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Kosovar Women's Voice

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

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Kosovo Joins Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict

The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Mr. William Hague and the Special Envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Ms. Angelina Jolie, organised the Global Summit to end Sexual Violence in Conflict with the motto #TimetoAct in London from 10 to 13 Jun. The President of the Republic of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga as well as two KWN member organizations Medica Kosova and the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims participated in the Summit. Meanwhile under the patronage of President Jahjaga, the National Council for Survivors of Sexual Violence in War organised several activities in Prishtina with support of the British Embassy.

On 11 Jun., Prishtina's clock tower "Sahat Kulla" was illuminated with the #TimetoAct message. Speakers included Igballe Rogova, as a representative of the National Council for Survivors of Sexual Violence during the War, Mr. Ian Cliff, Ambassador of the United Kingdom and a representative from World Vision.

"The exact number of people raped during the war may remain unknown forever, but we know that there are more than 20,000 women," said Rogova. "Although the procedure of collecting facts and evidence is very difficult, it is also a victorious process; finally the silence is being broken. Finally there are activities organized at a very high governmental level."

On 12 Jun., messages from President Atifete Jahjaga, UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs William Hague and Angelina Jolie were

broadcast at Square 21 (*Sheshi 21*). Vlora Çitaku, Minister for European Integration, opened this event. U.S. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson, KWN staff and representative of other institutions and organisations also participated.

The #TimetoAct campaign is part of a global initiative to end sexual violence. At the London Conference, the global [Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict](#) was launched.



The #TimetoAct message was
displayed at Sahat Kulla in
Prishtina on 11 Jun.

KWN Members Learn Research Methods

On Jun. 9, [KWN](#) organised a workshop entitled “Doing Research: Quantitative & Qualitative Methods.” Nicole Farnsworth, KWN Program Manager, who has an MSc in Sociology Research, provided information on the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods; how to select a survey sample from a population; variation sampling in qualitative research; asking good questions; interviewing techniques; and research ethics.

Then, the 21 members participating discussed specific examples of KWN members’ upcoming research initiatives. [Shqiponjat e Dardanes](#) from Graçanica and [Femrat Aktive te Gjakovës](#) (Active Women of Gjakova) both received grants through the Kosova Women’s Fund (KWF), which involve conducting research. Their initiatives provided concrete examples of the differences in conducting qualitative and quantitative research. [Shqiponjat e Dardanes](#) will conduct quantitative research on women’s position within the municipality. Active Women of Gjakova will conduct qualitative research on “The implementation of the Law for Protection from Domestic Violence.”

“Even though I have participated in similar workshops before, this was a very good update and helped us refresh our memory,” said Valbona Rizvanolli from Active Women of Gjakova. “This workshop is also very useful, because it will help our NGO conduct our research with support from the Kosova Women’s Fund.” The slides from the workshop are available [online](#).



KWN organised a workshop entitled “Doing Research: Quantitative & Qualitative Methods” on Jun. 9.

Partners Kosova Advocates Women’s Property Rights

[Partners Kosova \(PK\)](#) invited women and men to their one-day presentation on “Women’s rights in property division and inheritance” in Lipjan municipality on May 28. The Municipal Officer for Gender Equality attended.

“While advocating on this topic, we should work on raising awareness among both genders and among people of different ages and backgrounds,” said Hilmije Ramabaja, Training Program Manager, Mediator and Trainer at PK. “Only in this way we will be able to reach as many people as possible and change the patriarchal mentality, which denies women this basic right.” PK plans to organize similar presentations in three other municipalities:

Skenderaj, Drenas and Ferizaj.

Afterwards, groups will advocate further on this topic during a second meeting in each municipality, to be attended by representatives of institutions and other stakeholders.

“I liked this idea very much, and I would suggest widening further discussions on this topic, so there is harmony between the existent legal framework and practice,” said Gafurr Ademi, Officer for Legal and Property Issues in the Mayor’s Office. “In our society’s circumstances, it is very important that men also are present where such topics are discussed in order to raise awareness.”

This initiative was supported by the KWN KWF, financed by [Kvinna till Kvinna \(KtK\)](#).



Women and men discuss the topic “Women’s rights in property division and inheritance rights” at a presentation organised by PK on May 28 in Lipjan.

OPMDK Demands Rights for Persons in Wheelchairs in Prizren

Two volunteers push an empty wheelchair up the steep hill to Prizren's ancient castle, symbolizing the disappointment of persons with muscular dystrophy who could not make this journey. This was among many activities organized to mark the week of persons with muscular dystrophy.

This year, the [Organisation for Persons with Muscular Dystrophy of Kosovo \(OPMDK\)](#) focused on insufficient support from public institutions. Only the Ministry for Culture, Youth and Sport and KWN ([funded by ADA](#)) have supported the organisation financially in the last two years.

They released balloons of different colours from the castle and the centre of town into the sky. Each balloon had the name of an institution that should work towards ensuring protection of human rights.

"For six days, through different activities we will raise our voice and show our problems, needs and concerns and will address them in both levels of government: local and central," said Antigona Shestan from OPMDK. "The good thing is that this project is a continuation of what we already have done last year through our project supported by the Kosova Women's Network, where we achieved to mark 27 of around 50 access points to public buildings for persons with muscular dystrophy. This was done in cooperation with the Department of Public Services of our municipality."

On May 27, they also decorated a beautiful plant with colourful papers, each expressing a need, challenge or problem that persons with muscular dystrophy face. They opened a tent where they and volunteers distributed leaflets about the rights and demands of persons with muscular dystrophy. They also acted out a short drama sketch, expressing the problems they face.

"The lack of implementation of some administrative orders and laws regarding technical access to public buildings makes it difficult for people with disabilities and these problems are not being resolved," said Gëzim Abazi from Handicap Kosova. "NGOs, and more specifically Handicap Kosova, now is not only looking into the implementation of these laws, but we're also verifying who's not implementing them in order to fine those people."

OPMDK also handed in a document detailing their rights, demands and identifying other access points to public buildings that need to be fixed by institutions responsible for resolving these issues.



OPMDK Demands Rights for Persons in Wheelchairs Pziren 27 May.

Women's Wellness Centre Joins WAVE in Vienna

The Coalition of Shelters in Kosovo joined [Women Against Violence Europe \(WAVE\)](#) in 2011. The Women's Wellness Centre in Peja, a KWN member, is a representative focal point within WAVE, which brings together 48 organizations from throughout Europe in a network combatting violence.

Ardita Ramizi Bala from the [Women's Wellness Center](#) participated in WAVE's 9th meeting in Vienna on 26-27 May 2014, during which information was shared about WAVE's statute, board and new assembly.

Court Finds Guilty Perpetrators of Sexual Violence

According to the [Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims](#) (KRCT), the Court of Appeals in Prishtina has released a verdict that finds guilty and sentences two persons for criminal acts of sexual violence perpetrated during the war in Kosovo. They have been sentenced to 22 years in prison.

This positive step towards justice has encouraged institutions to continue pursuing and punishing crimes committed during the war in Kosovo. KRCT shared this information as part of its marking of the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 Jun.

Women from 15 Municipalities Strategize for Advocacy

Gender Equality Advocacy Groups (GEAG) from 15 different municipalities participated in the second workshop “Women Advocate at Local and Central Levels,” which took place on Jun. 26-27 at Hotel Arxhena, located in the beautiful mountains of Brod, Dragash. GEAGs bring together women in municipal assemblies and KWN member organizations for joint advocacy towards gender equality at the municipal level.

In the first session, moderated by KWN Executive Director Igballe Rogova, participants reported on the status of their joint advocacy campaigns in their respective municipalities. Campaigns targeted issues that they had identified during the previous GEAG meeting in Durres. Even though GEAG members planned to achieve their advocacy aims by the end of 2014, most municipalities already had achieved their aims as of June.

“It’s very good that we have achieved success in our advocacy efforts earlier than we planned, but this doesn’t mean that we will stop identifying new issues and advocating for them during the remainder of the year,” said a participant.

The workshop involved two sessions, led by inspirational speaker Shqipe Malushi, involved “Empowerment and Positive Thinking – from the Impossible to Realization.”

“This session was very much needed and useful for us,” said a participant. “Considering the everyday routine and challenges we face, we definitely needed someone to remind us to ‘get back’ to being positive and to show us useful techniques for doing that.”

The second day of the workshop began with a session on gender responsive budgeting led by Nicole Farnsworth, KWN Program Manager. She shared a very simple [method](#) for gender responsive budgeting, which KWN has used in close cooperation with the [Municipality of Kamenica](#) and [Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare](#).

“We all agree that the fact that the [Budget Circular 2015/01 for Municipalities](#) encourages gender responsive budgeting is good news,” a participant said. “Now we will use indicators with a gender perspective to measure the impact of the budget on women and men’s lives.”

During the final session, led by Igballe Rogova, participants planned future steps for GEAGs. Supporting GEAGs is part of KWN’s efforts to implement its Strategic Plan, which includes the important goal of increasing women’s participation in politics and decision-making. KWN believes that active participation will be possible only via cooperation and joint advocacy on issues that women consider important at local and national levels. GEAGs bring together women in politics and women in civil society in efforts to advocate for women’s rights and gender equality at the municipal level. This activity was supported by the Austrian Development Agency ([ADA](#)).



Gender Equality Advocacy Groups (GEAG) from 15 different municipalities participated in the second workshop on 26-27 Brod, Dragash

University of Essex Students Learn about KWN

Students studying Human Rights at the University of Essex visited with KWN on 16 Jun. They showed interest in learning about the experiences of women’s rights activists, current developments and challenges to human rights as well as future obstacles and opportunities.

KWN Program Manager/Lead Researcher Nicole Farnsworth informed students about KWN’s work, the history of the women’s movement in Kosovo, women activists’ involvement in implementing United Nation Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the situation of women’s right in Kosovo. Following this, students had the opportunity to ask questions.

“This was one of the best sessions we have had during our trip,” a student said. “You made a great presentation and we felt free to ask questions.”

CLE Presents Report on Gender Equality in Commerce

The Contract Law Enforcement (CLE) Program presented a report on [Gender Equality in Commerce](#), on Jun. 3 in Prishtina, offering an example of how the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) gender policies and strategies translate into "real world" actions. The report surveyed public perceptions about the barriers women face in economic and legal environments.

Even though evidence suggests that empowering women is smart economic policy, women are frequently at a disadvantage when pursuing economic opportunities, such as employment, training, education, access to finance and property ownership.

In Kosovo, statistics show that the rate of unemployment among women is 40%; women make up only 0.3% of top managers in private companies; women own only 11% of small businesses; and just 8% of land owners are women. Constraints to women's active participation in the economy include insufficient enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and policies, as well as socially entrenched gender stereotypes.

"Efforts to empower women economically are attempts to show not only the level of democratization of society but, above all, to steer the country towards a fairer and more rapid economic growth. Economic empowerment of women is the empowerment of society as a whole, is an investment in the future and guarantor of prosperity," said President Jahjaga. "I am deeply convinced that economic empowerment of women will bring us their empowerment in politics and decision making, where decisions about the fate of our children, the future of the country and beyond, are made every day."

This report will assist the CLE Program, among other USAID programs, in developing future activities with a better understanding of how to address real and perceived gender gaps in economic participation.



President of Kosovo Atifete Jahjaga speaks at the presentation of the report *Gender Equality in Commerce*, organized by Contract Law Enforcement (CLE) Program on Jun. 3 in Prishtina.

Kvinna till Kvinna Partners Discuss Good Practices

[Kvinna till Kvinna \(KtK\)](#) organized a Good Practices conference with its partners in the Western Balkans at Hotel Bleart in Durrës, Albania from 24-27 Jun. The conference was organized with the purpose of sharing experiences and good practices, as well as to provide a space for networking among women's rights activists.

The conference involved parallel workshops with interesting and challenging thematic issues, such as: *Working for women in politics* – experiences from the region; *1325 National Action Plans* – taking control and claiming accountability; *Art as tool for social change*; *EU advocacy* – good advice and practical examples; *Leading new activists*; *Working against VAW on the national and local level* – experiences from the region; and *Women Human Right Defenders* – working with EU guidelines and UN.

Lena Ag, Secretary General of Kvinna till Kvinna, opened the conference, providing information about KtK's present and future plans for the region and beyond. She quoted Virginia Wolf, "As a woman I have no country. My country is the whole world."

Two KWN staff members participated as panellists: Nicole Farnsworth discussed KWN's efforts to monitor and advocate for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Mimoza Pachuku, Kosova Women's Fund Coordinator, presented in the panel Leading New Activists. KWN members from *Legjenda*, Mitrovica Women's Association for Human Rights and Aureola also shared their experiences.



Kvinna till Kvinna gathers partner organisations for a Good Practices Conference in Durrës, Albania on 24-27 Jun. Photo: Yllka Soba KtK

Advocacy Leads to Employment for 24 Women

In spring 2014, the Women's Initiative Association, a KWN member, gathered women from several villages in the rural, mountainous municipality of Dragash in southern Kosovo. The women, many of them under age 30, demonstrated an interest in learning professional tailoring techniques. They were so eager to learn that when their official course ended, they travelled with the Women's Initiative Association to the municipality's capital in order to advocate for the Mayor to continue providing tailoring courses for them. But that's not all. They also requested the Mayor's assistance in encouraging the owners of the new clothing factory in Dragash to employ them. For most women, this was the first time they had visited the capital of their municipality, let alone advocated to the Mayor. Their efforts were supported through the KWN Kosovo Women's Fund.



Xhejrane Lokaj from the Women's Initiative Association congratulates women in Dragash for their new jobs, which resulted from their advocacy efforts undertaken with support from the KWN Kosovo Women's Fund in early 2014.

A week ago, the new textiles factory opened in Dragash. The Women's Initiative Association was happy to report that the factory has employed 24 women, including eight women who had developed tailoring skills through the Association's courses months earlier.

"When we organized our tailoring courses through the project, 'A new opportunity towards advancing employment,' we were committed to achieve women's employment in factories," said Xhejrane Lokaj, Executive Director of the Women's Initiative Association. Few women were employed in Dragash municipality, and the Association wanted to change that. "I am so happy that this has started to have results," she said.

Meanwhile, Vahidin Emini, the owner of the factory, emphasized that "all women who had finish the trainings and applied for a job based on their skills were employed by the factory."

Even though the factory just opened and women have not yet received their first salaries, they already feel economically empowered.

"I had participated in tailoring courses for six months, as well as some other handcraft courses, and I always hoped that one day this factory would open," said Nahije Bajrami, a woman trained by the Women's Initiative Association who is now employed at the factory. "I feel much better now, with more self-confidence and hope for the future."

Women from politics and civil society in 15 municipalities' Gender Equality Advocacy Groups (GEAG) visited the new factory during the KWN-organized workshop "Women Advocate in Local and Central Level" on 27 Jun.

"The fact that this factory has employed 24 women in the area is a strong reason for us to visit, show our support to the employed women, and wish them success," said a GEAG member.

The factory inspired women from other municipalities to advocate for similar workplaces for women in their areas.

The successful advocacy undertaken by the Women's Initiative Association was made possible through funding from Austrian Development Agency (ADA).