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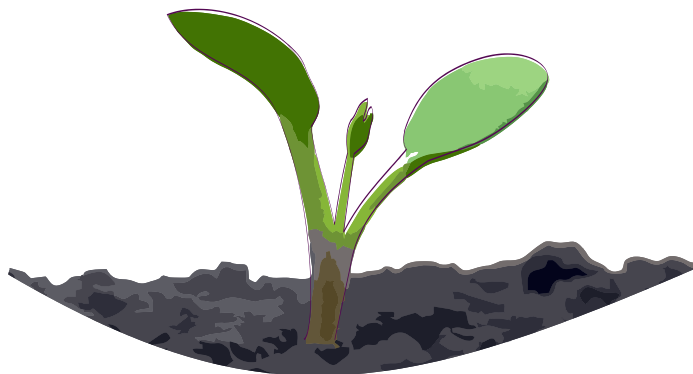


The Kosovo Women's Fund

Women's Rights Are Human Rights

Little Grants, Important Changes

2016-2017



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Introduction

During 2016 and 2017, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) provided **22** grants to 24 local women's rights organizations through the Kosovo Women's Fund, totalling **€103,503**. These initiatives were made possible thanks to support from the European Union (EU) Office in Kosovo through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, as part of KWN's broader Action to "Strengthen the Role of Women's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Promoting Women's Human Rights and Political Participation" in Kosovo.

In total, **3,012 diverse people** (86% women and 14% men) **benefited** from these initiatives, including women with disabilities (7%), from rural areas (42%), of various ethnicities (e.g., Turkish, Gorani, Serbian, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women) (13%) and young women (30%). In addition, these initiatives enabled **321 women** to participate in politics and decision-making processes, including via **86 different advocacy initiatives**.

The Action played an important role in enabling women and girls to develop skills for advocacy and to participate more in influencing decisions within their communities that impact their lives. Meanwhile, women's rights organizations' initiatives have reached some of Kosovo's most vulnerable and marginalized women and girls with new knowledge and information about their rights, empowering them to take steps towards claiming those rights.

Thus, the little grants distributed through the KWN Kosovo Women's Fund have achieved important changes towards furthering women's rights as human rights. Several initiatives have contributed to the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan II by improving women's access to healthcare, education, resources (e.g., land and trade), governance and policy processes, and a life without violence. Overall, this Action has supported women's rights groups in furthering gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, particularly at the local level. This booklet tells some of their stories.

A Brief History of the Fund

A growing literature shows the importance of supporting women's rights organizations as key instigators of lasting social and political change.¹ Women's rights groups are well-placed to undertake very efficient and effective initiatives towards gender equality and women's rights within their communities, particularly at municipal and local levels. They play a crucial role in furthering women's rights as human rights, transforming gender norms, combatting gender-based violence, increasing public awareness, providing services to the most marginalized (particularly in the absence of state services) and holding governments accountable through advocacy.

Moreover, in the context of EU Accession processes, women's rights groups can play an important role in supporting, monitoring and advocating for the implementation of reforms. Indeed, the European Council (EC) has stated that "women's organisations are crucial partners of the EU" and encouraged support for women's rights organizations.² The EC and European External Action Service (EEAS) have adopted the *Joint Staff Working Document - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020*,³ also known as the "Gender Action Plan" (GAP II), which foresees funding and support for women's organizations and human rights defenders.

¹ For example, see the publications of the Association of Women in Development.

² Council conclusions on Gender in Development, doc. 9241/15, 26 May 2015, at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9242-2015-INIT/en/pdf> and cited in the EC Joint Staff Working Document 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020', SWD(2015) 182, Brussels: 21 Sep. 2015, p. 11.

³ Ibid.

Despite their important contributions within their communities and countries, local women's rights groups often have struggled to access resources that support their important work. KWN's Kosovo Women's Fund was initially established to address the crucial need to support small and grassroots women's organizations. At the time of the Fund's creation in 2012, donors' shifting aid priorities and shrinking budgets for Western Balkan countries led several donors to close their grant-making programs in Kosovo or to decrease funding for non-governmental organizations. While some donors remained, such as the EU, they tended to provide very large grants, which were extremely difficult for most local organizations to access. Women's groups with limited English language skills and minimal annual turnover struggled to obtain such funds.

As a network of women's organizations, KWN received regular requests from its member organizations to investigate opportunities for addressing this situation and supporting them in their important work. In order to better address their needs, KWN undertook a study in close collaboration with the Association of Women in Development, entitled *Where's the Money for Women's Rights: A Kosovo Case Study*.⁴ Drawing from a survey of 90 women's organizations and interviews with 40 donors operating in Kosovo, this report closely examined funding trends, opportunities and challenges faced by women's rights groups in Kosovo. The publication was foundational for better understanding the needs of diverse women's rights groups and informed the establishment of the Kosovo Women's Fund.

Meanwhile, KWN instigated a very consultative process, organizing a series of meetings with its member organizations to discuss their needs and vision for establishing the Kosovo

⁴ KWN and Alterhabitus, *Where's the Money for Women's Rights*, Pristina: KWN, 2013, at: <http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/20140109133636572.pdf>.

Women's Fund: which types of organizations would be prioritized for funding; what types of initiatives would be funded; how would application processes function; who would make funding decisions; what would be the grant amount; and how long would funding last? KWN members discussed and decided that the Kosovo Women's Fund should prioritize funding for women's organizations that:

- Lacked access to other funding opportunities;
- Were led by and/or had as main beneficiaries vulnerable groups, including young women, women with disabilities, women in rural areas and from minority ethnic groups; and
- Undertook initiatives towards implementing the KWN Strategy,⁵ created by KWN members and serving as a broad strategy for the women's movement in Kosovo, towards having more impact on addressing identified needs.

In establishing the Kosovo Women's Fund, KWN also reviewed the experiences of other foundations supporting local civil society groups around the world and received first-hand mentoring from the Women's Reconstruction Fund in Serbia.

The Kosovo Women's Fund initially received support from the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation in 2012. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) started supporting the Fund in 2013. Since 2015, the Kosovo Women's Fund has received support from the EU Office in Kosovo through the Civil Society Fund (2015-2016) and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (2016-2017). The Fund also has received support from the IPKO Foundation and UN Women.

Between its inception and December 2017, the Kosovo Women's Fund has given **136** grants to **74** different women's

⁵ See: <http://www.womensnetwork.org/?FaqlD=5>.

rights organizations, located in 29 municipalities of Kosovo, totalling €639,326.

In total, **193,637 diverse people** (79% women and 21% men) **benefited** from these initiatives, including women with disabilities, from rural areas (46%), and of various ethnicities (e.g., Turkish, Gorani, Serbian, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women) and young women (34%). In addition, these initiatives enabled **3,471 women** to participate in politics and decision-making processes, including via **396 different advocacy initiatives**. With support from the Fund, women's rights groups have contribute to **21** policy changes, towards improving the lives of women, girls, men and boys. They have addressed important issues within their communities, ranging from safeguarding women's right to access to quality healthcare, to addressing gender-based violence, to empowering women economically and increasing women's political participation.

Kosovo Women's Fund Key Achievements Supported by the EU 2016-2017

- 2,584 diverse women and girls and 428 men benefitted.
- 499 women participated in decision-making processes, some for the first time.
- Women's rights groups undertook 86 advocacy initiatives.
- Women's groups successfully advocated for changes to seven public policies, towards better meeting the needs of women and girls.
- Several initiatives contributed directly to implementing the EU Gender Action Plan II.
- Women's organizations are better able to plan projects and write proposals; 18 KWN members, including rural and minority groups, received funds from different donors, following KWN's support.
- Municipal Gender Equality Officers and officials were involved in CSOs' initiatives.
- CSOs gained advocacy skills via a 'learning-by-doing' approach and some undertook advocacy initiatives for the first time.
- KWN members provided substantial co-financing for their initiatives, demonstrating local ownership and contributing to efficiency.
- KWN members have furthered their organizational capacities, including gaining knowledge in best practices in monitoring and evaluation.

How Does the Fund Work?

The Kosovo Women's Fund supports women's rights organizations that are registered as KWN members. The idea behind supporting KWN members, and not all civil society organizations, is that together the network's membership is committed to working towards achieving shared objectives, outlined in KWN's Strategy. This important document, in a sense, serves as a key strategic document for the women's movement in Kosovo. Any women-led organization that agrees with the vision and mission of KWN, works on similar issues, and commits to following a shared Code of Conduct can join the network. At present, most women's rights organizations in Kosovo are members of the network, totalling 126 members as of December 2017. The Fund also is committed to supporting women's groups specifically because of obstacles that women in particular have historically faced in accessing support for their work. To empower women, we believe that it is important to support women directly, meanwhile working with men and boys towards broader, transformative sociocultural change.

KWN's diverse member organizations are encouraged to submit applications for initiatives that would contribute to realizing Strategic Goals identified in the KWN Strategy for 2015-2018.⁶ KWN members themselves selected these goals through a consultative strategic planning process, undertaken in close cooperation with other partners and stakeholders during 2014. KWN's strategic priorities include:

- Strengthening KWN and its members;
- Furthering women's participation in politics and decision-making;
- Improving women's access to quality healthcare;

⁶ The Strategy is located at: <http://www.womensnetwork.org/?FaqlD=5>.

- Combating gender-based violence; and
- Women's economic empowerment.

Women's organizations can apply for funding in Albanian, Serbian or English languages, using the Application Form available on KWN's website www.womensnetwork.org.

In order to apply for a grant from the Kosovo Women's Fund, an organization must be a KWN member; plan and implement activities in accordance with their own organizational strategy; undertake activities that contribute to the KWN Strategy; reach grassroots and/or vulnerable persons and groups; and lack other opportunities to secure funds.

The Kosovo Women's Fund Grant Review Committee, elected annually by KWN members, decides whether grant proposals meet the aforementioned eligibility criteria. They award grants using a points-based system that corresponds with the aforementioned criteria.

The grant amounts differ depending on the amount of funding that the KWN Kosovo Women's Fund has at its disposal. Through the particular EU-funded Action discussed in this booklet, women's rights organizations could apply for two different types of grants: Advocacy Grants for a single organization with the maximum amount of €4,000; and Networking for Change Grants for joint initiatives by two organizations, up to €8,000. Of the 22 grants, five were joint initiatives and 17 individual advocacy initiatives for one organization.

Beyond Grants...

KWN provides capacity development opportunities for grant applicants and grant recipients, towards strengthening our member organizations and thus our network. KWN offers hands-on workshops, as well

as individualized mentoring in grant-writing, project cycle management, organizational management and financial management, furthering organizations' capacities to apply for funding from other donors in the future.

Since we strive to strengthen the women's movement overall, we continuously promote solidarity among organizations and offer support to all organizations, based on their needs. Thus, for organizations who do not receive financial support from the Fund in a particular grant round, we provide a detailed letter explaining the reasons given by the Grant Review Committee. KWN staff members meet with organizations to support them in addressing issues identified in these letters, so that they can prepare to apply again to the Fund in the future. Again, the aim is to strengthen organizations' capacities over time, using a "learning-by-doing" approach.

"This Fund serves many purposes, starting from assisting CSOs with the application procedures and properly writing a project, to reporting."

- KWN Member



KWN staff support member organizations in creating effective advocacy strategies.

KWN's innovative support for grant recipients does not end once a grant is given. We continue providing one-on-one mentoring for each grant recipient throughout their initiative and often beyond. This includes site visits, skills-building in financial management, assistance with organizational management, advice in effective advocacy strategies, facilitating networking with government officials and problem-solving.

We also support our members in thinking proactively about sustainability, which includes planning initiatives and gaining community support that will enable their initiatives to continue beyond the life of these short projects.

For more information about the Kosovo Women's Fund, visit our [website: www.womensnetwork.org](http://www.womensnetwork.org). KWN staff members can provide additional information via e-mail at grants@womensnetwork.org or by phone at +381 (0)38 245 850. Please contact us if you or your organization is interested in supporting the Kosovo Women's Fund.

FURTHERING WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS AND DECISION- MAKING

Rural Women from Dragash Engage in Politics

Sustainable, positive change cannot happen if women do not have agency over their private and public lives. Power in decision-making (both private and public) is an integral part of this agency. Women's representation in decision-making remains very low in Kosovo at all levels and spheres. Despite the circumstances, women are infiltrating the political sphere in the rural Municipality of Dragash. The local Women's Initiative Association continues to take a stand, empowering women by igniting their interest in politics.

Activists knew that they first had to identify potential women and men who would serve as allies. Therefore, they met with representatives of women's forums of political parties, youth forums, the Lobby for Gender Equality, the Municipal Assembly, students and businesswomen, establishing partnerships. This included meeting with the Mayor of Dragash, his colleagues and leaders of five Albanian, Bosnian and Gorani political parties. The Association steadily worked to build an inter-municipal network of active women, involving members of the Lobby for Gender Equality, CSOs, municipal gender equality officers, women municipal assembly members, businesswomen and students from Decan and Dragash.

In addition, radio stations were involved to better inform the public, and workshops were organized. Through these initiatives, the Association sought to increase the confidence and awareness of women, especially young women, to engage directly in politics.

Organization	Women's Initiative Association (WIA)
Title	Time for a new political spirit
Amount	€3,995
Municipality	Dragash
Timeframe	December 2016 - May 2017
Beneficiaries	187

Meanwhile, they aimed to change the mindset of people already in positions of power, regarding the capacities of women to participate in decision-making processes. In the context of upcoming elections, the Association empowered more women to run for office while challenging public perceptions regarding women's abilities to be leaders.

Networking with women in other areas, namely Decan Municipality, enabled experiences and ideas to flow. By supporting each other, women from the rural areas of Decan and Dragash could pursue solutions to the everyday challenges that they face. Women also were encouraged to join political parties with which they held common values.

Women started stating more assertively, "Let's all get into politics! Others have spoken for us long enough!"

The results of this initiative speak for themselves. As a result, more than 36 women joined different political parties for the first time. The number of women on the electoral lists of political parties increased. Moreover, the number of women in the presidency of political parties increased from one to eight members. Activists state that they have witnessed a shift in the political mood, evidenced by the seriousness with which political parties now treat proposals made by Women's Political Party Forums for women's increased inclusion in decision-making processes.

While many challenges remain, so too does the determination of young women for tearing down prejudices within their society. Accessing positions of authority and decision-making processes is an important first step for women to have decision-making power, a step that the women of Dragash are now taking confidently.

Liria and Legjenda Advocate for Gender Responsive Budgeting

Gender responsive budgeting (GRB) involves including a gender perspective in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the budget. GRB helps governments better plan and execute budgets in a more equal, effective and transparent manner. According to the new Law on Gender Equality (2015), GRB is a legal obligation for all central- and local-level budget organizations in Kosovo. Further, with KWN's support, Budget Circular no. 2017/I, distributed by the Ministry of Finance in June 2017, specifically encouraged all municipalities to undertake GRB in preparing their budgets.

GRB is a new concept in Kosovo and other countries. In 2016, a few budget organizations in Kosovo had begun implementing this legal obligation, including the municipalities of Vitia and Gjilan. KWN member organizations the Centre for Protection of Women and Children Liria in Gjilan and Legjenda in Vitia, decided to join forces to further the institutionalization of GRB in their respective municipalities.

Liria and Legjenda organized informational meetings with the Formal Group of women assembly members in Ferizaj and Klllokot municipalities, the Lobby for Gender Equality in Kosovo, and directors of directorates in each municipality. More than 75 women and men officials from the two municipalities participated in these meetings.

Organizations	Centre for Protection of Women and Children Liria and Legjenda
Title	Increasing women's participation in peace-making and gender budgeting
Amount	€7,927
Municipality	Ferizaj and Klllokot
Timeframe	November 2016 - April 2017
Beneficiaries	75

The topics discussed related to steps towards integrating GRB in decision-making; research and analysis that must be conducted at the municipal level. As a result, officials and activists in these two municipalities became more aware of GRB, what this concept means, and how to apply it in their respective municipalities. In addition, women involved in decision-making became aware of gender budgeting and were encouraged to become more active participants in the processes of drafting budget documents.

This initiative marked an important step towards furthering gender equality in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality. As a result of this initiative, the Municipality of Ferizaj completed new gender policies. Moreover, the municipality used gender analysis to plan its Medium-term Budget Framework.



Liria and Legjenda advocate for the institutionalization of gender responsive budgeting in Ferizaj and Klllokot municipalities.

Blind Women Advocate for More Opportunities

Blind and visually impaired women often face double discrimination and added difficulties in realizing their rights. The Committee for Blind Women of Kosovo has long worked to contribute to their social inclusion. Through this initiative, the Committee published leaflets in Braille and organized campaigns to increase awareness about blind persons' right to education. This included the need for educational materials in Braille.

The Committee organized a discussion with municipal assembly members in Prishtina, during which they raised several issues. Blind persons advocated for the provision of educational materials that are accessible for blind persons; materials in Braille; and equal rights to employment in the public sector, in accordance with the law guaranteeing rights for blind persons.

The initiative also influenced public discourse through a debate organized on the Radio Television Kosovo, the public television station. During this discussion, blind women presented publicly issues concerning them and the proposed institutional response.

Organization	Committee for Blind Women of Kosovo
Title	More opportunities for blind women
Amount	€3,370
Municipality	Pristina
Timeframe	June 2017 - November 2017
Beneficiaries	33

Blind women have never had the opportunity to meet government officials. Therefore, an important achievement of this initiative was the Minister of Education, Science and Technology's commitment to meet with 23 women and 10 men who are blind or partially sighted to discuss challenges that they face and how the Ministry can improve their access to quality education.



The Committee involves blind women and men in advocating to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for better quality education.

Inter-Municipal, Interethnic Body Fosters Women's Participation

Naš Dom and the Women's Centre for Rural Development joined forces, enhancing the capacities of 21 women from the municipalities of Gjilan, Kamenica and Novo Brdo in advocacy, community mobilization and social inclusion. Women worked closely with Municipal Assembly Members to better understand models and mechanisms for improving women's participation in decision-making processes at the local level and for monitoring the implementation of adopted decisions and local policies. Women learned not only to translate their and their communities' needs into effective advocacy, but also how to play a watchdog role when it comes to holding local institutions accountable.

This fruitful collaboration between institutional representatives and diverse women from three municipalities resulted in the establishment of an informal inter-municipal coordination body comprised of municipal representatives, Naš Dom and the Women's Centre.

The combination of citizens' initiatives at the local level, meetings held under the umbrella of the coordination body and strong lobbying by women's organizations has proven successful. Women have provided recommendations on municipal working documents and closely monitored their implementation. The organizations have worked with local media, informing and inspiring other community members to become active and voice their opinions on matters of local politics.

Organization	Naš Dom, Women's Centre for Rural Development
Title	Improving local policies with women's perspectives in partnerships for change
Amount	€7,980
Municipality	Gjilan, Kamenica and Novo Brdo
Timeframe	June 2017 - December 2017
Beneficiaries	68

Albanian, Serbian Women Learn Advocacy Techniques

Following many years of successful cooperation, organizations *Dera e Hapur* (Open Door) and *Ruka Ruci* (Hand to Hand) undertook another joint initiative aimed at empowering Albanian and Serbian women's participation in decision-making processes.

Their initiative brought together women in three villages inhabited by Albanians and three villages inhabited by Serbs, including Hajvalia, Bardhosh, Slivovo (Municipality of Pristina), Dobrotn, Ugljar and Gracanica. The initiative provided 18 local women activists with improved knowledge on effective methods of communication, including using digital means. Women learned how to write success stories, about the safety and privacy of social networks, online activism and methods for using social networks for activism. They also gained skills in drafting policies, as well as access to potential projects and programs that could support their respective communities.

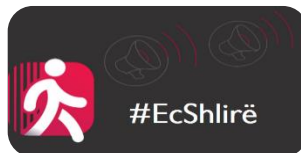
Women discussed various forms of women's activism, engagement and participation. This included community initiatives, petitions and public dialogue. In the end, participants from six villages organized initiatives to raise awareness about gender equality within their communities.

Organizations	Open Door and Ruka Ruci
Title	Empowering women community activists with digital knowledge to increase their activism and role in women's human rights and gender equality through participation, information and internet and social media communication
Amount	€7,955
Municipality	Pristina and Gracanica
Timeframe	June 2017 - December 2017
Beneficiaries	262

PROTECTING SURVIVORS AND WOMEN'S RIGHT TO A LIFE WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Police to Use “Walk Freely” App to Investigate Sexual Harassment

Open Data Kosovo (ODK), Girls Coding Kosovo (GCK) and KWN cooperated to design and launch a new mobile phone application for reporting sexual harassment in February 2016, entitled “*Ec Shlirë*” (Walk Freely). Developed by young women coders, the application enables users to report sexual harassment using smart phones, logging the location where harassment occurred, what form of harassment occurred, the gender of the perpetrator and the victim, among other information, as permitted by the application’s user. Since then, the application has been downloaded more than 1097 times and users have reported approximately 425 cases of sexual harassment. Women made 67.5% of reports, men made 21.7%, and 10.8% of reports came from persons identifying their gender as “other”, including transgender and intersex persons.



In addition to raising awareness about sexual harassment, the organizations supporting the application’s creation intended for it to be used to improve institutional response to sexual harassment. They foresaw that police could use the application to identify and investigate reports of sexual harassment; as well as to undertake preventive measures, using application data to identify vulnerable geographic areas and times of day so as to increase police security where needed. However, following the

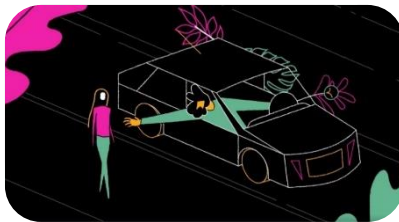
Organization	Girls Coding Kosovo (GCK)
Title	#EcShlirë v3.0. - Working with Kosovo Police
Amount	€4,000
Municipality	Pristina
Timeframe	July 2017 - December 2017
Beneficiaries	14

initial phase of developing and launching the application, creators lacked sufficient funding for follow-up advocacy to institutions.

Therefore, GCK received support from the Kosovo Women's Fund to advocate to the Kosovo Police for improved cooperation and opportunities for police use of the Walk Freely application. Moreover, KWN's research on *Sexual Harassment in Kosovo* has revealed that many police lack information regarding what constitutes sexual harassment in accordance with Kosovo law. This initiative sought to raise their awareness and advocate improved police response.

Therefore, as part of their initiative GCK supported by KWN trained Kosovo Police on the legal framework pertaining to sexual harassment, as well as how police can use the Walk Freely application to identify, investigate and prevent sexual harassment from occurring. GCK explained how the application functions, how to extract data and how to generate reports, analytics and maps. Kosovo Police officers considered the application a very important initiative, stating that it is a necessary platform that can support their work. Meanwhile, GCK supported by KWN succeeded in advocating for an agreement between the aforementioned organizations and the Kosovo Police, providing police with access to the application's data. Police have appointed officially a contact person responsible for following sexual harassment cases and collaborating on this work. Police soon will begin using data from Walk Freely to investigate sexual harassment and to improve its prevention.

At the same time, GCK continued raising awareness about sexual harassment and how to report it via social media. This campaign included a [promotional video](#) that has reached 30,000 people with information about sexual harassment.



Psychotherapists in Action Support Survivors of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence perpetrated during war constitutes a war crime, crime against humanity and potentially a constitutive act with respect to genocide, according to UN Security Council Resolution 1820 on Sexual Violence against Civilians in Armed Conflicts. Human Rights Watch has estimated that approximately 20,000 people experienced sexual violence during the war in Kosovo, namely in 1998 and 1999 alone.

Historically, Kosovar society has tended to isolate and has failed to support women who experienced this horrendous crime. As a result, many women have tried to continue their lives without learning how to cope psychologically with their past experiences. This can contribute to various disorders, such as trauma, phobias, loss of sexual desire, eating disorders and untreated physical injuries. Identifying women who suffered such crimes is essential for ensuring that they have access to assistance necessary for developing coping mechanisms for their daily lives. Meanwhile, by locating women, they could be informed of their rights to financial compensation, healthcare and other services, in accordance with recently adopted Kosovo legislation. Namely, the amendment to Law no. 04/L-054 on the Status and the Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian Victims and their Families officially recognizes civilian victims of sexual violence during the war in Kosovo. The Law entitles survivors to a monthly pension and other benefits.

Organization	Psychotherapists in Action
Title	Empowering women victims of sexual violence and torture during the conflict in Kosovo
Amount	€3,595
Municipality	Gjilan
Timeframe	November 2016 - April 2017
Beneficiaries	124

During 2016 and 2017, the National Council for the Survivors of Sexual Violence during the War, established in 2014 by the former President of Kosovo, Ms. Atifete Jahjaga, developed the legislation and by-law acts necessary to create the preconditions to ensure that survivors of sexual violence have access to benefits provided by this Law.

Therefore, CSO Psychotherapists in Action undertook an initiative to identify women in the region of Gjilan who had survived sexual violence, so that they could be informed of their rights and entitlements. During group meetings and individual visits, Psychotherapists in Action identified 30 women who had experienced sexual violence. Apart from identifying survivors and providing them with individual counselling by professionals, women also received information about their legal rights.

Further, 800 information leaflets were distributed to citizens in Gjilan, raising their awareness about the rights of persons who suffered sexual violence during the war.

Psychotherapists in Action also successfully advocated for local government institutions and officials in Employment Offices in the Municipality of Gjilan to employ 11 women who had survived sexual violence.

Former President of Kosovo, Mrs. Atifete Jahjaga, speaks at a discussion on empowering women survivors of sexual violence, organized by Psychotherapists in Action in Gjilan.



Activists Support Survivors of Sexual Violence in Claiming Rights

The Centre for the Promotion of Women's Rights (CPWR) and the Centre for Promotion of Healthy Family (CPHF) partnered to empower survivors of sexual violence perpetrated during the war in Kosovo. They wanted to support survivors in seeking and claiming their legal rights. Considering that Law no. 04/L-054 on the Status and the Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian Victims and their Families and the relevant secondary legislation was only recently adopted, few survivors of sexual violence had information about these laws and their rights to particular entitlements foreseen with the laws.

Therefore, building on their previous experience working with survivors of sexual violence, CPWR, in cooperation with CPHF, organized meetings with survivors to inform them of their rights under the new legal framework. The centres are recognized as trusted locations where survivors can receive assistance, an important pre-requisite for providing such services. Moreover, the organizations offered assistance regarding the legal procedures necessary for survivors to obtain the status of "civilian victim of war", which would enable them to access entitlements foreseen under the new legal framework. During meetings, activists explained the new regulation and the application form that survivors must complete in order to be granted this status.

Organizations	Centre for the Promotion of Women's Rights and Centre for Promotion of Healthy Family
Title	Empowering sexual violence survivors during the war for the realization of legal rights
Amount	€7,305
Municipality	Drenas
Timeframe	July 2017 - October 2017
Beneficiaries	98

Approximately 217 persons, including survivors of sexual violence, their family members, secondary school students and representatives of municipal institutions in Drenas, Skenderaj and Pristina municipalities attended these meetings.

During meetings with the family members of survivors of sexual violence, activists conveyed the importance of supporting survivors and undoing existing prejudices against survivors. Family members also received information about survivors' legal rights. Meanwhile, the organizations held meetings with secondary school students to discuss the history of the war, trauma and crimes perpetrated, in order to enhance their understanding of the experiences of their family members.

Then, the organizations supported directly 120 women survivors of sexual violence in completing the application forms necessary for registering officially as civilian victims of war.

Meanwhile, during meetings with survivors, activists collected 50 testimonies on crimes committed from persons who want to open criminal proceedings. Testimonies remain confidential in accordance with the Law on the Protection of Personal Data.

During this process, CPWR identified seven previously unknown women who had suffered sexual violence, who now have access to services and a support network that they did not have previously.

PROTECTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO ACCESS QUALITY HEALTHCARE

Health Practitioners Discuss Postnatal Depression

Postnatal depression is a form of depression involving as intense sadness, experienced by some women after childbirth. According to the American Psychological Association, one in seven women experiences postnatal depression. It can start anywhere between the first and the third week after childbirth and can continue for a longer period. It is manifested in mothers losing their interest in things which previously interested them, experiencing difficulties in establishing relationships with the child, and losing their interest in their child, family and society.

Historically, little public discussion has existed surrounding postnatal depression, and Kosovars therefore have lacked information about it. Therefore, the Action for Mothers and Children, undertook an initiative to advocate to the Division for Mother and Child's Health within the Ministry of Health to empower the existing Information Centres for Women's Health by expanding curricula to include discussion of postnatal depression. Such changes would better prepare centres to inform women and girls about this topic at the primary healthcare level. To support this, the organization created information and promotional videos. They also drafted an agreement for cooperation with the Ministry of Health in updating the existing "Pregnant Women's Booklet" to include information on Information Centres for Women's Health. These booklets now

Organization	Action for Mothers and Children
Title	Advocating for Expanding the Information Curricula in Information Centres for Women's Health and Staff Training Centre
Amount	€3,995
Municipality	Pristina, Ferizaj, Shtrpce and South Mitrovica
Timeframe	January 2017 - July 2017
Beneficiaries	265

contain information regarding the existence and location of Information Centres for Women's Health, topics important for pregnant women and the usefulness of counselling.

The Action for Mothers and Children also trained 19 medical practitioners on postnatal depression, including employees in Information Centres for Women's Health located in the municipalities of Prishtina, Ferizaj, Shterpca and South Mitrovica. The practitioners were happy with this training, which they said led to improvements in the quality of services they provide and communication with their patients: girls and women referred to these Centres. They felt more prepared to identify relevant signs of depression and to assist mothers experiencing such depression.



The Action for Mothers and Children trains nurses and midwives how to treat women with postnatal depression.

Considering that sometimes postnatal depression can result from psychological violence within families, the Action for Mothers and Children developed a video to raise awareness about this phenomenon and how women can access help.

Then, the Action for Mothers and Children successfully advocated to the Main Family Medicine Centre in the Municipality of Prizren to open a Centre for Classes for Mothers, as part of educational programs for mother and child's health in Kosovo. These classes offer health-related educational services to women,

girls and their partners, including: preparation for a healthy pregnancy, the birth process, baby care, the importance of breastfeeding, psychological and physical preparation for the birthing room, and other information on childcare and development. The classes provide advice in a comfortable room and through interactive means. the importance of breastfeeding, psychological and physical preparation for the birthing room, and other information on childcare and development. The classes provide advice in a comfortable room and through interactive means.

The opening of the Centre in Prizren marked the seventh such location for this program. So far, approximately 3,000 women have benefited from support provided by these classes in other municipalities. The Centre in Prizren will build on these best practices, reaching additional women in years to come. More specifically, this initiative enables healthcare practitioners within these Centres to provide better support to women with difficult living conditions, low educational levels (including illiterate women) and women historically deprived of their rights, from all ethnic groups: Albanians, Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Turks and Bosnians.

The Action for Mothers and Children plans to continue expanding the availability of such information centres for pregnant women and their partners throughout Kosovo, towards providing better quality health education within the primary healthcare framework. Other centres already have been opened via other initiatives in Shterpca, Mitrovica, Kaçanik, Pristina and Ferizaj.

Overall, advocacy targeting the Division for Mother and Child's Health within the Ministry of Health has resulted in postnatal depression being integrated into the curricula of Classes for Mothers. Therefore, thanks to this initiative, new mothers throughout Kosovo will have access to free, better quality information about postnatal depression, and services available for treating it, for years to come.

Youth Learn about Health through Art

Through their experience working in local communities, several KWN members have noted that young women and men still do not receive adequate information about sexual and reproductive rights. Although such topics should be addressed as part of the official educational curricula, activists and young women have reported that teachers often shy away from discussing such culturally taboo topics in schools.

Therefore, drawing from their experience, Artpolis and the Centre for Promotion of Women's Rights in Drenas had the idea of using theatre to transmit information. They launched a joint peer education project in which youth became educators. Nine young people acted in a performance involving the interactive method of Forum Theatre, in which audiences are encouraged to engage with actors. The method encourages discussion, including around taboo topics. Through this initiative, Artpolis created a Forum Theatre performance, entitled *"Jeta Jem, Shneta jem"* ("My Life, My Health"). Meetings and training for youth included sessions with information and exercises related to sexual and reproductive rights and health; sex, gender and sexual orientation; sexual education in the curricula; sexually transmitted diseases; protection from sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy; sexual health as a taboo theme in Kosovar families; virginity; and advocacy techniques. Theatre-based education was treated during other trainings. Exercises helped youth get to know themselves, so that they could further develop

Organization	Artpolis and the Centre for Promotion of Women's Rights
Title	Promoting rights to sexual and reproductive health through art education and youth engagement
Amount	€7,927
Municipality	Pristina and Drenas
Timeframe	November 2016 - March 2017
Beneficiaries	300

their characters. In the end, youth performed “*Jeta jem, Shneta jem*” at Dodona Theatre in Pristina with an audience of approximately 300 people. The performance was followed by a discussion with the public on these controversial themes.

On World AIDS Day, high school students in Drenas also distributed 150 brochures and 50 bags with information about sexual and reproductive rights and sexual health.

As a result of this initiative, more young people in Drenas and Pristina are more aware about their health rights. An advocacy group of 20 young people from the municipalities of Pristina and Drenas also was established to ensure that reproductive health and sexual education are included in the education curricula. The initiative included advocacy meetings targeting decision-makers at municipal and national levels. Officials participated in training on using theatrical techniques for sexual and reproductive health education. Further, advocacy meetings made officials in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology more aware of teachers’ failures to teach this curriculum, towards all schools better addressing these important issues.



Youth use Forum Theatre to raise awareness regarding sexual and reproductive rights.

“Alpha” Institute Protects the Rights of Imprisoned Women

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, among other laws, guarantees human rights for all citizens. These rights also apply to persons serving sentences in Correctional Institutions in Kosovo.

The Institute of Applied Psychology “Alpha” cooperated with the Correctional Institute in Lipjan order to provide comprehensive access and equal opportunities to psychological health and wellbeing for women and girls residing at the Institute.

Alpha organized workshops for 20 imprisoned women inmates and 15 correctional officers on trauma, stress, anger, fear, anxiety, phobias and techniques for reducing and overcoming these. Activists provided women with access to knowledge on how to adjust to stressful circumstances in the correctional environment and to build constructive forms of communication.

Building on the successes of their first initiative, the Kosovo Women’s Fund supported the Alpha Institute to continue its work, towards addressing the many needs identified during their first initiative. The Alpha Institute continued working with women inmates, focusing on concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation. Considering that counselling services towards reintegration are very limited, to non-existent, within Kosovo’s correctional system, these discussions sought to contribute to women’s wellbeing and enable their re-entrance into society.

Organization	Institute of Applied Psychology “Alpha”
Title	Protecting the rights of women imprisoned through their socialization
Amount	€3,985 + €3,845
Municipality	Lipjan
Timeframe	December 2016 - May 2017
Beneficiaries	29

Melihate Junik, the Project Coordinator, explained to inmates the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation for mental release. “Although it is very difficult to persuade yourself to forgive someone’s mistake, humans feel more comfortable and spiritually better when they forgive someone,” she said. “If you do not forgive a person, you will always have it in your mind. Whenever you meet him/her, you will remember the moment that affected the deterioration of your relationship.”

“Forgiveness is magnificent,” a woman inmate exclaimed, affected by these discussions.

While forgiveness is a one-sided act, reconciliation involves consent from two people.

This initiative enabled women imprisoned at the Correctional Institute to begin to have a better and more positive approach to each other. This affected their socialization and contributed to their overall psychological health and wellbeing.

Overall, the initiative contributed to furthering women’s rights to quality, psychological treatment and wellbeing while within correctional facilities, as correctional officers received training that would enable them to continue to offer similar support to women inmates in the future.



Alpha supports imprisoned women in expressing their gratitude, towards psychological wellbeing rehabilitation.

Women in Prizren Benefit from Free Examinations

In Prizren, many Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls drop out of school before completing compulsory education, mostly due to early marriage. As a result, several do not complete health education courses and lack information about the importance of health check-ups towards early identification of diseases and preventative care.

Concerned by this situation, “*Foleja*”, an organization with a long experience working with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women and girls in Prizren, decided to organize discussions with mothers, families and young women about the importance of education and preventative check-ups, particularly related to reproductive health. *Foleja* organized lectures in the premises of the Main Family Medicine Centre and in the Institute of Public Health in which 167 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women and 13 men participated. The physician provided information about sexually transmitted diseases, how to avoid unwanted pregnancy and how to use contraceptives.

Through these discussions, *Foleja* identified five pregnant women who had never had a gynaecological examination. The discussions helped them realize the importance of routine examinations, especially during pregnancy. *Foleja* also helped these women receive laboratory check-ups and analyses at the hospital. For the first time, they opened their medical records, which they will use for future gynaecological exams.

Organization	<i>Foleja</i>
Title	Improving health education, family planning and reproductive health
Amount	€3,675
Municipality	Prizren
Timeframe	November 2016 - August 2017
Beneficiaries	313

Meanwhile, *Foleja* advocated successfully for Dr. Afrim Avdaj, Director of the General Hospital in Prizren for 30 women who had never had a basic health examination or tests to receive gynaecological, mammography and pap-tests free of charge. These check-ups enabled one 57-year-old woman to learn that she a serious health condition requiring urgent medical intervention. With *Foleja's* assistance, she was treated immediately and is now well.

"I really did not think my life could be in danger because I did not do gynaecological examinations," she said. "From now on I will always carry out check-ups as the doctor has recommended".

Following *Foleja's* advocacy, Dr. Afrim Avdaj also promised that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women who live in poor economic conditions will be able to receive free of charge health services, including check-ups, such as pap smears, mammographies and other laboratory tests.

Overall, the initiative has contributed to improving Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women's access to quality healthcare.



Women in Prizren benefit from free health examinations.

Young Women Mobilized to Seek Reproductive Healthcare

Considering the aforementioned challenges that young women can face in accessing reproductive healthcare, the Association for Education and Family Care targeted approximately 230 women and girls ages 14 to 60 from the city of Gjakova and four surrounding villages within this municipality with such information. Women and girls joined awareness sessions, advocacy meetings, roundtables and counselling sessions.

The Association organized four informative meetings with girls and mothers in the villages of Dobrosh, Molliq, Korenica and Lipovec. Then, 16 awareness-raising workshops were conducted in schools and homes. Also, the association circulated a questionnaire on girls' health, completed by approximately 200 girls ages 13 to 18 and several women. Findings demonstrated the importance of this initiative, as well as girls' need for a place where they could receive health counselling without facing social prejudices.

Both the discussions and questionnaire showed the need for an office that would provide accurate health information for girls and women. The Association provided this information and advocated to municipal institutions to open such an office within Gjakova Hospital, which could provide information and counselling related to sexual health. Activists met with the Health Department, Centres for Social Work, physicians and directors of hospitals and Family Health Centres.

Organization	Association for Education and Family Care
Title	An educated woman – A healthy society
Amount	€3,815
Municipality	Gjakova
Timeframe	June 2017 - November 2017
Beneficiaries	237

Further, the Association organized a roundtable during which they presented the results and recommendations emerging from this initiative. Representatives of the municipality participated, promising to establish the proposed counselling centre by the end of 2018, after opening the new Family Health Centre. Thus, the initiative made officials more aware about the importance of opening a reproductive health counselling centre for women and girls.

Meanwhile, with support from a fellow KWN member organization, Medica Gjakova, women and girls received medical visits for three consecutive months, two times a week.

Activists anticipate that the impact of this initiative will expand over time, as the small groups of girls established in each village have committed to gathering additional girls and encouraging them to visit gynaecologists, providing peer support in overcoming prejudices against young women receiving reproductive healthcare.



Women learn about their rights to access healthcare.

Handikos Improves Access to Healthcare for Women with Disabilities

Several sociocultural and physical challenges can undermine women with disabilities' access to healthcare. Considering that women with disabilities sometimes are isolated within their homes, or they do not have the physical support that they need to travel to public institutions, they often face added barriers in realizing their right to access quality healthcare.

Therefore, Handikos Mitrovica initiated an effort to support women and girls with disabilities from urban and rural areas in gaining access to healthcare.

First, Handikos Mitrovica organized lectures, roundtables and individual counselling sessions for more than 100 women and girls. They gained knowledge about how to access to better quality healthcare, how to obtain health insurance and how to report violations of women's and girls' rights to access quality healthcare.

Beyond Mitrovica, this initiative also reached citizens in Vushtrri and Skenderaj. Moreover, key supporters and allies of persons with disabilities, including their family members, received information that they can use in supporting women and girls with disabilities in accessing healthcare. The organization supported 10 individual sessions between women with disabilities and doctors, during which women received needed medical counselling services with doctors, related to their health. This included gynaecological and general examinations at the Mitrovica Hospital.

Organization	Handikos Mitrovica
Title	Access of women and girls with disabilities to healthcare
Amount	€3,531
Municipality	South Mitrovica
Timeframe	June 2017 - December 2017
Beneficiaries	98

A roundtable was held and an awareness campaign was organized, where promotional materials were also published. Meanwhile, Handikos Mitrovica established a team to support persons with disabilities in reporting violations of women's and girls' rights to quality healthcare. This team continued their advocacy efforts after their Kosovo Women's Fund initiative ended, empowering patients to report violations of their rights healthcare.

Handikos Mitrovica's initiative resulted a several recommendations, including the importance of ensuring that teachers provide health education within the educational system, in accordance with the existing curricula. Media also can play an important role in transforming and improving gender perceptions, including the role of women in society, especially disabled woman.

Blind and Sight Impaired People Advocate Their Rights

Blind people and those with impaired eyesight are among the most marginalized groups in Kosovo. Therefore, the Association of Blind and Sight Impaired People has sought to tackle various issues faced by blind and sight impaired people in Rahovec Municipality.

The Association organized various gatherings with a total of 54 blind and sight impaired persons, providing them with knowledge about their right to healthcare, including mental health; the efficient and rational use of medications; and regarding various diseases for which they are at risk. They discussed and advocated for the welfare of blind people, their access to social services and privileges that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare foresees for them. Participants also learned about their legal rights, including the law protecting the rights of the blind people, and benefits provided by Kosovar legislation for blind persons, such as exemption from paying for various taxes and free legal aid.

The Association engaged psychologists, health practitioners and social welfare experts to support blind and sight impaired persons. Experts visited 50 different families of blind and sight impaired people to discuss how relatives can best offer support for them.

Organization	Association of Blind and Sight Impaired People
Title	Awareness about supporting blind and partially sight impaired people
Amount	€3,753
Municipality	Rahovec
Timeframe	June 2017 - November 2017
Beneficiaries	120

Activists also met with 15 representatives of different targeted institutions to raise issues of importance to blind and partially sighted people. Following their continuous advocacy, the Association received financial support from the Directorate of Health and Social Welfare to conduct sports activities with young blind people. Such activities are important for providing youth with a space to socialize with other youth facing similar issues; sports events also contribute to encouraging health and wellbeing.

Moreover, the Association cooperated with the Municipality of Rahovec to provide membership cards to 120 blind and sight impairment persons who will be exempt from paying for certain municipal services in the future.



Blind and sight impaired people discuss their needs and prepare for advocacy targeting public institutions.

FURTHERING WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO ACCESS RESOURCES AND THEIR ECONOMIC EMPOWER- MENT

Women in Malisheva Receive Agricultural Subsidies

Fatima Limaj from Banja e Malisheves village recently succeeded in fighting cancer, but the long battle left several consequences. What started as a treatment for a stomach tumour, led to complications that impacted the functionality of one of her legs. Now she has overcome the disease, but has struggled to find a job as a disabled person.

Fatima, who has three children and an unemployed husband, had no income. Therefore, she started working her family's land. However, she did not qualify for bank credit. Nor did she know how to apply for grants from the government or international donors. When she heard about informative meetings being held in her neighbourhood, she decided to attend. During these meetings, she met staff from the organization "*Rona*" who had undertaken the initiative to advocate for the empowerment of women farmers in the villages of Malisheva, supported by the Kosovo Women's Fund.

Initially *Rona* organized meetings with 120 women from five villages in the Municipality of Malisheva. Women learned how to apply for agricultural subsidies and how to prepare project proposals. During these discussions, *Rona* also identified women who never had engaged in agricultural activities before, but who had potential to start such activities. *Rona* assisted them in taking the first steps towards becoming more economically independent.

Organization	Rona
Title	Advocacy to empower women farmers in the villages of Malisheva
Amount	€3,972
Municipality	Malisheva
Timeframe	November 2016 - May 2017
Beneficiaries	125

Rona provided participants with several practical skills as well, such as soil treatment, as well as modern approaches to cultivating and processing fruits and vegetables.

Further, *Rona* supported women in applying for subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD). Historically, very few women have applied for such subsidies, let alone received them. During advocacy meetings supported also by KWN, the Ministry has committed to trying to support more women farmers with these subsidies, towards more gender balanced expenditures.

Meanwhile, following *Rona's* support and advocacy, ten women received subsidies from the Directorate of Agriculture in Malisheva Municipality for the first time. These subsidies enabled Fatima and nine other women to launch their bioproducts in the mobile market at Zahir Pajaziti Square in Pristina. Meanwhile, other women now have the necessary information and knowledge to apply for subsidies and grants from the Ministry in the future.



Fatima Limaj works her land, following support from CSO Rona.

CSO Education Code Supports Women Entrepreneurs

According to the Agency for Gender Equality in the Office of the Prime Minister, “women in Kosovo own only 11% of businesses”. Therefore, Education Code undertook an initiative to assist women entrepreneurs. They organized three-day workshops for 36 women from Fushe Kosova, Obiliq and Gracanica municipalities. The participating women had the potential to establish successful businesses, as they already possessed skills in particular crafts, including handcrafts, tailoring and beekeeping. The women intended to expand their existing businesses, so that they could employ other women.

During workshops, women learned to design business plans, open businesses, manage successful businesses and overcome potential risks. Education Code assisted women with clear business development ideas in drafting and finalizing their business plans. Then, women received information regarding various funding opportunities for expanding their businesses.

Women entrepreneurs also visited existing businesses, learned about their activities and heard women’s stories of how they started doing business. This provided opportunities for networking with successful businesswomen and learning from their experiences.

“Next year I will apply for subsidies from various donors,” a workshop participant said, noting that she had learned “a lot” from this workshop. The workshop motivated her take on challenges, despite difficulties that she faces, she said.

Organization	Education Code
Title	Women Entrepreneurs
Amount	€3,642
Municipality	Fushe Kosova, Obiliq and Gracanica
Timeframe	May 2017 - December 2017
Beneficiaries	39

Women stated that the workshop enabled them to better formulate their business ideas. The workshop also provided important networking opportunities. One woman made handicrafts, but had no market for these. KWN staff put her in contact with other KWN member organizations that helped her sell her products.

Meanwhile, activists from Education Code advocated for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development and the Ministry of Economic Development to better support women entrepreneurs. A key factor undermining women's access to subsidies from these ministries has been their lack of skills or ability to meet the minimum criteria. Following Education Code's advocacy efforts, they signed a Memorandum of Understanding with each of the aforementioned ministries, through which ministries committed to increasing support for businesswomen.

Therefore, this initiative has contributed to providing women with more equal access to government resources, towards furthering gender responsive budgeting, as well as enhancing women's ability to realize their equal rights and opportunities to apply for and access government support.



Education Code supports women entrepreneurs in developing business plans and identifying funding opportunities.

Women with Disabilities Fight for Equal Property Rights

Despite laws that protects women's equal rights to property ownership, only 16.7% of all properties in Kosovo are owned by women, according to the Cadastral Agency. While some women and men lack awareness regarding women's rights to property, in other cases sociocultural traditions result in property still being passed from generation to generation in the names of men. Women with disabilities experience additional challenges in claiming their right to property, as they face multiple forms of discrimination and oppression.

Considering its long experience working with women with disabilities, Handikos Mitrovica understood first-hand the challenges that women were facing in claiming their right to property. They organized group discussions to inform women and men about women's rights to property, as well as individual sessions. They analysed each individual case separately, as needed, advising and guiding women through procedures. The Handikos Mitrovica team assisted women with filing paper work or simply discussing the challenges they faced in claiming their property rights.

Considering that institutional support is crucial for lasting changes related to women's property rights, Handikos organized a roundtable that gathered representatives of public institutions, notaries, lawyers, civil society and media. This was followed by an energetic public awareness campaign, involving social media and

Organization	Handikos Mitrovica
Title	Strengthening women with disabilities by raising awareness about their property rights
Amount	€3,946
Municipality	South Mitrovica
Timeframe	November 2016 - March 2017
Beneficiaries	146

the distribution of more than 400 brochures about property and inheritance rights for women with disabilities in Mitrovica.

“People with disabilities need support, and these lectures by Handikos on inheritance and property were very much needed. They have greatly influenced everyone's awareness, including people with disabilities but also us, as their family members”, said Florije Muharremi, a mother of a child with disabilities.

This initiative enabled more than 100 women and men with disabilities in Mitrovica, Vushtrri and Skenderaj municipalities to acquire knowledge about their inheritance and property rights. Further, Handikos Mitrovica directly assisted 10 individual cases in seeking their right to property. As a result,

For example, with assistance from Handikos, Elfije Kelmendi is in the final phase of claiming her right to property inheritance. Her family has agreed to give her a flat, as part of her inheritance. Family support can play an enormous role in enabling women with disabilities to claim their property rights, as witnessed in this case. Following Handikos' support, Elfije was able to register her property.

Handikos Mitrovica hopes to build on this effort in the future, supporting more women in claiming their inheritance and property rights.

Partners Kosova Advocates for Women's Property Rights

Despite existing legal protections, women in Kosovo regularly are denied their right to inheritance. According to patriarchal traditions, inheritance tends to be passed primarily to men within the family. In many cases, women waive their right to inheritance following social pressure from their fathers, brothers, or other family members. As women often are economically reliant on their families and considering the importance of families as protection mechanisms, particularly in the absence of many state services, women fear becoming ostracized from their families. They therefore prefer to waive their own rights.

Having dealt substantially with this issue in the past, Partners Kosova drew from their experience to continue their important work towards furthering women's rights to inheritance. Towards transforming gender norms and practices, they organized activities involving men, who often exercise pressure that leads women to waive their rights to inheritance and property. Altogether 76 women and nine men from Drenas and Mamusha municipalities participated in these meetings, including women survivors of sexual violence perpetrated during the war in Kosovo. Partners Kosovo organized one-day information meetings in each municipality in order to inform women about their rights, focusing on their rights to property and inheritance. During these joint meetings, women and youth learned how to submit applications and queries regarding inheritance and

Organization	Partners Kosova - Centre for Conflict Management
Title	Women advocating for their property and inheritance rights
Amount	€3,532
Municipality	Drenas and Mamusha
Timeframe	July 2017 - November 2017
Beneficiaries	86

property, which mainly relate to violations of women's rights to property.

Meanwhile, Partners Kosova collaborated closely with relevant institutions. They held coordination meetings with municipal gender equality officers. Then, Partners Kosovo monitored cadastre and civil status offices to ensure that these institutions dealt appropriately with cases relating to women's property rights. Observers witnessed first-hand how women inheritors appeared in documents such as wills, and how officials dealt with cases when the names of women would-be inheritors were hidden from such records by other family members.

Importantly, Partners Kosova also offered direct support in assisting women with registering properties in their own names. Partners Kosova activists accompanied women, advising them during meetings held with the Directorate of Cadastre.

As a result, 55 women, girls and young people became aware of their property rights through one-day presentations held in the municipalities of Drenas and Mamusha, where they learned, among other things, how to advocate for their rights.

Moreover, following advocacy by Partners Kosova, the Free Legal Aid Office committed to prioritizing support for survivors of sexual violence perpetrated during the war.



Norma Improves Institutional Transparency in Inheritance Cases

As discussed, the Kosovo Law on Inheritance guarantees women's and men's equal rights to inherit, though in practice few women exercise this right. While some organizations have focused on working within their communities to transform sociocultural norms, others have focused on institutions. The Norma Lawyers Association focused on empowering women to claim their inheritance rights by increasing the transparency of institutions.

Norma analysed 184 closed cases from the four basic courts in Prizren, Ferizaj, Podujeva and Gracanica. Norma also corresponded with the Kosovo Judicial Council and Chamber of Notaries, which granted Norma access to case files. Meanwhile, this collaboration set the stage for Norma's future advocacy efforts. Norma then organized focus groups with judges, notaries, civil service offices and CSOs to discuss the findings, as well as their perceptions and attitudes.

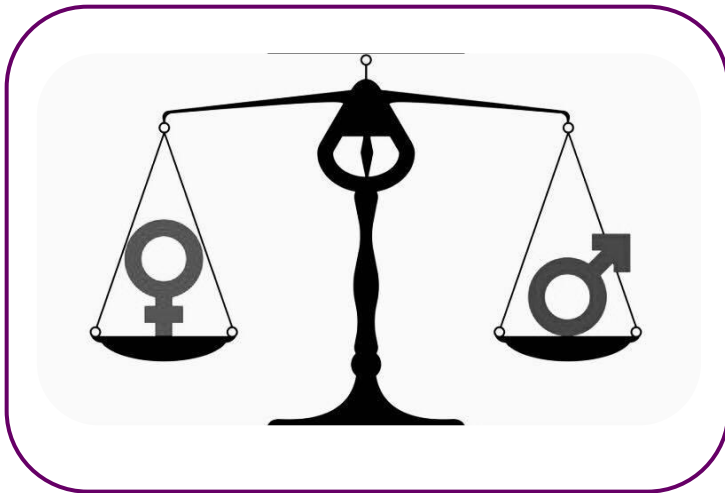
Based on their research, Norma drafted a report containing the findings and respective recommendations. They shared the report during a roundtable with the main stakeholders. The report found that many delays exist in cases of inheritance; and women and men require further awareness regarding the benefits resulting from equal inheritance. Further, Norma noted the need to harmonize the Law on Inheritance, Law on Notary and Law

Organization	Norma Lawyers Association
Title	Empowering Women through Increasing Transparency of Institutions
Amount	€3,995
Municipality	Prizren, Ferizaj, Podujeva and Gracanica
Timeframe	November 2016 - April 2017
Beneficiaries	212

on Contentious Procedures to address any confusion and resulting problems that may arise.

As a result of this initiative, the awareness of relevant institutions has improved, their transparency has increased, and Norma hopes that their recommendations will contribute to forthcoming changes in legislation, towards improved implementation.

Without question, owning property plays an important role in strengthening women's agency. When women inherit, this contributes to positive outcomes for their own well-being as well as that of their families. Through their work, Norma has emphasised this and shown that institutional shortcomings and cultural norms can and need to change so women can fully enjoy their rights.



Centre Supports Employment for Gjakovar Youth

According to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, unemployment remains very high in Kosovo, particularly among youth. In 2016, 34% of Kosovans ages 25 to 34 identified as unemployed. Unemployment tends to be even higher among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth, particularly young women. Although they have faced major challenges, with much dedication many Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth have completed university education. However, they still struggle to secure employment.

The Kosovo Centre for Development and Multicultural Integration in Gjakova had identified many such young people within their community who could not find employment. Therefore, they took the initiative to help 30 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth who had completed university studies in preparing for the labour market.

The Centre offered various courses. Initially, youth had the opportunity to learn skills related to various computer programs, such as Microsoft Office: Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Then, they attended an intensive four-month course in English. They also learned how to prepare CVs, motivational letters and successful job interviewing techniques.

Organization	Kosovo Centre for Development and Multicultural Integration
Title	Economic empowerment of graduated youth from non-majority communities: Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians in the Municipality of Gjakova, focusing on women
Amount	€2,535
Municipality	Gjakova
Timeframe	June 2017 - December 2017
Beneficiaries	29

“After completing courses offered by the Centre, I think that I am qualified for many positions and I’m looking forward to apply,” a young woman said.

Meanwhile, the Centre advocated for Gjakova Municipality to continue providing similar courses for other young people, obtaining the municipality’s consent to support such an initiative.

However, following municipal elections, many of the municipal officials were replaced. Activists from the Centre continue to meet with newly elected officials, towards addressing this issue. They seek for the municipality to adopt their successful approach, providing crucial skills to enhance the employability of youth in the future.



Youth learn computer skills during an interactive training organized by the Centre.

Kosovo Women's Network
Kadri Gjata St., (Feriz Blakçori), 2nd Floor, No. 8
10000 Prishtina, Kosovo
+381 (0) 38 245 850
www.womensnetwork.org
info@womensnetwork.org
[Facebook: Kosova Women's Network](#)



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