



# Kosovo Women's Network

*Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls*

## **Strategy 2019-2022**

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Printed on recycled paper by Night Design in Prishtina, Kosovo.

Printed with support from:



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# Introduction

The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) **mission** is to support, protect and promote the rights and interests of women and girls throughout Kosovo, regardless of their political and religious beliefs, age, level of education, sexual orientation and abilities. KWN fulfils its mission through exchange of experience and information, partnerships and networking, research, advocacy and services. KWN has **a vision** of a Kosovo in which women and men are equal and have equal opportunities for education, employment, political participation, healthcare and a life without violence.

Towards realising its vision and mission, KWN has drafted this Strategy for 2019-2022 to guide KWN's work during this period. KWN members, the KWN Board of Directors, partners and other stakeholders contributed to creating this Strategy via several consultative sessions held in 2018.



KWN's Strategy includes six programmatic areas: I) Strengthening the Feminist Movement in Kosovo; II) Women in Politics and Decision-Making; III) Women's Right to Healthcare; IV) A Life Free from Gender-Based Violence; V) Women's Economic Empowerment; and VI) Quality, Equal Education. These were identified by KWN members as the main areas in which KWN needs to focus during the next four years. For each of these programs, this Strategy provides a brief overview of the current situation; main achievements realized by KWN to date; key challenges that remain to be addressed; KWN's long-term goal for the program; the objectives that KWN strives to achieve during 2019-2022; and expected results. KWN also has sought to identify other actors working in these areas, towards promoting coordination and cooperation on efficient and effective actions. Additionally, the Strategy discusses important cross-cutting themes related to ensuring inclusivity in the network's actions, as well as towards protecting the environment.

Within this Strategy for 2019-2022, KWN also has integrated its existing Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming in the European Union (EU) Accession Process. This Strategy also was designed by KWN in close consultation with its members, women's rights civil society organisations (WCSOs), partners and other stakeholders. This Strategy, integrated within KWN's general Strategy, seeks to guide KWN and its partners' future advocacy towards advancing a gender perspective in the EU accession process. While the Strategy focuses on Kosovo, it also assumes a regional perspective, considering potential areas for cooperation and joint advocacy with partner WCSOs in other Western Balkan (WB) countries. This Strategy is a 'living document', and it is regularly revised based on new developments and needs.

Meanwhile, KWN will update its Strategy for 2019-2022 based on the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality (KPGE), when the latter is finalized. As a strategic document of the Government of Kosovo, the KPGE defines the main goals,

measures and actors responsible for achieving gender equality in all areas of social, economic, political, educational, health and cultural life for women and men in Kosovo.

# Strengthening the Feminist Movement in Kosovo

## The Situation

Initially, the network of rural women's rights organisations was formed in 1996. Later, members of this network together with other women's rights organisations established the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) in 2000, as an informal network of women and organizations operating in different regions of Kosovo. Since then, KWN has developed into a network advocating on behalf of Kosovar women and girls at local, regional and international levels. Since registering as a formal organization in 2003, KWN has increased its membership from 42 to 141 members organizations, operating in 23 municipalities in Kosovo.<sup>1</sup> Representing the interests of its member organizations, including women's organizations of all ethnic groups throughout Kosovo, KWN is recognized as a leading network in Kosovo and the region. KWN regularly cooperates with other formal and informal groups of women in the region and internationally.

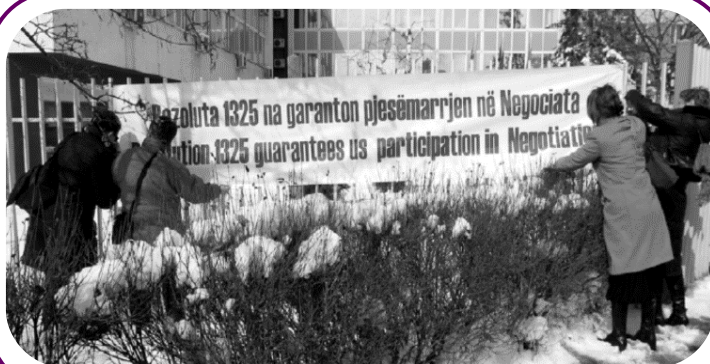
KWN has articulated and represented the interests of women and girls at several meetings in Kosovo and abroad. This has affected decisions at the international level, including related to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. KWN has supported international initiatives for peace-making, advancing the feminist movement, increasing women's participation in politics, the EU accession process and improving the access of women's rights organizations to funding. KWN has consistently joined forces with other women's rights groups to advocate for issues of mutual interest.

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<sup>1</sup> The number of KWN members constantly changes, as new organizations join the Network. KWN regularly updates the number of member organizations on its website.



Historically, and until recently, few women in Kosovo wanted to use the word 'feminism'. Recent developments can be attributed to the work of women's rights organizations, the University Program for Gender Studies and Research at the University of Prishtina, which has educated many young people on feminist theory, and the wide availability of online information about feminist movements. Progress has been made thanks to different actors from the university, various organizations and individual activists, combining efforts to advocate for gender equality by enhancing a cross-cutting approach and through events such as International Women's Day and the International Day of Human Rights. Joint initiatives on these days, carried out by diverse organizing collectives, serve as an important foundation for advancing the feminist movement in Kosovo.



Despite this progress, there is still a lack of solidarity among women. Power relations among women still can undermine an inclusive and diverse feminist movement. Moreover, many people still do not know what exactly feminism is, what it means to be a feminist activist in practice and how feminism relates to activism.

For KWN, supporting our members, and the various women's rights activists and diverse women that they support, contributes to the advancement of the feminist movement in

Kosovo. By empowering diverse women's rights organizations and activists, we support the growth of a feminist women's movement in Kosovo. Hence, most of our previous work related to this program, detailed here, has focused on empowering our members.

In 2006, KWN became the first network of non-governmental and non-profit organizations (NGOs) in Kosovo to adopt a Code of Conduct, setting an example of transparency and accountability. Since then, the capacity of these organizations has been significantly improved, as demonstrated by the fact that the implementation of the Code of Conduct has increased from 66% to 80%. The Code of Conduct requests that KWN members have: a clearly defined mission; a voluntary and effective steering board; human resources that contribute to achieving the mission; financial accountability and transparency; responsibilities and duties in service to citizens; and partnerships and networking with other organizations and non-partisan government bodies.<sup>2</sup>



Continuous individual mentoring has contributed greatly to building the capacity of KWN members, including better planning and drafting of project proposals, project cycle

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<sup>2</sup> KWN, *KWN Ethical and Accountability Code*, Prishtina, KWN, 2007, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20130120172523448.pdf>

management, monitoring and evaluation systems and advocacy through a 'learning by doing' approach. KWN has provided more than 5,104 individual mentoring sessions to its member organizations, helping them develop new knowledge and skills.

Given the need to continue mentoring, towards furthering the capacities of member organizations, including new member organizations, in 2018 KWN began using the Organizational and Advocacy Capacity Assessment (OACA). Based on assessment methodologies used by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and further developed and honed by the East-West Management Institute, this respectable methodology is used around the world to assess organizations' capacities and their abilities to carry out effective advocacy. The assessment is used to identify both the strengths of organizations and their needs for further developing their capacities.

In relation to the EU accession process, the EU has recognized the importance of financing civil society in WB countries.<sup>3</sup> However, the EU Guidelines on Supporting Civil Society in Enlargement Countries has no gender perspective.<sup>4</sup> In 2015, the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) 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*,<sup>5</sup> also known as the Gender Action Plan

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<sup>3</sup> EU Council, 'EU engagement with civil society in foreign affairs' Council Conclusion, Brussels: June 2017, at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24003/st10279en17-conclusions-eu-engagement-with-civil-society-in-external-relations.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> EU Guidelines on Supporting Civil Society in Enlargement Countries, at:

<http://europa.ba/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Guidelines-for-EU-support-to-civil-society-in-enlargement-countries-2014-2020.pdf>. It does not mention

women, men, gender equality, or WCSOs.

<sup>5</sup> EC, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, SWD (2015) 182, Brussels, at:

[https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/staff-working-document-gender-2016-2020-20150922\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/staff-working-document-gender-2016-2020-20150922_en.pdf).

(GAP II). It calls for ‘all actions, any type of aid (e.g. Budget Support)’ to be informed by ‘robust and rigorous gender analysis that is reflected in the final implementation of the program’; consultations with WCSOs to inform actions in all sectors; support for the political participation of WCSOs; and an increase in ‘dedicated funds for improving the outcomes for girls and women’. The European Council has emphasized ‘the need to raise funds [...] to ensure the effective implementation of [...] the GAP’.<sup>6</sup>

Women’s movements and organizations are important actors for advancing gender equality and empowering women.<sup>7</sup> WCSOs can play a decisive role in supporting, monitoring and advocating for the implementation of reforms related to the EU accession process. They can educate voters on reforms, enabling more sustainable reforms; inform reform processes; and hold officials accountable. Research shows that local WCSOs are well equipped to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of women’s lives, contributing to achieving gender equality in the long run.<sup>8</sup> WCSOs are well-positioned to undertake highly efficient and effective initiatives towards gender equality and women’s rights at the municipal level.

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<sup>6</sup> General Council Secretariat, ‘Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 - Conclusions of the Council (26 October 2015), at:

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24467/st13201-en15.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> This section is taken from the KWN paper, “EU Funds for Women’s Organizations: Challenges and Opportunities” (2017), supported by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation.

<sup>8</sup> Ford, L., ‘Funding for women’s rights groups in poor countries drops by more than half’, September 8, 2016, at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/sep/08/funding-womens-rights-groups-poor-countries-falls-awid-forum-brazil>; Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), *Where’s the Money for Women’s Rights?* p. 17.

## Why Fund WCSOs and Movements?

- **Relevance:** Securing their input in programming will improve actions' relevance to diverse target groups.
- **Efficient:** Lower costs, closer location, better access to stakeholders, knowledge of context, and, crucially, motivated by dedication to social change, not profit.
- **Effective:** Track record in social change and delivering results.
- **Sustainable:** After actions end, WCSOs remain, monitoring implementation and advocating reforms. Investments in capacities remain.

Given the important role played by women's groups in promoting women's human rights, it is important to ensure that they have sufficient support for their work. However, internationally, research has shown that funding for women's rights organizations has decreased, despite the fact that overall aid spending seems to be on the rise, especially within the EU.<sup>9</sup> In Kosovo, funding for WCSOs, especially at the grassroots level, decreased between 2000 and 2013.<sup>10</sup> Major international NGOs and United Nations (UN) agencies have received the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 47; and Cheney, C., 'German foreign aid is on a record high and rising. Here's how it works', February 2, 2017, at: <https://www.devex.com/news/german-foreign-aid-is-at-a-record-high-and-rising-here-is-how-it-works-89366>; OECD data for ODA Net DAC membership data 2015, December 22, 2016, at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/tab01e.xls>.

<sup>10</sup> KWN and Alter Habitus Institute for Studies in Society and Culture, *Where's the Money for Women's Rights? A Kosovo Case Study*, 2013, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/publications/wheres-the-money-for-womens-rights-2/>

majority of funds.<sup>11</sup> In recent years, many governments have reduced their programs in WB countries and lack resources for administering small grants at the country level. Hence, many of them find it easier to contract larger NGOs or agencies to perform these services for them.<sup>12</sup> Some public foundations can only fund NGOs and charities registered in their countries, but working abroad.<sup>13</sup>

Other donors have funds that are extremely difficult for local organizations to access. Women's groups, with limited knowledge of English, have difficulty obtaining such funds.

In order to address the aforementioned funding challenges faced by its member WCSOs and to provide them with the resources that they need to carry out their very important work, KWN established the Kosovo Women's Fund (KWF) in 2012, in close consultation with its members and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation. KWF provides small grants to WCSOs seeking to advance women's rights, especially among rural and/or marginalized groups. KWN also provides capacity development opportunities for WCSOs in proposal writing, project cycle management and financial management. This has further developed their ability to apply for funding from other donors. KWN also works to further the advocacy capacities of KWF grant recipients using a 'learning by doing' approach.

Since the establishment of KWF, as of December 2018, KWN transparently distributed 144 grants to WCSOs, totalling €506,830. In 2013 and 2014, KWF received support from the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). In 2015-2017, ADA and the EU Office in Kosovo supported KWF. In 2017, KWF also received support from UN Women in Kosovo, whereby grants were awarded to four

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<sup>11</sup> AWID, *State of Women's Organizations*, at: [https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/witm\\_factsheet\\_1.pdf](https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/witm_factsheet_1.pdf); AWID, *Where is the money for women's rights?* [https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/assessing\\_resources\\_and\\_role\\_of\\_donors\\_fundher.pdf](https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/assessing_resources_and_role_of_donors_fundher.pdf), p. 47.

<sup>12</sup> KWN discussions with funders.

<sup>13</sup> AWID, *Where is the money for women's rights?*, p. 51.

KWN member organizations specialized in working with women survivors of sexual violence during the war in Kosovo. Meanwhile, in 2018, KWF continued to receive support from ADA.

Since the establishment of KWF, 19,564 women and girls from different areas, as well as boys and men, have benefited directly from WCSOs' initiatives. Among them, 3,471 women participated in decision-making processes (some for the first time), including during 396 advocacy initiatives undertaken, through which 34 public policies were amended in order to better support the needs of women and girls in Kosovo.<sup>14</sup>

*Supported by  
KWF, OPDMK  
marks sidewalks in  
Prizren regarding  
their accessibility  
for persons in  
wheelchairs.*



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<sup>14</sup> To see the changes, read:

KWN, *Little Grants, Big Changes 2015-2016*, Prishtina: KWN, 2016, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/publications/little-grants-big-changes-2015-2016/>

KWN, *Women's Rights are Human Rights*, Prishtina: KWN, 2017, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/publications/womens-rights-are-human-rights-little-grants-important-changes/> and KWN, *Little Grants, Big Changes*, Prishtina: KWN, 2017, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/publications/little-grants-big-changes-2015-2017-2/>

## KWN's Main Achievements

In 2015-2018, KWN achieved its overall objective that 'women's organizations in Kosovo, the region and internationally cooperate and communicate regularly, and organize on issues of common interest'. More specifically KWN:

- Provided regular, continuous communication and cooperation among KWN members and other stakeholders through bimonthly networking meetings. The annual meeting created a space for women activists to discuss issues, as well as to reflect and build solidarity.
- Increased communication between women's rights groups, key actors and other stakeholders on issues faced by women and girls in Kosovo, their interests, as well as various initiatives. KWN enhanced its outreach, communicating its work and the activities of its members through the monthly *Kosovar Women's Voice* e-newsletter, its website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, annual reports and other public relations materials.
- Involved at least 3,670 young activists in the women's movement in Kosovo through activities, internships or voluntarism at KWN, empowering new leaders.
- Improved the institutional and advocacy capacities of KWN and its members, towards long-term sustainability. Workshops, mentoring and KWF have supported KWN members in strengthening their organizations.
- Increased cooperation among women in the region related to the feminist movement, including women's voices in the EU Accession process, addressing discrimination and supporting transitional justice, peace and security.



## Key Challenges

While considering KWN's achievements in prior years, WCSOs and the feminist movement in Kosovo still face the following challenges:

- Fear of feminism remains widespread among many women and men in Kosovo, which can undermine the building of a feminist movement.
- Feminist values remain unclear to many in Kosovo, including how to apply them in practice within the movement (e.g. the need to challenge existing power structures that undermine equality and the need to ensure an intersectional approach).
- The media and negative campaigns in social media can reach many people, undermining feminist goals.
- While prior door-to-door approaches that involved sitting with women and men to change traditional views have been effective, they are difficult to organize considering that they are time-consuming and resource-intensive, particularly amid a general decline in voluntarism compared to that of the 1990s.
- Insufficient communication and cooperation among feminists, coupled with competition for funding undermines solidarity and the building of an effective feminist movement. Personal issues, individual interests (including nepotism), rumours and gossip can impact negatively the building of a strong women's movement.
- Little effort has been made to move feminism beyond theoretical discussions, to establish strategies that strengthen the feminist movement or to incorporate feminist principles into politics and decision-making. Feminists in Kosovo, the region and beyond, do not have clear strategies on how to advance the feminist movement, including forging interlinked, inclusive local and global feminist movements.
- WCSOs continue to struggle to survive financially. They still need capacity-building on how to complete different types of

grant applications.<sup>15</sup> A survey of 90 WCSOs in Kosovo illustrated that total funding between 2001 and 2013 declined. Moreover, less than 10% of WCSOs have received income from individuals, assets, membership fees or income generating activities. This suggests dependence on international funds and an insufficient diversification of resources.<sup>16</sup>

- Procurement processes during grant applications may result in resources going to companies that write strong proposals, but do not necessarily possess expertise to further advance women's equality and rights.<sup>17</sup> Also, procurement processes may result in competition between WCSOs, rather than cooperation that can contribute to better changes.
- The areas that WCSOs consider priorities often do not receive funding from donors. Of the 90 surveyed WCSOs, 58% stated that they did not receive any funding in 2011 for issues they considered a priority.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, funds often are reserved or 'tied' to particular activities, preventing flexibility for WCSOs' activism.
- Donor constraints faced by KWN sometimes are transferred to KWN members, particularly grant durations and budget constraints. KWN has advocated since 2012 to raise donor awareness on the needs of WCSOs and that short deadlines and small grant amounts hinder long-term changes. Limitations on the duration and budget of KWF grants were useful during KWF's initial years, especially to manage potential risks. Now that KWF has been tested, such restrictions are no longer necessary.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Mainlevel Consulting AG, *External Assessment of the Kosovo Women's Network, its Strategy for 2015-2018 and Key Programs Contributing to the Strategy*, March 8, 2018, p. 31.

<sup>16</sup> KWN and Alter Habitus Institute for Studies in Society and Culture, 2013. As noted, This research will be repeated and updated in 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 67.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 47.

<sup>19</sup> Mainlevel Consulting AG, 2018, p. 23.

- KWN has minimal reserve funds (thus affecting the security of staff salaries), and KWN depends on external donor funds for the future as well. Other revenues like membership fees, consultancy services and individual donations remain limited, despite fundraising attempts.<sup>20</sup>
- Kosovo does not have a legal framework that encourages individuals and businesses to donate to non-profit organizations.
- Given their advocacy and work, KWN and its members lacked sufficient human resources to explore philanthropy opportunities and alternative resources that could support them if foreign funds are reduced in the future.
- Since not all organizations have long-term sustainable projects, many organizations have engaged volunteers instead of permanent staff. This can hamper their long-term stability and sustainability, also contributing to irregularities in knowledge retention. While volunteering fosters pro-activity and avoids excessive dependence on external donors, excessive volunteering may be counterproductive to sustainability, especially if the anticipated change is in the long-term.<sup>21</sup>
- Although WCSOs have increased their capacities through mentoring provided by KWN, some organizations still can enhance their organizational, financial and advocacy capacities.<sup>22</sup>
- Insufficient communication and coordination among organizations, donors and other stakeholders may lead to duplication of effort, overlap and inefficiencies in the work towards gender equality.
- Institutions and public officials in some cases hinder efforts for furthering gender equality.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

- While some WCSOs have extensive advocacy experience, others need additional support in order to lead their members and communities in advocating for their rights and holding officials accountable.

## **KWN's Strategy**

In order to address the aforementioned challenges and towards the long-term sustainability of KWN and its members, the long-term goal of this program is to: **strengthen the existing feminist movement in Kosovo, the region and beyond.** Towards this goal, KWN will seek to achieve the following objectives under this Strategy.

### **Objective 1.1. Establish a strategy for strengthening the feminist movement and make progress towards its implementation.**

KWN will cooperate with different key stakeholders to explore and develop a strategy to advance the feminist movement in Kosovo, which will include plans for contributing to broader initiatives to advance feminist movements regionally and globally. Afterwards, KWN will make progress in implementing this strategy.

### **Objective 1.2. Increase solidarity among women's organizations.**

KWN's experience suggests that furthering and supporting solidarity among WCSOs is crucial to build a sustainable feminist movement. These two objectives will be realized through the achievement of the following expected results.

**Expected Result 1.2.1. KWN members informed about other members' initiatives, KWN activities, funding opportunities and other information.** Information exchange is important for sustaining the network and the feminist movement. Activities will include regular communication and cooperation between KWN members and other stakeholders through KWN's quarterly meetings; dissemination of information through social media,

including KWN's *Kosovo Women's Voice* monthly newsletter; creating and updating a joint calendar of activities; organizing the Annual Meeting of KWN members each December; and disseminating the KWN Annual Report.

**Expected Result 1.2.2. More men and women activists involved in the feminist movement.** The feminist movement can only be sustained if it constantly recruits new members, especially girls and boys, who will keep the movement active in the future. Towards this result, KWN plans to include girls and boys, women and men in advocating for their priorities; provide internships for young women and men to work with KWN and its member organizations to gain experience and skills; offer opportunities for volunteerism; and to include them in awareness campaigns and other activities.

**Expected Result 1.2.3. Inter-ethnic understanding and cooperation strengthened among individuals and civil society groups.** This is important in terms of building solidarity among diverse women and involving them in the women's movement. KWN will support cooperation among women of different ethnicities, as well as promote opportunities to better understand each other. An understanding of past experiences of different women is important for building solidarity today. KWN will continue to reach out to organizations that support women from minority ethnic groups and will continue to engage with organizations in the region and beyond. Building understanding among different ethnic groups also will contribute to strengthening democracy and human rights.

**Objective 1.3. Improve the organizational and advocacy capacity of KWN and its members towards their long-term sustainability.**

A sustainable feminist movement cannot exist without its members, who keep the movement alive. Therefore, KWN will

continue to support its members in advancing their capacities. The following results will contribute to achieving this objective.

**Expected Result 1.3.1. KWN, its members and their work are more visible for potential partners, international activists and potential supporters.** This will be achieved by regularly updating the KWN website ([www.womensnetwork.org](http://www.womensnetwork.org)) and using social media; preparing and disseminating KWN's *Kosovar Women's Voice* monthly e-newsletter; organizing various street and social media campaigns; mentoring KWN members to enhance their skills in public relations; and encouraging and supporting members to publish more stories in the media.

**Expected Result 1.3.2. More members seek funding, plan effectively, lead successful organizations and undertake effective advocacy initiatives.** By conducting OACA with KWF grant recipients and other interested member organisations, KWN will identify specific areas in which KWN members need support. Based on the OACA, KWN will support members in developing tailored Capacity Development Plans towards addressing their identified capacity development priorities. Then, KWN will provide individual mentoring towards supporting members in realizing their aims. KWN will continue providing grants through KWF, using the 'learning by doing' approach to advocacy, organizational management and grant management. Based on the recommendations of KWN's last External Evaluation, mentoring will focus on two aspects: (i) capacity-building of KWN members in reporting on the impacts or outcomes of their initiatives; and (ii) capacity building to create coalitions and networks that enable them to access more funds, independently from KWN.<sup>23</sup>

**Expected Result 1.3.3. Capacities of KWN staff increased.** KWN has dedicated and strong staff members, but considers continuous learning and skills development important.

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<sup>23</sup> Mainlevel Consulting AG, 2018, p. 37.

Therefore, KWN will continue encouraging its staff members to further their education, to attend additional training and to receive on-the-job training and mentoring, towards further enhancing their capacities. KWN also will establish a more formal Volunteer Program to further the capacities of other activists. In cooperation with its members, KWN will develop a program that better organizes the work of volunteers and their involvement in the feminist movement, by working with KWN and its members.

**Objective 1.4. Improve the funding climate for women's rights organizations.**

Although some advocacy initiatives can be undertaken on a voluntary basis, WCSOs still need resources to support many aspects of their important work. Sustainable women's rights activism requires resources, and KWN will continue its efforts to mobilize sufficient resources from local and international actors to support the women's movement in Kosovo and beyond. This will be achieved through the following results.

**Expected Result 1.4.1. Improved implementation of KWN's Fundraising Strategy.** KWN will cooperate with its members, Board and partners in undertaking activities foreseen in its Fundraising Strategy. This includes further diversifying KWN's resourcing to support its long-term sustainability. KWN will research and establish a Philanthropy Strategy that will identify innovative, alternative, local forms of fundraising, in addition to international funds, which may support KWN and its members in the long-term. KWN will take steps towards implementing the Philanthropy Strategy as part of KWN's Fundraising Strategy.

**Expected Result 1.4.2. Improved knowledge and understanding among relevant EU bodies and other donors regarding the types of support that diverse WCSOs need.** This includes enhancing their knowledge regarding the long-term impact that WCSOs

can have in bringing about political, social and economic change; and the importance of providing long-term, operational support for strategic impact. Based on KWN's research to be completed with partners in the region in 2019, KWN will meet various donors to inform them about the financial situation of WCSOs and the women's movement, as well as to discuss ways to improve donors' support for WCSOs and the feminist movement.

**Expected Result 1.4.3. Improved institutional and public awareness of the importance of tax deductions to support the important work of women's rights groups.** KWN will cooperate with other stakeholders in advocating for a better legal framework that will encourage individuals and businesses to support non-profit organizations working for the public good. KWN will continue to organize public events and educate the public about the important role they have in supporting women's rights organizations.

## **Interest Groups**

Towards realizing these strategic objectives, KWN foresees continued cooperation with its member organizations and women's rights groups in the region. KWN members, and the network itself, will be the main target group of this program. Citizens, especially women and girls, also will benefit from a sustainable feminist movement that advocates on their behalf.

KWN will collaborate and coordinate its support for WCSOs with other actors seeking to build civil society capacities, such as the EU, USAID, Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, ADA and the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation. Partners for regional and international advocacy include: the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, partner organizations in the region, the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), MamaCash, the EU Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement



Negotiations (DG NEAR) as responsible for funding for WCSOs in WB countries, the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) as playing a leading role in funding decisions internationally, the Centre for Thematic Excellence for Civil Society support in DG NEAR responsible for providing guidance and suggested approaches for funding CSOs, and the Gender Adviser in DG NEAR, responsible for following and supporting implementation of GAP II. Other key stakeholders include: the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), the Ombudsperson Institution, the Ministry of European Integration, the Office of Good Governance, Members of Parliament and government officials. KWN has received support for this program from ADA, the EU and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation.

# Women in Politics and Decision-making

## Laws, Policies and Institutional Mechanisms

Several laws and institutional mechanisms towards increasing women's participation in politics and decision-making are in place:

- The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)<sup>24</sup> provides that States take all appropriate measures 'to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country, and in particular to provide women, under the same conditions as men, with the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referendums as well as to be elected, in all publicly elected bodies; (b) To participate in the elaboration of state policy and its implementation; to hold public office and to exercise all public functions at all levels of government; (c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations dealing with the public and political life of the country'. CEDAW is directly applicable in Kosovo under the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo.
- United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security calls for women's participation in decision-making at national, regional and international institutions in post-conflict countries, including conflict resolution and peace processes.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> CEDAW, at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/professionalinterest/cedaw.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>.

- On 30 April 2015, the European Council adopted the Stabilization Association Agreement (SAA) for Kosovo, and it entered into effect in April 2016. There was very minimal involvement of women, with no known gender analysis performed to inform the drafting of the SAA. This is evident in the fact that gender equality and women's rights hardly feature in its content. The only two references to women in the document relate to equal opportunities (in employment) and working conditions for women (Art. 106). There is no mention of gender equality.
- The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 7.2: 'The Republic of Kosovo ensures gender equality as a fundamental value for the democratic development of society, equal opportunities for participation of women and men in political, economic, social, cultural, and other areas of social life.'
- The Law on Gender Equality (2015) supports the policy expressed in the Constitution and forbids all forms of direct and indirect gender discrimination.<sup>26</sup> It calls for equal representation (defined as 50/50) of women and men in all political and public bodies at local and central levels. Also, the Law calls for the inclusion of gender budgeting in all areas, as a necessary instrument to ensure that the principle of gender equality is respected in the collection, delivery and allocation of resources.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2005, the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) was established as a separate governmental institution. Officers for Gender Equality have been appointed in municipalities and ministries.

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<sup>26</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo, Law No. 05-L-020, Prishtina: 2015, at <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10923>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

- The Law on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo<sup>28</sup> and the Law on Local Elections in Kosovo<sup>29</sup> both include a 30% quota for the participation of women and men in national and municipal assemblies, respectively.
- The Anti-Discrimination Law prohibits discrimination in many forms, including based on sex, gender, age, marital status or sexual orientation.<sup>30</sup>
- The Kosovo Law on Police calls for 25% participation of each gender.<sup>31</sup>
- Based on the obligations arising from the SAA, the Ministry of European Integration (MEI) developed the National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (NPISAA). The NPISAA replaces all existing documents and strategies relating to EU integration, informing Kosovo's accession process until eventual membership.<sup>32</sup> Initially, the NPISAA also lacked a gender perspective; however, following cooperation between KWN and MEI, this was somewhat improved in 2016.
- In order to prioritize actions taken in Kosovo towards EU accession, in 2016 the EU and MEI introduced the European

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<sup>28</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo, Law No. 2008/03-L-073.

<sup>29</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Local Elections in the Republic of Kosovo, Law No. 2008/03-L072.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Anti-Discrimination Law, Law No. 2004/3.

<sup>31</sup> Assembly of Republic of Kosovo, Law on Police, Law No. 03/L-035. Women accounted for 14% of the police force in 2017, KWN, *Gender Analysis*, 2018, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Government, National Programme for Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (NPISAA), 2016, at: [https://www.meiks.net/repository/docs/3\\_pkzmsa\\_miraturar nga kuvendi final\\_eng\\_.pdf](https://www.meiks.net/repository/docs/3_pkzmsa_miraturar nga kuvendi final_eng_.pdf).

Reform Agenda.<sup>33</sup> This document sets short-term priorities in the areas of (I) good governance and the rule of law, (II) competitiveness and investment climate and (III) education and employment for Kosovo to focus in maximizing the economic and political benefits of SAA. Following consultations that the EU organized with civil society, the gender perspective was somewhat improved within this document.

## **The Situation**

### **Integrating a Gender Perspective in the EU Accession Process**

The importance of women's involvement in decision-making processes has been well recognized within the relevant international policy framework. CEDAW emphasizes in its preamble the importance of women's participation in decision-making. UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) calls for women's participation in post-conflict situations.

The EC's GAP II calls for 'all actions, whatever aid modalities (e.g. Budget Support)' to be based on 'strong and rigorous gender analysis that is reflected in the final programme implementation'; consultations with National Gender Equality Mechanisms (NGEMs) and WCSOs to 'inform country level programmes, regardless of the sector'; and support to the participation of women's organisations as 'accountability agents in budgetary, legislative, and policy making processes at all levels.' Additionally, GAP II requires 'Sufficient resources allocated by EU institutions and Member States (MS) to deliver on EU gender policy commitments', as measured by a change in 'dedicated funding to improving results for girls and women'. GAP II establishes an important framework for pushing forward

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<sup>33</sup> Kosovo – EU High Level Dialogue on Key Priorities – European Reform Agenda (ERA), Prishtina, 2016, at: [http://www.mei-ks.net/repository/docs/era\\_final.pdf](http://www.mei-ks.net/repository/docs/era_final.pdf).

a gender equality and women's rights agenda as part of Kosovo's and the region's EU accession process. However, as of 2016, minimal progress had been made in its implementation in Kosovo and in WB countries.<sup>34</sup>

In order to join the EU, Kosovo must align its legislation with the *Acquis Communautaire*. Within EU Law, the Gender Equality *Acquis* consists of all relevant treaty provisions, legislation and case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union related to gender equality. Relevant gender equality legislation includes: Article 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, establishing the principle of equal pay for women and men; and directives on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation; on equal treatment of men and women in statutory schemes of social security, etc. Some EU directives directly and indirectly affect women's labour rights, including: parental leave conditions; flexible working hours; and equal treatment.

Towards aligning Kosovo's laws with the EU Gender Equality *Acquis*, in 2015 the Kosovo Assembly adopted the new 'Human Rights Law Package', consisting of Law No. 05/19 on the Ombudsperson, Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality and Law No. 05/L-021 on the Protection from Discrimination. These laws substantially improved Kosovar legislation in relation to gender equality and gender discrimination.

While formally most directives and concepts from the EU Gender Equality *Acquis* 'have been transposed correctly into Kosovo law', according to a KWN paper published in 2017,

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<sup>34</sup> KWN, *Mind the GAP*, Prishtina: KWN, 2018, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20180124144609545.pdf>; and CONCORD, *Analysis and recommendations Gender Action Plan report 2016*, 2016, at: <http://www.concord.se/wp-content/uploads/final-concord-analysis-on-gap-progress-report.pdf>.

potential exists for further improvements to some laws.<sup>35</sup> For example, the Law on Labour requires several amendments. Paternity leave, parental leave and carer's leave have not been transposed correctly into Kosovo law.<sup>36</sup> Breast-feeding provisions are inadequate.<sup>37</sup> The EU concept of self-employed capacity is not transposed correctly into Kosovo law. The status of self-employed parents regarding maternity and parental rights should be equal to that of parents who are employees.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, implementation remains problematic. Anti-discrimination provisions are correctly integrated into Kosovo law, but very few cases of discrimination are reported or treated by Kosovo institutions. While official data is lacking, gender-based discrimination seemingly remains prevalent in Kosovo, preventing women from fully enjoying their rights.<sup>39</sup> KWN's research has suggested that gender-based discrimination could be a root cause of women's low labour force participation rates.<sup>40</sup> Further, Kosovo does not possess information on the implementation of equal pay, the gender pay gap, informal economy, occupational social security schemes or statutory

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<sup>35</sup> Sylvia Cleff le Divillec and Katharina Miller for KWN, *Kosovo's Progress in Aligning Its Laws with the European Union Gender Equality Acquis*, Prishtina: KWN, 2017, at:

<http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/2017/1/08/105226438.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> KWN, *Striking a Balance: Policy Options for Amending Kosovo's Law on Labour to Benefit Women, Men, Employers and the State*, Prishtina: 2016, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20160504154201373.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> KWN, *Kosovo's Progress in Aligning Its Laws with the European Union Gender Equality Acquis*.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid and Riinvest Institute, *Women in the Workforce*, 2017, at:

[http://www.riinvestinstitute.org/uploads/files/2017/November/10/Women\\_in\\_the\\_workforce1510308291.pdf](http://www.riinvestinstitute.org/uploads/files/2017/November/10/Women_in_the_workforce1510308291.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> KWN research, forthcoming 2019. Only an estimated two in ten women participate in Kosovo's labour force.

social security schemes.<sup>41</sup> Case law is lacking. These issues make monitoring the appropriate implementation of gender equality, anti-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions difficult. The concept of 'positive action', formally transposed into Kosovo law, is rarely applied in practice.<sup>42</sup>

Few CSOs, including unions, are familiar with the aforementioned concepts or how they can be monitored in Kosovo, which hampers their ability to support implementation of anti-discrimination legislation.<sup>43</sup>

The **NPISAA and ERA** have reflected little if any gender perspective. Nor were WCSOs very involved in initial consultations undertaken to prepare these documents. Time limitations, particularly for the NPISAA given its length, precluded sufficient consultation with women and WCSOs, as well as limited the extent to which gender equality experts had sufficient time to review and comment on these documents.

The EC writes annual **country reports** monitoring Kosovo's progress towards EU Accession. Some discussion of gender inequalities has featured primarily in the human rights section. Gender, however, has not been mainstreamed throughout these documents until recently. This may lead to insufficient consideration of gender equality, particularly of women's interests and needs during Kosovo's EU accession process. However, with KWN, among others', involvement, the gender perspective within these documents has improved over time. In recent years, EU officials in Kosovo and Brussels have asked for activists' input regarding how to mainstream gender better within progress reports and political dialogues, such as related to women's political participation, violence against women, gender-based discrimination, and labour rights violations.

Sometimes EU officials request input on short notice, such as related to upcoming policy dialogues with national

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<sup>41</sup> KWN, *Kosovo's Progress in Aligning Its Laws with the European Union Gender Equality Acquis*.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> KWN research, forthcoming.



government officials. In the past, WCSOs have not always had enough information or time to respond to these requests.

In order to support Kosovo and other WB countries in the process of EU accession, the EC has established the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). Based on national strategies and action plans, Kosovo must use a sector-wide approach in drafting and submitting Sector Planning Documents (SPDs) to the EU for financial support. Based on these documents, Kosovo develops Action Documents (ADs), specific programs in particular sectors, for financing from the EU. Since 2015, the EU Office (EUO) in Kosovo has contracted KWN to support the mainstreaming of gender within these documents. Subsequently, the extent to which gender has been incorporated within these documents has improved.

In general, capacities among officials in line ministries for mainstreaming gender in IPA documents remain weak, though they have improved. Templates related to SPDs, ADs, calls for proposals, contracts, evaluations, guidelines and criteria have lacked a gender perspective, including guidance on minimum standards related to gender analysis within the situation analysis, objectives, indicators, and targets. Additionally, further oversight and accountability are needed with regard to reporting (see below).<sup>44</sup>

Sometimes the linkages between issues raised in the Country/Progress Report, the SAA, NPISAA, ERA, GAP II and financing for IPA programming are unclear. This makes it difficult to ensure that the same issues related to furthering gender equality are included in a similar way across all of these documents and processes.

Further, the timeframe for creating these documents has been very short, undermining possibilities for consultations with WCSOs and NGEMs. WCSOs and GEOs often are left out of the processes of preparing SPDs and ADs, though GAP II

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<sup>44</sup> See KWN, *A Gendered Reading of the 'External Evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance II'*, 2017.

encourages their involvement. Officials have stated that this is because GEOs lack sector-specific expertise. Further, documents are in the English language, which poses challenges for consulting with civil servants, NGEMs and the public more broadly.

Knowledge about GAP II and gender mainstreaming requirements remains weak among several officials in Brussels. Contractors implementing IPA programs have little to no knowledge regarding gender mainstreaming or its implementation. Few efforts have been taken towards ensuring a gender perspective in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of IPA-funded Actions. Minimal IPA funds seem to have sought to further gender equality as a main objective, though tracking has been poor.

GAP II can serve as an important document for further mainstreaming gender in EU accession processes. Yet KWN has identified several challenges relating to its implementation. First, insufficient knowledge about GAP II and its requirements, sometimes coupled with weak political will, at the EU and country levels hampers GAP II implementation. The EU could regularly raise issues relating to gender equality during political dialogues,<sup>45</sup> but they tend to lack knowledge regarding GAP II and their role in implementing it.<sup>46</sup> MSs also lack information and understanding related to indicators and their reporting responsibilities at the country level. Related, weak knowledge on *how* to implement gender mainstreaming, particularly within specific sectors, makes it challenging for EU task managers to implement it.

With regard to accountability, few EUDs and MSs reported adequately on GAP II implementation in 2016, despite reporting requirements. Information related to several indicators, such as financing for women and girls and/or women human rights

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<sup>45</sup> GAP II indicator I.1.2. is the number of 'political/policy dialogues between EU actors and partners in the country that raise gender equality issues per year and at country level'.

<sup>46</sup> KWN, *Mind the GAP*, 2018.

defenders, has not been adequately tracked. Nor has the Gender Marker been applied properly.

Meanwhile, several fundamental, underlying issues with GAP II hamper its implementation. Many of these issues would need to be addressed in creating GAP III. First, as a Staff Working Document, the GAP II is not as binding as it could be. Second, the IPA programming process is not aligned with the GAP. IPA programming is planned well in advance; in order to influence actions, gender analyses related to GAP II must be carried out in time to inform programming, including relevant objectives. In most instances, impact can be determined only several years later. The fact that IPA programming is entering its last three years, and that much programming already has been planned, makes it difficult to include GAP objectives and indicators at this late phase. Third and related, governments should take ownership in planning IPA programming, ensuring alignment with existing Sector strategies. Governments are not legally obliged to implement GAP II. Therefore, unless their own national legislation requires gender mainstreaming, few legal incentives exist for states to implement GAP II. The EU can encourage strongly gender analysis and gender mainstreaming as part of their funding requirements, but they cannot necessarily *require* governments to implement the GAP in relation to IPA programming.

Several issues exist with GAP II indicators. At present, indicators are only at the objective level. Without measuring progress at the goal/impact level, it will be difficult to track long-term impact. Arguably some indicators at the objective level (e.g., relating to Sustainable Development Goals) actually would fit better at an impact level. Some indicators do not require sex-disaggregated data, which arguably is problematic for any document seeking gender equality. Some indicators require information at an inappropriate level for showing change. Additionally, most indicators are quantitative rather than qualitative.

Finally, considering that this is a Gender Action Plan, there is little attention to men. The GAP II ignores the fact that gender roles often are relational, involving interrelationships between women and men. Therefore, changing gender roles and the position of women, requires attention to men.

### Engaging Women in Decision-making

Women remain insufficiently represented in politics and decision-making at the local and central level in Kosovo. In the 2017 early general elections, 38 women (32%), of whom 17 received seats in the Assembly thanks to the quota (43% of women parliamentarians), and 82 men (68%) were elected to the Assembly of Kosovo. In the fifth legislature (2014 - 2017), and re-elected in the sixth, a woman was appointed deputy chair of the Assembly of Kosovo. Further, within the Assembly of Kosovo, only one political party, which has 2.4% of seats, is led by a woman. All parliamentary groups are led by men, marking a decrease compared to 2010 when women led three commissions, and compared to 2013 when one commission was chaired by a woman.

Meanwhile, in the municipal elections of October 2017, of 204 mayoral candidates only 4% were women. Representatives of political parties have stated that women's under-representation is partly because women are not interested in running for mayoral elections. As a result of these elections, Kosovo has 38 mayors, and not a single one is a woman. Women hold 35% of all municipal assembly seats in Kosovo. Of them, 67% received their seats through the quota, while 33% were directly elected. This represents an encouraging increase in the direct election of women, without quotas, at the municipal level, from 30 women in the last election to 109 women in 2017.

Women, including women from national minorities, remain under-represented as elected officials in municipal assemblies (35%) and in the Assembly of Kosovo (32%); as civil servants in senior decision-making positions at the municipal level (20%) and at the national level (27%); in political positions as party chairs,

ministers (2 out of 21, later one will resign) and mayors (0 out of 38); as well as in the dialogue and negotiations process.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, in the appointment of the government cabinet, of 21 ministers only one is a woman. Of 66 political advisers, 14 are women and 52 are men.<sup>48</sup> For the 11 ministries for which data were available, only one woman was appointed Chief of Cabinet of the Minister, compared to ten men holding this position. Meanwhile, only one woman is a general secretary and one woman is acting general secretary; the 16 others are men. At the municipal level, two of 15 deputy mayors for communities are women (13%).

Women MPs continue to participate in the Women's Parliamentary Group.<sup>49</sup> This group has a strategic plan, as well as a seven-member board with one representative from each political party. KWN has supported their work and cooperated in issues of common interest.<sup>50</sup>

As Kosovo's policy making is largely controlled by political parties, the latter should empower women more and respect the Law on Gender Equality. The lack of democratization within most political parties and the inadequate participation of women in decision-making within parties has historically meant that women have had little influence on decisions in local and central assemblies.

Following decentralization, further work is needed to build human capacities at the municipal level, as well as to educate citizens about new municipal responsibilities, so that they can demand accountability from institutions. Given that women historically have had little responsibility in decision-making at the

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<sup>47</sup> This section draws directly from KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, 2018, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf>; p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Kosovo Parliamentary Groups, Women's Groups, <http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/?cid=2%2C196>.

<sup>50</sup> Farnsveden, Ulf and Nicole Farnsworth, *Gender Study in Kosovo*, Sida: December 2012, p. 9.

municipal level, their empowerment continues to be crucial to ensuring that women have equal opportunities and can realize their rights to public services.

KWN, along with other stakeholders, successfully advocated that AGE be placed at the highest level of decision-making (within the Office of the Prime Minister), so that it is positioned to influence gender issues throughout the government and in all laws and policies. AGE, Gender Equality Officers in ministries and municipal Officers for Gender Equality continue to face challenges. They lack sufficient financial and human resources to carry out their responsibilities. Moreover, there is persistent minimal political will to involve them in decision-making processes.

In order to strengthen the position of women in politics and decision-making and to address the aforementioned issues, KWN has undertaken several initiatives through the Kosovo Lobby for Gender Equality (KLGE) and KWF, including campaigns to elect as many women as possible in decision-making positions; gathering women's input for political party programs; involving voters in advocacy with the authorities to address their priorities at the local and central level; advocacy for policy change; gender revisions of laws and policies; etc. As a result of these activities, KWN has contributed to achievements mentioned in the box below.

Beginning in 2000, KWN slowly acquired better access to public institutions. In cooperation with other stakeholders, KWN's advocacy has contributed to several laws and policies in Kosovo, which are important from a gender perspective. In addition to the aforementioned laws, KWN also has participated in drafting and/or amending the following laws and policies affecting women: Law on Labour; National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings; Law on Protection from Domestic Violence; National Action Plan and the Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence; policies for the Protection of Women who have suffered Sexual Violence during the War; the NPISAA; the Draft National Action Plan on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2017-2019; the Draft Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law No. 02/L-249 on Health Insurance; the draft Regulation on the criteria, standards and procedures of public funding of NGOs; the Criminal Code of Kosovo; and the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2017-2021, among others.

KWN has involved more women in advocating for their priorities, especially at the municipal level, through KWF, and continued support for KLGE. This has resulted in some significant policy changes at the municipal level, such as: improved public transport for women to access school and work; improved access to public buildings for people with disabilities; jobs for women in rural areas; public space for use by WCSOs; reduction of organizational expenditures; budget allocations for gender equality at the municipal level; and interpretation for deaf people, so that they can pursue political processes and have access to healthcare, among other changes. Also, through KLGE, KWN has improved relations between women from diverse political parties and has empowered them to advocate for women's rights issues in their municipalities.

KWN brought together women in politics at the central and local level, WCSOs and women activists and founded the Coalition for Equality, which has a mission and vision for empowering and improving the position of women in politics and decision-making and achieving gender equality in Kosovo, regardless of political preferences, gender, age, ethnicity, ability, religion, geographic position, educational level or socio-economic status.



*On June 22, 2018, the Coalition for Equality was established, consisting of women in politics from the central and local levels, and WCSOs that support and empower each other in improving the position of women in politics, decision-making and advancing gender equality in Kosovo.*

Additionally, KWN has worked closely with six ministries and four municipalities to support them in institutionalizing gender responsive budgeting (GRB) in accordance with the legal obligations of the Law on Gender Equality. However, despite KWN's commitments and improvements, GRB is not yet fully institutionalized. KWN will continue to monitor institutions, considering that GRB is important not only for increased participation and improving women's participation in decision-making, but also for the efficient and fair distribution of public funds.

To date, the EU accession process has lacked sufficient participation of diverse women.<sup>51</sup> Discussions with women across the country suggest that few people seem to understand what the membership in the EU is exactly about and how it can

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<sup>51</sup> Arguably, men also have been insufficiently involved. However, data on participation and KWN experience suggests that women in particular have been under-represented. This Strategy focuses on women, given KWN's vision and mission.



affect their lives, including the EU *Acquis* on Gender Equality. Although important actors within their communities and experienced in reaching diverse women, few WCSOs have information about the EU accession process.<sup>52</sup> Despite KWN's efforts, only a few WCSOs have been involved in commenting on draft laws and policies drafted in connection with Kosovo's accession process. Few WCSOs have been consulted on planning IPA programs for different sectors (e.g., agriculture, energy, environment, human rights). The main causes seem to include insufficient understanding among institutions about what WCSOs can add to the process; and insufficient time within these processes for adequate and participatory consultations. The fact that WCSOs have minimal information on these processes contributes to their minimal involvement in the design, implementation and monitoring of IPA programs.<sup>53</sup> Contractors rarely seem to see the importance of women's involvement. The limited human resources and time to engage in these processes, also hinder the involvement of WCSOs.

Insufficient involvement of women (and men) regarding the EU accession process can hamper efforts to implement reforms, as people are unaware of these reforms or do not understand how such reforms are important to their lives. Further, insufficient consideration of women's particular interests and needs could contribute to a risk of changes associated with the accession process failing to reach women, or even causing harm.<sup>54</sup> If new policies ignore the needs and interests of diverse women, their rights are at risk of being violated, and they may face discrimination, even if unintentionally. Engaging WCSOs and

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<sup>52</sup> Discussion with KWN member organizations during KWN bimonthly meeting, November 2017.

<sup>53</sup> KWN discussion with WCSOs, November 2017.

<sup>54</sup> For example, reforms addressing the informal economy without gender analysis could run the risk of negatively impacting women if they are over-represented in this sector. Changes to labour laws without consideration of women's traditional gender roles and affiliated cultural challenges in Kosovo risk affecting women's labour force participation.

women in these processes can better meet their needs, and potentially contribute to the implementation of reforms, as diverse women and men become more informed and involved in supporting their implementation.

Pursuant to UNSCR 1325 and GAP II, EUO and EU officials visiting Kosovo should regularly consult with WCSOs. However, EU official political delegations still rarely meet with women's rights activists during their visits to Kosovo. Moreover, visiting officials often meet with women's rights activists at informal meetings after regular working hours. This may support perceptions that women and their needs are insignificant, setting a poor example for government officials regarding the importance of consulting women to hear their perspectives. Several leading WCSOs, mainly based in Prishtina, have been included, but many small and local WCSOs have not been consulted.

## **KWN's Main Achievements**

- KWN has empowered more women to run for official positions.
- KWN has involved more than 3,644 different women in decision-making processes in 2015-2018.
- Through advocacy, more than 40 public policies have been changed to better reflect women's priorities, as a direct result of KWN's support.
- Active in 27 municipalities, KLGE unites different women from civil society and politics. They have collaborated to bring about significant policy changes at the municipal level.
- KWN has held 1,049 mentoring sessions with Lobby groups throughout Kosovo. These sessions empowered Lobby members in their advocacy for women's rights and gender equality.
- Through these and other groups, women in politics, WCSOs and women voters are communicating and cooperating more on issues that women consider priorities.
- The Coalition for Equality was founded, which brings together women in politics at the central and local levels, WCSOs and women activists, for empowering and improving the position of women in politics and decision-making and achieving gender equality in Kosovo.
- KWN has encouraged GRB. This can help women access programs, services and state resources. KWN has built the capacities of more than 286 officials to carry out GRB.
- KWN reviewed from a gender perspective and/or provided information on more than 45 laws and other policy documents.

## Key Challenges

- Women remain underrepresented at central, municipal and party levels. Women do not account for 50% of decision-making positions in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality. Further, women are still largely dependent on the quota in securing 30% of seats in central and municipal assemblies. Women from minority ethnic groups in particular are underrepresented.
- The electoral laws are not harmonized with the new Law on Gender Equality.
- Promoting gender equality is not a political priority.
- The roots of this problem are social norms, according to which women are often seen as housewives and mothers, but not as political leaders. Social and cultural norms encourage women to stay at home, while men work in the public sphere. Such norms discourage women from entering politics.<sup>55</sup>
- The 'Oda' (Chamber) of men within and between political parties seems to influence the most important decisions in Kosovo, leaving little room for women. The lack of democratization within political parties makes it difficult for women to push issues they consider priorities.<sup>56</sup> Women lack decision-making positions within political parties, and political parties continue to control all decisions made at local and central levels.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, amid established party alliances, women sometimes face difficulties in advocating for issues affecting women, although cross-party advocacy has improved in recent years.
- Women lack funding for their political campaigns.

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<sup>55</sup> See Kosovo Center for Gender Studies (KGSC), *How Women Vote II*, Prishtina: KGSC, 2013, at:

<http://kgscenter.net/images/stories/howdowomenvoteinkosovo.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> Interviews with women and men in political parties, February 2014. See also IKS, *A Power Primer*, Prishtina: IKS, 2011.

<sup>57</sup> See IKS, *A Power Primer*.

- Women, including those running for political office, have limited and/or poor media coverage.
- WCSOs do not participate sufficiently in the EU accession process, and this process has not always been informed by gender analysis and a related gender perspective.
- The special needs of women after the war have been largely ignored during negotiations with Serbia, especially women who have experienced sexual violence, lost loved ones and faced considerable financial losses. Also, the issue of missing persons has not been addressed adequately.
- Although some trainings have informed officials and women's rights activists about gender budgeting, few feel confident to institutionalize GRB. Many women and men have no evidence and knowledge of how their taxes are spent and whether they are spent on issues positively affecting their lives.<sup>58</sup>

## **KWN's Strategy**

The long-term **goal** of this program is that **women participate actively in politics and decision-making at the local and central level**. The objectives and expected results for 2019-2022 are detailed below.

### **Objective 2.1. Increase and improve women's participation in politics and decision-making at local and central levels according to the Law on Gender Equality (50%).**

KWN will work towards this objective by achieving the following expected results.

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<sup>58</sup> For more information, see KWN, *Budgeting for Social Welfare*, Prishtina: KWN, 2014 and Practical Guides on Gender Budgeting, at: [www.womensnetwork.org](http://www.womensnetwork.org).

**Expected Result 2.1.1. Coalition for Equality functional at the local and central level.** The Coalition will continue to bring together women in politics, WCSOs and women's rights activists to promote gender equality and issues they identify as priorities.

**Expected Result 2.1.2. The Kosovo Lobby for Gender Equality functional in all municipalities.** KLGE will continue to bring together women in politics, civil society and civil servants to advance gender equality and issues they identify as priorities, particularly at the municipal level. This will be accomplished through meetings between KLGE members, networking meetings and KWN support for KLGE groups. KWN will seek to make KLGE more inclusive by involving more women with disabilities and women from minority ethnic groups.

**Expected Result 2.1.3. Capacities furthered of women in politics to advocate for women's priorities.** KWN will continue to empower women in politics at local and central levels through KLGE and the Coalition for Equality with trainings and mentoring sessions on advocacy skills.

**Expected Result 2.1.4. Increased awareness of the importance of harmonizing the Law on Gender Equality with other relevant laws.** Other relevant laws should be harmonized with the Law on Gender Equality, which considers equal gender representation as involvement of 50% of each gender. KWN will continue advocating for the harmonization of these laws through meetings with officials and awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of equitable representation, towards balanced, democratic governance. Amending the electoral laws, the Civil Servants Law, the Law on Political Parties and the Law on Government will directly contribute to increasing women's participation in politics and decision-making.

**Expected Result 2.1.5. Increased communication and cooperation among women in politics, women's organizations and voters on issues they consider priorities.** This will be achieved through the expected results 2.1.1. and 2.1.2., which will bring together different women in identifying and advocating for women's priorities. This result also will be achieved through communication between women politicians and voters; and through support of women politicians to improve their mechanisms for gathering input from voters.

**Expected Result 2.1.6. Advocacy on issues that women consider a priority initiated.** KWN will empower women to identify and advocate for their priorities. This will be achieved through grants to KWN members for their advocacy initiatives through KWF. The Fund also will support members' efforts to monitor and advocate for the implementation of existing laws and policies. KWN will encourage WCSOs to cooperate closely with KLGE and the Coalition for Equality.

## **Objective 2.2. Improve institutionalization of gender-responsive budgeting in Kosovo.**

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is important not only for increasing and improving women's participation in decision-making, but also for the efficient, transparent and fair distribution of public funds. Therefore, KWN will continue monitoring institutions' efforts to institutionalize GRB.

**Expected Result 2.2.1. Concrete recommendations for improving gender budgeting presented to officials.** This will include advocacy for the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration to institutionalize compulsory GRB training for all public servants and to allocate sufficient budget for its implementation. KWN also will submit recommendations to the government and budget organizations regarding the improvement of GRB, as relevant.

### **Objective 2.3. Improve and increase the participation of WCSOs in the EU accession process.**

In addition to the following expected results, increasing funding available for WCSOs, as described in the first program, also will contribute to achieving this objective by providing WCSOs with more resources to engage in the EU accession process.

#### **Expected Result 2.3.1. WCSOs and women are more informed about EU accession processes, their role and how to engage.**

Through regular KWN meetings, as well as through the aforementioned meetings with KLGE and voters, KWN will inform women about the EU accession process and how they can become involved. Stories on KWN's social media and e-newsletter also will seek to raise awareness. When relevant to their work, KWN will invite WCSOs to become involved in particular processes, and mentor them, if needed.

**Expected Result 2.3.2. Knowledge and understanding of stakeholders on the importance of WCSOs involvement in EU accession processes improved.** Through meetings and advocacy, KWN will seek to better inform ministries, contractors and EU officials regarding the important role of WCSOs in the EU accession process, encouraging them to better involve WCSOs.

### **Objective 2.4. Improve gender mainstreaming in documents affiliated with Kosovo's EU Accession and their implementation.**

This will be achieved through the following results.

#### **Expected Result 2.4.1. Comments submitted on documents.**

KWN will follow the processes of harmonizing Kosovo law with the EU Gender Equality Acquis, as well as amendments made to the NPISAA, ERA and other documents relevant to the EU accession process, such as the Indicative Strategy Paper and Country Reports. Where possible, KWN will submit comments



and write policy briefs in order to inform these from a gender perspective.

**Expected Result 2.4.2. Knowledge and capacity of EU, MEI, NGEM and line ministry officials improved for mainstreaming gender in documents affiliated with EU accession.** Based on demand, KWN will continue providing training and mentoring to these key stakeholders on gender mainstreaming EU accession-related documents. Where relevant, KWN also will undertake advocacy towards better reflecting a gender perspective in the EU accession process.

**Expected Result 2.4.3. Improved ability of diverse committees, especially committee on EU integration, and WCSOs to monitor implementation from gender perspective.** KWN will meet with parliamentarians to advocate for an improved gender perspective, including better oversight of EU accession related expenditures under IPA, as per best practices in GRB.

### **Objective 2.5. Improve implementation of GAP II.**

In order to better implement GAP II, KWN will seek to achieve the following results.

**Expected Result 2.5.1. Awareness improved of EU officials regarding the need for stronger political commitment, sufficient budget and adequate human resources for implementing GAP II.** KWN will continue providing training, mentoring and a helpdesk to the EU and member states, towards implementing GAP II. Where relevant, KWN also may undertake advocacy through meetings, letters and statements.

**Expected Result 2.5.2. Awareness improved of relevant officials regarding the reforms required to documents and templates, towards improving GAP II implementation.** KWN will continue

advocating for these changes through meetings, letters and comments directly on templates.

**Expected Result 2.5.3. Awareness improved of EU staff and MSs regarding GAP II and its implementation.** KWN will continue following GAP II implementation, meeting with EU officials and MSs to suggest ways to improve implementation.

**Expected Result 2.5.4. Awareness improved among WCSOs and NGEMs regarding GAP and how to support its implementation.** KWN will continue to share its experiences and research with WCSOs in Kosovo, the region and internationally, raising their awareness on how they can use the GAP in their advocacy work.

#### **Objective 2.6. Improve design of GAP III, based on lessons learned from GAP II.**

This shall be achieved through the following results.

**Expected Result 2.6.1. Awareness improved regarding needed improvements to GAP III.** Based on lessons learned from GAP II, KWN will prepare a policy brief with recommendations for creating an improved GAP III. This will be presented to relevant officials via email and meetings in Brussels.

#### **Objective 2.7. Improve transposition of EU Gender Equality Acquis into Kosovo Law.**

This objective will be achieved through the following result.

**Expected Result 2.7.1. AGE, MEI and MLSW better informed regarding needs for improved transposition of EU Gender Equality Acquis into Kosovo Law.** KWN will continue to provide comments on laws and policies, as well as policy briefs, as needed, in order to inform the transposition of EU Gender

Equality Acquis into Kosovo Law. KWN will prepare policy recommendations for the Labour Law, Law on Civil Service, Breastfeeding Law, Law on Gender Equality and Law on Protection from Discrimination. These will be provided to targeted officials by email, during advocacy meetings and in official working groups, as relevant. KWN will collaborate with a coalition of other WCSOs and actors in order to advocate for the amendments and to improve awareness among stakeholders, including unions, business associations, and other actors regarding reasoning for proposed policy changes.

## **Interest Groups**

The target group and main beneficiaries will be women politicians at local and central levels who will be more involved in policy and decision-making processes, particularly through KLGE and the Coalition for Equality. WCSOs and women voters also will be main target groups and beneficiaries. KWN will empower them to advocate for their priorities and to play a more active role in decision-making processes. Other beneficiaries will include people in politics who will learn more about women's priorities and how they affect society as a whole; and men and children, who can benefit from policy changes.

KWN member organizations will continue to be key partners in realizing this long-term goal. This will help reduce duplication of activities and strengthen women's advocacy efforts. KWN believes that its voice will continue to be more powerful when several organizations advocate together. In this regard, KWN will seek to cooperate with other CSOs that have similar interests.

KWN will continue to communicate and coordinate its work in this program with other actors that have similar goals. Regarding gender budgeting, KWN will continue its cooperation with AGE, the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration and the Ministry of Finance. Efforts to support women politicians will

continue to be coordinated with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), USAID, Swiss Development Cooperation, Helvetas Swiss Inter-cooperation and other stakeholders who may work in this area in the future. Collaboration with the following actors also will be essential: EU, Sida, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) Working Group amending the Labour Law, AGE, the Ombudsperson Institution, MEI, the Kosovo Agency for Statistics, Riinvest, D4D, the Women's Economic Forum, business associations, unions, the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation, the Labour Inspectorate, Members of Parliament and Parliamentary Committees.

KWN foresees that it will receive support for this program from ADA, the EU and the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation.

# Women's Right to Healthcare

## Laws, Policies and Institutional Mechanisms

- The third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is to 'ensure healthy life and promote well-being for all people of all ages' and aim to provide health and well-being for everyone at every stage of their life. It aims to address all major health priorities, including reproductive health for the mother and child; infectious, non-transmissible and environmental diseases; universal health coverage; and access for all to safe, effective, quality and affordable medications and vaccines.<sup>59</sup> It also encourages more research and development, for increasing health financing and strengthening the capacity of all countries in reducing and managing health risks.
- The Kosovo Law on Health includes equality, inclusiveness and non-discrimination among its principles.<sup>60</sup> It provides equal standards of healthcare for all citizens and residents for all levels, as well as provides for healthcare without discrimination 'on the basis of gender or sexual orientation'.
- The EU's Multi-annual Programme of Action for Health (2014-2020) has objectives that include contributing to new and sustainable health systems, enhancing access to better and safer healthcare, and promoting overall good health.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> UN Sustainable Development Goals, at:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg3>.

<sup>60</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 04/L-125 on Health, 2012, Section 5.1.2, at:

<http://kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/Ligji%20per%20shendetesi.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

- The Law on Reproductive Health regulates all activities in the field of reproductive health and protects the reproductive rights of individuals covering a wide range of issues, including sexually transmitted infections, family planning, access to information, assisted reproduction and safe maternity.<sup>62</sup>
- The Law on Health Insurance provides for health services to be provided on an equal basis to all insured persons.<sup>63</sup> Regardless of the status of insurance, children may have access to healthcare services from the list of basic services, and pregnant women or mothers enjoy the right to essential healthcare services. The Law has not yet entered into force.
- The Law on Health Inspectorate establishes the Inspectorate as 'an administrative authority of the Ministry of Health exercising the external professional supervision of health institutions.'<sup>64</sup>
- The Health Sector Strategy for 2014-2020 is relevant to the health of women and mothers.
- The Commission for Health, Labour and Social Welfare in the Assembly of Kosovo is the parliamentary commission responsible for monitoring the implementation of legislation and relevant health policies by the Government of Kosovo.

The Kosovo health system is currently undergoing important reforms and some laws and policies may be amended or adopted in the near future. Therefore, this part of the KWN Strategy may be updated, as relevant.

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<sup>62</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 02/L-76 on Reproductive Health, 2007, at: <https://gzk.rksgov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2506>.

<sup>63</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 04/L-249 on Health Insurance, 2014, at: <https://gzk.rksgov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=9450>.

<sup>64</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law on Health Inspectorate, No. 2006/02-L38.

## The Situation

Despite progress, access to basic, reproductive and gynaecological healthcare remains limited in Kosovo. The low budget allocated to healthcare has resulted in a lack of medical equipment, a shortage of medical specialists, poor quality healthcare providers and poor infrastructure in healthcare facilities (such as no elevators or heating). Little budget exists for research and development.

In general, 81% of Kosovars consider their health to be good or very good, although women on average assess their health condition slightly worse than men;<sup>65</sup> 23% reported apparent limitations in their daily lives due to health reasons.

In 2016, KWN conducted a survey on the access of Kosovo citizens to healthcare. Published in February 2017, entitled *Access to Healthcare in Kosovo*, it illustrated women in rural areas face more financial and cultural barriers in accessing healthcare than men or women in urban areas.<sup>66</sup> According to this survey, Kosovo Bosnian and Turkish women have a greater tendency to face obstacles than men of the same ethnicities, and significantly more than Albanian women and men. Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and Gorani women and men face barriers, including financial and cultural difficulties in accessing healthcare.



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<sup>65</sup> KWN, *Access to Healthcare in Kosovo*, Prishtina: KWN, 2016, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20170206150329798.pdf>. More than 1,300 people were surveyed in 2016, and 109 health workers and key experts were interviewed.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

Women living in rural areas mentioned travel expenses as a major obstacle to accessing gynaecological treatment. Women, especially in rural areas, are often reluctant to make annual obstetric gynaecological examinations because most gynaecologists are men. Social and cultural norms make it 'shameful' for a man who is not the husband of a woman to see her naked. Among other things, although maternities are open in many rural areas, they are out of order and have no available gynaecologist. Consequently, for example, women and girls from the 34 villages of Dragash municipality must travel at least 60 kilometres to visit a gynaecologist.

Another important issue is inadequate sexual education in schools. While curricula exist, students report that few teachers follow the curricula. This is partly due to cultural norms that consider discussing such topics in public taboo, but also due to inadequate teacher training on how to answer questions that may arise. WCSOs have worked to raise awareness about sexually transmitted diseases among youth groups and vulnerable groups. However, a more institutionalized approach is needed.

Limited access to family planning and free or low-cost contraceptives impedes women's right to make proper choices about their reproductive health.<sup>67</sup> Although abortion (and sometimes sex-selective abortion)<sup>68</sup> is considered acceptable among many married women, premarital sex and abortions by unmarried women are taboo topics in many places in Kosovo. This has resulted in unsafe abortions and the abandonment of children by young mothers. While values and attitudes towards premarital sexual relationships are slowly changing, especially in cities, more attention is needed for sexual education and family planning.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Discussions between KWN members, during the strategic planning meeting, Durres 2018.





*Jeta Vita organizes a march with the motto “Early Discovery = Survival” to express solidarity and raise awareness about breast cancer.*

KWN has supported the efforts of *Jeta/Vita* (‘Life’) Kosovo Centre for the Fight against Breast Cancer, which has increased awareness significantly regarding breast and ovarian cancer. More women are seeking regular controls, mammograms and gynaecological visits. With support from KWF, the Centre for Promotion of Women’s Rights has successfully advocated with the Directorate of Health for providing a mammography for 35 women and making PAP tests available for 19 women from the villages of Shtutica, Tërsteniku and Godanci. In addition, 35 women benefited from the essential list of medicines. *Vita/Jeta* successfully advocated with the Osteoporosis Association for the use of the DXA facility, through which 315 people benefited from free osteoporosis checks.

Further, WCSOs have worked to dismantle the negative perceptions of people suffering from cancer and to improve local support for women with cancer. Organizations run support groups, counselling and assistance for access to pharmaceuticals for women suffering from these diseases.

## **KWN's Main Achievements**

- With the support from KWN, approximately 3,847 women have accessed healthcare since 2012.
- Approximately 6,390 women and girls have become aware of their rights to access to healthcare.
- Public awareness of breast cancer has increased significantly. Mammography equipment has been made available, and hundreds of women have received free controls thanks to advocacy and awareness-raising efforts by KWN and its members. For example, with support from KWF, members have successfully advocated with local authorities in the Municipality of Ferizaj to request a mammography device from the Ministry of Health. The Ministry has funded two such devices.
- Supported by KWF, various advocacy initiatives were undertaken: Bliri NGO successfully advocated with the Main Family Medicine Center in Drenas municipality to provide free gynecological and mammography services. Artpolis in partnership with the Center for Promotion of Women's Rights advocated to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for the introduction of sexual education in curricula for secondary schools. The Action for Mother and Child successfully advocated for the opening of 'Mother Classes' within the Main Family Medicine Center in Prizren. They also advocated for the introduction of the topic of postpartum depression in the Educational Curriculum in the Classes for Mothers. Foleja NGO successfully advocated with the Main Family Medicine Center in Prizren Municipality and provided free gynecological services.

## Key Challenges

- Perhaps the biggest challenge to women's access to quality healthcare is the poorly-funded health sector in Kosovo. This is due to the fact that healthcare is not considered a priority in Kosovo's budget. Insufficient funding leads to poor resources and services.
- Another serious issue is the lack of data collected and maintained by the Ministry of Health. Data are manually recorded in registers rather than in electronic systems and are often incomplete, which makes the monitoring of possible health epidemics and of the quality of provided services very difficult, also from a gender perspective.
- Even in 2018, public health insurance still did not exist. This prevents some Kosovars from being able to afford quality healthcare. Corruption and control of services also continue to occur within the health system.<sup>69</sup> Given the relatively limited access of women to labour and family resources, they are more affected by this (although further research is needed).
- There are reports of sexual harassment and gender discrimination for workers and persons receiving services within the health system, but they are not adequately addressed.<sup>70</sup> Lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons have reported facing discrimination and lack of knowledge among physicians when seeking healthcare.
- Social norms still prevent some women from accessing annual gynaecological obstetric examinations and pregnancy care, which negatively affects mothers and infants.

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<sup>69</sup> UNDP, *Public Pulse Action on Health in Kosovo: Satisfaction with Health Care Services and Perception of the Presence of Corruption*, Prishtina: UNDP, 2013.

<sup>70</sup> Cases reported to KWN.

- Women with disabilities often face additional challenges in accessing healthcare due to limited mobility, limited access to public space, insufficient financial means and inadequate understanding of their specific needs.
- Some women's health and access to healthcare also is affected by domestic violence.<sup>71</sup>
- Since premarital sex is a taboo social theme, especially among girls, parents do not talk to their children about safe sex. Sexual education in schools is inadequate for the same reason. There also is limited access to family planning assistance and free or low-cost contraception.

## KWN's Strategy

The long-term goal of this program is: **Women have access to quality, affordable healthcare.** While women's reproductive health appears to be the focus of most development activities, KWN considers women's overall well-being as paramount, beyond the reproductive role of women. This program indirectly will support Kosovo in achieving the goals set out in the SDGs, the EU's multi-annual programme of action for health (2014-2020), and the Health Sector Strategy in Kosovo for 2014-2020.



*Vita-Jeta provides its members with free osteoporosis tests.*

<sup>71</sup> KWN, *No More Excuses: An Analysis of Attitudes, Incidence, and Institutional Responses to Domestic Violence in Kosovo*, Prishtina: KWN, 2015, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20151124105025622.pdf>.

**Objective 3.1. Increase accountability of public officials and health institutions in addressing violations of women's rights to healthcare.**

Towards this objective, KWN will work with WCSOs and citizens to hold accountable persons responsible for violating women's rights within the healthcare system and healthcare services. This will be achieved through the following interrelated results.

**Expected Result 3.1.1. Improved capacity of women's rights groups to document violations of women's rights in healthcare.**

There is well-documented, but limited information on gender-based discrimination in the health sector.<sup>72</sup> Identifying specific cases of discrimination and adequately documenting rights violations is important for identifying and addressing women's barriers to accessing quality healthcare. Towards this result, KWN will engage experts for training and mentoring KWN members to document violations of women's rights.

**Expected Result 3.1.2. More public officials, women, girls and men are aware of women's right to healthcare and violations of their rights.** Based on results from KWN's prior research and rights violations documented by WCSOs, KWN and its members will continue meeting with responsible officials to advocate and address the issues identified. KWN and its members will organize an awareness campaign to ensure that the public is informed of their rights. KWN may decide to use methods such as strategic litigation or public shaming to hold officials accountable if initial advocacy efforts are unsuccessful. These actions will contribute to improving the health system by encouraging better provision and access to quality healthcare, which in turn can result in better health in general.

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<sup>72</sup> Reports made to KWN.

### **Objective 3.2. Increase women's access to quality healthcare.**

To achieve the goal of this program, KWN will support more women to access quality healthcare. KWN and its members will work towards ensuring that women's access to quality healthcare services is institutionalized and sustainable, through the following results.

#### **Expected Result 3.2.1. Women and girls are more aware of their right to healthcare and the importance of accessing healthcare.**

Awareness of rights and the importance of preventative care are prerequisites for women to access quality healthcare. Therefore, through KWF, KWN will support WCSOs to raise awareness and to advocate for more women to have access to quality healthcare. Raising awareness can focus on the importance of regular health check-ups towards prevention, women's rights under the new legal framework, how to detect cancer and the importance of the osteoporosis screening. KWN members will target people who do not have access to such information, especially in rural areas and some minority ethnic groups.

**Expected Result 3.2.2. More women advocate for their right to quality healthcare.** Through KWF, KWN will support members' efforts to involve more women in advocating for their right to quality healthcare, especially when such rights are being violated and/or to address institutions regarding issues that undermine women's access to quality healthcare. Advocacy initiatives may include, for example, advocacy for institutions to gather and maintain better data; for health insurance that will be implemented and will provide access to all, including women working at home; for better funding from the state for healthcare; for better monitoring of private health clinics; and against the privatization of public healthcare.

## Interest Groups

The target group and main beneficiaries will be Kosovar women, especially those with limited access to quality healthcare services. Another target group and potential primary beneficiary will be officials within healthcare institutions, whose capacities can be increased by pursuing awareness-raising and advocacy efforts. Secondary beneficiaries will include all Kosovars, who will benefit from improvements in the healthcare system.

KWN member organizations will be key partners in implementing these efforts. KWN also will cooperate and coordinate with other stakeholders focusing on this sector, including the K10 Coalition, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), American International Health Alliance, Government of Luxembourg, World Bank, University Program for Gender Studies and Research, Dartmouth College, Kosovo's public health institutions, health workers and citizens who can support KWN and its members' advocacy efforts.

# A Life Free from Gender-based Violence

## Laws, Policies and Institutional Mechanisms

- CEDAW Recommendation 19 on Violence against Women has established the principle of state responsibility to take adequate measures to combat all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence, psychological abuse, women's exploitation (particularly trafficking), sexual harassment and forced sterilization.
- The UN Declaration of Key Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse has set the basis for intervention and standards for authorities to respond to cases of domestic violence.<sup>73</sup> These measures provide to victims: judicial representation; information on the judicial process; judicial compensation for the violence sustained; psychological and medical support; shelter and help.
- UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security calls for protection from sexual violence in war. It calls for justice for such crimes.
- The Convention on Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence and Violence against Women of the Council of Europe, also known as the 'Istanbul Convention', has a broad definition of domestic violence.<sup>74</sup> It criminalizes psychological abuse, although Kosovo's laws do not.
- In the SDGs for 2015-2030, Goal 5 on Gender Equality, 5.2 calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including

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<sup>73</sup> United Nations General Assembly, UN Declaration on Basic Principles for the Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, A/RES/40/34, 1985.

<sup>74</sup> Council of Europe, Convention on the Prevention and Fight Against Violence on Women and Domestic Violence, CETS No. 210, 2011.



- trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, as well as in 5.3 on the elimination of all harmful practices, such as early and forced child marriage and genital mutilation of girls.
- EU GAP II also aims at ‘a world where women’s and girls’ rights are sought, valued and respected by everyone, and where everyone is able to meet their potential and to contribute to a just society’. Objective 7 foresees that ‘women and girls are free from any form of violence against them in the public and private sphere’.
  - The Criminal Code of Kosovo<sup>75</sup> and the Criminal Procedure Code of Kosovo<sup>76</sup> include a number of offenses committed within a domestic relationship that can be considered domestic violence. They contain provisions related to other forms of violence against women, such as rape (including juvenile rape), sexual violence, trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation.
  - The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence aims to prevent violence, protect victims, punish perpetrators and mitigate the consequences of domestic violence.<sup>77</sup> It outlines procedures for and the content of protection orders.
  - The Law on Prevention and Combating Human Trafficking and the Protection of Trafficking Victims seeks to address this problem and its consequences.<sup>78</sup>
  - The Law on the Status and Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian War Victims and their Families was amended in 2014 to

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<sup>75</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Criminal Code of Kosovo, 2013, No. 04/L-082.

<sup>76</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Code of Criminal Procedure of Kosovo, 2013, No. 04/L-123.

<sup>77</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, Law No. 03/L-182, 2010.

<sup>78</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Prevention and Combating Human Trafficking and the Protection of Victims of Trafficking, 2013, Law No. 04/L-218.

include women victims of sexual violence as civilian war survivors.<sup>79</sup>

- The Law on the Protection from Discrimination prohibits discrimination and harassment, including unwanted sexual and psychological behaviour that violates a person's dignity.<sup>80</sup>
- The Law on Gender Equality states that sexual harassment constitutes gender discrimination; and forbids sexual harassment at work.<sup>81</sup>
- The Law on Social and Family Services includes provisions to assist people in need, such as persons who have suffered domestic violence or human trafficking.<sup>82</sup>
- The National Action Plan (NAP) for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 2013-2015 set out a plan for the implementation of this Resolution in Kosovo. However, it has expired.
- The National Strategy and Action Plan against Human Trafficking in Human Beings in Kosovo 2015-2019 aims to coordinate the fight against trafficking.<sup>83</sup>
- The National Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo for Protection against Domestic Violence and the Action Plan (2016-2020) aim to '(a) strengthen existing mechanisms and

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<sup>79</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on the Status and Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian Victims of War and their Families, Law No. 2011/4-L-061, 2014.

<sup>80</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, Law No. 05/L-021 - Law on the Protection from Discrimination, 2015.

<sup>81</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, Law No. 05/L-020 - Law on Gender Equality, 2015, at:

<http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/05-L-020%20a.pdf>.

<sup>82</sup> Assembly of Kosovo, Law on amending and supplementing the Law No. 02/L-17 on Social and Family Services, 2012.

<sup>83</sup> At: [http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/NATIONAL\\_STRATEGY\\_AGAINST\\_TRAFFICKING\\_IN\\_HUMAN\\_BEINGS\\_IN\\_KOSOVO.pdf](http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/NATIONAL_STRATEGY_AGAINST_TRAFFICKING_IN_HUMAN_BEINGS_IN_KOSOVO.pdf).

establish new mechanisms for rapid response to the protection and treatment of domestic violence cases; (b) coordinate actions and ensure financial sustainability to prevent, protect, treat, rehabilitate and reintegrate victims who should be given the opportunity to lead equal and dignified lives like all other family members and society; (c) take appropriate measures to punish (hold accountable) and for the continuing rehabilitation of perpetrators of violence, and; (d) organize information activities and awareness-raising campaigns to engage the entire society against domestic violence.’<sup>84</sup>

- Different sets of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) provide comprehensive frameworks for: 1) responding to reports of domestic violence; and 2) anti-trafficking measures, respectively.
- The Kosovo Police has Domestic Violence Investigation Units in each station with two trained officers on domestic violence (one woman and one man) on call 24/7.

## The Situation

Any form of violence exercised by one person against another person because of his or her gender is called gender-based violence. Economic, physical, psychological and sexual violence are some forms of gender-based violence. In Kosovo and worldwide, the most prominent form of violence is domestic violence, including violence by intimate partners. In its 2015 report *No More Excuses*, KWN found that more than 68% of women in Kosovo had experienced domestic violence in their

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<sup>84</sup> Ministry of Justice, Republic of Kosovo, 'National Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo for Protection from Domestic Violence and Action Plan 2016-2020', at: <https://abgi.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Strategija%20Komb%C3%ABtare%20e%20RK%20p%C3%ABr%20mbrojtje%20nga%20dhuna%20ne%20familje%202016-2020.pdf>.

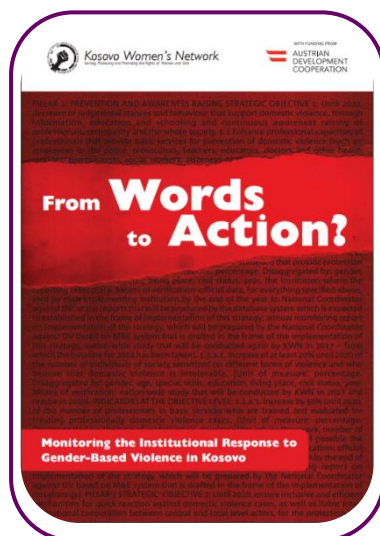
lifetimes (56% of men). In 2014 alone, 42% of women and 20% of men said they suffered some form of domestic violence.<sup>85</sup>

Although public perceptions suggest that domestic violence occurs mainly in poor families, in uneducated families or in rural areas, the KWN survey conducted in 2015 has suggested the contrary. Based on this research, no correlation could be observed between geographical origin, education or economic conditions and experiencing domestic violence. Women have tended to experience violence at the hands of their parents and partners, whereas men who experienced violence tended to mention their parents as perpetrators. Interestingly, women whose partners were employed were more likely to experience violence in 2014 than women whose partners were unemployed. Regarding citizens' awareness of where domestic violence can be addressed, 73.6% responded that they would contact the police, while very few mentioned other institutions, such as the Centre for Social Work or Victim Advocates.

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<sup>85</sup> Farnsworth, Nicole, Ariana Qosaj Mustafa, Iliriana Banjska, Adelina Berisha and Donjeta Morina, for KWN, *No More Excuses*, Prishtina, 2015, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20151124105025622.pdf>, p. 5.

In 2017, KWN monitored the progress of the implementation of the legal framework related to gender-based violence, as well as the Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo and the Action Plan for Protection from Domestic Violence 2016-2020. This 2018 KWN report, entitled *From Words to Action?*, illustrated that only 19% of the National Strategy had been implemented.<sup>86</sup> KWN monitoring of the performance of institutions suggested that there have been some improvements in the implementation of the legal framework related to domestic violence. Nevertheless, several shortcomings remain with regard to institutional response to other forms of gender-based violence. For example, while the Kosovo Police, particularly Domestic Violence Investigation Units, are familiar with domestic violence, they lack knowledge about sexual harassment or how to treat rape cases, particularly a sensitive approach that protects the dignity of persons who have suffered such crimes. The Basic Prosecution has appointed prosecutors who will deal with domestic violence cases. They have knowledge regarding domestic violence, but they similarly lack knowledge about other forms of violence against women or the importance of understanding power relationships between men and women. While prosecutors know the legal framework for protecting victims of crime, their heavy caseload may affect their



<sup>86</sup> KWN, *From Words to Action?*, Prishtina: KWN, 2018, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20180312142859762.pdf>

performance, KWN found. The Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) also has appointed specialized judges to handle domestic violence cases, both in civil and criminal proceedings. While some have attended trainings, some judges still 'blame the victim'.<sup>87</sup>

KJC data suggests that of the 5,024 gender-based violence-related cases resolved from 2015 to 2017, 73% resulted in some form of punishment. In 1% of the cases, the charges were dropped; 2% were rejected by the court; 16% were closed as the statutory limitations expired; and 8% were solved in other ways. Of the 76 cases resolved that were related to sexual violence, 59% resulted in some form of punishment, 4% were acquitted, 5% were refused by the court, 8% were closed due to statutory limitations and 24% were solved in other ways. Regardless of the specific circumstances of each case, this implies that cases of sexual violence are less likely to be punished and more likely to be released from charges or rejected by courts. KWN also found that they are significantly more likely to be 'solved differently', than cases involving other crimes.<sup>88</sup>

Another form of sexual violence is that committed against women during the war in Kosovo. Sexual violence, including rape, has been used as a weapon of war against civilians.<sup>89</sup> This included the violent rape of women by Serbian forces, which was used as a tactic of ethnic cleansing.<sup>90</sup> In general, various sources have estimated that between 10 and 45 thousand women were

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<sup>87</sup> KWN, *From Words to Action?*, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>89</sup> See Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Human Rights Violations in Kosovo*, USA: HRW, 1998; HRW, *One Week of Horror in Drenica: Violations of Humanitarian Law in Kosovo*, USA: HRW, 1999; OSCE, *Kosovo: As Seen, As Told*, Part III; UNFPA, *Gender-based Violence in Kosovo*, Prishtina: UNFPA, 2005, p. 6; and Chris Corrin, "The post-conflict situation in Kosovo" in *If not now, when?*, 2001, p. 93.

<sup>90</sup> HRW, *Kosovo: Rape as a weapon of ethnic cleansing*; OSCE, *Kosovo: As Seen, As Told*, Coomaraswamy, para. 82; Corrin, 'The Post-Conflict Situation in Kosovo', p. 93; and UNIFEM, p. 62.

raped during the war.<sup>91</sup> Sexual violence also reportedly was perpetrated against men and boys, as well as women of different ethnicities, though this has been less discussed publicly. Not a single person has been convicted of committing this crime in Kosovo.<sup>92</sup> Women who suffered sexual violence during the war often face isolation, untreated trauma, physical illness and poverty.<sup>93</sup>

The large ‘peacekeeping’ military force in Kosovo immediately after the war created a demand for sexual services that resulted in increased trafficking, especially of women and girls.<sup>94</sup> Trafficking for sexual exploitation seems to have decreased since 2002. In 2017, 18 cases were registered by the Kosovo police, of which all were women, including 10 girls. This year, of the 38 arrested, 34 were men and four were women.<sup>95</sup> The demand for sexual services has not received sufficient public attention in Kosovo. Gender inequalities that support and potentially contribute to prostitution also have not been discussed at all. Although KWN does not work directly with trafficking cases, KWN member organizations are directly involved in this area.

Sexual harassment occurs at work, schools, universities and public institutions. In 2016, KWN published *[Sexual Harassment in Kosovo](#)*, which showed that around 48.5% of Kosovars have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetimes. Only in 2014, 45.2% of Kosovars reportedly experienced sexual harassment. Women and girls are most affected by sexual harassment, accounting for 64.1% of cases. A 2010 Kosovo Gender Studies Centre study found that 16.6% of civil servants had experienced

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<sup>91</sup> By Farnsworth, Nicole for KWN, *Research on the Extent of Gender-based Violence in Kosovo and Its Impact on Reproductive Health of Women*, KWN, Prishtina: 2008.

<sup>92</sup> See KWN, *1325 Facts & Fables*, Prishtina: KWN, 2011.

<sup>93</sup> KWN members’ discussions with women.

<sup>94</sup> KWN, *1325 Facts & Fables*.

<sup>95</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*.

sexual harassment at least once in their careers.<sup>96</sup> Meanwhile, focus groups held at the University of Pristina (UP) have suggested that sexual harassment is apparently widespread, but not properly reported. Even when reported, it is ignored. To address the needs of students and academic and administrative staff of UP, KWN in cooperation with several member organizations, UP staff and students, have undertaken several initiatives to improve reporting and treatment of sexual harassment at UP. This includes supporting the drafting of a regulation on reporting sexual harassment, establishing reporting mechanisms and creating an action plan for prevention and protection from sexual harassment.

The current legal framework is rather confusing with regards to reporting sexual harassment.<sup>97</sup> In 2017 and 2018, KWN advocated for the introduction of sexual harassment as a separate criminal offense in the Criminal Code, a definition that was accepted by the Ministry of Justice and the Assembly of Kosovo, which will enter into force in 2019.

Gender-based violence also affects Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and differently identifying (LGBTI) people. Although the Constitution and the Law on the Protection from Discrimination address such discrimination, institutional responses and reporting mechanisms remain sluggish.<sup>98</sup> Many LGBTI people have been subject to verbal harassment and physical violence.<sup>99</sup> Apparently, widespread public perceptions

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<sup>96</sup> Demolli, Luljeta for KGSC, *Perceptions of Civil Servants Concerning Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*, Prishtina: KGSC, 2010, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> KWN, *Sexual Harassment in Kosovo*, Prishtina: KWN, 2018, at:

<https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20160223185243349.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> KWN interviews, 2014.

<sup>99</sup> See: Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) and Center for Social Development Group, *Freedom and Protection for Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgender in Kosovo*, Prishtina: YIHR, 2013; Savić, Marija for the Heartefact Fund, *Invisible LGBT: Report on the position of the LGBT community in Kosovo*, Belgrade: Heartefact Fund, January 2013; Huygens,



about LGBTI people suggest the need for further awareness-raising about LGBTI rights.



*Since 2014, KWN has supported public events for LGBTI rights, marking the International Day Against Homophobia or Pride Parades. KWN will continue supporting LGBTI groups.*

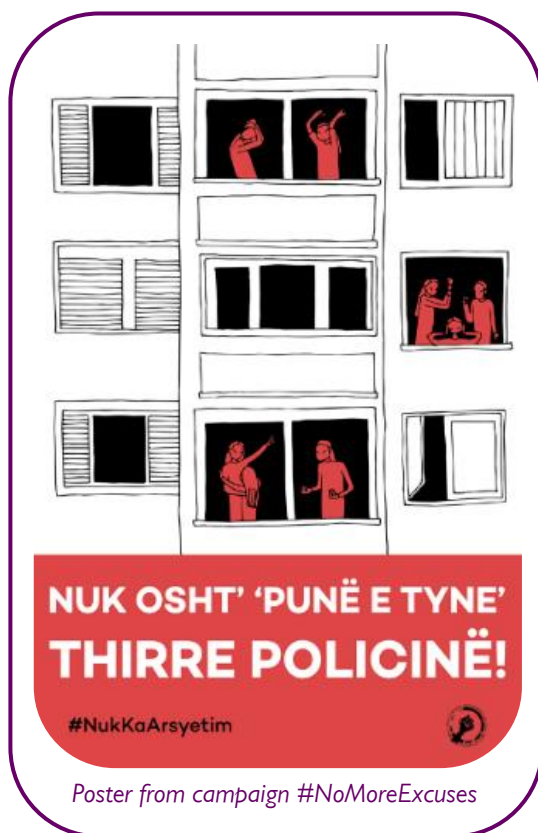
The general safety of women and men raises other concerns. UNSCR 1325 calls for the security of women and girls in post-conflict situations. However, the poor infrastructure in Kosovo, such as insufficient public lighting at night, can provide an enabling environment for gender-based violence. Local Action Groups and Community Safety Councils have initiated several projects to address such issues, including the addition of street lights and taking into account factors such as girls and women traveling to work and school. Women in northern Kosovo may face other security concerns as a result of weak rule

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Pierre, Eva Marn and Nenad Maksimović, Situation and Response Analysis: LGBT Vulnerability in Kosovo in 2012: In the name of “tradition”, 2013; Libertas, *Survey on the Attitudes of Kosovo Society on Homosexuality: Quantitative and Qualitative Survey of Opinions of Kosovo Citizens*, Prishtina: Libertas, 2012; the European Parliament has also expressed concern over discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in its resolution of 29 March 2012 On the European Integration Process of Kosovo, 2011/2885 (RSP), para. 38.

of law and disagreements over institutional competencies between Kosovo and Serbia, along with the general state of insecurity there.<sup>100</sup>

KWN has organized several national campaigns that have reduced prejudice against persons who have suffered from gender-based violence and has encouraged people to report violence by turning it from a private matter to a very public affair. KWN's work with regard to this program in previous years has shown several results (see the box on the next page).



<sup>100</sup> Interviews, February 2014, conducted for the *Country Gender Profile*.

## KWN's Main Achievements

- KWN has collaborated with experts and its members to research and inform the adoption of several of the aforementioned laws and policies to address gender-based violence in Kosovo. For example, KWN contributed to the drafting of the National Strategy and Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2016-2020, which included 70% of KWN's recommendations for this Strategy. KWN's recommendations also have been incorporated in recent Criminal Code amendments to include sexual harassment and domestic violence as criminal offences.
- In close cooperation with AGE and UNDP, KWN conducted the first national survey on domestic violence in 2008, collecting key baseline data that informed the new legal framework in Kosovo. KWN's monitoring of the performance of institutions suggests improvements in the implementation of existing laws and policies related to domestic violence and trafficking.
- KWN conducted the first ever survey on the extent of sexual harassment in Kosovo in 2015, resulting in the publication *Sexual Harassment in Kosovo*.
- In 2016, KWN in cooperation with Girls Coding Kosovo and Open Data Kosovo launched the 'Walk Freely' application, which aims to facilitate reporting of sexual harassment.
- In 2017, KWN monitored cases of gender-based violence, publishing findings in *From Words to Action?*

## **KWN's Main Achievements**

- KWN has supported shelters by successfully advocating for government funding to support the provision of shelters services.
- KWN and its members have enhanced the capacities of police, as well as domestic and international peacekeeping forces, in the appropriate ways to interact with women who have experienced gender-based violence.
- Through a rally on March 8, 2012, KWN drew public attention to the lack of recognition, services and assistance for women who suffered sexual violence during the war. Coupled with extensive follow-up advocacy, this resulted in new legal provisions for their protection. KWN also supported the creation of the President's National Council for survivors of sexual violence during the war.
- KWN supported improvements in coordination among various local and international actors working on issues of trafficking and domestic violence. This involved advocating for national coordinators for domestic violence and trafficking, respectively, who monitor and report on the implementation of existing laws and policies.

## Key Challenges

The legal and institutional framework for addressing gender-based violence is comprehensive and coordination has increased among WCSOs and responsible institutions. However, some challenges remain linked to social norms and the implementation of the legal framework:

- Individuals often attribute domestic violence to the difficult economic situation, unemployment, alcohol, war trauma and lack of education. This falsely justifies violence and discourages people from reporting violence to the police.<sup>101</sup>
- Marriages usually end with divorce if violence is reported and many women lack sufficient financial resources to support themselves after divorce.<sup>102</sup> The relatively poor financial situation of women is a common reason that courts grant child custody to male abusers; the economic situation of men is prioritized over the physical and psychological well-being of the child. Providing child custody to a perpetrator may place children at great risk of violence and may mean that women do not report domestic violence.<sup>103</sup>
- Delays remain within the judicial system in delivering decisions and issuing protection orders within the required legal framework.<sup>104</sup>
- Patriarchal perceptions embedded in society can adversely affect judicial opinions and the course of proceedings.<sup>105</sup> Courts and lawyers prefer reconciliation, but the return of

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<sup>101</sup> UNDP, Public Pulse, Gender, p. 39; KWN, *Security Begins at Home*, pp. 16-22.

<sup>102</sup> For more information, see KWN, *More Than "Words on Paper"? The Response of Justice Providers to Domestic Violence in Kosovo*, Prishtina: KWN, 2009.

<sup>103</sup> KWN, *Security Begins at Home*, p. 85.

<sup>104</sup> *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, p. 18; *Security Begins at Home*, p. 82.

<sup>105</sup> KWN, *More Than "Words on Paper"?*, p. 29.

victims to their previous environs often has been ineffective. It is estimated that 80% of people (mostly women) who suffer from violence have returned to their family after spending time in a shelter.<sup>106</sup> Insufficient access to justice, as well as ineffective and inefficient justice for the crimes committed contribute to recidivist violence.<sup>107</sup>

- Financial support for state-funded shelters is insufficient to cover all their costs, and shelters rely on international donors for additional support.<sup>108</sup> The quality of services provided by shelters requires further improvements. Kosovo continues to lack sufficient rehabilitation and reintegration systems.
- There is insufficient communication between courts and police. Courts rarely intervene when protection orders are violated and/or food or alimony is not paid. Often there are delays in the treatment of pending cases. Although this has improved since the establishment of the National Coordinator in 2013, it remains problematic.<sup>109</sup>
- Some prosecutors lack knowledge about domestic violence regulations. In addition, the lack of a functional witness protection system can prevent victims or witnesses from reporting cases of gender-based violence. Further, legal fees are often prohibitive and free legal aid is not always accessible.<sup>110</sup>
- Protection orders often are used instead of initiating criminal proceedings, even though crimes committed within a family

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>108</sup> For more information, see Farnsworth et al. for KWN, *At What Cost? Budgeting for the Implementation of the Legal Framework against Domestic Violence in Kosovo*, Prishtina: 2012.

<sup>109</sup> Interviews with police and judges in Gjakova, 2014, conducted for the *Country Gender Profile*.

<sup>110</sup> Farnsworth et al. for KWN. *At What Cost?*

relationship should be prosecuted *ex officio* (automatically).<sup>111</sup>

- Services provided by police, judges and prosecutors can be further improved, including more training through KJC and the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council.<sup>112</sup>
- Rape is not reported, especially in domestic relationships, which many people do not consider a crime, even though it is a criminal offense.
- Sexual harassment seems to be a serious issue in public institutions, UP, businesses and society in general. Few efforts have been taken to address it. Few people report it, especially due to the economic situation and the fear of losing their job.
- Justice has not been delivered for gender-based crimes committed during the Kosovo war. Women who have suffered gender-based violence need support towards rehabilitation.

## KWN's Strategy

Considering these challenges, the long-term goal of this program is: **Women and girls live a life free from gender-based violence.** The objectives, expected results and activities towards achieving this goal are outlined below.

### Objective 4.1. Improve implementation of the legal framework for domestic violence, including institutional responsibility to assist those who have suffered violence.<sup>113</sup>

Implementing the legal framework related to domestic violence will contribute to the goal of women and girls living a life free

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<sup>111</sup> KWN, *More Than "Words on Paper?"*, p. 6.

<sup>112</sup> Discussion with members of the KWN Board, 2014.

<sup>113</sup> This result will directly contribute to the implementation of Objective 1 of the National Strategy and Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2016-2020, activity 1.2.5.

from violence by preventing violence, encouraging justice, preventing recidivism and providing better treatment for persons who have experienced violence. The following results will contribute to the achievement of this objective.

**Expected Result 4.1.1. Knowledge enhanced regarding the extent to which the legal framework pertaining to domestic violence has been implemented, as well as awareness about and prevalence of domestic violence.**<sup>114</sup> Supported by ADA, KWN will repeat monitoring of the implementation of the legal framework and the National Strategy and Action Plan for Protection from Domestic Violence (2016-2020) in 2020. At the same time, KWN will measure changes in public awareness with regards to gender-based violence.

**Expected Result 4.1.2. Institutions and other actors aware of the extent to which the legal framework for domestic violence has been implemented.** KWN will publish the research results. Then, KWN will meet with relevant institutions to advocate so that research recommendations are addressed.

**Expected Result 4.1.3. KWN and its members are engaged in furthering the implementation of the legal framework on domestic violence.** KWN will cooperate with and support member organizations, through KWF, in advocating for the

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<sup>114</sup> This will contribute directly to the implementation of Objective 2 of the National Strategy and Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2016-2020, Activity 2.3.7: 'Increasing Resources and Staff, Office of National Coordinator against DV, who in their job descriptions should have specific responsibilities for supporting the implementation and monitoring of the National Strategy for Protection from Domestic Violence'. This also will contribute to monitoring Objective 3, Activity 3.3.2: 'Effective implementation of protection orders, monitoring and punishment and raising awareness on their violations, including capacity building of Kosovo Probation Service to reduce the degree of recidivism'.



implementation of the legal framework. This may include, for example, advocacy for: ensuring sustainable financing for shelter service providers; establishing rehabilitation and reintegration services for persons who have suffered domestic violence through improved inter-institutional response; and advocating other recommendations resulting from the research.

**Expected Result 4.1.4. Increase the performance and quality of shelter services, especially in terms of rehabilitation and reintegration.**<sup>115</sup> KWN will work more closely with its member organizations, particularly shelters, and public institutions (namely the Department of Social Welfare), towards increasing the quality of services provided to persons who have suffered domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. This will include advocacy for raising state funds to cover all housing-related costs, including rehabilitation and reintegration, and working with shelters to secure sustainable funding. KWN will work with MLSW on prioritizing vocational training and employment for women who have experienced gender-based violence (see the next KWN Program) towards their reintegration.

**Objective 4.2. Improve awareness and attention among officials and citizens in dealing with gender-based violence including domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment.**

Awareness of the public and officials on gender-based violence and the rights of persons who have experienced violence is important, including to ensure that gender-based violence cases are reported so that they can be addressed. It is also important to transform social norms towards reducing gender-based violence as foreseen by this program. This objective will be achieved through the following results.

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<sup>115</sup> This will contribute to implementing activity 1.1.9. of the National Strategy and Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2016-2020.

**Expected Result 4.2.1. More informed citizens about the legal framework and their rights.** This will clearly contribute to raising public awareness, towards the foreseen outcome. It will include awareness-raising campaigns at national and municipal levels, as well as involving member organizations via KWF support. A particular focus will be put on various forms of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and rape. Attempts will be made to transform social norms, towards preventing violence.

**Expected Result 4.2.2. Increased attention to and performance of institutions in treating GBV.** Through legal advice and strategic litigation, KWN will engage lawyers to represent individuals and families in seeking justice. Monitoring of ongoing court cases and analysis of completed cases also will seek to enhance the performance of local institutions in addressing gender-based violence.

**Objective 4.3. Improve policies and procedures for addressing sexual harassment.**

This objective will seek to establish better policies and procedures for reporting and addressing sexual harassment in various environments and institutions, towards achieving the abovementioned goal.

**Expected Result 4.3.1. Coordination among CSOs led by women, public institutions and other workplaces improved in terms of installing better mechanisms for reporting and investigating cases of sexual harassment.** KWN and its members will cooperate with various actors to support them in creating the best processes for reporting and investigating sexual harassment, aiming to decrease sexual harassment.

#### **Objective 4.4. Improve institutional and public support for persons who experienced sexual violence during the war.**

This objective focuses on addressing the negative consequences of gender-based violence that occurred during the war in Kosovo, since women and girls cannot live a life free from gender-based violence if the trauma of recent violence remains with them. To achieve this objective, KWN will support and monitor the implementation of recent amendments to the Law on Status and the Rights of Martyrs, Invalids, Veterans, Members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Civilian Victims of War and their Families and the related secondary legislation and procedures. This will involve continuing collaboration with KWN members specializing in such work to improve institutional support for women who have suffered sexual violence during the war.

**Expected Result 4.4.1. KWN and its members support persons who have experienced sexual violence during the war.** The inclusion of women's organizations is important, as they have gained the trust of war-affected women and can facilitate women's access to state-provided services. Towards this result, KWN and its members will continue supporting persons who have experienced sexual violence in gaining assistance. KWN will continue advocating for justice for gender-based crimes committed during the war, towards preventing such crimes from occurring in the future.

### **Interest Groups**

The main beneficiaries of this program will be women and girls who have experienced, are experiencing, or are at risk of suffering gender-based violence. Institutions responsible for implementing the existing legal framework on gender-based violence will be targeted, including: the National Domestic Violence Coordinator, Kosovo Police, Centres for Social Work, the justice system, shelters, the Victims Advocacy and Assistance

Office, AGE, Legal Aid Offices, KJC and Kosovo Prosecutorial Council. In addition, citizens (women and men) will be targeted with awareness-raising regarding the existing legal framework, ways of seeking help, and towards transforming social norms.

KWN will continue closely cooperating with its member organizations, especially with shelters and supporters of women who have suffered sexual violence during the war. KWN also will coordinate with other actors, including: the Security Gender Group, UN Kosovo Team, UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, OSCE, the European Union Mission for Rule of Law in Kosovo (EULEX), University Program for Gender Studies and Research at UP, Care International, European Centre for Minority Issues, and the Centre for Legal Aid and Regional Development (CLARD). Regarding LGBTI rights, KWN will continue cooperating closely with other organizations focused on supporting LGBTI people.

KWN expects to receive support for this program from ADA and UN Women.

# Women's Economic Empowerment

## Laws, Policies and Institutional Mechanisms

- The EU Equal Treatment Directive calls for equal opportunities and treatment of men and women in employment and occupational matters.<sup>116</sup>
- The EU Directive on Pregnant Workers sets out guidelines for workers during and after pregnancy.<sup>117</sup> It covers topics such as: exposure to potentially dangerous activities, duration of maternity leave and free time to visit the doctor. This has not been fully included in the legal framework of Kosovo.
- The EU Directive on the Establishment of a general Framework for Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. While the Directive has not been adopted in Kosovo, it has informed the Law on Protection from Discrimination.<sup>118</sup>
- The EU Parental Leave Directive establishes the right to a minimum of four months of leave for young mothers and fathers.<sup>119</sup> This Directive has not yet been included in the legal framework of Kosovo.
- GAP II has several objectives that relate to women's economic empowerment, including: Objective 13 on 'equal access for girls and women to all levels of education and vocational education and vocational training (VET) without

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<sup>116</sup> European Union, Equal Treatment Directive 2006/54/EC, 2006.

<sup>117</sup> European Union, Guidelines for Pregnant Workers, 92/85/EC, October 1992.

<sup>118</sup> European Union, Directive on the establishment of a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, 2000/78/EC, December 2000.

<sup>119</sup> European Union, Parental Leave Directive 2010/18/EU 2010.

discrimination'; Objective 14 on 'achieving decent work for women of all ages'; and Objective 15 on 'equal access for women to financial services, productive resources, including land, trade and entrepreneurship'.

- The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo calls for the government to ensure gender equality, including in access to employment.
- The Law on Labour aims to regulate the rights and obligations arising from employment.<sup>120</sup> This applies to employees and employers in the public and private sector, and deals with issues such as maternity leave. An employed woman has the right to 12 months of maternity leave, with six months of compensation at 70% of the basic salary paid by the employer, three months paid by the government at 50% of the average salary in Kosovo and three months without payment. It also provides for paternal leave after the baby is born, but only for two free weeks and two paid days.
- The Law on Protection from Discrimination prohibits discrimination in many forms, including on the basis of gender, age, marital status or sexual orientation, and it applies to the workplace.<sup>121</sup>
- The Kosovo Inheritance Law stipulates that men and women have the same inheritance rights, although this is not necessarily applied in practice.<sup>122</sup>
- The Law on Property and Other Property Rights deals with the ownership of physical objects, including the abandonment and registration of property.<sup>123</sup> The law treats all parties as

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<sup>120</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Labour No. 03/L-212.

<sup>121</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Protection from Discrimination, Law No. 05/L-021.

<sup>122</sup> Assembly of Kosovo and UNMIK, Law on Inheritance in Kosovo, Law No. 2004/26.

<sup>123</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law on Property and Other Property Rights, Law No. 03/L-154.

gender-neutral and does not provide any specific provision regarding women's property rights.

- The Law on Gender Equality explicitly states that there must be equal protection and treatment on the basis of gender in labour relations (this includes the prohibition of gender discrimination in labour relations and social security schemes at work, unpaid work assessment and in accessing and supplying goods and services).<sup>124</sup>
- The vision of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo and MLSW for 2020 is to create a society, 'where all working-age and capable people are trained and have equal opportunities in employment'. The strategic objectives of MLSW include increasing employment and skills, increasing social welfare with a focus on vulnerable groups and reducing informal employment.
- The National Development Strategy 2016-2021 points out that it is necessary to 'increase the involvement of children in preschool institutions in order to increase women's participation in the labour market'.<sup>125</sup>
- The Strategy for Private Sector Development in Kosovo 2018-2022 in a paragraph titled 'Women in Entrepreneurship' describes the need to close the 'gender gap in the private sector in order to increase the total number of entrepreneurs, resulting in more employment and productivity and having a positive impact on economic growth'.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Assembly of Republic of Kosovo, Law on Gender Equality, Law No. 05-L-020, Chapter III.

<sup>125</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Office of the Prime Minister, National Development Strategy 2016-2021.

<sup>126</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Strategy for Private Sector Development 2018-2022.

## The Situation

In Kosovo, only 20% of women are registered as active participants in the labour market, while for men this figure is 66%.<sup>127</sup> With regard to employment rates, only 13% of working age women are employed, while 47% of men are employed.<sup>128</sup> In 2017, education, health and trade sectors employed the most women (47% of all employed women).<sup>129</sup> For men, the main sectors of employment are production and trade (47% of all employed men).<sup>130</sup> These percentages have not changed much over the years, indicating that the labour market in Kosovo is fragmented from a gender perspective.

A deeper gender gap can be found in inactivity rates, where 80% of working age women are inactive, while 34% of men are.<sup>131</sup> Women's overall unemployment rate is 37%. However, unemployment among young women is 64%, and 48% among young men (aged 15 to 24).<sup>132</sup> The difference between total and youth is 18.5%. The most prevalent cause of inactivity among men is that they attend school, education or training (37%).<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile, for women, this is the second most common cause. The main reason why women are inactive is that they have care responsibilities at home, primarily for children (32%).<sup>134</sup> Very few men mentioned this as a reason preventing their labour force participation: only 1.1%.<sup>135</sup> KWN has long suggested that making economically affordable childcare available would enable more women to enter the labour market, by creating new jobs and by facilitating access to childcare. These percentages

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<sup>127</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, p. 37.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.



illustrate the way men and women generally spend their day. Through a survey of time usage, it was found that men, on average, spend 400% more time (3.9 hours a day) on work relationships than women (0.9 hours a day).<sup>136</sup> While women spend 300% more time on housework and care for the family (7.1 hours and 2.3 hours respectively).<sup>137</sup>

The citizens of Kosovo, who participated in the survey, ranked equal treatment for women and men at work (32.2%), equal pay for equal opportunities (25.4%), availability of part-time jobs or flexible jobs (16.6%) and access to childcare centres (14.2%) as key issues for women to become more active in the labour market.<sup>138</sup>

Research conducted by the Riinvest Institute shows that 'in the public sector, a higher percentage of women, about 72%, have indefinite contracts, while 28% have fixed-term contracts with an average duration of 14 months.'<sup>139</sup> Also, 'in the public sector, contracts are generally extended, as the existence of fixed-term contracts is often a mere formality'. Meanwhile they found that 'less than half of women working in the private sector (48%) have long-term contracts and around 52% of them have fixed-term contracts, which in average last 10 months'.<sup>140</sup>

In the private sector, about 30% of women work without a contract and about 50% have fixed-term contracts.<sup>141</sup> In the public sector, only 25% of women have fixed-term contracts.<sup>142</sup> It is believed (although there are very few concrete numbers) that the informal sector includes about 10% of Kosovo's

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<sup>136</sup> Millennium Challenge Cooperation, Kosovo Labor Force and Time Use Study, Prishtina: 2017, p. 12.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, p. 38.

<sup>139</sup> Riinvest Institute, *Women in the Labor Market: Analysis of Working Conditions for Women in Kosovo*, Prishtina: 2017, p. 39.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

economy, and most of those involved in it are women.<sup>143</sup> This phenomenon has many negative consequences on women's economic empowerment, including low wages, difficult working conditions, lack of social protection and lack of accumulated pension funds.

According to cultural norms, men tend to manage family assets and wealth. Despite the fact that laws guarantee women the right to property inheritance, many families continue to follow traditions according to which property is only granted to men. Experience suggests that women give up their own right to inherit family wealth based on existing cultural norms and to maintain 'good' relationships with family members. Without these assets, women have no guarantee to obtain loans and thus have no access to capital for the development of their businesses. Women heads of households face particularly difficult conditions, since they often have no access to assets for developing their businesses or markets for selling their products (a task previously done by their husbands). Women heads of households are among the poorest people in Kosovo.

Many women sell products such as processed vegetables and processed foods. They also often provide family services, care and hairstyling. In rural areas, women contribute to unpaid services, such as taking care of farm animals, unpaid work in family-owned shops and agricultural work. However, men traditionally trade products and manage family finances. Therefore, very few women reap the rewards of their hard work, and they have little rights to financial decisions taken within the family.<sup>144</sup>

Insufficient access to the labour market, property and family finances puts women in an insecure position. Women lack decision-making powers within their families. Women who experience domestic violence are unable to escape violent

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<sup>143</sup> Riinvest 2013, p. 7.

<sup>144</sup> *Country Gender Profile*, p. 17.

situations and fear losing custody of their children.<sup>145</sup> Without education and skills, women who have been victims of domestic violence struggle to find employment and reintegrate into society. Supporting women's access to education, employment and capital is key to women's economic empowerment.



*With support from KWF, the Women's Initiative Association has supported young women with professional training and advocated to the mayor of Dragash for their employment. As a result, 24 women are now employed in the new factory.*

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<sup>145</sup> KWN, *Security Begins at Home and More Than "Words on Paper"?*.

## KWN's Main Achievements

- As a direct result of KWF support, more than 41 women, mostly from rural areas, have become employed.
- KWN has supported approximately 30 women's rights groups to help their members identify new markets for their products, increase productivity and outputs, and increase their profits. As a result, 223 women have been trained to develop and manage successful businesses and 125 women have better access to markets.
- Following the publication of the *Striking a Balance*, KWN joined the Women's Economic Forum, collaborating with other stakeholders to advocate for policy changes to address gender-based discrimination at work and to change the current maternity, paternity and parental leave provisions.
- KWN conducted and published a study on the demand, supply and options for increasing the availability of childcare in Kosovo, titled *Who Cares?*. It examines the covered and uncovered demand for childcare services in Kosovo. It is informing advocacy for more childcare services.
- KWN raised awareness of the importance of women registering their property. As a result of this initiative 6,088 citizens in five municipalities (3,150 women and 2,938 men) are more aware of the importance of women registering their property, whereas 153 women initiated the process of registering their property.
- KWN also advocated successfully for the government to extend the Administrative Instruction for the Joint Registration of Property.

## Key Challenges

Key challenges to the economic empowerment of women in Kosovo derive primarily from cultural norms.

- The poor implementation of existing inheritance and property laws and low awareness among judges on how to deal with women's property and inheritance rights, prevent women from realizing their property rights.<sup>146</sup>
- Women face difficulties obtaining loans because they have no collateral, credit history and relations. Only 3% of commercial bank loans go to women. This makes property purchase and business start-ups quite challenging.<sup>147</sup>
- Social norms encourage women to stay at home as caregivers, and men to work outside the home to provide for their families. This can affect whether women choose to seek employment, whether spouses and family members would have allowed/encouraged them to work and if employers (usually men) would choose to employ them.
- Women's work is poorly paid, although society relies on this free work to function.
- The absence of affordable and quality kindergartens and day care centres also undermines women's ability to enter the labour force.
- Some employers seemingly discriminate against women in hiring and do not pay for maternity leave.<sup>148</sup> Men are discriminated against by legal provisions related to paternity leave, which allow fathers little time to spend with their new-born children.

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<sup>146</sup> KGSC, *Women's Rights to Property in Kosovo*, 2011.

<sup>147</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Kosovo*, 2012.

<sup>148</sup> KWN, *Striking a Balance*, Prishtina: KWN, 2016, pp. 7, 30.

## KWN's Strategy

The long-term goal of this program is: **Women and men have equal economic opportunities at home and in the public sphere.** Through this program, KWN will continue supporting MLSW in realizing the *Government of the Republic of Kosovo and MLSW 2020 Vision*, as well as the *National Strategy for European Integration 2020*, which cites gender equality, equal treatment of workers, and anti-discrimination measures as important and fundamental rights. This program will contribute to the implementation of the National Strategy, and to the economic empowerment of women in Kosovo.

### **Objective 5.1. Improve conditions for women's participation in the labour force.**

In order for women and men to have more equal opportunities in the economy and at home, the participation of women in the labour force must be increased. The KWN Strategy is in synergy with the National Agenda for Economic Empowerment of Women, drafted by the Women's Economic Forum, which guides advocacy efforts towards women's economic empowerment in Kosovo.

**Expected Result 5.1.1. Institutions and key actors are more aware of the extent of gender-based discrimination in the workplace in Kosovo and the ways to address it.** This will help address obstacles to women's employment. KWN will advocate for changes to laws and policies and their implementation, based on research conducted in 2018 within KWN's regional project, which aims at combating gender-based discrimination at work and empowering women's organizations to hold the relevant institutions accountable for enforcing anti-discrimination legislation and women's labour rights. Advocacy also will contribute to improving women's access to justice related to gender-based discrimination at work. In addition, using the research that KWN conducted in 2016 and 2018 on gender-

based discrimination at work, KWN will continue to advocate for the implementation of its recommendations, including for shared parental leave to provide women and men with equal opportunities for family care and employment. This will contribute to the approximation of Kosovo's legislation with the EU Directive on Parental Leave and the Pregnant Workers Directive.

**Expected Result 5.1.2. Awareness among stakeholders, including officials, CSOs and trade unions improved about the legal framework relevant discrimination and how to improve its implementation.** Using findings from its research conducted in 2018, KWN will meet and cooperate with these stakeholders towards improving their knowledge of the legal framework related to gender-based discrimination and how to report it when it occurs.

**Expected Result 5.1.3. Availability of information, including on the gender pay gap, informal economy and social security schemes improved.** KWN will advocate for Kosovo institutions to better collect and make publicly available data related to the gender pay gap and informal economy. Such information can support KWN, its members and other actors in advocating for better policies and affirmative measures to address inequalities related to women's labour force participation, thereby contributing to increasing their participation.

**Expected Result 5.1.4. Access to justice in cases of gender-based discrimination at work improved.** KWN will collaborate with its partners in Kosovo and the region to support women in seeking justice for gender-based discrimination at work, through legal advice and strategic litigation.

**Expected Result 5.1.5. More affordable childcare options available.** Childcare is essential to allow more women to work.

Therefore, KWN will cooperate with its member organizations and particularly the Women's Economic Forum to continue advocating for the opening of more childcare centres, kindergartens and other alternative childcare facilities.

**Objective 5.2. Increase the percentage of women who have access to inheritance and property ownership.**

Equal opportunities for inheritance and property ownership are crucial for women's economic empowerment. Increasing women's property ownership will create a friendlier environment for women to start and grow their businesses, contributing to the implementation of Kosovo's Private Sector Strategy. KWN will coordinate with other stakeholders working on this issue towards efficiency and effectiveness in achieving common goals.

**Expected Result 5.2.1. More citizens aware regarding women's rights to inheritance and property ownership.** KWN and its members supported through KWF will participate in campaigns undertaken in close cooperation with other actors, towards: 1) raising awareness among families, among women, men, boys and girls, about the importance of women and men having equal rights in property and inheritance; and 2) for women's registration of property. This will include coordinated media campaigns, public meetings, and door-to-door visits by KWN members within their communities.

**Objective 5.3. Improve the gender perspective in reforms related to the EU accession process.**

The EU accession process involves several important policy reforms. Additionally, the EU provides regular support through the Instrument for Pre-Accession to support Kosovo in this reform process. The potential impact of such policy reforms and



programs on women and men in Kosovo needs to be assessed from a gender perspective, in case reforms may have an unequal or even negative impact on women, undermining women's economic empowerment. Therefore, KWN will continue to follow this process and monitor reforms, towards ensuring that reforms and programs consider women and men's potentially different needs.

**Expected Result 5.3.1. Monitoring of EU policies and programs in Kosovo from a gender perspective has improved.** KWN and its members will monitor the impact that the EU accession process may have on women's economic empowerment, based on lessons learned from other countries; monitor the adoption and amendment of laws and policies related to EU accession from a gender perspective; provide feedback from a gender perspective on sections of the Country Report related to the economy; and monitor EU-funded programs and projects in Kosovo to ensure that both women and men benefit from these projects.

## **Interest Groups**

Women will be the main beneficiaries of this program, especially hitherto marginalized women. Their families will be secondary beneficiaries and will be in a better economic position. Targeted institutions for capacity development and recommendations also can benefit, as they will improve their skills to further women's equal access to state-funded programs.

KWN will continue to cooperate with its member organizations, particularly those focused on economic empowerment, awareness-raising, monitoring and legal aid.

KWN will cooperate with and support G7, the Women's Economic Forum and Women for Women. KWN will closely coordinate with other stakeholders involved in women's economic empowerment, including AGE, MLSW, the Ministry of

Education, Science and Technology (MEST), the Kosovo Cadastral Agency, the Chamber of Notaries of the Republic of Kosovo, USAID/TetraTech Property Rights Program, USAID/World Learning Transformation Leadership Program, USAID's Advancing Kosovo Together Program, USAID/Chemonics International Development Partnerships, EU, GIZ, UNDP Active Labour Market Policies Project, UN Women, OSCE, and the World Bank, among other stakeholders.

KWN plans to receive support for this program from the Austrian Development Agency and the European Commission, while some additional resources will need to be secured.

# Improving Access to Quality and Gender Sensitive Education

## Laws, Policies and Institutional Mechanisms

Numerous laws and institutional mechanisms relate to increasing girls and women's access to education:

- CEDAW's General Recommendation no. 3 encourages states to adopt public education and information programs that will help eliminate prejudices and practices that hamper women's social equality.<sup>149</sup>
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>150</sup> recognizes the right of all children to education. This Convention is directly applicable in Kosovo through the Constitution.<sup>151</sup>
- The EU Recast Directive contains provisions for implementing the principle of equal treatment in vocational training and for ensuring equality in occupational and employment matters. The Directive is mainly transposed into Kosovo's legislation, but implementation remains weak.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> UN, CEDAW, 1981.

<sup>150</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990, Art. 28: [https://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/CRC\\_albanian\\_language\\_version.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/CRC_albanian_language_version.pdf).

<sup>151</sup> Constitution, Article 22.

<sup>152</sup> Cleff le Divellec and Miller for KWN, 2017.

- The UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims at ensuring inclusive and equal quality education, as well as promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.<sup>153</sup>
- The Constitution guarantees the right to free, basic education, and obliges public institutions to provide equal opportunities to education for all, according to their abilities and needs.<sup>154</sup>
- The Law on Pre-school Education foresees the inclusive participation of boys and girls in pre-school education.<sup>155</sup>
- The Law on Education in Kosovo Municipalities obliges MEST to promote a non-discriminatory education system where each person's right to education is respected and where all opportunities for education are available.<sup>156</sup>
- The Law on Pre-university Education in the Republic of Kosovo ensures the participation of girls and boys in the education system. This Law guarantees access to pre-university education without discrimination, including based on gender and marital status, among others.<sup>157</sup> The Law also requires that pre-university education includes student preparation for a responsible life based on the spirit of gender equality.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, it emphasizes that promoting gender equality should be taken into account in all phases:

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<sup>153</sup> UN, Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>154</sup> Article 47.

<sup>155</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 02/L-52 on Preschool Education, 2006, Article 1, at:

<http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/7-lep-ligji-mbi-eukimin-parashkollor.pdf>. Registration is on a voluntary basis.

<sup>156</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 03/L-068 on Education in Municipalities of Kosovo, 2008, Article 3 (b), at:

<http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/9ligji-i-arsimit-ne-komuna2008-03-1068-al-ar-se-kom.pdf>.

<sup>157</sup> Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law No. 04/L-032 on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, 2011, Article 3.6, at:

<http://kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/04-L-032%20sh.pdf>.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, Article 1.2.5.

planning, managing and offering of pre-university education.<sup>159</sup>

- The Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo describes the principles of equality, equal opportunities, non-discrimination and diversity as basic principles of higher education.<sup>160</sup> It also ensures the participation of men and women, guaranteeing them the right to access education without discrimination.<sup>161</sup>
- The Law on Adult Education and Training in the Republic of Kosovo ensures that men and women can participate in adult education and training.<sup>162</sup>
- The Law on Vocational Education and Training is based on the principle of inclusiveness, ensuring that women and men can participate in vocational education and training.<sup>163</sup>
- The Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation forces institutions to ensure that young people are participating and have an impact on important decision-making processes affecting their interests.<sup>164</sup> The Law also details areas in which youth participation is mandatory, including: education, employment, social affairs and public health. The strategy for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in the Kosovar

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, Article 3.4.

<sup>160</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 04/L-37 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo, 2011, Article 2, at: [http://www.akreditimi-ks.org/docs/LawRegulation/Ligji\\_AL\\_RKS\\_04\\_L\\_037.pdf](http://www.akreditimi-ks.org/docs/LawRegulation/Ligji_AL_RKS_04_L_037.pdf).

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, Article 5.

<sup>162</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 04/L-143 on adult education and training in the Republic of Kosovo, 2013, at: <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/ligji-per-arsimin-dhe-aftesimin-per-te-rritur-ne-republiken-e-kosoves-2013-alb.pdf>.

<sup>163</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 04/L-138 on Vocational Education and Training, 2013, Article 3.1, at: <http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/ligji-per-aftesimin-profesional-2013-alb.pdf>.

<sup>164</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Assembly, Law No. 03/L-145 on Youth Empowerment and Participation, 2009, at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2654>.

society 2017-2021 includes a gender perspective on education, including gender-specific indicators and activities, such as: encouraging attendance of pre-school education and organizing awareness-raising activities for Roma and Ashkali communities on the importance of timely enrolment and school attendance, focusing on girls.<sup>165</sup>

- The National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2021 gives priority to the inclusion of children ages 0-6 years old in pre-school programs.<sup>166</sup> Among other things, it stresses that this will have a positive impact on increasing the participation of women in the labour force.
- The NPISAA aims at improving the standard of education, including in the area of education and vocational training, as well as developing policies for young people, without discrimination based on gender, race, religion, beliefs, ethnic affiliation, disability, age or sexual orientation.<sup>167</sup>
- The European Reform Agenda (ERA) states that it should be implemented in accordance with the Law on Gender Equality, including implementation in relation to educational policy reforms, enhancing participation in pre-school education and improving the quality of VETs and of the transition from school to work.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Office of the Prime Minister, "Strategy for the inclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities in Kosovo society 2017-2020", 2017, at: [http://kryeministri-ks.net/wp-content/uploads/docs/ALB-STRATEGJIA\\_PER\\_PERFSHIRJEN\\_E\\_KOMUNITETEVE\\_ROM\\_DHE\\_ASHK\\_ALI\\_NE\\_SHOOERINE\\_KOSOVARE\\_2017-2021.pdf](http://kryeministri-ks.net/wp-content/uploads/docs/ALB-STRATEGJIA_PER_PERFSHIRJEN_E_KOMUNITETEVE_ROM_DHE_ASHK_ALI_NE_SHOOERINE_KOSOVARE_2017-2021.pdf).

<sup>166</sup> Republic of Kosovo, Government, National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2021, 2016, at: [http://kryeministri-ks.net/wp-content/uploads/docs/Strategjia\\_Kombetare\\_per\\_Zhvillim\\_2016-2021.pdf](http://kryeministri-ks.net/wp-content/uploads/docs/Strategjia_Kombetare_per_Zhvillim_2016-2021.pdf).

<sup>167</sup> NPISAA 2017-2021.

<sup>168</sup> ERA, 2016. It sets short-term priorities in the following areas: a) good governance and rule of law; b) competitiveness and investment climate; and c) employment and education.

## The Situation

KWN has its roots in the Rural Women's Network, which focused mainly on expanding access to education for girls during the 1990s.<sup>169</sup> The core activities of some of KWN's longest-standing member organizations have contributed to fundamental changes in girls' access to education. Partly because of their efforts, the percentage of young women attending education has increased considerably in the last two decades. Many KWN members continue their important work today, focusing on improving access to education for minority ethnic groups and children with disabilities.

Beyond the classic concept of education, this program also considers the importance of providing education about feminism.

In November 2013, KWN organized the 2013 Regional Forum for Young Feminists, where 40 young feminists from Kosovo and neighbouring countries (Serbia, Macedonia, Croatia) gathered in Prishtina and discussed advocacy strategies, feminism and women's participation in decision-making.



*Regional Forum for Young Feminists*

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<sup>169</sup> In April 2018, KWN members decided to add this new program to the KWN Strategy.

In the final declaration of the Forum,<sup>170</sup> the young women asked for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), the Ministry of Finance and Parliament to provide books and transport for girls, especially if their families cannot afford the costs of their education due to financial constraints. The young feminists also urged the government to implement the Law on Pre-University Education, which requires parents to send their children to school. They called for psychologists in schools to help girls overcome challenges that could stop them from continuing their education. KWN has continued to advocate on these issues and many of these young feminists have continued their advocacy work as part of the broader feminist movement.

In 2013, KWN continued supporting girls' education by supporting the establishment of the 'Buçinca Couple' Foundation for girls' education. For 60 years, Naxhije and Fahri Buçinca have worked for girls' formal and informal education, and they established this Foundation to continue enabling girls' access to education for years to come. KWN supported the fundraising event that gathered €23,969 for the Foundation, mainly from local businesses, organizations and individuals. KWN also donated €1,000 to this Foundation. KWN has recognized the Buçinca's contribution with a certificate of gratitude.

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<sup>170</sup> KWN, Regional Young Feminist Forum Statement, at: <http://womensnetwork.org/documents/20131127140945971.pdf>.

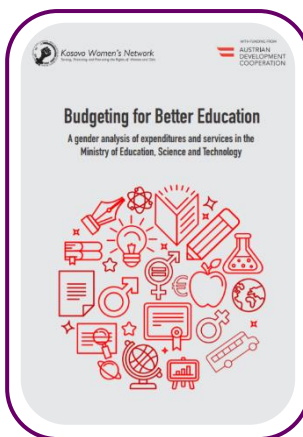


In 2016, KWN published the report *Budgeting for Better Education*.<sup>171</sup> KWN collaborated with MEST towards institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting, which included a gender analysis of this Ministry's work. This identified several areas in which gender equality can be improved in relation to education in Kosovo.

Meanwhile, KWN has supported various advocacy initiatives towards increasing access for girls and women to education by supporting KWN member organizations through KWF.

In 2017, supported by KWF, the Action for Mother and Child (AMC) advocated to the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Medicine, to collaborate with AMC to engage students in AMC projects. Also, AMC's advocacy to the Head of the Department of Maternal and Child Health at the Ministry of Health led to them integrating postnatal depression into the Educational Curriculum in the Classes for Mothers.

Also supported by KWF, Artpolis Art and Community Centre in partnership with the Centre for Promotion of Women's



*The Action for Mother and Child trains nurses and midwives to treat women with post-partum depression.*

<sup>171</sup> KWN, *Budgeting for Better Education*, Prishtina: KWN, 2016, at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20160607151528942.pdf>

Rights used art to make 130 women and girls from the municipalities of Prishtina and Drenas more aware of their rights to reproductive health and sexual education. KWN member organizations also advocated to MEST for the introduction and implementation of sexual education in secondary school curricula.

## Key Challenges

- The attendance rate of pre-university education for girls and boys is similar (48% of girls, 52% of boys), with the exception of pre-school education, where boys' attendance is slightly higher (54%).<sup>172</sup> In general, attendance in pre-school education in Kosovo is low due to the lack of affordable pre-school institutions.<sup>173</sup> Thus, Kosovo remains far from achieving the EU Barcelona Objectives.<sup>174</sup>
- Regarding ethnicity, the attendance rate of students in pre-university education is almost proportional to the demographics of Kosovo.<sup>175</sup> However, the educational system does not have sufficient data disaggregated by

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<sup>172</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, 2018.

<sup>173</sup> See, KWN, *Who Cares?*, Prishtina: KWN, 2016, at:

<https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/20161103153827186.pdf>

<sup>174</sup> The 'Barcelona Objectives' were set in 2002 by EU leaders. They state that pre-school education should be offered to 90% of children between the age of three and compulsory school age, and to 33% of children under the age of three (EC, *Barcelona Objectives: Development of childcare institutions for young children in Europe with a view to sustainable and inclusive growth*, p. 5, at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130531\\_barcelona\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/130531_barcelona_en.pdf)).

<sup>175</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, 2018.

ethnicity and gender, which makes it difficult to understand any differences between boys and girls.<sup>176</sup>

- In Kosovo, there are five Resource Centres and two schools for children with special needs, and there are more boys (59%) than girls (41%) with special needs who attend compulsory education.<sup>177</sup> Although the law provides special provisions for children with special educational needs,<sup>178</sup> the budget has not been allocated for its implementation.
- The ratio between women and men is 40% to 60% among high school teachers, and 99.6% to 0.4% among pre-school teachers, respectively.<sup>179</sup> The difference is lower in primary and lower secondary, with a teacher ratio of 54% women to 46% men.<sup>180</sup>
- The existing curricula in Kosovo, at all levels of education, often still enforces gender stereotypes.<sup>181</sup> Transforming socially assigned gender roles within the curricula could promote gender equality in all spheres of life.
- Apparently, few youth learn about issues related to sexuality and sexual and reproductive health at school.<sup>182</sup> Nor do they learn about using contraceptives, as teachers evidently regularly bypass reproductive health education lectures.<sup>183</sup> Limited knowledge about contraceptives may affect the rate of abortions or increase the risk of sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, p. 36.

<sup>177</sup> KAS, KAS Platform.

<sup>178</sup> Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo, Articles 39 and 40.

<sup>179</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, p. 36.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Youth Initiative for Human Rights - Kosovo (YIHR KS), *Discriminatory Language in Textbooks*, 2017.

<sup>182</sup> KWN, *Access to Healthcare in Kosovo*,

<sup>183</sup> According to the observations of KWN members.

<sup>184</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, 2018, p. 56.

## KWN's Strategy

Given these challenges, the long-term **goal** of this program is: **Improving access to quality education that challenges existing gender norms and power relations.** The objective and expected results for 2019-2022 are detailed below.

### **Objective 6.1. Increase the number of childcare centres in proportion to the number of children in need.**

Creating more childcare centres and pre-school institutions can create jobs, contribute to women's participation in the labour force, and improve educational outcomes for children through better qualification for later work.<sup>185</sup> This will involve continued cooperation with MEST. This will contribute to achieving the goals of the National Development Strategy.

**Expected Result 6.1.1. More officials are aware of the need for more pre-schools and childcare centres.** KWN, together with its members, will advocate at municipal and national levels to raise their awareness about this issue.

**Expected Result 6.1.2. Preschool institutions are inspected more often on the degree to which they are implementing legislation on preschool education.** KWN in cooperation with its members will advocate for better inspections of preschools and childcare centres regarding the quality of education provided in accordance with pre-school education legislation.

### **Objective 6.2. Improve curricula and textbooks from a gender perspective.**

KWN will continue cooperating with its members and other partners in advocating for removal of gender stereotypes in school textbooks and university books.

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<sup>185</sup> KWN, *Kosovo Gender Analysis*, 2018, p. 5.

**Expected Result 6.2.1. Recommendations established for curricula improvement and presented to relevant stakeholders.**

KWN will monitor the process of revising the curricula from a gender perspective. Based on monitoring, KWN will provide recommendations for changing curricula for preschool and primary institutions in order to reduce gender inequalities, transform gender roles, and change gender norms and power relations.

**Expected Result 6.2.2. Recommendations established for revising the curricula of the Faculty of Law from a gender perspective.**

The educational texts of this specific university program should aim to educate future Kosovo lawyers, prosecutors and judges on how to handle gender-based violence cases. KWN will cooperate with other actors to advocate for review and revision of the current texts, to better promote gender equality and access to justice for women.

**Expected Result 6.2.3. Institutions are held more accountable for appropriately teaching sexual education in schools.**

School textbooks should be among the primary sources of accurate information on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, as well as on the use of contraceptives. Accurate information reduces the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, as well as the rate of abortions. KWN will collaborate with its members to monitor the quality and delivery of this education, as well as advocate for improved sexual education in schools.

## Interest Groups

The target group and potential primary beneficiary will be officials within educational institutions, whose capacities can be increased by pursuing awareness-raising and advocacy efforts. The secondary beneficiaries will include all Kosovars, who will benefit from improvements in the education system.

KWN member organizations will be key partners in implementing these efforts. KWN will seek to cooperate and coordinate with other stakeholders in the sector, such as MEST, Kosovo municipalities including Education Departments, Hasan Prishtina UP and the Faculty of Law specifically, the University Program for Gender Studies and Research, AGE, Kosovo Education Centre (KEC), Peer Education Network (PEN), EU Office in Kosovo, ADA, GIZ, USAID, UNICEF, Care International, Balkan Sunflowers, Kosovo Youth Council and the Ideas Partnership.

## Inclusiveness

In line with its mission, KWN ensures that its programs and activities include different persons, regardless of their political and religious beliefs, age, level of education, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability or ethnicity. KWN and its members ensure that all activities particular interests and needs of different persons are considered when implementing the different programs of this Strategy.

**Gender Equality** is part of KWN's organizational mission, vision, strategic programs and actions. Gender analyses always inform the design of KWN's programs and initiatives. As part of the gender analysis, the relevant legal framework is always analysed. KWN regularly tracks its target groups, disaggregating by gender, age, ability, ethnicity, and location. Records are kept in KWN's Monitoring and Evaluation database. Gender sensitive indicators are developed in this database and used to measure progress regularly. Systematic barriers for equal access to resources and services for women and men are identified and addressed primarily through KWF-supported initiatives, but also through national level advocacy. KWN seeks to address obstacles to participation in decision-making processes at the household level through regular mentoring, visits to rural and urban areas, and support for local level advocacy efforts through KWF, KLGE and the Coalition for Equality.

Regarding **Social Inclusion**, KWN seeks to ensure that no individuals or groups are excluded, but rather seeks to ensure inclusion in KWN, KLGE and KWF-supported initiatives, as part of the "Leave no one behind" approach. Moreover, having 141 diverse women's organizations as members, KWN seeks to reach rural and urban, men and women of different ethnicities, abilities, ages, and geographic regions. KWN works towards strengthening social, economic and political capabilities of its member organizations, many of which belong to marginalized groups. This is achieved through mentoring sessions, political

engagement in KLGE, the Coalition for Equality, and enabling their access to KWF grants, particularly for those that do not have access to resources.

KWN has analysed the relevant legal framework and this has informed its initiatives, as well as those of KWF grant recipients. Existing labour standards and conditions are part of KWN's rules and regulations, and are passed on to its members through KWF grants, providing them with templates and guidance during their initiatives. KWN and KWF grant recipients continuously track beneficiaries, disaggregating data by gender, age, ability, ethnic group, and location. Information is logged in the KWN Monitoring and Evaluation database.

KWN considers attention to the **environment** important and necessary. KWN provides capacity building for its members in minimizing environmental impact of public relations materials, using eco-friendly printing, and saving resources where possible. All KWF grant recipients receive training related to environmental protection, as part of mandatory orientation sessions. KWN seeks to protect the environment through its organisational practices, including through energy saving, recycling, using eco-friendly printing, and using public transport and vehicle-sharing when possible. KWN also supports its members and partners in advocacy efforts to improve environmental conditions in Kosovo.



## Monitoring and Evaluation

KWN monitors and evaluates progress towards the implementation of its Strategy using a Monitoring and Evaluation database containing indicators for progress on each objective and expected result. KWN reports on progress to its members semesterly and publishes this information in its Annual Report. Further information regarding KWN's indicators and targets is available upon request.

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