

Strengthening Women's Participation in Politics

Background

The [Law on Gender Equality](#) (LGE) defines equal representation as 50% participation of women and men at all levels. However, electoral laws are not aligned and sanctions for not implementing the LGE are rare. Moreover, representation requirements set by the LGE are not met by most central and municipal level institutions. Following 2017 municipal and central elections, women comprised only 33% of municipal assembly members, 32% of parliamentarians, 10% of ministers, 5% of deputy ministers and 0% of mayors. Women with disabilities, as well as Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and Gorani women are not represented. Nevertheless, thanks to KWN's advocacy, among other civil society's organization, after 2021 elections, women now comprise 36% of assembly members, 35.8% of parliamentarians, 33.3% of ministers, and 19.04% deputy ministers are women and two Serbian women mayors.

As stated in the [Kosovo Gender Analysis](#), compiled by KWN, obstacles to women's participation in politics include socialized gender stereotypes suggesting that women are not sufficiently qualified or capable of being political leaders; political parties' resistance to involving women; low financing; minimal media coverage of women politicians; women's time constraints due to care responsibilities at home; and weak connections with constituents.

In order to address these challenges, the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) through *Strengthening Women's Participation in Politics and Decision-making processes* initiative, during the past three years has worked closely with women politicians at all levels and women interested in entering politics towards enhancing their capacities. Moreover, considering their significant underrepresentation to date, through this initiative, KWN also engaged women with disabilities and women from minority ethnic groups more in the aforementioned networks, as well as in politics and decision-making.

Objectives

The **overall objective** of this Action is to strengthen civic engagement, gender equality and inclusive, participatory democracy through diverse women's enhanced participation in politics and decision-making in Kosovo.

- KWN advocacy contributed to more women being elected in decision-making positions. In snap parliamentary elections in 2021, a woman candidate received the most votes of any political candidate in the history of Kosovo, and over 60% of women citizens participated in the elections
- 43 women were elected MPs, four more than in 2019, an increase from 32.5% to 35.8% in the last elections. Only nine women were elected due to the quota, whereas 34 won a seat with the popular vote.
- The Government of Kosovo has appointed two women as deputy prime ministers, and out of 15 ministries, five are led by women (an increase from 18.8% in the last elections to 33.3% in 2021)
- In the 2021 local elections, two Serbian women were elected as mayors and 364 women were elected as municipal assemblies, and;
- Two Ashkali and Egyptian women and a woman with different abilities were elected in municipal assemblies, showing improvement in their representation compared to prior years.

Towards achieving this long-term objective, the Action's **specific objective** is to improve capacities, inclusiveness, solidarity, representativeness and political engagement of women's networks, so they may effectively and reliably engage in Kosovo's European Union (EU) integration process.

- 67 new organizations became KWN members, totalling 194 KWN member organizations,
- 1,873 diverse women participated in politics and decision-making processes.

Expected Results

The Action realized three, interrelated expected results that will contribute to the achievement of the specific objective:

1) Improved inclusiveness, representativeness, capacities and cooperation among the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), Kosovo Lobby for Gender Equality (KLGE) and Coalition for Equality (CfE);

- KWN organized 16 membership meetings bringing together KWN member organizations, individuals and other stakeholders to strategize and evaluate progress
- KWN organized eight networking meetings among Lobby for Equality and Coalitions for Equality bringing together women from different political parties
- 299 volunteers were engaged in supporting networks and specifically involved in the "Vote for more Women" door-to-door campaign
- KWN has expanded its relations by joining three new networks, European Women's Lobby, Associations for Women's Rights in Development, and; Women Against Violence Europe
- Through the Kosovo Women's Fund (KWF), in 2019 and 2021 KWN has distributed 22 grants to diverse organizations, totalling €104,720.05

2) Enhanced the capacities of women politicians and potential future women politicians to engage in politics;

- KWN has enhanced the capacities of 953 women politicians and future women politicians through trainings and mentoring
- 1,704 diverse women activists attended trainings and mentoring organized by KWN and partner organizations to increase capacities and understandings of participants on EU directives and EU accession process in general, including EU Gender Equality Acquis, and Gender and Disability Rights, among others

3) Improved engagement of women citizens, particularly those hitherto marginalized, in political and decision-making processes;

- Through info-sessions and meetings, 2,821 citizens and politicians met and discussed sector-specific issues and common issues and obstacles they face in their regions.
- 112 meetings were organized between diverse women and leaders, officials, and the EC/EUO/EUSR
- 2,356 women and men (1,918 women and 438 men) were beneficiaries of Kosovo Women's Fund through this Action. A total of 21,920 women and men beneficiaries of KWF since 2012

Activities

The Action will continue involving the implementation of the following activities:

- Develop improved consultation mechanisms for informing constituents and gathering input on political/EU accession issues
- Train/mentor WCSOs and women politicians in legal analysis, etc.
- Support WCSOs serving women WwD and minorities to engage more women in WCSOs, existing networks and politics

- Organize networking meetings among KWN, and KLGE to strengthen these networks, solidarity and joint advocacy
- Distribute sub-grants to diverse WCSOs via KWF
- Further develop volunteer program for WCSOs
- Develop philanthropy supporting WCSOs
- Develop relations between women's networks in Kosovo and Europe
- Organize interactive capacity building and mentoring on topics women in politics identified
- Ensure better media coverage of women politicians
- Organize meetings linking women politicians, leaders and citizens/constituents at all level
- Facilitate meetings between women leaders, officials, and the EC/EUO/EUSR to discuss EU accession issues.

Target Groups

This Action supports three existing networks, supported by "solid" constituents, in advocating women's priorities, particularly related to EU accession. First, a target group and beneficiary is KWN, which now has 194 members: WCSOs of diverse ethnicities (Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Turkish, Bosnian, Gorani), ages, abilities (blind, deaf, physically limited) and geographic areas (29 municipalities, rural and urban); KLGE which is comprised of women politicians, women in civil society, GEOs and some men gender equality advocates; and CfE which includes women leaders (ministers, deputy ministers, parliamentarians, GEOs, KLGE, businesswomen, journalists, artists) and men equality advocates. Secondary target groups/beneficiaries will include policy-makers, political party representatives, officials, men and children, who will benefit from gender equality and reforms related to EU accession. They are selected as necessary for ensuring transformative changes in gender roles.

Timeframe and budget

From Jan. 2019 through Dec. 2022, Kosovo Women's Network (KWN), Organisation of Persons with Muscular Dystrophy of Kosovo (OPMDK), Ruka Ruci (RR) and the European Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), are working on this Action, with a total budget of €600,500, where €540,000 come from the support of the European Union (EU) Office in Kosovo, and €60,500 from other contributions.

Implementing Partners' Contact Information

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