Evaluation Report

Further Advancing Women's Rights in Kosovo II (2021–2025) and Cumulative Impact of Sustained Support (2011–2025)

Recipient Organization: Kosovo Women's Network (KWN)
Implementing Donors/Financing Agencies: Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Evaluation Type: Final Evaluation of the Action (2021–2025) and Strategic Assessment of Cumulative Impact (2011–2025)
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Organization: EDUTASK
Place of Evaluation: Kosovo

Executive Summary

Over the last decade, Kosovo has established a progressive legal framework aligned with international standards, including the Istanbul Convention. However, an "implementation deficit" persists due to limited institutional capacity, social norms, and insufficient domestic financing. Since 2011, sustained support from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and Sida has enabled the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) to lead interventions in gender-based violence (GBV), healthcare, education, and political participation.

This evaluation assesses the results of the 2021–2025 action and the cumulative impact of the 14-year partnership. Using a mixed-methods approach including a desk review and 29 key informant interviews, the report analyzes the intervention through OECD/DAC criteria, focusing on impact, sustainability, and forward-looking strategies.

Key Evaluation Findings

The evaluation underscores that KWN's intervention represents a leading contribution to Kosovo's gender equality landscape, fundamentally reshaping it through systematic, long-term engagement.

1

Transformative Impact of KWN

KWN has evolved from an awareness-raising civil society participant to a central architect of the state's gender equality framework. Its strategic interventions have permanently shifted the discourse and policy environment.

2

The "Triangle Approach"

By aligning government institutions, international donors, and civil society, KWN's "Triangle Approach" has effectively strengthened and institutionalized the legal and institutional "hardware" necessary for a gender-equal state.

3

Critical Vulnerability: Operational "Software"

Despite robust legal frameworks, the operational "software"—encompassing human resources, effective service provision, and sustained political will—remains fragile. This essential component is severely exposed to funding volatility and poses a risk to long-term implementation.

Detailed Evaluation Findings by Thematic Area

The evaluation thoroughly assessed KWN's interventions across five core thematic areas, highlighting significant achievements, persistent challenges, and critical lessons learned over the program's duration.

Gender-based Violence (GBV) Response

KWN's work has had a profound **Impact** on GBV response, spearheading major legal reforms including the criminalization of domestic violence, adoption of the Istanbul Convention, and recognition of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) survivors. **Effectiveness** was bolstered by improved monitoring mechanisms that enhanced accountability of institutional responses and survivor support, while also pinpointing gaps for targeted capacity-building. However, the **sustainability** of survivor support services remains precarious due to donor dependency. A **key lesson** is the "observer effect" of physical monitors, which encourages adherence to professional standards. **Looking ahead**, KWN is poised to advocate for the inclusion of cyber violence in the Criminal Code and promote sustainable reintegration measures like social housing and employment opportunities for survivors.

Education and Gender Norms

Long-term change in education is evident through the support for public kindergarten construction, underscoring the vital role of care infrastructure in women's economic participation. **Effectiveness** was driven by a dual strategy of school-level piloting and policy advocacy. **Sustainability** is mixed: while infrastructure investments are durable, pedagogical reforms face vulnerability to ideological resistance. A **key lesson** is that framing gender equality as a "family issue" effectively reduces community resistance and fosters men's engagement. Moving **forward**, progress requires a shift from general advocacy to technical implementation, including supporting municipalities to adopt evidence-based models and integrating modules on harmful masculinities into national curricula.

Feminist Movement-Building

The **impact** of movement-building is clear in the creation of a resilient ecosystem that enabled 106 organizations to sustain operations and amplify marginalized voices, including Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian women. **Effectiveness** stemmed from KWN's central role in fostering solidarity and coordination during periods of financial and political uncertainty. Yet, **sustainability** is fragile due to heavy reliance on volunteer engagement and associated burnout risks. A **key lesson learned** is that durable movement-building necessitates institutional infrastructure and material support. Consolidation of existing organizational structures and establishing independent public funding mechanisms will be crucial to sustain the operational foundations of gender equality.

Healthcare Access and Rights

Significant **impact** is observed in the institutionalization of preventive screenings, such as mammograms and Pap tests, which are now routine public services, greatly expanding access for underserved groups like women with disabilities and rural residents. The **effectiveness** stems from cooperation with the Ministry of Health, embedding violence response procedures within health service delivery. Despite this, **sustainability** is challenged by donor reliance for rights education and limited institutional capacity within the Ministry. A crucial **lesson learned** is that improved service access hinges on trust and guaranteed confidentiality. **Future efforts** should focus on strengthening domestic financing for preventive education and enhancing the operational role of Gender Equality Officers (GEOs) for better policy and budget integration.

Political Participation

The **impact** here reflects a transition from symbolic representation to substantive influence, with women actively shaping municipal budgets for community needs. The **effectiveness** of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda is demonstrated by the state's recognition and compensation of wartime sexual violence survivors. However, **sustainability** remains fragile due to a durability gap where individual empowerment persists, but collective advocacy platforms are vulnerable to donor cycles. The **key lesson learned** emphasizes that collective structures are essential for sustaining political participation. **Future progress** requires addressing informal power structures, such as the "oda mentality" (male decision-making gatherings), through political financing reforms and strengthening independent, legally safeguarded public funding for civil society.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) has demonstrated a transformative partnership model, effectively driving systemic change across education, political participation, and feminist movement-building. Their strategic interventions have built significant capacity and fostered a resilient feminist ecosystem, amplifying the voices of marginalized groups and laying critical groundwork for gender equality.

KWN's work highlights a critical **"hardware vs. software" sustainability gap**: while legal and policy frameworks for gender equality (the "hardware") have been advanced, the long-term material and institutional support (the "software") needed for their sustained implementation remains fragile. This includes continued reliance on volunteer efforts and external funding, posing risks of activist burnout and organizational fatigue.

Despite these challenges, KWN has fostered a robust **Ecosystem of Resistance**, enabling 106 active women's organizations to sustain operations and collectively advocate for rights and representation. This ecosystem's resilience is strong, built on solidarity and coordination, but requires diversified and stable funding to ensure its durability.

Recommendations

For KWN

- **Strategic Shifts:**
  - Strengthen inter-organizational collaboration and promote young feminist leadership to ensure movement continuity.
  - Consolidate existing organizational infrastructure to enhance operational resilience.
- **Key Programmatic Actions:**
  - Advocate for increased funding for inclusive education and digital literacy initiatives for women and girls.
  - Support emerging women leaders with advanced political training and long-term mentoring.
  - Diversify funding streams for grassroots initiatives to reduce dependency on external sources.

For Donors (ADA/Sida)

- Prioritize long-term, flexible funding that supports core institutional infrastructure and material needs, moving beyond project-specific grants.
- Invest in capacity-building for financial sustainability and diversified resource mobilization for women's organizations.
- Support initiatives that address activist burnout and foster sustainable volunteer engagement models.

For Government Institutions

- Ensure consistent implementation and monitoring of gender equality reforms in education, backed by adequate resource allocation.
- Advocate for electoral reforms that actively remove barriers to women's political participation and retention.
- Establish independent, public funding mechanisms to provide stable financial support for women's organizations, ensuring the operational foundations of gender equality are as durable as the legal frameworks.