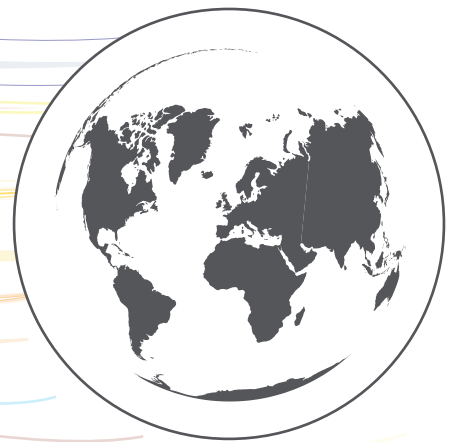


Kosovo: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Political Participation



February, 2015

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Kosovo: Overcoming Barriers to Women's Political Participation



February, 2015

■ LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
CEC	Central Election Commission
CEDAW	The Convention to End Discrimination Against Women
EU	European Union
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutes and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VV	"Vetevendosje" Self-Determination Movement

■ INTRODUCTION

From October 7 to 11, 2014 the National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) conducted an assessment of women's political participation in Kosovo's 2013 local elections and 2014 parliamentary elections. The assessment drew upon international standards for women's political participation developed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and NDI's own global programs on Gender, Women, and Democracy. The assessment focused on identifying challenges or "gaps" in the recruitment of women candidates, women's access to decision making positions, their nomination for positions by political parties, and women's roles within political parties' campaigns. Based on the assessment findings, NDI has developed recommendations to support gender equality within Kosovo's political parties and to support future electoral reform efforts.

NDI's assessment team included Ambassador Meryl Frank, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and, previously, mayor of Highland Park, New Jersey, United States; Laura Nichols, NDI's senior resident director in Yemen; Alexander Chavarria, NDI's senior resident director in Kosovo; Valon Kurhasani, NDI's senior program manager in Kosovo; and Pranvera Lipovica, NDI's program manager in Kosovo.

The Institute used three research methods to conduct the assessment: individual interviews, focus groups, and an online survey. The assessment team met with men and women representing a wide spectrum of government officials, opposition and political party leaders, members of parliament (MPs), and representatives of the media, academia, civil society and the international community. NDI also administered an online survey to a self-selected sample of 81 women party members from across the political spectrum. Of this total, 61 respondents were candidates in the 2013 local elections, while 12 ran in the 2014 parliamentary elections. Finally, NDI conducted three focus groups with branch-level women party members to explore their views on internal party procedures.

The following key themes emerged from NDI's assessment:

- While the technical requirements of Kosovo's electoral quota have generally been observed, the spirit of the law has not. Women are not cultivated as candidates or leaders, or provided the support give to male candidates. In some cases, male candidates use the quota to argue that women do not need to receive party support during the campaign because they are guaranteed seats.
- Despite the notable turnout of women in 2013 local elections, parties and civil society did not use this information strategically in the 2014 election to develop electoral strategies to win women's votes, educate the public about the role of women in politics, or demonstrate the strategic importance of women's votes. One reason for this is the difficulty of obtaining official gender disaggregated data on voting patterns and statistics.

- Informal recruitment and nomination processes disadvantaged women due to the reliance on male-dominated networks and late timeframe for recruitment. Women were often recruited at the last minute to meet the minimum number of legally required positions.
- Incumbents, particularly those in leadership positions, tend to be men. Incumbents received the majority of financial resources, political support, and visibility during the campaign. As a result, most women, many who were campaigning for the first time, were unable to mount effective campaigns or develop their public profile to win name recognition.
- When proposing candidates, party branches rarely nominate women. Branch leaders are usually among the first to be nominated, and few are women. Party branches lack strategies to recruit and retain women members between elections, and have a small pool of potential candidates from which to draw. As a result, party headquarters often must insert their own female candidates to meet the quota, bypassing branch nominees.
- Comprehensive electoral reform and the enhancement of women's participation in political processes would present significant opportunities for Kosovars to strengthen their confidence in the political system.
- Women in minority communities face greater cultural challenges to participating in politics, including more cultural resistance to women in politics, and a lack of educational and employment opportunities.

There are very few mechanisms within political parties through which women are able to access political leadership or pursue elected office in Kosovo. There is a disconnection between what party leadership says and women who were interviewed. Party leadership uniformly reported being unable to recruit sufficiently qualified women to ensure equal representation within party candidate lists. Many women interviewed spoke of significant challenges and obstacles to entering politics, including insufficient financial and political support from parties, and perceptions that the political environment is hostile to women's aspirations and needs.

Achieving meaningful women's political participation requires building the capacities of women candidates, increasing space within political parties, and fostering political will among party leadership. The assessment team concluded that greater effort is still needed in three primary categories below:

- 1) Increased party capacity to retain women: Parties are unable to attract women as party members and do not develop and maintain women through leadership development programs.
- 2) Increased space for women: Party decision-making structures and leadership positions at national and branch levels are inaccessible to most women. Additionally, parties lack the will and ability to make space for competent and talented women. There are few opportunities for women to hold party or government positions, which might instill greater appreciation of women's contribution to their parties.

3) Greater political will to create meaningful women's participation: For example, all political party leaders acknowledge the benefit of a gender quota but follow the quota in letter rather than in spirit. Parties often do not take women seriously as members, leaders, or candidates. Too often, parties recruit women simply to fulfill the minimum legal quota requirement.

Although political parties may claim to take an interest in women's advancement, this rhetoric does not necessarily translate to real commitments and parties face multiple challenges during implementation. However, a high turnout of women voters in 2013 municipal elections has increased party leaders' understanding of the power of women's votes, which has created an opportunity for change. There is an increasing appreciation for women's political power and the advantages that women candidates bring to parties by attracting women's votes, if not necessarily the value of women as party members, leaders, and government officials. This report outlines some of the issues raised in the assessment team's meetings and offers a framework for overcoming obstacles to increasing women's political participation in Kosovo.

■ BACKGROUND

The importance of women's political participation is recognized internationally. The Convention to End Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) calls upon signatory states to ensure women's equal right to be eligible for and hold public office.ⁱ In its 2012 Resolution on Women and Political Participation, the U.N. General Assembly urges all states to: "Strongly encourage political parties to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women, to develop their capacity to analyze issues from a gender perspective, and to adopt policies to promote the ability of women to participate fully at all levels of decision-making within those political parties."ⁱⁱ International organizations have articulated good practices for parties to support women as party members, candidates, and elected representatives. The assessment drew in particular upon the standards proposed in *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties*, produced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with NDI, and the *Handbook on Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties* of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

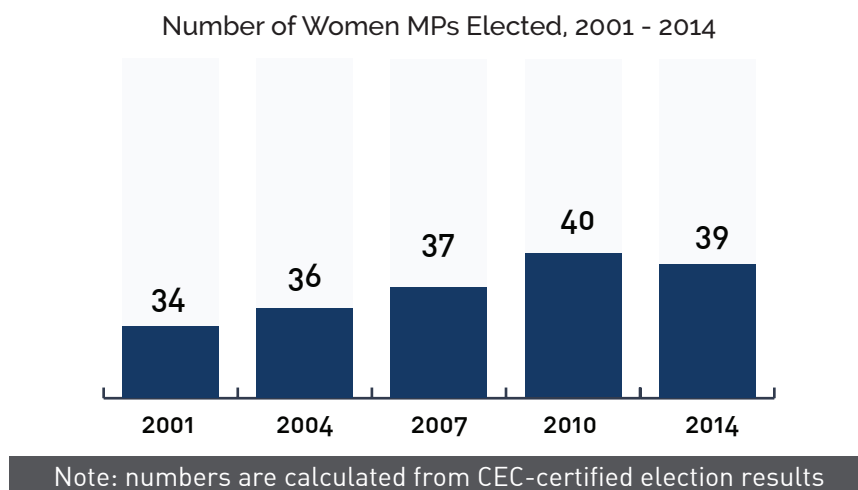
The Pristina Principles developed at the International Summit on Women's Empowerment hosted by President Atifete Jahjaga in 2012 and supported by USAID, states that "Women's political under-representation impinges on society's recognition of the economic, security, justice, and social problems they face, and government's preparedness to address them authentically."ⁱⁱⁱ Expanding women's political participation leads to tangible gains for democratic governance. Women's full and active participation in politics results in positive dividends including policy development that is more responsive to citizens' needs,^{iv} increased cooperation across party lines,^v and more sustainable peace.^{vi} When women are empowered as political leaders, countries often experience higher standards of living and positive developments in education, infrastructure, and health.^{vii} Expanding political participation to include women can improve the functioning of governments, legislatures, and political parties, and can help government provide more tangible benefits for citizens.

Women's Representation in Kosovo

Kosovo has made important strides in increasing the number of women in political leadership. Though the number of women in executive leadership positions remains low, the presence of influential women in a handful of key positions is changing public attitudes about women and creating momentum for increased women's leadership in the future. The implementation of a legislative gender quota has opened greater avenues for women's political participation and assists women in overcoming barriers to political participation. By increasing the number of women serving as public role models it also is helping change public opinion about women's ability to participate in politics.

In numbers, 32.5 percent of members of parliament (MPs) are women. For three out of six years since Kosovo's independence, a woman has been head of state. Several women ministers in government have and continue to hold key posts, and the head of the Central Election Commission (CEC) is a woman. In 2013 local elections, a woman mayor was elected for the first time. These are significant achievements that should be recognized. However, there remain many key leadership roles and sectors in Kosovo where women are not represented, and significant barriers to women's participation still remain.

Kosovo's electoral law regulates the application of a 30 percent gender quota for municipal and national assembly seats. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) first applied a gender quota system in Kosovo in October 2000. Regulation 39/2000, introduced by UNMIK, required at least 30 percent of female candidates on party lists and was met with great support by Kosovar women and civil society. According to the Law on General Elections, the CEC must ensure that party lists apply the gender quota in order to receive certification.^{viii} The CEC must also apply the gender quota when distributing seats in the Assembly among political parties.^{ix} While some challenge the value of the gender quota, most view its introduction in Kosovo positively, as it has directly led to an increase in the number of women within the National Assembly, Kosovo's parliament.



While the 30 percent quota in national and local assemblies, as mandated by the Law on General Elections, has for the most part been observed, the 2004 Law on Gender Equality, which stipulates that women hold 40 percent of appointed government positions, has not. Women's representation in government positions outside of the assemblies falls far below the 40 percent threshold. For instance, analyses of women's representation within the CEC in 2013 and 2014 elections show that electoral managerial bodies had less than 20 percent women's representation, even though the chair of the CEC is a woman.^x The CEC was unable to meet mandated representation levels because parties are not submitting enough women nominees for appointment to election commissions.^{xi} Women held only three of the 19 ministerial and five deputy prime minister positions in the last government, formed in 2010, although their portfolios were influential. By the end of the mandate in 2014, only one woman continued to hold a senior position. The situation is similar at the local government level.

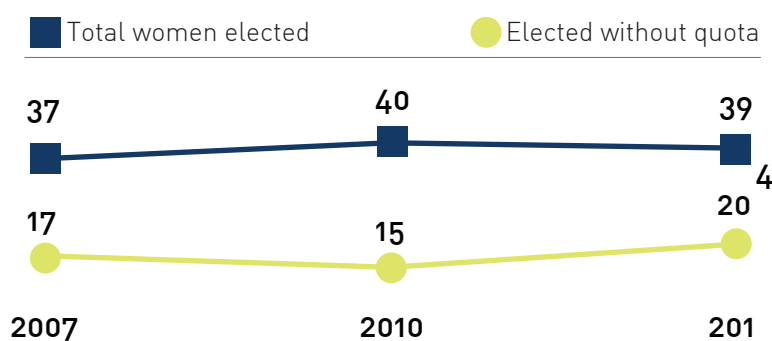
2013 and 2014 Election Results

Local elections on November 3, 2013 and parliamentary elections on June 8, 2014 were the first held across Kosovo's entire territory, in accordance with the normalization agreement mediated by the European Union (EU) in Brussels between Kosovo and Serbia. Compared to elections in 2010, which were characterized by widespread fraud and the repetition of voting in several polling centers, both elections were sufficiently transparent, well organized and largely in compliance with international standards, according to the domestic election observation mission organized by Democracy in Action.^{xii}

The quota was fulfilled in most of Kosovo's 38 municipalities. In four – Drenas, Peja, Skënderaj and North Mitrovica – the quota was not met or enforced and women hold fewer than 30 percent of local assembly seats. The quota was exceeded in Kaçanik, Kamenicë, Junik and Hani i Elezit, where women's representation in the municipal assembly is above 40 percent. Hani Elezit leads the pack with 47 percent of its municipal councilors being women. In addition, Kosovo's first woman mayor, Mimoza Kusari Lila, was elected in Gjakova in the 2013 local elections, a significant milestone that provides greater space and motivation for other women to pursue elected office.

Since 2007, Kosovo has had a system of open party lists, in which voters can vote for a party as well as select specific candidates named on enumerated party lists. In the parliamentary election, voters can vote for up to five individuals through a preferential ballot, and can vote for one individual in municipal elections. Over time, more women have been elected through the preferential ballot, signaling greater public support for women candidates.

Women MPs Elected By Preferential Ballot, Without Quota

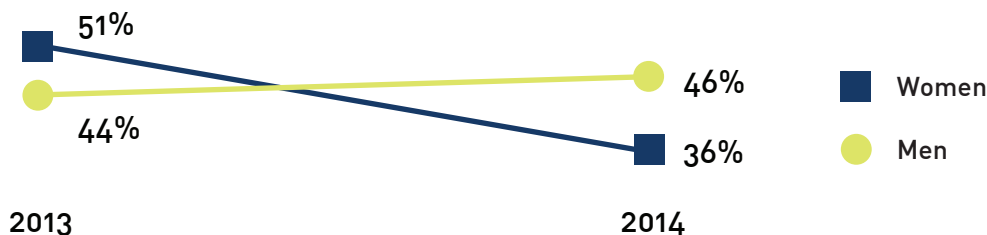


Note: the numbers are calculated from the CEC certified election results

Voter turnout

Voter turnout among women exceeded that of men in all but two municipalities in Kosovo (Skënderaj and Drenas) in the 2013 local elections. This marked the first time in Kosovo's electoral history that more women cast votes than men. The situation reversed itself during the 2014 parliamentary elections, in which nearly 15 percent fewer women voted than in 2013 local elections. In contrast, slightly more men voted in parliamentary than local elections. The reasons for this significant gender gap in voter turnout are unclear and deserve further inquiry.

Women as a percentage of Voter Turnout
2013 and 2014 elections

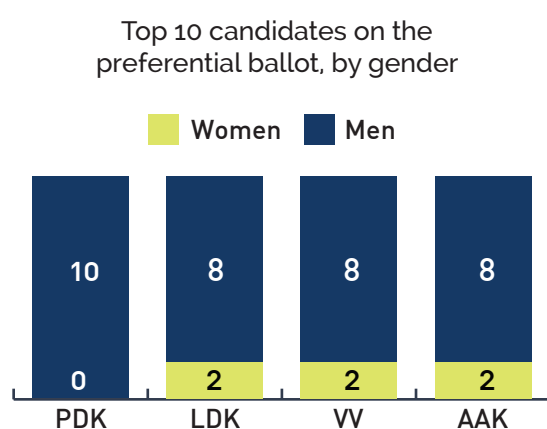


Note: Percentage of those of a particular gender who voted for those of that same gender registered to vote

■ FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Importance of the Gender Quota

A majority of interlocutors agree that the gender quota has helped to increase women's representation in parliament and in decision-making positions. Most women and men interviewed agreed that Kosovo would not have elected 39 women MPs in 2014 without the quota. In each successive election, more women are getting into parliament by virtue of the number of preferential votes personally received, rather than through apportionment to ensure quota numbers. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 20 percent of the top five (5) or ten (10) most-voted candidates on most parties' lists were women, despite the fact that they were competing against high political profile candidates.



Note: numbers are calculated from CEC-certified election results

There was general agreement that it would be premature to disable the quota, as it will take a few more elections before Kosovo can achieve equal representation of women without the quota requirement. It is still difficult for women to win elections on their own merit once they have secured a spot on their party lists. Nearly 75 percent of women party members surveyed for the assessment agreed that the gender quota should remain in place and that authorities should continue to enforce the quota. The fact that a majority (86 percent) of surveyed respondents believes that women are not duly represented in Kosovar society reinforces this sentiment.

Challenges of the Quota

Despite its effectiveness in increasing women's access to politics, the quota can be used against women. Male party members competing against women on the preferential ballot frequently told supporters that women candidates would win office automatically through the quota requirement, so there was no need to "throw votes away" by casting preferential votes for a woman candidate. This prevents more women from getting elected and can distort the election process by under-representing the amount of support that women candidates are able to garner.

Even women politicians make a distinction between those who win office based on votes, rather than as a result of the quota. Often, women MPs identify themselves by the number of votes they received in the last election. To avoid being marginalized,

women elected as a result of the quota must distinguish themselves and must begin work early to prove that their contribution makes a difference and that they are serious in their roles as parliamentarians and decision-makers. It is important that women's wings within parties, women MPs and the political parties stop drawing distinctions between women elected through different mechanisms, as women MPs must be treated with equal respect.

Barriers to Recruiting Women Candidates

Getting on the List

The assessment found that parties' lack of willingness to create greater space for women as candidates on party lists is the most difficult obstacle for women who want to run for office. Parties' approaches for getting women on the candidate lists vary but there are few, if any, examples where parties go beyond the legal requirement of the gender quota.

There are limited avenues for women candidates to get on their party's list. Women candidates' names come from dedicated women's wings within parties or from a party's leader, which leaves aspirant women candidates with few avenues through which they can lobby in favor of their candidacies. Because party branches rarely nominate women, a woman's ability to make it onto a party's list is often dependent upon the support of senior party leaders, and the value of their public profile, finances and skills to the party leadership. Most party leaders with whom the assessment team met confirmed that their parties heavily scrutinize the backgrounds of women candidates. The situation is different for male candidates, who enjoy a broad scope of avenues through which they can win a spot of the party's list, beginning from party branches, all the way to the party's presidency and interest groups both inside and outside of the party.

Most political parties in Kosovo have not updated their nomination procedures or they do not adhere to official procedures in practice. As a result, parties often do not follow transparent practices that would create greater space for women and youth. In these circumstances, women face structural obstacles to entering political parties, which have entrenched and rigid power structures and where a few individuals have a dominating influence over key decisions, such as the party's candidate list. Moreover, these individuals control access to training and other advancement opportunities for party members and potential candidates.^{xiii}

Reluctance to Run

Many women do not see an upside to entering politics and taking on a political career which makes recruiting women candidates for office more difficult. A 2014 UNDP poll shows that only eight percent of women are involved in political parties, versus 22 percent of men.^{xiv} Some women interviewed mentioned the challenge of succeeding within male-dominated political parties, the impact of entering politics on their families, welfare or careers, fear of overzealous media attention, and a lack of confidence in their ability to serve effectively as reasons for a reluctance to run for office. Polling data has shown that nearly a third of women in the general population believe that women are held back by men in political parties, and that discrimination is a major cause of women's low representation in office.^{xv} Women perceive the political arena as biased against them.

Many women perceive political ambition as an invitation for public scrutiny into their private lives, which would directly impact their families. Most women have a pragmatic sense of the heavy commitment required to run for public office and decide to forgo the significant sacrifices to their personal and professional lives that would be required of candidates for political office. In addition, some interviewees said that women are reluctant to pursue a career in politics for economic reasons, as becoming a candidate may require them to leave their jobs. A partisan identity could be detrimental to women's careers. In all cases, women who entered politics depended on the support of their families in order to overcome numerous obstacles.^{xvi}

Women in Minority Communities

Women from minority communities face additional obstacles to entering politics. Many minority communities live in small rural municipalities with traditional values that do not support women's political participation.^{xvii} As a result, there is a lack of family support for women to participate in politics at any level. Minority political parties have fewer resources and less access to decision-making positions than majority parties. In this context, non-Albanian parties have even more limited space for women to gain exposure and prove their ability to run for office and govern effectively.

The most immediate barrier to political participation facing minority women is exclusion from entering local government. Most minority communities live in rural areas where the most effective way to begin a political career is to serve in local government before advancing to the national level. However, local government positions reserved for minority communities are often held by men. Men also hold important decision making processes in informal settings after work hours, when women are socially discouraged from being outside of the home or have family duties to fulfill, contribute to their exclusion from local politics.

Another obstacle identified by minority interviewees is a lack of party structures to recruit and prepare more women to take leadership roles. The cultural context and a lack of financial support and economic empowerment among minority communities also contribute to a lack of participation by women. In addition, there is a general recognition that it is much harder for minority parties to engage women from the rural areas, where the majority of minority communities live, adding to their problems the lack of access to education and/or employability.

Despite these obstacles, there are ample cases of minority women candidates who have changed the attitudes and beliefs of their family members after reaching leadership roles. Overcoming these obstacles enabled them to succeed and to continue being active in public and political life.

Late Candidate Recruitment

The assessment team found widespread agreement that the short lead-time ahead of early parliamentary elections in June 2014 prevented parties from recruiting more women and encouraging them to pursue office. This short timeframe left little time for candidate recruitment, preparation and campaigning. Both parties and candidates perpetuate the issue of late candidate recruitment. On the one hand,

parties expressed a need to recruit women earlier, before the legal deadline for submitting their candidate list ahead of elections. Otherwise, parties acknowledge that they will continue struggling to elect women. On the other hand, party officials told the assessment team that candidates themselves often prevent early candidate recruitment, as many candidates are not prepared to abandon their jobs so far in advance of the election or be identified with a political party. For this reason, among others, the current system favors incumbents who are able to build profiles and connect with citizens throughout the mandate.

Challenges during the Campaign Period

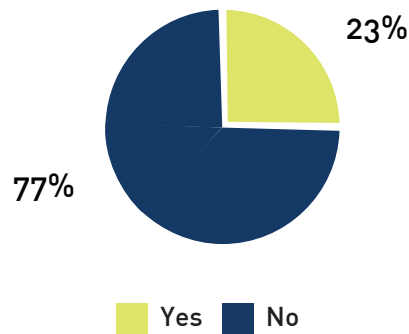
Low Public Profile

Interviewees agreed that it is critical for women in politics to build a strong public and media profile. In every example, women candidates who have been successful in attracting large numbers of votes credit their media profile and superior communication skills as a major factor in their success. The last-minute recruitment of candidates in the June 2014 elections disadvantaged women candidates in preparing for the campaign. A majority of women candidates did not have an established public profile, which made it more challenging for them to attract votes. Many parties told the assessment team that, although they were pleased with the caliber of women recruited by the party, women candidates were unable to connect with citizens and attract votes within a 10-day election campaign, despite being articulate and having impressive professional backgrounds. The short timeframe for preparation and campaigning meant that only a few of these women candidates were able to get elected.

The problem of inadequate public profiles is compounded by a lack of media opportunities for women candidates, through both; media opportunities they might have during different events and paid media by their own parties. The European Union's Election Observation Mission preliminary report notes that, "Political parties continue to be dominated by men and media give much more extensive coverage to male candidates."^{xviii} Another observation report on the 2014 elections by Democracy in Action noted that women's participation in campaign events was merely "symbolic," as women comprised just 5 percent of participants.^{xix}

Over a 10-day campaign, there are few opportunities for women to participate in debates. While the media did ask parties to send one woman candidate per two men for debates, in most cases, parties sent more experienced male candidates to represent the party on television. The lack of support and exposure was a critical factor for the lack of satisfactory electoral success for women. Of the women party members surveyed, 62 percent believe their party does not have a media strategy to promote women's image in politics.

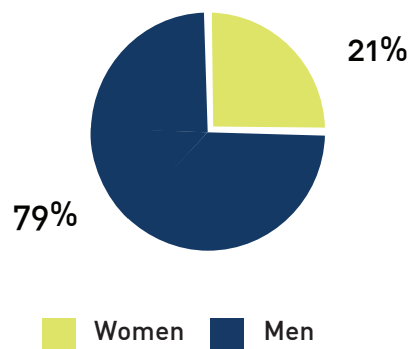
Online survey of women candidates and party members:
Are you satisfied with media promotion of women by
political parties in 2014?



Gender stereotypes and portrayal

The team found mixed opinions about the amount of media discrimination and stereotyping that exists among the Kosovo media. In many cases, opponents used women's age and gender as arguments against their candidacies. Polling data from the UNDP confirms that the general population tends to associate men with political office and many of those interviewed say that voters tend to favor men over women as candidates. Voting patterns from the last two elections support the argument that citizens are more likely to give their vote to a man than a woman when casting preferential votes. According to the results of the 2014 elections, voters preferred casting preferential votes for men by a ratio of four to one. However, a majority of people interviewed, including women who ran as candidates in the last elections, point to the election of a women mayor and the increase in women candidates elected without the quota as evidence that this situation is slowly improving, largely due to more women in leadership roles, which is helping to shift attitudes.

Percentage of voters writing in female versus male candidates by preferential ballot



Some interviewed raised the belief that women do not support other women to help them get elected. While this theory was raised several times during the assessment, the team could find little evidence to support it. In fact, during three focus groups of women political activists, there was little negativity expressed toward any of the women who hold leadership roles, and many women did not hesitate to describe women from other political parties as "brave," "professional" or "competent."

However, the assessment team didn't find evidence of spontaneous collaboration or support for women in politics from women in business, the media, and civil society. It would appear that despite the increased number of women who are now on the political stage in Kosovo, barriers exist to collaboration among various women's groups in Kosovar society.

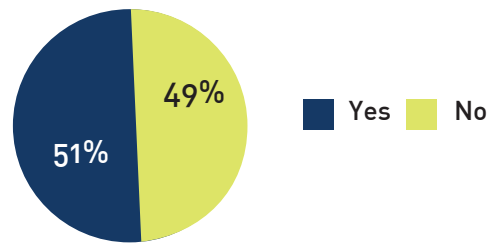
Lack of Networking Opportunities

Women lack access to networking opportunities that men routinely use to raise their profiles. Women candidates shared with the assessment team that there are few networking opportunities, especially in rural areas, which makes it more difficult for women to contact voters and ask for their support. Environments in which local political discourse is common, such as odas rooms in traditional Albanian households, have typically been the domain of men and are less accessible to women. Decisions about which candidates parties will support are often made in such environments, again disadvantaging women candidates unable to attend.

Lack of Financial Support from Parties

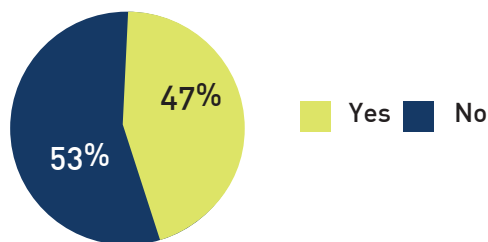
Political parties interviewed by the assessment team commonly reported that women candidates lack the necessary resources to mount a strong campaign ahead of elections. Most parties said that they were unable to offer financial support or training to candidates in advance of the election. One party offered a modest level of support to all candidates by providing them with leaflets, materials and communication support. Another party told the assessment team that they were upfront with candidates about the need to be self-sufficient and independently financed. This policy affects both male and female candidates, but women may have less ability or willingness to spend personal finances on a political campaign. In comparison, male candidates often have greater access to both in-kind party resources and fundraising opportunities through different business networks to which they belong. In other instances, candidates who have family connections to a party's leadership or its founders have distinct advantages for winning elections, which further marginalizes groups such as women.

Online survey of women candidates and party members:
Does your party support male and female candidates
with equal financial resources?



In addition, most women told the team that political parties did not offer any training or campaigning guidelines to first-time candidates. Other women who had more experience were better at optimizing social media but were limited to small circle campaigning in their neighborhoods or villages. Very few women candidates had their own personal campaign team and a targeted campaign operation.

Online survey of women candidates and party members:
Does your party conduct training for women candidates?



A majority of women party members surveyed expressed the opinion that there is a lack of necessary support, including both financial and educational support, for women candidates to be able to compete equally with their male colleagues.

Internal Party Competition

Women candidates face heightened internal competition because of their gender and lack of a record of leadership. While the preferential ballot system allows women candidates to build a base of their own popular support, it forces them to compete, in effect, against fellow party members. Despite having strong local support and good credentials, many women must still compete with well-known male candidates for one of five positions available on the preferential ballot. Parties disadvantage women candidates by promoting favored candidates, most of whom are men, over women, and discouraging allocation of resources to women on the basis that the quota will put them in office. In one case, NDI learned of a party maintaining two lists, one for women and one for men, to promote male candidates. Many women reported that this internal competition discourages them from seeking political office.

After the Election

Preparing Women for Decision-making Roles

With a large amount of turnover in both local and national elections, there are many new members ready to step into their roles as decision makers. The assessment team found little evidence that political parties will prepare their elected members with training or orientation, and it will likely fall on NGOs and elected bodies to fill this void.

New member orientation is even more critical for non-majority women MPs and members, who have few mentors to learn from, fewer peers to work with, and who face the challenging task of representing minority constituents and advocating for their issues and priorities.

Retaining Women as Party Members during Non-Electoral Cycles

Party leaders unanimously agree that parties struggle to keep women members engaged between election cycles. Lack of training and opportunities to exercise leadership discourages women from maintaining political involvement. Simply placing women on candidate lists is not sufficient. Furthermore, parties lack a strategy for retaining women candidates who do not win elections and preparing them for the next election cycle.

■ RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen the Legal Framework Protecting Women's Political Participation

Given the importance of legal frameworks such as the gender quota in creating space for women to overcome barriers to their participation in politics, NDI recommends the following in order to ensure an enabling environment for women to enter politics:

- Undertake a review of the electoral law and the gender equality law^{xx} and their implementation to ensure greater and more effective women's political participation. The electoral and gender equality laws and any proposal for laws governing political parties should be in accordance. This legal framework should include enforceable sanctions and penalties.
- Support the intent of the gender quota as a mechanism for equal representation and give public recognition to the benefits it has provided by establishing women in political office and changing attitudes towards women. Parties should embrace the spirit of the gender quota by developing strategies to recruit and retain women as party members, preparing and supporting them to run as successful candidates, and supporting women's leadership in parties and in government.
- Civil society organizations should monitor the implementation of gender quotas, as well as its effects.

Understand and Respond to Women's Voting Power

Women demonstrated their potential electoral power in the 2013 municipal elections. Political parties will increase their performance at the polls by better understanding the issues of importance to women voters and developing campaign platforms and governing agendas to address them.

- Political parties should undertake research on women's voting patterns in order to understand women's preferences, priority issues, attitudes and trends. Research should also focus on women candidates – why they run and obstacles they face – civil society's role in supporting women, and public perceptions of women in politics. Such research will enable parties to develop more effective electoral strategies.
- Gender-disaggregated data on voter behavior should be provided to the public by the CEC in a timely manner and in appropriate digital formats.
- Minority political parties should explore additional resources, such as public opinion research, internal party gatherings and dialogue with members, which could be utilized in order to understand the unique situation of women's political participation in minority communities.

Recruit and Retain Women to Run for Office

- Parties should conduct candidate recruitment with sufficient time in anticipation of future elections. Candidate selection should be formal, clearly formulated and transparent.^{xxi} For example, candidates should be recruited more than one month before the election, and parties should introduce criteria for the recruitment process.

- Political parties should make greater efforts to retain women to run for future office, particularly during non-electoral cycles by including women in such activities as training programs, policy discussion roundtables and branch level party events.

Increase Campaign Support to Women Candidates

- Political party leadership should dedicate equal resources for women candidates, including human and financial support, media exposure, visibility and in-kind resources.
- Civil society, including media, should undertake measures to actively engage in voter education on gender sensitivity and the benefits of women's participation in politics.
- Political parties should ensure gender-balanced leadership at rallies, meetings, and media appearances.

Create Inclusive Party Structures and Leadership Positions

- All political parties should ensure greater representation of women in party structures, especially at branch levels, and adopt a clear gender equality statement, in accordance with international standards.^{xxii} For example, at the branch level, deputy presidents should be from a different gender as the branch president.
- Parties should consider adopting regulations to prevent individuals from holding multiple offices and leadership positions in their structures, in order to ensure more space for women and youth.
- In the absence of a law governing political parties, parties should explore approaches to ensure gender balance within the ranks of its leadership, reflecting the practices of the respective European party families.
- Political parties should formally disseminate general descriptions of the types and roles of positions within parties, such as those at the branch level, and appointed institutional positions at the local and national level, to ensure women are informed about opportunities to advance within parties.
- Party headquarters should encourage greater women's representation in branch leadership by communicating the political benefits of women's political participation and advancing branch level institutionalization of more inclusive leadership practices.

Develop Women's Leadership

- Political parties should explore opportunities to provide continuous skills development training for women members.
- Parties should provide training on governance skills for women and men assuming leadership positions.
- Parties should undertake measures to provide political opportunities for women outside of elected office, such as through appointed executive posts at local and national levels, party leadership posts, and local government posts.

■ ABOUT NDI

Founded in 1983, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, non-governmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights. Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen political and civic organizations, safeguard elections and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. With staff members and volunteer political practitioners from more than 100 nations, NDI brings together individuals and groups to share ideas, knowledge, experiences and expertise. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies.

The Institute's work upholds the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. NDI believes that equitable participation of women in politics and government is essential to building and sustaining democracy. Comprising more than 50 percent of the world's population, women continue to be under-represented as voters, political leaders and elected officials. Democracy cannot truly deliver for all of its citizens if half of the population remains underrepresented in the political arena. NDI helps women acquire the tools necessary to participate successfully in all aspects of the political process. Our programs engage women in legislatures, political parties and civil society as leaders, activists and informed citizens. These programs create an environment where women can advocate on matters of policy, run for political office, be elected, govern effectively and participate meaningfully in every facet of civic and political life.

Since 1999, the Institute has conducted democratization programs contributing to the development of broadly representative political parties, effective governing institutions, and a vibrant civil society in Kosovo. NDI works to strengthen key Kosovar political institutions, especially the parliament, and to create adequate channels through political parties and civil society through which all citizens can participate in the country's emerging political system as voters, advocates and watchdogs. It is NDI's hope that this report will contribute to that ongoing work.

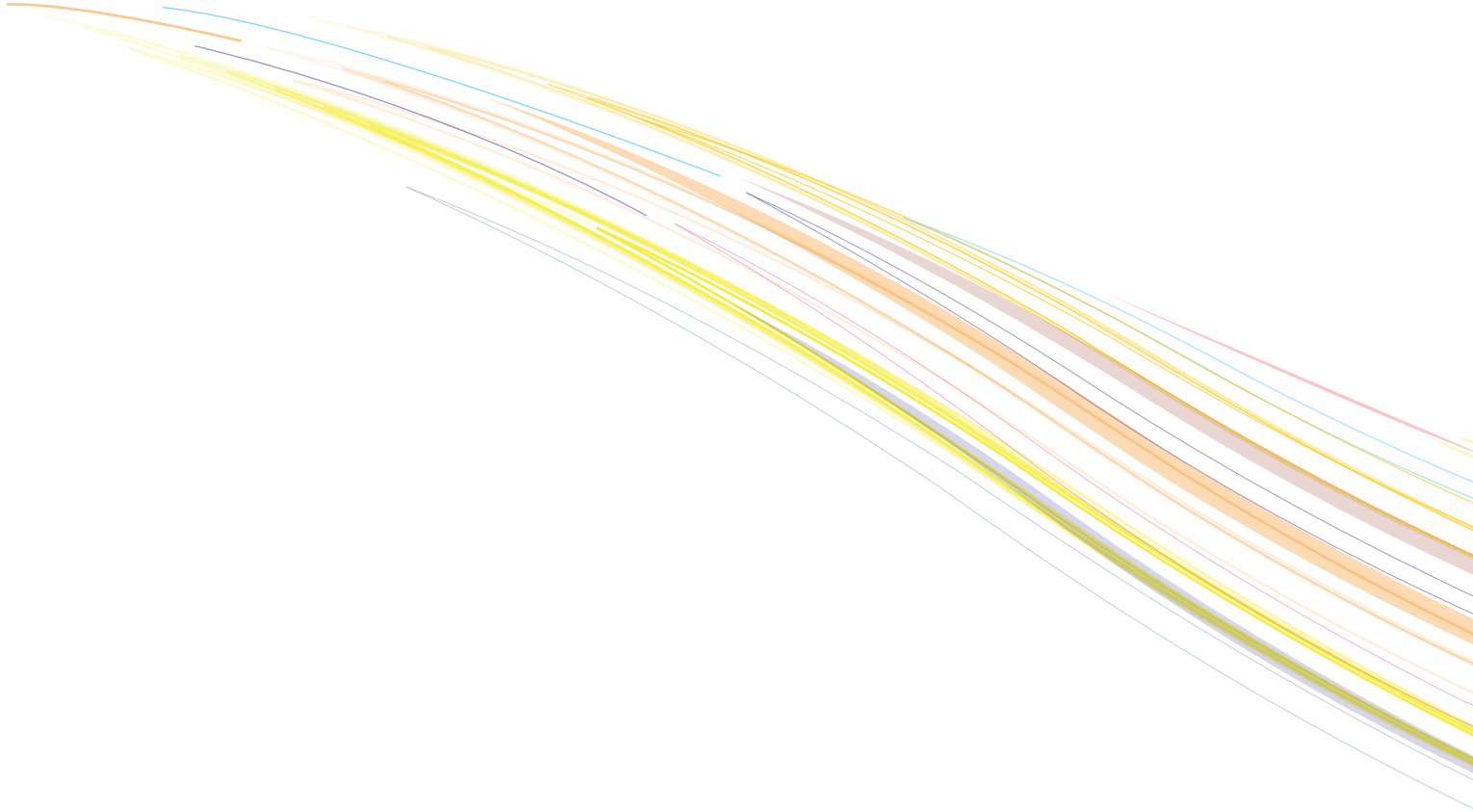
■ ENDNOTES

- i CEDAW, Article 7 states, "State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right...to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies. and (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government."
- ii UN Resolution of the General Assembly 66/130 on Women and Political Participation, 2012.
- iii Pristina Principles, October 2012, <https://www.ndi.org/files/Pristina-Principles-FINAL.pdf>.
- iv A. Cammisa, and B. Reingold, "Women in State Legislatures and State Legislative Research: Beyond Sameness and Difference," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* Vol. 4, No.2 (2004): 181-210, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40421515>.
- v C.S. Rosenthal, "Gender Styles in Legislative Committees" *Women & Politics* Vol. 21, No. 2 (2001): 21-46, http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J014v21n02_02.
- vi C. Chinkin, "Peace Agreements as a Means for Promoting Gender Equality and Ensuring the Participation of Women" *United Nations: Division for the Advancement of Women* (2003), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/peace2003/reports/bpchinkin.PDF>.
- vii L. Beaman et al, "Women Politicians, Gender Bias, and Policy-making in Rural India," *Background Paper for UNICEF's The State of the World's Children Report 2007*, 11, 15-16, http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/beaman_duflo_pande_topalova.pdf.
- viii Law No. 03/L-073 on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo (Article 27).
- ix Law No. 03/L-073 on General Elections in the Republic of Kosovo (Article 111.6).
- x International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), "Gender Analysis of Municipal Election Commissions, Polling Station Commissions and Polling Center Managers at the November 2013 Municipal Elections in Kosovo," March 2014.
- xi International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), "Gender Analyses of Municipal Election Commission, Polling Station Commissions and Polling Centre Managers at the November 2013 Municipal Elections in Kosovo", March 2014.
- xii Democracy in Action, "General Elections 2014: Extraordinary elections with ordinary challenges," *Democracy in Action*, 2014, available at: <http://www.demokracianeveprim.org/publikime/REObservation2014.pdf> (Accessed November 11, 2014).
- xiii OSCE/ODIHR, *Handbook for Promoting Women's Participation in Political Parties*, OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw, Poland, 2014, p. 193.
- xiv UNDP, Kosovo, "The leadership and participation of women in politics," *Public Pulse Report*, 2014, p. 22.
- xv *Ibid*, pp. 28-9.
- xvi Similarly, a majority of men and women polled believe family pressure, lack of state support, tradition, and lack of women in business are key factors keeping women from being political leaders. *Ibid*, p.16.
- xvii *Ibid*, p. 10.
- xviii European Union Observation Mission, "Preliminary Statement, Kosovo Legislative Elections, 8 June 2014, 2014," available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/euom/missions/2014/kosovo/pdf/euom-kosovo2014-preliminary-statement_en.pdf (Accessed October 15, 2014).

- ^{xix} Democracy in Action, "General Elections 2014: Extraordinary elections with ordinary challenges," Democracy in Action, 2014, available at: <http://www.demokracianeveprim.org/publikime/REObservation2014.pdf> (Accessed November 11, 2014).
- ^{xx} Legislative Program 2015, approved on 06 meeting of Government of the Republic of Kosovo with decision no. 02/06, date 14.01.2015, "Draft law on amending and supplementing the Law No. 2004/2 on Gender Equality".
- ^{xxi} OSCE/ODIHR Handbook, p. 65. The Pristina Principles call for the creation of "democratic structures within political parties through by-laws, funding transparency and equity, and internal election procedures that enable women to take party leadership positions that carry authentic power." Pristina Principles, 2011.
- ^{xxii} UNDP and NDI, Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation, February 2012, p.⁴

The original version of this report is in English, which was translated into Albanian and Serbian.

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