



# **LOCAL POLICY PRIORITIES**

**WOMEN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

**2017**

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## PREFACE

Today, societies around the world still have formal and informal barriers for women to meaningfully participate in local and national levels of government. In Kosovo, women are still facing significant challenges when pursuing elected or appointed office, as well as in accessing political leadership. We, at National Democratic Institute (NDI), believe that for women to achieve meaningful political participation will require political leadership's willingness to create greater spaces for women activists within the parties and be able to build their leadership, networking, advocacy and campaign capacities.

To support women and political parties to overcome some of these challenges, NDI, with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), designed the Women Leadership Academy (WLA). The WLA aims at assisting women from political parties in Kosovo to further develop their leadership, network and policy development skills. This Academy is a follow up activity of Week of Women (WOW) that provides participants in depth training and coaching opportunities. From the 2017 WOW graduates, NDI selected 30 participants from different regions to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> WLA. In this publication, NDI and USAID are proud to present the accomplishments of these remarkable Kosovo women. They took the challenge and committed themselves to decipher, analyze, advocate on and influence the political processes and address issues important to their communities.

Given that Kosovo will hold local elections this October, the WLA program was designed this time around aiming assisting the participants with the advancement of skills in policy analysis and debate. The participants identified and researched local issues that mattered most to Kosovo citizens with an emphasis on women's concerns. The participants developed through the Academy and have the ownership of four Position Papers on the topics of education, primary healthcare, employment, and women in leadership. Through the WLA participants were coached to articulate the findings related to the identified issues and shared the latter with the political party leaders.

NDI believes that Kosovo's democracy will be strengthened when civic and political activists, particularly women, youth, and minorities, are empowered not only to identify, conduct and ensure the implementation of issue-based advocacy but also by given the space and resources to emerging political activists to join party structures and enable them to participate in all political processes, including elections. To crystalize this belief, NDI Kosovo is currently implementing a Political Processes and Parliamentary Support Program, in partnership and funded by USAID. The overall goal of the program, where the WLA is one of the stellar activities, is to strengthen linkages between citizens, parties and institutions, to incentivize and orient the government to be more responsive to public interest.

In emerging democracies, like in Kosovo, the strength of the political parties is measured by their ability to be more representative of all sectors of society including women; be open and transparent; and effectively influence policy, political institutions, coalesce with other parties, and subsequently represent the interest of society in general. Through these position papers we highly expect that these women activities can be seen, heard and valued by the political leaders. We hope the findings and recommendations from these position papers will enrich political platforms ahead of local elections this October and, consequently, deliver greater benefits to all Kosovars.

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## METHODOLOGY

After the completion of the first phase of the “Women Leadership Academy”, where the participating women built their skills on research and policy development, they created four informal groups to address the following issues: education, primary healthcare, employment and participation of women in decision-making positions in the local level. Being an ambitious initiative and with the purpose of further building the abilities of the participants, to each group was assigned a consultant with relevant expertise to help the group members with research and writing of position papers.

Initially, a research and analysis of the legislative framework pertaining relevant fields was conducted whereby the participating women had the opportunity to learn more on the competences of the municipalities in this regard. Based on the initial document prepared by each group, besides consulting the existing materials, the participants supported by the consultants undertook various activities in order to ensure first-hand information. The groups had direct meetings in the field with various experts on the respective issues and municipal officials who lead relevant departments, whereas some of the groups used questionnaires in the field in order to acquire quantitative data.

After the end of the research, the groups went on to systemise the data acquired in the field as well as to process and analyse them and prepared their first drafts. In order to supplement the documents containing the positions of women concerning the above-mentioned issues, the women organised consultative meetings with representatives of civil society, political parties and various institutions with participants from all Kosovo regions and ethnicities.

Furthermore, the women presented and discussed their positions in front of the Lobby for Gender Equality and carried out additional activities in the field in order to raise the awareness of the citizens on the problems related to the above-mentioned issues. Marking of the International Labour Day, various visits to schools and healthcare facilities in order to have a closer look to their work and problems; participation in roundtable discussions and numerous media appearances were some of these activities.

Based on the expertise provided by the consultants, findings collected from the field, surveys, roundtable discussions and existing publications the groups drafted the recommendations which aim at improving of relevant issues from the gender perspective. Finally, it should be emphasised that the position papers aim at presenting opinions on specific issues in order to influence the targeted audiences with the ideas and recommendations related to issues concerned.



# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and economic empowerment of women are necessary to attain inclusive and sustainable development, and especially to eradicate poverty throughout the world.<sup>1</sup> Women make great inputs to the economy, whether through business as entrepreneurs and employees, in agriculture, or through their contributions to unpaid care work and household chores. But women's potential remains largely unutilized, mainly due to the fact that they have limited or no access to productive and dignified work—work at which their rights are respected, no matter the task they perform. They are also disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation in the job market.

According to a study performed by McKinsey Global Institute, “closing gender gaps in labour-force participation rates, part-time versus full-time work and the composition of employment would add 12-25% to global GDP by 2025. Other studies, using a variety of methodologies, find similar potential gains.”<sup>2</sup> Another study by Democracy for Development (D4D) (2015)<sup>3</sup>, supports the hypothesis that closing gender gaps more concretely through higher participation of women in the labour force, results in greater economic growth.

Economic empowerment of women may be achieved through various instruments, including, but not limited to, fostering work environments that afford women employees both respect and dignity, access to education, access to and better control over assets, equal rights to inheritance, and with an intervention in public institutions and policies determining growth and development.

Low participation in the labour market, and disproportionately high unemployment amongst women, suggest that generally, increased employment in itself does not suffice to increase women's employment. Therefore, a greater impact in development can only be gained if policies specifically target women's unemployment<sup>4</sup>.

Improved employability prospects and equal access to employment are the most important means to promote women's economic empowerment. This can be achieved by making policies which promote and support a higher participation of women in the labour market, and entrepreneurship. This would consequently improve women's well-being, and strengthen their position in the family and society.

Within the Women's Leadership Academy, the Economic Group (hereinafter: Group), consisting of representatives of several political parties and the civil society, aims to influence policy-making at the local level, with a view of improving women's employability prospects and entrepreneurship in Kosovo.

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (2011). Economic empowerment of women. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/47561694.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum (WEF). Women's economic empowerment is the smart and right thing to do. What's stopping us? Published on 17 January 2017. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/01/womens-economic-empowerment-is-the-smart-and-right-thing-to-do-whats-stopping-us/>

<sup>3</sup> Democratic Institute for Development (D4D) (2015). How much does a patriarchy cost? Series Public Interest, No.5. For more, see: <http://d4d-ks.org/punimet/sa-kushton-patriarkati/>

<sup>4</sup> Democracy for Development (D4D) (2015). How much does a patriarchy cost? Series Public Interest, No.5. For more, see: <http://d4d-ks.org/punimet/sa-kushton-patriarkati/>

This document presents the positions of the Group on policies and instruments that must be adopted at the local level in an effort to improve prospects of employment for women in Kosovo, based on best practices. Such positions will afterwards be presented to the management and decision-making bodies of political entities, to inform political platforms in the upcoming local elections. It must be stated that this document does not aim to set policies and specific instruments for the municipalities, it merely sorts alternatives for review, if authorities want to effectively improve employment prospects and entrepreneurship for women in Kosovo. This must be preceded by a needs-assessment exercise in municipalities to set priorities on these policies, and to decide which policy would best meet the needs of women in business (or those aspiring to be in business) and women in the labour market, building upon existing administrative and financial capacities.

## BACKGROUND AND PROBLEMS

Women in Kosovo remain underrepresented in the labour market. According to Kosovo's Statistical Agency, labour market figures show that around 81% of women in Kosovo were economically non-active during the period 2012-2016, and only 12% were employed.<sup>5</sup> Around 51% of women are employed in education, trade and health care. Meanwhile, men mainly work in manufacturing, construction and retail, (44.3% of employed men). Unemployment is higher for women, as well (31.8%), compared to men (26%). Though there are no official data disaggregated by regions, the expectation is that such differences would be even starker in regions outside Prishtina. Such differences may be the result of better opportunities in the labour market in Prishtina, since the majority of public institutions, larger enterprises, and international missions are mainly seated in the capital city.

According to D4D (2015), the existence and opportunities of employment, expected salary, availability of affordable child care services, and discrimination in recruitment, especially in the private sector, are some of the key factors adversely impacting women's participation in the labour market.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, USAID (2014) identified family responsibilities, lack of tradition in doing business, and lack of state support as some of the key obstacles to women's participation in business.<sup>7</sup> Another important barrier is access to finance, due to lack of collaterals, which is mainly a result of inequality in family inheritance, or plain denial of such rights. Furthermore, results of a random survey with citizens that the Group carried as part of May 1<sup>st</sup> activities show that 61% of respondents consider that their labour rights have been violated.<sup>8</sup>

Also, there is a lack of official data on women entrepreneurs, and attributes such as age, contribution in employment, and gross domestic product. According to the Business Registration Agency (KBRA), the number of businesses registered by women has increased by 14.3% in 2016, compared to 12.2%

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<sup>5</sup> Statistical Agency of Kosovo – Labour Market Data. For more details, see: <http://askdata.rks-gov.net/PXWeb/pxweb/sq/askdata/?rxid=0b4e087e-8b00-47ba-b7cf-1ea158040712%2f>

<sup>6</sup> Democracy for Development (D4D) (2015). How much does a patriarchy cost? Series Public Interest, No.5. For more, see: <http://d4d-ks.org/punimet/sa-kushton-patriarkati/>

<sup>7</sup> USAID (2014). "Women and Business: Gender equality in Business". Public opinion survey. Commercial Law and Enforcement Program (CLE). For more details see:

<http://www.womensnetwork.org/documents/20140611153950473.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See methodology for more information.

in 2012<sup>9</sup>. This shows that despite the tendency for growth, still only a small fraction of businesses registered each year are women-owned.

Although employment and entrepreneurship are mainly a responsibility for the central government, there is no legal provision preventing municipalities from embracing and adopting local policies that would foster and support women's employment and entrepreneurship. According to Article 17 of the Law on Local Self-Government no. 03/L-040, municipalities have full and exclusive powers in terms of local interest, with regard to standards set forth in applicable legislation, amongst others in the field of local economic development; urban and rural planning, and land use and development. Also, according to the Law on Local Government Finance, No. 03/L-049, "*municipal assembly, and its executive officers, shall have the right and authority to autonomously regulate and manage, in the interest of the municipality's population, financial resources derived from the municipality's own source revenues or provided to the municipality under a General Grant.*"

Furthermore, regardless of policies and legislation adopted at the central level, improvement of women's position, their empowerment and motivation to deal in business cannot be achieved without local policies based on the specific needs and contexts of said municipalities.

From the meetings we have had with officials of 5 municipalities<sup>10</sup> and a desk review of legal infrastructure and existing practices, we have found that there are practices fostering participation in the labour market, entrepreneurship and employment of women (See Box 1), although each municipality could benefit from growing their practices to include more of our recommended practices, described below.<sup>11</sup>

## POSITIONS

Since the end of the war, municipal budgets have mainly been spent on infrastructure. The Group finds that the need for infrastructure investment is now visibly lower, and therefore, attention must be paid to policies and programs fostering and supporting job generation and entrepreneurship, especially amongst women.

We consider that there are a number of policies and instruments that local governments can implement to improve the prospects of women's employment in Kosovo. They may be clustered into three groups:

1. Policies to foster and support women in business;
2. Policies encouraging businesses to employ women; and
3. Improved employment practices at a local level.

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<sup>9</sup> Business Registration Agency (KBRA) (2017). Basic performance indicators for businesses in Kosovo. For more details, see: <http://arbk.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/799C86E6-0EFF-438D-93E2-C753E095CFAA.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Ferizaj, Peja, Klina, Gjilan and Skënderaj. Due to inability to meet, the Municipality of Mitrovica sent electronic replies to our questions.

<sup>11</sup> To find whether there are policies at the local level aiming to improve the economic standing of women, the WLA Economic Group used the following methodological approach: 1) meeting Economic Development Departments in the Municipalities of Peja, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Drenas, Klina and Skënderaj. We also tried to meet officials of the Municipalities of Mitrovica and Prishtina, but due to other engagement, this was not possible. 2) Since it was technically and financially impossible to visit all municipalities, we have reviewed other municipalities' websites to seek for similar practices. More concretely, we reviewed published documents, regulations, strategies and work reports.

More concretely, for each policy, we have identified possible instruments which would require further evaluation in terms of administrative and financial capacities of municipalities before they are introduced, and these are the following:

## 1. POLICIES FOR FOSTERING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN IN BUSINESS

To foster and support businesses founded and managed by women, municipalities may adopt a full series of instruments, including the following:

- *Provide financial incentives for women starting up or expanding their businesses*

Municipalities may establish a women's entrepreneurship promotion fund, which would provide financial support, in the form of grants or subsidies, for women starting up or expanding their businesses. Access to finance is one of the key barriers to doing business, especially for women. Through such a fund, the municipalities would fund a part of initial investment or expansion, based on pre-set criteria, to alleviate the financial burden on women. The amount of such financial incentive would be determined by the amount of investment, or would be conditioned upon the number or groups of people employed.<sup>12</sup>

Municipalities must simplify their application procedures for financial assistance, so as to ensure an all-inclusive process, and to avoid discouraging women with the complexity of such processes.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, municipalities must undertake awareness-raising campaigns, because many women, and generally businesses, do not apply, and consequently cannot benefit, due to lack of information.

- *Exemption of municipal taxes and fees for women-owned businesses*

Within their competencies, municipalities collect municipal taxes, fees and charges for public services of the municipality, and have some regulatory duties, which affect citizens, but also businesses. Therefore, another instrument could be to exempt women-owned businesses from municipal taxes or other financial charges for a certain period, to ease the financial burden of start-up businesses. This may include exemptions from municipal fees, such as business charges, property tax, fees on public area utilization, and generally commercial fees considered the most relevant for businesses in specific fields.

- *Allocation or lease of land and property*

Allocation of land to use is another instrument that municipalities can use to support and foster women in business. According to the Law no. 04/L-144 on Allocation to Use and Exchange of Immoveable Property, municipalities can allocate land for use for short and long terms, based on pre-set criteria. These criteria are then further determined by secondary legislation. There is a practice in almost all countries of Western Balkans, to lease land for up to 99 years, on attractive fees, at the national level, but also at a local level.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, the fund may focus on investments of women-owned business in the manufacturing industry, or investments that recruit labour force, if the aim is to foster manufacturing in said municipalities.

<sup>13</sup> Due to complex procedures, businesses need to pay consultants to fill in their applications, because it is impossible to do them themselves. This is already an additional cost to these businesses.

- *Establishment of advisory offices*

Apart from financial support, businesses in Kosovo do need advice and technical assistance, and in this regard, municipalities can establish business advisory offices. An important item for such offices could be to provide advice for businesses, to help entrepreneurs cope with business challenges. Above all, these offices can provide assistance or guidance in developing business plans, registering a business, investment possibilities (high potential industries), other possibilities of funding and grants, and coaching by experienced entrepreneurs.<sup>14</sup>

## **2. POLICIES SUPPORTING BUSINESSES THAT EMPLOY WOMEN**

### *Financial incentives for businesses conditioned with employment of women*

Apart from providing financial support to businesses founded and managed by women, municipalities can also provide financial incentives for businesses (regardless of their ownership) employing women. This would mean that for the same position, a woman would have some advantage over a man with the same credentials. In this case again, municipalities would establish a fund to provide financial assistance (grants or subsidies) to businesses for every woman they employ. Financial incentives could be once-off payments for each (or a set number) employee, or subsidized salaries for a certain period of time, all conditioned upon recruitment of a certain number of women.<sup>15</sup> For example, Croatia provides subsidies from 3,000-9,000 Euros, and covers 10-30% of employment costs, depending on the rate of unemployment. On the other hand, Serbia offers 4,000-10,000€ for every new job created, conditioned upon a minimum investment and people employed. Although all these are offered for investments at the central level, they could easily be implemented at the local level as well.

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<sup>14</sup> The Municipality of Drenas has developed a Strategy for Entrepreneur Women 2017-2022, which amongst others, provides on “preparation of special coaching programs and advice to support women in business, in all stages of their activity, and in cooperation with line ministry”.

<sup>15</sup> To ensure greater sustainability, salary subsidies may be given in cooperation with the employer. Subsidies can be awarded in the first, middle and last months, while the other salaries are to be covered by the employer. In this case, instead of ensuring employment for at least six months, one year of employment is secured.

### 3. IMPROVEMENT OF RECRUITMENT PRACTICES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

To improve women's prospects, local authorities must also improve their recruitment practices in their respective municipalities, including:

- Reduction and gradual elimination of discriminatory practices in employment<sup>16</sup>, promotion or demotion, respect for labour rights of employees, and improvement of working conditions and safety at working places.
- Positive discrimination of women in recruitment, on the condition that they have same credentials as their male counterparts, to stimulate women's participation in the labour market and to reduce discouragement.
- Improved transparency in recruitment processes.

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<sup>16</sup> Eliminate discriminatory language and criteria in recruitment ads, and eliminate practices of adapting vacancy announcements to specific men or other people.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is generally recognized that gender equality and women's economic empowerment are extremely important for inclusive, sustainable development and diminished poverty. Women's potential in the labour market of Kosovo is largely untapped. Only around 19% of women are active in the labour market, and only 12.7% are employed. Also, a rather modest percentage of businesses registered in the recent years have female owners. Improvement of employability prospects and equal employment opportunities are amongst the key instruments to promote women's economic empowerment.

Although key competencies in establishing employment policies pertain to the central level, the Group finds that there is sufficient room for the local governments to adopt their own policies to improve employment and entrepreneurship prospects in their own municipalities, with a special focus on women.

The Group has identified three policies, which could reflect several instruments, within the bounds of municipal competencies, and which are mainly of a financial or advisory/technical nature:

- a) Policies to foster and support women in business;
- b) Policies encouraging businesses to employ more women; and
- c) Improved recruitment practices at the local level.

These policies could be enforced through instruments such as funds in grants or subsidies for start-ups or expanding businesses, but also for employment of women. Also, along with financial assistance, businesses need advice on starting up, registering or expanding a business, and assistance in terms of financing, partnerships, training and networking. Beyond all these, it is essential that application procedures are simplified for financial assistance (grants or subsidies), and that awareness raising campaigns are developed, so that all women or generally businesses have equal access and opportunities.

Since municipalities have their own specific attributes and needs, not all instruments will be applicable to all. Therefore, whether and which of the above-mentioned policies will be adopted, is a question that would be answered by an evaluation, in terms of prioritizing and defining needs of women in business, or those aspiring. Also, it would highly depend on financial and administrative capacities of municipalities.



### **Box 1. Best practices in municipalities of Kosovo aiming at women's economic empowerment**

**Municipality of Ferizaj**, in cooperation with the UBT College, has developed 40 detailed guidelines for starting up a business in various areas. With the support of a donor, they have also presented a practice of salary subsidies - 2,000 euros for an employee for at least one year, and precedence is given to businesses led by single mothers (2 more points in evaluation). Also, the Municipality has established a fund of 600.000 Euros to subsidize loan interests for businesses operating in agriculture, in cooperation with the Bank for Business (BpB). However, very few women can benefit from this opportunity, because they lack property to leave as collateral for the banking loans. Therefore, they cannot apply for subsidies either.

**Municipality of Peja** has adopted a Regulation to prioritize women in allocation of land to use. This Municipality has also financially supported women, with grants, in business in tailoring, beauty salons and tourism, more concretely tour guides in Rugova, all sectors mainly dominated by women.

**Municipality of Gjilan** has not applied any of the said practices, but is developing a Strategy to support women in business.

**Municipality of South Mitrovica** has in 2015 co-funded two projects:

a) Project "Support to new businesses for women in the South-North of Mitrovica", funded by the European Union, from which, 30 women of various ethnicities have received non-repayable grants at the amount of 2500-5000 euros. Also, 100 women have been certified for market research, entrepreneurship and business planning.

b) Cooperation and co-funding of the project "Support to Socio-Economic Stability by empowering micro-businesses in Kosovo". The project has been beneficial for 40 businesses, while out of these, 15 were women.

Also, the municipality has supported 3 processing points, led by women, with processing equipment and milling machines and vertical display boxes, and there are cases of financial support to cover damages in women-owned agro-businesses.



# ACCESS TO THE PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

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## INTRODUCTION

The healthcare system in Kosovo is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, as the highest legal act, with laws such as the Law on Health acting as secondary legislation. The main goal of the Law on Health, as a legal act that regulates functioning, organization and implementation of healthcare policies, is to “ensure the legal basis for preserving and advancing the health of citizens of the Republic of Kosovo through promotion of health, prevention activities, and provision of comprehensive and qualitative healthcare services”. Article 4 of the Law on Health determines the duties and responsibilities in healthcare, and determines that all citizens and residents have equal rights to healthcare.

The main principles on which this law is founded include: equality, inclusion and non-discrimination, quality, honesty and accountability, prioritizing of cost-effective healthcare intervention, sustainability and consistency, prevention and early detection of illnesses and inclusiveness and solidarity.

The responsible institutions to guarantee implementation of this Law include state institutions, legal entities and natural persons. These institutions have the responsibility to offer and organize provision of healthcare services for all citizens without discrimination.

Based on the Law on Health, the healthcare system in Kosovo is divided into three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary. The focus of this research is primary healthcare.

Primary healthcare in Kosovo, under the Law on Health, is a legal obligation of the local level of governance. Under the Law on Local Self-government, Article 17 on municipal competencies, municipalities are obliged to provide public primary healthcare to citizens.

The law on health regulates primary healthcare only in the general aspect, whereas the Administrative Instruction (Healthcare) No. 02/2015 on organization, determination of services and activities of primary healthcare institutions, more clearly defines organization and functioning of this system. According to the Administrative Instruction 02/2015, primary healthcare institutions are divided into the Main Family Medicine Centers (MFMC), the Family Medicine Centre (FMC) and Ambulatory Care Units (ACM).

Apart from the national legislation, the Constitution of Kosovo also adopted the Convention for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women which requires from the adopting states to undertake measures in order to “eliminate discrimination against women in the field of healthcare in order to ensure access to healthcare services”.

## SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS IN THE ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AND POLICIES FOR ADDRESSING THEM

Although the access to dignified healthcare, protection and provision of healthcare is a state obligation, the Government of Kosovo at both the central and local level faces challenges in terms of provision of healthcare for its citizens. When it comes to budget allocation, in 2016<sup>1</sup> the Government of Kosovo allocated 3.3% of its budget for healthcare for the central level and 3.1% for the local level. Lack of investments and insufficient budget for healthcare may have increase the number of ill persons (morbidity), lack of investments in awareness raising of citizens about the importance of regular medical visits, provision of healthcare services in dignity as well as respecting the rights of citizens of Kosovo in access to primary healthcare. The most effected remain women and girls, as a more vulnerable category of the society, according to the Kosovo Women's Network's research entitled "Access to healthcare in Kosovo. The same study found that especially "women in rural areas face more financial and cultural obstacles as well as obstacles in the relationship provider of service - patient, in their access to healthcare services, unlike men or other women in urban areas".

During the interviews with 55 citizens, of whom were 13 men and 42 women, aged over 18, the group found that citizens of Kosovo have some difficulties that impede proper access to primary healthcare.

One of the obstacles that citizens expressed was the improper relations between providers of healthcare services and patients. Some of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the relations and services offered to them by healthcare centers in the primary level. A study implemented by Kosovo Women's Network entitled "Access to healthcare in Kosovo", indicates that 53.8% of respondents from rural areas and 51.4 of respondents from urban areas have had a bad relationship with providers of healthcare services. Whereas an Action Paper on Healthcare in Kosovo implemented by the USAID and UNDP, found that 25% of Kosovo citizens are dissatisfied with services and care provided by primary healthcare institutions.

Yet only a small number of citizens interviewed know about the existence of complaint boxes, or have ever reported irregularities in the primary healthcare system to relevant institutions. This has direct impact over the lack of access and treatment in dignity of citizens by the healthcare system, as guaranteed by the law. If no complaints are lodged, poor services cannot be improved. A report of the Initiative for Progress has emphasized that professional staff in healthcare institutions is often selected based on nepotism. Hiring inadequate persons in institutions providing healthcare at the primary level also harms the provision of healthcare services. Furthermore, this puts the health of Kosovo citizens, especially women and girls as more vulnerable categories of the society, at risk.

Citizens interviewed by the WLA expressed that they have often observed that corruption is one the problems that poses obstacles in their access to healthcare. For example, some noted that to receive certain services you must personally know the appropriate head of that service. The FOL movement found that through procedures of public procurement, corruption starts from the manner in which the call for tenders and the specifications for respective tenders are drafted, by giving a possibility and

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<sup>1</sup> The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo, Law No. 05/L -071 on the Budget of the Republic of Kosovo for 2016, accessible at: <http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/05-L-071%20sh.pdf>

priority to certain companies and individuals<sup>2</sup>. The research of the FOL Movement, called, “Corruption in Public Healthcare Institutions in Kosovo”, found that medicine and expendable materials are products that “disappear” in institutions providing healthcare”. Based on these findings, the level of corruption is higher in rural areas than in urban ones. This could be due to the fact that rural areas are more remote, there are fewer residents, and people there know each other more, so that reporting corruption is very rare<sup>3</sup>. The FOL Movement also found that 2% of Kosovo citizens have reported corruption that they encountered in healthcare; similarly findings of the KWN research state that only 1.4% of respondents reported violations in the healthcare to judicial institutions.

Another challenge emphasized by citizens and the medical staff interviewed by the team is lack of medicine from the Essential List, expendable materials, as well as lack of medical equipment. Citizens were often compelled to buy products even though they were supposed to be available through the essential list of medicines. A Municipal Director of Health, interviewed by the WLA stated that: “If the budget for the essential list was allocated to municipalities, no citizen of my municipality would remain without the necessary medicaments contained in the essential list”. A similar finding was reported by the interview with FOL Movement, which especially emphasized that such deficiency was observed in rural areas.

The Sectorial Health strategy for 2017-2021 emphasizes that “Ministry of Health will focus in determining clear criteria for drafting and updating the Essential List of Medicines. Determination of such criteria aims to have a list that is based in data and reflects the real budget possibilities, with patient at the center of attention”. Previously, the strategy simply defined the list, rather than allowing space for each municipality to define its own needs.

Other findings show that, in the FMC-s and ACU-s, there is lack of technical staff. As a consequence, in these healthcare institutions, often times the nurses are obliged to deal with hygiene and maintenance of the premises. Engaging nurses in duties that do not pertain to their work can harm work performance, as well as negatively impact the provision of quality services for citizens.

Based on these challenges, we consider that municipalities can adopt a number of policies and affirmative measures with the aim of providing proper access to primary healthcare for their citizens. These policies can be divided into:

- 1. Policies for improving the relationship between citizens and providers of healthcare services at the primary level;*
- 2. Policies for increasing transparency through reporting irregularities at the primary level of healthcare;*
- 3. Policies for planning based on real needs in municipalities, so that provision of services during the access to healthcare is in line with the needs of the community.*

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<sup>2</sup> From the interview of WLA with Mr. Petrit Zogaj, Executive Director in FOL Movement.

<sup>3</sup> From the same interview.

## 1. LOCAL POLICIES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZENS AND PROVIDERS OF HEALTHCARE SERVICES IN THE PRIMARY LEVEL

- **Additional ethics and patient relationship trainings for the professional staff:** The MFMC-s, in cooperation with the Department of Health in municipalities, can organize trainings in cooperation with chambers of healthcare professionals for the professional staff, on ethics relations with patients, as required by the Law on Chambers of Healthcare Professionals and the Administrative Instruction 02/2015, Article 17 on Continuous Professional Development. Likewise, Article 17 of the Law on Local Self-Government determines competencies of municipalities and obliges them, among other things, to work in providing public primary healthcare.
- **Encouraging of specialization in the field of family medicine:** Another initiative that might have an impact in reducing the lack of professional staff in municipalities, would be incentivizing and encouraging specialization in the field of family healthcare in specific municipalities where that is necessary. That can be done through motivating those that have specialized by offering contracts that guarantee their employment positions after specialization.
- **Creating conducive conditions for the personnel and patients:** Through the Association of Kosovo Municipalities, the mayors should exert pressure to the central level in order to increase the budget for health for the local level, in order to improve access to primary healthcare. This would have a positive impact on the quality of healthcare services, increase the number of medical staff, support staff, and supply them sufficient and appropriate.
- **Increase the number of medical staff in the ACU and FMC:** Considering the lack of medical staff in most ACU-s and FMC-s, municipal health directorates can contract the service of hygiene in order to enable an increase in the number of medical staff.
- **Establishment of mobile teams:** The Department of Health in municipalities with less than 150,000 residents, where there are no Emergency Health Centers, should create on call mobile teams, which would be at the service of citizens that live in remote areas and who have limited access to primary healthcare institutions.

## 2. LOCAL POLICIES FOR INCREASING TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH REPORTING IRREGULARITIES AT THE PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AND FOR FIGHTING NEPOTISM AND CORRUPTION

- **More frequent visits to FMC-s and MCU-s:** In order to address these issues, it was assessed that it is necessary to conduct more frequent visits to Family Medicine Centers and Medical Care Units, in order to ensure that the staff is complying with working hours. Such visits should be implemented by persons already authorized by health directorates in each municipality.
- **Functioning of ethical-professional committees:** Departments for Health and Social Welfare should empower Ethical-professional committees comprised of municipal healthcare director, the staff of the Main Family Medicine Centre, as well as a representative from civil society, which will look into the possible violations of the Code of Ethics and undertake disciplinary measures in line with rules of procedure.
- **Awareness raising campaign with citizens:** Awareness raising of citizens on their rights and responsibilities through continuous meetings, in order to raise their awareness about the Law on Health and patient's rights card. This can be achieved through implementation of the strategy on schools that promote health in Kosovo, regular meetings with citizens, awareness raising campaigns and cooperation with the civil society.
- **Establishment of complaints review commissions:** Establish and make operational commissions for reviewing complaints received in healthcare institutions of primary system. Apart from this, municipal directorates can use modern technology to increase transparency. This can be done through designing specific platforms for municipalities, where citizens can send their complaints online. Verification of these complaints should be done by one representative of the MFMC, one from the health directorate, one citizen and one representative of the civil society and they should act immediately once the complaint is analyzed.
- **More frequent reporting to the assembly:** Municipal Health directorates should compile detailed quarterly reports on the situation of healthcare in the municipality, which would be submitted to the municipal assembly.



### **3. LOCAL POLICIES ON PLANNING AND ENSURING THE PROPER SUPPLY WITH MEDICAMENTS FROM THE ESSENTIAL LIST AND THE EXPANDABLE MATERIALS BASED ON THE NEEDS IN THE MUNICIPALITY**

- **Supply based on the needs of the municipality:** Through the Association of Kosovo Municipalities, Mayors should advocate to the central level so that the supply of medicines is determined based on the needs and specifications of municipalities. The budget related to the Essential List and expendable materials should be decentralized.
- **Supply through own source revenues:** When the municipality has a lack of certain medication from the Essential List and expendable materials, the Department of Health can use the budget from municipal revenues in order to provide for adequate access and distribution of medicines in a regular manner for patients.



# ACCESS AND QUALITY IN EDUCATION

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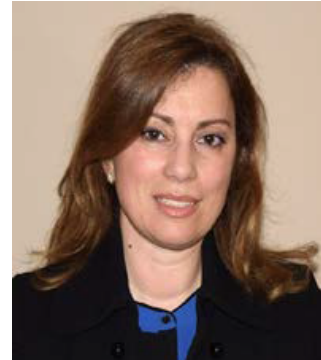
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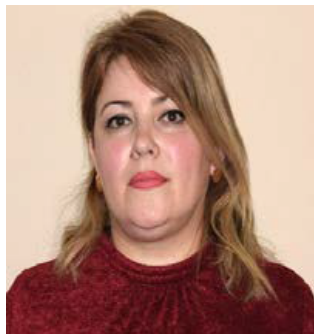
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## INTRODUCTION

The education system in Kosovo has undergone various intensive transformational processes. The first measures were taken to establish main pillars on which education reform in the education system in Kosovo would be conducted. Through a developed education system, our country will be able to be a competitor in terms of knowledge along world's most developed countries. Given the fact that young people make up the majority of the country's population, education should be prioritized by the central and local government institutions of the Republic of Kosovo.

Despite numerous investments and developments in the field of education, one of the most important sectors of the country is continuously facing different challenges, from matters relating to contents to those of technical and infrastructural character. Institutions of the Republic of Kosovo whether those of the central or local level, they should remain committed to correctly perform all duties and obligations that are comfortable with the applicable legislation, while political parties in the country should promote and guarantee development of education through their political platforms.

This document will serve as a tool for advocacy for relevant institutions in the country in terms of inclusion of some of the important issues for the development and progress of the teaching process, with particular focus at the municipal level. This document aims to include some important aspects of education into political platforms of the entities that will be running in the 2017 local elections.

## EDUCATION AT LOCAL LEVEL: LEGISLATION AND COMPETENCES

The competencies of the local government in the field of education are regulated by the Law on Local Self-Government, adopted in 2008. According to this law, municipal bodies are obliged to *"provide public pre-primary, primary and secondary education, including registration and licensing educational institutions, hiring, payment of salaries and training of instructors and education administrators"*.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo further specifies the competences of local government, which, inter alia, envisages series of obligations that must be met by municipalities.<sup>2</sup> Also, the Law on Municipal Education specifies in detail the obligations of municipalities and in particular those of the Municipal Departments of Education (MEDs) in creating conditions and guaranteeing development of the teaching process.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the abovementioned laws, the MEST has also issued a large number of administrative instructions, which regulate in detail specific aspects of pre-university education, where local government plays a very important role in fulfilling the tasks established under these guidelines.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Law on Local Self-Government 03/L-040, Article 17(h): <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2530> (accessed on 07 June 2017)

<sup>2</sup> Law on Pre-University Education 04/L-032, Article 7(3): <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2770> (accessed on 07 June 2017)

<sup>3</sup> Law on Education in Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, No. 03/L-068: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2543> (accessed on 07 June 2017)

<sup>4</sup> Some of the Administrative Instructions are the following: Administrative Instruction No.490/1B/2011 on Code of Ethics for Student Evaluation, Administrative Instruction No. 40 /2005 on the Termination of the job and the initiative for disciplinary procedure for teachers and other workers in the educational, training and scientific institutions, Guidelines on the Norms and Standards of School Buildings, Administrative Instruction Nr.06/2014 On Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Measures for Students of Secondary High Schools, etc.

## **1. ADVOCACY ISSUES AT LOCAL LEVEL**

Local government bodies in the Republic of Kosovo are the main providers of pre-university education. Given this fact, three issues identified by the informal group on education fall within the competencies of the municipal bodies, more specifically within competencies of MEDs, enabling them to improve the current situation.

Three main issues we consider to be a priority for local government in the Kosovo municipalities during the forthcoming governing mandate are: promotion of vocational schools and internships, drafting of municipal education regulations as well as intervention to increase quality of education and improve teaching environment in general. A survey of the current state of affairs regarding concerned issues has been carried out in 23 municipalities of Kosovo, where visits to vocational secondary schools, meetings with MED directors and interviews with more than 400 students, 200 teachers and 100 parents were conducted.

We will elaborate the main issues for advocacy with political parties below, aiming the inclusion of these aspects of pre-university education on political platforms of the political parties running in the 22 October local elections.

### **1.1. PROMOTING VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS AND INTERNSHIPS**

Secondary vocational schools in the Republic of Kosovo offer many branches of study that are attractive and relevant to the labor market requirements in the country. However, lack of proper treatment by the municipal directorates of these schools is creating problems of various natures. Schools are not equipped with special workshops and cabinets where professional internships can be conducted within the school, there is a significant lack of literature and there are no programs for internships to be conducted. In addition to obstacles to practical learning within the school, students continue to face obstacles even if they strive to engage into practical teaching outside the school, be it in the public or private sector. While local and central level institutions continue to offer few internship programs for students, the private sector, in this regard, remains more accessible. However, despite the will of the students, both private and public sectors do not offer many opportunities that would impact on building of professional capacities of students. Students conclude that in many cases companies offer them tasks that do not correspond with their branch of study, and they are made to perform secondary jobs in those companies, even though companies and schools are obliged to draft contracts specifying duties and requirements of interns in accordance with the branch of study they attend at school.

Vocational schools are in most cases considered to be second-hand schools, and generally there is an impression that excellent students should continue only their studies in gymnasiums. Lack of initiatives for the digitization of schools or professional cabinets, compilation of texts on vocational subjects resulting in dictation (giving of notes) are also damaging the teaching process.

### **1.2. DRAFTING MUNICIPAL REGULATIONS ON EDUCATION**

The role and responsibilities of municipalities are defined by the Law on Education in Municipalities. This Law regulates the aspect of organization of public education institutions and access to public education at pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary education levels in the municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo. Giving powers to municipalities or schools in the field of education and further clarifying these competences through a special municipal regulation based on this law is a necessity. This is proven in two municipalities (Prishtina and Shtime), which have already

adopted such a regulation. By means of municipal regulations on education, municipalities would lay down basic rules by which it would be easier for schools to be operating. These regulations would enable schools to regulate some of the key processes related to pre-university education in the same way, such as student enrollment, school uniform dressing, school attendance, disciplinary measures, extra-curricular activities, etc.

A very important issue that needs to be regulated by municipal regulations is imposing of educational and disciplinary measures. Under current situation, education and disciplinary measures for students are not yielding positive effects. Transferring students from one school to another is only transferring the problem, but it does not solve it. Therefore, MEDs through municipal regulations must find sustainable solutions to this problem, while following the applicable administrative instructions that foresee these sanctions.

Also, in the field research, it was noted that most primary and secondary schools do not have school regulation. Drafting of work regulations for schools is foreseen by the Law on Municipal Education. Drafting regulations would increase the quality in the educational process, the level of discipline of both staff and students, responsibility in job and in teaching, respect for the code of conduct, respect for working hours and the teaching process in general.

### 1.3. QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT IN SCHOOLS

Some problems were identified from the field research with regard to various aspects related to the quality of education and the teaching environment.

One of the biggest problems identified is the organization of elective education in secondary schools.

*“Students from my class that go in private courses in Informatics and English automatically get maximal grades from the teachers”*

**Altini, pupil from Fushe Kosovo**

Field data suggest that elective teaching is generally not properly applied, and is often not in line with students’ needs and interests.

Another element that affects progress of the teaching process, especially student assessment is the arrangement of private courses by teachers. What is worrying in this aspect is the fact that (non) attendance of private courses has a direct impact on the assessment process at school, ascertaining that students attending private courses get better marks.

Despite numerous extensions and extensive repairs funded by municipalities and various donors, in many schools classes are small; there is a shortage of benches, chairs and work tools. Many schools do not have emergency stairs or evacuation plans in case of emergency situations. There is also lack of adequate spaces and mechanisms for students with disabilities in most of the schools in Kosovo, such as special school entrance, staircases or separate toilets. Also, the vast majority of schools do not have lockers or spaces where students could place and store their books and personal belongings.

*“I am concerned about my child every day, because in case of a fire incident, the school does not even have emergency stairs for evacuation purposes”*

**Ariana, a mother from Prishtina**

The biggest problems as to the external environment of the school are considered to be lack of proper traffic control, and, in most cases there are no traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, road bumps, and traffic signs warning of the entry into the school area. In many cases, there are many cafeterias and gambling businesses around schools directly or indirectly affecting safety of students.

During the research conducted in the field, and especially during conversations with parents, it is noted that in most of the municipalities transportation of students from home to school is arranged with a minibus and is followed by problems. The biggest concern raised by parents in this regard was the large number of students put on the minibus, and in the vast majority of the cases these minibuses are overcrowded and beyond norms allowed for by law. This fact poses a risk both for life and health of the children.

Lack of kindergartens for children as well represents a major problem in the development of children, starting from a young age. According to research conducted, children who go to kindergarten and attend pre-school education achieve better results in learning when they start formal education. Municipalities in the Republic of Kosovo, and more specifically MEDs, should focus more on the creation of community-based kindergartens, a move which would also improve the quality of education in the long-term.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

After analyzing the factual situation in the field and after reviewing of the competencies of the municipal bodies, the group on education within the Women's Leadership Academy recommends:

### Related to vocational schools:

- Municipalities lacking Career Counseling Centers should establish these centers, which would enable connection of vocational schools with the labor market;
- Municipalities should create and maintain an online platform with all information on vocational education in the municipality;
- Municipalities should sign agreements with both public and private institutions to enable conducting of professional practice (internships) for all students;
- Professional practice (internships) should be inclusive and accessible to all students, regardless of their results in education in formal school;
- MEDs and vocational schools should monitor professional practice (internships) of students, to ensure its progress;
- Municipalities and vocational schools should be more active in awareness campaigns on employment opportunities for young people after their completion of vocational schools;
- MEDs in cooperation with the MEST should provide necessary literature on the professional subjects, and avoid dictation of material during the classes;
- MEDs should provide schools with workshops, labs and functional cabinets to enable development of practical teaching within the school.

### Related to municipal regulations:

- Municipalities should take concrete steps in drafting municipal regulations of education;
- Municipalities should individually have municipal developmental/educational plans (separate or integrated into overall development plans);
- Schools are encouraged to draft work regulations, and MEDs should assist to schools aiming at drafting regulations, as defined by law;
- Working groups composed of teachers, students, heads of educational institutions, municipal officials and education experts should be established, where contents of the municipal regulation on education would be determined;
- MEDs should review disciplinary measures for students who violate the Disciplinary Code;
- MEDs in coordination with the MEST should take joint steps in terms of harmonization of disciplinary measures foreseen by the Administrative Instruction and the Municipal Regulation.

### Regarding quality of education and teaching environment:

- Elective courses should be determined upon initiative and consultation with students;
- MEDs should provide sufficient space inside the school to carry out practical work;
- MEDs and the Inspectorate of Education should take adequate measures to stop provision of courses by public school teachers;
- Instead of private courses, schools should provide additional hours for all interested students;
- MEDs should ensure that each school has emergency stairs, an emergency evacuation plan exists, and staff and students are trained for such situations;
- Each school should create access to students with disabilities;
- Municipal bodies should identify and close cafeterias, gambling business places or premises with video games in the vicinity of the schools;
- MEDs should take steps to protect students health at school by replacing old boards and chalk with white plastic boards and color markers;
- MEDs should undertake initiatives through projects from external/foreign donors to begin gradual digitization of teaching;
- Transport of students from rural areas should be made properly, by a cozy minibus carrying a limited number of students, taking care of their life and health;
- The selection process of school directors should be depoliticized and their selections should be made on merit basis and their proven experience.





# WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

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## INTRODUCTION

This short summary analysis provides the main findings and recommendations related to increasing women's representation in political parties and decision-making, aiming to share these recommendations with the political parties before October 22, 2017 local elections. These findings were extracted from an analysis of the existing laws, policies within political parties, exploration of existing reports and discussions with women from the civil society and politics related to women's participation in Kosovo politics.

Moreover, research was conducted in the field, in seven regions of Kosovo by the group of participants in Women Leadership Academy 2017. The analysis was also based on some current trends regarding women's representation in political parties and media during the electoral campaign for central elections held on 11 June 2017. This position paper aims to contribute to discussions on women's participation in politics in the upcoming local elections, while identifying future opportunities for the promotion of women's participation in such processes.

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP:

### a) WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Laws on general and local elections define a 30% quota for the participation of women and men in the Assembly of Kosovo as well as municipal assemblies.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo (2015) demands a change in the representation of women within political parties. Moreover, only the 30% representation quota was respected in the 11 June 2017 elections, in clear contradiction with requirements set in the Law on Gender Equality (LGE), which requirement supersedes the older election law.<sup>2</sup> According to this law (No. 05/L-020, of 2015) adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo, it is clearly envisaged that political parties should respect principles of gender equality and provide for 50% representation for both genders on candidate lists (Articles 5, 6, 14 of the Law on Gender Equality<sup>3</sup>). Specifically, Article 14 of LGE stipulates "Political parties with their acts are obliged to implement measures to promote equal participation of men and women at authorities and bodies of the parties in accordance with provisions of Article 6 of this Law."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Article 6 of the Law on Gender Equality defines that: "Equal gender representation in all legislative, executive and judiciary bodies and other public institutions is achieved when ensured a minimum representation of fifty percent (50%) for each gender, including their governing and decision-making bodies" (Article 6, paragraph 8).

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<sup>1</sup> See Kosovo Country Gender Profile: Analysis of gender differences at all levels in Kosovo, page 16. Prepared by Orgut Consulting for the Kosovo Gender Equality Agency, Prishtina. Available at [http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit\\_2014%20-ALB.pdf](http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit_2014%20-ALB.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> See Law on General Elections in Kosovo, No. 03/L-073 and Law on Local Elections No. 03/L-072, Articles 27.1 respectively 7.2 of said laws stipulate that the list of candidates of each political subject shall contain at least 30 percent of men candidates and at least 30 percent of women candidates; with one candidate of each gender represented in at least every third candidate ranging from the first candidate in the list.

<sup>3</sup> See Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo, No. 05/L-020. Available at <https://mapl.rks-gov.net/getattachment/165dc3a6-5295-4d24-8437-a50f8ed4e237/LIGJI-NR--05-L-020-PER-BARAZI-GJINORE.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Article 14 of the Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo.

The same conclusion is also reached by the Kosovo Ombudsperson, who explicitly requested from political parties to implement requirements of the Law on Gender Equality before the national elections held on 11 June 2017. Moreover, the Ombudsperson explicitly emphasized, in an effort to remove all eventual legal hesitation, a reminder to the Kosovo Central Election Commission and the political parties that "... in order to ensure equality between men and women, and the implementation of this human rights standard, Law on Gender Equality No. 05/L-020 stipulates clearly that "Any provision that is in violation of the principle of equal treatment as per this law shall be derogated."<sup>5</sup> If this requirement was adopted by the Kosovo Central Election Commission during the certification of political parties for national elections in the Assembly of Kosovo held on 11 June 2017, this would advance the position of women in political parties. It is possible that for the next local elections, electoral rules will be updated, in order to reach compliance with the Gender Equality Law requirements regarding gender representation in political parties, and to require implementation of legal provisions in a progressive manner with the aim of having women participating at a minimum rate of 50%.

Some of the political parties, excluding AAK, Nisma për Kosovën, LDK, have one woman vice-president and have established quotas for women's participation as leaders within their parties.<sup>6</sup> However, field research also shows that respecting gender quotas and the position of women within party structures remains fragile. In fact, parties view the quotas as a legal obligation and not as something of substantial significance for their interest.

In relation to the analysis of women participation in politics, in line with NDI recommendations from 2015, political parties have improved their programs and policies in the last central elections, in order to attract women voters.<sup>7</sup> However, parties have not regularly conducted preliminary gender-based analyses of their programs, nor has civil society exercised any pressure to demand such programmatic reviews. Gender perspectives of political programs should take into account different needs of women and men, and should reflect solutions based on such needs and interests. Although improvements are noted in the political parties' programs of the most recent central elections, they do not necessarily reflect a gender sensitive approach. Notably, most political party programs for the last central elections were not easily accessible in the web pages of political parties or were not published in them at all. Some of the political party program provisions addressed, somewhat specifically, interests and concerns of women voters.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Article 5, paragraph 1 of the Law on Gender Equality. See statement of the Ombudsperson of 19.05.2017, at <http://www.ombudspersonkosovo.org/sq/lajme/DEKARATE-E-AVOKATIT-TE-POPULLIT-LIDHUR-ME-PERFAQESIMIN-E-BARABARTE-GJINOR-NE-LISTAT-E-KANDIDATEVE-NGA-SUBJEKTET-POLITIKE-1511>

<sup>6</sup> See Kosovo Country Gender Profile: Analysis of gender differences at all levels in Kosovo, page 19. Prepared by Orgut Consulting for the Kosovo Gender Equality Agency, Prishtina. Available at [http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit\\_2014%20-ALB.pdf](http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit_2014%20-ALB.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> See National Democratic Institute (NDI) Report "Kosovo: Overcoming obstacles for women participation in politics," February 2015, p. 5-6. Available at <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Gender-Assesment-report-ALB.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> For instance, Lëvizja Vetëvendosje, addresses in its electoral campaign the needs and interests of women to appeal to other women voters. The effects of said program are to be seen after the analysis of the number of votes and gender disaggregation of candidates upon certification of 11 June 2017 elections. See the Program of Lëvizja Vetëvendosje, item 6 on increase of subsidies for women farmers, item 8 on increase of social residence possibilities for women, item 9 on resolving property issues, with special focus on women, item 16 on health insurance and additional children benefits for mothers, item 17, etc. For additional information, see the 40-point program of Lëvizja Vetëvendosje, available at <http://www.vetevendosje.org/Al/prioritetet-e-republika-laquo-s/12820/prioritetet-e-republikes/>.

During the electoral campaign for the 11 June 2017 national elections, women candidates continued to complain about lack of support by political parties, when compared to male candidates. Women politicians claim that political parties offer limited funding for women's electoral campaigns, which hinders their ability to collect votes. Often, electoral campaigns are funded by the women candidates themselves.<sup>9</sup> It often occurs that the work of women in politics is a result of their own initiatives and affected by competition for funds within the party.<sup>10</sup> This is also evident from the distribution of public funds by the Assembly of Kosovo as support for parliamentary political parties: since women are already under-represented in the parties, they are less likely to get these funds. Women in politics also agree that such funds are not proportionately and transparently distributed.<sup>11</sup> Also, during electoral campaigns, women face discriminatory practices by being insufficiently proposed to play the role of electoral observers or commissioners.<sup>12</sup> Women are also often left out of electoral lists, if they are not preferred by the party leadership. Even when they are part of the lists, they are not subject to a fair competition.

## **b) WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN PARTY DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS**

The low trend of women representation in political parties continues to be applied in the appointment of women in decision-making posts. Women are seldom proposed for party branch leadership positions. Branch leaders are usually the first ones to be proposed, and they are very rarely women. Party branches lack recruiting strategies and continuity of operation after elections have concluded. They also often face a small number of potential candidates to select from.<sup>13</sup> As a result, party headquarters often have to include women candidates in order to fulfill the quota overlooked in the nominations coming from branches.<sup>14</sup>

In 2014, after the national elections, women continued to remain underrepresented at the local and central levels.<sup>15</sup> In 2013 municipal elections, Kosovo elected its first woman Mayor (in Gjakova), and two women were elected Municipal Assembly Chairpersons in Gjilan and Lipjan. As far as the political appointment at the local level executive is concerned, in municipalities with between 10 and 14 municipal directorates, the vast majority are led by men, with women appointed in one or two such positions. While in Drenas and Zubin Potok municipalities women were represented at least at an equal level, in Dragash municipality, no woman director was appointed.<sup>16</sup> In the permanent municipal assembly committees--such as policy, finance, and the functional committee for communities--the representation of women was minimal.<sup>17</sup> The 2014 gender analysis showed that there is evident

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<sup>9</sup> See the abovementioned NDI Report, at supra note 7.

<sup>10</sup> Quote from the discussion with women in political parties and women in municipal assemblies, Mamusha, 20 May 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Discussion with women in politics, Bogë, 30 June, 1, 2 and 3 July 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Supra note at 11.

<sup>13</sup> NDI Report, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> See Kosovo Country Gender Profile: Analysis of gender differences at all levels in Kosovo, page 19. Prepared by Orgut Consulting for the Kosovo Gender Equality Agency, Prishtina. Available at [http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit\\_2014%20-ALB.pdf](http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit_2014%20-ALB.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Women held 33.3% of the seats in the Assembly of Kosovo (40 of 120 seats), of which 14 women were elected directly, while 24 held their seats based on the quota provided. See Kosovo Country Gender Profile: Analysis of gender differences at all levels in Kosovo, page 14. Prepared by Orgut Consulting for the Kosovo Gender Equality Agency, Prishtina. Available at [http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit\\_2014%20-ALB.pdf](http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit_2014%20-ALB.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Discussions with women in politics and civil society, June 2017.

<sup>17</sup> Youth initiative "Half of the population, equal representation", by Saranda Bllaca. See the courtesy copy NDI-Kosovo, 2015.

underrepresentation of women in decision-making posts in municipalities, as they were only chairing 14 municipal directorates in all of Kosovo (4.4%).<sup>18</sup>

This was the opposite of the real demand in the field. After the 2013 local elections, leadership positions changed hands in more than 50% of Kosovo municipalities. It is ascertained that 15% more women than men voted in 2013 municipal elections.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, political parties did not follow the will expressed by women for higher participation in elections and better appointment in decision-making posts after the establishment of municipal executive bodies.

### c) WOMEN IN MEDIA

Electoral campaign monitoring revealed that women representation in politics by both political parties and media was conducted in a non-gender sensitive way. Television spots used by political parties very often used non-gender sensitive messages, thus representing women in their stereotypical roles in society, e.g. in debates regarding what are considered women issues, such as welfare, healthcare, family care, lack of pre-school institutions for children, etc.<sup>20</sup> Also, messages in televised spots were stereotypical roles that women and men play in the society.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, women's representation in public debates was low.<sup>22</sup>

In many pre-electoral and electoral shows, low representation of women in debates was noted, while media and political parties failed to use their opportunity to promote women in decision-making posts. According to media, this often happens due to the "hesitation" of women to participate in debates or of the parties that delegate men even if they are asked exclusively by the media to delegate women.<sup>23</sup> According to some media, there are no "adequate" women to engage in debates, but also parties tend to delegate their preferred candidates.<sup>24</sup> Also, research by the Independent Media Commission (IMC) of November 2013 of three television stations (RTK, KTV and RTV21) showed that women's representation was very low in comparison to men. In 2013, RTK offered 5.21% of its space for women, KTV offered 7.72% and RTV21 offered 4.20%.<sup>25</sup>

Most women candidates for members of parliament in the June 2017 central elections agree that the only medium in which they had direct access during the electoral campaign was social media, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Most women also agree that use of social media in the recent elections was limited because of the short time for preparation offered for the extraordinary elections. However, women also agreed that there is a need for training on use and development of social media-based electoral campaigns.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See Kosovo Country Gender Profile: Analysis of gender differences at all levels in Kosovo, page 17. Prepared by Orgut Consulting for the Kosovo Gender Equality Agency, Prishtina. Available at <http://abgj.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/Profili%20Gjinor%20i%20Vendit%202014%20-ALB.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> For instance, in the AAK television spot, the Prime Minister candidate presented women in their societal, clan-based roles, with sequences of the social and leading position of young boys and men, while young girls were depicted in stereotypical and traditional roles.

<sup>21</sup> See for example the quote: "State has two hands. The hand of the father and hand of the mother. Father's hand is the police, judiciary, prosecutors' offices and army; while mother's hand is healthcare, education, culture and social care. We wish to put our emphasis on the mother's hand, in order to emphasize the care of the state towards the citizen." See the official page of Albin Kurti, Lëvizja Vetëvendosje, at <http://bit.ly/2rMQd22>

<sup>22</sup> Interview with editors-in-chief of KTV and "Komiteti" show produced by Express, conducted by the Women in Leadership Group, May-June 2017.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with the editor-in-chief of "Komiteti" show, Express, May-June 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Independent Media Commission, "Women presentation in media", see link at <http://www.kpm-ks.org/?mod=njoftimet&id=400>.

<sup>26</sup> A good model is the New Media School, provided by the National Democratic Institute for political parties, on annual basis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings above and lessons learned from previous elections, the group offers the following recommendations:

### POLITICAL PARTIES:

- In the upcoming municipal elections, political parties should ensure that their programs are more gender-sensitive, and should learn from central elections to reflect on concrete actions related to equal representation, in order to attract votes of women.
- While some parties in their platforms and programs address gender matters, more political parties should do this, thus increasing gender inclusivity. More initiatives to work with men within parties, in cooperation with civil society and women in politics at the local level, could be established to support the analysis and provide gender-sensitive pre-electoral and electoral messages.
- In cooperation with the Central Election Commission, political parties should work in updating electoral rules, in accordance with requirements of the Law on Gender Equality, in terms of gender representation within parties, and should demand implementation of legal provisions in a progressive manner, in order to achieve an equal gender representation.
- Women's engagement in decision-making posts within political parties should be considered an opportunity for advancement at the local level, in order for one of the two heads of municipal executive to be a woman, and to increase the number of women in municipal executives, as per the Law on Gender Equality.
- Furthermore, Gender Equality Lobbies, established after the local elections and comprising women representatives in municipal assemblies and civil society should provide names of women in politics, which could potentially head municipal directorates in municipalities.
- Political party branches at the local level should promote women candidates in public debates, selecting women representatives to discuss various topics and not only topics stereotypically perceived as gender matters. This approach should be viewed as a strategy for appealing to voting women.
- Political parties, in cooperation with CEC, are obliged to propose women in the role of commissioners and observers, in accordance with requirements of the Law on Gender Equality.

### MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY:

- Media can play an important role in the presentation of women experts in non-stereotypical roles. To this end, civil society, in cooperation with political parties, should propose a list of women available for debates, depending on topics proposed and fields of expertise. Gender equality advocacy groups should be established in municipalities, which could gather women from politics and civil society in support networks for advancing gender equality.
- Civil society and donors should offer training, in cooperation with political parties, on use of social media for women candidates in local elections.
- Civil society, in cooperation with international organizations, should continue to research women's participation in politics at the central and local level, in order to promote the significance of equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes.



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