



Kosovo
Program
for
Gender
Equality

**ENHANCED REACH
TOWARD NON-MAJORITY
COMMUNITIES**

Kosovo Program for Gender Equality -
enhanced reach toward non-majority communities

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Introduction

Gender equality is a fundamental human right that is essential for creating a just and equitable society. It ensures that all individuals, regardless of their gender, have equal opportunities to fulfill their potential and contribute to society. Gender equality is crucial for social and economic development and creates a society where all citizens are valued. However, achieving gender equality is not a standalone challenge but rather requires addressing other obstacles that women face, such as ethnic discrimination.

In Kosovo, women from non-majority communities, particularly the Serb community, face intersecting forms of inequality based on their gender and ethnic identities. These women encounter economic, social, and cultural barriers both within their communities and in interactions with other communities. They experience various obstacles that are shaped by their gender, ethnicity, religion, and language, including issues related to employment, education, public representation, mobility, and safety. They also live in certain regions, which are often physically isolated and lack the resources, opportunities, or support necessary to participate in advocacy or take action to improve their situation. To address these inequalities, it is essential to recognize and acknowledge the unique experiences of women from non-majority communities and ensure that gender-related policies and action plans address these layers of discrimination.

This paper presents urgent and achievable measures and actions to be included in the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality (KPGE)'s Action Plan, which is the leading gender policy. It also highlights the weaknesses of the KPGE in meeting the needs of non-majority communities and offers recommendations for an Action Plan in a clear, action-oriented form. Only by accepting and implementing these recommendations and allocating adequate resources and efforts can non-majority communities be reached and meaningful improvements in their position achieved.

Kosovo Program for Gender Equality (KPGE) is "the umbrella document for planning institutional actions, of the public and private sector, which should serve as a reference platform for undertaking actions followed by allocation of sufficient budgetary funds" making it one of the most important gender policies in Kosovo. The KPGE 2020-2024 is the second such program, building on the experiences and lessons learned from the first 2008-2013 program. The Program sets the general framework for integrating gender equality into laws, policies and public services. This legal infrastructure paves the way for effectively including gender-responsive budgeting in all phases of the central and local financial management cycles.

Kosovo gender dynamics

Women in Kosovo face a multitude of challenges that hinder their social, economic, and political well-being. One of the most prominent issues is gender-based violence, which remains widespread despite efforts made through laws, services, and advocacy. Women also experience significant discrimination in the labor market, with limited access to qualified jobs and salaries. Furthermore, women are underrepresented in decision-making positions, both in government and in the private sector. While in numbers women are well represented in the education system as pupils and students, access to education and healthcare is limited for the impoverished, women with disabilities, and those living in rural areas. Traditional gender roles and patriarchal society further reinforce these challenges and reflect on women's inheritance rights, access to family and personal resources, mobility, and safety. Women from non-majority communities, in addition to all these, face additional challenges, including ethnic-based discrimination, prejudices, freedom of movement restrictions, language barriers, and social, economic, and physical segregation.

Gender disparity in Kosovo remains especially high in the labour market. According to the latest statistics from the Agency of Statistics, the employment rate for 2021 was 31.1%, with the highest employment for men at 45.9%, and the lowest for women at 16.5%. The highest employment rate for women was at the age group of 25-34 at 24.1%, while for men was for the age group 35-44 at 61.9%. Women were mainly employed in the education, trade and healthcare sectors with 51.8%, while men were mainly employed in the trade, construction and manufacturing sectors with 41.8%. The majority of employed women had employee status at 88.3% compared to 74.3% for men. The men were more self-employed at the rate of 10.8%, compared to women at 4.9%.² According to the results of the Census of Agriculture in Kosovo from 2014, only 4.9% of women own agricultural land, while in 2021 women own 17.07% of all businesses.³ Also, only 3% of commercial bank loan recipients in 2015 were women.⁴ Perhaps the most worrisome figure was the inactivity rate among women which was at 78% compared to men at 43.4%.⁵ Therefore, it is not a surprise that almost 90% of the contribution to the pension fund comes from men.⁶

² Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Social Statistics - indicators of education and labour market by gender, 2023, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/social-statistics---indicators-of-education-and-labour-market-by-gender>

³ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Graté dhe Burrat në Kosovë, 2020-2021, 2022, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/7207/bur-rat-dhe-grate-2020-2021f.pdf>

⁴ IMPAQ International, Gender, LGBTI, and Persons with Disabilities Assessment, 2018, available at: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00T8D4.pdf

⁵ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Social Statistics - indicators of education and labour market by gender, 2023, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/social-statistics---indicators-of-education-and-labour-market-by-gender>

⁶ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Graté dhe Burrat në Kosovë, 2020-2021, 2022, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/7207/bur-rat-dhe-grate-2020-2021f.pdf>

Contrary to the labor market trends, the numbers are in favor of women when it comes to education. The total number of students attending higher education at the Bachelor's level in 2021/2022 was 70,187, of which 58.2% were women and 41.8% were men. Graduation rates are also better for women, with 66%, compared to 34% for males. At the master's level, 61.2% of students were women and 38.2% were men, while graduates were 62.6% women and 37.4% men. However, the gap remains in the selected field of studies, where studies such as "education" are still pre-dominated by women, at a rate of 92.6%.⁷ These numbers further attest that women face unjust discrimination in the labour market, as they are equally, if not more, qualified to compete in it.

In 2021 79.88% of all victims of domestic violence were women⁸, according to the research conducted by OSCE Mission to Kosovo. The study also found that "Kosovo Serb women are more likely to say they have experienced physical or sexual violence than Kosovo Albanians (34% versus 13%)." However, women from minority non-majority communities and other disadvantaged groups face particular challenges in accessing services.⁹ The normalization of domestic violence is also a concern, as highlighted by a 2018 UN Women report which found that 1 in 5 Kosovo citizens agreed with a husband's use of violence against his wife, and 29.9% perceived domestic violence as a normal part of any relationship. Furthermore, 74% believed that women provoke sexual harassment, and 24.6% believed that sexual intercourse between two married adults.¹⁰ could never be violent. In addition, 95% of adults convicted in the Basic Courts between 2013-2019 and 94.3%¹¹ of minors convicted in the Basic Courts were men.



⁷ It is important to note that Kosovo Serbs attend schools administrated by the Government of Serbia, separate from the ones administrated by the Government of Kosovo, hence the numbers presented are primary for the Albanian and other non-majority communities.

⁸ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Grate dhe Burrat në Kosovë, 2020-2021, 2022, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/7207/bur-rat-dhe-grate-2020-2021f.pdf>

⁹ OSCE Mission in Kosovo, Survey on well-being and safety of women in Kosovo, 2019, available at: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/439781.pdf>

¹⁰ UN Women, 2018 Public Perceptions Of Gender Equality And Violence Against Women, 2018, available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ECA/Attachments/Publications/2019/2018%20Public%20Perceptions%20of%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20VAW/Kosovo%20Under%20UNSCR%201244%201999.pdf>

¹¹ Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Grate dhe Burrat në Kosovë, 2020-2021, 2022, available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/7207/bur-rat-dhe-grate-2020-2021f.pdf>

Gender and non-majority communities

Women from non-majority communities face challenges such as ethnic-based discrimination, prejudices, restrictions on freedom of movement, language barriers, and social, economic, and physical segregation. These challenges are constantly reinforced through neglect and ignorance as institutional and policy challenges, as in the case of KPGE. To map and attest to institutionally reinforced challenges that women from non-majority communities are facing, the NGO CASA engaged in discussions with them in the form of round tables and a workshop to gather their experiences, knowledge, and viewpoints. The discussions included women from Serb, Gorani, Bosnian, and RAE non-majority communities, as well as women from the Albanian majority community. The challenges identified include a lack of data, language barriers, lack of protection of communities' rights, limited access to services, and passive community outreach.

Persistent absence of qualitative and quantitative data Kosovo Serb community: non-majority communities in Kosovo, specifically in the Serb community, remains a largely unresearched topic. The last census in Kosovo, held in 2011, was boycotted by the Serb community,¹² who refused to participate. Office of Statistics does not provide disaggregated data on the Serb community, while the Office of Community Affairs and the Ministry of Communities and Returns offer scattered information in irregular intervals. A similar data gap exists when it comes to gender in non-majority communities, with occasional research done by international and nongovernmental organizations, revealing that internally women in the Serb community struggle with similar challenges as women at large in Kosovo,¹³ with the additional burden of unequal treatment and relations outside of the community.¹⁴ This lack of data further brings to question how laws and policies such as KPGE are informed, especially those targeting certain segments of society, such as women

For example, KPGE notes that "the participation and representation of women in minority communities in the media have never been analyzed" but fails to provide any actions to address this. This raises questions about how KPGE was informed by, and reflected on, specific challenges women from non-majority communities face, if at all.

¹² It is very important to emphasize that "the Kosovo Agency of Statistics has been used as the main source of data "for the KPGE, while omitting to acknowledge the ethnic-blindness of majority of their datasets and reports.

¹³ One research on women from the Serb community finds that: "In summary, there are gender differences identified with regard to women's and men's access to resources, mobility, safety, access to green spaces and income and employment opportunities. Many women are socially excluded, and they do not participate in community work and local politics. They have lower mobility levels than men. They have restricted access to all types of resources. They are more unemployed than men even though they have good education levels. Women are mainly not registered as land owners and may have very limited access to finances and business opportunities." UN-Habitat, Gender Analysis in north Kosovo and concerned local authorities, 2017, available at: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/gender_analysis_in_north_kosovo_and_concerned_local_authorities_0.pdf

¹⁴ EU Office in Kosovo research show that "Women from non-majority communities remain underrepresented in the parliament, assemblies, government, public administration, and justice institutions, particularly in decision-making positions." EU Office in Kosovo, "Gender Action Plan III – 2020-2025, Country Level Implementation Plan for Kosovo", 2021.

Partial implementation of communities' language rights: Women from Serb and other non-majority communities face barriers in researching and accessing information regarding their rights, any public or private programs, or other opportunities, due to inadequate implementation of communities' language rights. Despite provisions in the Constitution (Article 5, 58, 59), the Law on the Rights of Communities (Article 4), and the entire Law on the Use of Languages, the lack of implementation or poor and inadequate implementation of the Serbian language as the one of the official languages, or other communities' languages, is omnipresent in Kosovo, including in policies, public services, education, healthcare, the private sector, and media, among others. These barriers limit opportunities for non-majority communities and are often the cause of social, economic, and political exclusion. On the other side, repercussions for violations of language laws and rights are almost non-existent.

For example, in judicial institutions, institutions mandated to safeguard the law are violating communities' language rights. Judicial institutions struggle with a shortage of translators, and even when court-employed translators are available, they are often not sufficiently qualified to perform these services. It is also important to note that Serbian, as one of the official languages, is an unintelligible language for the Kosovo Victims' Advocate. However, KPGE fails to acknowledge these challenges and offers no mitigation actions that would safeguard equal access to justice for all. Furthermore, this implies that achieving access to justice, a Pillar 3 of the KPGE, is almost impossible for members of non-majority communities due to the shortage of highly qualified translators in all institutions, including the justice system.

Partial implementation of the legal framework on the protection of the rights of non-majority communities: The legal framework for the protection of non-majority communities in Kosovo has often been praised for its progressive and inclusive provisions, however, that progressivity is lacking when it comes to its implementation. Difficulties in addressing this challenge lie in the interplay of institutional capacities, political will, ethnic prejudices, and lack of enforcement practices. Thus, women from non-majority communities are faced with yet another obstacle in becoming equal members of society, their ethnicity, on top of their gender. This matter remains the biggest elephant in the room, not reflected in most strategic documents, including the KPGE.

For example, the Law on Civil Service (Article 11) guarantees non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and equal representation. It specifically states that non-majority communities have the right to fair and proportional representation in the public sector at both the central and local levels. This is achieved through a quota of a minimum of 10% of public sector employees for non-majority communities. However, this legal norm lacks a functional mechanism to

safeguard the employed members of non-majority communities.¹⁵ According to the latest assessment of the implementation of this legal provision, as of December 2015, non-majority communities reached only 9.63% of employment in the public sector.¹⁶ The Law on Civil Service also requires gender equality in public service (Article 3, Article 5), and the latest data show significant differences in gender representation for different communities. Women from the Kosovo Serb community are statistically the least represented within their community.¹⁷ This dual discrimination in employment practices raises questions about how we can achieve the goal of "creating equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic development" outlined under KPGE Pillar 1 if we don't have stand-alone, progressive action points for the inclusion of women from non-majority communities.

Restricted access to public services: Non-majority communities face restricted access to public services due to physical barriers (such as location, transport, and accessibility) as well as social barriers (such as language, mistreatment, ethnic distance, and prejudices). According to research, 45% of respondents from the Serb community were denied access to institutional services,¹⁸ at some point.¹⁹ Moreover, the Serb community primarily trusts and relies on public services such as education, healthcare, and social protection from Serbia-run institutions. Other non-majority communities also encounter challenges when in need of public services.

For example, the Bosnian community faces numerous challenges in accessing education at all levels. The curriculum in Bosnian is not tailored to the needs of the community, schools are not easily accessible, and language barriers are particularly limiting for higher education opportunities. Educational mobility is also limited due to the lack of recognition of Kosovo diplomas and scarce scholarship opportunities. However, none of the actions developed under KPGE Pillar 2 plans for addressing the challenges of inclusion of non-majority communities in the education system or offer indicators that would track community-specific data or disaggregate data based on ethnicity.

A passive approach to outreach to non-majority communities: KPGE has a communication and outreach component under each pillar to increase the reach of its actions and the inclusion of women. However, there is no foreseen outreach to engage non-majority communities. This means that there is no plan for translation into non-majority communities' languages, implementation of actions in areas populated by non-majority communities, or involve-

¹⁵ Even though there is a regulation that further stipulate implementation of the Law, specifically the Regulation on Procedures for the Fair and Proportional Representation of Communities not in the Majority in the Civil Service (Regulation 04/2010), there are still matters within the Law and Regulations that are not clear, including the mechanisms for oversight, fining and corrective measures, among others.

¹⁶ OSCE Mission in Kosovo, "Representation of Communities in the Civil Service in Kosovo", 2017, available at: https://www.osce.org/-files/f/documents/c/8/320496_0.pdf

¹⁷ OSCE Mission in Kosovo, "Representation of Communities in the Civil Service in Kosovo", 2017, available at: https://www.osce.org/-files/f/documents/c/8/320496_0.pdf

¹⁸ KFOS, OPEN, Consolidated Report, 2020, available at: <https://ngocasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/60dc32e826339087008189.pdf>

¹⁹ Moreover, a significant number of members of non-majority communities, primary Serb and RAE, cannot even request public services

ment of non-majority communities in the development and implementation of the Action Plan.

For example, the grant scheme that aims to support women's entrepreneurship as envisioned under Pillar 1 requires a proactive and inclusive approach that takes into account the specific economic, cultural, and social dynamics to ensure the reach of non-majority communities. This can be done by providing materials in non-majority communities' languages, collaborating with local institutions, utilizing non-majority media, and organizing events in areas populated by non-majority communities. Otherwise, the KPGE remains exclusive to certain groups in society, contrary to the practices, norms, and values it was intended to fight against



Key takeaways

To achieve a society where all members are treated equitably, Kosovo needs policies that are more inclusive, effective, and responsive to the diverse needs of all members of society. To provide fair treatment for women from non-majority communities in gender-related policies and actions, several main postulates must be kept in mind:

Thorough research and understanding of non-majority communities: Any policy introduced to Kosovo society may be ineffective or harmful for non-majority communities if it is not informed by their unique challenges and strengths. Conducting research on non-majority communities is the first step to identifying the barriers that women from these communities face, both within and outside their communities, and identifying solutions that are appropriate to their needs. It is essential to conduct research on non-majority communities before updating or introducing policies, to ensure that the policies are informed by these communities and that appropriate measures are put in place to address their unique needs and concerns.

Protection and implementation of non-majority communities' rights: The importance of protection and implementation of non-majority communities' rights is paramount to the alleviation of segregation, discrimination, and hardship non-majority communities in Kosovo face. Only by protecting non-majority communities' rights as stipulated in the Constitution and several laws, Kosovo can promote other values such as social justice, inclusion, and gender equality, and build a more inclusive and equitable society. When non-majority communities are empowered and their rights are protected, they can contribute to the well-being of society, and their diverse perspectives can enrich public discourse and decision-making. Such a society will become stronger, more vibrant, gender-inclusive and ultimately truly democratic.

Guarantee language rights, access to services and outreach to non-majority communities: All actions proposed in the KPGE, or any other policy, must be available in non-majority communities' languages, especially in Serbian as one of the official languages in Kosovo, and must take place in regions predominantly populated by non-majority communities.

Respecting and fully implementing the Law on the Use of Languages is an important step in guaranteeing that all communities have equal access to information and services and in creating a more inclusive and equitable society. Providing policies and services proposed in KPGE in non-majority communities' languages will help to address gender inequalities by ensuring everyone can understand and engage with government efforts to create a more equal society. This can also help to improve communication and trust between

Kosovo Program for Gender Equality Overview

Kosovo Program for Gender Equality (KPGE) is the only national program mandated by the Law on Gender Equality No. 2004/2 (Article 11). In May 2020, the Government of Kosovo adopted the KPGE 2020-2024 and its Action Plan 2020-2022. This second KPGE builds on the experiences and lessons learned from the first 2008-2013 program. The aim of the 2020-2024 program is "to ensure that gender equality is placed at the center of transformation processes in Kosovo, within all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices, and programs of the government, agencies, civil society, the private sector, and the donor community.

The Program is guided by main principles including:

- » Women's rights and human rights
- » Gender equality is a key contributor to the country's sustainable development.
- » Kosovo institutions are committed to promoting accountability through women's leadership, voice, participation, and representation in decision-making, politics, good governance, and security.
- » The Agency for Gender Equality and all mechanisms for achieving gender equality must have the capacity to integrate gender equality and empower women.
- » The government and all stakeholders demonstrate the political will to integrate a gender perspective.
- » Women are a diverse group, and diversity must be reflected in all government interventions.

The program is structured around three pillars, including economic empowerment and social welfare; human development, roles, and gender relations; and women's rights, access to justice, and security. The Program envisions to be achieved with specific objectives under each pillar, and within the three-year action plan (2020-2022):

Pillar 1: Economic Empowerment and Social Welfare

Strategic Objective 1: Creating equal opportunities to contribute and benefit from economic development, increased inclusion and improvement of social welfare

- » Increasing employment of women and girls
- » Providing/enhancing equal access to rights, freedoms, decision-making, resources and services

Pillar 2: Human Development Roles, and Gender Relations

Strategic objective 2: Promoting gender equality through quality education and health, inclusiveness and human capacity utilization as factors contributing to sustainable human development and the elimination of gender inequalities and stereotypes

- » Gender equality is treated as a condition for quality and inclusive education
- » Creating a favourable environment for the realization of human rights, capacities and potentials
- » Inclusion in quality healthcare and health education of the population on gender equality, family planning and reproductive health

Pillar 3: Women's Rights, Access to Justice, and Security

Strategic Objective 3: Promoting the realization of rights in decision-making, peace, security and justice and thereby guaranteeing the achievement of gender equality

- » Strengthening institutional mechanisms and raising social awareness of access to justice
- » Increasing equal participation and representation in the decision-making process in line with the requirements of the Law on Gender Equality
- » Creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment for women and men in the security sector
- » Increasing women's participation in the negotiation, peace and reconciliation processes, in diplomatic missions and missions abroad

The Program further lists the main challenges, set of interventions and measuring indicators²⁰ for each of the three pillars, that is strategic objectives.

With the adoption of the KPGE the Government of Kosovo legally bound itself to allocate funds and implement the activities as foreseen in the Action Plan, and the Agency for Gender Equality bound itself to monitor the implementation and annually report on implementation progress and achievements. At the time of writing this report (April 2023), the Agency for Gender Equality has

²⁰ A total of 35 indicators with targets set for 2021/2022 and 2024.

not submitted any of the annual reports²¹, required evaluation reports²², or published any form of progress reports, making accountability overall unattainable. This also falters improvements for the upcoming implementation years, as the Agency, regardless of these omissions, has already "organized first meeting with Working Group to review the Action Plan for the remaining period to execute Kosovo Program for Gender Equality for years 2023–2025".²³

²¹ According to the KPGE, the Agency for Gender Equality is responsible for: "The annual progress report on the achievement of the KPGE objectives and the implementation of the action plan will be drafted on an annual basis and will be submitted to the inter-ministerial Coordination Body." The annual progress report aims to "provide information on the progress versus objectives and implementation of activities". Moreover, the particular importance of the progress report is in the mandated attention "to be given to the analysis of obstacles, challenges and risks related to the implementation of the Programme."

²² According to the KPGE, the program was to "be subject to an interim evaluation in 2021 in order to assess effectiveness and efficiency of implementation" as well as "the final evaluation in 2023. Both evaluations shall be independent (external) and the Agency for Gender Equality will request external support."

²³ For more please see: https://abgj.rks-gov.net/en/lajmi_single/1054

Kosovo Program for Gender Equality and women from non-majority communities

In Kosovo, ethnicity is an independent variable, and gender is the dependent variable, meaning that ethnicity directly influences how gender is perceived and treated. As a young society still rising from the conflict where ethnicity was an important factor, understanding how ethnicity plays out in economic, social, political, and ultimately gender dynamics is paramount for sound gender policy planning and delivery. Although KPGE acknowledges the “more pronounced social, economic, and cultural challenges of women from minority groups,” it fails to provide an overview of those challenges or actions to address them.

Women from Serb, Bosnian, Gorani, and Roma communities live in isolated, rural areas with difficult access to information and services provided by the central institutions. In most cases, these institutions fail to provide services, products, or goods in the Serbian language, despite the fact that Serbian is the second official language in Kosovo. On top of that, ethnic tensions, prejudices, and social and economic isolation further contribute to the lack of access to guaranteed human, community, social, economic, religious, language, and gender rights in Kosovo. As such, it is understandable that the legal framework mandates affirmative measures for achieving equality in society. These measures are stipulated in the Constitution, different laws, policies, and procedures. The term “affirmative measure” is crucial in understanding Kosovo Program for Gender Equality pitfalls as a strategic framework for achieving gender equality.

KPGE largely disregards the needs and challenges of women from non-majority communities²⁴ and, with that, fails to offer affirmative measures to secure their inclusion and benefits. KPGE offers a comprehensive overview of the challenges women face in Kosovo²⁵ if Kosovo’s gender dynamics were homogeneous and unrelated to other factors such as ethnicity. Specifically, for over 100 action points laid out in the Action Plan, only one targets a non-majority community, while the sole indicator for monitoring the attainment of objectives is set for non-majority communities, pertaining to the expansion of active labor market measures. Such a policy, which ignores a large subgroup of society, the most discriminated against, outcast, and vulnerable, will yield neither equality nor equity in society.

²⁴ The methodology of development of KPGE was a non-majority communities blind, leading the creation of non-majority communities-blind policy. For example, in the annex of the policy there is a list is of the members of the five working groups for KPGE development, where only two groups had representatives of the Serb community. The secretary team also does not include representatives from the Serb community.

²⁵ For an overview of the most important factors affecting women from the Serb community and further exploration of the proposals for amendments and additions to the Program Action Plan measures plan see annex: Amendments Proposal to the Action Plan of the Program for Gender Equality of Kosovo 2020-2024.

This paper presents urgent, followed by actionable, measures and actions to be included in the KPGE and Action Plan with the 2023 update. This is not an exhaustive list, but a mandatory first step in creating an Action Plan that is both gender and non-majority communities receptive, as the only approach to making "gender equality at the center of the transformation processes in Kosovo, within all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices and programs of the government, agencies, civil society, the private sector and the donors' community".



Urgent measures to be included in KPGE's Action Plan

Pillar 1: Economic Empowerment and Social Welfare

Increasing employability of women and girls from non-majority communities by:

- » An in-depth study of the educational and professional background of women from non-majority communities would further guide the proposed actions.
 - » Safeguard the inclusion of women from non-majority communities in leading and informing the study throughout the process.
 - » The study must be published in all community languages.
- » Create concrete and inclusive opportunities for women from non-majority communities to connect with the labour market through professional networks.
- » Develop and implement initiatives to increase awareness of employment discrimination against women from non-majority communities.
- » Establish and enforce a minimum quota for the employment of women from non-majority communities.
 - » Create a database with statistics on the number of women from non-majority communities in the public and private sectors. Provide qualitative updates on those women's experiences.
- » Increase media exposure of successful women from non-minority communities in the workspace, entrepreneurship, or public service.
- » Precise delineation of maternity leave provisions within labour laws including protection for women, full salary and a safe return to work.

Create professional opportunities for women from non-majority communities by:

- » Provision of professional training to women from non-majority communities to encourage their participation in non-traditional occupations.
 - » Specify targets for the percentage of non-majority women in the courses.
 - » Certify the programs are provided in regions populated by non-majority communities and in non-majority communities' languages.
- » Address the challenges of recognizing diplomas and certificates between educational systems in Serbia and Kosovo, to remove the employment and education barriers.
 - » Create a timeline with firm due dates for achieving full diplomas and certificate recognitions.
- » Create inclusive and accessible options for a streamlined retraining program for women from non-majority communities.

Ensure that women from non-majority communities have access to high-quality social and family services by:

- » Expanding the capacity of childcare facilities in regions populated by non-majority communities.
- » Enhancing social infrastructure in regions populated by non-majority communities.
- » Enhancing social services, including access to visiting nurses, teaching assistants, and personal caregivers for people with disabilities, in regions populated by non-majority communities.
- » Providing psychosocial support to women from non-majority communities.

Pillar 2: Human Development, Roles and Gender Relations

Create inclusive, equal, and fair opportunities by:

- » Conduct a comprehensive situational analysis of the position of non-majority communities, including public service provisions and access to, specifically healthcare, education, and welfare, to inform and (re)direct actions in these areas.
 - » Safeguard the inclusion of women from non-majority communities in leading and informing the study throughout the process.
 - » The study must be published in all community languages.
- » Involve and seek substantial input from non-majority communities in the review of translations of laws, strategies and other materials, to ensure accuracy, quality and accessibility.
- » Ensure provision of educational programs in non-majority communities in languages, that are respectful of communities' social, economic, cultural and religious upbringing.
- » Guarantee cultural heritage protection.
 - » Establish a diverse team of specialists who can review and elaborate on the significance and accurate recognition of cultural heritage, ensuring its fair and equitable utilization and protection.

Pillar 3: Women's Rights, Access to Justice and Security

Safeguard equal and just access to justice institutions by:

- » Engage more translators and court interpreters who are bilingual in at least two official languages in the Kosovo judicial institutions.
- » Provide accessible mechanisms for verifying the civil population record for notaries.

- » Create measures for greater inclusion of women from non-majority communities in the security and justice sectors.
 - » Create a database with statistics on the number of women from non-majority communities in the security and justice sectors in Kosovo, followed by information on the number of women's associations that have been established. Provide qualitative updates on the work of associations.
- » Include civil society in observing the implementation of the Law on gender equality in public institutions.

To achieve these measures full responsibility and liability of competent institutions (Ministries, Agencies, and Chambers) to undertake the necessary actions and ensure the inclusion of women from non-majority communities must be taken

Strategic Objective 1: Creating equal opportunities



Strategic Objective 1: Creating equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic development, increase inclusion and improvement of social welfare, will be achieved	
Actions as per the Program	Actions for inclusion of women from non-majority communities
Specific objective 1.1. Increasing employment of women and girls	
Provision of vocational training for women with special focus on women with low level of education and women who have been unemployed for a long time	Provide tailored professional trainings and courses for women from non-majority communities in non-majority languages, including Serbian as one of the official languages
	Open evening schools for women from non-majority communities with safe, easy, and fast access
Conduct of the labour market needs research	Research education and professional background of women from non-majority communities
Review of the profiles provided in VET schools and adaptation to market needs. This will be achieved by formatting a tripartite working group that will conduct the analysis, harmonize profiles with market needs, and create a list with the priority profiles to be provided.	Updating professional profiles of women from non-majority communities to meet the needs of the job market
Promotion of success stories in the labour market of people from Roma and Ashkali communities, with a particular focus on women. Strategy for inclusion of Roma and Ashkali Communities in the Kosovo Society 2017-2022.	Promotion of success stories in the labour market of people from other non-majority communities such as Serb, Bosniak and Gorani
Supplementation/amendment of the Law on Labour for guaranteeing parental leave, and alignment with the EU Directives	Expand maternity level to 12 months with a full salary provided
Information activities for promoting of the right to maternity and parental leave	Ensure information activities are available in non-majority languages
	Ensure at least one out of five informational campaigns is held in regions predominately inhabited by non-majority communities
Subsidizing the payment for kindergarten children of single mothers, beneficiaries of social schemes	Ensure there is no limit on the number of subsidized children

Analysis and evaluation of the financial cost for subsidizing the payment for pre-school education for children from families included in social scheme	Provide free preschool education for all
Training of beneficiaries of social categories and their engagement in employment programs	Provide trainings in non-majority languages, and in regions predominately inhabited by non-majority communities
Construction of residential and day care centers for providing services to older people and to those with no family care	Construction of such centers in regions predominately inhabited by non-majority communities
Construction of day-care residential centers for the provision of services to persons with disabilities	Construction of such centers in regions predominately inhabited by non-majority communities
Promotion of the development of existing women-owned businesses through microfinance and microcredit programs	Promotion of the non-majority women-owned businesses through grants for start-ups and tax breaks.
Establishment of stimulating structure (mutual fund) by the government and businesses for supporting schooling in majors with a deficit number of students and, for girls and women, in technical fields.	Determine the mandatory % of the proposed scholarships to be awarded to girls and women from non-majority communities.
Production of TV shows and columns with women/girls' success stories in technical profession.	Ensure the shows and columns promote women/girls from non-majority communities
	Broadcast on RTK2 and other non-majority languages TV channels
Sensitizing activities to promote the engagement of women and men in the sectors with a deficit number of employees (agriculture, energy, forestry, water, environment)	Organize activities in regions predominately inhabited by non-majority communities
Survey/analysis of the situation on the possibility of establishing credit unions	Create opportunities for networking women from non-majority communities to improve their position when applying for loans
Provision of financial education programs	Determine the mandatory % of the education program participants to be women from non-majority communities

Strategic Objective 2: Promoting gender equality through quality education and health, inclusiveness and human capacity utilization as factors contributing to sustainable human development and the elimination of gender inequalities and stereotypes	
Actions as per the Program	Actions for inclusion of women from non-majority communities
Specific objective 2.1. Gender quality is treated as a condition for inclusive quality education	
Award scholarships to boys and girls for gender studies abroad (Young Cell Scheme)	Guarantee a minimum of 10% of scholarship for boys and girls from non-majority communities
Establishment of a fund and community support program (100 scholarships, including housing, travel, and learning materials) (Kosovo Education Strategy plan 2017-2021, Outcome 7.9.5)	Review Kosovo Education Strategy to ensure all non-majority communities are included, and appropriate allocations of program benefits are required
Expansion of orientation and advisory service in schools for girls (Communication Strategy School-Parents for Career Guidance of Lower Secondary Education Students 2018-2020)	Establish sustainable and accessible mechanisms to provide career counselling support for young people and parents of non-majority communities
Awareness raising campaign on women's rights and gender equality focusing on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities	A persistent, ongoing campaign should be implemented, focused on and reaching all communities
Specific objective 2.2. Creating a favorable environment for realization of human rights, capacities and potentials	
Drafting of a training module for the media in addressing: basic gender concepts, LGBTI, gender-based violence and security, the risk of carrying weapons, special needs	Include in the model: reporting on women from non-majority communities, and ethnic gender discrimination.
	Include representatives of non-majority communities in developing and delivering the training model.
Specific objective 2.3. Inclusion in quality healthcare and health education of the population on gender equality, family planning, and reproductive health	
Advancing education and decision-making of girls and women and boys and men on reproductive and sexual health	Incorporate ongoing informal education into the government's budget and establish a program for family planning and healthy lifestyle tailored to young people.
	Ensure that education is available in non-majority languages, and in regions predominately inhabited by non-majority communities

Strategic Objective 3: Promoting the realization of rights in decision-making, peace, security and justice, and thereby guaranteeing the achievement of gender equality	
Actions as per the Program	Actions for inclusion of women from non-majority communities
Specific objective 3.1. Strengthening institutional mechanisms and raising social awareness of access to justice	
Appointment of judges and prosecutors profiled to deal with gender-based violence	Ensure high-quality translation services throughout the court processes.
	Employing more translators and court interpreters who are bilingual in at least two official languages in courts at all levels.
Increase society's awareness through advocacy on access to justice, focusing on property rights, gender-based violence during the war and other rights deriving from relevant legislation	Include representatives from non-majority communities in the awareness-raising campaigns, ensure campaigns are available in non-majority languages and distributed through non-majority media outlets
Specific objective 3.2. Increasing equal participation and representation in the decision-making process in line with the requirements of Law on Gender Equality	
Building the capacities for regular monitoring of LGE implementation within public institutions	Include civil society in the monitoring processes
	Ensure monitoring is conducted in all municipalities and central institutions, and has community disaggregated data
Conducting periodic research on the representation of women in decision-making positions in the public and private sector	Ensure research includes women from non-majority communities
	Ensure research findings are published in non-majority languages
	Ensure non-majority media outlets are utilized for dissemination of research findings
Specific objective 3.3. Creating a safe and non-discriminatory environment for women and men in the security sector	
Situation analysis of the needs to establish a women's association in Kosovo Security Forces	The analysis must include data on women from non-majority communities working in the security sector and their participation in the associations.

Conclusion

Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment requires restructuring political, social, and legal structures that are accountable for the existing inequalities. Until the root causes of gender inequality are addressed – and in Kosovo, ethnic inequality and discrimination are deeply ingrained in gender, among other factors – systematic changes to social norms and the positions of all women are unachievable.

The current strategic approach to combating gender inequality in Kosovo deprives women from non-majority communities of opportunities and assistance provided through policies such as KPGE. The consequences of such neglect are grave, as they not only perpetuate discrimination toward the group, they are intended to aid but also discriminate against the most underserved categories of society, whose unequal position is shaped not just by their gender but also by their ethnic identity. Existing ethnic tensions further aggravate the position of women from the Serb community specifically, affecting their everyday lives and ability to attain even basic rights.

The goal of this paper is to ensure that the institutional fight for gender equality is inclusive and responsive to women from non-majority communities. The adoption and implementation of the urgent and actionable measures within the KPGE implementation plan for 2023–2025 is the first step in achieving this. This will bind all Kosovo institutions to act upon the predetermined course of action, assuring the extension of KPGE benefits across communities. It will create opportunities for accessing public services and programs, measures for economic and social empowerment, networking, and other actions for those who are currently excluded from such benefits. This means that each program deriving from the KPGE Action Plan will encompass non-majority communities, making KPGE a truly all-inclusive policy.



This paper also validates a process that ought to serve as an example of good practice, as all urgent measures proposed were crafted in direct communication and cooperation with women from both majority and non-majority communities²⁶. NGO CASA used different consultative forms (including inclusive baseline assessment, round tables, focus groups, workshops, and individual experts' reviews), at different dates and times, and across Kosovo, to offer ease of access to women from different communities, and with various social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. The result is well-developed, community-driven, urgent measures for efficient remedies to the discrimination patterns that women from non-majority communities face in all aspects of socio-political life, which must be enforced through the KPGE and its Action Plan.

²⁶ Civic participation, which is mandated by the law, must take a meaningful form, and must reflect the diversity of Kosovo society.

