



Handbook for  
Women's Liberation  
~ Kosovo Edition ~

**Publication Title:**

Handbook for Women's Liberation – Kosovo  
Edition

**Publisher:**

Center for Affirmative Social Action - CASA

**Author:**

Dušica Jovičić

**Editor:**

Boban Simić

**Gender consultant:**

Nora Ahmetaj

**Translation:**

Srđan Simonović I.B.

**Proofreading:**

Tomislav Perušić

**Design:**

Bojan Marinković

**Print:**

CAP Solution

**Year of Publication: May 2024.**

**Disclaimer:** This publication was created within the Barabar Centre project financially supported by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The authors of the publication are solely responsible for the views expressed in this document and in no way represent the official views of UNMIK.

# Table of Contents

The Emancipation Club .....	3
Workshop Methodology.....	3
Summary .....	3
Principles of the Emancipation Club.....	5
<b>Internal Inconsistencies of Patriarchy</b> .....	7
<b>Women and Gender</b> .....	10
Gender Socialization .....	11
How to overcome gender stereotypes? .....	13
<b>Women Lead</b> .....	14
Women and Feminism .....	15
<b>Women and Politics</b> .....	17
How to Increase the Number of Women in Leadership Positions? .....	19
<b>Women and Conflict</b> .....	20
The Female Perspective in Conflict Resolution .....	21
How to Enable Women to be Part of Peace Processes?.....	22
<b>Women and Media</b> .....	23
Stereotypical Portrayal of Women .....	24
How to overcome these problems? .....	26
<b>In conclusion</b> .....	26
<b>Literature</b> .....	28

## The Emancipation Club

The inception of our Emancipation Club dates back to February 2024, when it commenced its activities at the Barabar Center in Pristina. The main idea was to offer young girls in Kosovo a platform to explore the significance of gender identity through themed workshops, fostering solidarity, tolerance, and reconciliation. That's how the main goal of the Club is designed - empowering young women, through their liberation and better understanding of their position in society, surpassing cultural, religious, and ethnic differences.

Within our women's Club, four thematic workshops were held titled: "*Women as Agents of Change*," "*Women's Activism, Leadership, and Volunteerism*," "*Conflict Resolution*," and "*Women in Media*." Each of them was conceived as a separate thematic unit but always interconnected with the gender theme.

We observed firsthand the progress toward our objective: within the supportive environment of the Barabar Center, young girls openly shared comparable experiences and emphasized shared challenges. ***The sole distinction lay in the languages they used.*** This realization underscored the importance of inter-community communication as a vital prerequisite for empowering women across Kosovo.

## Workshop Methodology

The workshops, held in two blocks of two sessions each during February and March 2024, brought together young women from Kosovo, aged 18 to 29. Among the participants were students, university attendees, and employed women. What united them was their shared enthusiasm for the goals and the concept of the Emancipation Club. Led by experienced women with both expertise and practical knowledge, these interactive workshops allowed the material to be brought to life and made accessible to the participants.

## Summary

This manifesto, or rather, handbook for the liberation of women in Kosovo, represents a tangible manifestation of the Emancipation Club. By reading it, you can gain a deeper understanding of the topics we covered in the workshops within the Club.

## I Women and Gender

*This part focuses on questions of gender and gender socialization. We know that there are biological differences between women and men. Gender socialization is the process that, based on these differences, creates social distinctions by forming gender roles. These roles manifest through the expectations and freedoms given to boys and girls. This process often fosters stereotypes and limits individual freedoms, especially in deeply traditional and patriarchal communities like those in Kosovo.*

## II Women in Leadership

*The women in Kosovo come from diverse communities, yet they share a common need for feminism as both an idea and a practice of women's liberation. This section delves into the evolution of feminism through waves, illuminating its role in empowering women. It highlights the various waves of struggle and the challenges that women encounter in politics, which is predominantly a male-dominated sphere*

## III Women and Peace Processes

*In this section, we will discuss the women's perspective in conflict resolution and Resolution 1325. Although often overlooked, women from conflict-affected areas can provide valuable contributions to the peace-building process, as evidenced by the efforts of numerous activists from Serbia and Kosovo during and after the Kosovo War in 1999.*

## IV Women in Media

*In the concluding section of this manifesto, we will scrutinize the portrayal of women in the media, where they often encounter stereotypes and double standards. Moreover, we will tackle the issue of gender inequality within the media landscape, spanning both Serbian and Albanian contexts.*

This handbook is intended for all young women in Kosovo who are on the path to emancipation and who understand that female solidarity transcends political, geographical, and cultural boundaries. However, it can be read by anyone whose curiosity needs to be satisfied when it comes to emancipation topics. The manifesto can be read as a whole or in sections. It has two main objectives: to offer a deeper understanding and portrayal of the position of women in Kosovo today and to promote inter-ethnic cooperation and unity among women in Kosovo around common themes, issues, and problems they face.

## Principles of the Emancipation Club

This document is based on specific principles that serve as the foundation for achieving the club's goals. They are:

### 1. Principle of Gender Education:

Gender is a sociological construct shaped by cultural norms. Gender roles, stereotypes, and prejudices are learned behaviors that perpetuate inequality. **The desire for a fairer life in Kosovo obligates us to understand and fight against harmful gender-based norms and stereotypes.**

### 2. Principle of Demystifying Femininity:

Being a woman in Kosovo entails a myriad of prejudices and societal expectations. Undoubtedly, they represent a burden. **The path to a more inclusive and progressive society in Kosovo begins with empowering women to break free from traditional frameworks and embrace non-traditional roles.**

### 3. Principle of Women's Political Emancipation:

Women play a crucial role in shaping the future political landscape of Kosovo. The contribution of women to political life in Kosovo must be recognized as an additional value. **Social progress and transformation are only possible through greater participation of women in places where important political decisions are made.**

#### 4. Principle of Gender-Inclusive Governance:

Social progress and transformation are only possible through greater participation of women in places where important political decisions are made.

#### 5. Principle of Validity of the Women's Perspective in Peace Processes:

The uniqueness of women's experiences and insights contributes to more comprehensive and sustainable peace agreements.

#### 6. Principle of Inclusivity in Peacebuilding:

Efforts for peacebuilding in Kosovo must be gender-responsive and inclusive.

#### 7. Principle of Authenticity in Media:

Realistic portrayal of women in the media, free from stereotypes and idealized images, along with an understanding and respect for the complexity of women, is imperative for all media outlets.

#### 8. Principle of Gender Equality in Media:

Fair treatment of women in the media, as well as of women working in the media, is essential to combatting double standards, prejudices, and gender inequality.

The background features a light cream color with intricate marbled patterns in shades of gold and brown. The corners are adorned with delicate watercolor-style floral illustrations, including blue and pink blossoms and green leaves. The overall aesthetic is soft and artistic.

# ***Internal Inconsistencies of Patriarchy***



In every narrative about the struggle for women's rights, we must start with patriarchy. Patriarchy, in its literal translation, means **"rule of the father"** and it is described as a form of social organization in which men dominate. Patriarchy is a system in which decisions are made by men and where their values are predominant. It is important to understand that any system that contributes to the social, cultural, political, and economic dominance of men is inherently patriarchal. This is crucial because the entire world in 2024 is still patriarchal. Kosovo is no exception in this regard. Today, women in Kosovo predominantly carry out household chores, marriage and family are considered the most important aspects of their lives, and they are often advised to stay in unhappy marriages because divorce is stigmatized. Additionally, lacking sufficient education and access to the job market, women are not likely to inherit property, land, or money, and above all, they are expected to be obedient and submissive<sup>1</sup>. Here, it is considered that:

- Women are highly emotional, surpassing men in this aspect. Nevertheless, they are often perceived as lacking comprehension of profound loneliness.
- Men are rational and logical beings. However, they are often portrayed as unable to restrain themselves when „provoked or tempted“ by women.
- It is commonly believed that men have a natural inclination towards aggressive behavior, which is often excused during arguments or instances of breaking things. Yet, they are still deemed more suitable for leadership roles compared to women.
- Women are frequently labeled as hysterical and unpredictable. Nonetheless, they are expected to handle responsibilities such as scheduling doctor appointments, raising children, and managing household affairs.
- Household chores are often trivialized as easy tasks, deemed as a duty that women should fulfill while their husbands earn money. However, men are often reluctant to contribute to household chores, even in dual-income households or when they are the primary caregivers at home.
- Women are often portrayed as harboring anger and holding grudges. However, it is men who are often associated with resorting to violence when faced with rejection.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sejdija, B. (April 29, 2020). Women from Kosovo torn between family and career. Retrieved from the [link](#).

And many, many other inconsistencies exist. However, there is only one internal consistency in patriarchy: it benefits men. Considering the nature of the system we live in, the Emancipation Club today can offer women in Kosovo a lot. Young women in Kosovo must continue acquiring tools on their path to emancipation, to understand their role in the social progress of their communities, and to shed light on the specificities of the female perspective in many issues. Ultimately, they must realize that gender is the most important characteristic, and when things like national identity, religion, or culture (and Kosovo is a great example of this because it has multiple communities) divide them, gender is what brings them together - **the female experience brings them together.**

The background features a light cream color with a subtle marbled pattern in shades of gold and brown. The corners are adorned with delicate watercolor-style illustrations of blue and pink flowers, green leaves, and small blue berries. The overall aesthetic is soft and elegant.

# ***Women and Gender***

## Gender Socialization

It is evident that differences between women and men exist, whether we are from the Balkans, Europe, or Asia. These differences are not only biological, reflected in various reproductive systems, hormones, and muscle strength, but also extend to the social sphere. Society treats women and men differently, having distinct expectations, assigning them different roles, evaluating them differently, and rewarding or punishing them differently for the same actions. The more resistant a society is to change (and Kosovo indeed exhibits such resistance, as its transformation process and overcoming of traditionalism resemble a slow-moving river, often seeming stagnant), the harder it is to resist the forces of gender, gender socialization, and roles. In Kosovo, informal pressures like condemnation and disapproval are strong, particularly in communities that are not sufficiently open and flexible. What lies at the root of these differences? Are they innate predispositions, or is it society that conditions us?

There exist numerous theories that explain this phenomenon. We will rely on one sociological theory - the theory of gender roles, or the theory of gender socialization<sup>2</sup>, which, through two processes - internalization and self-evaluation, leads to the overlaying of social differentiation onto the biological differences between women and men through the process of learning gender roles.

Gender roles are visible and tangible even before a child is born. Parents have a whole set of expectations for their children, so they paint their nursery in a certain color and buy toys and clothes accordingly. Even before birth, a child is expected to meet many social expectations. And when the child is born, the process of gender socialization truly takes momentum. The different expectations of parents and society as a whole materialize first through colors, toys, behavioral expectations, interests, help with household chores, development of life skills, freedoms, and even rights they will have later in life. The more resistant a society is to change, as is the case in Kosovo, the greater the challenge to resist the forces of gender socialization. Here, informal pressures, often in the form of condemnation and disapproval from the environment, are very strong<sup>3</sup>.

**Colors.** Pink for girls, blue for boys. From infancy, children are ingrained with the notion that pink symbolizes delicacy and is exclusively for girls, while blue is

---

<sup>2</sup> Gender identity and gender socialization: between pink and blue. (March 11, 2024). Social Psychology. Retrieved from the [link](#).

<sup>3</sup> Dobranja, D. et al. Gender Analysis: Multiple perspectives on gender justice in Kosovo. Retrieved from the [link](#).

reserved for boys. However, colors are inherently gender-neutral; they are simply colors.

**Toys.** From the earliest age, girls and boys are handed different toys. Girls get dolls to nurture, signaling their future role as caregivers, while they also receive Barbie dolls and plastic kitchen sets, conditioning them for the role of homemakers. These toys tend to be passive, guiding girls toward roles they'll assume as adults but offering a narrow view of their potential. Conversely, boys receive blocks to build and create, toy cars, and action figures of superheroes or soldiers, preparing them for future roles while still limiting their perceptions of potential. The key difference lies in the toys' encouragement of activity, movement, and logical problem-solving, aspects rarely emphasized in girls' play and upbringing.

**Expectations and behaviors.** They vary significantly based on gender. Boys are often encouraged to engage in active, adventurous play, even if it involves getting dirty or dismantling objects. In contrast, girls are frequently discouraged from similar activities and may face criticism if they engage in rough or messy play. Additionally, girls' clothing tends to be more restrictive, lacking functional pockets and prioritizing appearance over comfort. As a result, girls may find themselves in passive roles, relegated to observing while boys play freely.

**Household chores.** Household responsibilities are often assigned based on gender from a young age, particularly in traditional settings like ours. Girls, as early as 10 years old, are taught to assist their mothers with household chores, including making coffee, washing dishes, and cooking. Conversely, boys typically follow their fathers' examples, who often have minimal involvement in household tasks. This early division of labor ingrains the expectation that girls will take on domestic duties, both in their current homes and in their future roles as wives.

These illustrations of gender socialization underscore the reality that boys and girls inhabit distinct worlds governed by disparate rules. As a result, they encounter different treatment and enjoy varying degrees of freedom throughout their lives. Gender socialization occurs through two processes. First, we accept imposed "rules of the game" because our parents tell us so. After all, society tells us so, and because we fear being sanctioned if we step out of the given framework. As girls, we accept wearing dresses and collecting stickers, even if we may not want to, but that's how it should be. We accept all the rules because we know that society will punish us if we don't. These sanctions are usually in the form of disapproval from our surroundings. Just remember the girl in your class who always tied her hair and loved playing soccer with the boys. She was labeled as a "tomboy." The boy who didn't like sports and mostly hung out with girls was called "sissy." We mocked them because we didn't understand that it's perfectly okay to have behaviors and expectations that are not entirely in line with gender norms. And that it made them different, but not in a negative way. They effortlessly defied imposed gender roles,

and instead of praising that, we ridiculed and commented on it. This just shows how powerful the forces of gender socialization are. It seems that in traditional settings, like Kosovo, it is harder to resist these forces. These divisions are particularly evident on Sunday afternoons when the streets of southern Mitrovica are predominantly occupied by men. Conversely, in the hallways of the Medical School in northern Mitrovica, one is more likely to encounter girls. These patterns reflect the typical divisions characteristic of a traditionally conservative society.

### Example of gender stereotype

*The notion that women are allowed to be vulnerable and show their emotions while men cannot is inherently flawed. The price women pay for being able to "show their emotions" is that people think we are irrational and weak. People have sincerely expressed the view that women should not be in positions of power because our emotions might lead us to start wars. These are the same people who don't want women in leadership roles. The only reason we are allowed to "be vulnerable" is because we are already portrayed as weak, so OF COURSE, we will cry. Our feelings come at a cost (auth).*

## How to overcome gender stereotypes?

Challenging and overcoming gender stereotypes necessitates a sustained and multifaceted strategy that encompasses all facets of society, spanning from families and educational institutions to the wider community. Although Kosovo may be entrenched in deep-seated traditions, instigating change starts at the individual level and gradually evolves into a collective endeavor aimed at progress. Since gender socialization starts from an early age, its main catalyst is the family, followed by the school. It is precisely in these places that we need to seek ways to overcome stereotypes. Children need to be provided with diverse choices when it comes to colors, activities, and toys. Through books and entertaining content featuring diverse characters, children can learn more about their roles. It is important to give children the freedom to choose in play, activities, and interests, regardless of whether they are traditionally feminine or masculine. In this way, instead of being limited, children will develop diverse talents, skills, and interests. Parents and teachers should be positive examples in promoting gender equality. If we want our future generations to be more empathetic, tolerant, capable, and better than us, we must teach them these values.



**Women Lead**

## Women and Feminism

Before delving into how women have begun to step out of the sphere of home and family, where they are placed based on gender stereotypes, into the realm of public and politics, it is necessary to talk about feminism, which has enabled them to do so. Feminism is the theory and practice of women's liberation. There are so many different perspectives, and so many different ways to define women's struggle, but the offered definition best encapsulates the essence of feminism. All major currents in feminism emphasize different aspects of women's liberation, but it is important to know what all these feminisms (liberal, radical, ecological) have enabled women to do. How they have brought to the surface issues such as unpaid female labor, (family) violence against women, women's sexuality, and more. Kosovo is composed of different communities, they differ in culture, duration, memories, and language, but beyond those differences, there is an implicit agreement: feminism is necessary for women in Kosovo.

The pursuit of women's liberation has unfolded in distinct waves. The first wave occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The goal was to create opportunities for women, with a special focus on the right to vote. The result of these struggles was the acquisition of the right to vote for women in America. The last country in Europe to grant women the right to vote was Switzerland (1973). However, universal women's suffrage still does not exist because, in many countries like Afghanistan or Pakistan, there is significant resistance to women's participation in politics. Even in Kosovo, which is a deeply traditional society, women's suffrage is not universal. In the Albanian community, when women vote, it is often part of the "family voting" process where women vote as directed by their husband or father, and often women only go to polling stations after they have finished their household duties (or sometimes not at all). If they are illiterate, they usually vote according to the principle of family voting, and their votes are often "stolen"<sup>4</sup>. Also, they do not vote in the same places as Serbian women, as the Serbian community regularly boycotts Kosovo elections. Women from the Serbian community vote in Serbian elections, but often under the influence of the dominant political party, so they are, in a way, deprived of their right to vote freely and according to their own will. The situation regarding women's participation at the most basic political level - in the voting process in Kosovo - shows us that regardless of nationality, religion, and culture, there are still barriers for women to participate in democratic political processes.

---

<sup>4</sup> Jašari, S. (June 6, 2017). Thousands of women without voting rights in Sunday's elections. Kosovo 2.0. Retrieved from the [link](#).



The second wave began in the 1960s and continued until the 1990s. In this phase, sexuality and reproductive rights were the main issues. Feminists spoke about women as a social class and coined the phrase "the personal is political." They made efforts to rid society from top to bottom of sexism, criticizing everything they saw as problematic - from children's cartoons to the highest levels of government.

The third wave began in the mid-90s. One of the more interesting aspects was that many young feminists reembraced what their predecessors had rejected: makeup, high heels, believing that a woman can look beautiful and have brains at the same time. Additionally, this wave was marked by a strong sense of self-awareness regarding one's prejudices, privileges, and power dynamics.

We are currently in the fourth wave, characterized by the utilization of technology. This wave leverages technology as a pivotal tool, empowering women to cultivate a robust movement through platforms like social media. This wave began ten years ago, focusing on issues such as sexual harassment, rape culture, body shaming, and similar topics. A key component was the use of social media to highlight and address these issues. This brief overview of the feminist waves only gives us a sketch to better understand women's struggle for equality. Again, the struggle of women in Kosovo is far more complex, facing significant resistance from patriarchal and traditional communities, where "bigger" problems like nationality and conflicts based on them took precedence, making it extremely difficult to find time to fight to improve the status of women. However, women in Kosovo, both before and during the war, fought for their political agendas and goals within the context of their social progress.

The protracted struggle for women's liberation has yielded, among other achievements, formal legal equality between women and men in Kosovo. Formal-legal equality implies that all citizens are equal before the law and that no one is discriminated against by the law. The Constitution mostly guarantees this. And in a way, that is true; men and women are equal before the law. But not in all countries. In the examples I have already mentioned, it is clear that in Kosovo, equality under the Constitution often exists only on paper. That's precisely why achieving social equality is important. It's not just a moral imperative; it would also bring about many positive social changes in Kosovo. Social equality between women and men in Kosovo is important for several reasons: its achievement is crucial for attaining a fair society of equals; it would enable economic development and prosperity, reduce poverty, increase national income, and be the foundation of a stable society.

The background features a light cream color with a subtle marbled pattern in shades of gold and brown. It is adorned with delicate floral illustrations in blue and pink, including large blue flowers and smaller pink blossoms with green leaves and berries. The overall aesthetic is soft and elegant.

# ***Women and Politics***

Women make up 51% of the general population. However, they comprise only 26% of the political sphere<sup>5</sup>. In Kosovo, the political landscape is not particularly gender-diverse, mirroring the global situation. Women are rarely found in leadership positions in ministries and municipalities, and the percentage of women in the Assembly barely exceeds 30% (which is the legal quota). Most parties do not include a gender quota in their leadership structures; men often hold leadership positions, and a very limited number of seats on representative bodies are occupied by women<sup>6</sup>.

Here, a justified question arises: "Why do women encounter difficulties entering and staying in politics?" The answer to this question is complex, with dual causes contributing to this state of affairs. On one hand, there are certain internal reasons why women engage in politics. First, women have adopted gender roles and societal expectations. Politics is almost exclusively a male club, while the home is reserved for women. In Kosovo, where the struggle against gender stereotypes is challenging, women are less likely to engage in traditionally male occupations, such as politics. Additionally, when women enter politics, they are subjected to a higher degree of public scrutiny, and media coverage is characterized by serious stereotyping of women, as well as the application of double standards compared to men<sup>7</sup>. Women in politics are also more likely to be criticized for neglecting their traditional roles as mothers and wives by entering politics. Finally, these women are often targets of psychological violence conducted through media and social networks and are frequently victims of physical violence.

Internal factors pertain to the individual barriers that deter women from engaging in politics, while external factors encompass societal attitudes and treatment towards women. This encompasses a spectrum of biases and stereotypes that portray women as unfit for political participation, as well as the discrimination and violence they may face. Ultimately, an important factor is the double burden imposed on them: juggling between family and political activities. Through the lens of women's participation in politics, we can see many negative effects of patriarchy. In Kosovo, women are still burdened with roles as "caretakers" (of children, spouses, and elderly family members) and other "traditionally female" responsibilities and tasks, all without much support from men. Therefore, they are not motivated to enter politics because it would represent an additional burden<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation. UNWOMEN. Retrieved from the [link](#).

<sup>6</sup> Women in politics. Gender (in)equality in politics and decision-making processes. (2019). BIRN. Retrieved from the [link](#).

<sup>7</sup> Leinart Novosel, S. (2010). Gender stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against women in politics. Collection of women's rights. Retrieved from the [link](#).

<sup>8</sup> Kovačević, N. (February 12, 2024). Women in politics: Gender as a disadvantage. Novi magazin. Retrieved from the [link](#).

## ***How to Increase the Number of Women in Leadership Positions?***

Enabling greater female participation in politics entails the proposal of numerous progressive affirmative policies. These include suggestions such as increasing quotas for women on electoral lists or reserving parliamentary seats specifically for women. However, a critical question arises: Are these progressive affirmative policies truly progressive? Does the emphasis on quantity detract from the pursuit of quality? How should we interpret women's involvement in politics today? Let's examine the cases of Vjosa Osmani and Ana Brnabić, both holding prominent state positions. Do they actively advocate for women's rights, engage with and address women's issues, or do they merely align with the agendas of their respective parties? Conversely, without progressive affirmative measures, very few women would be motivated to enter the political arena, and political parties would rarely nominate women for leadership positions.

Some generalized recommendations involve social changes. For example, working on eliminating gender-based prejudices and reexamining gender roles. Additionally, there is a need for political education for women, which would be organized at both the local and central levels and involve not only state actors but also those from civil society.

The background features a light cream color with intricate marbled patterns in shades of gold and brown. The corners are adorned with delicate watercolor-style floral illustrations, including blue and pink flowers and green foliage. The overall aesthetic is soft and elegant.

# ***Women and Conflict***

## The Female Perspective in Conflict Resolution

In January of this year, our organization CASA welcomed master's students from the Applied Human Rights program in Vienna. Interestingly, all our guests were female—a fact that did not come as a surprise. This gathering underscored the observation that girls often exhibit heightened sensitivity, empathy, and problem-solving capabilities. It became evident that fields such as peace studies tend to attract predominantly young women. A decade ago, The Guardian wrote about how research showed that when women are involved in the peacebuilding process, there is a 24% higher chance that violence will cease within a year. Women are considered crucial because they tend to focus more on societal issues rather than just satisfying opposing parties in the peacebuilding process. This research has shown the advantage of involving women in peace processes, but also that mere inclusion is not enough.

Questions arise: "Are women more inclined to peace than men?" And, "Do women show less belligerence than men in international conflicts?" Intuitively, we might assume so. Research has shown that women are more concerned about the prospects of future wars compared to men, and empathy (a trait often associated with women) is a very good indicator for achieving compromise in conflicts. This question is very close and familiar to Kosovo. It is a territory whose practically entire history is marked by ethnic conflicts. Although women rarely participate in war as combatants, they are the most affected by the consequences of armed conflict. Yet, even here, women are often sidelined from peace processes, despite the recognition that women from war-affected areas can contribute most effectively to the peacebuilding process. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, among other things<sup>9</sup>:

- *Calls upon member states to ensure increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution;*
- *Calls upon all parties involved to adopt a gender perspective in negotiations and agreements on peace implementation, including, inter alia: (a) special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, as well as during rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction; (b) measures supporting local women's peace initiatives and local conflict resolution processes and involving women in all mechanisms for implementing peace agreements; (c) measures to ensure the protection*

---

<sup>9</sup> Kosovo is not a member of the UN, but it has sought to incorporate Resolution 1325 into its Constitution through the Istanbul Convention. You can find the full text of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1235 at the following link: [Resolution 1235 \(unscr.com\)](https://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/2000061235.html).

*and respect of the human rights of women and girls, especially concerning constitutional matters, electoral systems, police, and judiciary.*

It is considered that this document "goes hand in hand with Kosovo's legal and political commitment to gender equality"; however, often the letter on paper remains just that<sup>10</sup>. Commitment to gender equality in all aspects of social life, including peace processes, must be accompanied by tangible changes and efforts to achieve gender equality. This idea was most sincerely expressed by Igo Rogova, Executive Director of the Kosovo Women's Network, by emphasizing her frustration with reports and conferences debating Resolution 1235 and stressing that what is needed is action<sup>11</sup>.

## **How to Enable Women to be Part of Peace Processes?**

For establishing long-lasting peace in territories with a long history of ethnic conflict, such as Kosovo, institutionalizing gender equality is necessary in a way that ensures women's permanent participation in implementing the peace plan. Such policies would also encourage women to overcome victimization (as women are often the most common civilian victims of war, as well as children) and to hold positions that will establish longer-lasting peace. This involves systematic efforts at multiple levels, including political institutions, international organizations, and civil society

First and foremost, it is important to ensure that women are actively involved in all phases of the peace process by introducing quotas in negotiating teams. To ensure that these positions are filled by genuinely qualified women, it is necessary to organize training for women on leadership skills, and peace negotiations, as well as provide support for the education of local female leaders and activists. This way, a lasting role for women in peace processes can be ensured, contributing to the creation of more inclusive, sustainable, and just peace solutions.

---

<sup>10</sup> Szunyog, T. We need to empower women and engage them as active agents of peace. EEAS. Retrieved from the [link](#).

<sup>11</sup> Women Network of Kosovo. 1325: Facts and stories. Retrieved from the [link](#).

The background features a light cream color with intricate marbled patterns in shades of gold and brown. The corners are adorned with delicate watercolor-style illustrations of blue flowers and green foliage. The overall aesthetic is elegant and artistic.

# ***Women and Media***



## Stereotypical Portrayal of Women

The rise of social media has granted individuals the platform to share their views, opinions, aspirations, and dreams with a global audience. Often hailed as a democratic medium, the internet's inherent nature suggests inclusivity and accessibility. However, in practice, this ideal is not always realized. In Kosovo, there are approximately 1.6 million internet users overall and about 930 million social media users<sup>12</sup>. When everyone can express their opinion, the question arises: are the opinions of all people something we need and want to hear? One small experiment that Twitter conducted a few years ago can best illustrate the toxicity of social media. Namely, a female bot was created with the ability to learn and acquire new things through interactions with other users. In just a few hours, that bot adopted and expressed extremely misogynistic, racist, and Nazi views.

The internet exhibits duality: it plays an important role in the fourth wave of feminism. It is extremely useful in women's campaigns as an important tool for spreading information and organizing events and protests, such as the recent protests in Pristina. The protest was organized by the Collective for Feminist Thought, demanding safety for girls and women, following a case of a girl's rape<sup>13</sup>. Social media was used in this case to gather people at the protest and to spread messages throughout Kosovo. On the other hand, its democratization has made the internet an unsafe place for women and girls. Globally, online violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination are on the rise<sup>14</sup>.

However, when we shift our focus to traditional media, it seems that they are still toxic in many ways because they also have their ways of spreading gender inequality, gender stereotypes, and prejudices. If we look at detergent commercials, women often appear in the role of a mother or homemaker, enjoying household chores with their daughters. Men are more likely to appear in ads for entertainment products, such as alcoholic beverages. But this is not the only role that the media assigns to women. If they are not modest mothers and homemakers, then they are sex symbols and objects. Advertisements are everywhere, and they mostly serve to normalize certain behaviors and expectations we have of women and men. So, we can't say that women are not visible in the media. The problem here is how they are represented. Women in the media are portrayed as symbols and trends. They are desirable, ideal, have no

---

<sup>12</sup> Datareportal. Digital 2023: Kosovo. Retrieved from the [link](#).

<sup>13</sup> T. Bujar. (March 14, 2024). "How many times do I have to protest about the same thing?" Radio Free Europe. Retrieved from the [link](#).

<sup>14</sup> CoE. Internet content and equality between men and women. More on [link](#)  
Sample, I. (12.3.2020. ) Internet is not working for women and girls, says Berners-Lee. *The Guardian*. More on [link](#)

cellulite, have long hair, and are always smiling, even in commercials for sanitary pads. Generations of girls in Kosovo grow up with such images and develop an unrealistic and limited idea of what a woman is and what she can be. Girls adopt these patterns - how to dress, how to smile, how to apply makeup to be real women.

One significant consequence of the stereotypical portrayal of women in the media is the perpetuation and deepening of gender inequality and harmful gender-based norms. Media reinforce the societal perception that women are less capable, less important, or limited to certain roles and characteristics. When women are predominantly depicted as caregivers, homemakers, and mothers, it reinforces the idea that their value lies mainly in relationships with others rather than in themselves, their qualities, and their skills. As already mentioned, the lack of nuanced and diverse representations of women in the media can negatively impact women's self-esteem and aspirations. When they mostly see one-dimensional or stereotypical portrayals of women, they may internalize expectations and perceive their potential as constrained by gender norms. The portrayal of women in the media, which is stereotypical and one-dimensional, not only affects individual perceptions but also deepens gender-based inequalities in society.

The portrayal of women in the media serves as a mirror to broader societal discrimination and stereotyping. Upon closer examination of the internal workings of the media, one often encounters entrenched patriarchal patterns. Namely, men almost always hold positions as owners and editors. Through the Media Ownership Monitor (MOM) platform, which is a public and accessible database on media ownership, we can see that in Serbia and Kosovo, gender inequality in the media is identified as a significant risk<sup>15</sup>. The situation is identical in both cases. Only some media outlets have internal policies aimed at balanced representation of women in editorial teams. Harassment of female journalists is common in both environments, with many cases being known and reported, and female journalists being much more frequent targets of harassment than men. The percentage of women in ownership of major media outlets is less than 30%, and such is the proportion of women among media founders, as well as among top managers and key editorial positions. So, women in the media do exist, in positions such as journalists, photojournalists, editors, and similar roles. However, their position is far from ideal. A study on "Women in Media" conducted in Serbia and Kosovo revealed similar problems in both communities: discrimination against women

---

<sup>15</sup> Media ownership monitor for Serbia - [link](#).  
Media ownership monitor for Kosovo - [link](#).

based on appearance and age, sacrificing private life for work, cases of sexual harassment, and low salaries<sup>16</sup>.

## How to overcome these problems?

The solution to rectifying the issues surrounding the media representation of women lies in tackling the root causes that perpetuate gender stereotypes. Firstly, journalists and media professionals should work on raising awareness about the harmful consequences of stereotypical portrayals of women through training and seminars. Since social media users are creators of content themselves, it's essential to raise social awareness about this issue overall. Additionally, it's crucial to critique existing practices by both media workers and politicians, who should utilize their platforms to highlight issues in the media portrayal of women. Visibility on social media is also important, so opening up special groups or pages would allow women employed in the media, coming from Serbian, Albanian, and other communities, to connect and discuss women's issues in their profession.

## In conclusion

Throughout the exploration of these four themes, we aimed to address key issues facing women in Kosovo today. While we acknowledge that certain important topics may have been overlooked, their significance remains undiminished. At the heart of each workshop lay a deep dive into the female experience within the context of the given themes. This exploration led us to a fundamental realization: despite the diverse backgrounds and identities of women in Kosovo—varying in nationality, religion, social status, education, sexual orientation, appearance, lifestyle, and attitude—they share a common thread. This commonality is the collective female experience, encompassing everything that defines and distinguishes a woman from a man within this dichotomy. This collective female experience transcends all differences—ethnic, religious, and cultural—and underscores the universal need for it to be heard, acknowledged, and understood by all. It is within this collective female experience that the potential for social progress, particularly in the specific task of peacebuilding in Kosovo, lies. The female experience can significantly contribute to peacebuilding efforts in several

---

<sup>16</sup> Women in media. Serbia and Kosovo. (2023). *Peaceful change initiative*. You can read more about this research at [link](#).

ways: by fostering a more inclusive and nuanced approach to peacebuilding that incorporates the perspectives and needs of diverse communities; by advocating for nonviolence and emphasizing the importance of peace, thereby promoting violence prevention and reconciliation. As demonstrated in the text, the female experience is intricately linked to struggles for human rights and gender equality. Through activism, women tirelessly work to advance the human rights of all citizens of Kosovo, laying the groundwork for sustainable peace. In essence, the female experience in Kosovo holds immense importance for fostering an inclusive, sustainable peace that respects the needs and viewpoints of all citizens. This underscores the significance of continued collaboration between activists from Serbia and Kosovo. Integrating women into peace processes not only empowers their societal roles but also contributes to the overarching goal of achieving peace and stability in Kosovo.

# Literature

- Sejdija, B. (April 29, 2020). Women from Kosovo are torn between family and career. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Dobranja, D. et al. Gender Analysis: Multiple perspectives on gender justice in Kosovo. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Gender identity and gender socialization: between pink and blue. (March 11, 2024). Social Psychology. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Jašari, S. (June 6, 2017). Thousands of women were without voting rights in Sunday's elections. Kosovo 2.0. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation. UNWOMEN. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Women in politics. Gender (in)equality in politics and decision-making processes. (2019). BIRN. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Leinart Novosel, S. (2010). Gender stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against women in politics. Collection of women's rights. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Kovačević, N. (February 12, 2024). Women in politics: Gender as a disadvantage. Novi magazin. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1235. Retrieved from: [Resolution 1235 \(unscr.com\)](#).
- Szunyog, T. We need to empower women and engage them as active agents of peace. EEAS. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Network of Women of Kosovo. 1325: Facts and stories. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Datareportal. Digital 2023: Kosovo. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- T. Bujar. (March 14, 2024). "How many times do I have to protest about the same thing?" Radio Free Europe. Retrieved from the [link](#).
- Media ownership monitor for Serbia at the [link](#).
- Media ownership monitor for Kosovo at the [link](#).
- Women in media. Serbia and Kosovo. (2023). Peaceful change initiative. Retrieved from the [link](#).

Video material for further education:

- [Girls Alone. Social experiment documentary.](#)
- [Boys Alone. Social experiment documentary.](#)

- [The Dark Side of Gender Stereotypes](#)
- [How to avoid gender stereotypes](#)
- [Why we have too few women leaders](#)
- [Women should represent women in the media](#)

Books for further education:

- Zaharijević, A. (2008). Someone said feminism. Heinrich Boll Stiftung: Novi Sad
- Lerner, G. (1986). The creation of patriarchy. Oxford University Press: New York