

# focus KOSOVO

Newsletter of OPIC partners in Kosovo  
May – June 2014

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# The Second Issue

Dear reader,

We continue with the second issue of the newsletter. This newsletter aims to inform the foreign audience about what is happening in Kosovo, in general with the civil society and public authorities. In this issue you can read the activities delivered by Olof Palme International Center partners in Kosovo during May – June 2014 period. In this issue of the newsletter you will read on women's rights, culture and arts, general elections, accountability and transparency.

The "Success Story" of this issue is Democracy in Action's activity to integrate persons with special needs in elections' monitoring, while the short interview was realized with Ajete Kërçeli who coordinates the "Gender Mainstreaming" project of the Peer Educators Network.

Through this Newsletter you will have the opportunity to understand the work of OPIC partners in Kosovo and some of the key civil society events.

We sincerely hope that you will enjoy our newsletter,

Hope you will enjoy it.

EC Ma Ndryshe

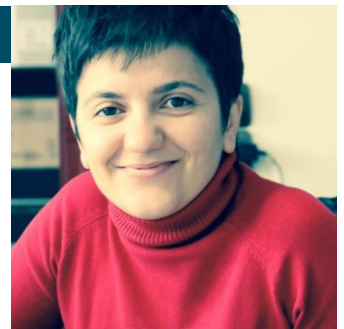


## DiA involves persons with special needs in the monitoring of 2014 elections

Kosova Democratic Institute (KDI) as the leader of the Democracy in Action (DnV) network once again monitored parliamentary elections in 2014. This time, Democracy in Action in collaboration with HANDIKOS was committed to raise the awareness of the institutions for an easier access to persons with special needs by calling them to greater participation in parliamentary elections that were held on 8 June 2014. Around 230 persons with special needs were part of monitoring in the entire election process in Kosovo. Read more on this successful activity from a Jeta në Kosovë newspaper report.

### 5-QUESTION INTERVIEW

## Gender mainstreaming in Kosovo



Civil society in Kosovo is working hard to mainstream gender into all relevant areas of public life. One of the most interesting initiatives is implemented by Peer Educators Network that developed a gender mainstreaming manual in their Pro WO+MAN project. Ajete Kërçeli in the project coordinator and was invited to this issue's 5-question interview section.

### 1. What is "gender mainstreaming"?

Gender mainstreaming aims at making visible the different impacts on or impact of women and men in a given context. As such it relates to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, for every area and at all levels. Thus it makes women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes, in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally.

### 2. Why is it important to take gender concerns into account in program design and implementation?

It is important to take gender into account in program design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation since the implications for any action differ for men and women. Hence through mainstreaming of gender throughout the cycle of any program we are able to take into account the contributions, priorities and needs of women as well as men.

### 3. Is gender equality a concern for men in Kosovo?

Gender equality should be a concern for all genders since perpetuation of inequality has consequences on every sphere of our lives, regardless of gender.

### 4. Is there a mechanism in Kosovo that ensures equal participation of women and men in decision-making?

Several institutional mechanisms and legal instruments have been established in Kosovo, with the aim to promote gender equality and to integrate a gender perspective in developmental policies of institutions and organizations, thus ensuring equal participation in decision-making. Efforts have been made continuously to ensure this, however, the challenges that Kosovar women face to this day indicate that there is a great gap between reality, political will and implementation of laws.

### 5. What has PEN done to address this issue?

PEN is currently implementing a project called Pro WO+MAN, where a manual for gender mainstreaming has been developed. This manual is part of a continuous process to identify challenges and build capacity towards gender mainstreaming. The manual provides tools, simple exercises and guidelines related to organizational development and the programme and project cycle in this respect. The manual targets the OPIC partners in Kosovo and serves to facilitate their work for gender equality at policy and programme levels. The project is now in its second phase where a range of briefing and coaching sessions tailored to our partner organizations' needs are being held.

## **YAHR published monitoring report**

Youth Association for Human Rights (YAHR) in early June 2014 has published a monitoring report regarding the work of Lipjan Municipality, covering January – June 2014. Monitoring was focused on the Municipal Assembly and its respective branches. The report also contains qualitative analysis of legislation and best practices on local government which are used in connection with the findings and responsibilities of the municipality. Read the report.

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## **ODA's Invisible Walls**

"Invisible Walls" is a remarkable story of people trapped, in isolation, surrounded by invisible walls. The stories told of war torn Kosovo are drawn from the real life experiences of the actors and their friends and families. The audience is provided with passports that take

them on a touching and sometimes intimate experience where they discover the isolation and physical and psychological pressure, the impossibility of enjoying basic human rights and the joy of small freedoms. Watch the trailer of the show, and read more.

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## **Focus group "The state budget for culture"**

Cultural Forum held second focus group within the project "Cultural Development Forum", to discuss the Kosovo's state budget for culture. Focus group discussion was oriented around the themes of the second research project, which is analyzing the Kosovo state budget for culture in the two levels of government. The report of this research was published in late June 2014, and during the focus group the preliminary research findings became valid. Overall, these findings indicate lack of state support for culture, especially for independent cultural organizations. Read more.

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## **Gender Mainstreaming Manual – Pro WO+MAN**

A gender mainstreaming manual has been developed within the Pro WO+MAN project. This manual is part of a continuous process to identify challenges and build capacity towards gender mainstreaming. The manual is a follow-up initiative identified during the first phase of the Pro WO+MAN project (Pro WO+MAN Research Report, PEN, 2013). As such, the manual provides

tools, simple exercises and guidelines related to organizational development and the programme and project cycle in this respect. The manual targets the Partner Organizations of the Palme Center in Kosovo and serves to facilitate their work for gender equality at policy and programme levels. The manual can be found at <http://www.ngo-pen.org/publications/>

## Rural women in entrepreneurial projects

Groups of women from several local communities in Peja, Klina, Istog, Deçan and Rahovec have created strategies for improving the situation of women in society and greater commitment to them as entrepreneurs. Selected from different areas, mostly rural, women were slightly or very little so far involved in the decision-making process. Led by local organizations and with financial support from OPIC every day more and more women are seeking to become part decision making. This initiative resulted in an action plan, while five municipal assemblies are expected to adopt the plan and provide a better entrepreneurial environment for women.



## Local councils demand municipal support

Syri i Vizionit has conducted workshops with representatives of several villages and neighborhoods of cities of Klina, Istog and Rahovec to discuss the challenges in implementation of the municipal regulation on cooperation with villages and neighborhoods, which were adopted in early 2013. Representatives of villages and neighborhoods required from municipalities the implementation of the regulation, to structure the local councils and to legalize the village and neighborhood elders. They also said that municipalities can pay for them, but there is no willingness on the part of the institutions.



## Prevention of irregularities in the electoral process

Kosovo Law Institute (KLI) in collaboration with the State Attorney and the Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI) in Prizren organized the round table "Justice in parliamentary elections 2014". This round-table was organized in order to prevent irregularities in the election process for the parliamentary elections in 2014. Representatives of political parties, most

candidates for the Assembly of Kosovo, praising the initiative, have raised concerns about the pressures and threats against voters by groups and certain individual, over alleged vote buying, voter lists, the issue of school directors, the issue of the votes of persons with special needs, etc. Watch the video.

## KDI influenced the agenda of local self-government institutions

Kosova Democratic Institute (KDI) in June first analyzed Budget Circular 2015/01 for the municipalities. According to this circular, the Medium Term Budget Framework (MTBF), should be published for public access, with a copy submitted to the Ministry of Finance - Department of Municipal Budget no later than 30 June 2014. Through press releases as a form of public pressure and official requests to the Chairpersons of the Municipal Assembly of Prizren, Malisheva and Dragash, KDI has requested to call hearings for approval of this document. Municipal Assembly of Prizren, Malisheva and Dragash reflected in KDI's request to handle the Medium Term Budget Framework 2015-2017. Such reflection resulted in the impact on the agenda of self-governing institutions of the civil society.

## From the Balkan to Sweden

Five performances of the international project "Peer Gynt from Kosovo" were presented in Kosovo. In Prishtina, this performance was presented at Oda Theater. In September, a tour is planned in more than 15 schools and theaters across Sweden. Through the work of social theatre to engage marginalized groups, we understood the depth and the scope of consequences of illegal immigration and difficulties in

integration of immigrants to Europe. There is little understanding by the public and institutions, either in the Balkans or in countries like Sweden, on the depth and the complexity of this issue. Media, a victim of its own nature, tends to oversimplify or in worst cases skew stories, to fit simple and frequently politically motivated narratives. "Peer Gynt from Kosovo" had huge international and local media coverage.



## RADC

Every year RADC gives its written input on the needs and priorities and the Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian communities. This year, RADC participated in the conference organized by the EU office in Kosovo to collect the input from the Kosovo CSO's. Three issues were of the particular important to the communities: 1. Implementation of the Strategy at

national level and the need to draft a new policy/strategy (2016 – 2020), 2. Lack of knowledge in some of the municipalities about the strategy (some adopted local action plans, but many lack financial means) and 3. Institutionalization of the existing Learning Centers is several municipalities.

## Photography exhibition in Prizren

EC Ma Ndryshe has organized a photo exhibition at the Shadërvan Square in Prizren. The exhibition "Prizreni po lulëzon" contained photographs shot by the organization's staff and the citizens of Prizren, which displays the extent of the chaos and degradation in which many neighborhoods of Prizren are found in. These photos once again have proven the quality of life of the citizens of Prizren, who face with a polluted environment, insufficient infrastructure, occupation of public space and endangered public safety. See the pictures.

## Who benefits from high-level corruption in the energy sector in Southeast Europe

ATRC, within the Sustainable Energy Policy in Southeast Europe (SEE SEP) project, which is funded by the European Commission, UNDP and The Balkan Trust for Democracy and is implemented in

cooperation with organizations of the six countries of the region, published the report Who benefits from high-level corruption in the energy sector in Southeast Europe? Read the report.

## Consultative Committees in Kamenica and Vitia

ATRC has advocated for establishment of Consultative Committees in Kamenica and Vitia Municipalities, aiming to increase citizen's participation in decision making process in local level. Besides other advocacy activities, ATRC submitted requests to respective Municipal Assemblies for the establishment of such mechanisms. Municipali authorities expressed their willingness for citizens' involvement in decision making process, by approving ATRC's requests.



## CSD continues to fight for women's rights

CSD continued implementing the "Active women in community" project, organizing two training courses for the members of non-formal groups of women from municipalities of Gracanica, Klokot, Partesh and Ranilug. Participants had opportunities to find out more about women's activism, influencing local decision-making, gender budgeting, etc. The next step in this project will be transformation of non-formal groups to formal legal entities. CSD team is very proud to the fact that participants were very active and they gave maximal contribution to successful finishing of the training courses.



## Experimental Studio Group



Experimental Studio Group (ESG) in cooperation with Gorazdevac Radio/TV production produced two short TV stories and four radio reports. The first TV story is related to Serbian community in Gorazdevac voting in Kosovo Parliamentary elections held on June 8th. Unlike extremely low participation of Serbs in Parliamentary Kosovo elections during the past years, this time the turnout of Serbian community members in Gorazdevac was the highest. The second TV story is related to women's NGO "BRIGA" in Gorazdevac and its project activities with children supported by Netherlands Embassy in Kosovo. These two TV stories are also transformed into radio reports while another two radio reports are picturing interview with Pec/Peja municipality Chief of Cabinet as well as culture events in Gorazdevac village.

## Democratic governance of political parties at the local level

KIPRED is continuing the implementation of the "internal democracy in political parties", which aims to promote best practices in democratic governance branches of political parties in Kosovo. KIPRED will hold various activities to achieve the project objectives related to the promotion of financial transparency, involvement of the membership in the formulation of policies, selection of candidates and leaders in an open competition and fair, as well as increased communication between local and central level. During May-June 2014 KIPRED organized trainings in Obiliq, Ferizaj and Lipjan with representatives of all political parties represented in the assemblies.

## Cultural cooperation between Prishtina and Belgrade



In frame of this year's edition of the International Literature Festival polip 2014, an interesting panel discussion was organized to explore the cultural cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia in the last 25 years. The problem of cooperation between cultural scenes of Prishtina and Belgrade ever since the fall of the Berlin wall and after Yugoslavia's melt down, until today, is an important topic to discuss, in its historical, political and cultural sense. Considering that that for a long time there was almost no contact at all, misunderstanding ensued and as ethnical stereotypes from the past were reinforced, at one point the two sides could only look at one another from this perspective. Even in such a state, when we look back, a few important historical bits and pieces happened in different segments of cultural industry: in visual arts, theater, performances and literature.

## CEC published the final results of the parliamentary elections in 2014

The Central Election Commission has announced the final results of the parliamentary election on June 8. According to the results of the CEC, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) won 30.38%, Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) 25.24%, Vetevendosje Movement 13.59%, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK)

9.54%, Serbian List 5.22% and Nisma 5.15 % of the votes. According to final results, PDK will have 37 MPs, LDK 30, Vetevendosje 16, AAK 11, Serbian List 9 Nisma 6. More at the CEC web-page: <http://www.kqz-ks.org/en/home>

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## Public call to nominate civil society members

A public call was issued to nominate civil society members for the council responsible for the implementation of the governmental strategy for cooperation with civil society. The joint council for the implementation of the government – civil society strategy will have 29 members, 14 representing the government of Kosovo and 15

representing the government of Kosovo and 15 coming from the civil society sector. Out of 15 civil society members, one will be elected by Civikos Platform, while the rest will be chosen among the civil society organizations. Read the details of the call.



# Independent culture organizations meet with municipal authorities

"Forum for Cultural Development" project has started a second round of meetings in the municipalities in order to build cooperation and continuous dialogue between public authorities and independent culture organizations. On June 12 in Mitrovica, a meeting was held with representatives of the Independent Cultural organization who have already established the Network of Cultural Organizations

(RrOK) in Mitrovica. Also, on the same day a meeting took place between representatives of the Network of Cultural Organizations in Mitrovica, the Forum for Cultural Development and the Director of Culture, Youth and Sports in Mitrovica. A number of local cultural policy initiatives are being taken in Prizren, Peja, Mitrovica and Prishtina to address the lack of cultural policy planning.

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## Civil society contribution for the 2014 Progress Report

At the invitation of the European Union Office in Kosovo a number of civil society organizations have presented their sectoral analysis at the consultative meeting of EU with civil society representatives.

The reports (analysis) cover a number of areas relevant to the Progress Report and are an organized effort to provide civil society input for this report.

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## Vote and Monitor

Kosovo Foundation for Open Society organized the campaign "Vote and Monitor" during the last national elections. This campaign had four objectives: 1. To prevent eventual abusive actions during the vote, 2. To materialize documented potential fraud, 3. To give the citizens a greater stake in the country's democratic construction, and 4. To gather enough data to feed electoral reforms. For the details, watch the documentary film.



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