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Research paper on identifying best socio-economic reintegration practices and programs in Kosovo and beyond for survivors of gender-based violence

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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGE	Agency for Gender Equality
CSW	Center for Social Work
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
DV	Domestic Violence
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
KCGF	Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund
LFS	Labor Force Survey
MFLT	Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers
NCDV	National Coordinator against Domestic Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAW	Violence Against Women
WB	Western Balkans
W4W	Kosova-Women4Women



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INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is one of the most pervasive human rights violations as it takes multiple forms (physical, sexual, psychological, economic violence), is perpetrated against girls and women of all ages, is not limited to any socio-economic or educational group and occurs in all countries. Despite its prevalence, violence against women (VAW) remains in the shadows, with efforts still needed to increase awareness and understanding of the problem in order to combat it more effectively. Although VAW is the most common violation of women's human rights in Council of Europe member states, progress in legal and policy reform has been slow. The organization-wide Gender Equality Strategy for 2018-2023 identifies several actions under Strategic objective 2 (Prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence), including supporting member states to implement relevant international instruments that prohibit violence against women, building knowledge about the subject and providing technical and legal expertise¹. Kosova – Women4Women requested the preparation of this research paper due to general lack of information and resource material on the best practices and programs of reintegration in Kosovo and beyond. Therefore, the general aim of this research paper through exploring what are the best practices of socio-economic reintegration plans and programs in Kosovo and beyond for women who have been, are or have the potential to be victims of violence.

The assignment is envisaged as an activity within the project 'Supporting survivors' income generation activities to be able to reintegrate into society and escape the cycle of violence'. The project is funded by the EU and implemented by Kosova-Women4Women and UN Women. The aim of the project is the economic empowerment of women, building the capacity of women to be employed or self-employed in order to become economically independent.

¹ Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (2018), Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023.



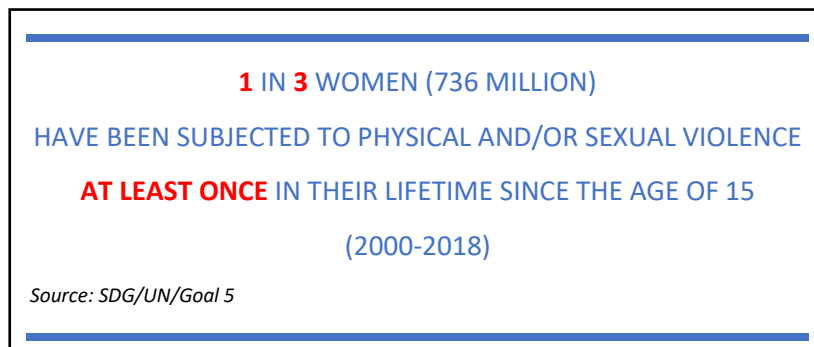


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DEFINITION OF REINTEGRATION

Reintegration is a process. When a woman or girl who has survived an experience of violence and decided to stay in a community or return to her family and her previous community this process is known as reintegration. A definition of the word reintegration is as follows: “reintegration is the process of incorporating and rebuilding relationships within a community in the country of origin at four levels: physical, socioeconomic, socio-political and cultural”. Reintegration is also defined as *“the process of recovery and social and economic inclusion after an experience of violence. It includes placement in a safe and sustainable environment, access to a reasonable standard of living, physical and mental well-being and opportunities for personal, social and economic development and access to social and emotional support. A central aspect of successful reintegration is that of empowering, supporting victims to develop skills towards independence and self-sufficiency, and to be actively involved in their recovery and reintegration”*.²



² Surtees, R. (2006) Re/integration programmes in SE Europe



SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT IN KOSOVO

The process of socio-economic reintegration of women depends largely on the general social, economic and political conditions in the country. After a long period of economic growth, the Kosovar economy has recently experienced the consequences of the global economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2017-2019, Kosovo outperformed other Western Balkan countries in terms of real GDP, recording an average rate of 4.3%. The outbreak of the pandemic Covid-19 in 2020 led to a contraction of Kosovo's real GDP by 6.4% in 2020. The country is now recovering from this pandemic-induced recession; the real GDP growth is projected to reach 7.2% in 2021.

Table 1: Economic activity rate of the population aged 15-64 in the period 2018-2020 is as following³:

	2018	2019	2020
Female	18.4%	21.1%	20.8%
Male	63.3%	59.7%	56.0%

Source: Kosovo Statistical Agency

Table 2: Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-64 in the period 2018-2020 is as following:

	2018	2019	2020
Female	33.4%	34.4%	32.3%
Male	28.5%	22.6%	23.5%

Source: Kosovo Statistical Agency

Population 25-64 with a tertiary degree, 37% are female, which is relatively small percentage.

³ European Commission – Kosovo* 2021 Report



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Another factor influencing reintegration interventions is related to informal employment as a very widespread phenomenon in Kosovo. Kosovo's per capita GDP remains the lowest in the region. It stood at about 26% of the EU average in 2020.

COVID-19 had a negative impact on employment, wages and poverty. Inequalities remain widespread due to a large informal sector and high inactivity rates, especially among women.

The COVID-19 pandemic influenced the employment and livelihoods of people in Kosovo in many ways and to varying extents. An assessment from UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA [SEIA I, 2020] has revealed an increased burden of domestic duties on women during the pandemic, and an increased violence against women and girls. The UNDP reports that during the pandemic, the percentage of domestic violence, largely targeting women, has increased by 35%, and disconcertingly of the respondents do not know where to seek help in case they or someone experiences domestic violence. In the second assessment of SEIA II (2021) around 59% of the respondents felt that domestic violence had increased since the beginning of the pandemic. However, comparative data results suggest that changes regarding employment and working hours became less radical in March 2021. Prior to the pandemic, 59% of men and 29% of women were either employed or self-employed. While 22% of women refrained from working to be able to take care of household and family duties, none of the men reported to do the same.⁴

In general, women in Kosovo play an important role in the two main sectors of the economy: services and agriculture.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper implements several methodological approaches, including desk research, quantitative and qualitative methodology, consisting of a review of available administrative data and studies conducted in Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, Poland, Sweden and United Kingdom; online interviews with the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers of Kosovo and Total Family Coaching & Parenting in UK and; legislation and policy documents were consulted to understand the system in place to respond to cases of VAW and governmental strategic documents. Concretely,

⁴ <https://kosovoteam.un.org/index.php/en/130632-rapid-socio-economic-impact-assessment-covid-19-kosovo-3>



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the research paper presents the best practices of socio-economic reintegration plans and programs in Kosovo and beyond for women who have been, are or have the potential to be victims of violence.

There is currently no basic, comprehensive and qualitative research on the socio-economic reintegration of women and girls in Kosovo, which are victims of gender-based violence. Therefore, this research paper aims to address such an issue.

DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) remains one of the most common human-rights violations worldwide as well as in Kosovo. Proper response by all responsible institutions is of utmost importance to combat this phenomenon. According to the Istanbul Convention, GBV is defined as either: 1) Violence that is directed against a woman only because of the fact that she is a woman, and, 2) violence that affects women disproportionately.

There is no universal definition of domestic violence⁵. In Kosovo, it is defined as any intentional act or omission that results in abuse, when committed by a person who is or has been in a domestic relationship with the victim, such as:

- **Physical abuse:** use of any kind of physical force; any act that may cause or threaten to cause physical pain; physical assault regardless of the consequences; forcibly entering and removing the victim from a common residence or the victim's residence; causing victims to fear for their physical well-being; kidnapping.
- **Psychological abuse:** use of psychological pressure; any act that may cause or threaten to cause psychological suffering; provoking a feeling of fear, personal danger or threat of dignity; insult, offence, calling by offensive names and other forms of violent intimidation; repetitive behavior with the aim of degrading the victim; unlawfully limiting the freedom of movement of the victim; causing victims to fear for their emotional well-being.
- **Sexual abuse:** non-consensual sexual acts and sexual ill-treatment.

⁵ OSCE, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/a/88708.pdf>



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- **Economic abuse:** property damage or destruction or threatening to do this; causing victims to fear for their economic well-being.

Domestic violence is above all a human rights concern. It has deep roots in unequal relations of power. Authorities have the obligation to prevent domestic violence, protect survivors and prosecute the perpetrators.

A survey published in 2019 by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) with data collected during 2018, found that 57% of women surveyed in the Republic of Kosovo had suffered psychological, physical or sexual violence since the age of 15 years (more specifically, 53% of women had suffered psychological violence, 9% physical violence and 4% sexual violence from an intimate partner)⁶. Many women in Kosovo (48%) still consider such violence, especially domestic violence, a private matter, so gender-based violence often goes unnoticed, never being reported. The OSCE study found that women with lower levels of education were financially dependent or those living in rural areas were more likely to report experiencing domestic violence.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Government of Kosovo has prioritized the fight against domestic violence and violence against women. This is also reflected in all the steps taken to improve the legal framework and national policies, which aim to be increasingly harmonized with international standards; as well as further steps planned to prevent and address domestic violence, violence against women, and gender-based violence.

The Constitution of Kosovo stipulates international conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women are directly applicable to the country. No Kosovar citizen “shall be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, relation to any community, property, economic and social condition, sexual orientation, birth, disability or other personal status.” Considering representation in public sphere, the constitution specifies that the composition of the

⁶ “A Survey on Well-being and Safety of Women in Kosovo”, OSCE 2019. See: <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/4/439790.pdf>. It should be supplemented by recent reports from the Women's Network regarding research into addressing domestic violence. See: <https://womensnetwork.org/en/publications/nga-ligjet-ne-vepra/>



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Assembly of Kosovo, Civil Service, the Judiciary, Kosovo Judicial Council, State Prosecutor, Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, and the Constitutional Court shall reflect the diversity of the people of Kosovo and take into consideration internationally agreed principles of gender equality.

The *Criminal Code* of the Republic of Kosovo envisages domestic violence as a special criminal offence and recognizes physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence within a family relationship as domestic violence. The Criminal Code of Kosovo was amended in 2019, to include criminal offences in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment and mutilation of the female genitals⁷.

The *Law on Protection against Domestic Violence* provides a set of legal measures aiming to protect domestic violence victims. The law defines concepts such as domestic violence and domestic relationships and explains which kind of protection measures and orders exist as well as the procedures to follow in order to obtain them.

The *Law on Gender Equality* determines the general and specific measures to ensure and protect the equal rights of men and women, and defines the institutions responsible and their competencies.

In Kosovo, the National Strategy on Protection Against Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022-2026 and the Action Plan to implement the strategy and Programme for Gender Equality 2020-2024 are the two policy documents that explicitly address the issue of violence against women.

*National Strategy on Protection Against Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women 2022-2026*⁸, the Government of the Republic of Kosovo in its four-year program has prioritized the fight against domestic violence and violence against women. Within its scope, the Ministry of Justice has defined the prevention and addressing of domestic violence and violence against women as one of the 5 strategic objectives. As a result, national policies are envisaged to improve the legal framework undertake strategic initiative and action plan aiming at increasingly harmonization with the international ones.

The 2022-2026 National Strategy, are organized into four main pillars:

⁷ Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo, 2019. See: <https://md.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/6A2D4377-6AE1-4530-909F-3FB2680CD1EC.pdf>

⁸ <https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/viewConsult.php?ConsultationID=41237>



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- I. Identification and prevention of violence
- II. Advancing and harmonizing public policies with international standards
- III. Institutional strengthening for protection and treatment of victims
- IV. Sustainable rehabilitation and reintegration of victims

Rehabilitation and reintegration of victims/survivors/survivors of domestic violence and violence against women is another important direction that constitutes the fourth pillar of this national strategy.

Thus, the actions envisaged under this strategic objective are mainly focused on the establishment, extension or improvement of specialized support services, in line with and harmonization with the Istanbul Convention. According to the Convention, specialized support services are necessary and a state should at least provide for the establishment and efficient operation of these types of services.

a) Shelters (providing safe, accessible and available accommodation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for all groups of women and girls or victims/survivors/survivors of domestic violence and violence against women), b) Helpline (which should be nationwide, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, free of charge for all forms of violence against women and domestic violence), c) Support for victims of sexual violence (such as emergency centers for rape or referral centers for victims of sexual violence, where the medical and forensic examination is provided, support for trauma, counselling, etc..), d) Support for a child witnessing violence (support services should take into account the rights and needs of the child witnessing violence and these services should provide appropriate psychological counseling according to the age of the child). e) Legal Aid Support (Violence Advisers should assist and/or support victims during investigations and court proceedings; provision should also be made for the provision of appropriate support services to victims so that their rights and interests are presented and taken into account), f) Programs for perpetrators (which provide for two distinct types of programs: for perpetrators of domestic violence and for sexual abusers).

Specific objectives envisaged under the strategic objective IV:

Specific objective IV.1	Establishment and strengthening of specialized support services for victims/survivors/survivors from all groups.
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Specific
objectives
IV.2

Implement integrated policies that enable long-term and sustainable reintegration of victims/survivors/survivors of violence.

Kosovo *Programme for Gender Equality 2020-2024*⁹ defines gender equality as a fundamental right and one of the important factors for economic growth, development and stability in society.

Coordination of measures and policies in the field of domestic violence throughout the territory of Kosovo is currently the responsibility of the *Office of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence (NCDV)*¹⁰.

The overall strategic objective of Kosovo Program for Gender Equality is to ensure that gender equality is placed at the center of the transformation processes in Kosovo, within all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices and programs of government, agencies, civil society, the private sector and the donors' community. This objective will be achieved by working in these three directions:

- Creating equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from economic development, increased inclusion and improvement of social welfare;
- 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; and
- Promoting the realization of rights in decision-making, peace, security and justice and thereby guaranteeing the achievement of gender equality.

⁹ <https://abgi.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/AGE%20Kosovo%20Program%20for%20Gender%20Equality%202020-2024.pdf>

¹⁰ See Decision of the Government of Kosovo and Terms of References for the appointment of the National Coordinator against Domestic Violence, adopted on 11.07.2012, with the Decision no. 04/83.



Women are often more economically **vulnerable** than men and thus are less likely to be **resilient** in the face of the crisis.

Source: International Labor Organization

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

- 1. Kosovo Police.** The Kosovo Police in most cases is the first contact for the victim/survivor of domestic violence.
- 2. Police Inspectorate.** The Police Inspectorate / Investigation Department has a special role in helping victims of domestic violence.
- 3. Victim's Advocate / Office for Victims' Protection and Assistance.** Victim's advocate usually meets with victims immediately after the police response to a reported case of domestic violence.
- 4. State Prosecutor.** The interaction between the Prosecutor and the victim of domestic violence usually comes into play in the subsequent reporting process.
- 5. Courts.** The courts review cases of domestic violence by their priority. These cases are addressed by the court in civil or criminal proceedings depending on the nature of the case.
- 6. Department of Forensic Medicine / Ministry of Justice.** Victims of domestic violence meet with the staff of the Department of Forensic Medicine based on an order from the investigative and judicial bodies.
- 7. Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers.** The Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers has the mandate to draft policies, programs, legal infrastructure and monitor the quality of social services.



8. Municipalities / Department for Health and Social Welfare. The Department for Health and Social Welfare as the bearer of local government is mandated to manage social services in the municipality.

9. Centers for Social Work. The Center for Social Work (CSW) is a public institution at the municipal level, competent for the protection of citizens in need of social and family services, in this context also the protection and provision of services for victims of domestic violence until the reintegration of the victim. It also coordinates activities with other stakeholders in the process of supporting and empowering the victim.

Kosovo is quite well covered by legislation regarding social housing. There is a law on financing special housing programs no. 03 / L-164 which presents an advanced framework for local decision-making authorities to provide sustainable housing for the population in the territory of Kosovo municipalities.

Based on the legislation in force, Kosovo municipalities are responsible for implementing schemes related to social housing, while support and monitoring is provided by the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure. These institutions are obliged to help all families who cannot provide housing on their own by providing temporary housing according to applicable law.

Regarding the selection of housing in collective housing (social housing) CSW in cooperation and coordination with the actors of the Municipal Coordination Mechanism, a mechanism which is led by the Office for Gender Equality in each municipality, evaluate, review and decide on the priorities of each case, based on the needs for further services¹¹.

The Law on Financing Specific Housing Programmes requires municipalities to conduct housing needs assessments and prepare social housing programmes every three years. However, according to a European Commission report in 2019, “municipalities have not collected data on victims of domestic violence and have not included victims of domestic violence among potential beneficiaries of their planned social housing programmes.” Women and children victims of domestic violence remain extremely vulnerable to homelessness and housing exclusion, particularly in terms of long-term housing solutions.¹²

¹¹ Written input by Adile Shaqiri, Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, January&February 2022

¹² Haxhikadrija, A. for the European Commission, National strategies to fight homelessness and housing exclusion – Kosovo, 2019



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10. Free Legal Aid Agency / Regional Legal Aid Offices. The Free Legal Aid Agency / Regional Legal Aid Offices provide free legal aid to victims who are eligible for this type of assistance.

11. Municipal Departments of Education / Educational Institutions. The Municipal Education Departments are responsible for providing education to victims/survivors of domestic violence under applicable law.

12. Health Institutions: primary, secondary, tertiary and mental health centers. Health institutions have an important role in identifying cases of domestic violence.

13. Regional offices of the Ombudsman. The regional offices of the Ombudsman have the following organization: the unit for gender equality and the gender equality officer. The Ombudsman has the responsibility to address allegations of human rights violations by the state.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT PARTNERS

- **Shelters.** There are currently 8 licensed shelters in Kosovo that provide a safe place where survivors of domestic violence and their children are provided with temporary accommodation, security, assistance and other services. In addition, there is another shelter covering the four northern Kosovo municipalities inhabited by Serb community. The shelter was opened in June 2020 and is located in the Zubin Potok.

According to the Kosovo Police, cases of domestic violence are increasing year by year, which shows that violence in Kosovo is a very pronounced phenomenon, where most cases of violence are women and girls. Thus, in 2016 there was 1225 reported cases; in 2017, 1269 reported cases; in 2018, 1533 reported cases; in 2019, 1914 reported cases and in 2020, 2069 reported cases.



Table 3: Financial support from the Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers (former Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare) for the Shelters¹³ in Kosovo for the period 2016-2020:

Year of support	No. of shelters	Support amount
2016	8	252,383.25 Euro
2017	9	290,000.00 Euro
2018	9	193,000.00 Euro
2019	10	324,000.00 Euro
2020	10	495,000.00 Euro

Source: Agency for Gender Equality, 2021

On 27 of May 2021¹⁴, the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Ministry Finance, Labor and Transfers (MFLT), Division of Family and Social Services launched a set of Quality Guidelines for Shelters for survivors of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence.

The quality guidelines for shelters of violence against women and domestic violence are rooted in the Istanbul Convention and other international standards, as well as by practical experiences and good practice examples for running women’s shelters and women’s support services.

On the basis of the guidelines, the Council of Europe project will support the Ministry to train social workers and staff of shelters.

The guidelines and the trainings are part of the Council of Europe project “Reinforcing the Fight against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Kosovo*-phase II”.

¹³ Shelters include those that operate within NGOs and provide shelter to victims of domestic violence, victims of trafficking in human beings as well as shelter for abused, neglected children and children victims of various forms of crimes.

¹⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/-/launching-quality-guidelines-for-shelters-for-victims-of-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence-in-kosovo->



According to the MFLT, for reintegration issues the focus will be on vocational training, employment mediation and inclusion in subsidies through active market measures. Whereas, with municipalities to ensure their involvement in programs and plans for securing the issue of housing. MFLT publishes public calls that provide annual support with subsidies, where for example for 2021 the public call has been somewhere from 40 to 50 thousand euros per year. But overall, the reintegration part is challenging for MFLT¹⁵.

NGOs are familiar with the problem of the survivors of domestic violence and are well informed about their treatment. They may apply for a protection order and/or an emergency protection order.

LABOR MARKET

The economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have affected women more severely than men. With many of them employed in the informal economy, they had more limited access to mitigating support measures. The government has continued protecting women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence during the outbreak of COVID-19. The shelters for gender-based violence and trafficking in human beings have continued providing services at all times.

According to the Labor Force Survey (LFS)¹⁶, in 2020, published by Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS), two thirds of the population in Kosovo are working age population. The working age population includes age 15–64 year old. Within the working age population, the rate of participation in the workforce is 38.3%.

The highest employment is for males 42.8%, while employment for females is 14.1%.

Females are employed mainly in the sectors of education, trade and health care, by 52.7%, while males are mainly employed in the sectors of trade, construction and manufacturing by 44.1%.

According to the results of LFS, in 2020 the unemployment rate was 25.9%.

Unemployment was highest among females at 32.3%, compared to males at 23.5%. The highest unemployment rate is in the age group 15-24 with 49.1%.

¹⁵ Online interview with Mentor Morina, Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers, January 2022

¹⁶ <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/labor-force-survey-in-kosovo-2020>



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According to the results of LFS, in 2020 inactive labor force is quite high at 61.7%, with a particular focus on females at 79.2%, compared to males at 44.0%.

Increasing the **participation of women** in the labor market could **increase** countries' **productivity**, leading to greater **economic diversification, innovation** and **poverty reduction**.

Source: International Labor Organization

EDUCATION

Education attainment is a key predictor of employment. In 2020, the employment rate (15-64) was 59.9% among people with tertiary education but only 11.3% for those with primary education. Although women tend to attain higher education levels (e.g. over 40% active women hold tertiary qualifications against 20% of active men), they remain underrepresented in employment. Youth unemployment remains high (49.1%), particularly among women¹⁷.

ECONOMIC REVIVAL PACKAGE

In response to the pandemic situation from COVID-19, the Government of Kosovo (GoK) has approved the Economic Recovery Package¹⁸ in July 2021 and one of the measures is to support Women Employment, with EUR 5 million (Measure 1, sub-measure 1.3 and Measure 3, sub-measure 3.5).¹⁹

¹⁷ European Commission, Kosovo* 2021 Report

¹⁸ <https://mf.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/1250EF76-BBC2-4A35-83DE-E45110E4D664.pdf>

¹⁹ Women are under-represented in the labor market. As long as they make up half of the population and are left out of the labor market, we cannot claim inclusive growth without the inclusion of women in the labor market. Thus, for each woman who has not been employed in the last 3 months, and who is employed, we will subsidize 50% of the wage for the



PROPERTY RIGHTS

It is acknowledged that access to and ownership of land or any other real estate is one of the factors of women's economic empowerment. Property rights give women security, a basis from which to produce, invest and set up their own business and improve their well-being. The impact of women's property rights (or their deprivation) goes beyond providing economic opportunities and is an essential element for other aspects of women's empowerment and well-being.

The Endline National Survey on Property Rights in Kosovo²⁰ shows that informality remains an important challenge in Kosovo; and that there is still a significant disparity in property ownership between men and women. At the same time, the Endline Survey also shows that several positive trends are continuing. These include increases in the number of respondents who report that they have undergone formal inheritance; the number of women who have property registered in their name; and the number of women initiating inheritance proceeding.

In April 2021²¹, the Government extended the affirmative measure to increase registration of joint immovable property on behalf of both spouses for six years. This measure, first introduced in 2016, has led a noticeable increase in the registration of women as property owners, from only 104 in 2016 to 7,417 in 2020.

The legal framework addressing property and inheritance rights in Kosovo provides equal opportunities for women and men to participate²². Several laws and administrative measures intertwiningly regulate property rights, namely: The Law on Family, Law on Inheritance, Administrative Instruction on Special Measures for Registration of Joint Immovable Property on Behalf of Both Spouses, and National Strategy on Property Rights.

first 3 months, up to a maximum of 150 euros per month. After the quarterly period, the pension contribution will be subsidized according to Measure 1.2.

²⁰ <https://www.land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/3.-National-endline-survey-on-property-rights.pdf>

²¹ European Commission, Kosovo* 2021 Report

²² http://www.k-w4w.org/site/assets/files/1787/learning_brief_alb.pdf



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KOSOVO CREDIT GUARANTEE FUND

The Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund²³(KCGF) is an independent and sustainable institution that issues guarantee to financial institutions to cover the risk for MSME loans.

During 2020, the share of guaranteed loans for women in business was 15%. This share continued to grow compared to previous years.

KCGF launched its windows under the Economic Recovery Package, providing support to lending in certain sectors, such as manufacturing, services, agriculture, trade, with special focus on women in business, start-up businesses, and investments in energy efficiency.

Experts estimate that the **gender gap** in economic participation will take **257 years to close**.

Source: World Trade Organization & World Bank Group

²³ https://fondikgk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/FKGGK_Annual-Report_2020.pdf



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BEST SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS

ALBANIA: COUNTRY CONTEXT

The following programs of the Albanian government are positive measures to fill the gap between excluded individuals from society and the marginalized group, which includes women and girls who have suffered from an experience of violence:

Support for unemployed women²⁴

Under this program, employers who provide employment to marginalized jobseekers for at least one year receive 100 percent of the minimum wage for four months and 70 percent of their share of social security contributions. In the case of two-year contracts, employers receive a minimum wage of six months and 85 percent of their share of social security contributions. Likewise, in the case of three-year contracts, employers receive a minimum wage of six months and 100 percent of their share of social security contributions. The target groups that make up "marginalized women" are trafficked women, over 35 years old, Roma women, women with special needs and divorced women.

Support for unemployed jobseekers in difficulty²⁵

Under this program, employers who provide employment for jobseekers for at least one year receive up to 100 percent of the minimum wage for four months and are reimbursed 100 percent of their share of social security contributions. Beneficiaries are long-term unemployed persons, persons receiving social assistance, persons receiving unemployment benefits, persons aged 15-25, entering the labor market for the first time, persons over 45 years of age who have no further education than secondary or equivalent education, persons with disabilities, Roma population and returned migrants.

²⁴ DCM no.27, date 11.1.2012 "For the program of promoting the employment of women from special groups", amended.

²⁵ DCM no.48, date 16.1.2008 "For the program to promote the employment of unemployed jobseekers in difficulty", amended.



On-the-job training for unemployed jobseekers²⁶

Under this program, employers providing on-the-job training for unemployed jobseekers are provided with financial support in the form of training costs (up to 70 percent of the cost). Also, jobseekers who receive part of the training receives 50 percent of the minimum wage for the duration of the training, which should not be more than 6 months. During the training period, the financial assistance and unemployment benefits of the unemployed person are terminated, but she has the right to recover them after the end of the treatment, if she is not employed. The employer, at the end of the training period, must employ not less than 50 percent of the trainees, for a period of 6 months.

Social housing programs in Albania

According to Article 2/3 of Law no. 9232/2004 "On Social Housing Programs", as amended, these programs apply to housing families and individuals who are not economically and socially able to afford the offer of a free housing market. The law provides for three programs of social housing: social rented housing, low-rent housing, and the program of equipping land with infrastructure. Government has also set the provision for subsidies for social rents, subsidized loans, small grants and immediate grants targeting specific groups²⁷.

Beneficiaries of social housing programs must meet one of the housing conditions: they have reached the age of 18; do not own an apartment; own living space below defined housing norms; or have been left homeless as a result of natural disasters (Article 4). The selection of beneficiaries is based on housing conditions (family (single parent family, families with more than four children, the elderly, young couples), social (persons with disabilities, persons with orphan status, returned immigrant, migrant worker, families of fallen police officers, victims of domestic violence).

²⁶ DCM no.47, date 16.1.2008 "For the employment promotion program, through on-the-job training", amended.

²⁷ See UNDP, Social Housing in Albania: Situation analysis, October 2014, prepared by Marsela Dauti.



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Digitalized Online System for registration of cases of domestic violence “Recording Violence in Albania” (REVALB) was established in 2014 by the then Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, in close cooperation with UNDP, and financial support from the Government of Sweden²⁸.

Other developments²⁹

As of September 2017, in addition to its responsibilities in the field of healthcare, the Ministry of Health and Social Protection is in charge of developing policies addressing gender-based violence, violence against children, women, and other groups, gender equality, protection of the rights of children, non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity etc.

Also at the local level, based on Law 9669/2016 "On measures against violence in family relations", as amended, there are established the Coordinated Referral Mechanisms of domestic violence' cases (CRM), led by municipalities (responsible authorities for establishing and empowerment of these mechanisms) and based on the philosophy of a coordinated multi-sectoral approach. CRMs have in their composition all local institutions responsible for the implementation of the legal framework related to violence against women and domestic violence (municipality and its social services, police, prosecution, court, forensic doctor, bailiff, health, education, state social service, employment, probation service, county prefect, etc.), as well as civil society organizations specialized in providing the necessary specialist support services for cases' management and intervention on prevention and awareness of entire society (organizations that provide sheltering services, psycho-emotional or legal counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration services, information and awareness, capacity building activities for professionals, etc.).

In 2018, following a joint proposal by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Finance the Albanian Government established a Social Fund. Local Self-Government Units (LSGUs) whose social plans have already been adopted by their respective municipal councils, can apply to the Social Fund for additional support in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups for social services. About 80% of LSGUs have drafted their Social Plans with the

²⁸ United Nations Joint Programme End Violence against Women in Albania (EVAW)

²⁹ Report on the implementation of recommendations addressed to Albania by the Committee of the Parties of Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, June 2021



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support of international organisations and the State Social Service. These plans include measures in support of victims of violence and trafficking and other disadvantaged groups of women.

In addition, the government adopted a DCoM pursuant to the Law on Social Enterprises, according to which an enterprise support fund in the sum of 249,760,000 ALL (about 2.81 million Euro) was adopted for the period 2019-2021, of which 37,000,000 ALL (about 308 thousand Euro) was allocated for the creation of new jobs; 7,776,000 ALL (about 65 thousand Euro) went towards covering the mandatory social and health insurance payments for employees of social enterprises belonging to disadvantaged groups, and the rest went towards supporting these enterprises, upon submission of a business plan. In order to be eligible for the subsidy, a business must employ at least 3 young persons from disadvantaged groups within 12 months from receipt of the subsidy. The allocation of subsidies is conditional upon the employment of persons from disadvantaged groups with a contract duration of no less than 2 years.

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection also funds two specialist support services, at the national level, which provide long-term sheltering and treatment focused on reintegration, for victims of domestic violence and trafficking of human beings.



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NORTH MACEDONIA: COUNTRY CONTEXT

During 2021, continuing the work from the past 2 years, the National Network to end Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, together with 6 women civil society organizations from the region, continues to work intensively on the establishment of services for reintegration of women victims of violence and domestic violence in local level. Within the framework of the project “Institutionalization of quality services for rehabilitation and integration of victims of violence” funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Network during 2021, through a sub-granting process is providing support to 8 local women’s organizations. These organizations will work in 8 different regions in North Macedonia.

The reintegration and rehabilitation of women who survived violence and left the violent environment is a key process for achieving their full empowerment and independence, as well as not getting back with abuser or re-entering into a violent relationship due to economic dependence. The establishment of local reintegration services prevents future violence against women and children, enabling them to step out of the role of victim and become active actors in all social processes. Reintegration services include safe assisted housing, long-term financial support, economic empowerment and career counseling, psychosocial counseling and treatment, as well as advancing education and acquiring new skills. The key role of reintegration is confirmed in the new Law on Elimination and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Article 99, which declares the production of Program for reintegration of women victims of violence and domestic violence. The activities that will be implemented locally in 8 cities throughout North Macedonia include: Assessment of the needs of women victims at the local level, creating local Reintegration Programs for women Victims, and advocacy with competent institutions for allocation of funds and establishment of reintegration services.

Regarding long-term financial support, the package of measures would include:

- Exemption from costs related to the education of children (school supplies, attendance at extra-curricular activities that require additional payments, etc.)



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- Exemption from co-payment for preschool institutions, as well as other costs related to teaching in the kindergarten
- Complete exemption from co-payment for health services, including procurement of medicines
- Exemption from public transport costs for her and her children (obtaining free monthly public transport tickets)
- Enabling the use of direct financial assistance from the state (Law on social protection, local municipal funds etc.)
- Alimony allowance for children, if there is no regularity in the payment of the alimony
- Introduction of a voucher system for shopping (MLSP in cooperation with civil society organizations / business community to introduce a voucher system that will be used for procurement of food / hygiene products for survivors in reintegration. The criteria for receiving the vouchers can be additionally determined on the basis of the one-time financial aid (regulated by law), type of accommodation (short-term or long-term) and the like³⁰.

Several recent initiatives have aimed to strengthen access to justice, for example the HELP course on Violence against Women and Domestic Violence launched in 2018 for North Macedonian lawyers³¹. In 2014, North Macedonia adopted a new law to prevent and respond to GBV, with an expanded definition to include economic violence and stalking. The law established a national coordination body with training for service providers and the education system³². The National Action Plan (2018-2023) for implementing the Convention has three main objectives: harmonizing the legal framework; establishing general and specialized domestic violence services; and prevention activities.³³

³⁰ <http://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/en/03-02-2021-local-women-s-organizations-advocate-for-the-establishment-of-reintegration-services-for-women-victims-of-domestic-violence/>

³¹ Council of Europe (2018) Macedonian lawyers to be trained to better protect victims of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence [Macedonian lawyers to be trained to better protect victims of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence - News \(coe.int\)](https://www.coe.int/en/web/violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence/news/macedonian-lawyers-to-be-trained-to-better-protect-victims-of-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence)

³² UN Women (2014) 'New Law Spurs Action in Macedonia' [New law spurs action, bringing protection to many | UN Women](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/10/new-law-spurs-action-bringing-protection-to-many)

³³ Sproule, K, Dimitrovska, N, Risteska, M, Rames, V (2019) USAID/North Macedonia Gender Analysis Report. Prepared by Banyan Global. 2019



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House for Open Housing³⁴ is first reintegration service in North Macedonia for women victims of domestic violence who have left the violent environment. The House for Open Housing is a form of supported living for women victims of domestic violence and is part of the model for reintegration and rehabilitation of women victims of domestic violence. The House for Open Housing is intended for women victims of domestic violence who have fled the violent environment and their children. The House can accommodate women, victims of domestic violence who are at risk of homelessness, cannot stay in the homes of the extended family, do not have the financial means to provide safe housing for themselves and their children, are not employed or have very low incomes. Female victims who are accommodated in the house are not at risk of violence from the partner who committed the violence, i.e. they are divorced or separated, and the risk of violence has been overcome before the accommodation in the House.

The House for Open Housing provides housing from 6 to 24 months, where the beneficiaries and their children have access to separate bedrooms and common areas such as kitchen, dining room, and living room. The stay in the House covers all overhead costs, food costs, personal hygiene, school needs of children, medical expenses, as well as court costs and legal services. During the stay, the beneficiaries receive counseling and support for exercising social rights, continuous individual and group counseling with a psychologist/psychotherapist, legal counseling and mentoring, and employment assistance.

The career counseling³⁵ mentor works with women victims of violence, who are unemployed or have low incomes. Through individual sessions, the mentor helps women in identifying career opportunities, choosing a profession, prioritizing professional goals, time management, career development, etc.

In addition to individual counseling, the mentor organizes and conducts group training for soft skills, such as writing a CV and supporting employment documents (motivation letters), improving communication skills for attending job interviews and communicating with employers.

³⁴ <https://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/en/our-services/house-for-open-housing/>

³⁵ <https://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/en/our-services/career-counseling/>



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Additionally, mentoring involves informing, providing guidance, and liaising with the employment agency, and assisting in their programs.

The purpose of career counseling is to empower women and increase their competitiveness in the labor market. This will give them easier access to employment and economic empowerment so that they can achieve financial independence and stability.

The National Network to End Violence against Women and Domestic Violence³⁶ has opened the first Intervention Women's Fund that provides financial assistance to women-victims of violence who want to leave the violent environment. Beneficiaries of the Women's Fund can be women and girls victims of some form of gender-based violence, who have reported the case to the relevant institutions / organizations and are conducting proceedings against the perpetrator.

Beneficiaries of the Women's Fund can also be single mothers who have been victims of some form of gender-based violence.

Women and girls victims of gender-based violence can seek support through the use of the Women's Fund, if they find themselves in any of the following situations:

- They are victims of some form of gender-based violence, and are financially insecure (for example, unemployed, low-income, recipients of social assistance);
- They are single mothers;
- They are at risk of homelessness.

Funds are allocated to meet the existential needs or provide a particular service, as follows:

- Material assistance and assistance in kind to women and girls victims of violence that will cover the costs of food, clothing, medicine, etc.
- Legal aid for representation of women victims of domestic violence (legal aid in initiating a procedure before a court and following it until the moment when the free legal aid is approved by the Ministry of Justice)

³⁶ <https://glasprotivnasilstvo.org.mk/en/intervention-womens-fund/>



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- One-time coverage of utility bills

The Social Mentoring Guidebook developed by the Association for Research, Communication and Development PUBLIC, capacitates professionals with skills to systematically work with vulnerable persons excluded from the labor market on equipping them with working skills (how to get a job) and skills for self-confidence and self-realization (how to retain a job and career development). All these aspects are necessary for dealing with the stress from marginalization and social exclusion in order to overcome these obstacles to employability³⁷.

³⁷ GIZ & NALAS, Association for research, communications and development PUBLIC, October 2021, Social mentoring – a labor market activation approach for vulnerable groups, North Macedonia



POLAND: COUNTRY CONTEXT

In Poland violence against women continues to be under-reported and stigmatized, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In Poland, 50 % of the population tend to trust the police, which is significantly lower than in the EU overall (just over 70 %).³⁸

It is estimated that in Poland, 19 % of women have experienced violence, which is 14 % lower than in the EU overall.³⁹

A promising practice in Poland is the multi-agency intervention system and procedure for domestic violence called the Blue Cards Procedure.

In November 2009, the Polish government launched the platform for action against sexual violence, which offered new procedures for the police and medical facilities dealing with victims of sexual violence, and provisions protecting victims' rights.

Poland⁴⁰ provides an example of a system for multi-agency intervention to facilitate local-level policing and service provision in cases of DV. In Poland, each municipality is required by law to establish an interdisciplinary team to combat DV and co-ordinate assistance to victims. The Blue Card Procedure was first introduced to standardize police intervention in DV cases and later extended to improve co-operation of all relevant services. When there is a reasonable suspicion of DV, the police or any other competent services (social services, healthcare providers [doctors, nurses, paramedics], the education system, and local government committees for the prevention of alcohol abuse) can initiate the procedure. The first stage is the completion of Card A, a record of basic information about the incident (e.g. forms of violence, circumstances, health conditions, actions taken by police, etc.). The initiation of Card A does not require the consent of the victim. Card A is transferred to the interdisciplinary

³⁸ European Commission (2016). Eurobarometer. Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/screen/home>

³⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality: Combating Violence Against Women / Poland

⁴⁰ Sources: Wiesława Kostrzewa-Zorbas, Counsellor to the Head of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Poland and Krizsan, A. and Pap, E. (2016), Implementing a Comprehensive and Co-Ordinated Approach. An assessment of Poland's response to prevent and combat gender-based violence, Council of Europe).



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team within a period of no more than 10 days. Once the procedure is initiated, Card B is given to the victim; it contains basic information about DV, the obligations of the police, relevant criminal law and available support services. The victim is requested to meet with a case manager and the interdisciplinary team, at which time Card C is used to record additional information about the victim (e.g., family, professional, economic and health situation) in order to develop an individualized assistance plan with the victim. Card C guarantees that the family, professional, economic, and health situation of the victim, and, if relevant, the situation of children is assessed, and an individual plan is developed to help the victim. The perpetrator is also called to meet with the interdisciplinary team, and Card D is used to record additional information and to determine appropriate actions regarding the perpetrator. A Council of Ministers' regulation sets forth the rules for coordinating information exchange and interventions under the Blue Card Procedure, and each interdisciplinary team documents their decision-making process. The Blue Card system was an important innovation because it created a platform for multi-agency co-ordination and a framework for comprehensive protection of DV victims. Systematizing the information collected by police (Card A) has proved to be helpful in prosecuting DV cases; even though the cards do not meet all the requirements of a criminal procedure, they may still be used as evidence. However, some weaknesses in the Blue Card Procedure have also been identified, namely that they have not been very effective when rapid responses are needed in emergency situations. The fact that the victim meets with both a case manager and the interdisciplinary team increases the risk of secondary victimization. Also, perpetrators are not obliged to meet with the interdisciplinary team under the Blue Card Procedure.

It is nonetheless an important step that the creation of conditions to provide social housing for victims of domestic violence has been included in the National Programme on Counteracting Domestic Violence as one type of action⁴¹.

⁴¹ <https://rm.coe.int/168064ecd8>



SWEDEN: COUNTRY CONTEXT

Swedish⁴² legislation on violence against women is integrated into the penal code. Additional legal provisions target particularly the protection of, and support to, victims of violence. Legislation in Sweden generally does not differentiate domestic violence from violence in other societal domains, or between crimes by the sex of the perpetrator or the victim. The gender-based crime ‘gross violation of a woman’s integrity’ is an exception, as it also exists in the gender-neutral form, ‘gross violation of integrity’. The offence ‘gross violation of a woman’s integrity’ came into force in 1998 and covers repeated criminal acts directed by men against women with whom they have, or have had, a close relationship. The provision is intended to increase the penal value of offences, which together constitute a serious violation of a woman’s integrity. This is often the case regarding domestic violence. Alongside this specific provision, crimes such as assault, murder and sexual crimes, including rape, may of course also apply.

In 2011, the Swedish government announced three action plans for gender equality (2011—2015). The ‘action plan for combating men’s violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honor, and violence in same-sex relationships’ was adopted in 2007 and focused particularly on women with mental and physical disabilities, substance abuse or addiction problems, women from ethnic minorities and older and younger women.

Sweden is one of the few countries where national helplines for women meet the Council of Europe standards. The state-run helpline service, Kvinnofridslinjen, also runs a website. The website primarily supports women survivors of violence and their families but also assists professionals working in the field. In addition to the two national women’s helplines, most of the crisis centers and women’s shelters in Sweden run helplines and online chats that women all over Sweden can access. In total, more than 100 helplines are run by crisis centers and women’s shelters.

A new 10-year national strategy to prevent and combat men’s violence against women took effect since 2017. The overarching objective is that men’s violence against women must come to an end and is broken down into four guiding targets: more and effective preventive work against violence; improved detection and stronger protection of women and children being victims of crime; more

⁴² European Institute for Gender Equality: Combating violence against women / Sweden



effective law enforcement; and improved knowledge and working methods. The strategy's main focus, departing from an intersectional perspective, is on the perpetrator rather than the victim, on girls' and young women's exposure to crime and on improved cooperation and knowledge-based working methods.

For women and children experiencing domestic violence, Sweden has 161 shelters with 631 beds. Sweden has two national helplines and women victims of any kind of violence can also get help via texts and online (www.kvinnofridslinjen.se). For women who have experienced sexual violence, there are at least eight women's centers providing specialist support.

The Government has a development programme designed to strengthen the gender mainstreaming work within government agencies. The program was carried out during the period 2013–2018 and has gradually been expanded to include almost 60 government agencies. Since its establishment in 2018, the Swedish Gender Equality Agency has been assigned the task to provide support to these agencies in their work with gender mainstreaming.

The Swedish Agency for Public Management has evaluated the programme for gender mainstreaming within government agencies. The evaluation shows that the authorities have carried out extensive work. For example, the Swedish Migration Agency has begun to apply the principle that all adults should have their own bank card, rather than, as before, only issue a bank card to the man in the family. Other examples include the Swedish Tax Agency, which has developed a more gender equal treatment of citizens at the agency's service offices, and Vinnova, Sweden's innovation agency, which has increased the proportion of women leading projects in the area of small and medium-sized businesses. Also, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth has increased funding to women who run businesses from 7 percent in 2015 to 13 percent in 2017. The Government has announced that the programme for gender mainstreaming within government agencies will continue.⁴³

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth has successfully doubled the financial resources destined to businesses run by women, and the Swedish Research Council has now reached gender equality in the allocation of research grants. Similarly, the Swedish Arts Grants Committee has developed a tool to support a gender equal process for assessing applications for grants and

⁴³ CEDAW, 15 June 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27692&LangID=E>



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scholarship. The Swedish Work Environment Authority, The Swedish Schools Inspectorate and the Social Insurance agency, have all integrated a gender perspective in their work in tangible ways⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/governance/policy-framework-on-sound-public-governance/chapter-one-sweden.pdf>



UNITED KINGDOM: COUNTRY CONTEXT

UK⁴⁵ has made huge strides forward since the 2010-15 Conservative - Liberal Democrat Coalition Government published the first Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls in 2010. UK has introduced new offences for:

- controlling or coercive behavior;
- stalking;
- so-called 'revenge porn'; and
- 'upskirting'.

UK has:

- raised the maximum penalties for stalking and harassment;
- ended the automatic early release of violent and sexual offenders from prison;
- introduced new orders for stalking, preventing sexual harm, and female genital mutilation to better protect victims and those at risk;
- introduced a mandatory duty for frontline professionals to report cases of FGM in children to the police; and
- strengthened the tools available to frontline professionals - including putting in place a range of statutory guidance, training and online resources.

In addition, last year the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 ('the 2021 Act') passed. The 2021 Act will transform the response for the 5 in 100 adults who have suffered domestic abuse in the year to March 2020 by strengthening protections for those who have experienced abuse and harm whilst also ensuring perpetrators feel the full force of the law. The UK Government is continuing to make record investment so that victims and survivors are supported with more than £300 million being invested last year to ensure this. This included £27 million to recruit more Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisers who provide advice and support for victims. In addition, to make sure that victims know what they can expect from the police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts and other criminal justice organizations, UK government introduced a revised Victims' of Crime Code

⁴⁵ HM Government, Tackling Violence Against Women&Girls, July 2021



of Practice (Victims' Code) which came into effect in April 2021. UK has already committed to significant additional action; the Ministry of Justice will launch a Victims' Bill consultation to keep victims at the heart of their work to tackle crime and will also publish a new Victim Funding Strategy to improve the way that this funding is managed across Government. Key additional actions the Government will take forward to help further build on this and ensure victims and survivors of violence against women and girls get the support they deserve include:

- The Home Office will provide £1.5 million funding to further increase provision for 'by and for' services and to further increase funding for valuable specialist services such as the 'revenge porn' helpline;
- To ensure students and young people are supported, the Department for Education will work with the Office for Students to tackle sexual harassment and abuse in higher education (including universities) and will review options to limit use of Non-Disclosure Agreements in cases of sexual harassment in higher education; and
- NHS England and NHS Improvement are developing local 'pathfinder' projects for enhanced trauma-informed mental health support for sexual abuse victims and survivors with the most complex needs.

In UK⁴⁶ there are 525 shelters for women and girls which are victims/survivors of domestic violence. UK provides the so-called The Freedom Programme which examines the roles played by attitudes and beliefs on the actions of abusive men and the response of victims and survivors. There are also in place psycho-educative programs and 2 days intensive course for abuser. Trauma informed approach is another platform services to be offered to the victims and survivors, which addresses trauma awareness, safety and trustworthiness, skills building, etc. UK provides training for healthcare professionals in order to meet need of victims and survivors of domestic violence. It⁴⁷ has been estimated that nearly half a million victims and survivors of domestic abuse seek assistance from medical professionals every year. Guidance for health professionals says that "domestic

⁴⁶ Online interview with Adelina Toplica-Badivuku, Systemic Family Coach, Parenting and Grief Recovery Specialist, Total Family Coaching & Parenting, www.totalfamilycoaching.co.uk, February 2022

⁴⁷ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9233/CBP-9233.pdf>



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violence and abuse is so prevalent in our society that NHS and other provider staff will be in contact with adult and child victims (and perpetrators) across the full range of health services.”

The Government recognizes the critical role victim and survivor support organizations play by providing victims and survivors with the support/tools to rebuild their lives. The Home Office’s Call for Evidence highlighted the requirement for increased provision to ensure support can be accessed by all victims, regardless of their protected characteristics or where they live. That is why the Government continues to make record investment in this area, with more than £300 million from across Government being spent to support victims and survivors this year alone. This includes:

- £32 million for sexual violence support services over three years;
- £27 million to recruit more Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisers who are a key component in support through the criminal justice system, resulting in the recruitment of nearly 700 new posts, an increase of 44% on existing provision;
- £20.7 million for community-based sexual violence and domestic abuse services, helping to reduce the amount of time survivors have to wait for support. Male specific services will see a 60% funding increase following a significant increase in demand for support from men and boys;
- £2 million for smaller specialist organizations helping people from different ethnic backgrounds, LGBT or disabled victims; and
- £1.3 million support package to support more victims and survivors to access support while at home.

In response to the impact of COVID-19, the Government provided an additional £76 million to support victims of domestic and sexual abuse, vulnerable children and their families, and victims of modern slavery, as well as £2 million for immediate support to domestic abuse helplines and online services, particularly on technology needs. NHS England and NHS Improvement provided £2.5 million to support the voluntary sector with activity and capacity to respond.



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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

CONCLUSIONS

Legislation and institutional mechanisms on gender equality are in line with international and EU standards. The impact of the pandemic on well-being of women has been significant not only in Kosovo but globally. The government and Assembly of Kosovo and beyond foresaw specific measures for women within the recovery package related to the pandemic, which assisted in mitigating some adverse effects. Ownership of property by women has further increased. However, women continue to face discrimination in the labor market and when accessing finance. There is also lack of programs for reintegration of survivors of domestic violence.

The experiences of WB and EU countries demonstrate that developing a comprehensive model to address issues as complex as VAW requires dedicated resources, including human and financial resources, and many years of work that involves testing, monitoring, analysis and adapting new approaches. One of the common threads that connects all good practices is that they are supported by the political will to make change. A comprehensive, and effective system must be based on solid legal and policy frameworks that recognize the importance of putting survivors needs at the forefront.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations addressed for policymakers seek to provide constructive suggestions that will benefit diverse women and men as well as further gender equality:

- Establish systems to measure support, safety and satisfaction of survivors with systems and services;
- Designing new programs in accordance with the identified skills development needs and adapting current vocational training programs;
- The development and implementation of shared service or practice standards, guidelines or codes across the sectors that respond to violence against women;
- Increase the number of service providers with specialized training for all forms of violence against women in both specialized and general services;
- Service providers should further explore developing relationships with employers in the private sector, to open options for employment, internships and on-the-job training.



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North Macedonia: Gender Issues Briefing Note

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