



# Kosova Women's Network

Serving, Protecting and Promoting the Rights of Women and Girls

## DECLARATION of the REGIONAL YOUNG FEMINISTS FORUM

We, young feminists, believe in gender equality and know our rights, protected by the Constitution and laws of Kosovo. Through this declaration we set forth our recommendations to the institutions of Kosovo towards ensuring our rights.

### **Implement the 30% quota for women's and men's participation in decision-making processes**

The Law on Gender Equality foresees equal participation of men and women. This is achieved when one gender's participation in all institutions, bodies and levels is 40%.<sup>1</sup>

Women have been denied their rights under this law. We call for the immediate implementation of this law, which will create a foundation for us and other young women to take on leadership roles within our country in the future. We urge the President of the Republic of Kosovo Mrs. Atifete Jahjaga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Hashim Thaçi and the Agency for Gender Equality to use all their powers to encourage all institutions to fully implement this law.

### **Implement the pre-university education law**

"When you educate a woman, you educate a whole generation," said Brigham Young. The Law on Pre-university Education requires parents to ensure that their children complete compulsory schooling.<sup>2</sup> Even so, our experience shows that several children, particularly girls, still drop out of school due to family pressure or as a result of early marriages. Yet, no steps are taken to implement this law.

We call upon the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST) to immediately take measures to implement this law. Inspectors of education must also collect fines from parents who do not ensure that their children complete compulsory education, towards ensuring that all children realize their right to education.

### **Provide transportation and books for all students attending compulsory education**

The Law on Pre-university Education foresees that the municipality provide transportation for every child residing far from their school.<sup>3</sup> However, due to unemployment and poverty, our experience suggests that several families are unable to pay for transportation and books for all of their children to attend compulsory education. We have seen that young women in particular cannot realize their right to education because of their families' financial conditions.

The government has the responsibility to ensure that transportation and books are available for all children so that they may realize their right to pre-university education. We ask the MEST, the Ministry of Finance and the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo to approve a sufficient budget for covering these transportation and books for all students. We believe that it is a priority not only for young women, but for the development of Kosovo.

<sup>1</sup> Article 3, paragraph 3.1.

<sup>2</sup> Article 15, paragraph 2.1.

<sup>3</sup> Article 15, paragraph 5.

### **Involve psychologists in schools**

Since Kosovo seeks to join the European Union, MEST must meet European criteria for quality education, including the employment of professional staff as psychologists and social workers. Kosovo leads the region with the highest number of students leaving school early<sup>4</sup>. Based on Kosovo's Education Strategy for 2011-2016, psychologists are considered necessary only for school protection networks. Furthermore, based on the administrative instruction issued by MEST in 2013,<sup>5</sup> it is foreseen that schools should have 1000 students in order to hire a psychologist.

We consider the situation in Kosovo alarming. We believe that psychologists and social workers in schools could prevent students from dropping out, as well as offer counseling to students. Therefore, we recommend that psychologists exercise as their primary tasks ensuring the physical and mental development of children. We also recommend that every school has access to a psychologist, regardless of the number of students.

### **Implement the Code of Conduct for written and electronic media**

Kosovar journalism should capture the principles of gender equality, including how women and girls are portrayed in the media. Degrading language and non-ethical reporting on women and girls has negative effects on the general public's confidence in the media. Further, it reinforces social stereotypes about gender roles.

We call upon the Independent Media Commission, responsible for electronic media, and the Press Council of Kosovo, responsible for print and online media, to implement penalties when media violate the code of conduct for written and electronic media via non-ethical reporting on women and girls.

Prishtina, Kosova  
13, 14 November 2013

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in collaboration with UNICEF, *Basic Reading and Writing for women and girls*, Prishtina

<sup>5</sup> Administrative Instruction No. 26/2013, "Selection of Employees for Provision of professional Services in Pre-university Instructive-Education Institutions."