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KOSOVO WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL EVIDENCE REVIEW

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS II

SUMMARY INFORMATION 1

THEORY OF CHANGE 2

WHAT IMPACTS, FOR WHOM, AND WHERE; WHAT WORKS, FOR WHOM, AND WHERE 7

WHAT ARE KEY INTERVENING OR CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES? 10

RECOMMENDATIONS 11

ESSENTIAL READINGS AND RESOURCES ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 14

REFERENCES 17

ACRONYMS

DRG	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
IGO	Inter-governmental organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Note on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) evidence reviews: *DRG evidence reviews are a semi-standardized approach to presenting evidence about what does and does not work in DRG interventions and why, including key intervening variables to explain. DRG evidence reviews include a table at the beginning with key summary information, bolded statements to highlight key findings, and small two-by-two icons to clarify the evidence base behind these findings. One column of the grid includes an "E" for experimental or quasi-experimental research support. These design approaches include an estimation of the counterfactual—what would have happened without the intervention—and, generally speaking (although not always), allow for greater confidence in study findings. The other column includes an "O" for observational research, which is another way of saying non-experimental research without an estimate of the counterfactual. This might include a statistical analysis or comparative case study. If the bottom row is shaded in, it implies there is some evidence, either experimental/quasi-experimental or observational, to support the finding; if both rows are shaded in, it means there is considerable evidence. Any questions about this or other DRG evidence reviews can be submitted to the DRG Center's Evidence and Learning Team at ddi.drg.emaillist@usaid.gov.*

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Outcomes considered	• Representation: Increased elected female representatives in local levels of governance. • Capacity: Women amass greater networks, education, and experience that help them get elected and govern effectively. • Social norms: Perception of women as viable candidates, improving attitudes about female candidates.
Programmatic approaches	• Improved women's representation quotas, networks, and capacity-building. • Messaging and media strategies. • Attitudes, norms, and social capital. • Preventing gendered violence against women in politics. • Civic, economic, and social empowerment.
Variants on the programmatic approaches considered	• Closed and alternating party lists versus open lists. • Gender representation quotas for municipal assembly/council versus sole local representative. • Encouraging parties to incorporate enforceable formal internal mechanisms to promote and support female candidates. • Capacity-building for women to increase potential leadership pool.
Studies included	• Experimental or quasi-experimental (11 studies). • Observational (71 studies).
Level of confidence	Overall, the study has a moderate level of confidence as the overwhelming majority of experimental evidence from low-/moderate-income countries comes from India—though there are also experimental studies from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Lesotho, and Afghanistan—and the degree to which the lessons are transferable is unclear. Also included is evidence from observational studies on

	other low-/moderate-income countries, and moderate-/high-income countries such as Scotland and Great Britain. Additionally, very little experimental evidence exists on interventions when quotas are already in place.
Contextual considerations	The review presents evidence across diverse contexts, including the incorporation of evidence from the U.S. and other wealthy democracies. Nonetheless, the team explores the importance of contextual variables such as: ● Level of educational attainment by women. ● Female labor force participation. ● Conflict-affected contexts. ● Religious and social norms. ● Intersectional discrimination against female members of minority groups.
Summary	Gender representation quotas are a popular and well-researched means to increase female representation in government. There is evidence that quotas affect social norms, but the observational and theoretical literature also argues that a broader suite of interventions is necessary to target social attitudes and power structures that must change before gains in equality can become self-sustaining. Capacity- and network-building coupled with economic empowerment interventions may increase the supply of qualified female candidates. Messaging strategies, changes to social norms, and working with men's groups (among other key stakeholders) could potentially increase the demand for female candidates and a safe, enabling environment.

THEORY OF CHANGE

While low levels of female political participation impede gender equality at all levels of society (Beath et al., 2013), women's political participation at the local level specifically is important for several reasons (Human Sciences Research Council, 2004):

- Women represent a significant portion of the electorate. In a representative democracy, they should comprise a comparable proportion of political representatives at all levels.
- Women are agents of change who push for gender equality and gender-related issues.
- Gender mainstreaming at the local level is critical for considering both women's and men's interests and concerns—chiefly how women's and men's local service needs differ.
- Local government is closest to the people and is often where directives from the national government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) are carried out.
- Women in local government can serve as visible role models to other women. Local politics is also an important "training ground" that prepares women to later participate in national politics. Women serving in local government can also diversify the types of women later participating in

national politics, as "dynastic" women leaders (those whose positions can often be attributed to the prior political leadership of their fathers, husbands, brothers, etc.) tend to jump straight into national politics rather than working their way up from local government.

- Women have historically been more concerned with the common good across policy sectors and are perceived to be less corrupt while serving in office, increasing trust in government.

- Women, as employees of the municipality, are necessarily concerned with making local working environments conducive for women to serve in government.

There are three main hypothesized avenues to achieve greater gender equality in political representation, including at the local level: 1) through quotas, 2) through parties, and 3) through social norms.

Concerning quotas, Kosovo is one of around 136 countries globally[1] that utilizes a gender quota to seek a minimum level of representation by women in the national and local assemblies. Gender quotas can take on one of three forms: first, as reserved seats, which are a mandated percentage of seats earmarked for female candidates which other groups cannot contest; second, as legislative candidate quotas, which require political parties to nominate women for seats to be directly elected; or third, as seats to be voluntarily allocated by political parties (Nayar, 2021). In Kosovo,[2] this policy led to 34 percent (41 out of 120) of national legislative seats in Kosovo being held by women as of February 2021 (International IDEA, 2022). Additionally, in 2021, 36 percent of the members of Kosovo's municipal assemblies were women (European Union, 2021).

Quotas become self-fulfilling institutions, directly impacting overall female representation in government. Quotas alone, at all levels of government, have been useful in increasing women's prescriptive representation in countries such as India, South Africa, and Tunisia, though the application is not uniform across countries or municipalities (*see* Baniamin and Jamil, 2021; Beaman et al., 2008; Beath et al., 2013; Berevoescu and Ballington, 2021; Clayton, 2015; Gashi et al., 2019; Karpowitz et al., 2017; Krook, 2009; Martin de Almagro, 2022). Importantly, the way quota laws are written and applied directly impacts their success. Laws with placement rules and clear sanctions for non-compliance are more effective, for example. Additionally, Kosovo uses an open list system, but female representation is generally higher in countries that employ electoral rules that include closed party lists (Hillman 2018). Open lists allow the voting public to distinguish the names and genders of the party's candidates, whereas closed lists do not disclose this information. A closed list thus forces the constituency to vote for the political party in its entirety (Corrêa and Chaves, 2020). Female candidates often also

[1] At the national level, the highest percentage of legislative seats held by women are in the following countries: Rwanda (61 percent); Nicaragua (51 percent); Iceland (48 percent); South Africa (47 percent); Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Sweden (all 46 percent); Argentina and Norway (both 45 percent); Senegal (43 percent); Ethiopia, Mozambique, and the Republic of Northern Macedonia (all 42 percent); and the Republic of Moldova, Peru, and Portugal (all 40 percent) (International IDEA, 2022).

[2] At both the national and subnational levels, Kosovo uses a reserved seat gender quota system. This is prescribed in the Law on Elections: "In each Political Entity's candidate list, at least 30% shall be male and at least 30% shall be female, with 1 candidate from each gender included at least once in each group of 3 candidates, counting from the first candidate in the list." (General Elections Law, Article 27.1) Please note there is inconsistency in the legal framework for gender representation in Kosovo. While the Law on Elections requires a quota of 30 percent of all candidates to be women, the Law on Gender Equality in Kosovo actually requires representation of a minimum of 50 percent of women in the governing decision-making bodies of all legislative, executive, judicial, and other public institutions. According to the information available to the authors, the different requirements within these laws have not been reconciled.

struggle to attract equal campaign financing, but Smulders et al. (2019) and Krook and Norris (2014) find that the funding gap is smaller in countries where gender representation quotas are implemented.

However, even in countries where a quota law is written most effectively and is fully implemented, the presence or absence of quotas (prescriptive representation) alone is not enough to ensure sustainable gender equality in political representation or in society at large (Krook, 2014). Instead, one must consider multiple other factors like voter behavior (Möhring and Teney, 2020; Cutts et al. 2008), campaign funding, political party dynamics (Murray et al. 2012), and candidate quality (Murray, 2010). In Kosovo, overall female representation at the national level has steadily grown over the last decade, but this improvement in prescriptive representation is not translating consistently to lower levels of government (International IDEA, 2022). For example, in Kosovo, despite some success with mandating the proportion of female representatives in the national and local assemblies, far fewer women serve in local leadership positions, such as the mayor.[3] To achieve further gains in female representation at lower levels of government, donors must also focus on the characteristics of local political and socio-economic institutional structures and the driving cultural characteristics reinforcing them.

It is important to consider both *supply* factors and *demand* factors in political recruitment. Namely, women pushing for inclusion provide a supply of potential candidates. **In terms of the supply of qualified female candidates, women in Kosovo and elsewhere may choose not to participate in politics because they feel disempowered to effect change** (Temaj, 2019; Kenny, 2013; Prillaman, 2017). In terms of demand, political parties seek ideologically like-minded women and ideally create an enabling environment for them, increasing demand for women nominees. Citizens also express their demand for candidates through their voting choice. Oftentimes, the supply of women interested in serving in politics lags behind demand because women fear negative social repercussions for participating in the political process as well as encounter barriers to entry such as challenges surrounding freedom of movement (Norris and Lovenduski, 1993; Kittilson, 2006; and Franceschet, 2001). The ease of party membership and their experiences within parties, such as having access to financial support, also affect the number of potential female candidates.

Political parties have a significant impact on demand for candidates, the number of female candidates, and the success of gender equality in representation. Political parties are active in candidate recruitment and selection, supporting and organizing election campaigns, organizing committees tasked with policy drafting and resolutions, and ensuring a politically unified voice in legislation creation and execution (Copus et al., 2016; Leach and Wilson, 2008). For this reason, political parties are described as being "gatekeepers" in much of the literature (Wängnerud, 2009; Castillejo, 2010; McCann, 2013; Kenny, 2013; Franceschet et al., 2014; Navarro and Medir, 2016).

When parties strategize for elections, they recruit candidates that possess leadership potential and characteristics perceived as "electable." Parties must commit to gender equality within this recruitment process, but in many countries, including Kosovo, parties lack binding directives on how to carry out and promote female participation (USAID, 2021). The national government requires gender quotas to be

[3] In 2019, 18 percent of local leadership positions were held by women and no municipality had a female mayor (Temaj, 2019), though one woman has since been elected mayor of a municipality. The number of women in local politics is increasing in Kosovo, but slowly. For example, the percentage of municipal leadership positions held by women increased from four percent in 2014 to 18 percent in 2019 (Temaj, 2019).

enforced but does not provide a blueprint, leaving parties to ineffectively and inefficiently ensure that outcome. According to the European Union's local elections monitoring report from 2021, "Despite nominating the required number of women candidates, political parties, which are overwhelmingly male-dominated, have not yet seriously addressed the issue of gender inequality in their programmes and statutes, and are far from fulfilling the legal obligations deriving from the Law on Gender Equality" (p. 32). As discussed above, the next consideration for parties is whether there is an adequate supply of women seeking nomination.[4]

Assuming the (potential) female candidate exists and the quota has been implemented so that she has made it past the nomination process with the political party and secured a place on the list, in an open list system she must then increase her visibility with the voters. In a closed list system, that burden is absent, but she must consider her place on the list (the party may place all female candidates on the bottom of the list where they are unlikely to be selected) and overall presence within the party. Political parties present a multi-level challenge to female candidates when they do not provide resources equitably for their male and female candidates (USAID, 2021; Kittilson, 2013; Kenny, 2013). Once nominated, candidates rely on parties to provide financial support and a network to strengthen the candidate's public presence. Women are at a disadvantage as the networks that parties possess and rely on are made up of male counterparts and their established networks. Men's political networks do not prioritize supporting or enabling female political participation. Without help from the party or individual party members, female candidates often lack the necessary support networks (Norris and Lovenduski, 1993). This exacerbates the "supply" problem as potential female candidates may be turned off by the lack of support and opt not to seek candidacy.

Female candidates must then work toward securing votes through media exposure. Female candidates may be unable to secure sufficient media coverage and may not receive as much media exposure or support as compared to their male colleagues within the party (Kenny, 2013). This could be due to a lack of party support to promote media exposure or provide opportunities for women to represent the party publicly. Alternatively, it could be a result of media apprehension to report on female candidates, exemplifying a broader cultural barrier where negative characteristics are attributed to women who are seen in positions outside of the home or in positions of power (Martin De Almagro, 2022; USAID, 2017; Domingo et al., 2015; Beath et al., 2013; DiLanzo, 2018; Human Sciences Research Council, 2004; Norris and Inglehart, 2000). These cultural biases are a key obstacle that female candidates must overcome. Even with an ample supply pool of women wishing to run for an elected position, there is now a "demand" problem because voters may not want female representatives.

To borrow from Liu (2018, 2021), women's political status is not aligned with their social status. Evidence of this is visible in observed disconnects between characteristics applied to all women and characteristics given specifically to female candidates and politicians in public opinion polls. For example, according to a National Democratic Institute (NDI) survey on public perceptions carried out in Kosovo in July 2021, respondents reported positively that women have the potential to be good candidates because they are seen as more honest, compassionate, and hardworking than men (NDI Public Opinion Survey, 2021), but these positive perceptions have not translated into votes for female candidates (European Union, 2021). However, female political candidates can be seen by both the media and political parties as taking seats

[4] It is unclear in Kosovo if the problem is limited to a lack of demand for female candidates or if women also decline to participate for the reasons outlined previously. Additional fieldwork may be warranted to explore this issue.

away from qualified male candidates (Bjarnegård, 2013; Hubbard and Greig, 2020; USAID, 2021). When negative characteristics are attached to female candidates, the demand for female representation decreases across parties and electoral races. Women in politics also experience targeted violence and harassment to discourage them from being politically active (Krook, 2017; NDI, 2017; NDI 2021). This can take the form of acts of physical bodily harm against women in politics, sexual acts, or other hostile behavior intended to inflict psychological violence such as online or in-person threats, character assassination, social boycotting, and stalking.

A systematic bottom-up (supply-focused) and top-down (demand-based) approach to changing norms and attitudes could simultaneously affect both the supply of viable female candidates and the demand for female representation.

In terms of pathways affecting the supply of female candidates, as female representation increases at the national and lower levels of government, policy issues that women care about are more routinely addressed (Beaman, et al., 2011). If gender issues are more frequently addressed, it has a positive effect on women willing to participate in government. This self-reinforcing pattern has been shown to exist in long-standing democracies in Scandinavian countries and newer democracies like Chile, Colombia, India, and Tunisia (Baniamin and Jamil, 2021; USAID, 2016; Franceschet et al., 2013). When women serve in prominent political positions, they are inspirational models or symbols to encourage other women to become politically involved (Alexander and Jalalzai, 2020; Baniamin and Jamil, 2021; Barnes and Burchard, 2013; Berevoescu and Ballington, 2021; Dim and Asomah, 2019).

Higher female labor force participation can increase both the supply of women in the workforce and the demand for female representatives (Navarro and Medir, 2016). Scholars have found that professional women who work outside of the home have a positive effect on women seeking out parties and parties recruiting women (Navarro and Medir, 2016; Norris and Lovenduski, 1993). This is because educated women who have the skills and experience to be successful in the labor market also have the requisite skills to be successful in a position of legislative power. There is also evidence that strengthening women's economic presence can have a positive impact on changing the perception of women's role in politics (Pula 2013).[5] Inglehart and Norris (2003) offer a scale to measure gender equality based on attitudes regarding women as political leaders and professionals or women in traditional maternal roles. Generally, the more society views women as leaders and professionals, the more female representation is seen. Additionally, women have different preferences than men. In some cases, this can force parties to adapt to shifting voter preferences by including more female candidates (Iversen and Rosenbluth, 2008; Kenny, 2013; Navarro and Medir, 2016). Collectively, this can lead to an increase in female social capital.

However, improving women's social capital alone is not enough to overturn long-standing social expectations for the role of women in an otherwise patriarchal society (Alexander and Andersen, 1993; Clayton, 2015; Baniamin and Jamil, 2021; Norris and Krook, 2008). Within parties, existing members (men and women) must support female prospective candidates and newcomers. This effort can spill over by involving the community. Successful investment in women's movements and groups through civil society support and social funding will help these bodies serve as safe spaces for women to grow their political advocacy, leadership, and negotiation skills (Gashi et al., 2019; Irvine, 2018; DiLanzo, 2018; ODI, 2015).

[5] Importantly, participation in the labor force does not automatically empower women, as women may work in an informal or exploitative setting out of necessity (Harper, et al., 2020).

Attention should be paid to support movements and organizations to self-identify their political issues and values (Irvine, 2018).

WHAT IMPACTS, FOR WHOM, AND WHERE; WHAT WORKS, FOR WHOM, AND WHERE

The most extensive rigorous evidence on women's political participation is on the effects of mandated gender quotas in subnational political structures, including eight experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations of quota systems in local government in Afghanistan, Lesotho, and several states in India. Below are summarized learnings from this body of research on what works in gender representation quotas as well as observational literature and case studies from quotas in other locations. Because most of the rigorous research on quotas comes from India, it is difficult to say how comparable results may be across contexts.

Gender representation quotas quickly alleviate institutional and financial barriers to women's political participation. Research shows that formal party rules for candidate selection and centralized leadership over the selection process produce more positive outcomes for women (Kenny, 2013). When implemented in a proportional representation system utilizing closed or alternating lists, gender representation quotas at the local level address financial barriers to political participation that can be otherwise difficult for women to overcome by providing institutional support to women that removes the onus on women to succeed alone (Navarro and Medir 2016, Krook and Schwindt-Bayer 2013, Castillejo, 2011, Krook and Schwindt-Bayer 2013, Hillman 2018). Importantly, closed lists are more beneficial to female candidates, especially in societies where traditional roles for women are expected. Hillman (2018) finds in Indonesia that open list systems for choosing candidates can undermine the goals of the gender representation quota by not addressing challenges in access to finance by female candidates, as they must compete with other members of their party for selection at a large cost. Women's chances for election are more equal on a closed list; however, within a closed list, the order also matters as parties may place all female candidates at the bottom of their lists if not barred from doing so (Wangnerud 2009).

Quotas must also be enforced. Generally, quota enforcement is the purview of an electoral commission that can reject candidate lists that fail to comply with the quota regulations (Hughes et al. 2019; Clayton, 2021). This strategy can be coupled with monetary sanctions against parties for noncompliance. Enforcement can also come by way of mandates placed upon the lists themselves. In Tunisia, parties are required to alternate between men and women on their lists. In Kosovo, every third entry on the list is required to be a woman. Very limited research has been done regarding quota enforcement in reserved seat systems, though similar enforcement protocols to those outlined above can apply.[6]

While evidence from Scandinavia and India on policies by women in local politics suggests that female local leaders often affect social policy agendas, producing benefits in women's daily lives (Bratton and Ray 2002; Wangnerud and Sundell, 2012; Beaman et al., 2008), comparative observational evidence suggests that, in

[6] Hughes et al (2019) identify three ways in which enforcement can occur in a reserved seat system: first, in "women's electoral districts or lists, women are separated out and compete only against other women (e.g., Kenya)"; second, "under 'best-loser' systems, women compete against men through regular channels, but unelected women who receive the most votes fill the quota seats (e.g., Afghanistan)"; and third, "reserved seats can also be filled indirectly: National leaders appoint a specified number of women (e.g., Saudi Arabia) or, after elections, political parties or legislators select women (e.g., Bangladesh)." (Hughes et al., 2019, pp 224).

other cases, newly elected female candidates do not champion women's issues or engage with women's civil society (Castillejo, 2011). Castillejo postulates that this could be because political parties deliberately seek socially conservative female candidates or because female candidates do not feel empowered to challenge party leadership on gender issues since they rely on party systems and resources to get elected.

Quotas also help women get elected in subsequent open local elections; Beaman et al. (2008) find that in communities where a gender representation quota has been in place for two prior elections, twice as many women ran as candidates in open elections than prior to the representation requirement. Voters continued to express a preference for male candidates in surveys in this case, but the gender quota still increased women's access to local offices by improving the supply of female candidates. Similarly, Bhavnani (2008) found that the probability of a woman winning an open seat previously reserved for women was about five times the probability of a woman winning an open seat that was not reserved for women previously. However, the experience of European nations with longstanding voluntary or mandated gender quotas on party lists (Navarro and Medir, 2016) shows that there are other societal structures (such as the function of women in society and traditional patriarchal roles), as well as norms, that are critical to account for to achieve equal representation at the local level.

Capacity-building and expanding women's social networks can increase political participation. Scholars and practitioners (DiLanzo, 2018; ODI, 2015) agree that supporting women's rights groups to access flexible, long-term financial resources and build political will for change can grow them into powerful and responsive political actors. This includes ensuring that women's organizations are included at all stages of the policymaking process and building linkages between organizations, social movements, political parties, transnational networks, media, and state actors by funding women's promising organizations and networks that have clear political goals determined via debate and are organized around genuine local leaders (Irvine, 2018). Capacity-building for women currently serving in local government is also important to ensure that they have the skills to effectively govern. Other studies have suggested that building knowledge of their political system, as well as skills such as negotiation, computer literacy, public speaking, facilitation and mediation, and policy research and analysis would be beneficial (HSRC, 2004; DiLanzo, 2018; ODI, 2015).

Improving attitudes about women in politics and female leaders is a critical, long-term outcome. Krook and Schwindt-Bayer's (2013) comparative study found that countries with a culture of gender equality show a greater representation of women in politics. Messages and other outreach strategies—such as media campaigns promoting the importance of women in government and media-based interventions delivering information intended to spur political participation (e.g. information about how to share feedback with local government)—are seen as important to promote equality, address information imbalances, and level the playing field for female candidates (Adida et al., 2018; Hillman, 2018), though the experimental evidence on their use to influence political participation is limited outside of strategies to promote women voting, where a study in Pakistan found that canvassing their male relatives supports women to vote (Cheema, et al., 2020). Findings from the literature on framing messages regarding workplace gender equality may also be applicable to consider when crafting messages promoting women's political representation. For example, Hardacre and Subašić (2018) found in two experiments that framing workplace gender equality as a common cause requiring women and men as agents of change (instead of only women) increases the perceived legitimacy and influence of leaders delivering the message. Interestingly, results were mixed on whether this framing led to increased collective action mobilization

and whether the gender of the leader delivering the message (male, female, or neutral government agency) affects its effectiveness.

Quotas may be another pathway to influence these attitudes. Beaman et al. (2008, 2009) in India found that political reservation, or reserving the chief councilor position exclusively for women in some villages, leads to reduced bias against female leaders' effectiveness among male constituents (women did not exhibit the bias to begin with) and weakens stereotypes about gender roles in the public and domestic spheres. However, it is important to note that this change was observed during the terms of the second woman to serve as chief councilor, not the first. This finding suggests that a longer time horizon is required to produce changes in attitudes. Attitudes within parties are also critical. An observational study in South Africa (HSRC, 2004) found that in the context of women entering local government through quotas, other members placed different expectations on female candidates and trusted them less, preferring to keep them out of roles requiring direct interaction with constituencies (in this case, the role of ward candidates) due to anxiety about female representatives interacting with hierarchical traditional leaders. For this reason, it is also important to require that the roles of female candidates elected through quotas are equivalent to the roles of other elected officials to avoid stigma or tracking associated with those seats, and for men to receive training on girls' and women's rights to participation and roles in decision-making, as well as unconscious bias and inclusion (DiLanzo, 2018).

Finally, Baniamin and Jamil (2021) found in Sri Lanka that citizens are more likely to give the government *as a whole* a positive evaluation in terms of fairness, trust, and performance when there is a greater percentage of women in local government. This could be because women in politics are seen as less corrupt than men (Rothstein, 2009; Rothstein and Teorell, 2008; Van Ryzin, 2011; Wängnerud, 2012), or because female leaders engage in less corruption in office than men (Beaman et al., 2008). However, this positive association with gender representation quotas does not hold true everywhere. In Lesotho, political engagement across several attitudinal dimensions was lower in districts with a gender quota reserving some single representative districts for women (Clayton, 2015) as compared to unreserved districts; Clayton argues that this result stems from female citizens' suspicion of quota measures for women in politics, highlighting the importance of community buy-in and strong implementation for gender quotas.

To make lasting change in gender representation, it is important to support the full nexus of civic, economic, and social empowerment. Investing in female empowerment can come in many forms. Comparative studies have found that countries with more social spending and greater female labor force participation are more likely to have greater representation of women in politics (Krook and Schwindt-Bayer, 2013). Interventions that support women's employment and social services, such as childcare, are likely to facilitate women's political participation. For example, Prillaman (2017) found that expanding women's social networks via a program that mobilized women into small credit collectives improved their political participation, even in the absence of fundamental changes to resource allocation or social norms regarding women. It is unclear whether this worked via increased skills and information or the perception of increased capacity to organize politically with other women.

Violent backlash behaviors against women in politics also remain a serious threat (USAID, 2016). There is some evidence from other cases that quotas may lessen violence against female politicians (Castillejo, 2011). Krook's (2017) observational study suggested actions on the individual, organizational,

and institutional levels that have been attempted in some countries and appear necessary to systematically address gendered harassment and violence in politics—these include speaking out against sexist attacks, enforcing party declarations of zero tolerance for perpetrators (South Africa, Canada), and creating legislation criminalizing such actions (Bolivia). This legal framework in Bolivia now bars anyone with a record of violence against women from running for public office. Pakistan and Côte d'Ivoire have also adopted standardized measures to facilitate collecting data on violence against women in politics by a state agency. Other examples of initiatives from Europe include a campaign by current and former female British Members of Parliament to "reclaim the internet" from online harassment.

WHAT ARE KEY INTERVENING OR CONTEXTUAL VARIABLES?

Female labor force participation: Scholars (Navarro and Medir, 2016; Pula, 2013; Rosenbluth et al., 2006; U.N. Millennium Project, 2005) have made the connection between professional positions as a pathway to increasing political representation. Women's roles in the existing labor market can be a sign of their acceptance overall as equals, especially the larger portion of the female population that is in skilled labor positions. This is a large factor in transforming gender norms, which tends to lead to higher female political representation (Rosenbluth et al., 2006). Labor force participation is supported by states that prioritize a dual-earner family model and make policy choices that encourage women's equal participation outside the home (Navarro and Medir, 2016). In Kosovo, women's low labor force participation may be a particular challenge to instituting the necessary attitudes and social protections to support equal participation in political life. In 2020, Kosovo's Labour Force Survey measured that 21 percent of women aged 15–64 were active in the labor market, compared to 56 percent of men. High unemployment in Kosovo (approximately 60 percent of the population in 2020) may exacerbate difficulties encouraging female labor force participation.

Access to education and education completion: Investment in women's education is a critical modality to overcome gendered obstacles to political participation by women and existing social norms (Cipollone et al., 2014). Navarro and Medir (2016) find that female councilors in second-order local assemblies have a higher education level than male councilors, and they theorize this is because women need greater education to overcome barriers to their entry into local politics. This does not just refer to academic education; it also encompasses increases in literacy, skill-building, and trades. The gender gap in employment participation in Kosovo appears highest among the population without a high school diploma (World Bank, 2012); likewise, groups with the lowest education levels are affected by unemployment the most (Beqiri and Mazreku, 2020).

Post-conflict settings: While these issues could be found anywhere, party dynamics in post-conflict settings such as Kosovo may be particularly hostile to female candidates because political parties are more likely to center around charismatic male leaders rather than collective decision-making, operate through informal networks and in informal spaces that women cannot access, and sideline women into "women's wings" rather than including women in party leadership (Castillejo, 2011; Cornwall and Goetz, 2005). Women's wings are not intended to provide space for women to emerge as leaders or shape policy, but instead to harness their support for the existing leadership and party structures. Furthermore, in many post-conflict settings, political parties are vehicles for individual power and do not represent citizens' interests or develop a meaningful policy agenda.

Cultural and religious norms: Less secular (i.e., more religious) societies have had a negative correlation with women in politics (Castillejo, 2011; Hillman, 2017; Norris and Inglehart, 2004). As societies secularize, women are more enfranchised and have a positive correlation with elected female representatives. A significant majority of the people in Kosovo practice Islam with a small minority practicing Christianity and an even smaller percentage practicing Judaism. There is no separation between religion and the state, and religious institutions are strong at the regional level (Office of International Religious Freedom, 2021). Religion is culturally important in Kosovo and actively lends support to patriarchal social norms. Women who participate in the labor force or in politics can be negatively viewed in society for violating acceptable cultural (including religious) norms. This promotes a patriarchal power hierarchy that again discourages female equality and political participation. Increasing education for women and encouraging participation in the labor force is one way of promoting and solidifying beliefs about equality and social acceptance for women in leadership/representative roles (Bano, 2019).

Intersectional discrimination: Women from marginalized groups, such as minority ethnic groups and women with disabilities, often face even greater barriers to participation via intersectional discrimination (DiLanzo, 2018). In Kosovo, women from the Turkish, Askhali, Egyptian, Gorani, and Roma communities may face additional barriers to their participation in local politics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Kosovo might be at a turning point in women's political leadership, as assemblies have generally met or exceeded the 30 percent mandated quota. Additionally, even in positions without a mandated quota, the representation of women has slowly increased since 2014 (Temaj, 2019). At this juncture, the application of additional gendered policies at lower levels of government with the help of key actors is critical to ensure Kosovo maintains and sustains gains in women's political participation. With this context in mind, the team makes the following recommendations:

- **Improve existing institutional representation systems.** Activities that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Kosovo should consider include advocating for closed party lists (as opposed to the current open list system), instituting women's representation quotas in other areas of local government beyond the municipal assembly (especially leadership positions), reconciling the legal framework (Law on Gender Equality, Law on Elections), and ensuring that all structural and legal requirements for gender representation are enforceable, such as through the creation of a women's electoral commission/watchdog agency. If the political will exists to pursue legislative reconciliation, USAID could commission a full legal analysis of what is needed to amend or reconcile the laws on gender and elections. Kosovo could also consider conducting an abstract review for guidance on the interpretation of these laws (Rrahmani, 2021). Another area for improvement cited by the European Union (2021) is the gender composition of the Central Election Commission, Municipal Election Commissions, and Polling Station Committees.

- **Using technical assistance, explicitly address the power structures within political parties that exclude women.** In addition to creating leadership and selection policies that enforceably promote equal representation, women must be empowered to challenge party leadership even though they rely on party systems and resources to get elected (Castillejo, 2011). NDI recommends holding awareness raising and training programs for all party members to understand why women's

representation within the party is important and what barriers they face, conducting an external assessment of the political party to identify institutional barriers and supports to gender equality, ensuring principles of gender equality are in all foundational documents, guidelines, and regulations that direct how the party is run and operated, adopting democratic and transparent rules in party bylaws and establishing a equal opportunity committee to ensure that all bylaws related to gender equality are observed, making the candidate selection process fully transparent, creating a plan to recruit women into the party, ensuring that women are represented in party leadership and on all decision-making bodies, and establishing a zero tolerance policy for gendered violence and harassment, among other strategies (Hubbard, 2018).

- **Partner on messaging strategies with local media and local governments.** This can include awareness and information campaigns, commitments to equal coverage of candidates, and the creation of platforms for a broad range of voices.

- **Improve the supply of qualified women in politics by investing in educating women in career skills.** Women can apply their newly learned skills to directly benefit their families and, in the longer term, a better educated and trained population can modernize social norms.

- **Pursue multi-dimensional programming that simultaneously builds the supply of and demand for female political candidates.** Complementary approaches could include adopting parallel strategies to increase women's participation in political parties as well as civic society (ODI, 2015). Support for women's organizations and networks should promote their inclusion in all stages of the political process, through mechanisms such as public comment on draft legislation, standing working groups to support committees, participation in internal dialogues on important issues, and public discussions.

- E**nsure that women have a safe and enabling political environment** free from the fear of harassment and violence by creating legal protections against violence and harassment against women in politics and incubating women's networks that can support each other and advocate for change. In Kosovo, violence against women is connected to their participation in the country's economic and political institutions. To counter violence against women in politics, NDI suggests a number of strategies in their recent renewed #NotTheCost call to action, such as digital safety training programs for female candidates on how to decrease vulnerability and respond to and mitigate in-person and online attacks, training for men on how they can better understand their disproportionate power and stop or respond to violence, establishing standards for behavior in political spaces, creating a cross party working group on violence against women in politics, developing party codes of conduct with sanctions against members who violate them, providing anonymous reporting mechanisms for women, and ensuring that all existing state and legal mechanisms to pursue complaints are utilized, among others (NDI, 2021).

- **Invest in building women's economic empowerment and social capital more broadly.** Even if they are not directly related to political participation, initiatives that build women's consciousness, capacity, and social capital will likely produce positive impacts on gender norms (ODI, 2015). These programs include opportunities for women to advance their education, access healthcare, prepare for careers, and earn an income. These active programs would serve as the basis for women's civil society groups in a model in which women would help other women. This, of course, would not preclude similar programmatic support for men (separately), nor does it preclude men from helping boost women, but it would rely on women's networks primarily. This can be an attractive approach to target

younger women who are preparing to enter higher education or professional positions. This will also help sensitize the population to seeing women outside the home, becoming a stepping stone to seeing women in power.

- **Support initiatives that collect and regularly release standardized data on women's political representation and violence against women in politics at the local level**, including on the number of female mayors, members of Municipal Assemblies, directors of directorates and other municipal offices, and instances of gendered political violence and harassment.

ESSENTIAL READINGS AND RESOURCES ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Beaman, L., Duflo, E., Pande, R., & Topalova, P. (2012). Female Leadership Raises Aspirations and Educational Attainment for Girls: A Policy Experiment in India. Science, 335(6068), 582–586. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1212382. J-PAL Evaluation Summary.

This summary covers both recommended sources by Beaman, et al. These two studies investigate the effects of the mandatory reservation system in West Bengal, India, following the 1993 constitutional amendment to require a random third of village council positions to be reserved for women.

The first study measures the effect of the exposure to a female representative on parents' aspirations for their children as well as adolescents' aspirations for themselves, and whether such changes in aspirations can impact education and labor outcomes. They find that in villages assigned a female leader, the gender gap in aspirations closed in parents and in adolescents, the gender gap in adolescent educational attainment was erased, and girls spent less time on household chores. Because they found no evidence of changes in young women's labor market opportunities, they conclude the impact of women leaders primarily reflects a role model effect.

The second study investigates the effect of the mandatory reservation system on electoral gains for women, as villages with a prior female leader for two terms were significantly more likely to elect a female leader in subsequent open elections. They provide experimental and survey evidence on one pathway for this observed effect—changes in voter attitudes. Prior exposure to a female chief councilor improves perceptions of female leader effectiveness and weakens stereotypes about gender roles in the public and domestic spheres.

Gashi, A., Rizvanolli, A., & Adnett, N. (2019). Bucking the Trend: Female Labor Market Participation in Kosovo. Croatian Economic Survey, 21(2), 85–116. https://doi.org/10.15179/ces.21.2.3

The literature makes a connection between increases in female labor force participation and increases in female political participation. This is addressed as a necessity in some of the literature. Though not specific to political participation, Gashi et al. portray a social obstacle for women in Kosovo. In Kosovo, where unemployment is well above an acceptable number when measured for both genders, female labor market participation is overwhelmingly low. Without female labor force participation, there is a smaller group of women available (supply) to be successful in leadership positions. Without a stable supply, the demand for female political participation will also decrease.

Irvine, J. A. (2018). US Aid and gender equality: Social movement vs civil society models of funding. Democratization, 25(4), 728–746. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2017.1420058

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This summary covers both recommended sources by Jill Irvine. Irvine is a primary scholar in the areas of female representation and gender equality.

There is an assumed link between women's empowerment and a country's peace and democratization. This is backed not only through history but with the accepted practice that funding empowerment has a positive relationship with gender equality and democratic transformations. Irvine's first work cited here is based on over a decade of fieldwork in the Balkans to explore the different approaches to women's empowerment through her coined terms "civil society model" and the "social movement model." Both models can be incorporated for social change, but Irvine argues that the social movement model is more likely to achieve enduring political change.

In Irvine's more recent work, a book chapter in an edited volume about Gender in Central-Eastern Europe and Eurasia, she takes her theories presented in the earlier work to the three decades of observations and data produced from funding NGOs (gender equality organizations in Central-Eastern Europe). She reports that in the 1990s, the push was for funding women's organizations and what she dubbed "project feminism." The next phase of implementation, led by the European Union, pushed for increasing professionalization among women's organizations. The third area of analysis looks at the post-2008 period, at the role of right-wing populism that has either helped or hindered the inclusion of marginalized groups (i.e., women and female minorities). Irvine concludes that there is still too much to learn about the effectiveness of aid distribution and the collective roles of NGOs, IGOs, and national governments.

Kenny, M. (2013). Gender and Political Recruitment. In Gender and Political Recruitment: Theorizing Institutional Change (First). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137271945

Kenny's book explores the previously under-researched area of gender and political institutions to develop a new institutional theory to explore and understand the gendered dynamics of institutional innovations and change the dynamics of candidate selection and recruitment. Her approach identifies political parties as being the initial obstacle to gender equality. Kenny describes political parties as the gatekeepers of the political process and outlines her theory of gender dynamics. Though her work is focused on the case study of Scotland, her theoretical proposal is applicable to all countries working toward gender equality in political institutions and recruitment.

Milazzo, A., & Goldstein, M. (2019). Governance and Women's Economic and Political Participation: Power Inequalities, Formal Constraints and Norms. The World Bank Research Observer, 34(1), 34–64. https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lky006

This comparative review discusses the evidence on institutional reforms—including the legal enabling environment, quotas in the corporate sphere, and representation quotas in national legislatures—to reduce gender gaps in economic and political participation. The authors explore micro-empirical studies showing that reforms have been successful in reducing inequalities to escape issues identifying the direction of causality, as reforms may have been adopted in countries where attitudes toward women had already been improving.

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