



KOSOVO PROPERTY RIGHTS PROGRAM (PRP) SNAPSHOT

Women in Kosovo own a disproportionately small share of property. The USAID Property Rights Program (PRP) conducted a national survey in 2015, which among other things, revealed that only 16% of women in Kosovo own real property. Other research has corroborated these general findings. This situation poses a number of potentially negative consequences for women in particular and for Kosovo society in general. For the women, this can mean complete economic dependency on others; lost opportunities to pursue personal dreams and ambitions; and a reduced ability to help others in their families and in society. For the society, this means that women lack the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and create new businesses, to help the economy grow and to generate employment for others.

The reason why women own little property can be traced to patriarchal custom and traditions. Property has traditionally been passed on to male heirs only; and a daughter has traditionally been viewed as passing to their husband's family. As a result of these practices, women in Kosovo typically do not inherit property from their parents, or they renounce their inheritance in favor of their brothers and sons. According to the same survey, only around 4% of women inherit real property from their parents. The most common reasons cited in the survey for this are adherence to traditional patriarchal values and accepted views on the appropriate roles for women (68% of women surveyed affirm this); a lack of knowledge of one's legal rights; a reluctance to assert one's rights; and a reluctance to deal with formal institutions.

To help address this, PRP is undertaking a number of activities designed to change common practices and social attitudes, using legal reforms and public advocacy. Here is one example of these efforts: to complement its ongoing national media campaign on TV, radio and social media to support women's property rights (under the rubric, *For Our Common Good*, with 24 media products to date), PRP is conducting grassroots, community-level activities to bring this message to Kosovo citizens directly – with a particular focus on youth. PRP launched this national initiative with a visibility event in the

municipality of Viti/Vitina, where PRP is carrying out a number of local initiatives to assist the local authorities to make it easier for their citizens to register their property.

The event brought together a number of PRP initiatives and marshalled important national and local support. The US Ambassador, the First Deputy Prime Minister, and the Mayor of Viti/Vitina made remarks in support of women's property rights. The launch event also featured an exhibition of local second-graders' drawings on the topic, "Home and Family," from a children's art activity that PRP had organized in Viti/Vitina the previous month; and a video clip from that activity was presented at the launch event. (PRP is using these drawings in other aspects of its grassroots campaign.)

In addition, the launch event featured testimonials from two women from the community about their own positive experience in exercising their property rights and helping other women to do so.

The central feature of the launch event was a demonstration of Forum Theater, to show how art and other non-conventional media can be employed to raise social issues and advocate behavior change. The production addressed daughters' inheritance, and following the dramatic presentation, local high school students made comments and posed questions to the characters in the play.

The event was very well attended and generated extensive national and local publicity.

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