

# Local level coordination mechanisms against domestic violence



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In Kosovo\*, several institutions are charged with protecting and providing services for the victims of domestic violence and their children. Good quality, timely services are vital, as is cooperation and coordination between institutions and other relevant stakeholders. Kosovo has therefore established several local coordination mechanisms at municipal level, whose main role is to improve the level of safety, treatment and reintegration of domestic violence victims, as well as to increase effectiveness in the prevention of such incidents.

Through a Memorandum of Agreement, the local coordination mechanisms gather together the following institutions: local government/municipality (through the Gender Equality Officer), Directorate for Education, Directorate for Health and Social Welfare, Kosovo police and prosecutors, courts, safe houses, domestic violence protectors, Office for free legal support, centre for social work, hospitals and other health institutions, the Public Employment Office, and civil society organisations representing the rights of women and children. The mechanisms are usually coordinated by the municipal Gender Equality Officer and they gather at least four times a year, as well as on an ad hoc basis at the request of any member institution. The mechanisms have contributed to better case management and higher quality protection and service provision for domestic violence victims.

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## **Impact of local coordination mechanisms**

Kosovo currently has seven active local coordination mechanisms, operating at local level. In most cases the work is coordinated by the Gender Equality Officer, which implies that the mechanisms operate under the local government. The mechanisms have worked well to date, with contributions noted in the following areas:

- 1 Improved cooperation between institutions;
- 2 Improved case management of domestic violence cases;
- 3 Improved provision of good quality, timely services for women victims of domestic violence and their children;
- 4 Increased awareness of domestic violence issues (through joint actions).

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## **Transferability to other contexts**

Kosovo currently has seven active local coordination mechanisms. The National Coordinator for Protection from Domestic Violence (Deputy Minister of Justice) is in the process of empowering three previously established mechanisms, along with several new ones.

Local coordination mechanisms are transferable as they do not entail a change in roles or responsibilities but, rather, enhance cooperation between those institutions engaged in providing services and support for domestic violence institutions. The key to an effective coordination mechanism is commitment from the relevant institutions, particularly support from local government. The role of the Gender Equality Officer in coordinating the mechanism is thus of central importance.

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## **Learning and capacity-building potential**

The experience of the local coordination mechanisms in Kosovo has proved to be a learning opportunity for member institutions. During meetings and communications, members observed that the ways in which support was provided were not adequate for a specific local context. This prompted changes/upgrades in the mode of service provision. In addition, close cooperation and better case management has resulted in the identification of new avenues of support for domestic violence victims and their children.

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## **Sustainability of the local coordination mechanisms**

The initiative is sustainable because it relies on those institutions that provide support and services for domestic violence victims. The effectiveness of local coordination mechanisms depends heavily on the will and commitment of these institutions, and particularly on support from local government. Seven active coordination mechanisms have developed local action plans that are directly aligned with the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence. Members of the coordination mechanisms work jointly to implement their local plans, thereby contributing to better support for victims.

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## **National plans and strategies**

Establishing local coordination mechanisms is one of the activities under Pillar 2: Protection and Coordination of the action plan of the National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence 2016-2020. The national action plan foresees local coordination mechanisms in place in every municipality in Kosovo by 2020. The national plan has been translated into local action plans, whose implementation is assured by the coordination mechanisms.

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

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## Contacts/Further Information



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## Metadata

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