

FINAL REPORT

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE

KOSOVO WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

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Glossary of Acronyms

AOR	Area of Responsibility (designating geographic zones in Kosovo)
BWI	Bosnia Women's Initiative
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CPWC	Centre for Protection of Women & Children
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OSCE
DM	Deutsche Mark
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
FDRS	UNHCR Funding and Donor Relations Service
FRY	Former Republic of Yugoslavia
FY	Financial Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICMC	International Catholic Migration Commission
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
IEC	Information, education, communication
IDP	Internally-Displaced Person
IGP	Income Generation Project
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM (OIM)	International Organization for Migration
IPH	Institute for Public Health in Kosovo
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JIAS	Joint Interim Administrative Structure for Kosovo
KEP	Kosovo Enterprise Project (ICMC's microfinance programme)
KFOR	Kosovo Force: NATO-led international force responsible for establishing and maintaining security in Kosovo
KWI	Kosovo Women's Initiative
KTC	Kosovo Transitional Council
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
MCI	Mercy Corps International
MDM	Medecins du Monde
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OGA	Office for Gender Affairs, United Nations Mission in Kosovo
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PRB	KWI Project Review Board
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees & Migration, U.S. Dept. of State
QIPs	Quick Impact Projects
RH	Reproductive Health

RI	Relief International
RLSS	UNHCR Reintegration & Local Settlement Section
RWI	Rwanda Women's Initiative
SGBV	Sexual & Gender Based Violence
SPMR	UNHCR Sub-Project Monitoring Reports
UN	United Nations
UNFPA/FNUAP	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WWC	Women's Wellness Centre

Executive Summary

Overview

During the 1990s, grassroots women's networks throughout the Balkans had been found to be effective in reducing conflict-induced trauma amongst women, many of whom found themselves heading households for the first time or had suffered personal atrocities, such as rape. The Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI) was established in July 1999 in the wake of a peace agreement that included provision for the withdrawal of all Serb forces from Kosovo and the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced people. Initial funding for the KWI, amounting to US\$10 million, came in the form of a grant to UNHCR from the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) in the U.S. Department of State.

Project documents relating to KWI covering 1999 and 2001 actually describe a diverse range of goals and objectives, but the Terms of Reference relevant to this study refers a 2001 UNHCR document that describes two over-arching goals for KWI as follows:

- To help mobilize women throughout Kosovo, with a specific focus on returnee, displaced and war affected women, to assist them and their families in rebuilding their lives and livelihood; and
- To empower women to become agents of change and solidarity through raising awareness, fostering the development of women's networks and enhancing the principles of gender equity at all levels of government and civil society.

During September and October 2001, a two-member team of external consultants conducted focus group discussions, key informant interviews and a document review to evaluate impact, appropriateness, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of KWI-funded activities. The team also examined the application to KWI of lessons-learned from the Bosnian Women's Initiative (BWI), management and coordination issues and assessed the impact of donor requirements on project implementation.

Prior to the war in 1999, Kosovo had a reputation for being the poorest province of the former Republic of Yugoslavia's (FRY). Illiteracy rates were relatively high before political autonomy was revoked in 1989, and the following decade witnessed further declines in the quality of education and health services for the Albanian population, particularly for women. Over the same period, an armed rebellion by ethnic Albanians gathered momentum. In 1999, massive expulsions, killings and human rights abuses by Serbs against ethnic Albanians living in the autonomous republic of Kosovo provoked an international response, including the bombing of Serbia by NATO forces and the stationing of NATO and Russian peacekeepers in Kosovo. The refugee exodus of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo was unusually large and swift and the subsequent humanitarian response involved the national interests of major powers, regional organizations and NATO. At the peak of the crisis, UNHCR estimated that there were almost 850,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees who had fled Kosovo.

Serbs had selectively targeted men, and a large number of women thus found themselves not only living in new surroundings in one of the hastily constructed refugee camps, but also with new role and responsibilities within their households.

The voluntary repatriation of Kosovo Albanian refugees and displaced persons that started in June 1999 was unexpectedly rapid and returnees arrived home to an environment that had been fundamentally altered. Surveys by a UN agency indicated that a third of the population was now under 15 years of age and the ratio of men to women between the ages of 20 - 50 was around 86:100. Many observers also warned about a return to the Albanian "*kanun*" of traditional codes that would result in the deterioration in the situation of women in post war Kosovo, notably in terms of unequal access to education, employment and rights to both property and children.

One of the most disturbing features of the conflict in the Balkans during the past decade has been the systematic use of rape as a weapon and instrument of torture. Concerns were raised from several quarters that similar atrocities were being perpetuated in Kosovo, but the actual incidence of rape remains a subject of controversy due to the unwillingness of victims to speak out for fear of stigmatization and reprisals. The KWI programme was announced in mid 1999 in the midst of the emergency phase and, although some of the initial discussions within some U.S. political circles had focused on assistance to rape victims, when the KWI project was eventually launched it took the form of a two-year multisectoral programme based on the BWI model. During the early phases of KWI there was an appropriate emphasis on using methods borrowed from Bosnia and elsewhere with an initial focus on reproductive health and sexual and gender based violence. Priority was also given to vulnerable women, who included enclave residents, minorities, returnees and females heading households.

UNHCR had assumed a leading role as the head of the Humanitarian Pillar of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and widespread damage to housing and public infrastructure meant that UNHCR initially devoted much of its capacity towards helping the population to prepare for the winter ahead. KWI was not prioritised during this early phase and implementation in this already highly complex politicised setting was undermined by a combination of conflicting priorities, low capacity, high staff turnover, lack of a detailed needs assessment, diverse goals and objectives, donor pressure to disburse funds rapidly and provide special reports.

UNHCR had learned from its BWI experience that its institutional capacity and procedures were not well suited to productive interaction with large numbers of relatively small women's groups. KWI Funds were thus channeled in two ways; sub-projects with NGOs for sectoral interventions such as RH and microfinance, or small project grants channelled through international NGOs acting as Umbrella Agencies. Women's groups and organizations were then encouraged to submit proposals to Umbrella Agencies to access KWI funds. Umbrella Agencies invested a great deal of resources in training their national staff and their professionalism in dealing with women's organizations was evident. Agencies tended to focus on disbursement and reporting which has had a positive impact on sustainability since representatives of women's organizations are now using their skills acquired from KWI to prepare proposals and access funds from alternative donors for their projects. However, provision of specialized key technical support, sustainability,

strengthening of networks and monitoring of reintegration and empowerment indicators has been given lower priority by Umbrella Agency field staff, despite their status as overarching goals.

A relatively small number of Kosovo Albanian women's organisations were able to establish themselves during the pre-war period with very limited resources in a risk-laden environment. In early 1999, leaders of some of these organizations participated in round-table discussions in the U.S. and were able to enlist the support of key government and NGO figures. During the first few months that of KWI operation, several of these Kosovo Albanian women leaders were severely critical about UNHCR's implementation of KWI and communicated these concerns directly to their contacts in Washington, D.C. Considerable pressure was emanating from the U.S. Senate on PRM and UNHCR to fund four of these organizations, but strained relationships, bureaucratic obstacles and miscommunications delayed the process of submitting and negotiating proposals, while UNHCR staff and women's leaders alike were pre-occupied with a number of competing operational priorities during the emergency phase. This situation prompted the donor to once again temporarily suspend funds that had been allocated to UNHCR for the Kosovo crisis.

By mid 2000, at a time when UNHCR-provided relief assistance had been considerably reduced due to improved living conditions, KWI capacity was increased through a combination of additional staffing and a technical support mission by UNHCR HQ, resulting in a marked improvement in the quality of implementation. In the meantime, a new pattern of violence, harassment, and discrimination had emerged in Kosovo that brought with it new victims whose protection needed particular attention by UNHCR. These victims were mainly ethnic minorities, but also included certain categories of Kosovo Albanians who have had difficulty in coping with the damage and destruction to housing, infrastructure and social services.

February 2001 marked another major milestone for KWI when six multi-ethnic regional Women's Councils were formed and assumed primary responsibility for review and approval of KWI grant-funded projects. This was something that women leaders had been advocating for from the outset and indications were that this could become one of the KWI's major contributions towards women's empowerment in Kosovo while at the same time providing a viable exit mechanism for UNHCR. At the same time, there was a need to place a greater emphasis on capacity building of Councils and associated networks since there is a focus by Council members on the projects themselves without reference to a strategic framework.

Despite evidence of conflicting priorities, diverse goals and objectives, inappropriate requirements imposed by the donor, a highly politicised environment, poor targeting of beneficiaries, formation of many women's groups "around the project" and high administrative overheads contributing to low efficiency, KWI has nevertheless achieved some impressive results. A number of new women's groups have formed and sustained themselves and existing groups were supported at key junctures in their development. KWI has supported the mobilization of women during the reintegration process and one of the most noteworthy achievements towards the second overarching goal has been in helping to identify and empower charismatic women's leaders amongst minorities living in enclaves or in remote rural areas.

KWI Sectoral Activities

Training of health workers comprised the core activity of all three of UNHCR's implementing partners involved in RH activities, although a limited amount of equipment for hospitals and health centres was also purchased. Health professionals demonstrated substantial increases in the level of RH knowledge following the training and the RH sector offered a good example of interagency coordination although the fact that UNHCR Field Offices were not involved in monitoring this sector left substantial gaps. The KWI network offered an excellent tool for RH outreach advocacy and awareness training although it was not always fully utilized. While overall results of these short-term interventions have been positive, the long term impact will be heavily influenced by factors such as female access to secondary education. KWI funding for RH activities ceased at the end of 2000 and this sector represents a successful phase out for UNHCR as many key activities were continued with funds leveraged from other donors.

Most of the KWI resources for SGBV have supported international NGOs and several local women's groups in raising awareness about relevant issues through training and community education of local women's groups, while messages are disseminated to a larger audience via posters and flyers. Anecdotal evidence from KWI-funded projects suggests that women are more willing to come forward in seek of help although it proved difficult to assess the extent to which KWI had actually contributed to this change due to the large number of agencies supporting SGBV interventions along with the emphasis of KWI field staff on monitoring outputs rather than impact. There is a need for a more holistic approach towards SGBV related issues that KWI can facilitate via existing networks and, since one of KWI's key strategies for 2002 is to invest in girls' education, this presents an opportunity to incorporate appropriate SGBV messages in the curriculum.

A widely heard criticism regarding KWI-funded vocational training projects was directed at the multitude of sewing, hairdressing and English language courses. The prevailing view was that, while many of these projects played a beneficial role in group formation and trauma relief during the emergency phase, there was little planning for sustainability. In addition, participation of teenagers in these courses seemed actually to be a symptom of the lack of female access to secondary schools. There have nevertheless been some markedly successful attempts to diversify into non-traditional activities that have resulted in both employment and empowerment. This success can only partly be attributed to taking advantage of market niches, such as construction-related activities such as glass-cutting and metal work during an era of massive reconstruction. Further analysis showed that such projects were actually subjected to a careful preparation process that included market research and a gender equity analysis. Where these techniques were applied by the same agencies to more traditional activities, such as training in handicraft production, trainees were usually successful in earning an income.

Almost two years after the emergency phase had ended, many Kosovo women viewed economic development as the key to empowerment and their future. Increasing emphasis was accordingly placed within KWI on income generation, either directly through small-scale business activities, or indirectly, through vocational training. Performance of KWI grant-funded income generating projects was disappointing, however, with less than 30%

showing indications of being viable. Poor record keeping and a lack of business plans were indicative of poor management capacity and technical support. 80% of sewing and handicraft projects funded during 1999-2000 were still operating in 2001 by virtue of a second grant from KWI.

A very different situation was found in the Peje region where the bulk of KWI-funded income-generating projects fell under a micro finance programme implemented by ICMC which, in addition to micro loans, also provided training and coaching in business planning and financial management. Repayment rates of micro-loans have consistently been maintained at 100%, with a number of clients repaying early. Many businesses have increased their profit margins and clients are applying for larger loans. However, while the ICMC component project has been very successful in training and increasing incomes of clients, objectives did not include encouraging participation of clients in the KWI network, which resulted in missed opportunities.

Along with assistance aimed at the grassroots, some KWI components attempted to address structural and legal issues for women. KWI began support to legal rights organizations during 2000 that enabled hundreds of women to benefit from legal counselling and court representation. Thousands of women have participated in rights awareness sessions and facilities were also provided for training lawyers and paralegal staff in human rights that has extended outreach and has resulted in a mutually-beneficial collaboration with UNHCR and other agencies involved in protection activities.

Another KWI objective was to create opportunities for tolerance and dialogue, supporting existing interethnic women's groups and promote contacts among different ethnic communities. While much work remains to be done in this area, KWI-supported groups in enclaves and collective centres for internally-displaced persons has reinforced UNHCR's protection monitoring activities and the empowerment of these women could give them a key role in helping to resolve conflicts and promote durable solutions within their respective communities.

Women's empowerment in the political sphere in Kosovo was perceived by UNHCR as being the mandate of agencies such as OSCE and UNMIK. However, many women leaders and even some UN staff were frustrated by stark gender imbalances in the transitional administration and municipal government (where only 8% of elected representatives were women) and felt that KWI could have played a more significant advocacy role within the UN administration to compensate for this. UNHCR and IRC did make repeated efforts during 2001 to try and strengthen links between the Councils and local government through, for example, lobbying for office space in municipal buildings, but this has yielded mixed results.

Another KWI objective was to support women's groups in becoming an active part of Kosovo civil society. Examples of effective use of the KWI network was seen in Peje AOR where the KWI network was systematically being used to promote RH, public health and legal rights amongst all women's groups. However, overall there seems to be considerable untapped potential for strengthening KWI networks and making more productive use of their own resources. Many of the members of women's groups in rural areas were unaware of the identity of their Council representative and, as noted above, promoting involvement of borrowers in the network did not figure amongst ICMC sub-project objectives.

Management Issues

Although KWI specifically targeted women, mainstreaming was an underlying goal and UNHCR in Kosovo interpreted this at two levels. Firstly, UNHCR decided at an early stage to incorporate KWI resources into their overall program rather than treating KWI as a separate project, a decision that subsequently proved to have both advantages and disadvantages. Secondly, KWI sought to promote mainstreaming through increasing gender awareness amongst UNHCR and NGO staff and this was reflected in a progressive improvement in the quality of KWI implementation. Nevertheless, KWI remained somewhat handicapped by weak networking and inadequate gender analysis leading to a tendency to view KWI as a “woman's project” rather than adopting an approach consistent with UNHCR’s policies regarding gender equality mainstreaming. The capacity of UNHCR and international NGOs was also undermined by staff turnover, including five different KWI Coordinators from the programme’s inception in mid-1999 until the end of 2001.

Monitoring by UNHCR KWI staff and implementing partners focused mainly on disbursements, project procurement and other outputs resulting in a contradictory situation whereby financial records relating to salaries and procurement records for KWI projects were being meticulously kept, but staff of UNHCR and implementing partners were not in the habit of examining accounts of individual projects once disbursements had been completed. Likewise, monitoring of empowerment and networking was carried out on an ad-hoc basis without clear agreement on indicators or definition of terms amongst field staff. Given the distinct developmental focus of KWI activities from mid 2000 onwards and clear linkages with reintegration programmes, it was also unclear why guidelines and lessons learned from UNHCR’s long experience with Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) were not used in the development of tools for KWI.

By 2001, most of the relevant lessons learned from BWI had been applied to KWI, though not always in a timely fashion. The exception was a recommendation to promote cross visits between KWI and BWI members and there appears to be considerable unexplored potential for sharing of lessons learned and mutual strengthening of both networks.

The proactiveness of the donor in supporting a Women's Initiative should be viewed positively. KWI has helped to elevate the profile of women’s organizations and networks and demonstrated the potential of such groups to participate actively in rehabilitation, reintegration and peace-building. At the same time, donor emphasis on rapid disbursement of KWI funds and special bimonthly reports was unrealistic, inconsistent with KWI goals and objectives and seriously undermined its cost-effectiveness. One indicator of this was that, in contrast to the pre-war organizations, many of the newly-formed women’s groups (and NGOs in Kosovo in general) were established to access the relatively abundant funds from KWI and other international donors. As a result, a substantial number of such groups were observed to be implementing KWI-funded projects without a clear sense of unifying goals.

The KWI experience gives some basis for supporting a targeted Women’s Initiative in post-conflict environments. Prominent among the potential advantages of a targeted Women’s Initiative is the time and resources needed for capacity- and confidence-building during preparatory stages to support women’s collective efforts to take advantage of any “windows

of opportunity” during the transition phase when policy-making and political structures are in a state of flux. At an individual level, KWI’s involvement with psychosocial issues (including SGBV) has highlighted the need for a context-specific and skillful approach to ensure that priority needs of women in traditional societies can be rapidly identified and appropriately addressed.

A high priority is to build gender awareness, particularly amongst staff implementing the program, and support this with a sound gender analysis. Otherwise, assistance to women will tend to be marginalized, and the importance of male responsibilities and roles overlooked. Indeed, in the absence of an appropriate focus on awareness-raising, many stakeholders will tend to view both approaches merely as a different label for women’s projects.

UNHCR’s comparative advantage in this type of programme is likely to be at the beginning of a repatriation operation because of its protection mandate along with the ability to coordinate activities and provide operational/technical support in emergency situations. However, it is evident at the same time that a more cost-effective, appropriate and sustainable implementation model that incorporates a longer-term developmental planning horizon is needed. Consequently, implementation by agencies other than UNHCR has also been considered as an option. An institutional assessment of alternative agencies was beyond the scope of this study and it was recommended that a consultative process take place involving key stakeholders to examine a range of options and lessons learned to identify an appropriate strategic framework and guide the development of operational tools.

Summary of Recommendations

Specific to the KWI Project

1. Women’s Councils should be involved in the review and subsequent revision of project selection criteria, indicators, guidelines and monitoring systems based on a strategic plan developed together with stakeholders. Technical support and monitoring systems for KWI field staff should be reoriented accordingly. Particular attention should be paid during the review to the potential of the KWI network for mutual support of project activities and outreach for promoting RH, SGBV and legal rights. Councils should also progressively take on greater responsibilities for interagency coordination.
2. To avoid a conflict of interest, Women’s Council representatives should not have a direct involvement in projects. Councils should facilitate contacts between donors and women’s groups, but fund-raising for the Councils themselves should be limited to issues-based thematic issues (e.g. communication and negotiation skills, documentation, advocacy) designed to enhance the performance of the network as a whole.
3. Capacity building measures need to take account of the fact that most Council Members tend to be relatively well educated and financially more secure. An emphasis on a training of trainers or mentoring approach for this group of women is needed to support capacity-building at all levels within the KWI network.

4. The KWI network needs to strengthen vertical linkages and a “training of trainers” approach for Council Members to encourage greater participation by groups and individuals not represented on the Councils. The Councils should also take a more proactive role in interagency liaison (other UN agencies, UNMIK) to improve coordination, build capacity and ensure that KWI is not merely seen by external observers as a “UNHCR woman’s project”.
5. While UNHCR continues to empower and build capacity of the Women’s Councils as part of a viable exit strategy, UNHCR protection staff should continue to play a key support and monitoring role for members of KWI networks in enclaves and collective centres. The KWI Network has the potential in turn to assist in monitoring and, as they become progressively more empowered, the various groups should be in a position to play an important role in promoting durable solutions within their respective communities.
6. KWI should facilitate a more holistic approach towards SGBV related issues via existing networks in partnership with local authorities, NGOs and sister UN agencies with an interest in the sector. Women’s groups should be consulted to identify the best possible response from the health providers and also to create a demand among the women themselves for these kinds of services. Networks can also help in promoting KWI – funded examples of SGBV “best practices” in the Djakova area to assist in leveraging funds from alternative donors to expand coverage.
7. One-day SGBV awareness training should be done with the women’s councils, women’s groups and integrated into related KWI activities. As much as possible this should be carried out in partnership with an agency that has the mandate and resources to conduct follow-up sessions to help overcome obstacles to sustainability imposed by various cultural, psychological and emotional barriers.
8. KWI should sponsor a “study tour” by KWI network representatives to Bosnia to share lessons learned with BWI members, support conflict resolution processes and extend the outreach of the KWI network.
9. To facilitate networking and an enhanced role for women in governance and civil society, the structure of Women’s Councils should reflect Kosovo administrative boundaries and jurisdictions rather than UN Areas of Operation.
10. Active participation of micro credit beneficiaries in the KWI network should be promoted. UNHCR and ICMC should conduct a more detailed review of KWI micro finance activities to determine a) the differential project impact felt by men and women borrowers (including an assessment of empowerment using appropriate indicators, gender balance in planned microfinance bank management structures), b) how economic empowerment has affected gender relations within the family/community, and c) assess the potential advantages of membership/use of networks (KWI and others) to promote business relationships, legal rights and social protection systems.

General Recommendations for Post-Conflict Gender-based Projects

1. A key lesson learned from the KWI experience for UNHCR (or alternative lead agency) is the importance of fielding competent and adequate numbers of staff at an early stage supported by a commitment from the lead agency and donor(s) in support of a process-oriented multi-sectoral approach. While some funding would be available for start-up projects, such an approach should prioritise an in-depth needs and contextual assessment, including a gender analysis and an institutional assessment of women's groups. Other key activities during the initial phase would be the establishment and capacity-building of a consultative group to enable women's representatives to spearhead a transition to development activities over a 2-3 year period.
2. While the fielding of the right people at the right time in the early phases of an emergency is the ultimate goal for agencies such as UNHCR, this is not easy to achieve in practice¹. Relevant technical units (notably UNHCR's Gender Unit) should expect to support offices in the field by programming technical assistance in the form of periodic field missions of sufficient length during the assessment, design and setting-up of monitoring and evaluation systems for a women's programme. An overriding objective of this approach is to promote the use of a gender-based analysis in all aspects of humanitarian programming².
3. UNHCR and its partners should periodically review their respective management structures and ensure that they are developing gender analysis, conflict-resolution and negotiating skills within their national staff. Senior national staff in particular should be expected to play a key role during the planning and development of such gender-focused intervention.
4. Rather than confining monitoring and evaluation to tracking physical outputs and disbursements, such systems should be adapted to reflect the multi-sectoral nature of the intervention, a focus on empowerment³ and the importance of developing a strong network. Networks themselves could help significantly in addressing immediate needs.
5. Since there appears to have been difficulties in respecting existing earmarked funding agreements, it is recommended that UNHCR and the donor undertake a joint review, using the KWI Programme as a case study. If respecting bilateral earmarking guidelines proves impractical in an environment of resource constraints, funding by a consortium of donors should be encouraged to reduce risks of micro-management by a single donor and add the advantage of increasing the visibility of a women's network.

¹ For a discussion on this issue, see UNHCR. Real-Time Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to the Afghanistan Emergency. UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, Geneva. November 2001.

² Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2000). Thematic issues of: Women in Conflict, Transition from Emergency Relief to Development and Access to Vulnerable Groups. Mid-Term Review of the 2000 Consolidated Interagency Appeals.

³ Evaluation of all three UNHCR Women's Initiatives have highlighted the need to develop a consensus on empowerment indicators.

6. Promote mechanisms that raise visibility of a women's initiative at various levels; including strengthening communication within the network, improve the standard of donor reporting⁴ while promoting transparency (to assist with participatory monitoring), and raise awareness about empowerment issues amongst the community as a whole. Apart from the awareness-raising activities for UNHCR and partner staff described above, one example of an "alternatives" approach could be to fund promising women's organizations for income generating media projects that could use the network for dissemination of information and earn income at the same time.
7. A Women's Initiative should start considering sustainability at an early stage when formulating strategies. Based on the KWI experience such an approach should prioritise capacity-building of local groups, participatory management, an active search for partners with development mandates and access to development funding to facilitate handing over of responsibilities for sectors and/or geographical areas. Exit strategy(ies) should be subject to periodic review and take into account the differing capacities and needs of ethnic and socio-economic categories. A technically sound micro finance project should be an important part of the economic development component of such an intervention given its impact on both livelihood and empowerment. Once again, preparatory activities⁵ should be initiated at an early stage with sound technical support.
8. A programme management "tool kit" should be assembled from using lessons learned from the three Women's Initiatives and Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). Generic formats⁶ for monitoring and reporting as well as a basic database software package will be integral components of this toolkit, as should guide methodologies and indicators for institutional assessments of pre-existing women's groups, capacity-building of women's groups, empowerment and networking.
9. The planned review of the three UNHCR-led Women's Initiatives should be a participatory process, bringing together representatives from women's groups, donors, UN agencies, NGOs and other key stakeholders. The active participation of a sufficient number of experienced field practitioners during this process will be essential to ensure that, as a component of the resulting framework, operational tools and guidelines are produced for use of field-based staff. Some of the issues to be examined during this review include:
 - Review of lessons learned and best practices resulting from Women's Initiatives and alternative approaches (notably gender equity mainstreaming);
 - Capacity assessments of agencies which could potentially fill a lead agency role;

⁴ The KWI experience argues against a donor-imposed requirement for frequent special reports. The time and effort devoted to producing and re-drafting these reports occupied a significant amount of resources at different levels and did not contribute to improved implementation.

⁵ Pre-lending activities such as needs assessment, group formation, etc.

⁶ These generic tools should be easily adaptable to each context

- Potential role of a women’s network composed of representative women’s leaders, including consideration of the such a network eventually filling a “lead agency” capacity);
 - Role and profile of senior national staff associated with a gender focused program;
 - Objectives and indicators for empowerment along with guidelines on their use; and
 - Peacebuilding components of such programs.
10. For future evaluations of a similar nature, UNHCR could consider including both donor and women beneficiary representatives on the steering committee. Such a structure would help promote ownership of lessons-learned while at the same time build capacity and sustainability within the women’s network.

I. Aim, Scope and Methodology

The Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI) was established in July 1999 following a peace agreement in June 1999 agreed by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that included provision for the withdrawal of all Serb forces from Kosovo and the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced people. Initial funding for the KWI, amounting to US\$10 million, came in the form of a grant to UNHCR from the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) in the U.S. Department of State. Although project and sub-project documents relating to the KWI programme during the period between 1999 and 2001 actually describe a diverse range of goals and objectives, including a list of ten overarching objectives in the KWI Program and Operations Manual. The Terms of Reference for this study make reference to a 2001 UNHCR document⁷ that articulates two over-arching goals for KWI:

- To help mobilize women throughout Kosovo, with a specific focus on returnee, displaced and war affected women, to assist them and their families in rebuilding their lives and livelihood; and
- To empower women to become agents of change and solidarity through raising awareness, fostering the development of women's networks and enhancing the principles of gender equity at all levels of government and civil society.

PRM and UNHCR envisaged that the KWI would be based on the Bosnian Women's Initiative model that had also been attempted in Rwanda. Women's Initiatives were seen as a way of facilitating durable solutions for women in the aftermath of war. Many of whom were heading households for the first time or had suffered atrocities and personal violence, such as rape and Women's Initiatives were seen as a way of promoting psycho-social recovery and empowering women to better cope with these dramatic changes. An evaluation commissioned by UNHCR in 1999 found that, despite difficulties encountered during the BWI implementation, BWI had been both "successful and valuable"⁸ in this regard.

The primary purpose of this evaluation was to assess the extent to which KWI has been able to meet its stated objectives. The evaluation team was tasked to identify examples of good practice and lessons learned, and make recommendations concerning the planning and implementation of similar initiatives that might be undertaken in other parts of the world within UNHCR's protection mandate. The Terms of Reference (see Annex 1) required the team to evaluate overall impact, appropriateness, cost-effectiveness and sustainability issues of KWI-funded activities in addition to investigating specific aspects, namely:

- Lessons learned from BWI;
- Organization, staffing and administration of KWI;

⁷ According to a UNHCR project document dated February 2001

⁸ Quote taken from an address by Julia V. Taft, former Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, Houston, TX, November 18, 1999

- Consistency with other programmes being implemented within the context of the UNMIK humanitarian pillar;
- Roles and responsibilities of UNHCR, Umbrella Agencies, local Women's Councils and NGOs; and
- Impact of donor requirements on the selection of implementing partners, time frame and reporting obligations.

This study was carried out two years after the inception of the KWI following an extensive restructuring of the programme that had started in mid 2000. The evaluation team discovered many areas of consensus regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the KWI and found stakeholders⁹ prepared to openly analyse lessons learned and offer constructive criticism (including a willingness to be self-critical).

The evaluation team consisted of two consultants Hilde Haug and Jock M. Baker, the Team Leader. Hilde Haug is a sociologist who has worked in the areas of reproductive health and women in development for almost 10 years. She worked as UNFPA staff prior to becoming a consultant. Jock M. Baker served as staff for an international NGO and four different UN agencies during more than 18 years before turning to full-time consulting, specializing in post-conflict transition issues.

Data collection during the evaluation relied largely on focus group discussions and key informant interviews while reviewing project monitoring reports and other relevant documentation that was available¹⁰. Both members of the evaluation team participated in orientation discussions at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva and spent a total of three and a half weeks in Kosovo, where they visited fifty-two projects that had been funded by KWI (approximately 16% of the total number funded since the KWI project was launched in 1999) and carried out key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Respondents included KWI stakeholders (members of beneficiary organisations, local and international NGOs, UNHCR, donor representatives) as well as representatives of sister UN agencies, other donor missions, UNMIK, civil society and academia. The Team Leader also conducted a number of interviews with individuals in the U.S.A. and elsewhere¹¹ who had a previous involvement with KWI.

A checklist (see Annex) was used both during interviews and focus group discussions, beginning with an invitation to respondent(s) to provide a chronological account of their involvement with KWI, highlighting issues and events they perceived as significant. Open-ended questioning techniques were then used to elicit responses to particular issues specified in the TOR (and had not already been addressed during the narrative). Interviews generally lasted 1 - 2 hours. Two Albanian-speaking interpreters were hired specifically for the

⁹ Representatives of Kosovo women, UNHCR, UNMIK, OSCE, NGOs and the U.S. government

¹⁰ Typical to emergency situations, many communications took place over the telephone or via brief e-mails that were rarely printed out and/or filed. Reasonably complete archives did exist from mid-2000 onwards.

¹¹ Due to the high turnover of international staff, a number of key informant candidates had already left Kosovo.

evaluation, one for each consultant (male and female). Serb-speaking staff drawn from one of the UNHCR implementing partners was also made available when required¹².

Post-conflict interventions are characterised by multiple goals, diverse participants and actors, shifting time frames and are highly susceptible to external factors such as abrupt changes in the prevailing security situation. A significant challenge faced when evaluating KWI was to develop a reasonable understanding of the different goals and expectations of different stakeholders over time and assess the impact of interventions. Many KWI-supported activities lasted a few months (or even days, in some cases) and, although a number of groups were continuing their activities, participation varied and there was often overlap with support from other agencies. Due to high turnover of staff, KWI staff were not always aware of projects which had been implemented during 1999. Some women's organisations, mainly longer-established groups, made efforts to systematically keep track of former participants and, in smaller communities, it was sometimes possible to identify beneficiaries of completed projects, but in many cases this proved not to be feasible within the time constraints.

While it was possible to assess sustainability of activities such as RH interventions many of which continued with alternative funding after KWI funding ended in 2000, it was at times difficult to judge the sustainability of many of the KWI grant-funded projects due to the large proportion relying on further injections of funds from KWI. Sustainability for this category of projects which were still operating was thus assessed through comparison of income against operating costs while judging how successful the organisation had been at leveraging non-KWI resources or, in the case of income generating projects, their net profits or losses. We also looked for evidence of development of an organisational vision and, in the case of income generation projects, a business plan (either written or verbal) or accounting records, which provided clues to management capacity and future planning. To assess impact and appropriateness of interventions, we relied to a large extent on verbal feedback from respondents (including both the participants themselves and "outsiders" who had no direct involvement in KWI).

Given the limited time available for field visits, it was possible to visit only a sample selection of activities and this time was further restricted by the desire to interview a wide selection of individuals (including observers not directly connected to KWI). To assist in planning interviews, UNHCR and IRC field staff were asked to identify a representative selection of projects covering sectors, project years (1999, 2000 and 2001), and include both performing and non-performing projects in the sample. Project lists were subsequently reviewed with field staff to verify expectations and their assessments before comparing with findings during field visits. These pre-planned visits were supplemented with visits to project sites and ad hoc interviews with participants and "outsiders" organized at short notice. This approach worked reasonably well although there were some information gaps in relation to 1999 projects¹³. We were unable to confirm reported beneficiary numbers other than verifying participation in some of the projects that were visited. Case studies were

¹² Periodic checks on translations did not indicate that the independent nature of the evaluation was compromised by this arrangement

¹³ This was due to a combination of staff turnover and an operational priority on monitoring current projects.

selected for inclusion in the report to give readers a sense of the variety, appropriateness and impact of KWI projects.

Presentation and initial validation of findings was done during exit briefings at UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva. In Pristina, consultative sessions were held with the UNHCR office, representatives from KWI councils, UNMIK, OSCE, international and local NGOs, and the donor. The conclusions and recommendations laid out in this report largely represent a synthesis of interview results, facilitated both by the relatively good cooperation which existed between different stakeholders and our discovery that a reasonable consensus now exists regarding strengths and weaknesses of KWI. Nevertheless, the authors take sole responsibility for the content of this report, including any errors.

II. Background

The Pre-War Period

Kosovo was known as the poorest province of the former Republic of Yugoslavia's (FRY). Between 1990 and 1995, due to the combined effects of conflict and international economic sanctions, it is estimated that Kosovo's GDP contracted by 50 percent to \$720 million, or less than \$400 per capita (lower than Albania, Europe's poorest country)¹⁴. A large proportion of economic activity was focused on mining and production of raw materials and semi-finished products (metals and energy) that were sold at subsidized prices to other republics. These sectors were responsible for about 37 percent of GDP in 1995, were characterized by state/social ownership and low productivity. Agriculture accounted for a further 34 percent of 1995 GDP. Around 60 percent of the pre-conflict population lived in rural areas. Unemployment was already high before the war (over 35 percent in 1995) due to the long-term impacts of regional crisis and the rate was even higher amongst ethnic Albanians. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a WFP survey conducted in 1999 found that approximately half of the families interviewed had at least one family member working abroad¹⁵. Disaggregated employment data from the pre-war period is sparse although it is well known that women's contribution to agricultural labour significantly exceeds that of men¹⁶.

Illiteracy rates were relatively high in Kosovo before political autonomy was revoked in 1989, and the following decade witnessed further declines in the quality of education for the Albanian population. Boys were sent to school rather than girls to both conserve scarcer resources and because of security concerns, a situation that had not visibly improved by the end of 2001. Other barriers to girl's education include long distances to secondary schools without the means to pay for transportation, low priority of education when unemployment is high, desire to save resources for bride price, early marriages and traditional perspectives which tend to discourage girl's education.

Prior to the war, it is estimated that approximately 30% of the women delivered at home, partly due to a desire to avoid Serb-run hospitals. Antenatal monitoring by (mostly male) gynecologists was carried out erratically and was often limited to the use of ultra sound. Nurses and general practitioners frequently lacked the skills to identify at-risk pregnancies and referral services or basic protocols were generally inadequate. Abortion is frequently used as a method of birth control, periodically causing serious complications or even death. The prevalence of STDs was high, and knowledge of transmission, prevention and treatment almost non-existent. UNFPA estimated the anticipated maternal mortality rate (MMR) in Kosovo exceeded 60 per 100,000 live births and the infant mortality rate (IMR) was as high as 23 per 1,000 births. If accurate, these figures are the highest in Europe and are comparable to rates found in least developed countries.

¹⁴ World Bank. 1999. World Bank Group Response to Post Conflict Reconstruction in Kosovo: General Framework for an Emergency Assistance Strategy http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/kosovo/kosovo_st.htm

¹⁵ Lawrence, Mark. 1999. Food Economy Assessment of Kosovo Province, July - September 1999.

¹⁶ McKay, et al. (2000) "Kosovo Women's Initiative Needs and Resources Assessment". UNHCR Consultancy Report.

NATO Intervention and the Refugee Exodus

In 1999, massive expulsions, killings and other forms of human rights abuses by Serbs against ethnic Albanians living in the autonomous republic of Kosovo provoked an international response, including the bombing of Serbia by NATO forces and the stationing of NATO and Russian peacekeepers in Kosovo. The refugee exodus from Kosovo was unusually large and swift and the subsequent emergency involved the national interests of major powers, regional organizations and NATO. At the peak of the crisis, UNHCR estimated that there were almost 850,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees who had fled Kosovo, of which over 90,000 whom had been transported out of the region through a humanitarian evacuation program.

Serbs had selectively targeted Albanian men, and many women found themselves not only living in new surroundings in one of the hastily constructed refugee camps, but also forced to assume new roles and responsibilities within their families.

The Post-War Period

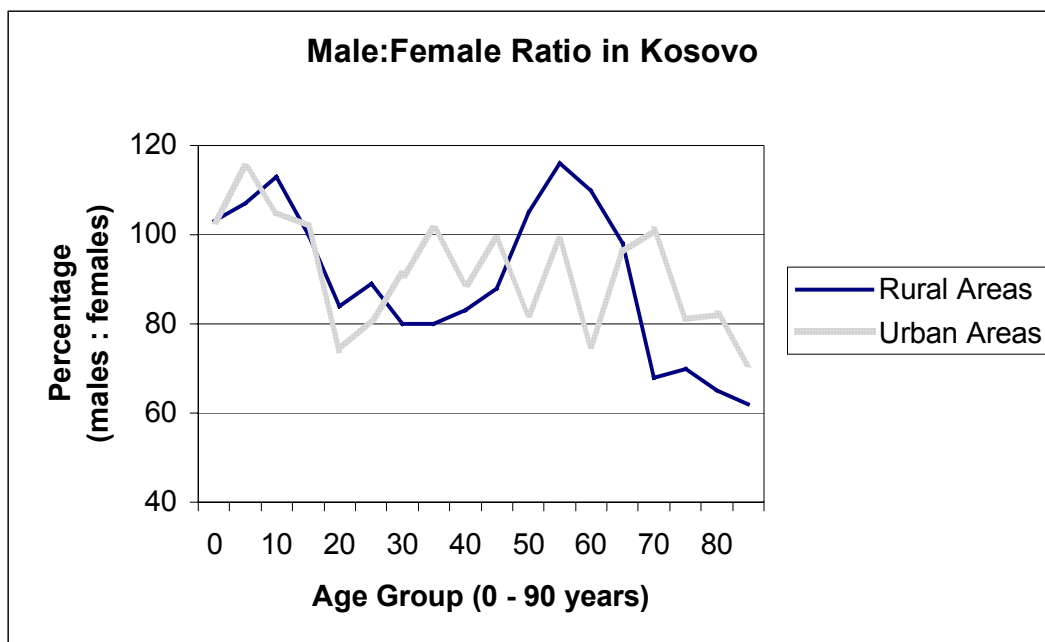
The voluntary repatriation of Kosovo Albanian refugees and displaced persons starting in June 1999 was unexpectedly rapid and they discovered a vastly changed environment upon their return. Apart from the widespread damage to infrastructure, it was now the turn of Serb civilians to flee reprisal attacks and those that remained fortified themselves in “enclaves”. Ethnic minorities, whom Kosovo Albanians had perceived as supporting the Serbs, adopted similar survival strategies.

A survey conducted during the first few months found that over a third of the population to be under 15 years of age, with around fifty percent is below the age of 25. The ratio of men to women between the ages of 20 and 50 was estimated at 86:100¹⁷, reflecting the combined effects of emigration and the conflict (see Figure 1 below).

Fig 1. Gender Ratios in post-war Kosovo¹⁸

¹⁷ FNUAP, OIM, Office Statistique du Kosovo, Situation démographique, sociale économique et santé de la reproduction au Kosovo au lendemain du conflit de 1999: Résultats d'un enquête auprès des ménages, Novembre 1999 - Février 2000.

¹⁸ FNUAP, OIM, Office Statistique du Kosovo. Ibid (numbers are based on survey results)



One of the most disturbing features of the conflict in the Balkans during the past decade has been the systematic use of rape as a weapon and instrument of torture. During the refugee crisis, concerns had emanated from several quarters that such atrocities were being perpetuated in Kosovo. The international community eventually came to understand the inherent difficulties in identifying rape victims in Kosovo due to the victims' genuine fear of being ostracized, but not until the rape issue had been the subject of intense controversy¹⁹. UNIFEM has estimated that as many as four per cent of Kosovo Albanian women and girls were victims of rape during the conflict²⁰.

Along with what many consider as a gradual return of the tradition embodied in the "*kanun*"²¹, the situation of women in post war Kosovo is perceived to have deteriorated in a number of respects²². Manifestations of this phenomenon are reported as unequal access to job training and opportunities, increased trafficking of women and increased risks of losing rights to both property and children since priority is given to their male relatives in this

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch (2000) <http://www.hrw.org/press/2000/03/kosrape.htm>. HRW criticized NATO, the U.S. and the British governments for spreading unconfirmed information about rape while the NATO bombing campaign was underway. HRW documented 96 cases of rape by Serbian and Yugoslav forces against Kosovo Albanian women immediately before and during the 1999 bombing campaign, but believes that many more incidents of rape have gone unreported. HRW also documented rapes of Serbian, Albanian, and Roma women by ethnic Albanians during the post-war period -- including by members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

²⁰ UNIFEM (2000) "No Safe Place: Results of an Assessment on Violence Against Women in Kosovo".

²¹ Traditional laws regulating economic organization, hospitality, brotherhood, the clan, boundaries, work, marriage, land, livestock, etc. The Kanun laws initially existed as an oral tradition and the first written version dates from the 15th century.

²² World Bank (2001) "Conflict and Change in Kosovo: Impact on Institutions and Society". ECSSD Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Working Paper No. 31, June 7, 2001.

traditional code²³. This could have very serious implications for the thousands of women who lost their husbands during and after the war. At the same time, a number of women leaders have accused the international community of undermining the position of women in Kosovo by placing undue emphasis on the *Kanun* during orientations of NATO peacekeepers and UN officials, claiming it is now of little relevance.

Some observers feel that the creation of an Albanian parallel structure that developed spontaneously to provide schooling, medical care and welfare benefits when autonomous status was revoked in 1989 has given Kosovo Albanians something of a head start in developing a civil society. Part of this parallel society included Kosovo Albanian women's groups, which became very active in advocacy and assistance delivery both during the conflict and in the post-war period.

Small in number, most of these Kosovar²⁴ women's organisations were formed during the 1990s. Such groups operated with limited resources and at a certain risk (prior to 2000 a number of Albanian women's leaders had been imprisoned by authorities in Belgrade). In early 1999, U.S.-based NGOs sponsored prominent Kosovar members from some of these groups to attend a series of round table discussions in the U.S.A.²⁵ These women helped to raise awareness about the plight of women and succeeded at the same time in enlisting the support of a number of senior U.S. political leaders and government officials.

The female population in Kosovo is far from homogeneous, however, not only with regard to ethnicity, but also marital status, age, education and socioeconomic status and very few women are actually members of a women's organization. This includes a relatively large group of women from all ethnic groups who benefited from increased education and employment opportunities under the Tito regime²⁶ but who now live in the rural areas with few prospects to utilize their competence and resources.

On the basis of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (Annex 4), the Secretary General established the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) as the transitional administration which was progressively to be replaced with provisional self-governing local institutions until a permanent political settlement for the province could be found. In order to prepare for the first phase of self-governance, a Kosovo Transitional Council (KTC), Kosovo's highest political consultative body, was created to include representatives from

²³ Property rights is a noteworthy example of this since under *Kanun* or customary law it is difficult, if not impossible, for a widow to own and inherit property (including any children from the marriage). Due to such cultural barriers, many women in rural areas in Kosovo are not in the habit of seeking assistance when faced with problems that call for legal protection.

²⁴ Kosovar = Kosovo Albanian

²⁵ see, for example, conference proceedings at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, DC. Sept. 14, 1999. <http://www.kamilat.org/News/USIP.htm>

²⁶ The university in Pristina began to teach classes in Albanian in the 1970's, and by 1988, 30% of the graduates were women. In 1989, 60% of the teachers and 40% of upper secondary pupils were women. The first women's declaration and Platform for Action was announced in March 1990 as a follow up to an initiative in November 1989 when 1.300 signatures were collected. The Albanian Women's League and the Women's Association of LDK were formed shortly afterwards and formed a key component of the "parallel" Kosovar administrative structure during the 1990s.

Kosovo's Albanian, Serb and other ethnic groups – but without a single woman representative.

Female representation in the interim government administration as of May 2000, is shown below²⁷. Only 8% women were elected to the Municipal assemblies/councils in the 2000 local elections and women's advocacy groups claimed that UNMIK had already biased the result by appointing an overwhelming majority of men to the interim administrative structure. This is a stark contrast to the situation in neighboring Bosnia where women in senior positions have been effective in promoting gender-awareness among the international community²⁸.

Table A. Composition of UNMIK Staff

Dep. Institution /	UNMIK International staff	UNMIK Local staff	Kosovo Transition Council	Interim Administrative Council	Municipal Councils	Department Co-heads (International)	Department Co-heads (local)
Total number	753	2500	36	29	368	20	20
Number of women	214	732	6	4	47	4	3
Percentage of women	28%	29%	17%	13,8%	13%	20%	15%

UNMIK subsequently came under severe criticism in a “gender audit” commissioned in 2000 by human rights organizations for a perceived failure in adequately mainstreaming gender equality issues within the political and policy-making processes²⁹. The administration attempted to redress this situation by reinforcing their Office of Gender Affairs (OGA) and establishing a women's working group to support the all-male Kosovo Transitional Council.

UNHCR's Role in Kosovo

UNHCR had been designated as the lead humanitarian agency during the Kosovo refugee crisis in early 1999 and the agency's subsequent performance came under criticism from a number of donor governments. While an independent evaluation conducted in late 1999 found that some donor expectations in relation to UNHCR's role to be unrealistic, a number of staffing failures and weaknesses in coordination and contingency planning on the part of UNHCR were identified³⁰. The resulting cloud of distrust hanging over the organisation in the politically-charged environment in post-war Kosovo meant that UNHCR's operations were subjected to particularly close scrutiny by donors.

²⁷ Kvinna til Kvinna (2001) “Getting it right? A Gender Approach to UNMIK Administration in Kosovo”, Stockholm.

²⁸ Kvinna til Kvinna, *ibid*.

²⁹ Corrin, Chris (2000) “Gender Audit of Reconstruction Programmes in South Eastern Europe”. Urgent Action Fund and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

³⁰ Suhrke et al. “The Kosovo refugee crisis: an independent evaluation of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response” (1999) <http://www.unhcr.ch/evaluate/kosovo/ch4.htm>

UNHCR again assumed a leading role in this phase of the Kosovo crisis, this time as the head of the Humanitarian Pillar within the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK)³¹. Following the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces and the entry of the international military presence (KFOR) into Kosovo and establishment of UNMIK in mid-June 1999, the situation for ethnic Albanians inside Kosovo has progressively improved and many displaced persons have returned home. According to UNHCR statistics, well over 900,000 refugees had returned by the end of 2000, of which some 190,000 through organized return under the auspices of UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM)³².

UNHCR's main priority, as the lead agency of the UNMIK humanitarian pillar, was on meeting basic needs. Widespread damage to housing and public infrastructure obliged UNHCR to devote most of its capacity on helping the population to prepare for the winter ahead. Priority was given to arranging temporary shelters for vulnerable families and ensuring sufficient fuel wood was available while public utilities were being repaired, in addition to trying to fulfil its critical protection mandate in an environment of continued interethnic violence.

UNHCR's position within UNMIK meant that its responsibilities in the early stages also included oversight of a wide range of basic public services, extending even to solid waste collection. This situation not only reduced the profile of KWI within the overall programme, but UNHCR's Funding and Donor Relations Service (FDRS) was faced with the formidable task of raising a lion's share of the \$939 million requested in a UN Consolidated Appeal for South-Eastern Europe issued in July 1999. The U.S. had responded quickly with a pledge of \$34 million. In a letter dated July 27th from the U.S. Permanent Representative in Geneva confirming their contribution, an additional \$16 million (total of \$50 million) was divided into earmarked funding. Of this amount, \$5 million was allocated for UNHCR's operations in Montenegro, \$1 million for care and maintenance of Kosovar refugees in Turkey, and \$10 million to establish KWI.

The KWI programme was announced in mid 1999 in the midst of the emergency phase, precipitated by the unexpectedly rapid return of Kosovo Albanians. Some of the initial discussions within some U.S. political circles focused on assistance to rape victims³³. When the KWI project was eventually launched it took the form of a two-year multisectoral programme³⁴ based on lessons learned from the Rwanda Women's Initiative (RWI) and particularly the BWI.

³¹ As the need for humanitarian relief diminished, the functional responsibilities of Pillar 1 were redefined and leadership was transferred to UNMIK police and judiciary structures

³² UNHCR (2000) Annual Protection Report

³³ Guest, Ian (2000). "On the Record Kosovo", Volume 10, Issue 7. May 8, 2000.

³⁴ \$10 million was earmarked by the U.S. Government to "...support projects designed to assist women affected by the crisis in Kosovo, particularly survivors of gender violence, and provide opportunities for self-sufficiency. Elements would include legal assistance, income generation, community organization, reproductive health, psycho-social support, and reintegration assistance."

In their written acknowledgement dated July 30th, UNHCR noted that "...funds earmarked for Kosovar women are urgently required...", and UNHCR Field Offices "...have to date identified some US\$ 4 million worth of projects...". UNHCR also cautioned that they would be unable to absorb the total amount for KWI during 1999 and suggested that remaining balances would be carried over into 2000. The impression amongst many senior UNHCR staff at the time was that US \$10 million for KWI represented an excessive amount ³⁵, but the decision was taken not to renegotiate with the donor since this pledge formed part of a package that included the urgently-needed \$34 million for the Kosovo crisis. The first KWI concept paper from UNHCR Kosovo was sent to UNHCR HQ on July 3, 1999, three days after UNHCR had agreed to implement the KWI project.

By mid 2000, relief assistance within the entire UNHCR program in Kosovo had already been considerably reduced as living conditions of the population improved. However, a new pattern of violence, harassment, and discrimination had emerged that brought with it new victims whose protection needed particular attention. These victims are mainly ethnic minorities, but also included certain categories of Kosovo Albanians who have had difficulty in coping with the damage and destruction to housing, infrastructure and social services³⁶.

Description of Beneficiary Population (as of 31 March 2000)³⁷

Caseload (in persons)	UNHCR Beneficiaries	Overall population
Returnees	100,000	835,000
Refugees	500	500
Internally displaced persons including ethnic Albanians and IDPs from Southern Serbia	50,000	350,000 to 500,000
Local residents at-risk, including IDPs ("Minorities")	150,000	Estimated 150,000
Total	Up to 300,500	Up to 1,485,500

Almost two years after the emergency phase had ended, the population in Kosovo being assisted by the entire UNHCR programme had fallen to approximately 125,000, of which some 70% belonged to the category of at-risk "minority" populations³⁸. By this time, many

³⁵ A report published by the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) echoed these reservations: "Civil society organizations have received, since 1999, significant support from international donors. On some occasions this in fact proved detrimental (for example, the Kosovo Women's Initiative was unable to cope with the magnitude of the funds at its disposal) and generated confusion. That does not represent a reason to abandon the sector, but it underlines the need to have a very carefully focused and realistic approach." EAR (2000) "Action programme Part 2, €100 million". p. 46

³⁶ Everts, Dan (2001) in "Human Rights in the OSCE Region: The Balkans, the Caucasus, Europe, Central Asia and North America. International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights". Austria. OSCE estimated unemployment levels of 50-60% with an estimated 30% of housing stock destroyed
http://www.ihf-hr.org/reports/ar01/Country%20issues/Countries/YU_Kosovo.pdf

³⁷ Source: UNHCR 2001 Country Operations Plan

³⁸ Source: 2002 UNHCR Country Operations Plan. The concept of minority is not being used in the legal sense but rather to describe groups of persons belonging to a certain ethnic group who form a minority in a particular location (usually a municipality or a village) regardless of their status in the province or the country.

Kosovo women viewed economic development as the key to empowerment and to their future³⁹. This phase could be described as a "transitional development" characterised by high unemployment, a severe shortage of employers operating medium or large enterprises⁴⁰ in addition to a variety of political, macroeconomic and security-related obstacles to establishment of efficient export markets. Many existing businesses are tailored to serve staff belonging to the relatively large and economically important international aid community (including KFOR). The emphasis of KWI since 2001 on economic activities has resulted in the bulk of KWI activities rapidly distancing themselves from UNHCR's expertise and mandate.

³⁹ The timing of the field visits for the evaluation coincided with planning sessions for a Women and Development Conference organised by the Kosovo Women's Network. KWI was one of the sponsors for the conference.

⁴⁰ Notably in Kosovo's numerous factories which had been destroyed during the war

III. KWI Programme

Overview

A primary objective of the KWI programme was to empower women, including the most vulnerable, such as enclave residents, minorities, returnees and female-headed households, providing opportunities for education, psychosocial healing, vocational skills, income generation activities and access to proper services. Despite evidence of conflicting priorities, diverse goals and objectives, inappropriate requirements imposed by the donor, a highly politicised environment, poor targeting of beneficiaries, formation of many women's groups "around the project" and high administrative overheads contributing to low efficiency, KWI has nevertheless achieved some relatively impressive results. A number of new women's groups have formed and sustained themselves and existing groups were supported at key junctures in their development. KWI has supported the mobilization of women during the reintegration process and one of the most noteworthy achievements towards the second overarching goal has been in helping to identify and empower charismatic women's leaders amongst minorities living in enclaves or in remote rural areas.

Along with assistance aimed at the grassroots, some KWI sub-project objectives attempted to address structural and legal issues for women. However, there was a feeling amongst many women leaders and some UNHCR staff that KWI could have played a more significant role within the UN administration through advocacy to compensate for structural gender imbalances. While it could be reasonably argued that many of these activities fell outside UNHCR's mandate and capacity, it was felt that a more systematic effort could have been made in enlisting the support of gender focal points in key agencies to promote dissemination through the KWI network. An example of such an opportunity was an IOM project that promoted awareness and participation amongst voters prior to the municipal elections in 2000. The project had targeted women and the implementing agency had invested a substantial amount of time to put together a women's network to facilitate dissemination. IOM learned of the existence of the KWI network shortly before the scheduled elections and staff admitted that it would have greatly facilitated their work if it had been brought to their attention earlier.

Virtually all of the respondents supported the concept of the KWI project while at the same time most expressed various degrees of dissatisfaction with the way in which it had been managed during the early stages.

KWI Case Study: Vocational Training - sewing/computer courses (DM 6,381 in 2000)

The southern region of Kosovo is populated mainly by Serb-speaking Muslim Slavs, or "Gorans". This is a relatively conservative culture; women above the age of 14 are generally not seen outside the house and many of the men earn their living abroad (mostly in Italy). While on mission near the Albanian border, a UNHCR staff member met a woman who wanted to help teenage girls in her village acquire vocational skills. The case was referred to KWI and after a series of negotiations with male village leaders over several months, approval was finally given for the project and equipment was purchased. A year after project funding had ended the sewing courses were still continuing since the trainees continued to make modest contributions to pay the

teacher. However, the computer teacher had gone to Bosnia in search of work and a replacement had not yet been found. The Project Coordinator was very interested to learn about experiences of other KWI projects but hadn't ever met with anyone from the network and wasn't aware that she had a representative on the KWI Council. Indeed, she wasn't aware that such a body existed at all. She would like to empower women in her community but cautions that it can only take place step by step in this conservative culture.

Although a Women's Initiative is targeted specifically at women, gender equity mainstreaming has been an underlying goal of KWI⁴¹. Mainstreaming of KWI activities was interpreted by UNHCR Kosovo in two different ways, firstly at a programme design level and secondly at a broader level of increasing gender awareness amongst UNHCR protection and program staff. In an effort to promote mainstreaming, UNHCR had decided at an early stage to incorporate KWI resources into their overall program rather than treating KWI as a separate project. Despite the relatively abundant resources at its disposal, KWI was not prioritised during the first few months of operation. As described elsewhere, this approach also caused serious difficulties in implementation of UNHCR's 2000 Kosovo programme due to the disproportionately large scale of resources allocated to KWI combined with a budget cap imposed by UNHCR HQ.

Effective mainstreaming also requires a sound gender analysis and, although an analysis was included in the context of a consultancy that resulted in a "KWI Needs and Resource Assessment"⁴² report that was commissioned by UNHCR in early 2000, many of the findings were not reflected in the KWI Program and Operations Manual nor was there a concerted attempt to review or refine this gender analysis despite a rapidly changing post-conflict environment. Although the quality of KWI interventions visibly improved over time, KWI remained somewhat handicapped by weak networking and a tendency to view KWI as a "woman's project" rather adopting an approach more consistent with UNHCR's policies regarding gender equality mainstreaming⁴³.

Nevertheless, by the time the evaluation took place, it should be emphasized that key UNHCR staff from both Protection and Programme Units demonstrated a good level of gender awareness that was reflected in appropriate and effective implementation of KWI. The evaluation team observed a number of concrete examples of this in the field, notably with regard to legal rights training and monitoring of minority protection issues (see Case Studies). However, given the distinct developmental focus of KWI activities from mid 2000 onwards and clear linkages with reintegration programmes, it was unclear why guidelines

⁴¹ Although gender equity mainstreaming was not listed as a specific objective until the 2002 UNHCR Country Operations Plan, the training provided by the UNHCR Gender Unit in June 2000 had placed special emphasis on "bringing KWI closer to the mainstream". Gender mainstreaming was also listed as an objective in some of the 2000 and 2001 sub-projects.

⁴² McKay, *et al.* Ibid.

⁴³ UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women. 1990.

and lessons learned from UNHCR's extensive experience with Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) were not used in the development of tools for KWI.

Monitoring by UNHCR KWI staff and implementing partners has focused mainly on disbursements, project procurement and other outputs. This has resulted in a somewhat contradictory situation whereby financial records relating to salaries and procurement records for KWI projects were being meticulously kept, but staff of UNHCR and implementing partners⁴⁴ were not in the habit of examining accounts of individual projects once disbursements had been completed⁴⁵. Likewise, monitoring of empowerment and networking is carried out on an ad-hoc basis without clear agreement on indicators or definition of terms amongst field staff⁴⁶. Indeed, empowerment was scarcely mentioned as a specific objective in any of the 1999 sub-project descriptions.

A key objective of KWI was to connect with other international NGOs and UN agencies on promoting the use of a gender lens when designing their programmes. Although gender focal points from sister UN agencies and INGOs had heard of KWI, many claimed that they had never held substantive discussions with KWI staff or UNHCR on how to integrate their respective programmes. At the same time, it has to be noted that most of these agencies had experienced relatively frequent staff turnover themselves and minutes of monthly KWI Interagency Meetings during 2000 and 2001 show regular participation by various representatives from UN agencies and INGOs.

KWI has taken a number of concrete steps towards phasing-out UNHCR's leadership role, including increasing participant ownership through the formation of Councils and encouraging the participation of other international agencies in KWI network activities. UNHCR and IRC should attempt to reverse the historical "momentum" of promoting quick dispersal of KWI funds to arrive at a situation where the first question the Council asks itself is "how can this project sustain itself in the absence of KWI funding?". This not only implies encouraging Councils to seek out alternative sources of support (including in-kind), but also handing over sectoral implementing responsibilities to partner agencies with development mandates and access to development funding⁴⁷. Attempts to transfer some KWI responsibilities to UNFPA and UNIFEM during 2000 were only partially successful. Reasons behind this were not completely clear but seem to be linked to high staff turnover within the various UN agencies⁴⁸, weakness of coordination between UN agencies, and donor

⁴⁴ An exception is the field staff of ICMC, who were observed to be systematically monitoring accounts and reviewing financial and business plans.

⁴⁵ Out of over 30 income generation projects visited (not including the ICMC micro credit projects), only three were found to be keeping regular accounts. Out of these, financial projections showed only two to be viable.

⁴⁶ A review of the Rwanda Women's Initiative similarly concluded that "It is difficult to measure whether the stated objective of empowerment of women was achieved through RWI because indicators of sustainability, empowerment or gender mainstreaming were not clarified...". Baines et al. 2001. *You Cannot Dance if you Cannot Stand; A Review of the Rwanda Women's Initiative and the UNHCR's Commitment to Gender Equality in Post-Conflict Societies*". Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, New York. p.14.

⁴⁷ For example, most business candidates throughout Kosovo could be automatically directed to sources of micro credit, as in Peje with ICMC, while promoting their continued participation in women's networks.

⁴⁸ UNIFEM was experiencing another turnover at the time of our visit and their head of office position had been vacant for a number of weeks.

reservations regarding the capacity of some UN agencies to manage and coordinate an operation of this scale.

Trends in KWI assistance

During armed conflicts it is not only the physical well-being of the civilian population that is at risk, but individuals who are subjected to rapes by combatants, witnesses to killings and other forms of abuse and violence are often subjected to intense psycho-social suffering. Grassroots women's networks in Bosnia and elsewhere in the Balkans were found to be effective in reducing the suffering caused by SGBV and other traumatic incidents⁴⁹ and there was an appropriate initial focus on using similar techniques in the early phases of KWI on RH, SGBV and assistance to vulnerable women⁵⁰, which in some cases extended to direct relief assistance such as shelter. Grant-funded vocational training projects created an opportunity for women to meet informally and offer a chance to escape from the continuing trauma that characterized much of their day-to-day living.

Legal aid and rights training began to address SGBV issues during 2000 whilst KWI-funded RH activities were eventually phased out at the end of 2000 due to the combined considerations of limited UNHCR resources and the delegation of decision authority for funding allocations to the KWI Regional Councils in 2001⁵¹. The RH component represented a reasonably satisfactory phase-out for UNHCR as implementing partners were generally successful in accessing funds from alternative donors to enable continuation of their respective interventions.

As already described, the first KWI concept paper was only circulated after the funds had actually been allocated. This sparked a subsequent debate about KWI objectives and definitions (and indicators) of empowerment. An early donor mission to Kosovo indicated a preference for a focus on psychosocial programmes. Some UNHCR staff at both HQ and in Kosovo felt that many of the initial KWI projects were too welfarist in tone, portraying women as victims. KWI staff gave initial priority to activities for women who were most disadvantaged, in particular those women from rural areas who had left school early and rarely ventured outside the confines of their family compounds. KWI staff felt that work on the larger strategic issues should be the domain of organizations such as OSCE, UNMIK and UNIFEM, although several women activists felt that KWI should do more to promote women's participation in civil society during the transition phase. KWI staff felt their approach was justified as these activities seemed to be what women in the communities were

⁴⁹ Soerensen, Birgitte. 1998. "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Issues and Sources". Programme for Strategic and International Studies, Occasional Paper No.3, UNRISD, Geneva.

⁵⁰ Definitions of vulnerability were observed to vary between different subprojects, but Country Operations Plans defined enclave residents, minorities, returnees and female-headed households as belonging to vulnerable groups.

⁵¹ KWI Councils seemed to see RH activities as a public health service and, while demonstrating a willingness to facilitate awareness campaigns using the network, the Councils tend to prioritize other activities when allocating the limited funds under their control.

asking for. By 2001, KWI objectives had become more coherent although a continued lack of consensus regarding empowerment indicators and associated monitoring systems between the various stakeholders could still be observed.

Empowerment: Objective-Setting and Monitoring

Empowerment can be defined as a process of change wherein persons denied the ability to make choices subsequently acquire such abilities⁵². Economic independence is often cited as evidence of empowerment and in certain societies family, community and organizational institutions in societies may reinforce barriers to women's empowerment where gender discrimination is culturally entrenched. A strategic approach to women's empowerment should involve interventions not only to improve women's access to and control over resources in the short term, but also to challenge discriminatory institutions that limit her ability to make choices in the long term.

Establishing empowerment objectives and indicators should ideally be agreed using a participatory approach based on a sound contextual and gender analysis. A selection of empowerment indicators, including a few taken from KWI sub-project descriptions, that could be applied to KWI are provided below:

Right's-Based & Health Empowerment

- Greater willingness and ability to take a collective approach to rebuilding lives in the aftermath of conflict, including mutual support to recover from trauma
- Increased knowledge of women's rights and relevant legal issues
- More say in when to have children (and how many)
- Better knowledge in relation to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV-AIDs
- Greater awareness and confidence regarding actions to be taken in response to sexual and gender-based violence
- Increased understanding and appreciation of the meaning of empowerment, gender equality and gender awareness and how this manifests itself in their lives

Economic Empowerment

- Increased economic opportunities through better access to resources and acquisition of new skills
- Increased income for themselves and family via income-generating activities
- Greater self-confidence manifested in a willingness to be more independent of males/husbands and family
- Applying learning to develop sound business plans and better manage financial resources

Organizational/Community Empowerment

⁵² Baines, Erin K. (1999) Ibid

- Expanded and more effective women's networks
- Increased competence in functioning as a project coordinator or in another position of leadership
- More active participation in women's organizations, identifying key issues and organizing advocacy campaigns
- Enhanced capacity to analyze and conduct assessments of project proposals
- Improved conflict-resolution skills are applied by women's groups within communities

By 2001 KWI Councils were using their newly-acquired authority to prioritize projects with income generation objectives, either directly or as a means to this end (i.e. provision of vocational training so that women could earn a living). Nevertheless, UNHCR continued to promote equity amongst the different ethnic groups by ensuring proportional representation on the Councils and allocation of funds, in addition to giving priority in the selection criteria to projects in enclaves and collective centres⁵³.

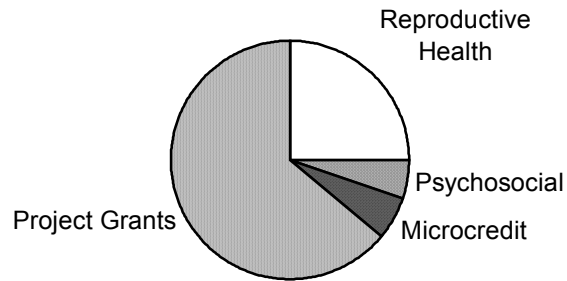
KWI expenditures for 1999-2000 and the budget for 2001 are shown below. Allocations for different activities according to sub-projects are depicted in Figure 1.

Financial Year	Amount (US\$)
Reported 1999 KWI Expenditures	\$ 2,078,649
Reported 2000 KWI Expenditures	\$ 7,201,747
Carry over to the 2001 KWI Project	\$ 719,604

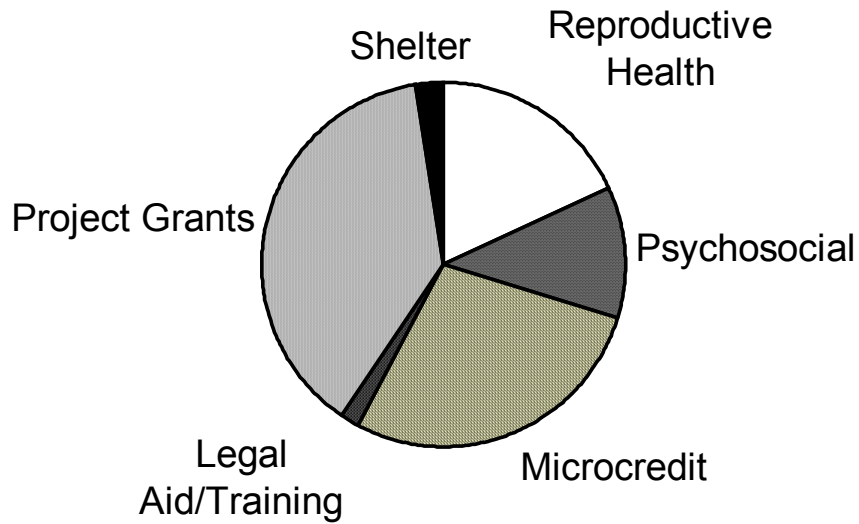
⁵³ This approach was consistent with UNHCR's strategic priorities and its position as joint chair of the Ad Hoc Task Force on Minorities, an inter-agency forum used to highlight the concerns of minority communities and developing appropriate solutions in response.

1. Figure 2 - KWI Fund Allocations⁵⁴

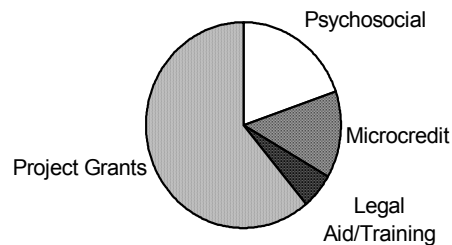
1999 - \$2.1 million



2000 - \$7.2 million



2001 - \$1.6 million



⁵⁴ FY 1999 and FY 2000 are reported expenditures. FY 2001 is budgeted amount. "Project Grants" refer to projects by individual women's groups.

KWI Funds were allocated in two ways; sub-projects with NGOs for sectoral interventions such as RH and microfinance, or small project grants channelled through international NGOs acting as Umbrella Agencies. Women’s groups and organizations were then encouraged to submit proposals to Umbrella Agencies to access KWI funds. During 1999 and much of 2000, project proposals were approved at a central level by UNHCR. Women’s Councils were formed early in 2001 and soon afterwards assumed primary responsibility for review and approval of proposals within specified parameters.

Project Grant categories are shown below and geographical distribution is shown in Annex 3. Categories should be regarded as indicative since some 60% of projects had multiple objectives (for example, approximately 65% of the sewing projects contained a combination of vocational training, income generation and/or psychosocial objectives in the project descriptions).

Project Category	% of Total Number of KWI Project Grants: 1999-2001
Vocational Training (of which approximately 50% were sewing, knitting and handicraft)	47%
Capacity building (women’s centres, recreation activities, other vocational training)	11%
Income Generation & Business Training	12%
Advocacy (rights education, RH awareness)	4%
Psychosocial (counseling services, women’s sewing groups in collective centres)	26%

Lessons Learned from the Bosnian Women’s Initiative

UNHCR took a number of steps to incorporate lessons learned from the BWI into the KWI. In June 1999, a planning meeting took place with staff that had been involved in the Bosnia Women’s Initiative (BWI) at the same time as making BWI reports and other documents available to their office in Kosovo. A handful of UNHCR and NGO staff whom had previously been involved with the BWI were also deployed to Kosovo. Some lessons learned were applied relatively quickly, such as the decision to work through INGO Umbrella Agencies, while others, such as decentralizing project management, was only implemented in mid 2000. However, it is noteworthy that soon after KWI was announced, some women leaders in Kosovo contacted women’s groups in Bosnia & Herzegovina on their own initiative to gather information about the BWI proposal process and types of issues they were likely to face with UNHCR.

The set of recommendations for KWI (Annex 2) resulted from an evaluation of the BWI published at the end of 1999⁵⁵. Most of the major recommendations had been implemented at the time of the KWI evaluation, including strengthened KWI capacity and coordination

⁵⁵ Baines, Erin K. (1999) Ibid

(mid 2000) and the constitution and capacity-building of Women's Councils (early 2001). However, the recommendation suggesting cross-visits between the BWI and KWI projects for both Council representatives and project staff was not implemented and there appears to be considerable unexplored potential for sharing of lessons learned and this would also assist in extending and strengthening both networks.

Reasons for delays in implementing lessons learned from BWI appeared to be linked to the following reasons:

- i) The BWI evaluation was only made available 4-5 months after KWI had started;
- ii) Despite a recommendation in favour of decentralization, there was an initial decision to postpone delegation of the project grant approval process to the Field Offices with the notion that this would facilitate setting of policy and priorities during the early stages. However, as in Bosnia, the centralized approval system proved cumbersome, resulting in substantial delays between project submission and a decision on funding.
- iii) Implementation of many of these recommendations required extensive consultations with stakeholders and a thorough needs assessment. During 1999-2000, KWI staff had community services responsibilities in addition to their roles in the KWI project and pressures from the donor to rapidly disburse KWI funds and produce special reports consumed a relatively large amount of their already limited capacity.

These observations support the overall findings of this evaluation that a medium- to long-term approach supported by appropriate technical expertise and consideration of lessons learned would have provided space for the time and consultations necessary to set up systems and level expectations amongst stakeholders.

A number of respondents who were familiar with both BWI and KWI felt that KWI was the more advanced of the two, even though KWI had been established at a later time. There was a consensus that the establishment of the Women's Councils in Kosovo may have planted the seeds for a sustainable process and a viable exit strategy for UNHCR.

KWI Project Categories

Reproductive Health

Surveys conducted in 1999 by UNHCR implementing partners found that RH care was handicapped by a shortage of trained staff, damaged infrastructure and a general lack of equipment (most of which was outdated). One of the main impacts of international assistance in post-war Kosovo to this sector was to strengthen the reproductive health care system. Awareness about RH issues has also been raised amongst large segments of the target population, resulting in increased demand for reproductive health information and different RH services (e.g. family planning, STDs and HIV/AIDS), particularly among the youth. These activities form part of a broader strategy which has been supported by follow-up activities supported by agencies such as UNFPA, WHO and IPH ⁵⁶.

Training of health workers was the core activity of all three of UNHCR's implementing partners involved in RH activities, although a limited amount of equipment for hospitals and health centres was also purchased. Activities were subsequently developed on the basis of assessments and focus group discussions carried out by the INGOs and assessments by other relevant agencies. Unlike a number of other KWI interventions, baseline data were reasonably well documented and support the relevance of RH activities funded, which accounted for over 30% of total 1999 KWI funds allocated on a geographical basis to Mercy Corps International (MCI), Relief International (RI), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

According to IRC reports, 385 health providers participated in five-day training sessions during 1999-2000, which amounted to 73% of the total number of health workers in the Pejë region. IRC also collaborated with MCI to provide training on safe motherhood and emergency obstetric care and trained a total of 181 midwives in the health houses in the region. The pre- and post-tests of knowledge levels showed an increase for the different modules of between 20 and 33%⁵⁷.

Although RI experienced serious difficulties in 1999 while starting their activities due to staff turnover, they subsequently overcame these problems and by the end of 2000 had trained 406 health professionals in 46 facilities (amounting to some 95% of all health workers in the Prizren region)⁵⁸. RI also adjusted the curriculum to the social, cultural, demographic and

⁵⁶ A National Committee for Healthy Families in Kosovo has established a strategy to address systemic RH problems areas. The committee consists of JIAS health department co-heads and representatives from UNFPA and WHO. The Health Promotion Commission at the Institute of Public Health is also involved in all activities promoting the inclusion of reproductive health. There is recognition in Kosovo now that RH needs to be addressed at the level of governing institutions and that RH is best managed in the broader framework of primary health care.

⁵⁷ The increase in the level of knowledge was a somewhat higher amongst health workers at health centres than in the hospitals.

⁵⁸ Community leaders, teachers (biology and health education), administrators of health houses, imams and soldiers from TMK (Kosovo Police Force) also participated in a series of one-day RH awareness sessions and youth rallies organized by RI.

logistic situation in Kosovo on the basis of a needs assessment carried out by the beginning of 2000. Pre- and post testing of health professionals trained showed an average increase in the level of RH knowledge by approximately 50%⁵⁹. RI subsequently focused their efforts on minority groups and on establishing “cross-ethnic linkages in health”.

MCI provided training, supplied contraceptives and equipment, and upgraded the gynecological clinic in Klina to provide appropriate antenatal care⁶⁰. The standard of post-partum services, primarily provided through home visits, was also improved. Antenatal training, including identification of high-risk pregnancies, was provided to midwives and nurses. Partly as a result of this assistance, maternity wards have experienced an increase in the number of deliveries, including virtually 100% of cases involving complications. MCI also implemented a comprehensive community health education and by September 2001 had trained 377 women and girls in 70 villages⁶¹. Pre- and post-project testing of participants demonstrated an improvement in knowledge of RH issues by an average of 40%.

KWI Case study: Reproductive Health – Gynecological clinic in Klina

Our visit to the gynecological clinic in Klina demonstrated some of the underlying problems within the hierarchical medical system in Kosovo that prevents midwives and nurses from taking on a more important role during antenatal care due to the attitudes of senior medical staff. The common procedure for the male gynecologists is to use ultrasound, sometimes without pelvic examinations. Information and advice about pregnancy, nutrition, delivery procedures and good breast-feeding practices is often inadequate.

Our visit actually provoked an argument between the male gynecologist and midwives that illustrated the tension that exists within the medical hierarchy regarding different approaches to RH. The nature of their discussion served to underline the need to focus on the training of midwives and the nurses while involving them more in antenatal and postnatal care. The midwives have, however, reportedly shown some reluctance in assuming greater responsibilities in this area and empowering this important group of women is a continuing challenge.

The IEC material developed by the three agencies was perceived by a cross section of focus groups as culturally sensitive and yet the messages were felt to be quite powerful. Materials were translated to relevant languages (including Serb-Croat and Turkish) and distributed and placed in strategic locations throughout Kosovo. Participatory and interactive techniques, in-service and hands-on training were extensively utilized by all three

⁵⁹ Relief International. 2000. “Reproductive Health Capacity Building program”, Final Narrative Report to UNHCR.

⁶⁰ MCI received contributions from other donors in addition to UNHCR for these activities.

⁶¹ The approach is usually to identify a resource person in the village, often a teacher or a nurse who assists them in gathering a group of participants, 5-25 people. The educators visit the villages weekly and carry out 9-10 sessions in total of 1-2 hours in each village on different topics each time. The participants pay no fees for the sessions or the material.

organizations. International and national/local professionals and expertise have been utilized for all the different components of the projects that have ensured good quality performance. RI carried out the IEC activities in conjunction with IRC and CARE.

UNFPA and the Institute for Public Health (IPH) provided technical assistance and arranged coordination meetings between the national and international organizations engaged in RH, and the INGOs also held additional coordination meetings with relevant agencies in their geographical area. The RH activities implemented by the international NGOs are good examples of effective KWI interagency coordination, although the lack of formal involvement of UNHCR Field Offices in the RH program left significant gaps in monitoring.

It was observed that INGOs have largely met their specific objectives while promoting participation within minority communities. The three organizations differed slightly in their respective approaches. MCI emphasized safe motherhood and community health education, while RI implemented basic RH training with a large number of health professionals and non-health professionals (teachers, NGO and community leaders), emphasized the development of IEC material and general advocacy with a focus on youth. IRC prioritized sexual and gender based violence in addition to the basic RH training for health professionals and community leaders.

Several local NGOs were carrying out different kinds of RH activities on a smaller scale, notably the Centre for Protection of Women and Children (CPWC) that employs a gynecologist at their Pristina centre and general practitioners at the nine regional centers who requested support from government gynecologists for more complicated cases.

Some impact indicators, such as the improvement in safe delivery procedures and the quality of antenatal and postnatal care, were not possible to measure within the timeframe available. However, indications were that assistance would have been enhanced with follow-up refresher training courses. Training focused at a particular level of health cadres, such as MCI's focus on midwives, could also have increased impact. As with other categories of KWI activities; the emphasis of the donor on speed of delivery and beneficiary coverage appears to have undermined the quality of assistance.

Ambulancias and health houses within the project area appear to have received sufficient supplies of drugs and contraceptives. Several maternity clinics have been upgraded to full-fledged emergency obstetric care facilities that will have a significant impact in the longer term. However, provision of equipment and rehabilitation of facilities alone would have had little impact without a corresponding focus on behavioural and the attitudinal change amongst health professionals.

RH activities achieved relatively extensive coverage and, though KWI funding for these activities ended in 2000, it is evident that much of this initial work is being continued and built upon using funds from other donors. Professionals and non-professionals working in the sector expressed an enormous need for RH information and services.

While overall results have been positive, it is difficult to assess actual impact of KWI-funded RH activities on women's empowerment for such short-term interventions. The capacity of women to make decisions as to when to have children, experience safe deliveries and protect

themselves from sexually transmitted diseases can only be measured over the longer term and will be heavily influenced by factors such as female access to secondary education. The KWI network provides an excellent tool for RH outreach advocacy and awareness training but is not always effectively utilized.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence

"Rape and other forms of sexual violence were used in Kosovo in 1999 as weapons of war and instruments of systematic ethnic cleansing: Rapes were not rare and isolated acts committed by individual Serbian or Yugoslav forces, but were rather used deliberately as an instrument to terrorize the civilian population, extort money from families, and push people to flee their homes"⁶².

The actual incidence of sexual violence in Kosovo during the 1999 war will remain controversial. An estimate provided by researchers from Centre for Disease Control estimates that over 4% of the Kosovo-Albanian women were raped during the conflict⁶³. In certain villages it was reported that as many as 80% of the women had been subjected to sexual abuse. Other claims were heard that for every registered victim of sexual violence, ten others never dared to come forward due to fear of stigmatization and reprisals⁶⁴. The combination of cultural constraints and a relative lack of technical expertise give the general impression that SGBV issues were neither fully acknowledged nor adequately dealt with by health professionals, police, or the judiciary.

KWI funding has supported international NGOs and several local women's groups in raising awareness about SGBV issues through training and community education of local women's groups, while messages are disseminated to a larger audience via posters and flyers. The Women's Wellness Center (WWC) in Pejë and Afrodita in Ferizaj, have used radio-shows and seminars to advocate on these issues and helped to mobilize the KWI network in support of a White Ribbon Campaign during November 2000 to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women.

Several other initiatives have been taken by women's groups to provide psychosocial support to victims of violence. The Center for Protection of Women and Children (CPWC) has provided counseling and assistance to victims of violence in ten facilities and the center in Pristina also provides a temporary "safe house" for women. The WWC in Pejë provides extensive counseling and other services and, has in cooperation with other relevant agencies/institutions⁶⁵, established protocols for the police and health facilities to assist them in dealing with victims of SGBV. In addition to direct support to SGBV victims, the Center

⁶² "Kosovo: Rape as a weapon of ethnic cleansing", Human Rights Watch, March 2000

⁶³ "No Safe Place. An Assessment of Violence against Women in Kosovo", UNIFEM, Pristina, 2000

⁶⁴ Sexual and gender based violence continues to be widespread in post-war Kosovo, illustrated by a comment made by a member of a women's group working in eastern Kosovo: "Violence in the family is normal. There are so many cases, but the woman would deny it. Perhaps 80% of all women have experienced physical violence at home. I know this because I conducted sixty interviews in villages myself".

⁶⁵ UNHCR, UNMIK, IOM, WHO, Women's Network, Centre for Social Welfare.

has provided SGBV and RH training to KWI groups and government health staff and has also lectured in schools. It was clear that there is a high demand for services and expertise provided by WWC.

Another ground-breaking initiative supported by KWI was the establishment of the safe house for victims of SGBV in Djakova in August 2000 by the Women's Association (see case study below). Nevertheless, there is no system in place to follow up after the women leave the center and, while victims often find a place with relatives after leaving the centre, they are rarely able to fend for themselves. The Center has tried to help in identifying employment and education prospects, but current resources are adequate only for provision of care at the Center itself and this is again where a stronger KWI network could perhaps support economic empowerment to reduce dependency and vulnerability. The Women's Wellness Center is in the process of fund-raising for the establishment of a similar center in Pejë.

The main KWI contribution to SGBV-related medical assistance has been IRC's distribution of screening cards to health practitioners throughout Pejë and Decani region. Other international agencies (notably WHO and UNFPA) have supported the establishment of standard referral system within the Primary Health Care Services. Such an approach puts a female health provider as the initial point of contact for a woman who has experienced SGBV whereas a visit to the police can often be traumatizing immediately after such an experience.

Measuring the full impact of such interventions can be as challenging as assessing the extent of SGBV. Decreased levels of violence were cited as an impact indicator in one sub-project proposal, although this is very difficult to measure in practice. Based on accounts from a range of respondents, indications are that SGBV is now receiving greater attention and is discussed more openly than during the period immediately after the war. Anecdotal evidence from KWI-funded projects suggests that women are becoming more willing to come forward in seek of help. However, it proved difficult to accurately assess the extent to which KWI had actually contributed to this change due to the large number of agencies supporting SGBV interventions along with the emphasis of KWI field staff on monitoring outputs rather than impact. There also seemed to be relatively little practical cooperation between KWI and UNMIK/OSCE structures on SGBV issues although there was evidence that KWI staff had made attempts to promote linkages⁶⁶.

According to one of IRC's KWI sub-project objectives for 2001, activities and training programs related to SGBV should be mainstreamed into all KWI programs. While some groups made an effort to adopt this strategy (notably those involved with legal rights), it was observed that other interventions were limited to one seminar lasting an hour or two. A promising campaign against sexual and domestic violence with schools has been initiated by another network (the Kosovo Women's Network) but this was without any specific involvement from KWI.

⁶⁶ UNMIK has been criticised for a failure to develop coherent gender strategies in this regard – see Corrin, Chris (2000) "Gender Audit of Reconstruction Programmes in South Eastern Europe". Urgent Action Fund and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

KWI Case Study: Sexual & Gender Based Violence - Safe House, Djakova (DM 6,400 in 2000)

The Women's Association in Djakova runs a Safe House for victims of violence where women can stay 6-12 months. Victims come from all over Kosovo and are usually brought either by the police or KFOR, but some come directly to the centre. Training has been provided by KWI through Malteser on fundraising, organizational management, needs assessment and writing of project proposals. Counsellors received training from the Counselling Centre based in Tirana, Albania and Safe House staff cooperate closely with the local office of the Department of Social Welfare. KWI funds helped to purchase a vehicle which enables contact with the children of the women, their husbands, other family members and to make other field visits. The centre has 13 beds, and at the time of the interview the centre was housing eight women and four children. The Safe House provides food and shelter, advice and counselling, both individually and in groups. The clients also participate in cooking and cleaning. A bee-keeping project is associated with the centre that is maintained by some of the women.

The Women's Association running the Safe House also receives funding to provide free legal aid to the women and cover representation costs if cases are brought to the courts. The Association cooperates closely with the Pristina-based NORMA, another local NGO funded by KWI, and the Norwegian Refugee Council. In the next phase they plan to set up a SOS hotline.

There is a need for a more holistic approach towards SGBV related issues that KWI can facilitate via existing networks. Such an approach would address physical and psychological issues (medical examination, counseling, etc.), stigmatization/the reaction of the family and the community, judicial issues, preventive mechanisms and information dissemination. As part of an exit strategy for KWI, this could be achieved in partnership with organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) to assist in identifying the best means of informing women's groups on these issues so that they in turn can help establish an appropriate response to victims of violence within the primary health care system. Women's groups should be consulted to identify the best possible response from the health providers and also to create a demand among the women themselves for these kinds of services.

The establishment of WWC and the Safe House should be replicated in other regions to ensure Kosovo-wide coverage after assessing the prevalence of sexual and gender based violence and the existing needs. The protocol developed by WWC should be introduced to all relevant partners accompanied by relevant training. Consistent with KWI's phase-out strategy, KWI could help in leveraging resources from other donors, using the Safe House and WWC as examples of best practice⁶⁷.

⁶⁷ A prominent women's activist in Kosovo has also suggested establishing women's centers which professionals visit rather than adhering to the usual practice of victims visiting the professionals at their clinics. The intention is to ensure that the counseling, medical examination and other assistance are provided under conditions of complete confidentiality.

One of KWI's key strategies for 2002 is to invest in girls' education. This presents a good opportunity to try and ensure that issues related to SGBV is included in the curriculum. The issues should be discussed with both girls and boys in the context of gender relations, the strengthening of women's position in society and women's legal and reproductive rights. The sooner these issues are brought to the children's and the adolescents' attention, the greater is the chance of establishing prevention mechanisms.

Prostitution and trafficking of women has also been a significant SGBV issue in Kosovo (primarily as a transit point for foreign nationals). A number of other agencies with more relevant mandates (notably OGA/UNMIK and UNIFEM) have supported interventions in this arena but KWI (i.e. UNHCR) has not become directly involved. IRC had flagged this as an area they wished to focus on in their 2000 sub-project, though this was not part of any KWI strategic framework, and does not appear to have resulted in any specific outputs.

Protection and Legal Rights

KWI has made some significant strides in promoting legal rights both in provision of assistance to vulnerable individuals and in building capacities of legal-rights organisations. KWI has supported legal rights organizations help hundreds of women to benefit from legal counselling and court representation and thousands more have participated in rights awareness sessions. KWI has also provided facilities for training lawyers and paralegal staff in human rights that has extended outreach and facilitated a mutually beneficial collaboration with UNHCR and other agencies involved in protection activities.

KWI Case Study: Legal Assistance to Women, Peje (DM 23,930 in 2000)

NORMA is a Pristina-based women's organization founded during the pre-war period and was one of the groups that initially had been critical of UNHCR implementation of the KWI project in 1999. NORMA eventually received KWI funds in early 2000 that helped them to strengthen their organization and by the end of 2001 had developed a pivotal partnership role with UNHCR, ICRC and other organizations engaged in protection activities and remain an active member of the KWI network.

Eleven lawyers from the Pejë/Pec region attended a seminar facilitated by NORMA on women's rights in mid 2000 that motivated them to form their own organization to provide outreach in the Peje region. They describe their organization as a "daughter of NORMA" and have begun the task of educating women in 450 surrounding villages about women's and human rights. Topics include family issues, inheritance, political rights in addition to explaining administrative and documentation procedures. Apart from legal rights training, the organization also provides legal counsel and court representation for women and periodically helps to disseminate information on voting rights and registration.

Another KWI objective was to create opportunities for tolerance and dialogue, supporting the existing interethnic women's groups and promote contacts among different communities.

While exit strategies are being identified for most other activities, UNHCR should continue to expect to play a key support and monitoring role for minority groups and associated conflict-resolution initiatives. This need was most pronounced when visiting enclaves and collective centres for internally displaced persons where it was clear that psychosocial activities continue to be a key intervention. While at least two examples were observed where KWI project coordinators apparently dramatized their situation as a marketing strategy for donors, in general there was undoubtedly a great degree of insecurity and uncertainty regarding the future amongst minority populations living in enclaves and collective centres. This uncertainty was reflected in a pronounced lack of a strategic vision within women's groups along with reluctance to invest time and other resources in longer-term activities. On the other hand, KWI groups in enclaves and collective centres for internally-displaced persons have not only reinforced UNHCR's protection monitoring activities, but the empowerment of these women could give them a key role in helping to resolve conflicts and promote durable solutions within their respective communities.

KWI Case Study: IG/Empowerment, N. Mitrovica (DM 8,985 in 2001)

In mid-2000 KWI staff visited a Roma collective centre (IDP camp) near a river that marks the dividing line between Serb and Albanian communities. They identified a group of five women, headed by a charismatic woman who, although not particularly skilled in handicrafts and tailoring, wanted to form a sewing group to keep women in the camp occupied. KWI assisted the group to establish themselves and they now make bed sheets and other items that agencies buy for distribution to IDPs. The leader is the sole Roma member on the Council and, although reserved and silent in the beginning, she has now become a confident and articulate advocate for human rights issues. The other members of her group seem happy to have something to do and relate how their lives have changed, although it's not clear where their products would be marketed if INGOs stopped buying the finished articles.

The initiatives of KWI staff in Mitrovica to facilitate communication between the two separate Serb and Albanian-dominated "Boards" in this area are innovative attempts to create opportunities for peaceful coexistence. KWI has addressed this issue through ensuring a) at least three members on each regional Council are from minorities, b) allocating funding based on ethnicity, c) awareness and confidence-building within KWI groups and Council members. The impact of these measures was seen in more active participation of minorities in Council meetings as well as a discernable attitudinal change towards acceptance of the concept of working for a common future.

Continued work by UNHCR and partners with Councils to encourage equitable participation of all ethnic groups is needed, including training in conflict-resolution skills and legal rights, study tours by women's leaders, etc. Global experiences of post-conflict situations suggest that both UNHCR and its international partners should also analyse their own management structure and develop conflict-resolution and negotiating skills within their own national staff⁶⁸. A number of incidents were witnessed highlighting tensions between national staff belonging to different ethnic groups, and these attitudes can be expected to impact on their

⁶⁸ Anderson, Mary B. (ed.) 2000 - Options for Aid in Conflict: Lessons from Field Experience. Collaborative for Development Action, Cambridge, MA, USA.

relationships with women's organisations. Interethnic tensions are deeply-rooted in Kosovo and external interventions require careful planning and realistic objectives⁶⁹, along with developing a common understanding between UNHCR and implementing partner staff regarding both the potential and limits of women as peacemakers⁷⁰.

Vocational Training Courses

A widely-heard criticism regarding KWI projects from a cross-section of respondents was directed at the multitude of sewing, hairdressing and English training courses as these were perceived as unimaginative projects of questionable sustainability. The prevailing viewpoint was that, while many of these projects played a beneficial role in group formation and trauma relief during the emergency phase, there was little planning for sustainability. Assessments revealed that where such projects have continued they have done so either through further injections of funds from KWI or other donors or by charging fees from trainees (typically with a few less well-off individuals attending for free). It was also suggested that the sewing teachers should have been trained in trauma counseling since some teachers reportedly adopted a formal classroom approach and prohibited conversation.

Participation of teenagers in these courses seemed actually to be a symptom of a much more serious structural problem; namely lack of female access to secondary schools⁷¹ due to a combination of economic and cultural reasons (see Case Study below).

KWI Case Study: Vocational Training – English Course (KWI Grant of DM 4,280 in 2001)

In a Goran village in southern Kosovo, a group of 22 young women (average age of 17-18) are about to complete their English course and the women take turns reading some of their assignments from their notebooks. When asked why an English course was chosen, reasons given by participants range from understanding the foreign media to improving employment prospects. Apart from the media and the occasional passing foreigner, there seems to be little opportunity to practice the language in this remote community. The sustainability seems very uncertain, since only a handful of KWI-funded English courses had managed to continue after the project funding had been exhausted.

Further questioning of the participants reveals that the English course is actually a temporary solution for some fundamental structural problems. A primary concern is the lack of opportunity in the area for these young women. Nearby factories that once provided most of the employment for the village and supported the local economy were

⁶⁹ Development Assistance Committee Task Force (1997). "Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation". OECD.

⁷⁰ Marshall, Donna Ramsey (2000). "Women in War and Peace: Grassroots Peacebuilding". US Institute for Peace, Washington, D.C.

⁷¹ UNHCR & OSCE. 2001. Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo. March - August 2001. This problem is widespread in Kosovo, but UNHCR protection staff have highlighted the particularly serious obstacles faced by female students from Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptian ethnicities.

all destroyed during the war. Without employment opportunities these young women have only two choices; move out of the village in search of work or get married at a young age. The young women themselves mostly want to continue their secondary schooling, although one of the participants says she would like some training to help her get a job and another strategic-thinking young woman thinks it would be a good idea to also start learning Albanian. The primary school in the village only goes up to eighth class (age 15) and if students want to continue their studies they have to ride a bus to the nearest large town. Schooling is free, but none of their parents can afford to pay the DM5 per day needed for bus fare and food. There are around 500 families in the village, but of these only nine boys and a solitary girl go to secondary school.

There have been some markedly successful attempts to diversify into non-traditional activities that have resulted in both employment and empowerment. A national NGO used KWI funds to train twenty-two women whose husbands had been killed during the war to drive tractors so they could cultivate their land (see Case Study below). Similarly, many activities supported by the organization “Women for Women” illustrate the empowerment potential of training women in non-traditional activities such as glass cutting, carpentry and metal work. With few exceptions, the entry of the women into these trades was frowned upon by men during the early stages and the implementing agencies had to invest substantial amounts of time negotiating with village leaders, fathers and tradesmen whom they wished to hire as trainers. By the end of 2001 there was much more acceptance, even to the extent that the male trainers were hiring the best women “graduates” for their workshops.

KWI Case Study: Vocational Training/Empowerment – Driver’s Training, Peje region (KWI Grant of DM2,700 in 2000)

Peje and the surrounding area witnessed widespread violence and destruction during 1999 and many men were killed. Traditionally only the men cultivate the fields and female heads of households were thus obliged to seek assistance from male relatives or pay men to drive tractors so that they could cultivate their fields. A national women’s organization, Motrat Qiriazhi, had opened a women’s centre in the area in the mid-1990s to support training activities and trauma counselling and decided to do something for these women who were suddenly forced into a breadwinner role for their families. With KWI funds, twenty-two young women completed a driving course. The women say they initially had difficulty concentrating on the driving lessons but now feel confident with their new skills, not only in driving but also in their improved knowledge of farming. The group bursts into laughter when one of the women members describes the astonished looks of the men in their village when they first caught sight of them behind the wheel.

The success of this activity added to the reputation of this organization and helped to leverage funding from other donors. Other donors provided agricultural training for the women and purchased tractors. They also supported the construction of a small pepper factory which now employs 17 women, and have helped to construct a pre-school in the village for children of the working women. The sight of women driving cars and tractors no longer draws particular attention from the men – they appear to

have accepted this new role for these women who have lost their husbands. Discussions with individual members of the group reveal the great pride with which they view their achievements only two years after going through the most traumatic period of their lives.

The relative success of training in these non-traditional activities can only partly be attributed to taking advantage of market niches (e.g. training in construction-related activities such as glass-cutting and metal work during an era of massive reconstruction). Such projects were actually subjected to a careful planning and preparation process (market research, gender equity analysis, etc.) by implementing agencies. Where these techniques were applied by the same agencies to more traditional activities, such as training in handicraft production, these were generally successful in increasing incomes for beneficiaries⁷².

Income Generation

Towards the end of the emergency phase in mid 2000, increasing emphasis was placed within KWI on income generation, either directly through small-scale business activities, or indirectly, through vocational training. Roughly half of the sewing and hairdressing projects were presented in the corresponding proposals as business activities. If these are included, the proportion of profitable (or even breakeven) projects classed as KWI income generation projects (IGPs) drops below 30%. Only two projects out of the twenty KWI grant-funded projects with income generation objectives that were visited were observed to keep accounts and none had a written business plan. According to project reports and field staff accounts, 80% of those sewing and handicraft projects funded during 1999-2000 were still operating in 2001 by virtue of a second grant from KWI. In many cases, difficulties were experienced in marketing products nor were there significant employment prospects⁷³ for course participants. This raises the question whether these projects have actually had a negative impact on empowerment since expectations of the women have been raised about improvement of their economic situation. The subsequent failure was clearly disappointing for the participants and a typical response by Project Coordinators was to seek further injections of funds from KWI. It may be that this is part of a learning process that will result in sustainable activities, but no specific examples were observed where this had occurred.

KWI Case Study: IGP – Hairdresser and sewing income generation project (DM 16,720 in total, of which a KWI of DM 9,000 grant in 2001 supplemented by an OECD grant of DM7,720)

A women's group had formed in a Serb enclave during March 2000 and approached

⁷² One of the organizations that received support from KWI, 'Women for Women', has achieved relatively good results with both traditional and non-traditional vocational training projects. Having recognized the importance of also focusing on the marketing of the products, this project strategically included not only training and materials, but also the concurrent establishment of retail outlets (one of which is located directly opposite the UNMIK/OSCE Headquarters in Pristina).

⁷³ One group in Gjilan considered it a significant achievement that 3 out of 68 trainees had managed to find employment during the previous 6 months.

OXFAM with a sewing and handicraft IGP proposal. The project was approved and OXFAM even sent the group leaders to Belgrade for training in business and organizational development. However, group members became progressively more disillusioned over the next few months since the products they produced were not selling. Most of the leaders ended up moving to Serbia leaving behind allegations of corruption and mismanagement. The remaining membership couldn't afford to continue to pay rent for the space and so the items are now stored in a container.

Six of the former members regrouped and established two businesses, a hairdressing salon and a small sewing workshop producing jackets. Additional funding from OECD was necessary since the KWI ceiling for 2001 is DM 9,000. The grant covered the cost of equipment, rent and salaries for three months. None of the members have received any business training and they lack a business plan. An inspection of the accounts for the hairdressing salon shows that accounts (only receipts were being kept, there was no ledger) were entered during the first four days after opening and nothing has been entered since. The daily income from the salon is between DM 5 and DM 15, and is insufficient to cover operating costs.

The women working in the salon also express concern about the future viability of the salon, though they say they are glad to have work for the present time. They point out that the Serb clientele within the enclave is too small in number to support the salon and it will be necessary to also attract Albanian clientele.

A very different situation could be found in the Peje region, where the bulk of the KWI-funded IGPs fall under a micro finance programme implemented by the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)⁷⁴. Fifty-two percent of the 3,213 active micro-credit loans disbursed as of July 2001 were provided to over 600 women clients using a group lending system⁷⁵. It is clear that there is an enormous demand for credit as the war has severely disrupted markets in Kosovo and the majority of assets (including banks) were either looted or destroyed. This demand, along with assessed risks and other margins, translated into a 15% annual interest rate on Deutsche Mark (DM) denominated micro-loans in September 2001. Micro-Enterprise Banks had recently been established in main urban centers but their clientele was limited by distance and relatively high micro-loan amounts (generally DM 20,000 - 50,000). In contrast, micro-loans in the KWI-supported sub-project begin at DM1,500 for the first loan and borrowers have maintained repayment rates approaching 100%. Reviews of reports and interviews with ICMC field staff suggested that as much as 90% of businesses managed to increase their profits and a significant number of clients are applying for new (and larger) loans. In addition to microcredit provision, ICMC also provides formal training and coaching in business planning and financial management.

⁷⁴ This is being implemented in conjunction with the PRM-funded Kosovo Enterprise Project (KEP)

⁷⁵ KWI targets require at least 50% of micro finance clients to be women. The figure in 2001 was approximately 52%.

Small Business Activities of Women Microcredit Clients

	Rural Areas	Urban Areas
Retailing	Negligible	58%
Milk Production	30%	-
Tailoring	15%	20%
Handicraft	40%	20%
Others	15%	2%

Businesses of male clients in urban areas showed a similar distribution, with the notable exceptions of handicrafts (virtually nil) and, hairdressing, which provided employment for 10% of male clients.

Capitalization of the KWI lending portfolio as of September 2001 was of the order of DM 3.4 million and from 2001 onwards, UNHCR has only covered a portion of ICMC's operating costs. Following an assessment, ICMC has chosen as an exit strategy the challenging task of setting up an independent Micro finance Bank and plans to progressively localize management and establish a Board of Directors.

While the ICMC component project has been very successful in meeting its stated objectives, which are primarily focused on business skills training and income generation, micro-credit beneficiaries were not encouraged to participate in the KWI network as this aspect was not considered as a component of this sub-project. IGPs funded by KWI grants, although much less likely to be profitable, were better integrated into the KWI network (see Case Studies).

There was some evidence of problems in targeting beneficiaries, both in terms of poverty thresholds (some recipients are relatively well-off) and examples of male relatives using women to access micro-credit. Nevertheless, numerous studies have shown that narrow targeting is not necessarily a condition for reaching the poorest⁷⁶, notably with regard to lending programs for women⁷⁷.

It is recommended that UNHCR and ICMC conduct a more detailed review of KWI micro finance activities to determine a) the differential project impact felt by men and women borrowers (including an assessment of empowerment using appropriate indicators, gender balance in planned microfinance bank management structures), b) how economic empowerment has affected gender relations within the family/community, and c) assess the potential advantages of membership/use of networks (KWI and others) to promote business relationships, legal rights and social protection systems.

KWI Case Study: IGP – Bakery (KWI/KEP loan in 2000 of DM 2,000)

A woman helped her husband run a bakery but during the war they were forced to flee

⁷⁶ Aguilar, Verónica González. 1999. Is Micro-Finance reaching the Poor? An Overview of Poverty Targeting Methods. Luxembourg. <http://www.globenet.org/horizon-local/>

⁷⁷ Gibbons, David S. and Meehan, Jennifer W. 1999. The Microcredit Summit's Challenge: Working Toward Institutional Financial Self-Sufficiency While Maintaining a Commitment to Serving the Poorest Families. Journal of Microfinance: Volume 1 Number 1.

and their machines were looted and the building severely damaged. She applied for a KWI micro-loan through ICMC to purchase some second-hand equipment to restart the bakery and now manages the business together with her husband and one employee. She describes how her business has developed and how she sees it evolving in the future. The accounts are meticulously kept and indicate a return on investment of around 20%. She paid back the first loan on time and has applied for another (larger) loan for DM4,000 to purchase more equipment. When asked what KWI means to her, the reply was “a source of credit to empower women”. In her case, not only is the business yielding a satisfactory income but the management has now also clearly evolved into much more of a partnership with her husband. She is nevertheless unaware of either the existence of the KWI network nor of the identity of her Council representative.

A number of Kosovo women leaders in Pristina were sceptical that small scale projects would have much impact during this phase of the transition⁷⁸. They recommended that KWI resources be pooled to support a handful of small enterprise development projects (e.g. start-up factories) that would generate employment for women. However, KWI staff felt that such projects were beyond the scope of the project both in terms of resources (start-up costs amounting to tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars) and appropriate technical expertise. Micro-enterprise development is certainly needed, but whether UNHCR's mandate or capacity makes it the appropriate agency to support such an activity is questionable, although the KWI network could potentially be used to support and catalyse such ventures with other agencies and potential donors.

Capacity-building and Networking of Women's Groups

Another KWI objective was to support women's groups in becoming an active part of Kosovo civil society, enabling them to advocate for women's needs through the existing province wide networks, but also with the relevant local institutions. Examples of effective use of the KWI network was seen in Peje AOR where the KWI network was systematically being used to promote RH, public health and legal rights amongst all women's groups. However, overall there seems to be considerable untapped potential for strengthening KWI networks and making more productive use of their own resources (e.g. supporting a KWI project publishing a women's newsletter, encouraging Councils to develop a contact list, promoting business networks, etc.). Many of the members of women's groups in rural areas were unaware of the identity of their Council representative and, as noted above, promoting involvement of borrowers in the network did not figure amongst ICMC sub-project objectives.

KWI Case Study: Networking in the Peje Region

CONCERN has been working in 25 villages in the Peje region since 1999 and was a KWI implementing partner until the end of 2000 (although their staff continue to

⁷⁸ A ceiling of DM10,000 for an individual project grant was imposed by UNHCR for the 2001 KWI project.

participate in KWI inter-agency coordination meetings). Training courses in sewing, embroidery, weaving, hairdressing, English and art are open to all women but priority is given to female-headed households. CONCERN enlisted the help of a professional Austrian designer and much of the production is exported on a contractual basis through a group called “@K - Women Artisans of Kosovo” that has yielded a regular income for women participants. Two other members of the KWI network, KODI and NORMA, provided legal aid for these groups. Training for IG project participants is done in cooperation with ICMC, which runs the micro credit component of the KWI project. Women participants range in age from 15 to 55 and most have only completed primary education and rely on these activities for their sole source of income.

CONCERN plans to phase out its involvement at the end of 2001 but this project provided a good example of a holistic approach, promoting equitable assistance to the most vulnerable categories (including women from minorities) while using KWI and other networks to improve impact and sustainability.

There was some evidence that the KWI network served as a locus for promoting civic awareness, notably with regard to electoral, legal and human rights issues. During 2001 UNHCR and IRC have made periodic efforts to try and strengthen links between the Councils and local government through, for example, lobbying for office space in municipal buildings - so far with mixed results. Some observers have criticized KWI for a perceived failure to encourage women’s groups to take a more active advocacy role in the political arena to address the stark gender imbalance that exists in the government. While it can be argued that this is outside the project’s direct responsibility, it is yet more evidence of a lack of focus concerning empowerment objectives.

IV. Women's Councils

UNHCR's 2001 Country Operations Plan included a strategy for handing over KWI management to regional Women's Councils. Although this added yet another layer to the management structure, this was deemed necessary to achieve sustainability and in any case allowed the Umbrella Agency to reduce its costs. Women's groups were asked to choose representatives in each district so that a total of 15 members were selected for each regional Council, of which at least three had to be members of ethnic minorities. Six councils were established conforming to the UN's Area of Responsibility (AOR) structure. IRC facilitated the work of the councils and one of their national staff functions as interpreter and co-chair for the meetings. Funding quotas were established for each ethnic group by UNHCR and IRC. While UNHCR has a role in promoting equity, the fund allocation issue was clearly a source of tension between different ethnic groups⁷⁹ and the process could have been improved through a more consultative and transparent approach. KWI fund allocations during 2001 for grants are shown below:

AOR	Albanian	Serb	Mixed
Pristina	60%	20%	20%
Gjilan, Prizren Mitrovica	40%	30%	30%
Pejë	70%	30% (Serb & Mixed)	

The Councils had been in place for over seven months by the time the evaluation took place and it was already being widely acknowledged that consultative bodies should have been formed at a much earlier stage. This was something that many of the women's groups had advocated since the beginning of KWI and indeed had been one of the main recommendations resulting from the BWI evaluation. The formation of the Councils helped to strengthen existing women's networks and broadened ownership of KWI. UNHCR staff felt this delay was partly due to donor pressure to disburse funds and prepare special reports, leaving little for the necessary planning and consultations. There also appears initially to have also been some wariness about the programmatic, equity and political ramifications of turning over too much control to Albanian women's groups whom, with the exception of Mitrovica, constitute an overwhelming majority in the regional Councils.

At the same time, there was a consensus that there is a need to put greater focus on capacity building of Councils and support to strengthen networks as the Council's focus tends to be on the projects themselves without reference to a strategic framework. However, there were differences of opinion between the Council members, UNHCR and IRC in terms of how "interventionist" and proactive such support should be. Good attendance at meetings when funds are being allocated and poor attendance of Council members during joint appraisal or monitoring visits to project sites suggest that systems and related incentives would benefit from further review and adjustment through a consultative process. There is a significant conflict of interest within the Councils since the vast majority of members are at the same

⁷⁹ Our debriefing for various agencies and Women's Council's at the end of our mission came to an abrupt conclusion when a heated debate developed between Serb and Albanian Council members over KWI funding quotas.

time Coordinators for KWI-funded projects⁸⁰. While under existing procedures Project Coordinators are not allowed to vote (or even be present in the room) while their project is being discussed, there was evidence that a number of Council members were making informal agreements to support one another during the project approval process. A comment heard from several Kosovo women was that the current structure of the Councils had led to competition between women's groups for funding instead of cooperation towards common goals.

The initiative at the end of 2001 to involve the STAR Network⁸¹ to build the capacity of the Councils was perceived as a critical step in developing a strategic framework. Well-targeted support both from well-established women's organizations in Kosovo, such as the Kosovo Women's Network, as well as networks outside Kosovo can also help to promote this process. Capacity building needs to take account of the fact that most Council members tend to be relatively well-educated and financially more secure. An appropriate emphasis on a training of trainers or mentoring approach is needed to build capacity at various levels within the network.

The six regional Councils reflected UN/NATO Areas of Responsibility, rather than Kosovo administrative boundaries. While this arrangement facilitates networking between women from different municipalities, this somewhat artificial structure should be reviewed when considering the future sustainability of the Councils. KWI is trying to address this issue by lobbying municipalities to allocate office space for Councils. However, this will not in itself be sufficient to attain advocacy and networking goals without associated capacity-building initiatives and appropriate incentive structures.

Some of the more frequently-heard suggestions to promote sustainability of Women's Councils from key informants or during focus group discussions are listed below:

- Strengthen linkages between Women's Councils in the municipalities and with the Centre for Social Welfare (some progress had already been made in this direction);
- Council members should be more neutral and should not be Project Coordinators. Members should be professional women drawn from different sectors of society. Councils should be smaller, 5-6 women;
- Establish a central consultative body of women in Pristina ensuring regional and professional representation. An alternative would be to convene regular meetings for

⁸⁰ The UNHCR consultant tasked with helping to operationalize a Women's Forum in Sierra Leone arrived at a similar conclusion. She warned that the Forum advocacy function would be seriously undermined if they started to implement project activities and recommended that fund-raising be limited to issues-based thematic issues related to research, documentation, advocacy and training. Lamptey, Comfort (2000) "Sexual & Gender Violence Programming to Sierra Leone: Reintegration with Equality". UNHCR Mission Report.

⁸¹ The STAR network is an initiative of the World Learning organization and its Kosovo program has supported a) skills training for women candidates and elected representatives before and after municipal elections; b) NGO capacity building; and c) leadership for economic opportunity through the formation of women's business associations, skills development in micro-credit management, and support services for small business development.

Council representatives to discuss strategies and long term planning, while strengthening coordination with UNMIK, UNIFEM and other such organisations;

- Women's Councils should adapt to administrative structures in Kosovo, not externally-imposed AORs; and
- The procedure of project review and approval should be simplified while introducing stricter selection criteria.

The establishment of the Women's Councils could become one of the major KWI contributions towards women's empowerment in Kosovo (although the future sustainability of the Councils was not yet assured). At an individual level it is evident that Council members have increased their levels of confidence and gender awareness during the course of their work. However, decision-making was not usually based on an underlying strategy and Council Members often lacked a system to ensure dissemination of information and discussion of relevant issues with those whom they are supposed to represent. Many Council Members seemed to be aware of these shortfalls and, as noted above, KWI has been creating opportunities for them to identify solutions.

V. UNHCR Coordination & Management of KWI

Up to five different UNHCR staff members are named by stakeholders as being successive KWI Coordinators from its inception in mid-1999 until the end of 2001 and, indeed, the incumbent at the time of the evaluation had only been offered a series of short-term contracts by UNHCR. While it was understood that this situation had arisen due to UNHCR's global efforts to reduce staffing to targeted levels, from an outsider's perspective the organisation was perceived as discouraging continuity.

There was a consensus amongst respondents that a competent team designated for KWI should have been in place from the beginning. Up until mid-2000 KWI Coordinators had additional responsibilities and lacked support staff. It was widely felt that donor pressure to disburse funds rapidly and prepare special reports left virtually no time for adequate planning or consultations. However, on the basis of available information, it was difficult for the consultancy team to understand why staffing capacity had only been strengthened in mid 2000 (nearly a year after the establishment of KWI) given that:

- i) A KWI planning meeting in June 1999 at UNHCR HQ recommended the appointment of a senior KWI Coordinator (P.4 level), a Programme Officer (P.3 level) supported by a Programme Assistant (G6 level).
- ii) Donor representatives confirmed they had never been opposed to allocating a reasonable portion of KWI resources for operational support⁸².
- iii) None of the UNHCR staff interviewed expressed opposition to augmenting KWI staffing (although some questions were raised regarding the cost-effectiveness of a Reporting Officer dedicated to a single programme component).
- iv) An evaluation of the BWI circulated in December 1999⁸³ recommended "UNHCR staff dedicated solely to the (Kosovo Women's) Initiative are essential to ensure that the strategy moves forward and to provide assistance and training to umbrella agencies and local NGOs project identification, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation from a gender perspective. A co-ordinator of the overall project is critical, and at least one assistant should be assigned to this co-ordinator. Both should have experience with gender mainstreaming and empowerment related initiatives."

Respondents suggested a number of options for the composition and profile of such a team, including the secondment to UNHCR of a Coordinator from an agency with an appropriate development mandate. The most frequent core competencies mentioned for a KWI Coordinator were programme management and coordination skills, a background in development, gender expertise and the ability to be a "good listener". Apart from the reservation expressed above, most respondents felt the the KWI Reporting Officer had been a

⁸² An internal UNHCR communication dated July 2000 notes that a proposal to U.S. Government representatives to cover KWI administrative costs "met with very favorable responses".

⁸³ Ibid

worthwhile addition, particularly in view of the importance of information flow in a heavily politicized environment. In fact, this addition not only markedly improved the quality of reporting, but also significantly reinforced field monitoring, assisted in raising KWI's visibility⁸⁴ and helped to build relations with local women's groups.

There were marked differences of opinion regarding the preferred profile of the senior national staff member of a Women's Initiative. Some respondents felt that priority should be given to programme management skills, others suggested that an advocacy background and existing links to women's networks would be more important, although such connections could potentially compromise neutrality. In any event, it is clear that this individual must play a key role in formulating policy and providing guidance to UNHCR (or an alternative lead agency) to ensure sustainability and that the intervention is appropriately geared to a given context. This aspect should be subject to careful consideration during the planned review of Women's Initiatives.

Support by UNHCR senior management and programme staff to KWI was reported as variable during 1999 and early 2000, particularly in terms of provision of additional staff and programme support. Alternative activities were given greater priority, notably assisting the population to make it through the winter. The Headquarters mission led by the Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women and Gender Equality Unit in July 2000 facilitated a series of workshops on gender awareness, People Oriented Planning and women's empowerment and was perceived as an important and timely support. However, there has subsequently been considerable international and national staff turnover both within UNHCR and their NGO implementing partners and consideration should be given towards using local resources (with additional support from the Gender Unit if necessary) to maintain the desired level of gender awareness. The Gender Unit should consider the option of providing additional technical support in the form of periodic extended field missions to help in the assessment, establishment and monitoring for any similarly-targeted intervention.

KWI focal points in the UNHCR Field Offices were similarly being pulled in a number of different directions as they all had a number of other responsibilities apart from KWI. The majority of staff lacked previous experience of gender-based programming and, with two exceptions (Mitrovica and Prizren), attempts at training and awareness-raising were handicapped by a high staff turnover. Field Office coordination with the RH component of the KWI programme was particularly weak.

After more than a decade of implementing Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), UNHCR has already discovered that programming procedures based on one year planning horizons and three-month implementation timeframes for individual projects are better adapted to relief contexts than conducive to sustainable projects with a developmental focus. Many of the KWI projects were subject to similar constraints and, given the distinct developmental focus of KWI activities from mid 2000 onwards and clear linkages with reintegration⁸⁵, it was

⁸⁴ An example can be viewed on the PRM Kosovo website at <http://www.usofficepristina.usia.co.at/kwi/kwi.htm>

⁸⁵ One of the overarching goals of the KWI project was to assist women and their families in rebuilding their lives and livelihood

unclear why UNHCR Reintegration and Local Settlement Section (RLSS) was not involved nor “Quick Impact Project” (QIP) guidelines, procedures and “best practices” adapted as tools⁸⁶. During discussions with RLSS staff it was discovered that, while a QIP policy framework and guidelines exist⁸⁷, a tool kit for field practitioners had not yet been developed.

The KWI Program and Operations Manual describes structures and procedures, but lacks specific guidelines for certain key activities, including a common set of project selection criteria, which would have facilitated a decentralised approach. Examples of tools borrowed from QIPs that would facilitate KWI management include standardised reporting formats, performance indicators, project monitoring database and project selection criteria. While reasonably comprehensive databases existed at the level of each AOR, these are not standardised nor centralized. In the absence of a centralised database for KWI, the consultants were obliged to develop a rudimentary database in Excel for the purpose of this evaluation⁸⁸.

The value of a common set of selection criteria is best illustrated by a case described by OXFAM, which forwarded two virtually identical proposals in 2000 to UNHCR for poultry projects in two different Roma communities living in similar circumstances. One was submitted to the Pristina Project Review Board (PRB) and the other to the PRB in Gjilan. The proposal in Gjilan was approved almost immediately, while the Pristina PRB imposed a number of pre-conditions and eventually, after a period of several weeks, ended up rejecting the proposal.

A number of women’s groups in Kosovo had been very critical of seemingly high overhead, multiple layers and administrative costs compared to the amounts actually reaching beneficiaries and repeatedly voiced their displeasure about UNHCR’s lack of transparency in this regard. Operating costs of international agencies tend to be relatively high in conflict-affected environments due to a combination of the need to establish operations, support international staff, invest in capacity building and compensate for implementation delays due to unforeseen events.

The cost effectiveness of KWI nevertheless appears to have been undermined, particularly during the first year of operation, by a combination of factors that have been described in the various sections of this study. Such factors include the relatively low priority initially accorded to the KWI programme, the lack of clear operating guidelines (e.g. indicators, project selection criteria and monitoring systems), multiple administrative layers, staff turnover, inadequate KWI staff capacity, weak coordination, donor emphasis on rapid

⁸⁶ The “fundamental tension” between speed and sustainability while implementing QIPs is highlighted on page 173 in the 1997-98 edition of “The State of the World’s Refugees: A Humanitarian Agenda”. Main deficiencies are attributed to rapid implementation with relatively little planning.

⁸⁷ EPAU and Jozef Merckx (2000) Quick Impact Projects: Lessons Learned and Best Practices. Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit – UNHCR.

⁸⁸ One of the consultants in the evaluation team had been involved in a UNHCR review of a QIP programme in Myanmar during 1997 where a Microsoft Access-based database had been developed that could be adapted to track KWI implementation.

disbursement, along with a periodic deficiency of appropriate technical and managerial support.

The table below illustrates how over \$4 million was allocated for KWI Umbrella Agencies for grants to women's groups⁸⁹. In 2001, the combined factors of a relatively limited budget plus an emphasis on capacity-building of Women's Councils largely accounts for the higher proportion of staff salaries and associated overhead costs compared to amounts allocated for project grants. Nevertheless, the trend observed is inconsistent with a sustainable programme.

Umbrella Agency Expenditure	1999	2000	2001⁹⁰
Grants & Training Funds	65%	63%	51%
Project Staff Salaries	12%	18%	23%
Administrative & Operational Costs	23%	19%	26%

⁸⁹ Staff salaries and operational costs include only a portion of UNHCR staff costs since most of these are covered under a separate administrative budget.

⁹⁰ 2001 figures are based on budgeted amounts. 1999 and 2000 percentages are based on expenditure reports (final SPMRs)

VI. Umbrella Agencies and other International NGOs

“So far the international assistance has been focused on quick emergency aid, e.g. distribution of shelter kits, tents, blankets, hygienic articles etc. To sustain the return of refugees not only into the province at large, but also to their places of origin, a long-term approach is proposed. Understanding return as a complex social process, it cannot be coped with just by providing shelter and basic assistance. Key activities sustaining the return and restoring normalcy will be in the fields of food security, psychosocial support, community services and income generation....

Firmly established, self-directing women's groups from before the war --- capable of developing, initiating and carrying out appropriate, sustainable programs for women --- currently exist in Malishevo, Viti, Obiliq, Podujevo, and Pristina. The existence of such a strong base from which new women's initiatives can be launched.⁹¹”

UNHCR had already learned from its BWI experience that its institutional capacity and procedures were not well suited to productive interaction with large numbers of relatively small women’s groups. Partnering with international NGOs as Umbrella Agencies which could advise and build capacities of local NGOs was seen to have improved BWI implementation and thus was recommended for KWI. According to a UNHCR KWI report in October 1999, Umbrella Agencies were to have been selected on the basis of three main criteria:

- Active in community activities with a primary focus on women;
- Experience in Kosovo; and
- Experience with BWI.

The same report goes on to note that “the response by an over-extended NGO community was limited” and the indeed the only Umbrella Agency selected which appeared to satisfy all of three criteria was Maltheser Hilfsdienst. The large numbers of international NGOs in an environment with abundant donor funding proved not only to be a significant challenge for agencies involved in coordination⁹², but also for the limited numbers of existing local NGOs who were potential partners⁹³.

Umbrella Agencies have invested a great deal of resources in training their national staff and their professionalism in dealing with women’s organizations was evident. However, it was observed that the capacity of INGOs was largely devoted to providing administrative support for disbursement of funds (project proposal, procurement) and monitoring systems were designed accordingly. This has had a positive impact on sustainability since representatives of women’s organizations are now using their skills acquired from KWI to prepare proposals and access funds from alternative donors for their projects. However,

⁹¹ Extract from an OXFAM sub-project submission to UNHCR in 1999.

⁹² OSCE reports from that period estimate that as many as 265 international NGOs were present in Kosovo during the winter of 1999/2000, many of whom were competing local NGO partners.

⁹³ Guest, Iain (2000) “On the Record Kosovo2”, Volume 10, Issue 4.

provision of specialized key technical support, strengthening of networks and monitoring of reintegration and empowerment indicators has been given lower priority by Umbrella Agency field staff, despite their status as overarching goals. It will be important to revise guidelines and monitoring systems on the basis of a strategic plan developed with the Councils and train field staff of Umbrella Agencies accordingly.

Performance of Umbrella Agencies was mixed. Unsatisfactory performance was linked mainly to both lack of technical capacity and inconsistent management (largely high staff turnover). The choice of some partners as Umbrella Agencies who, like UNHCR, specialize in provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance may be disadvantageous in the medium to long term. Such agencies rely on resources available during the relief and rehabilitation phase and, as witnessed elsewhere in the Balkan region, many of these agencies subsequently have difficulty in accessing development funds as UNHCR begins to phase out. While we found field staff of these Umbrella Agencies to be very motivated, they appeared to lack much of the necessary technical backstopping, mandate and resources to help KWI make the transition to development. At the same time, many respondents expressed surprise at the relatively poor performance of OXFAM in Gjilan, where the agency had previously achieved outstanding results in supporting the establishment and capacity-building of women's groups under very difficult circumstances during the pre-war period. This example illustrates that success cannot be guaranteed, even for agencies respected for their work in the development arena⁹⁴.

In addition to staff turnover within UNHCR and their implementing partners, KWI was also handicapped by replacement of international NGOs in some areas (see maps in Annex 2). Where agencies withdrew from KWI due to capacity considerations (Danish Refugee Council, OXFAM in Gjilan), this contributed to delays in implementation and caused confusion amongst beneficiaries. There are nevertheless other examples where partners, such as Concern and Malteser Hilfsdienst, were able to phase out but retain productive links with the KWI network.

⁹⁴ Several international agencies lodged an official complaint to UNMIK and UNHCR in August 2000 to express concern about the poor standard of KWI implementation by the umbrella agency in the Gjilan area. The problem appears to have stemmed mainly from a high turnover of international staff and their performance in Pristina municipality, where both UNHCR and NGO staffing was relatively stable, was perceived as satisfactory.

VII. Impact of Donor Requirements on KWI

The proactiveness of the donor in supporting a Women's Initiative should be viewed positively. KWI has helped to elevate the profile of women's organizations and networks and demonstrated the potential of such groups to participate actively in rehabilitation, reintegration and peace-building.

Several prominent Kosovar women leaders who had formed organizations during the 1990s were elated upon receiving news from the U.S. in July 1999 that \$10 million had been allocated to KWI. This mood soon turned to disappointment and frustration when it was learned that funds were to be channeled not only through UNHCR, but also international NGOs acting as Umbrella Agencies. This seemed to not only be inefficient, but they were concerned that salaries for international staff and other overhead costs would consume much of the funding. During the first several months that KWI was in existence, several prominent Kosovo Albanian women leaders were very vocal in their criticism of UNHCR implementation of KWI and did not hesitate to communicate these concerns directly to senior U.S. officials in Washington, D.C.

Before UNHCR could take receipt of the initial installment, however, the U.S. Senate Foreign Operations Sub-Committee placed a hold on the funds due to lingering concerns over UNHCR's ability to manage the Kosovo crisis. Funds were eventually released for KWI a few weeks later after a senior State Department official claimed during a briefing that funds were being blocked for rape victims in Kosovo. This move nevertheless proved to be politically confrontational and at the same time created misconceptions within the Senate regarding the primary objectives of the KWI project.

Three women's organizations and a commercial radio station involved in women's advocacy issues were particularly outspoken about UNHCR whom they accused of holding onto funds that had been given by the U.S. government for Kosovo women. Two of these organizations delayed submitting proposals for psychosocial and RH activities because they objected strongly to having funds channeled through Umbrella Agencies. UNHCR requested that these NGOs be established as legal entities so that they could receive funds directly. However, while this was a reasonable request consistent with standard UNHCR operating procedures, UNMIK/OSCE did not actually establish a system for registering national NGOs until late in 1999. Considerable pressure was also emanating from the U.S. Senate on PRM and UNHCR to fund these agencies⁹⁵. Strained relationships and unrealistic expectations undermined and delayed the process of submitting and negotiating proposals, while KWI staff and women's leaders alike were pre-occupied with a number of competing operational priorities during the emergency phase. Funds were eventually allocated to these groups in the spring of 2000 although UNHCR elected to sign a special form of agreement with the radio station in view of its status as a commercial entity.

One of these organizations submitted a proposal for \$1 million in early 2000 to establish up to twenty women's wellness centres throughout Kosovo, many of these in areas where they had no previous contacts or experience. Concerned about the capacity of the organization, UNHCR eventually agreed to support a smaller number of centres and reduced the original

⁹⁵ Guest, Ian (2000). "On the Record Kosovo", Volume 10, Issue 7. May 8, 2000.

budget by 60%. An audit conducted by UNHCR after completion revealed significant deficiencies in project and financial management, although it should be stressed that no evidence was found that KWI funds were used for anything other than the intended purpose.

In the meantime, new women's groups were forming and accessing funds via Umbrella Agencies and a few KWI activities received start-up funds as early as September 1999. Based on accounts from the OSCE, UNHCR, NGOs and the women participants themselves, it is apparent that many of the women's groups (and indeed local NGOs in general) were formed "around the project", drawn by the prospect of accessing apparently abundant funds from KWI or other international donors. The emphasis was largely on speed of disbursement and physical outputs without necessarily following a process to develop a vision or a strategic plan. As a result, a substantial number of the KWI groups implemented projects without sufficient preparatory capacity building and gender awareness training. The contrast was evident when interviewing representatives of Kosovo Albanian women's organisations founded in the 1990s during a period when NGOs were exposed to considerable risks and operated with very limited resources. While some of the newer groups have since been able to compensate for this, the pre-war groups were all notable during our interviews in their ability to articulate a clear vision of the future for their respective organizations and indeed for Kosovo women in general.

The donor was critical about the quality of KWI reporting over the first several months and file archives support claims from respondents regarding a lack of clarity about formats and reporting styles. KWI reports submitted by UNHCR to the donor by and large did not depict a representative version of events and issues when compared with reports received from Field Offices, meeting minutes and correspondence with implementing partners during the end of 1999 and the first part of 2000. Notably, reports to the donor focused almost exclusively on outputs and very few problems are described. Further delays were experienced since UNHCR Offices in both Geneva and Washington were at one point involved in editing reports for the donor. While UNHCR capacity was clearly inadequate during the early stages of KWI, donor emphasis on rapid disbursement of KWI funds and bimonthly reports was unrealistic, inconsistent with KWI goals and objectives and seriously undermined its cost-effectiveness.

In the meantime, regular direct (and much quicker) communications were taking place between prominent women leaders in Kosovo and senior officials in the U.S. The practice of giving a positive slant to donor reports is not an uncommon practice amongst international aid agencies. However, the end result in this case was that UNHCR's credibility was undermined and contributed to the decision by the U.S. Senate to place another hold on funding for UNHCR in the spring of 2000⁹⁶. Around the same time, however, UNHCR increased the capacity of KWI resulting in substantial improvement in both relations with women's groups and in implementation. Better quality reports was also being drafted after a Reporting Officer was seconded to UNHCR Pristina a few weeks later.

⁹⁶ The second hold on funds did not directly affect the Kosovo programme that had recently received another installment of funds. The main impact was felt on repatriation programmes of other countries within the region.

Criticism from both women's groups and the donor had abated by mid 2000 thanks largely to improved KWI capacity and a more consultative KWI management structure. Several of these women leaders acknowledged that some of their criticism could be attributed to their lack of experience with post-conflict situations and the *modus operandi* of international organizations (i.e. they realized that UNHCR is not the only funding agency with seemingly cumbersome bureaucratic procedures). However, the sentiment remains that many resources were wasted during the early stages of the KWI, mainly due to the multi-layered management structure without obvious value-added and the perceived failure by UNHCR to involve women's leaders as partners from the early stages.

UNHCR and its partners eventually disbursed just over US\$2 million under the 1999 programme. The remaining balance of almost US\$8 million became, in the words of one UNHCR staff member, an "albatross" during 2000. Earmarked funds for the KWI component amounted to approximately one third of the budget ceiling imposed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for the entire Kosovo programme. This scale of resources was completely out of proportion with programme priorities in the corresponding UNHCR Country Operations Plan, and thus handicapped implementation of the overall programme.

UNHCR's earmarking policy guidelines emphasize the need to have the "...confidence and support of its donors and to maintain a certain flexibility in the use of its resources." However, donor emphasis on special and frequent reporting is indicative of a lack of trust and contributed to a situation during the first part of 2000 when KWI staff estimated that they were devoting at least a third of their time compiling, drafting and editing reports. Indeed, judging from the file archives, deliberations over the format, content and style of KWI reports occupied a disproportionate amount of time and energy of women's groups, NGOs, UNHCR and donor staff alike.

In a widely circulated UNHCR internal memorandum on the subject of earmarked contribution policies dated April 16, 1998 jointly signed by the Director of the Division of Operations Support and the Head of Funding and Donor Relations Service (FDRS) it was noted that "...greater control on contributions could rapidly lead to donors, de facto, setting up priorities with regard to UNHCR's operations and controlling tightly the broad orientations UNHCR intends to give to its different programmes...". It was concluded that UNHCR should "...be committed to respond to donors' expectations of increased transparency on the use of their contributions but did not want this to limit its independence under the High Commissioner's mandate and become an unnecessary bureaucratic burden for the Office". It may therefore be helpful for UNHCR/FDRS to review/revise existing agreements regarding earmarked contributions from the donor government using the KWI project as a case study.

VIII. Options for the Future

“One of the best means of establishing sustainable peace is to concentrate on supporting women in post-conflict. Many women emerge from war heading households for the first time, and many have suffered atrocities and personal violence, such as rape. Legal assistance to establish inheritance to property may be needed by some; further education so that the family can be supported may also be required.⁹⁷”

“Development agencies can also be a catalyst for the broader inclusion of societal groups in discussion and negotiation processes. Women, and women’s groups specifically, should be encouraged to participate in efforts to prevent conflict and build peace. They can often exert considerable influence in bringing warring parties to the negotiating table, and lend another voice to the search for peaceful solutions.⁹⁸”

Widespread violent conflict and displacement of large numbers of people severely disrupts economic, social and political relations that often provoke dramatic changes in gender roles and patterns. Conservative structures may be torn apart and replaced by new structures, at times opening a “window of opportunity” when roles of women are redefined and strengthened. At other times, new regimes may be less open to women’s empowerment or demobilized soldiers may return after the conflict to reclaim their role as breadwinner. Nevertheless, the environment in post-war Kosovo appears to offer considerable potential for women’s empowerment though, as seen above, substantial obstacles exist.

Based on the KWI experience, there is some basis for supporting a targeted Women’s Initiative in post-conflict environments. An alternative approach, which is finding increasing favour with UNHCR and other agencies, is to integrate gender equality mainstreaming strategies into the programme and base interventions on gender roles and relationships using a community development approach. A difficulty common to both approaches is that, unless humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected environments is supported by a sound gender analysis and accompanied by a significant effort to build gender awareness (particularly amongst the staff of the implementing agency), assistance to women will tend to be marginalized, and the importance of male responsibilities and roles overlooked. Indeed, in the absence of an appropriate focus on awareness-raising, many stakeholders will tend to view both approaches merely as a different label for women’s projects.

Prominent among the potential advantages of a targeted Women’s Initiative is the time and resources needed for capacity- and confidence-building during preparatory stages to support women’s collective efforts to take advantage of any “windows of opportunity” during the transition phase when policy-making and political structures are in a state of flux. At an individual level, KWI’s involvement with psychosocial issues (including SGBV) has

⁹⁷ Excerpt from a speech by Julia V. Taft, former Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University, Houston, TX on November 18, 1999

⁹⁸ Development Assistance Committee (DAC). 1997. Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation, pg 4.

highlighted the need for a context-specific and skillful approach to ensure that priority needs of women in traditional societies can be rapidly identified and appropriately addressed.

While a targeted approach drawing on lessons learned from Women's Initiatives could be helpful particularly in the early stages to help ensure that gender needs are being addressed, interventions should nevertheless be mainstreamed within the overall programme using evolving women's networks to help build gender awareness amongst staff and assist in identifying advocacy priorities, notably protection-related issues concerning women.

At the same time, KWI has demonstrated the importance of taking full account of any structural and legal barriers that exist, lest such interventions only reinforce the tendency to treat women as a separate group in society. Efforts need to be focused on ensuring that gender equity mainstreaming becomes automatically part of every policy consideration, be it the design of a public information campaign, the creation of an advisory body, draft legislation, or devising reporting guidelines and priorities.

When considering whether to lead any future Women's Initiative, UNHCR needs to also assess its potential value-added taking account of its focus on core mandate functions as one of the main lessons that has emerged from the KWI is the need for an institutional commitment. Apart from a medium- to long-term protection role, UNHCR's comparative advantage would appear to be at the beginning of repatriation operations due to its protection mandate along with the ability to coordinate activities and provide operational/technical support in emergency situations. While priorities of such an intervention will change according to the context (e.g. the relative incidence of gender-based violence), a multi-sectoral development perspective should be adopted from the start⁹⁹.

Several respondents questioned the need for and cost-effectiveness of so many layers (funds channelled from PRM through UNHCR through an NGO Umbrella Agency through women's groups to a beneficiary). Various models were suggested for a WI, of which five options are presented below:

- a. **UNHCR as lead agency** - Should UNHCR decide to make the necessary commitment to lead another Women's Initiative, the following should be considered:
 - Initial focus of a designated Women's Initiative team on rapid needs assessment, with a special emphasis on identification, appraisal and capacity-building of women's groups. If strong groups are identified during an early phase, these could already support the delivery of relief assistance. Experienced practitioners should conduct a gender analysis, support the project design process, train/coach WI staff, and provide gender awareness training to other UNHCR and implementing partner staff and ideally plan for periodic follow-up missions.
 - Initiate activities with development partners with a plan to hand over as soon as possible (e.g. micro credit for income-generation projects, UNFPA for RH activities, etc.).

⁹⁹ This approach will require not just community services and community development skills, but also experience in gender analysis and reintegration programming.

- UNHCR phase out over a period of 2-3 years, while continuing to promote strengthening and extension of women's networks, notably with a view to reinforcing protection and conflict-resolution. It will be important to ensure that stakeholders understand at an early stage that the program is time limited, something which should be reiterated (and demonstrated) throughout the life of the program.
- b. **Other lead UN agency** – potential candidates mentioned were UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM and UNFPA, though some respondents expressed reservations as to whether the latter two organizations possessed the operational capacity and/or mandate to coordinate and monitor such a wide-ranging multi-sectoral project. In any event, an agency taking on a coordinating role would have to undertake a careful review both internally and with donors to determine whether the required level of commitment can be met. An alternative option is to second staff from one or more of these agencies (or another agency with a relevant development mandate) to UNHCR and progressively transfer lead agency responsibilities over time. This solution was perceived to have the dual advantage of integrating a development perspective with facilitating the phase-out process.
 - c. **Lead bilateral agency** – questions were raised by some respondents about the risk of political interference, coordination issues and perceptions about ownership of such interventions.
 - d. **Direct Assistance to Local NGOs** – A few of the longer established women's organisations advocated for a direct transfer of funds from donor to local NGO. The BWI experience demonstrated that UNHCR systems and procedures are not well adapted to direct implementation arrangements with local NGOs. Capacities of local NGOs are often overstretched during post-conflict situations although, as recommended above, there is a good case for an early emphasis on capacity building by international agencies and progressive hand-over of responsibilities to local organizations¹⁰⁰. In the case of Kosovo, there were also procedural obstacles since local NGOs could not be registered until UNMIK had put the necessary mechanism in place and legal constraints prevented both bilateral donors and UN agencies from directly funding unregistered NGOs.
 - e. **International NGO** – this option was perceived to have the advantage of removing one of the layers to increase efficiency and reduce overhead costs. The choice of international NGOs with a combined relief and development mandate should facilitate a longer-term perspective and promote sustainability. Questions were raised as to whether implementation by an international NGO would allow sufficient coordination or effectively address important protection issues.

The planned review of the three UNHCR-led Women's Initiatives should be a participatory process, bringing together representatives from women's groups, donors, UN agencies, NGOs and other key stakeholders. The active participation of experienced field practitioners during this process will be essential to ensure that these consultations result in

¹⁰⁰ This process could be relatively rapid in cases where local NGO partners already possess a reasonable capacity.

operational tools and guidelines. The various options for future interventions supporting women should be examined while also bringing in lessons learned from alternative approaches (notably gender equity mainstreaming) during a workshop involving key stakeholders to identify an appropriate framework. Nevertheless, it is strongly recommended that a strategy underpinning such assistance should focus on establishing and building capacity of a network composed of representative women's leaders who can themselves subsequently assume a "lead agency" role.

Terms of Reference

Independent Evaluation of the Kosovo Women's Initiative

Background

The Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI) was established in July 1999, after the acceptance of the peace plan in June 1999 by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which included the withdrawal of all Serb forces from Kosovo and the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced people. According to one project document¹, this project, funded by a US\$ 10 million grant from the US government, had two overarching goals :

- to help mobilize women throughout Kosovo, with a specific focus on returnee, displaced and war affected women, to assist them and their families in rebuilding their lives and livelihood;
- to empower women to become agents of change and solidarity through awareness raising, fostering the development of women's networks and enhancing the principles of gender equity at all levels of government and civil society.

KWI funded project sectors include: immediate survival needs; psycho-social and community support; reproductive health and sexual/gender-based violence; empowerment; micro-credit, business training, economic empowerment and livelihood; legal rights and protection; NGO/women's group capacity-building; participatory rural assessment and rural development.

Under the overall co-ordination of UNHCR, the project is being implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), umbrella agencies and local councils. Reduced funds are available for 2001.

After completion, the KWI evaluation will feed into a comparative analysis of the Women's Initiatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Rwanda so as to identify the lessons learned and the overall role of such special initiatives in the context of gender mainstreaming in UNHCR. The evaluation will also feed into the current evaluation of the Women's Commission on Refugee Women and Children on the implementation of the UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women.

The evaluation of the Kosovo Women's Initiative is to be undertaken by a team of two independent consultants and will be managed by UNHCR's Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU). The evaluation will be guided by a Steering Committee, consisting of representatives from EPAU, UNHCR's Department of Operational Support (Division of Communication and Information & Senior Co-ordinator for Refugee Women/Gender equality Unit), South Eastern Europe Operation, Division of Resource Management and Department of International Protection.

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which KWI has been able to meet its stated objectives. It will also review the impact, appropriateness, cost-

¹ UNHCR, (February 2000) "Overview of Kosovo Women's Initiative, UNHCR Pristina"

effectiveness and sustainability of activities undertaken by KWI, differentiating those activities according to sector and implementing partner. The evaluation will identify examples of good practice and lessons learned, and will make recommendations concerning the planning and implementation of similar initiatives that might be undertaken in other parts of the world within UNHCR's protection mandate.

In the context of these objectives, the evaluation will seek to:

-Assess the methods and criteria used during the selection and management of projects, focusing on a variety of different sectors and providing case studies where appropriate;

-Assess if the lessons learned from the BWI were implemented during the KWI;

-Assess the effectiveness of the way in which KWI was organized, staffed and administered;

-Assess the extent to which activities undertaken by KWI were consistent with and complementary to other programmes carried out under the humanitarian pillar of UNMIK;

-Review the roles and responsibilities of UNHCR, umbrella agencies, local women's councils and NGOs, as well as the effectiveness of the way these and other relevant actors were coordinated;

-Assess the impact of the donor requirements on the selection of implementing partners, the time-frame and the reporting obligations;

The evaluation of the Kosovo Women's Initiative will cover the period from July 1999 to the time of the evaluation mission.

The evaluation will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the EPAU mission statement (see below) and UNHCR's draft evaluation policy statement.

The consultancy team is expected to make its own travel and accommodation arrangements but will be provided with logistical support by UNHCR in the field. UNHCR will also meet the costs of interpretation.

The style and format of the final report must conform to EPAU's specifications. UNHCR will exercise no editorial control over the evaluation report but will format and copy edit the report prior to publication. The report will be credited to the consultancy team and placed in the public domain. UNHCR reserves the right to attach an annex to the report, commenting on its findings and recommendations.

The evaluation team

The evaluation will be undertaken by an independent and gender-balanced team of two consultants, of whom one will be the designated team Leader. The team selected will be engaged on individual, lumpsum consultancy contracts. The team will ideally incorporate

expertise in gender analysis, refugee protection, economic rights, institutional capacity-building as well as sexual and gender-based violence. As a participatory approach to this evaluation is expected, preference will be given to candidates who have a proven capability to communicate effectively and sensitively with refugees and who have an understanding of Kosovo's history and its political, economic and social context.

Methodology and management

The evaluation will review the existing literature relevant to the Kosovo Women's Initiative, including project documents, i.e. budgetary documents, consultancy reports and the evaluations of the Bosnian Women's Initiative and the Rwandan Women's Initiative. In-depth discussions and interviews relating to all aspects of the KWI project will be held with UNHCR, umbrella agencies, NGOs, local councils, and donors in Kosovo (20 days) and Geneva (3 days). While in the field, the evaluation team is expected to undertake extensive consultations with a representative sample of beneficiaries, including both men and women.

The evaluation is expected to commence at the end of August, 2001 and the first draft is expected for submission by 8 October, 2001. The second and final draft should be submitted not later than three weeks after the first draft submission. The final draft should be well-written and clearly structured in accordance with EPAU's Style Guide – EPAU is entitled to request the consultancy team for a third draft in case these criteria are not met.

This evaluation will be managed by Elca Stigter, Associate Evaluation and Policy Analysis Officer in EPAU. At the completion of the project, the steering committee will, in close consultation with key stakeholders, consider the conclusions and recommendations of the review and establish appropriate implementation and follow-up mechanisms. In accordance with UNHCR evaluation policy, the review will be placed in the public domain.

Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit: Mission Statement

The Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU) is committed to the systematic examination and assessment of UNHCR projects, programmes, practices and policies. EPAU also promotes rigorous research on issues related to the work of UNHCR, and encourages an active exchange of ideas and information between humanitarian practitioners, policy makers and the academic community. All of these activities are undertaken with the purpose of enhancing UNHCR's capacity to fulfil its mandate on behalf of refugees and other people of concern to the organization.

The work of EPAU is guided by four fundamental principles:

Transparency: EPAU's activities will be undertaken in an open and transparent manner. Reports prepared and commissioned by the unit, as well as details of EPAU's work programme, will be placed in the public domain and actively disseminated to interested parties.

Independence: EPAU strives to provide an objective analysis of UNHCR's activities and performance. In accordance with this principle, the unit will make extensive use of independent consultants with proven expertise in the evaluation of refugee protection and humanitarian assistance activities.

Consultation: EPAU will function in a consultative and participatory manner, soliciting the involvement of key stakeholders within and outside of the organization. EPAU will make particular efforts to work in collaboration with partner organizations. The unit will also strive to ensure that beneficiary views are taken into account in the analysis and assessment of UNHCR's activities.

Relevance: The work of EPAU will be relevant to UNHCR's operational needs and performance. It will also place particular emphasis on the identification and dissemination of best practices. Every effort will be made to ensure that the unit's findings are incorporated into UNHCR's planning, programming and policymaking processes, thereby reinforcing the organization's ability to meet the needs of its beneficiaries.

Elca Stigter
July, 2001

PART THREE: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS from Baines, Erin K. (1999) "Women Transforming Themselves and Society: Empowerment through the Bosnian Women's Initiative". Senior Co-ordinator for Refugee Women and Gender Equality Unit, UNHCR

3. The Kosovo Women's Initiative: Suggestions for Future Directions

- A strategy which identifies short term and long term goals and objectives of the KWI is critical. This should be based on a sound situational analysis about the needs, resources and capacities of women and women's associations in Kosovo, and of the gender relations which shape their abilities to act.
- A number of comprehensive studies and analyses have already been underway in Kosovo regarding the status of women. Likewise, a number of initiatives are underway to support Kosovo women and women's associations, including but not limited to the OSCE women and politics programme, a UNIFEM initiative to co-ordinate gender issues among international humanitarian organizations and to support women in the grass-roots, USAID's Office in Transition Initiatives (OTIs) and the creation of a gender office in UNMIK. Co-ordination with these organizations in the articulation of a long-term strategy, as well as with women's associations in Kosovo, is essential to the success of the Initiative at the start.
- The design of the strategy should actively involve women's associations in Kosovo; a long-term strategy and situation analysis can identify the specific steps necessary for a gradual phase-over to Kosovo women themselves. This requires establishing a mechanism for communication and a working relationship with and between women's associations.
- Phase-over to an established women's forum or council should be a planned course of action at the onset of the initiative. Performance indicators which measure progress toward this goal should be developed.
- A meeting between women's associations in Bosnia and Kosovo is one means of convening a forum and identifying sectors for support. Funds could be set aside to appoint an experienced preferably local co-ordinator to organize this event at the earliest possible date.
- A shared understanding of the goals and objectives between the donor, UNHCR, umbrella agencies and local women's associations must be fostered. This could be facilitated through a series of regularly scheduled meetings between the UNHCR and umbrella agencies.
- Umbrella agencies should be selected on the basis not only of their capacity to implement projects, but also gender expertise. Trainings on gender analysis should be provided to these agencies.

PART THREE: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS from Baines, Erin K. (1999) "Women Transforming Themselves and Society: Empowerment through the Bosnian Women's Initiative". Senior Co-ordinator for Refugee Women and Gender Equality Unit, UNHCR

- Alternatively, sister organizations could be a way to build the capacity of existing Kosovo women's associations so that they eventually act in place of umbrella agencies. The strongest associations in BiH often had sister organizations from other countries supporting them financially and in terms of capacity building.¹
- UNHCR staff dedicated solely to the initiative are essential to ensure that the strategy moves forward and to provide assistance and training to umbrella agencies and local NGOs project identification, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation from a gender perspective. A co-ordinator of the overall project is critical, and at least one assistant should be assigned to this co-ordinator. Both should have experience with gender mainstreaming and empowerment related initiatives.
- Two levels of complimentary and co-ordinated intervention should be pursued: 1) individually in the form of support to both 'vulnerable' women and established or fledgling women's associations and 2) the institutional level, to promote gender-sensitive institution-building and the participation of women in public institutions. Both should be done in co-ordination of various other international humanitarian actors involved, as well as with local government officials.
- A needs based approach must compliment a right based approach: programme and protection staff should be involved in articulating a strategy which addressing both practical and strategic interests.
- The strategy will have to reconcile the tension which may exist between UNHCR Mission priorities and KWI priorities. A situation in which standard programming takes priority over meeting the practical and strategic interests of Kosovo women negates the raison d'etre of such an initiative. This does not mean that UNHCR and women's initiatives goals are irreconcilable, on the contrary. It does point to a consistent misperception of some UNHCR staff -- notably senior management -- that promoting gender equality is beyond the scope of UNHCR's work.
- UNHCR staff must develop a strategy for mainstreaming a gender equality perspective within standard UNHCR programming, this may include trainings and monitoring of programme and protection activities using a gender analysis.

¹ Follow-up research on this idea could be explored with Women for Women Bosnia and the New Bosnia Fund, both NGOs have sister NGOs in the United States. Both are located in Sarajevo and can be reached through the Sarajevo FO.

PART THREE: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS from Baines, Erin K. (1999) "Women Transforming Themselves and Society: Empowerment through the Bosnian Women's Initiative". Senior Co-ordinator for Refugee Women and Gender Equality Unit, UNHCR

- UNHCR staff must be clear that mainstreaming gender perspective is not met through the existence of a special fund for women alone. This requires integrating a gender analysis throughout standard programming.
- The KWI must develop with the consultation of women's associations and beneficiaries. Their priorities and objectives must not be subsumed under that of the UNHCR's.

UNHCR Partners

Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI) Health Activities

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



●	UNHCR Field Office (FO)	■	UNHCR OCM / FO	■	No partner (17)
—	International border	■	IRC (1)	■	MCI (2)
- - -	Republic border	■	RI (9)		
—	Provincial border				
—	Municipality border				
—	UNHCR FO boundary				



KOSOVO WOMEN'S INITIATIVE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ACTIVITIES

2000

US Government funded

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



- Town
- Capital
- International border
- - - Republic border
- Provincial border
- Municipality border
- UNMIK Region boundaries
- Training
- ◆ Community education
- ▲ Service provision
- ⊕ Civil Hospital

RH Services: State institutions
Hospitals: Inpatient maternal/newborn services; inpatient and outpatient gynecological services, including abortion services, family planning services and treatment of STDs
Health Houses: Outpatient gynecological services, including family planning services and treatment of STDs; inpatient maternal/newborn services at the 15 Health Houses that have a maternity ward
Ambulantas: Outpatient services, including provision of some family planning methods and treatment of STDs; antenatal and postnatal services at the ambulant supported by IMC and MDM/France

Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI) Umbrella Agencies 1999

US Government funded



■ DRC	● UNHCR Field Office (FO)
■ Malteser	■ UNHCR OCM / FO
■ OXFAM	 International border
	 Republic border
	 Provincial border
	 Municipality border
	 UNHCR FO boundary



UNHCR Umbrella Agencies (2000) of Kosovo Women's Initiative (KWI)

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Kosovo Border | International Legend | Country Capital | Umbrella Agencies |
| UNHCR FO AORs | Republican border | City | IRC |
| Municipal border | International border | Town | Malteser |
| | Provincial border | | MCI |
| | | | OXFAM |



ANNEX 4 - SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1244 (1999) ON SITUATION RELATING TO KOSOVO

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4011th meeting, on 10 June 1999

The Security Council

Bearing in mind the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security,

Recalling its resolutions 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998, 1199 (1998) of 23 September 1998, 1203 (1998) of 24 October 1998 and 1239 (1999) of 14 May 1999,

Regretting that there has not been full compliance with the requirements of these resolutions,

Determined to resolve the grave humanitarian situation in Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to provide for the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes,

Condemning all acts of violence against the Kosovo population as well as all terrorist acts by any party,

Recalling the statement made by the Secretary-General on 9 April 1999, expressing concern at the humanitarian tragedy taking place in Kosovo,

Reaffirming the right of all refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes in safety,

Recalling the Jurisdiction and the mandate of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,

Welcoming the general principles on a political solution to the Kosovo crisis adopted on 6 May 1999 (S/1999/516, annex 1 to this resolution) and welcoming also the acceptance, by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the principles set forth in Points 1 to 9 of the paper presented in Belgrade on 2 June 1999 (S/ 1999/649, annex 2 to this resolution), and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's agreement to that paper,

Reaffirming the commitment of all Member States to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other States of the region, as set out in the Helsinki Final Act and annex 2,

Reaffirming the call in previous resolutions for substantial autonomy and meaningful self-administration for Kosovo,

Determining that the situation in the region continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security, Determined to ensure the safety and security of international personnel and the implementation by all concerned of their responsibilities under the present resolution, and acting for these purposes under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. Decides that a political solution to the Kosovo crisis shall be based on the general principles in annex 1 and as further elaborated in the principles and other required elements in annex 2;

2. Welcomes the acceptance by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of the principles and other required elements referred to in paragraph 1 above, and demands the full cooperation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in their rapid implementation;

3. Demands in particular that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia put an immediate and verifiable end to violence and repression in Kosovo, and begin and complete verifiable phased withdrawal from Kosovo of all military, police and paramilitary forces according to a rapid timetable, with which the deployment of the international security presence in Kosovo will be synchronized;

4. Confirms that after the withdrawal an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serb military and police personnel will be permitted to return to Kosovo to perform the functions in accordance with annex 2;

5. Decides on the deployment in Kosovo, under United Nations auspices, of international civil and security presences, with appropriate equipment and personnel as required, and welcomes the agreement of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to such presences;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to appoint, in consultation with the Security Council, a Special Representative to control the implementation of the international civil presence, and further requests the Secretary-General to instruct his Special Representative to coordinate closely with the international security presence to ensure that both presences operate towards the same goals and in a mutually supportive manner;
7. Authorizes Member States and relevant international organizations to establish the international security presence in Kosovo as set out in point 4 of annex 2 with all necessary means to fulfil its responsibilities under paragraph 9 below;
8. Affirms the need for the rapid early deployment of effective international civil and security presences to Kosovo, and demands that the parties cooperate fully in their deployment;
9. Decides that the responsibilities of the international security presence to be deployed and acting in Kosovo will include:
 - (a) Deterring renewed hostilities, maintaining and where necessary enforcing a ceasefire, and ensuring the withdrawal and preventing the return into Kosovo of Federal and Republic military, police and paramilitary forces, except as provided in point 6 of annex 2; paragraph 15 below;
 - (b) Demilitarizing the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups as required in (c)
 - (c) Establishing a secure environment in which refugees and displaced persons can return home in safety, the international civil presence can operate, a transitional administration can be established, and humanitarian aid can be delivered;
 - (d) Ensuring public safety and order until the international civil presence can take responsibility for this task;
 - (e) Supervising demining until the international civil presence can, as appropriate, take over responsibility for this task;
 - (f) Supporting, as appropriate, and coordinating closely with the work of the international civil presence;
 - (g) Conducting border monitoring duties as required;
 - (h) Ensuring the protection and freedom of movement of itself, the international civil presence, and other international organizations;
10. Authorizes the Secretary-General, with the assistance of relevant international organizations, to establish an international civil presence in Kosovo in order to provide an interim administration for Kosovo under which the people of Kosovo can enjoy substantial autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and which will provide transitional administration while establishing and overseeing the development of provisional democratic self-governing institutions to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo;
11. Decides that the main responsibilities of the international civil presence will include:
 - (a) Promoting the establishment, pending a final settlement, of substantial autonomy and self-government in Kosovo, taking full account of annex 2 and of the Rambouillet accords (S/1999/648);
 - (b) Performing basic civilian administrative functions where and as long as required;
 - (c) Organizing and overseeing the development of provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous self-government pending a political settlement, including the holding of elections;

(d) Transferring, as these institutions are established, its administrative responsibilities while overseeing and supporting the consolidation of Kosovo's local provisional institutions and other peace-building activities;

(e) Facilitating a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet accords (S/1999/648);

In a final stage, overseeing the transfer of authority from Kosovo's provisional institutions to institutions established under a political settlement;

(g) Supporting the reconstruction of key infrastructure and other economic reconstruction;

(h) Supporting, in coordination with international humanitarian organizations, humanitarian and disaster relief aid;

(I) Maintaining civil law and order, including establishing local police forces and meanwhile through the deployment of international police personnel to serve in Kosovo;

(J) Protecting and promoting human rights;

(k) Assuring the safe and unimpeded return of all refugees and displaced persons to their homes in Kosovo;

12. Emphasizes the need for coordinated humanitarian relief operations, and for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to allow unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organizations and to cooperate with such organizations so as to ensure the fast and effective delivery of international aid;

13. Encourages all Member States and international organizations to contribute to economic and social reconstruction as well as to the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, and emphasizes in this context the importance of convening an international donors' conference, particularly for the purposes set out in paragraph 11 (g) above, at the earliest possible date;

14. Demands full cooperation by all concerned, including the international security presence, with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia;

15. Demands that the KLA and other armed Kosovo Albanian groups end immediately all offensive actions and comply with the requirements for demilitarization as laid down by the head of the international security presence in consultation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General;

16. Decides that the prohibitions imposed by paragraph 8 of resolution 1160 (1998) shall not apply to arms and related material for the use of the international civil and security presences;

17. Welcomes the work in hand in the European Union and other international organizations to develop a comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilization of the region affected by the Kosovo crisis, including the implementation of a Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe with broad International participation in order to further the promotion of democracy, economic prosperity, stability and regional cooperation;

18. Demands that all States in the region cooperate fully in the implementation of all aspects of this resolution;

19. Decides that the international civil and security presences are established for an initial period of 12 months, to continue thereafter unless the Security Council decides otherwise;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Council at regular intervals on the implementation of this resolution, including reports from the leaderships of the international civil and security presences, the first reports to be submitted within 30 days of the adoption of this resolution;

21. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.

Annex 5: KWI Question Checklist

General Approach

- ❑ Emphasize independent nature of evaluation and confidentiality of information (no citations in the report, etc.)
- ❑ Use open-ended questions
- ❑ Start with questions with those requiring straightforward factual answers
- ❑ Try and create an environment where it is relatively easy for the respondent to be objective
- ❑ Refer to the project objectives/indicators beforehand and look for clues of impact

Question categories for all respondents These should be general in nature to give an idea of the priorities accorded to each category by the respondent. Additional prompting towards the end of the interview may be appropriate so to fill in important information relevant to the checklist, but ensure that open-ended questions are used.

- ❑ Date & Place of Interview
- ❑ Name and, if appropriate, function, of interviewee?
- ❑ What was the situation before/during the war? Gender roles?
- ❑ What is the situation now? What are expectations for the future (and why)? Gender roles?
- ❑ Perception about international presence? International assistance?
- ❑ Have the projects and/or the sub-projects been appropriate for the context?
- ❑ Have the project and/or the sub-projects had the desired impact?
- ❑ Have the project and/or the sub-projects and the project components/individual projects been cost-effective?
- ❑ What are medium to long-term plans for the project? Any plan for phase-out? Any potential phase-over? Assess how the projects will survive after the funding ends.
- ❑ What kind of needs assessment was carried out? Was there a gender analysis component?
- ❑ Did the project and/or the sub-project seem to respond to the needs of the female population in Kosovo?
- ❑ Were the women consulted in an appropriate manner prior to project planning and project initiation?
- ❑ Who seems to have been most influential in terms of how the project has turned out?

“Community Members” (e.g. man/woman in the street, municipal council members, teachers, businessmen, medical staff, non-KWI NGOs).

- ❑ Socio-economic profile of respondent(s)
- ❑ Any awareness about UNHCR or KWI? If so, what is the perception? Any knowledge of specific examples? (look for indicators of impact)
- ❑ Summary analysis.

KWI Beneficiaries & Women's Organizations (three separate categories: individuals, NGOs under Umbrella Agencies, NGOs implementing directly). Representative case studies should be used to demonstrate impact.

- ❑ Socio-economic profile of respondent(s)? Personal/family experience during/after the war?
- ❑ How did the respondent first hear about KWI? How did they perceive the purpose of KWI (before and now)?
- ❑ History of involvement with KWI? What were the "highlights"?
- ❑ What were the objectives of the project? (check against proposal). Who were the target beneficiaries? Who actually benefited (and how)? Description of what actually happened with the project, including any "side effects"? (obtain concrete examples where possible)
- ❑ Perception about purpose/function(s) of KWI organization (including women's councils, UNHCR, UAs, NGOs)?
- ❑ What opportunities exist? What constraints/problems? What's going to happen in the future? (check for evidence of medium to long-term planning, alternative sources of operating funds, system of accounts, bank balance, trends in numbers of participants/members)
- ❑ What's good about the project/KWI? Suggestions for improvement?

Umbrella Agencies / UNHCR Field Staff

- ❑ Background (technical skills, experience) of respondent(s) and individual contribution(s) to KWI? Description of technical resources within UA?
- ❑ History of involvement with KWI? What were the "highlights"?
- ❑ Description of historical involvement with KWI (individual and organization)? (check for staffing, management issues, technical resources)
- ❑ What is the purpose of KWI? UA role within KWI?
- ❑ What has worked well? What could be improved?
- ❑ Any knowledge of BWI? How did BWI influence KWI?

UNHCR HQ - UNHCR Kosovo (KWI Project Management)

- ❑ History of involvement with KWI? What were the "highlights"?
- ❑ Staffing - what were the requests, what was the response?
- ❑ What was good about KWI? What could have been improved?
- ❑ Any knowledge of BWI? If so, how did BWI influence KWI?
- ❑ Previous experience with gender programmes?
- ❑ Why UNHCR chosen as the executing agency? Are there other agencies that could fill this role?

UNHCR & Donor Representatives

- Why was \$10 million allocated to KWI?
- Original concept(s)?
- History of involvement with KWI? What were the "highlights"?
- Previous experience with gender programmes?
- Why UNHCR chosen as the executing agency? Are there other agencies that could fill this role?
- Staffing - what were the requests, what was the response?
- Where did KWI succeed? What could have been improved? (obtain concrete examples of outputs, impacts)
- Any knowledge of BWI? If so, how did BWI influence KWI?

ANNEX 6 – RESPONSE FROM THE UNHCR KOSOVO OFFICE WITH REGARD TO THE KWI EVALUATION

Appearing below are comments from UNHCR KWI regarding the 10 Recommendations listed in the Independent Evaluation of KWI.

Overall Comments

We appreciate the recommendations given and agree with most of what they contain. However, a number of the recommendations do not contain anything new from what was planned at the end of 2001, and in fact some of the activities listed in the recommendations were already taking place. In addition, we believe that the recommendations would have been a bit different and more valuable if the authors had a better understanding of available resources for KWI in 2002 and beyond. Some of the recommendations are not possible to implement due budget and staff limitations.

Furthermore, all of the recommendations were fairly specific and technical. While technical and specific recommendations are very useful, also beneficial would be general recommendations about KWI. For example, it would be useful to know the authors' overall impression and recommendations regarding the structure of KWI, primarily regarding the establishment of the LWCs. Recommendations regarding the sustainability of KWI would also be very useful.

Brief Comments Re each Recommendation

1. The Local Women's Councils (LWCs) currently are involved in the review and revision of project selection criteria based on their respective strategic plans they made with assistance and guidance with UNHCR and its implementing partner. However, it is true that there is room for improvement in terms of their capacity to do so.
2. Recommendation #2 is somewhat unclear. It seems to suggest that the LWCs should not be involved in issuing grants. This is a bit confusing to us since that is their main function. If indeed, the authors believe that the LWCs should not be involved in grant-giving, we would expect greater clarity and detail in this particular recommendation.
3. We agree with recommendation #3. There is some TOT scheduled for this year, but we could improve in this area.
4. We agree with recommendation #4 and the LWC members are beginning to do this more actively.
5. KWI has a Minority Component Team consisting of 3 full time staff members who work specifically with LWC members in engaging and assisting women in minority and returnee communities.
6. The focus of KWI in 2002 is preparing the LWCs for independent operation. KWI has neither the money nor the resources to focus on SGBV-related issues as suggested in recommendation #7.
7. See above. Various roundtables are currently being scheduled with LWC members. SGBV will be a recommended topic, the LWCs themselves will decide what topic is most appropriate given their location, history and circumstances.
8. LWC members did visit BHWI in 2001 and if funds permit, BHWI members will visit KWI in October of this year.
9. Recommendation #9 suggests expanding the program by adding 2 more LWCs. We do not have the personnel or financial resources to do so. All 30 Kosovo municipalities have representation on a LWC.
10. We do not disagree with recommendation #10, but, again, it is a matter of available resources. We agree that the LWC members should be trained in micro-finance and should refer women's groups and NGOs to KEP. We are currently exploring what kind of relationship KWI can have with KEP in the future.