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GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Call for Project Proposals

Empowering Youth for Human Rights and Equality

through

EU funded project “Countering Discrimination, Hate Speech and Gender-based Violence”
Contract Number 2022/441-438

Contracting Authority: Advocacy Training and Resource Center - ATRC

Project funded by the: European Union Office in Kosovo

Project Title: Countering Discrimination, Hate speech and Gender-based Violence

Deadline for submission of applications:

15 January 2024, at 4 P.M.





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1. Background Description of Activity

Human rights, an essential cornerstone within a democratic system, embody notions of equity, honor, parity, and regard among the populace in a society. Kosovo, aspiring to embody these principles, actively safeguards marginalized groups, particularly those vulnerable to mistreatment and bias, thereby fueling encouragement for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to counter discrimination. The prevailing state of human rights, compromised due to the propagation of animosity, bias, and disparities concerning gender and ethnic parity, underscores the pressing need for proactive measures, initiatives, and endeavors aimed at elevating public consciousness, fortifying institutional capabilities, and involving civil society entities. Over recent years, marginalized communities in Kosovo have grappled with pervasive bias, misinformation, educational barriers, institutional and societal prejudice in employment, access to social services, freedom of movement, and the deprivation of other fundamental, legally mandated entitlements.¹

In Kosovo over recent years, a conspicuous absence of cohesive oversight and synchronization within human rights and minority protection mechanisms is evident, both at central and local administrative tiers, while essential rights receive inadequate attention on the political agenda. Instances of hate speech, instigation, as well as gender and racial bias, depict a landscape fraught with human rights transgressions. As per the ATRC's Hate-O-Meter highlighting the surge in hate rhetoric via media channels, and research conducted by the Kosovo Women's Network on gender discrimination in workplaces, it's apparent that existing legislation isn't fully enforced to ensure the robust execution of human rights statutes. Vulnerable and non-dominant groups—such as disabled individuals, youth, LGBTQI+ communities—are profoundly impacted by the ramifications stemming from hate speech, discrimination, and administrative disregard. The 2021 Commission Staff Working Document for Kosovo voices apprehensions regarding the efficacy of mechanisms in coordinating and enforcing human rights laws, policies, and strategies, emphasizing the need for a functional system to prevent and redress gender-based violence. Moreover, the report highlights the recurrent neglect and sluggish handling of discrimination cases by law enforcement, prosecution, and judicial systems.

Despite having a robust legal framework safeguarding citizen rights, the practical implementation of laws like the Anti-Discrimination Law, Gender Equality Law, Ombudsman Law, and other associated human rights statutes remains a challenge across public and private sectors. Kosovo's institutions need to intensify efforts to ensure the rights of marginalized groups—such as the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, women, individuals with disabilities, and youth—are effectively guaranteed. Additionally, comprehensive data on hate crimes remains scarce. The pervasiveness

¹ https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/313615_KOSOVO-2021-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf



of hate speech targeting vulnerable and non-dominant communities, including the LGBTQI+ community, persists extensively, notably on social media platforms.²

Consequently, there is an urgent need to implement specific measures aimed at respecting anti-discrimination statutes and cultivating equality, acceptance and diversity within public and private entities, as well as within the broader society of Kosovo. Ensuring inclusive participation in all sectors of society to strengthen the human rights framework, fostering informed discussions and cultivating trust between institutional and non-institutional entities in Kosovo stands as a key step towards establishing sustainable peace and prosperity.

Therefore, this project aims to create different initiatives from civil society organizations in Kosovo to fight these phenomena of discrimination, hate speech and gender-based violence through the support of their projects.

Efforts to address discrimination in Kosovo involve legislative measures, governmental initiatives, and the tireless work of civil society organizations. Laws prohibiting discrimination and promoting equality exist, alongside institutions like the Ombudsperson's Office and Anti-Discrimination Agency, offering protection and support for victims. Despite these measures, deep-rooted prejudices, historical tensions, and systemic inequalities pose ongoing challenges in realizing a society where every individual enjoys equal rights and opportunities. Creating a more inclusive and tolerant Kosovo demands sustained efforts to overcome these ingrained issues and foster a society where diversity is celebrated, and discrimination is vehemently opposed.³

The supreme law in Kosovo; the Constitution of Kosovo guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms for all individuals, prohibiting discrimination based on ethnicity, race, gender, religion, language, and other grounds. It serves as the basis for subsequent legislation aimed at protecting citizens from discrimination.⁴ Meanwhile, Kosovo has a comprehensive Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, which defines and prohibits discrimination in various aspects of life, including employment, education, healthcare, and access to public services. This law establishes the legal framework to combat discrimination and provides avenues for individuals to seek redress if they have experienced discrimination⁵.

Moreover, the Office of the Ombudsperson serves as an independent institution responsible for protecting and promoting human rights in Kosovo. It investigates complaints related to

² Commission working document, Kosovo 2021 report, Strasbourg, 19.10.2021, [file:///C:/Users/lirika/Downloads/Kosovo%202021%20report%20\(1\).PDF](file:///C:/Users/lirika/Downloads/Kosovo%202021%20report%20(1).PDF)

³ DISKRIMINIMI ME BAZË GJINORE DHE PUNËSIMI NË KOSOVË Nga Iliriana Banjska, David JJ Ryan, Nicole Farnsworth, Lirika Demiri, Liridona Sijarina dhe Adelina Tërshani, 2019/2020, https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/RrGK_Diskriminimi-me-baze-gjinore-dhe-punesimi-ne-Kosove_REV_FIN.pdf

⁴ Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo - <https://md.rks-gov.net/desk/inc/media/D2F3A120-841C-473D-87A9-6AAD9F6E28A2.pdf>

⁵ Law on protection against discrimination - <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10924>



discrimination and human rights violations, provides legal advice, and advocates for the rights of individuals facing discrimination.

Kosovo has an Anti-Discrimination Laws play a crucial role in implementing the rules on the Prohibition of Discrimination. It works to prevent discrimination, raises awareness about discrimination issues, and provides support and guidance to individuals who have experienced discrimination⁶. The Gender Equality Agency is another institution dedicated to promoting gender equality and protecting the rights of women. It works on policies and programs to advance gender equality, address gender-based discrimination and violence, and support women's empowerment. All above mention institutions, supported by relevant legislation, aim to provide legal protection, support, and advocacy for individuals and groups facing discrimination in Kosovo. They play a crucial role in upholding human rights, fostering inclusivity, and promoting equality for all citizens.

According to the Rule of Law index, Kosovo in the part of respecting Fundamental Rights has scored 55/142, which means that in regard to human rights the implementation is moderate/good. In Transparency International regarding the level of corruption Kosovo stands 84/180, which still is a positive result with a possibility of increasing every year⁷.

The main objective of the project is to “Increase institutional transparency and accountability and enhanced citizens’ awareness and mobilization to counter discrimination, hate speech and gender-based violence.” Through this project ATRC, Internews and D4D are making significant attempts to counter discrimination and hate, and promote equality in a contextually tailored action, through this systemic intervention of engaging civil society organizations, strengthening institutional response to fulfil their obligations towards marginalized communities including persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ community, women, and minorities.

The Call for Project Proposals is the main component of the project with the aim of providing new opportunities for local youth NGOs/CSOs, who work and operate in Kosovo, so they can tackle the issues related to eliminating all types of discrimination among youth through education, mediation, and intercultural skills, critical thinking, and empowerment of disadvantage groups.

Through these activities, the sub-grantees will have the opportunity to counter discrimination, hate speech, and other forms of violence by advocacy, capacity building, research, investigative reporting and awareness raising activities.

1.1 Objectives and Priorities of the Call for Project Proposals

The overall objective of the Call for Project Proposals is to “*Increase institutional transparency and*

⁶ Ibidem - <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10924>

⁷ <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/ksv>



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accountability and enhanced citizens' awareness and mobilization to counter discrimination, hate speech and gender-based violence.”

The specific objective of the Call for Project Proposals is to contribute to prospective and to propose ideas and request support for activities that promote and protect human rights, enhanced youth awareness and mobilization to counter discrimination, hate speech and gender-based violence.

LOT: “Counter discrimination, hate speech and gender-based violence through engagement of youth.

ATRC plans to award **5 Grants**, from which grants will be awarded 5 CSOs.

The Call for project proposals will also consider the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues at the project level. When developing a project to address any of the specific objectives of the call, cross-cutting issues need to be mainstreamed in the following manner:

- a) Gender equality
- b) Protection and promotion of ethnic minority rights in education, work, security and institutions.
- c) Social security and social protection of LGBTQ+ community.
- d) Integration of persons with physical and mental disabilities in society.
- e) The combating of social exclusion.
- f) Democratic standards, anti-discriminatory practices, and good governance.



Lot Number	Objective	Suggested Interventions:
LOT - “Counter discrimination, hate speech and gender-based violence through engagement of youth “	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish written reports on related issues as countering discrimination, hate speech, bullying and gender – based violence 2. Raising awareness on eliminating all types of discrimination 3. Strengthen capacities of youth on identifying discrimination towards disadvantaged groups and reporting violations of human rights 	<p>-Analysis and research of anti-discrimination policies, analysis of equality at work in terms of gender and ethnicity, social protection, or other economic policies.</p> <p>- Analysis and research of the level of implementation of international standards of human rights, equality, and in general the fight against discrimination.</p> <p>-Analysis related to the inclusion of vulnerable groups in society such - Awareness Raising activities</p> <p>-Capacity building activities</p> <p>-Monitoring the policies regarding the implementation towards discrimination and gender-based violence in local and national level - Cooperation between the relevant institutions, regarding the denunciations or presentation of cases of discrimination in the appropriate manner to the appropriate institutions.</p>

2. Eligibility of Applicants

To be eligible to participate in this Call for Project Proposals, several criteria must be met. As mentioned above, sub-grants are intended to be awarded to local CSOs, media associations and other registered entities that meet the criteria described below:



2.1 CSO applicant must:

- be a non-profit-making organization.
- be a legal entity registered within Kosovo authorities at least six months before this call is launched.
- provide registration documents of the organization (certificate of registration, fiscal number certificate) and proof they have completed all obligations towards the state, including registration with the Tax Administration, and bank account information
- provide last two years' financial statements or Audit Reports (if applicable)
- show organization capacities and profile including but not limited to: Human Resources capacities, past and present projects in the last two years (funding source, timeframe, partnerships, objectives).

2.2 If applicant is selected for funding, the following submissions are required:

- A statement issued by the relevant authorities certifying that the applicant and its representative has not been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity
- Banking details

2.3 Exclusion Criteria

Potential applicants may not participate in this Call for Project Proposals, or be awarded grants, if they are in any of the following situations:

- They are bankrupt or having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities. They are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of any taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the contracting party in which they are established.
- They, or persons having powers of representation, decision making, or control over them, have been the subject of a judgment that has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering, or any other illegal activity.
- Their proposed actions are not already supported by the European Union in order not to duplicate European Union funding of the same expenditures.
- They are directly affiliated to commercial profit.
- They are involved directly in political campaigning.



3. Eligible actions within the scope of the project

This section will provide information on the duration, amount, and scope of the projects to be financed under this sub-granting scheme, and the eligible activities for which the potential applicants may seek financial support under this Call for Project Proposals.

3.1 Size and Duration of Sub-Grants

Lot I: Maximum amount of **EUR 10,000** - Duration: 6 months up to 12 months

The time frame for the implementation of the supported projects is **February 2024 to January 2025**.

3.2 Scope of Activities

All activities to be implemented within the scope of the sub-granting program must be implemented in Kosovo; they may be focused on one municipality, a region, or cover the entire territory of Kosovo.

3.3 Eligible Activities:

- Organization of advocacy campaigns including conferences, round tables for educational, awareness-raising and advocacy purposes, the engagement of policy actors from central and municipal institutions on issues of human rights, gender equality, integration of minorities in the market of work, etc.
- Designing and carrying out social media campaigns aimed at issues related to the essential topic of human rights in the categories of combating discrimination, hate speech, bullying and gender-based violence,
- Civic education activities aimed at raising issues of human rights, equality and other related topics, aimed mainly at high school and university students,
- Publication of educational and promotional online materials in various media forms,
- Training and capacity building for youth, parents, teachers or public officials or for ways of treating people who are or may be affected by the above phenomena.
- Activities that strengthen and improve implementation of human rights between ethnic groups and public authorities.
- Research reports on combating discrimination, hate speech, bullying and gender-based violence, and other related issues, addressing problems and providing recommendations.
- Supporting the production of new content through investigative reporting and/or in-depth analysis of human rights, gender equality, and combating discrimination.



3.4 Non-Eligible Activities:

- Activities concerning only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses.
- Activities undertaken before signature of the contract.
- Activities aimed at profit making activities.
- Activities that are directly affiliated with or supportive of political parties.

4. Eligibility of Costs: Costs which may be taken into consideration for the grant.

We encourage all local youth CSOs to propose realistic and cost-effective budgets in line with market prices. Note that the eligible costs must be based on real costs based on supporting documents.

Recommendations for the award of a grant are always subject to the condition that the checking process preceding the signing of the contract does not reveal any problems requiring changes to the budget (for instance arithmetical errors, inaccuracies or unrealistic costs and other ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and lead the Contracting Authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. The amount of the grant because of these corrections may not be increased. It is therefore in the applicant's interest to provide a realistic and cost-effective budget.

Eligible costs/costs that we can support are actual costs incurred by the Beneficiary(ies), which meet all the following criteria:

- a) they are incurred during the implementation of the Activity, as specified under 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.
- b) they are indicated in the estimated overall budget for the Activity.
- c) they are well-justified for the implementation of the Activity.
- d) they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the Beneficiary(ies) and determined according to the accounting standards and the usual cost accounting practices applicable to the Beneficiary(ies);
- e) they are in full compliance with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation.
- f) they are reasonable, justified and comply with the requirements of sound financial management, particularly regarding economy and efficiency.

Types of Eligible Costs/Types of expenses that we can support:

- a) the cost of staff assigned to the Activity, including cost of staff performing financial and administrative tasks related to the Activity, corresponding to actual gross salaries including social security charges and other remuneration-related costs; salaries and costs shall not exceed those normally borne by the Beneficiary(ies), unless it is justified by showing that it is essential to carry out the Activity.



- b) travel and subsistence costs for staff and other persons taking part in the Activity, provided they do not exceed those normally borne by the Beneficiary(ies) according to its rules and regulations, or the rates published by the European Commission at the time of such mission if reimbursed on the basis of simplified cost options.
- c) costs of consumables.
- d) bank charge costs.
- e) costs entailed by contracts awarded by the Beneficiary(ies) for the purposes of the Activity.
- f) costs deriving directly from the requirements of the Contract (dissemination of information, evaluation specific to the Activity, accounting, audits, translation, reproduction, insurance, etc.).

Ineligible costs/Costs that we will NOT support

- taxes, including value added taxes (VAT) - (excluding taxes on salary).
- customs and import duties, or any other charges.
- purchase, rent or leasing of land and existing buildings.
- fines, financial penalties and expenses of litigation.
- indirect operating costs, costs of guarantees and similar charges.
- conversion costs, charges and exchange losses with any of the component specific euroaccounts, as well as purely financial expenses.
- contributions in kind.
- depreciation costs.
- debts and debt charges.
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities.
- interest owed.
- costs declared by the beneficiary and covered by another activity or work programme.
- credits to third parties.

5. Application Procedures

The Application Package has to be submitted by email, and must include the following three documents:

- 1. Application Form**
- 2. Budget Form**
- 3. Registration Act** from the relevant public authority.

The applications **MUST** be sent by email to:

grants@advocacy-center.org no later than 15 January 2024, at 4 P.M.

Applications can be submitted in Albanian, Serbian, or English.



6. Evaluation and selection of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority (ATRC) with the assistance of external evaluators.

If the review of the Application shows that the proposed activity does not meet the eligibility criteria, the Application shall be rejected solely on this basis.

All applications will be assessed following the criteria below:

	Criteria	Definition	Max. coefficient
1.	Relevance of the action with the priorities of the Call for Project Proposals	This criterion evaluates the relevance of the content of the action vis-a-vis the objectives of the call for project proposals of the project. The evaluation committee will review the impact of the project proposals on the selected target groups and the beneficiaries of the project.	40
2.	Design of the action	This criterion assesses the overall impact of the coherence of the proposal of the action, the problem analysis, the expected results, new and innovative topics/activities that have not been analysed/implemented before by local youth CSOs in Kosovo.	20
3.	Effectiveness and feasibility of action	This criterion assesses the proposed activities of the project by evaluating if they are appropriate, practical, and consistent with objectives and expected results.	10
4.	Budget and cost effectiveness	This criterion evaluates the budget and the balance between the estimated costs of the proposed action and the real costs in line with current market prices.	20
5.	Sustainability of the action	This criterion evaluates the practice where human needs and actions are addressed in a way that is	10



	environmentally friendly and stable, shows the tangible impact on the target groups of the proposal, and includes the multiplier effects of implementing the action.	
TOTAL POINTS		100

7. Notification of the Contracting Authority

Each applicant will be informed in writing about the decision, together with a justification regarding the decision according to the jury evaluation.

7.1 Content of the decision

Letters to successful and unsuccessful applicants will be sent within 5 working days after the selection by 31 January 2024. Unsuccessful applicants will have the right to enquire further clarifications within 10 working days of the notification.

7.2 Indicative Timetable

	DATE	TIME
Public announcement of the Call for project proposals	18 December 2023	10 A.M.
Deadline to request any clarifications from ATRC Kosovo	25 December 2023	2 P.M.
Last date on which clarifications are issued by the ATRC	28 December 2023	N/A
Deadline for submission of Application Package	15 January 2024	4 P.M.
Deadline for the evaluation of received project proposals	26 January 2024	
Information to applicants on the evaluation of the Application Form	31 January to 7 Feb 2024	
Signing of contracts	7 - 14 February 2024	N/A
Start date of the projects	15 February 2024	N/A

*Please note that this is an indicative plan only, exact dates are not presently available.

Questions regarding the propositions of the Call for Project Proposals can be sent in Albanian, Serbian or English by e-mail before 25 December 2023 to the email: grants@advocacy-center.org. All questions and answers as well as other important notices to applicants will be published on ATRC official website, no later than 7 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.



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7.3 Information Sessions

The information session for this call for project proposals will be held live. Please check the ATRC website and social media pages for the exact Info-session schedule.

The first information session will be held on December 26, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., virtually through the respective platforms. While the second session at the beginning of January