

SUCCESS STORY

The Right to Property, empowers women in business



Photo: from the left Valbona Ajeti talking to Vesa Pallaska from KW4W

“I run a private business in my village. When I first started, people thought we are just a bunch of women wasting time, no one took us seriously, mainly...well because no women runs a business where I live.” – says Valbona Ajeti, laughing. “

Valbona is one of the most enthusiastic, strong-willed and determined person you will ever meet. She lives with her family in Sllatina e Epërme/Gorna Slatina - a village in municipality of Viti/Vitina located in southeastern part of Kosovo. Her company “GRASEP” – an abbreviation meaning Women of Sllatina e Epërme/Gorna Slatina has 20 women employees and produces preserved vegetables, pickles and mainly so called Ajvar (a very famous red pepper sauce in Kosovo that goes with basically everything).

“My business was not always this big, I had some machines and a small number of people involved. Now, having a parcel carried in my name from my husband’s inheritance will be a boost to my success as a business-woman. Now I have no limitations get loans and widen

my business in terms of a bigger space, bigger machines and just more workshop room for workers. Having a property on my name strengthened and empowered me a lot!” Valbona together with other women and men from Viti/Vitina municipality were a part of continuous trainings on women’s rights with the focus on property and inheritance rights, business and other managerial skills organized by Kosova - Women 4 Women (KW4W).

“I have employed 20 women whom I shared most of the trainings with. We have grown into something bigger than I have imagined, and trust me it’s not always only about the success of my business; but to see attitudes changing, to see women empowered and having a job in the village-this brings me joy!” Valbona is one of the rare women that owns property in her village. According to the latest study published in 2017 by Property Rights Program¹, only 20% of women in whole Kosovo own land. Valbona knew her rights, knew the laws, but her determination was crucial. “I encourage other women, too. Their right on property is guaranteed by the law. No woman should hesitate on her rights”.

KW4W has trained 340 women and 106 men about their property rights in municipalities of Viti/Vitina, Kaçanik/Kaçanik and Štrpce/Shtërpce and plans to train additional 400 women in the course of this project. Kosovo already has good laws on the books that guarantee a woman’s equal right to property, but implementation of such laws is very slow, mainly because of the patriarchal attitude of Kosovar society.

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¹ http://www.advocacy-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ENG_FINAL_Kosovo-PRP-MidTerm-Survey-on-Property-Rights-July-2017.pdf, Midterm national survey on property rights in Kosovo, 2017, page 8