EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES KOSOVO

ECMI KOSOVO

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Working Towards a
Stable Multi-Ethnic Kosovo



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES KOSOVO

Preface



Throughout many years, I have had the privilege of observing the dedication and hard work that ECMI Kosovo has conveyed towards all minorities in Kosovo. In 2015, ECMI Kosovo and its work was naturally affected by the ongoing political instability; nevertheless, this has only underlined its commitment in protecting and promoting the rights and interests of all minority communities in Kosovo. Throughout the year, ECMI Kosovo has continued its work towards the establishment and growth of a democratic and stable multi-ethnic society in Kosovo.

During 2015, ECMI Kosovo strengthened its role as the principal non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the field of minority and community rights. ECMI Kosovo also continued to espouse its vision for a stable, multi-ethnic Kosovo in which the human and minority rights of members of all communities are implemented and respected in line with domestic and international standards. It has engaged in a wide range of activities aimed at supporting the effective implementation of the legal and institutional framework of minority rights. ECMI Kosovo covers a wide range of topics crucial to Kosovo's democratic future: governance and accountability, education, language issues, and economic empowerment. During 2015, projects focused on improving access to employment and education for minority communities, promoting cultural tolerance among Kosovo youth from various communities, improving the institutional capacities of municipalities to promote and protect the rights of minority communities, and addressing and preventing gender-based violence.

Moreover, ECMI Kosovo monitored closely the position of minority communities in Kosovo and provided consistent analysis on the political situation. In October 2015, ECMI Kosovo embarked on an important component to their analyses with the "Kosovo Communities Issues Sector", which also provides recommendations to the government and civil society regarding minority communities in Kosovo. Through this, ECMI Kosovo aimed at advancing the role of minority communities in Kosovo and simultaneously increasing the collaboration of majority-minority relations.

ECMI Kosovo has maintained a continuous and consistent approach to support for vulnerable and marginalized groups and as we continue onto 2016, I am proud of ECMI Kosovo's work and achievements in 2015. The organisation is passionate and determined, and together we will continue our efforts towards an inclusive, democratic and stable multi-ethnic society in Kosovo.

Srećko Bogajćević
Chairperson of the Senior Oversight Board
ECMI Kosovo

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Director's Message



2015 was a period of major social and political events in Kosovo. Against this unstable but challenging background, ECMI Kosovo continued to be an independent and impartial actor in addressing issues of concern to minority communities in Kosovo. Through its 25 strong staff from diverse backgrounds and its two offices, in Prishtinë/Priština and Mitrovica North, the organisation has played a key role in progress in Kosovo in the field of minority rights from the institutional and political to the daily-life level.

This year, we launched the Kosovo Communities Issues Monitor which, for the first time, monitors, analyses, and provides recommendations on developments and incidents related to the position of minority communities in Kosovo. The Monitor particularly seeks to report on incidents of a controversial nature, within the framework of international and domestic minority rights legislation. Further, ECMI Kosovo has continued to provide a series of in-depth analyses aimed at informing the wider public and policy makers on the on-going developments related to the Association/Community of Serb-majority Municipalities, as well as other issues related to the Brussels Dialogue Process between Kosovo and Serbia. Our Monitor and public policy briefs have been received positively and contributed to shaping the debate on these issues.

During 2015, we also stepped up our social media outreach activities, which resulted in an increase of 1000 "likes" on our Facebook page compared to November 2014. This success is compounded by an active Twitter account and a steadily growing number of stakeholders receiving our external communications through MailChimp. Consequently, donors, beneficiaries and the general public are made increasingly aware of our achievements.

In addition to analysing and monitoring the position of minority communities in Kosovo, we have implemented a number of important projects, focusing on improving access to employment and education for minority communities, improving the institutional capacities of municipalities to promote and protect the rights of minority communities, addressing and preventing gender-based violence, and promoting cultural tolerance among Kosovo youth from various communities.

We launched a number of new projects during 2015, including the implementation of a European Union-funded project aimed at providing support and assistance to Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian community members engaged in collecting recyclable waste to improve and enhance their self-employment opportunities in Kosovo's labour market.

Towards the end of the year, we also started two new projects funded by the US Embassy in Pristina and USAID; the overall aim of the US Embassy-funded project is to provide a series of trainings, study visits to multi-ethnic municipalities and locations in Kosovo and to share experiences and celebrate diversity.

The USAID-funded project aims to provide support to grassroots civil society organisations to increase their capacities to monitor local authorities.

Drawing on our long-standing commitment to tackle discrimination faced by Roma students in the education sector, we joined the European Roma Rights Centre in a research project aimed at identifying cases of segregation of Roma students in Serbian-curriculum schools in Kosovo. Our engagement in this under-researched area includes field visits to locations in all regions of Kosovo where our project team collects testimonies from the community and school officials.

During the past year, we have also continued some of our ongoing projects. The project "Empowering Minority Communities against Gender-Based Violence," funded by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, completed its second, and final, year. This project provides legal and economic empowerment of Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and Serb women in four municipalities with the purpose of strengthening adequate gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and treatment services and to address the extreme socioeconomic vulnerability of the women of these communities.

With these objectives in mind, we have organised skills training for beneficiaries, roundtables with women, psychological sessions for beneficiaries and paralegals, and workshop discussions with men, and implemented curricula on women's rights in high schools in the municipalities in question. With the financial support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo, we have continued to provide support and advocate for a solution to the ongoing problem of the lack of recognition of diplomas issued by the Serbian parallel education system in Kosovo by Kosovo authorities. Our work at this stage has consisted in trying to mediate a technical solution, pending a political agreement, which will allow diploma holders to apply for jobs at Kosovo public institutions. Such a mechanism has been agreed upon by all sides after an intense period of negotiation and mediation. The mechanism is expected to come into force during the beginning of next year. This should be a first step towards the harmonisation of Serbian-language education in Kosovo.

Also in the domain of education, we have continued to implement an UNICEF-funded project which supports the establishment and functioning of teams bringing together municipal authorities and school representatives with the purpose of retaining and preventing children from dropping out of school in nine municipalities throughout Kosovo.

Over the year, ECMI Kosovo has continued to implement its long-standing project, supported by the Finnish Embassy in Kosovo, in providing assistance to ten Serb-majority municipalities in areas of local economic development and decentralisation. A number of milestones have been achieved in 2015, including but not limited to updated Local Economic Development strategies adopted by the municipalities and their associated Action Plans, issue-based dialogue forums between municipal officials, members of municipal assemblies and vulnerable and marginalised groups, and the implementation of a capacity-building programme on professional and entrepreneurial skills for vulnerable and marginalised groups.

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With the support of the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and the Office of the Language Commissioner, for the fifth consecutive year we have provided beginners' and advanced level language courses in the official languages of Kosovo, Albanian and Serbian, to municipal officials in thirteen municipalities throughout Kosovo.

These projects give a good impression of the various domains in which we are active. We are convinced that these projects have major impact at the institutional level – where they raise the awareness and capacities of institutions to promote and protect minority rights – and in the daily lives of members of minority communities in Kosovo.

As we look forward to continuing and expending our work in 2016, we would like to thank our long-standing trusted partners who have supported our work throughout so many years, especially the Government of Finland, the Government of Norway, the European Union Office in Kosovo, the US Embassy, USAID, UNICEF, OSCE HCNM, UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, the Kosovo Language Commissioner, as well as other associates and partners who have made our success possible.

Adrian Zeqiri
Executive Director
ECMI Kosovo

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ECMI Kosovo Staff and Interns

Note: Below is only the list of employees that have been engaged with ECMI Kosovo on a regular basis. ECMI Kosovo uses an extensive network of short term researchers, experts and consultants which are not included in this list. The overall number of people who worked with ECMI Kosovo during 2015 is 143.

Mr Adrian Zeqiri – *Executive Director*

Ms Jeta Bakija – *Project Manager*

Mr Trim Kabashi – *Project Manager*

Ms Ann Madsen – *Project Manager*

Mr Carlo Giovannone – *Project Manager*

Mr Hans Fridlund – *Project Development Officer*

Mr Pieter Troch – *Project Officer / Coordinator for the North of Kosovo*

Mr Gazmen Salijević – *Project Coordinator*

Ms Marija Krstić – *International Coordinator*

Ms Elizabeta Haziri – *Technical Expert*

Mr Arben Osmani – *Project Officer*

Ms Zihnie Gurmani – *Project Assistant/Technical Advisor*

Ms Renata Nikolla – *Project Assistant*

Ms Dijana Hasani – *Project Assistant*

Ms Drenusha Miftari – *Project Assistant*

Mr Filip Rakić – *Project Assistant*

Mr Nazmi Zuka – *Financial Manager*

Mr Granit Berisha – *Financial Assistant*

Ms Bardha Hamiti – *Finance Officer*

Mr Lars Burema – *External Associate*

Ms Jennifer Addea – *Researcher*

Ms Daniela Radić – *Local Correspondent Zubin Potok*

Mr Marko Marjanović – *Local Correspondent Leposavić/Leposaviq*

Ms Mirjona Zivić – *Local Correspondent Gračanica/Graçanicë*

Mr Predrag Simić – *Local Correspondent Parteš/Partesh*

Ms Snezana Ristić – *Local Correspondent Ranilug/Ranillug*

Ms Vesna Stajić – *Local Correspondent Novobërdë/Novo Brdo*

Ms Belkize Islami – *Paralegal in Ferizaj/Uroševac*

Ms Valdete Osmani – *Paralegal in Ferizaj/Uroševac*

Ms. Medina Mustafa – *Paralegal in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje*

Ms Xhejlane Haliti – *Paralegal in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje*

Ms Mimoza Gavrani – *Local Coordinator from NRAEWOK*

Ms Shpresa Agushi – *Local Coordinator from NRAEWOK*

Ms Arbane Shala – Rama – *Local Coordinator from CLARD*

Mr Gezim Hoti – *Local Coordinator from Health for All*

Mr Ramadan Mujaj – *Local Coordinator from RADC*

Mr Burim Ademi – *Local Coordinator from CRIK*

Mr Fatmir Berisha – *Collection Centre Coordinator in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje*

Ms Jovana Tintor – *Serbian Language Teacher in the Municipality of Lipljan/Lipljane and Vushtrri/Vučitrn*

Mr Nuhi Kosumi – *Albanian Language Teacher in the Municipality of Kamenicë/Kamenica, Ranillug/Ranilug and Partesh/Parteš*

Ms Anisa Muric – *Serbian Language Teacher in the Municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje*

Ms Anyla Zajmi – *Albanian Language Teacher in the Municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Graçanicë/Gračanica*

Mr Davor Petković – *Serbian Language Teacher in the Municipality of Kamenicë/Kamenica, Gjilan/Gnjilane and Novobërdë/Novo Brdo*

Mr Hajdar Mallaku – *Albanian Language Teacher in the municipality of Prizren*

Ms Feride Lohaj – *Albanian and Serbian Language Teacher in the Municipality of Shtërpcë/Štrpce*

Ms Fjolla Dubovci – *Intern*

Ms Vesa Dinarama – *Intern*

Ms Rachelle Olinger – *Intern*

Ms Andrea Garaiova – *Intern*

Ms Marina Mišović – *Intern*

Mr Anttoni Niemi – *Intern*

Mr Daniel Heler – *Intern*

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EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES KOSOVO

I. MISSION AND HISTORY OF ECMI KOSOVO

The European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo (ECMI Kosovo) is the principal non-government organisation (NGO) engaged with the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of all minority communities in Kosovo. Our overarching goal is to contribute to developing an inclusive, democratic and stable multi-ethnic society in Kosovo.

Our vision and mission

ECMI Kosovo's vision is a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo in which the human and minority rights of members from all communities are realised in line with domestic and international standards. With a view to contributing to this vision, ECMI Kosovo engages in a wide range of activities aimed at stabilising inter-ethnic relations and ensuring the effective implementation and functioning of the legal, policy and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of minority rights.

Our Approach

ECMI Kosovo adopts a unique approach in its work for the protection and promotion of human and minority rights in Kosovo. One of its key aspects is our two-pronged focus, which combines top-down implementation and bottom-up feedback: we provide capacity-building and policy recommendations to government institutions for them to function in a community-sensitive, accountable and transparent manner, while also empowering civil society within communities to effectively participate in decision-making and advocate for their rights. This approach seeks to contribute to enhancing dialogue between these actors and developing an inclusive, participatory and accountable democracy. We also strive to ensure the inclusion of gender perspectives and the representation of particularly vulnerable groups in our work.

In order to achieve our vision, ECMI Kosovo conducts a wide range of activities, including capacity-building, monitoring, policy-oriented research, legal analysis and support, and awareness-raising. Our unique approach allows us to combine the best qualities of NGOs, think-tanks and consultancy companies. ECMI Kosovo maintains close relations and is positively perceived by communities and a large number of stakeholders in Kosovo, both at the local and central level.

ECMI Kosovo has been active in Kosovo since 2001 and became a locally registered NGO in 2008. Today, our organisation is recognised as the leader in the field due to our vast experience in and in-depth expertise on a multitude of human and minority rights related issues, including, but not limited to, decentralisation, language and education rights, the economic and legal empowerment of minorities and vulnerable groups, and the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Our team currently comprises around twenty-five highly motivated staff members and interns from various Kosovo communities and abroad, based at our offices in Prishtinë/Priština and Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North. In addition, ECMI Kosovo has a team of local correspondents working in the field, namely in the newly-decentralised Serb-majority municipalities throughout Kosovo.

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Our Main Areas of Work

Since its establishment in 2001, ECMI Kosovo has conducted activities and developed in-depth expertise on a wide range of minority rights related issues. Currently, our work is focused on four main thematic areas:

1. Governance & accountability – Kosovo has developed a comprehensive legislative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of the rights of minority communities. However, much remains to be done to ensure and enhance the effectiveness of this framework. Presently, government institutions lack adequate capacities and knowledge to fully implement the legislative framework, while civil society remains weak, often lacking the ability to effectively advocate for their communities' rights. To address these deficiencies, ECMI Kosovo works closely with both institutions and civil society to establish an accountable and transparent system of governance, responsive to the needs of all minority communities in Kosovo. We have provided capacity building support to central and local level institutions, provided regular training opportunities to civil society and actively support minority communities in advocating for their rights.

2. Education – ECMI Kosovo strongly believes that an inclusive education system, respectful of diversity and human rights is a key requirement for the establishment of stable inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. Therefore, ECMI Kosovo has developed a diverse portfolio of activities aimed at promoting the education rights of minority communities and has been particularly active in supporting the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in Kosovo's education system.

3. Language issues – Language forms an important part of human identity and is a central feature of Kosovo's community rights protection framework. ECMI Kosovo has a long history in working on language issues in Kosovo. We have supported the development of a comprehensive legislative framework on language rights, through the development of the Law on the Use of Languages (2006), co-operate closely with the Office of the Language Commissioner and have, since 2010, offered Serbian and Albanian language courses to municipal officials in Kosovo.

4. Economic empowerment – The creation of economic opportunities for minority communities is essential to ensuring their sustainable future in Kosovo. Unfortunately, many members of minority communities continue to face economic marginalization. In response to this problem, ECMI Kosovo has developed a programme to support the economic empowerment of minority communities in Kosovo. Our work in this field has included: support to municipal administrations in improving the business environment for minority communities; the provision of training and in-kind support to Roma, Ashkali

and Egyptian women to improve their socio-economic opportunities; and, the delivery of technical assistance in the creation and operation of business associations in Serb-majority municipalities.

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II. ECMI KOSOVO DONORS AND PARTNERS

- European Roma Rights Centre
- European Union Office in Kosovo
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland
- Office of the Language Commissioner/Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo
- OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
- Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo
- UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
- UNDP
- UNICEF
- United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women
- USAID funded program, "Advancing Kosovo Together"
- US Embassy



III. ECMI KOSOVO ACTIVITIES

- **Community Mobilization – Capacity Building Program for CSO's in the North of Kosovo**

  The project "*Community Mobilization – Capacity Building Program for CSO's in the North of Kosovo"* aims to foster democratic potential of the communities living in Northern Kosovo by increasing the role and strengthening the abilities of civil society organisations, thereby encouraging involvement of CSO's and local communities in the decision-making processes. The involvement of citizens in the political processes and their active participation will be achieved through increase of visibility of civil society organisations and their capacities to work with local communities which will enhance cooperation and contact between local civil society organisations and citizens from different ethnic communities. Due to the political and social situation in Northern Kosovo and absence of a functional legal and rule of law system, civil society organisations operating in the region failed to impose themselves as productive actors on the social scene and to prove effective in addressing the needs of the local community. This results in lack of connection between non-governmental organisations and population whose interest organisations are expected to present and impossibility of organisations to communicate their goals and activities to wider community. Consequently, activities implemented under the project focus on increasing the knowledge of CSOs on the value of mobilization of the society as a mean of increasing civil participation in community development, increasing relations with citizens and increasing the experience in practical application of social media in community outreach and mobilization.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 January 2014

  End date: 01 June 2015

  Funding

  This project is funded by European Union Office in Kosovo.

- **Empowering Minority Communities in Kosovo against Gender-Based Violence" funded by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women**

  Domestic violence is one of the most common forms of violation of women's rights. Moreover, despite the fact that the problem appears to be widespread across all communities living in Kosovo, women from Serb, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities appear to be more affected by GBV. According to our researches, Serb women have low levels of trust into Kosovo Institutions due to the political situation Kosovo is currently at; thus, they are not fully integrated in the society. Whereas Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women usually have a lack education, face double discrimination (as being members of minority and being women); thus, they are not able to become employed and generate incomes. ECMI Kosovo, during 2015, within the project *"Empowering Minority Communities in Kosovo against Gender-Based Violence"* funded by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, in partnership with NRAEWOK, CLARD and Aktiv implemented various

activities through which it managed to reach a total number of 1,700 through home visits, awareness raising activities, quarterly meetings with women, three months skills trainings, discussion workshops with men and the implementation of the Women's Rights Curriculum in high schools in the municipalities of Ferizaj/Uroševac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Gračanica/Graçanicë.

Implementation Period:

Starting date: 01 January 2014

End date: 01 January 2016

Funding:

United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.





- **Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Growth for All Newly-established Municipalities in Kosovo**

  In 2015, ECMI Kosovo continued to work directly with municipalities and communities to promote sustainable and inclusive growth in Serb-majority municipalities. Highlights of the project have included the development of municipal strategies on local economic development, communication classes for municipal officials in North Kosovo and capacity building for civil society. In the target municipalities, there is an observable lack of dialogue between community members, specifically those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups, and municipal officials. Thus, the project has sought to improve communication between these actors through a series of regular focus groups and roundtables to ensure that the voices of all community members are heard.

  Implementation period

  Starting date: 01 February 2014

  End date: 31 January 2017

  Funding

  This project is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.



- **Improving Minority Communities' Access to Higher Education in Serbian Language and Public Employment**

  During 2015, ECMI Kosovo continued to support a government-led working group in establishing a temporary mechanism that will verify diplomas issued by the University of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North for the purpose of applying with Kosovo public institutions. After an intensive round of consultations and adaptation, the working group finalised a regulation which will allow UMN graduates to have their diplomas certified for job applications with Kosovo public institutions. Up to this moment, UMN diplomas are not recognised by Kosovo because the University is not accredited within the Kosovo higher education system. This, however, violates the right to education and work of minority communities, many of whom attend higher education in Serbian at the University in Mitrovica/Mitrovicë.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 April 2014

  End date: 01 April 2016

  Funding

  This project is funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo.

- **Promoting Good Governance and Enhancing the Capacity of Kosovo's Newly Established Municipalities in Protecting Community Rights**

  The project *"Promoting Good Governance and Enhancing the Capacity of Kosovo's Newly Established Municipalities in Protecting Community Rights"* aims to strengthen the knowledge of municipal representatives on community-related issues, enhance interaction with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and increased participation of citizens in local public life. The aim of the project is to promote good governance at the local level, strengthen the knowledge of municipal representatives on community-related issues, enhance interaction with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and increased participation of citizens in local public life.

  Implementation Period

  Starting date: 01 May 2014

  End date: 31 January 2015

  Funding

  This project is funded by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

- **Monitoring and Evaluation of Language Rights in Kosovo: Towards Strengthening Institutional Compliance with the Kosovo Law on the Use of Languages**

  In order to address this situation, the project '*Monitoring and Evaluation of Language Rights: Towards Strengthening Institutional Compliance with the Kosovo Law on the Use of Languages' seeks* to support the work and mandate of the OLC by strengthening the technical capacities of the OLC and providing expert support to monitor and enhance the institutional compliance with the *Law on the Use of Languages*. The overall aim of the project is to improve the enforcement of language rights in Kosovo.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 May 2014

  End date: 28 February 2015

  Funding:

  This project is funded by the Office of the Language Commissioner/Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo (OLC/OPM), and the supported and coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

- **Increasing Employment of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Community Members through a Recycling Collective**

  In 2015, ECMI Kosovo continued to provide support to the informal waste collection sector with the aim of increasing self-employment opportunities in a sustainable and dignified manner. Highlights of the project over the past year include: the establishment of the association of informal waste collectors, the Collective Recycling Initiative Kosovo, in order to organize the work of collectors around a common platform, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the project and self-

employment of informal collectors; the organization of study visit to Macedonia where participants saw first-hand on how informal collectors collaborate with recycling centres, and studied the process of integrating informal collectors to formal structures; the delivery of a series of trainings designed to increase the capacities of beneficiaries and of the association of informal waste collectors itself.

Implementation Period:

Starting date: 14 December 2014

End date: 14 December 2016

Funding:

This project is funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo.



- **Enabling cooperation between Serbian and Albanian women via language and business in Kosovo**

  ECMI Kosovo provided support for trainers in the W4W project, *"Enabling cooperation between Serbian and Albanian women via language and business in Kosovo",* which implemented and integrated 12-month women's empowerment programmes that combined life skills and rights awareness education with market-based vocational training and small business start-up support.

  Implementation Period:

Starting date: 16 January 2015
End date: 20 March 2015
Funding:
This activity was funded by Women for Women International.

- **Official Language Acquisition for Municipal Officials In Kosovo**

  The project *"Official Language Acquisition for Municipal Officials in Kosovo",* funded by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, started its fifth year/phase on 15 March 2015 and ended on 30 November 2015. In this phase, ECMI Kosovo, as implementing partner, managed to cover 13 ethnically mixed and Serb majority municipalities in which it organised 23 language courses in total – 13 Albanian and 10 Serbian. Other activities included one info session in each of the municipalities, two teachers briefing sessions where the main issues and challenges of the courses were discussed, three field visits to each of the courses for evaluation and monitoring (after one month, mid-term, and final), activity of joint classes in each of the municipality where municipal officials from both communities had opportunity to practice the second language, mid-term and final testing, and certificate ceremonies. This year we had in total 285 municipal officials who attended our language courses, out of which 175 (61%) had attendance rate above 70%. The share of women among participants was 44%, while the share of men was 56%. A total of 69% (198) of all the participants took the final test, while 37% of them obtained the certificate for advanced level of language competence; 37% obtained the certificate for beginner level of language competence; and 26% received the confirmation of attendance.

  Implementation Period:
  Starting date: 15 March 2015
  End date: 30 November 2015
  Funding:
  This project is funded by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and Office of the Language Commissioner/Office of the Prime Minister.



- **Enhancing Access to and Retention in Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children – Phase II**

  The project aimed to enhance the access to education and retention in education for vulnerable and disadvantaged children through strengthening the capacities of municipal officials and teams for prevention of and response to school drop-outs and non-registration at school and municipal levels to reduce the number of out-of-school children. The project has been implemented for 21 months in six municipalities, and expands in its second phase to three additional municipalities.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 June 2015

  End date: 31 May 2016

  Funding:

  This project is funded by UNICEF.

- **Diversity Is Opportunity: Promoting Tolerance As a Means of Reconciliation and Democratisation**

  In September 2015, ECMI Kosovo launched a new project which brings together youth from various communities from the mixed municipalities of Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North and Gračanica/Graçanicë around themes of cultural diversity and tolerance. Highlights of the project so far were a two-day training on cultural diversity and heritage in Kosovo and a study visit to the city of Prizren. The project provides a platform for youth to engage with cultural diversity and tolerance in a creative and spontaneous manner. By giving young people the opportunity to share their own experiences on cultural diversity in a relaxed atmosphere and providing well-chosen guidance, we aim to instill

upon them the insight that cultural diversity is inherent to Kosovo's cultural landscape and that this should not be a burden but rather an asset.

Implementation Period:

Starting date: 01 September 2015

End date: 31 March 2016

Funding:

This project is funded through the US Embassy Pristina Democracy Commission Small Grants Program.



- **The Segregation in Serbian Curricula Schools in Kosovo**

  The *"Segregation in Serbian Curricula Schools in Kosovo"* project was launched in October in cooperation with the European Roma Rights Centre. The objective is to open the "black box" of segregation of Roma students in the Serbian parallel education system present in Kosovo. The initial three months of the projects focused on gathering information through extensive field research in 7 locations around Kosovo where ECMI Kosovo researchers documented the in-school environment and collected testimonies from teachers and other school officials, and from parents and past and present students from the Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian communities. The project will result in a report compiling evidence from researched locations and offer hands-on recommendations to authorities on how to effectively tackle the issue of segregation.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 October 2015

End date: 31 March 2016

Funding:

This project is funded by the European Roma Rights Centre.



- **Strengthening the Watchdog Role of Minority Civil Society Organizations in Kosovo**

  In 2015, ECMI Kosovo launched a new project with the aim of improving the watchdog capacities of grassroots civil society. Currently, governance on minority issues in Kosovo suffers from a lack of accountability and transparency, with minority civil society playing a weak role in this process due to their low capacity, experience and resources. Although the legislation on the protection of minority communities in Kosovo is very comprehensive, the legal framework is frequently left unimplemented. Thus, there is a clear need for a strong and effective civil society with the capabilities to monitor and evaluate the work of local authorities. Highlights of 2015 have included meetings with municipalities and civil society organizations to discuss the monitoring framework in place and gaps that need to be filled.

  Implementation Period:

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Starting date: 01 October 2015

End date: 31 March 2017

Funding:

This project is funded by Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution, a USAID funded Program.



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IV. ECMI KOSOVO PUBLICATIONS

*The full documents and reports are available at www.ecmikosovo.org, in English, Albanian, and Serbian. Please click one any title if you would like direct access to its location on our website. In addition, the titles in the colour of **light blue** are part of our Kosovo Communities Issues Monitor.*

Political Updates and Analyses

- **ECMI Kosovo condemns the violent blockage of entrance to the Serb orthodox church in Gjakovë/Đakovica**

  January 7, 2015
- **ECMI Kosovo calls for calm in light of protests against minister Jablanović's controversial statement**

  January 10, 2015
- **Forging a Working Environment within the Government of Kosovo**

  January 19, 2015
- **Calls for Reason and Action in light of Protests in Prishtinë/Priština**

  January 25, 2015
- **What should be remembered from the Jablanović case?**

  February 8, 2015
- **A Unified Court and Legal System in Kosovo?**

  February 15, 2015
- **The Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities: A lot of speculation, little factual agreement and no implementation**

  February 23, 2015
- **Minister Murati's Controversial Statement and the Reactions that Followed**

  March 5, 2015
- **The Neglecting of Non-Serb Minority Communities in the Kosovo–Serb Technical Agreements**

  March 10, 2015
- **The Association/Community Of Serb Majority Municipalities: An Exclusive Club Based On Ethnicity?**

March 31, 2015

- **The Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities: What Is (Im)possible Within the Legal Framework?**

  April 16, 2015

- **Incidents and Tensions in Mitrovica: The Need For Unbiased Reporting and the Strengthening of the Rule of Law**

  April 21, 2015

- **Municipal Budgets In Northern Kosovo: Agreement, At Last**

  May 7, 2015

- **On the Occasion of the Recent Incident In Pasjane**

  May 10, 2015

- **The Gorani holiday on 6 May: A missed opportunity for the Kosovo institutions**

  May 14, 2015

- **On the recent security incidents in Klinë/Klina and the difficult return process**

  May 21, 2015

- **Vidovdan: No News is Good News**

  July 3, 2015

- **On the Worrisome trend of Incidents Directed at Serb Communities in the Pejë/Peja and Klinë/Klina Area**

  July 19, 2015

- **Human Rights Law Package Enters into Force**

  July 26, 2015

- **Disagreements Surrounding the Use of Languages in Kosovo and the poor Implementation of the Legal Framework**

  August 2, 2015

- **Incidents in August**

  September 4, 2015

- **The New Agreement on the Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities: An Important Step Forward, But Not The Final Word**

  September 7, 2015

- **For An Inclusive Discussion On The Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities**
  October 8, 2015
- **Is the minority quota system in higher education being abused?**
  October 15, 2015
- **Kosovo and UNESCO: For a Renewed Focus on the Debate**
  November 6, 2015
- **The Suspension of the Agreement on the Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities**
  November 13, 2015
- **Repeated Incidents in Goraždevac/Gorazhdec: Prompt Action Required**
  December 10, 2015
- **The Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities: Obligation or Opportunity?**
  December 17, 2015

Studies and Handbooks

- **The Development Potential of Tourism and Agriculture – A Study of Newly-established Serb-majority Municipalities in Southern Kosovo**
  January 16, 2015
- **To promote strong local governments for sustainable growth through trainings on their roles and responsibilities, while also analyzing relations between local and central governments**
  January 22, 2015
- **Monitoring and Evaluation of Language Rights: the Use of Indicators in the Work of the Municipal and Central Public Institutions**
  March 17, 2015
- **Guidebook on Social Mobilization**
  June 2, 2015
- **Informal Waste Collection in Kosovo: Challenges and Opportunities**
  June 24, 2015
- **Guidebook on How to Establish Community-Based Paralegals** *(currently unavailable in digital formats)*
  December 14, 2015



V. ECMI KOSOVO IN 2016

- **Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Growth for All Newly-Established Municipalities In Kosovo**

  The goal of the TSIGaN project is to promote strong, effective, accountable and transparent local self-government for Kosovo Serbs, triggering sustainable and inclusive growth as a means to improve inter-ethnic relations and to contribute to a stable, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo as envisaged in the Ahtisaari plan. The project seeks to increase the capacities of local governments to fully and effectively implement their competencies attributed by the Ahtisaari plan, by the Constitution of Kosovo and by the Law on Local Self-Government, in order to establish growth-oriented policies at municipal level for the benefit of the local communities. The project also encourages active participation and engagement of all local communities and vulnerable and marginalised groups (VMGs) in the decision-making process, in social life, and in local economic development.

  Implementation period

  Starting date: 01 February 2014

  End date: 31 January 2017

  Funding

  This project is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

- **Improving Minority Communities' Access to Higher Education in Serbian Language and Public Employment**

  The purpose of this project is to propose and support a solution that will enable citizens of the Republic of Kosovo who have obtained degrees issued by the University of Mitrovica North (UMN) to apply for employment in public institutions of the Republic of Kosovo.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 April 2014

  End date: 01 April 2016

  Funding

  This project is funded by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Embassy in Kosovo.

- **Increasing Employment of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities through a Recycling Collective**

  The project *"Increasing Employment of Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian Communities through a Recycling Collective"* aims to increase self-employment opportunities for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo through strengthening and unifying recycling initiatives already present in these communities.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 14 December 2014

  End date: 14 December 2016

  Funding:

  This project is funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo.

- **Enhancing Access to And Retention in Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children – Phase II**

  The project aims to enhance the access to education and retention in education for vulnerable and disadvantaged children through strengthening the capacities of municipal officials and teams for prevention of and response to school drop-outs and non-registration at school and municipal levels to reduce the number of out-of-school children. The project has been implemented for 21 months in six municipalities, and expands in its second phase to three additional municipalities.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 June 2015

  End date: 31 May 2016

  Funding:

  This project is funded by UNICEF.

- **Diversity Is Opportunity: Promoting Tolerance as a Means of Reconciliation and Democratization**

  The project goal is to promote inter-ethnic and cultural tolerance as a prerequisite to enhance inter-ethic dialogue and bring about reconciliation in Kosovo. The proposed action is to bring young people from Albanian, Serbian, Roma and Bosniak communities in Mitrovica/ë North and Gračanica/Graçanicë closer through trainings, creative workshops and study visits promoting values of cultural tolerance and democracy. In a formal and informal manner, young people will be able to present themselves and their communities to young people from other communities and, at the same time, learn about the others. Taking into consideration that Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe, such efforts are paramount for breaking the barriers between ethnic communities, thus contributing to meaningful and sustainable conflict resolution and reconciliation, and the creation of a stable multi-ethnic Kosovo society.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 September 2015

  End date: 31 March 2016

  Funding:

  This project is funded through the US Embassy Pristina Democracy Commission Small Grants Program.

- **Strengthening the Watching Role of Minority Civil Society Organizations in Kosovo**

  The overall goal of the project is to strengthen the 'watchdog' role of minority civil society in ensuring transparency and accountability of public authorities. Participating CSOs will directly benefit from capacity building activities through a training program (20-30 participants), including practical on the job coaching, as well as practical experience in conducting monitoring, evaluation and advocacy. The final beneficiaries will be minority communities in Kosovo, who will profit from a strengthened civil society and improved accountability and transparency in governance on minority issues. In addition to capacity building trainings for minority CSOs, the project will produce two monitoring and evaluation reports over 1.5 years in the form of a practical handbook for the use of grassroots CSOs to implement.

  Implementation Period:

  Starting date: 01 October 2015

  End date: 31 March 2017

  Funding:

  This project is funded by Advancing Kosovo Together – Local Solution, a USAID funded Program.

- **Equal Rights for All Coalition**

  Fundamental human rights for citizens of Kosovo are *de jure* guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There is however a considerable gap between legislation and *de facto* access to and protection of fundamental rights.

Vulnerable and marginalised groups, including minority communities, women, youth, and LGBT are particularly restricted when exercising their fundamental rights. Thus, A Coalition comprising seven (7) non-governmental organisations was established and developed a project *"Equal Rights for All Coalition"* which is funded by the European Union and managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo.

The Coalition will organise its activities around a number of fundamental rights that have been identified by the Coalition partners and international actors as particularly problematic for VMGs which are as following:

1. Equality before the Law; Right to fair and impartial trial; Right to Legal Remedy
2. Right to Liberty and Security
3. Freedom of expression; Right to access of public documents; Freedom of media
4. Right to education
5. Right to work and exercise profession
6. Health and social protection

Equal Rights for All Coalition project objectives are to establish and maintain an effective coalition that aims to strengthen the capacities of participating CSOs to advocate for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights of selected vulnerable and marginalised groups (VMGs). In particular, *the Coalition* will:

1. Form a cooperative mechanism to provide aid and support to members of VMGs whose fundamental rights are not guaranteed or protected;
2. Establish meaningful and informed participation in the government's decision- and policy-making processes on the promotion and protection of fundamental rights of VMGs on the basis of multi-disciplinary policy research;
3. Strengthen the institutional capacities and interdisciplinary skills of participating CSOs;
4. Raise awareness about the role of civil society in enhancing access to fundamental rights for all.

Implementation Period:

Starting date: 29 December 2015

End date: 29 December 2019

Funding:

This project is funded by the European Union and managed by the European Union Office in Kosovo.

EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR MINORITY ISSUES KOSOVO

VI. AUDIT REPORT

In 2015, ECMI Kosovo maintained a dynamic staff, including representatives from many communities in Kosovo, as well as internationals. It operated on principles of equitability when it came to employing staff members from the different communities across Kosovo.

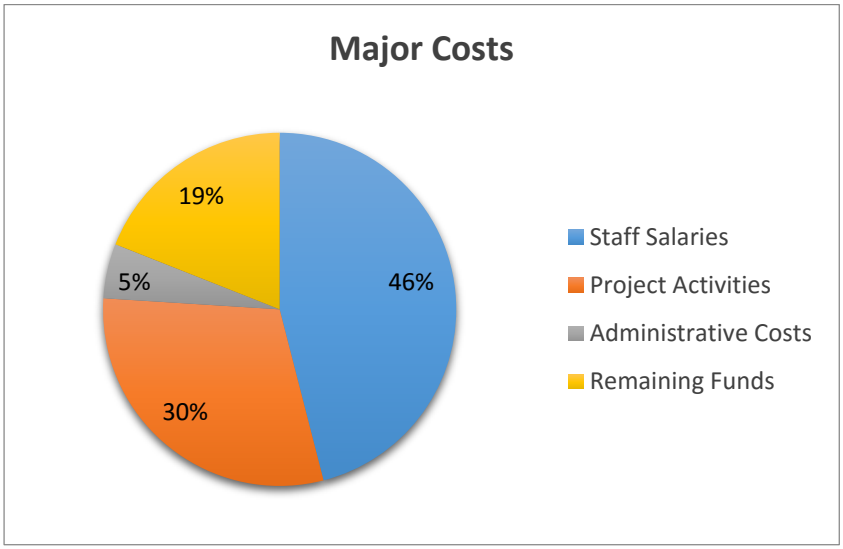
Over the course of 2015, ECMI Kosovo paid 143 individuals, who included staff researchers, experts and different part time correspondents. ECMI Kosovo employed 22 full-time staff within its two offices in Prishtinë/Priština and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North.

Some employees worked for specific projects, who were not always based in the office. They included experts, consultants, paralegals, local correspondents, and researchers. Over the course of the year, ECMI Kosovo paid 89 unique secondary staff members.

Major Costs for 2015

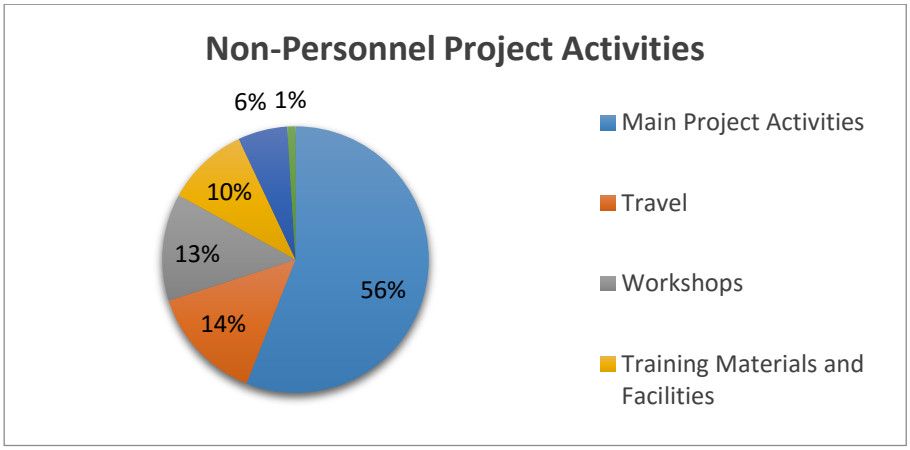
In 2015, ECMI Kosovo spent a total of €359,641 on salaries for staff and other personnel expenses. This amounts to 46 per cent of the total funds of the organisation, which totaled €789,671. Of this, €12,645 was paid as pension contributions.

Other non-personnel project activities, across all projects, amounted to 30 per cent of total funds, or €237,464. Administrative costs, €40,348, amounted to only 5 per cent of total funds for the year. These figures are shown below:



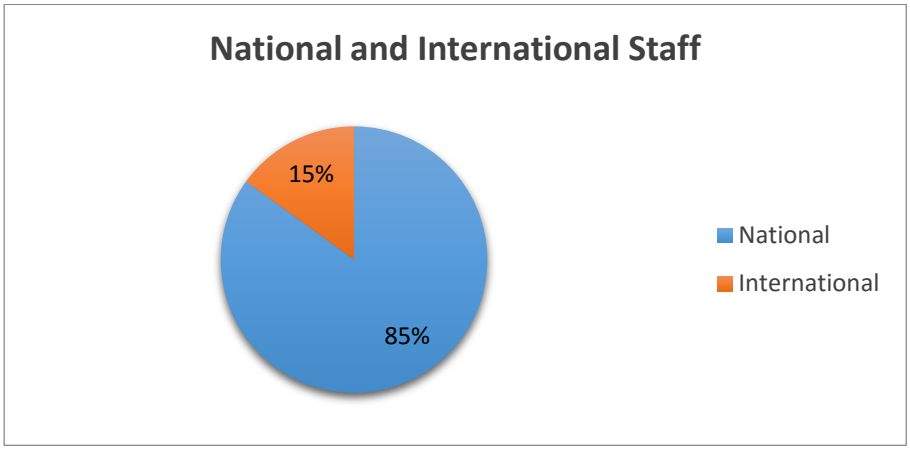
Independent audit Grant Thornton LLC expressed an unmodified opinion on ECMI Kosovo's cash-basis financial report for 2015 in its report dated 27 January 2016.

Non- personnel project activities included travel, workshops, training materials and facilities, advocacy work, and food and refreshments. Below is a breakdown of the use of funds for poject activities across all projects within ECMI Kosovo:

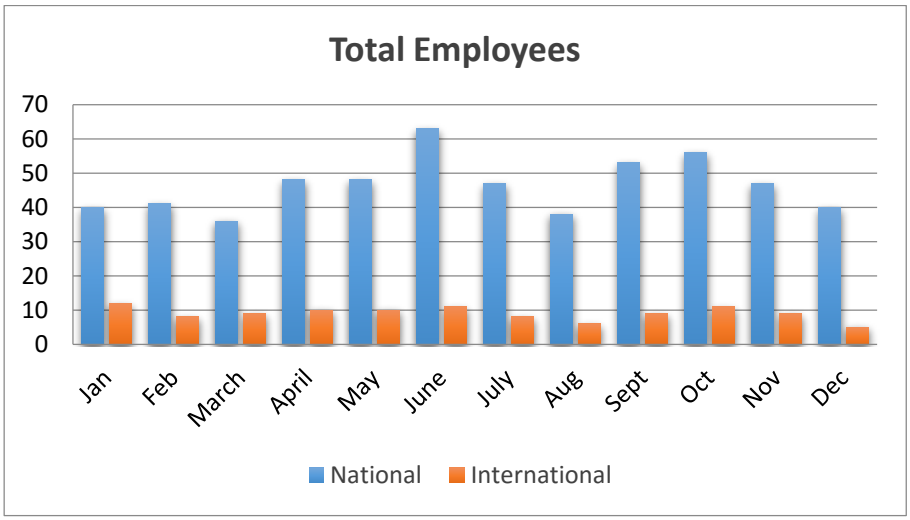


National and International Staff

ECMI Kosovo has always aimed for the highest quality of staff members, who can contribute effectively to the organisation's aim of furthering the multi-ethnic society in Kosovo. To this end, while ECMI Kosovo employs predominately local staff, there are also a number of qualified internationals who are engaged in projects. As shown below, overall in 2015, 85 per cent of ECMI Kosovo's employees (amounting to 143 employees) were national staff from different communities in Kosovo:

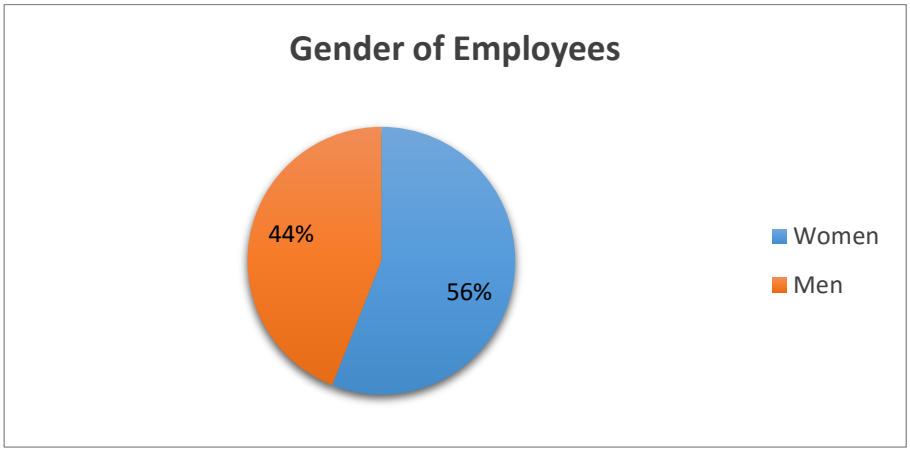


Below is a breakdown of the month-by-month employment of local and international staff members, including both primary and secondary staff:



Gender Balance

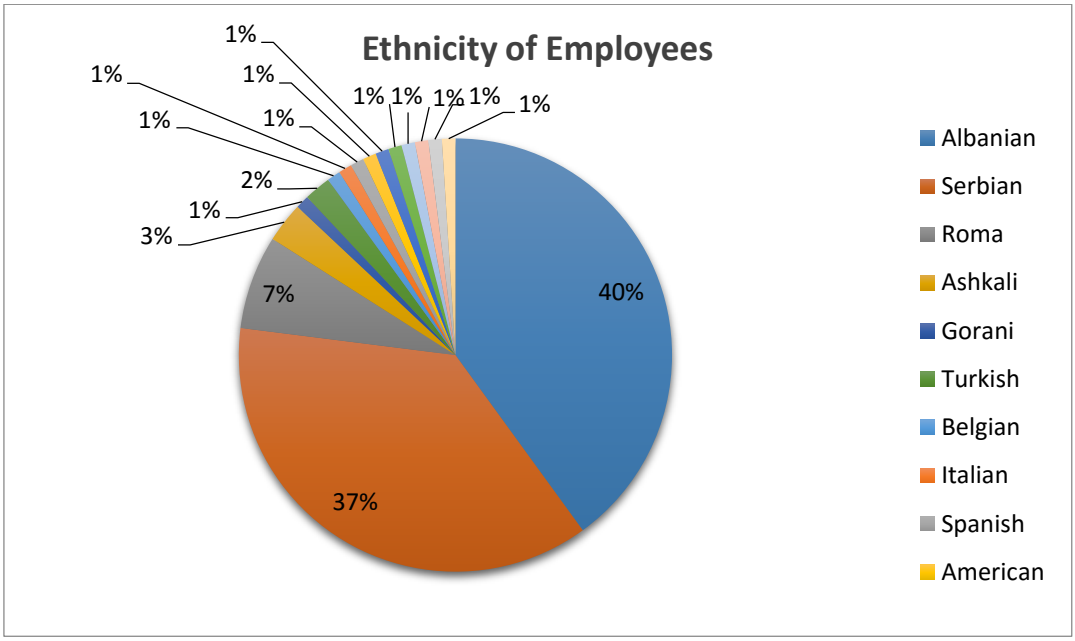
ECMI Kosovo strives to have a strong gender balance within its teams across all projects. In 2015, there were four (4) women project managers who worked on the projects, *"Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Growth for all Newly-Established Municipalities in Kosovo", "Empowering Minority Communities in Kosovo against Gender-Based Violence", "Official Language Acquisition for Municipal Officials in Kosovo",* and *"Enhancing Access to and Retention in Education for Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Children"*. Across all paid primary and secondary members of staff in 2015, ECMI Kosovo employed more women than men. There were 81 women and 62 men paid across the year:



Ethnicity of Employees

ECMI Kosovo has sought to employ members from different communitites represented across Kosovo. There are six (6) local communitites represented in the local staff members both in the office and in the field in 2015: Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Ashkali, Gorani, and Turkish.

Overall in 2015, ECMI Kosovo employed staff from many local and international communities. A breakdown of this can be seen below:



If you have any questions about the structure of ECMI Kosovo, we would be glad to answer them. Please contact us at: info@ecmikosovo.org, or call the office at +381 (0) 38 224 473.

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