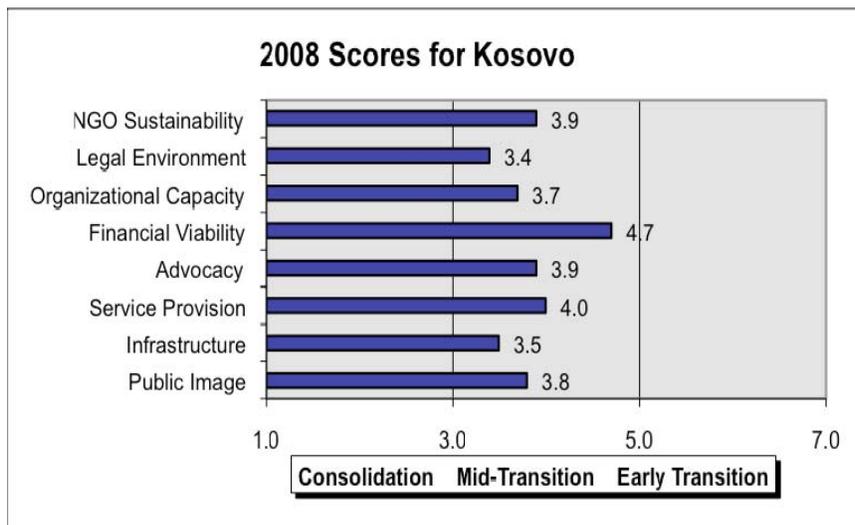


KOSOVO



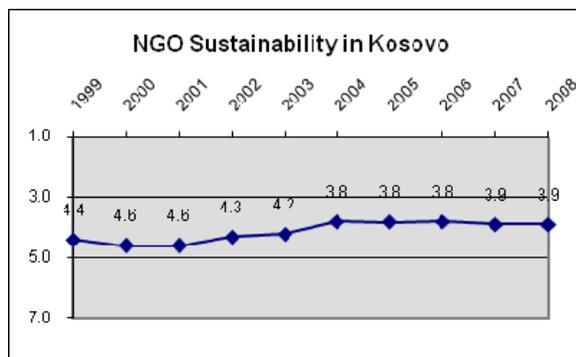
Capital: Pristina

Polity:
Republic

Population:
1,804,838 (July 2009 est.)

GDP per capita (PPP):
\$2,300 (2007 est.)

NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 3.9



The declaration of independence by the Kosovo Assembly on February 17, 2008 marked one of the most significant turning points in modern history, ending the status quo that was preserved by the United Nations Interim Administration (UNMIK) for almost nine years. The declaration of independence was a unilateral action coordinated with the international community and was followed by intensive efforts on the part of various actors to gain international recognition of Kosovo's statehood. To date, fifty-six UN member states have recognized Kosovo as an independent country.

Kosovo's government institutions have made considerable progress in completing the legal infrastructure. Throughout the process, civil society actors have been involved either as

partners or as advisory groups for shaping policies. Civil society made a considerable contribution to the three processes that have received the most attention and energy: the Ahtisaari proposal, the constitution, and lobbying for recognition of statehood. The civil society role was largely behind the scenes, however.

The dissatisfaction of the Serbian community with Kosovo's independence was expressed primarily in the north of the country, where local Serbs took over public buildings and burned down two border crossings. During violent clashes between police and protesters, UNMIK police forces recorded two casualties and many injured.

The division of authority between UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) and the Kosovo government is complex and, in some areas, unclear. UNMIK's mandate continues until further decision by the UN Security Council, which has been divided regarding Kosovo. EULEX has slowly begun to establish a presence and take up monitoring responsibilities.

The current coalition government, composed of the two largest parties (Democratic Party of

Kosovo and Democratic League of Kosovo), continues to face challenges similar to those of its predecessors, with the economy and unemployment being the most pressing concerns. Several protests and strikes organized by trade unions were another source of pressure on the government. Among the most disruptive were strikes in the health and education sectors, and protests by the Kosovo Police Service.

Several NGO networks and informal coalitions have been established, while the level of cooperation and networking between NGOs from different regions and ethnic backgrounds did not change significantly.

The government has yet to increase the capacities of the NGO Registration Office, either through building capacity of existing staff, increasing staff, or opening branch offices. It is difficult for Serbian NGOs operating in enclaves to visit Pristina for registration purposes. NGOs from majority-populated areas also have difficulties processing their paperwork. A draft NGO law has once again been the subject of

discussions in the Kosovo Assembly, but anticipated discussions with civil society have yet to take place.

A considerable number of active NGOs are actively engaging to redefine their goals and strategies in the new environment. New organizations that have clearly defined missions and scopes of work are also emerging. The emerging role of government watchdog NGOs is another novelty in post-independence Kosovo. One example is the Organization for Anticorruption and Dignity (COHU), which has published several reports concerning government behavior.

The overall performance of the NGO sector improved slightly during 2008, largely due to the improved ability of NGOs to fundraise, organize and communicate about their work to the general public. The number of NGOs registered in Kosovo remains approximately 3,800. Of these, only about 200 are well established and active.

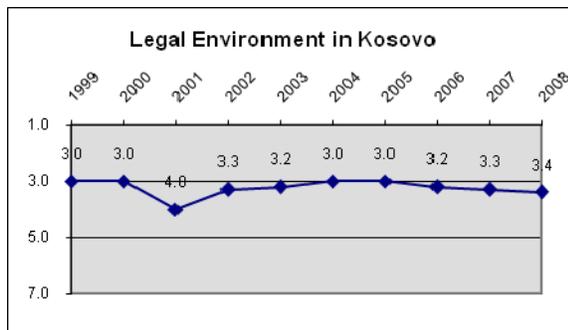
LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 3.4

The legal environment for NGOs in Kosovo slightly deteriorated during 2008. Although the NGO Regulation provides for a quick and easy process, in practice this does not happen. Procedural and administrative delays are caused mainly by the inability of the NGO Registration Office to efficiently process documentation. Changes in existing NGO statutes or registering new entities may take several weeks or even months. NGOs operating in Serb enclaves face even more challenges registering due to restrictions in movement that make traveling

back and forth difficult. Serb NGOs continued to express their dissatisfaction with the NGO Registration Office during 2008. A potential solution to this issue could be the decentralization of the office, bringing its services down to the municipal or regional level.

The VAT Regulation requires that all NGOs, even those with public benefit status, pay VAT on imports, including donated goods. NGOs are allowed to compete for government grants and contracts, and often engage in contractual arrangements with local and central government.

Although the law protects NGOs against government harassment, during 2008 there were several instances of direct or implied pressure on NGOs by the government. The NGO Registration Office attempted to inspect the financial documents of several NGOs who were critical of government policies, even though the authority to audit NGOs' financial documents is reserved for the Kosovo tax authorities.

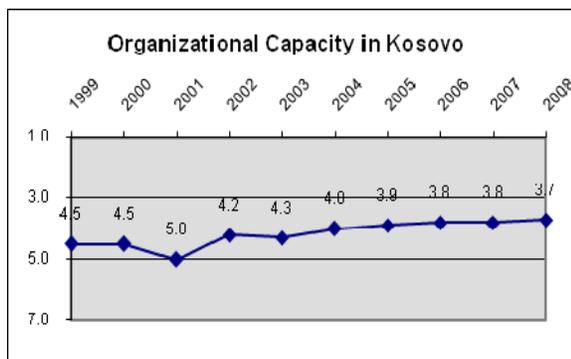


Legal advice is available to NGOs in Kosovo. Numerous law firms offering legal advice on all matters regarding Kosovo legislation have been established in Pristina and other urban centers. Despite the fact that each municipality has a legal aid office that offers free legal advice to

citizens, in reality these offices have limited capacity. No NGOs, however, reported seeking legal assistance and being unable to receive it. The lack of law firms and centers that specialize in NGO law could indicate a lack of demand for such services.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 3.7

After delaying activities because of the uncertainty preceding the declaration of independence, many NGOs have adapted their working plans and strategies to the post-independence environment and resumed their activities in the new setting. An increasing number of NGOs developed clear organizational profiles and missions during 2008. One can clearly identify NGOs that specialize in service provision and policy development and advice, as well as those that deal with pressing issues such as human rights and corruption.



Few NGOs have developed their local constituencies. The number of NGOs that engage volunteers in Kosovo is still marginal and there is an overall lack of volunteerism. The isolated instances of volunteer work are usually limited to local community actions or neighborhood initiatives, while actions involving wider networks of volunteer activists are nonexistent. For a decade before the conflict, volunteer work underpinned the ethnic Albanian alternative system and peaceful resistance movement. The lack of volunteer activity today can be attributed to a lack of incentives. NGOs need to engage more actively in outreach and provide the motivation for volunteerism.

While most active NGOs in Kosovo have clearly defined missions and internal management structures, many organizations still design their activities and projects according to donor priorities and funding policies. The situation in the Serb enclaves is rather different. Minority NGOs have more limited capacities and not very clearly defined missions and structures. Few Kosovo Serb NGOs have linkages with Kosovo Albanian civil society actors, or engage with Kosovo government institutions.

The capital Pristina has more intense NGO activity, while the activities of NGOs in other regions of Kosovo are much more limited.

One issue of concern regarding the organizational capacity of NGOs in Kosovo is the nature and function of governing boards. The same group of individuals serves on boards of numerous organizations. Some individuals are board members in as many as ten organizations. This casts doubt on the effective functioning of the boards.

During 2008, several NGO coalitions and partnerships were established. The civic initiative Fol 08 was started by several young people and focuses on reacting to government actions or inaction. It has developed into a network of activists that expresses dissatisfaction through street protests and petitions against government policies. An anti-corruption coalition also emerged. Despite the fact that the number of these coalitions and partnerships remains limited, in comparison to 2007 there was significant improvement.

Basic technical equipment is not an issue for NGOs as most of them possess computers,

phones, and faxes, and have access to the Internet. NGOs in Pristina and in the regions have suitable and functional office spaces.

NGOs in Kosovo have gathered staffs of admirable backgrounds and experience. The level of professionalism and expertise of NGO activists and leaders exceeds that of their peers in most other sectors. Participation in trainings,

FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 4.7

Financial viability of NGOs in Kosovo improved significantly during 2008 despite the fact that the donor presence decreased and two grantmaking institutions ceased their programs. In comparison to 2007, the diversification of funding by NGOs improved significantly, resulting in a more stable financial situation. Increasing numbers of NGOs are seeking funding from international donors that do not have a physical presence in Kosovo, as well as taking advantage of new funding opportunities from domestic sources. Fewer NGOs than in the past are dependent on a single donor. Also during 2008, NGOs became increasingly aware of the importance of fundraising.

Most active NGOs have good financial management procedures and records of their spending, thanks to donors' growing demands for accurate bookkeeping and independent audits. NGOs with diversified sources of funding sometimes find financial reporting more challenging as they may need to maintain records in several formats. NGOs in the north tend to have lower capacity in terms of financial management.

Fundraising is often tied to knowledge of donor languages, especially English. Because a significant share of the funds for NGOs in Kosovo is provided by donors outside the country, organizations that do not have staff with knowledge of English cannot effectively compete for such funding. Consequently, many local community initiatives do not receive international funding.

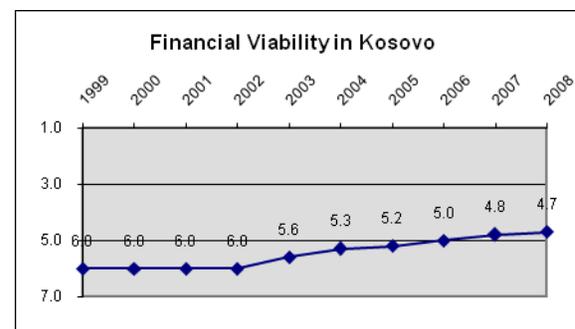
A positive phenomenon is that some Kosovar businesses and celebrities fundraise for the less

exchange programs, and networking with NGOs abroad has added to the professionalism of Kosovo NGO leaders. Most active NGOs have permanent full-time staff and engage additional project staff on a temporary basis. The Serb NGOs differ a great deal in this regard. Due to a lack of funding, NGOs in northern Kosovo face greater organizational challenges because they cannot afford to engage full-time employees.

fortunate members of society. Social responsibility, currently in very infant stages, needs to be further explored and nurtured for developing sources of local philanthropy.

Specialization of some NGOs in certain types of activity has been another positive development in terms of financial viability. Some NGOs provide paid services to both the government and the private sector. The most effective NGOs that have progressed in matching their work to their constituencies are NGOs that provide social services, such as the Mother Theresa Society, and professional associations. Such entities successfully collect membership fees and coordinate work with their constituencies.

Increased competition for funding has prompted many organizations to improve their proposal writing skills. The phenomenon of hiring external consultants for proposal writing, or hiring additional full-time staff for fundraising, is ever more common among Kosovo NGOs.



Two grantmaking foundations in Kosovo ceased their grant programs during 2008. The Community Development Fund exhausted its grants fund and is fundraising to reestablish it.

Advocacy Training and Resource Center ended its grants program with the USAID Civil Society Program. Although a new USAID civil society program with a grantmaking component began during 2008, the grants program had not resumed by the end of the year.

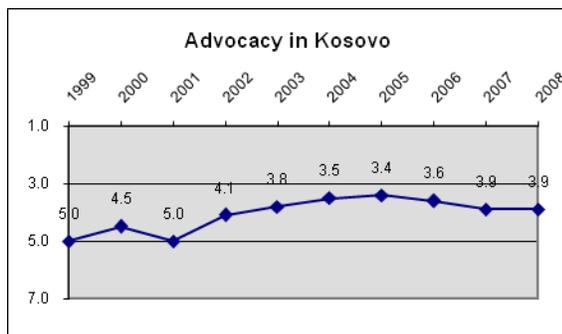
Both local and central government have awarded grants and contracts to NGOs. While the amounts and types of these contracts have

varied, they have encompassed NGO-provided goods, services and advice. NGOs have also been awarded contracts with international agencies and institutions, including the European Commission. EC funds have also been distributed through a civil society grants program. Moreover, one of the priorities of Instrument for Pre-Accession funds for Kosovo is support to civil society.

ADVOCACY: 3.9

NGO advocacy improved in 2008, especially in the post-independence period. In many instances NGOs exercised pressure on both local and central government for inclusion in decision-making processes. Nevertheless, the design of the constitution

has had very limited input from NGOs. NGO activists were engaged in the process of responding to the draft document during the public consultation period, but there was no organized input on the part of civil society in the formal drafting, even though individual NGO activists were involved in the process. As in 2007, lobbying at the local level was more successful than at the central level.



Several civil society initiatives were quite successful in shaping government policies and decisions. One example is the Forum 2015 advocacy campaign against the Kosova C power plant, which raised public awareness about this

energy project.¹ Additionally, the Organization for Anticorruption and Dignity (COHU) campaign to improve the process of licensing and accrediting private universities has been very influential.

Among the most successful advocacy initiatives have been the protests and strikes organized by trade unions in vital sectors such as health, education, and law enforcement. The demands of the trade unions have been fulfilled to a great extent.

One noteworthy initiative was lobbying for the recognition of Kosovo undertaken by Forum 2015 and a group of civil society activists who sought to generate support within the Arab world for the state of Kosovo. Civil society activists worked in tandem with the government to strengthen support for the newly established state. The results of this lobbying remain to be seen, as countries of the Middle East have yet to determine their final position on Kosovo.

Issue-based coalitions were limited in 2008. Informal cooperation between NGOs on particular issues was minimal. The Fol 08 initiative and anti-corruption coalition mentioned above were examples of attempts to build civic initiatives, civil society coalitions and networks. In general, however, activities in this vein were rare.

¹ Forum 2015 was established in 2003 as a joint initiative of the two most prominent NGOs in Kosovo, Kosovo Foundation for Civil Society and RIINVEST Institute.

SERVICE PROVISION: 4.0

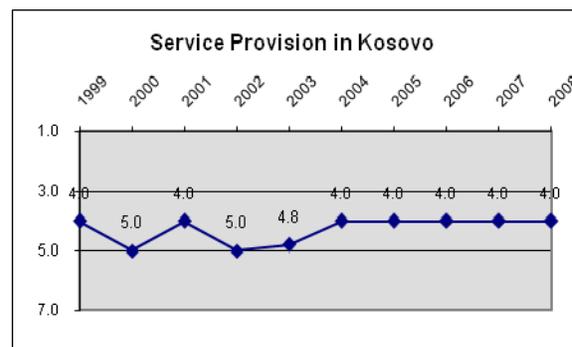
In general, the situation regarding service provision did not change a great deal during 2008. Some aspects of service provision have improved, while others have deteriorated.

NGOs continue to provide a considerable range of services, and an increasing number are involved in areas such as economic development, environmental protection, and governance. Organizations with the highest responsiveness to the needs of their communities and constituencies are those specializing in matters related to youth, gender, and human rights. The number of government grants and contracts to NGOs decreased slightly in comparison to 2007, although exact figures were not yet available. Some think tanks have offered advisory services to the government and to donor projects that have required specific expertise.

A significant number of NGOs charge for their services, although in some instances they provide their services for free. In general, NGOs recover their costs efficiently through provision of services. Conducting research and charging

fees for publications are some of the methods that NGOs use to cover their costs in part or in full.

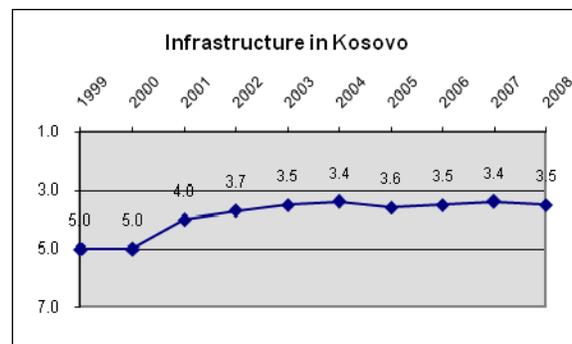
The government has contracted think tanks such as GAP Institute to offer expertise on governance issues, such as the functional review exercise that is being conducted to develop recommendations for public administration reform. Other NGOs that have provided services to the government include Advocacy Training and Resource Center, which organized a series of informational roundtables on the constitution, and the Community Development Fund, which has implemented several infrastructure projects.



INFRASTRUCTURE: 3.5

The only NGO resource center in Pristina, Advocacy Training and Resource Center, was less proactive than in previous years in offering services to the NGO community. Northern Kosovo and other enclaves continue to be serviced by the Center for Civil Society Development, which offers support and trainings to Serb NGOs operating in Kosovo. Private companies also offer trainings in various spheres that interested NGOs can attend. A considerable amount of materials is available in the local language, except in the north, which has a shortage of local-language training materials.

Kosovo Civil Society Foundation implemented a capacity building program for civil society on behalf of the European Agency for Reconstruction, but its impact was limited to a small number of organizations.



Local foundations redistributed funds raised abroad to local NGOs, but considerably less than in previous years. The remaining local grantmaking foundations continue to determine their own funding priorities, but given that the funds available to them have shrunk, the impact they have is limited. The funding priorities of donors from outside Kosovo do not necessarily

reflect local needs. For instance, there are very few if any international grants available for revitalizing agriculture, which is a high priority in Kosovo.

During 2008, there was only one instance of formalized civil society interaction and coordination. CiviKos Platform, an umbrella entity that aims at channeling the interaction of NGOs and advancing the interests of the entire sector, undertook an initiative to send an open letter to parliamentary deputies regarding the draft NGO law.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 3.8

The public image of NGOs improved in comparison to 2007. The public continues to perceive NGOs positively. The situation is rather different in the enclaves, where NGO activists are perceived as collaborators of foreign governments or even as traitors.

Media coverage of NGO events and activities in Pristina is adequate, as almost all public events are covered. Activities in other regions, however, tend to receive less national media attention. The media has limited human resource capacity at the national level to cover all activities across Kosovo. Local broadcast media dedicate significant space to covering NGO activities and events.

The level of professionalism in the media sector and the quality of coverage leaves much room for improvement. Editorial policies of media at the national level have been often characterized by self-censorship or intentional non-coverage of certain NGOs and activities.

PR activities of active NGOs improved significantly during 2008. An increasing

The government, through the Office of Good Governance within the Prime Minister’s Office, summoned NGO activists on various occasions. These included the promotion of the Ahtisaari proposal in municipalities of Kosovo and the discussions on the constitution. Such initiatives were perceived as rather superficial. For example, the public discussions on the constitution were conducted in the absence of a written, published document. The general opinion is that the government engages civil society for PR purposes or when it is forced to do so.

number of NGOs publish regular reports, newsletters, and other communication pieces. They have regular communication channels with the media that include email and fax correspondence about events and activities.

In the north the situation slightly improved in terms of media coverage, but the overall situation was worse than in other parts of Kosovo. NGOs in the Serb enclaves find it more difficult to obtain media coverage and successfully promote their activities. Still, in comparison to 2007, the attitude of the local Serb media towards NGOs improved slightly.

