



# The Right Livelihood Award

*for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people*

## Kvinna Till Kvinna (Sweden)

(2002)



*for its successes in addressing ethnic hatred by helping war-torn women to be the major agents of peace-building and reconciliation.*

Kerstin Grebäck & Anna Lidén

The Kvinna Till Kvinna Foundation was founded in 1993 in response to the war in the Balkans and the atrocities committed on women there. Yet from the start KtK saw women not only as victims of these circumstances but as important forces for change in society and an important part of the community, which needs to be rebuilt in the aftermath of war and conflict. So KtK was established to give support to and work with women's organisations in such situations. Its formal aims are:

- To carry out projects in areas affected by war and armed conflict which promote women's self-reliance and self-esteem, and women's psycho-social and/or physical health, or which contribute to promoting women's participation in the development of a democratic civilian society.
- To promote studies and research concerning the effects of war and armed conflict on women.
- To publicise facts and information concerning the effects of war, and to rouse public opinion in favour of the peaceful solution of conflicts using non-military methods.

Most of KtK's work so far has been carried out in the Balkans. The work entails promoting dialogue, training for empowerment and employment, health care, addressing domestic violence, legal advice, and many other issues (such as sex-trafficking), which arise in conflict and post-conflict situations. A study published in 2000 drew attention to the lack of gender sensitivity in the Dayton Peace Accords, and the barrier this represented to reconstruction. This report was part of the official Swedish presentation at the Beijing+5 Conference on Women in New York in 2000 and made KtK internationally known. It is also thought to have influenced the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which urges "Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict." Other KtK reports have focused on the gender aspects of the UNMIK administration in Kosovo and on overcoming the obstacles in the healing process for women in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

KtK now has eight field offices in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia, Albania, Israel/Palestine and Georgia with a total staff of about eleven women. An additional eleven staff members (also women) work in the Stockholm office. The Serbia office was opened in 2001. Also in 2001, KtK started supporting women's groups in Israel and Palestine after some years of contact building in this area. The offices in Albania and Georgia were opened in 2002. In their 2001 review, KtK write that their partner organisations are now "important parties in the work of building up new

and democratic societies."

KtK has 70-80 projects with about 60 organisations in the Balkans and knows several hundred women's organisations there, involving many thousands of people. They offer various activities and awareness raising for women's issues. This can range from reproductive health information to political questions. The ability and willingness of these organisations to cooperate across ethnic divides is a precondition for KtK's support. The support is mostly economical and for capacity building. The cooperation is phased out when a group has become sufficiently mature and has found other funding sources, or when a group is not needed any longer because the public service has been able to take over its tasks.

An important part of KtK's work is to build networks among the women's groups, e.g. by organising common seminars. KtK is now in a situation where it can make contacts between, for example, Bosnian and Croatian groups, which KtK started cooperating with in the mid-90's, and new groups in Kosovo or Albania that now face the same problems the others had some years ago. In Macedonia, KtK has been instrumental in stimulating the formation of many new women's groups.

In 2001, 30m of KtK's SEK 32m budget came from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

### Quotation

*The question that needs to be asked is what is the biggest obstacle facing women in this particular place, and at this very point in time? Women who work with questions related to health care, education, domestic violence, and trauma treatment recognise the causes of these problems. Therefore they need to have a voice in the decision-making body.*

Kerstin Grebäck

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