



# NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN COUNCILORS



**HELVETAS**

## Who are we?

NAWC is the culmination of 10 years of efforts of local actors and the international community to network women in politics. NAWC is the successor of Women in Politics Network (WiP), established in 2011 upon the initiative of women municipal councilors in Shkoder and Lezhe Regions supported by the Decentralization and Local Development Program dldp. OSCE and NDI have also made similar efforts. In 2016 UN WOMEN in synergy with dldp brought the fragmented efforts into a joint national initiative.

2011

Women in Politics Network is established upon the initiative of women councilors in Lezhe and Shkoder regions

2015

The network is extended in the regions of Durres, Dibër and Kukës. At the end of the mandate there are 468 members.

2018

NAWC is established by 33 Local Alliances (out of 61 municipal councils).

2020

NAWC is re-established through a transparent and democratic electoral process by 55 local alliances.

NAWC was established on March 8, 2018 as an informal cross-party structure of women and girls members of Municipal Councils. After local elections of June 2019, considering the one-wing political representation of municipal councils (MC) and preserving the informal feature of Women Alliances, the NAWC decided to include women from the opposition and civil society, out of MC in 30% of its membership at local and national level. In 2020, 55 local alliances are set up and new elections for leading structures were held at NAWC through a transparent and democratic electoral process.

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Today the Alliance has about 700 members in 55 municipalities where the Alliances operate as semi-formal groupings.

## Why were we established?

Gender Equality in Albania has made steady progress. NAWC is a direct reflection of the increase of representation of women at historical levels in local government after the amendments to the Electoral Code in 2015 and the Territorial and Administrative Reform. Currently **women make up 44%** of the Municipal Councils and chair **38%** of them. The Alliance has made a substantial contribution to all reforms aimed at achieving gender equality, such as proposing the introduction of a 30% quota to law on local finance and medium-term budget law and increasing the support of women in local communities through specific projects.



## What do we provide?

The purpose of the Alliance is to provide a **model of cooperation** and cross-party dialogue at the local level and beyond as a political tool for achieving the objectives of good governance and gender equality through the representation and promotion of women and girls.

Following the 2019 local elections, NAWC is the only cross-party structure at the local level, expanding its membership by 30% with women who have previously held the position of councilors and civil society activists.



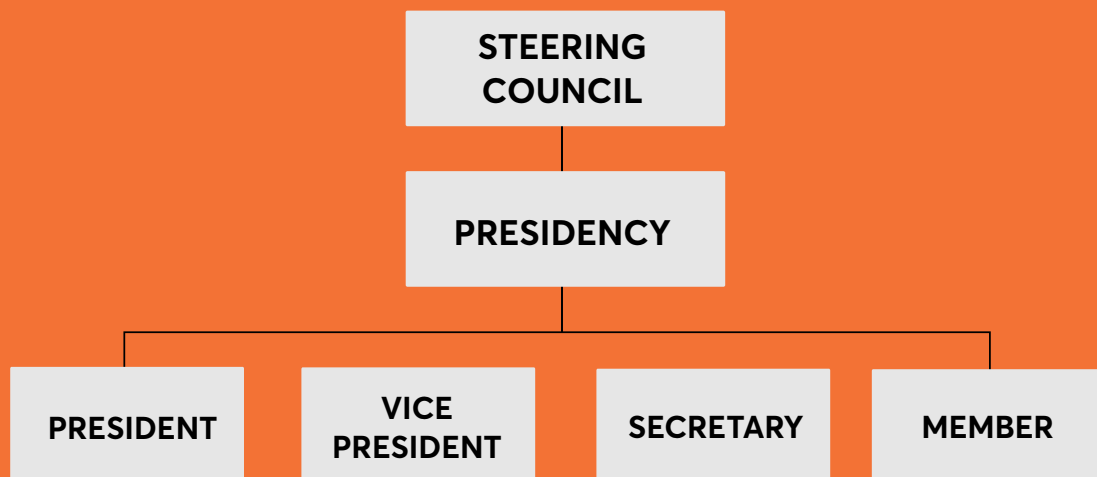
## How do we provide it?

**The Alliance empowers women** and girls, members of municipal councils in Albania from all political parties, so that they work to develop and push forward legislative initiatives, local policies and other initiatives that respond to the needs of women and communities, increase gender equality and social inclusion. The Alliance works with partners at the legislative, executive and civil society levels to achieve sustainable change in local structures towards improving gender representation and inclusion.



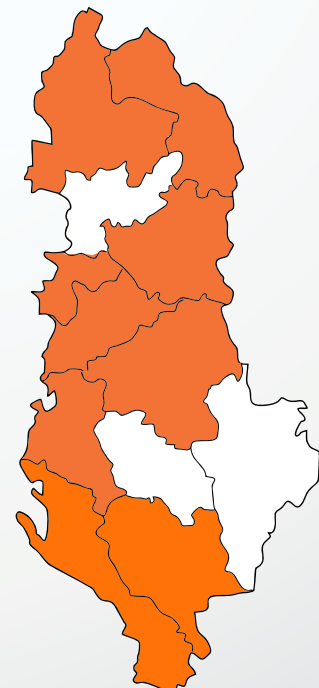
## How are we organized?

The NAWC operates as a women movement across the country to bring women's voice in decision-making and local/national politics. It has a semi-formal nature, although it has an approved statute. According to the statute approved in November 2018, NAWC consists of the Steering Council and the Presidency. The Presidency consists of 9 members, who represent different political forces and regions. 1/3 of the members of the presidency consist of members of the Steering Council representing the group of successful women and girls in leadership in various development sectors of the city, prominent former women councilors from various political groups, members of the Steering Council of NAWC with rotation to cover the entire geographical extent of the Member Alliances.



**9 regions out of 12 in total are represented in the presidency:**

Mat (Diber Region), Tropoje (Kukes Region), Elbasan (Elbasan Region), Durres (Durres Region), Shkoder (Shkoder Region), Vlore (Vlore Region), Gjirokaster (Gjirokaster Region), Kavaje (Tirane Region), Fier (Fier Region).



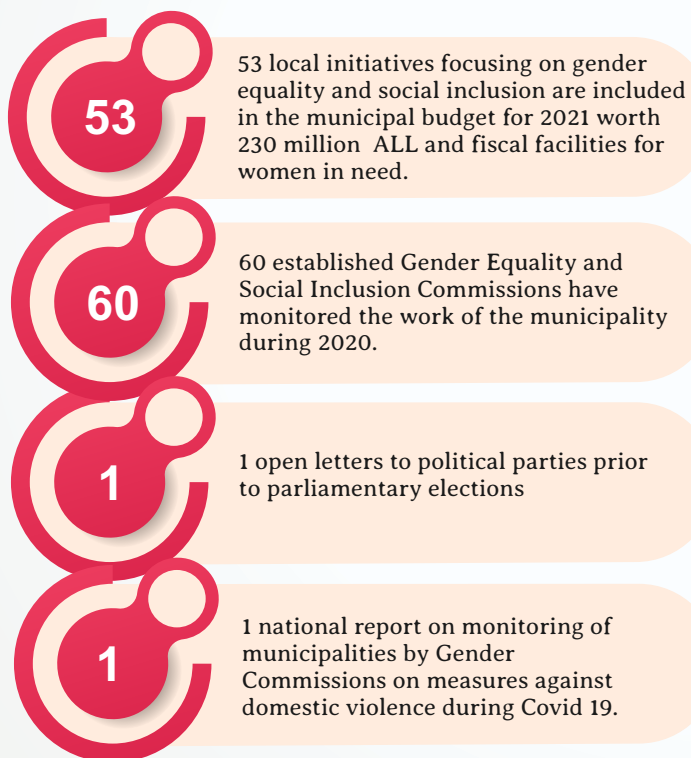
## What are some of NAWC achievements up until now?

### Prior June 2019:

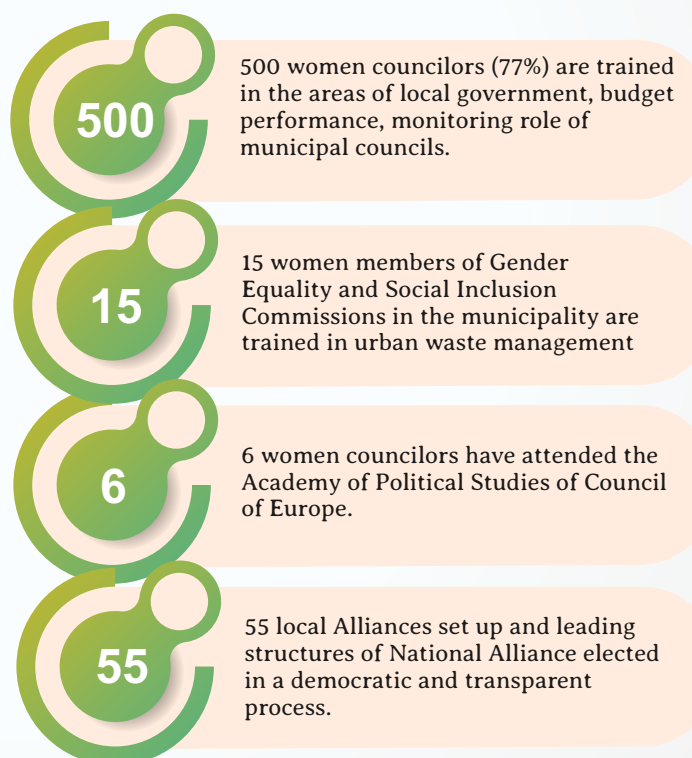
- NAWC has mainstreamed gender in the Law 139/2015 on Local Self-government and in the Law 68/2017 for Local Self-Government Finances.
- NAWC has brought legal changes in the electoral code for respecting the gender quota in the political parties' lists of candidates: Political parties that do not respect the gender quota will be deprived of the right to participate in the elections, compared to paying a fine in the previous electoral code.
- 33 local Alliances are set up with international support, UN Women, dldp, 61 municipal councils covering a population of over 1 million voters, about 77% of the population.
- 1 open letter to political parties and wide public prior to the local elections of June 2019, accompanied with a national media campaign for addressing gender related issues to women in politics
- Best practices of Alliances identified and capitalized for scaling up countrywide.

### During mandate 2019 and on:

#### Projects



#### Empowerment



## Recommendations

- ▶ **Electoral law (2020)** on gender equality in elections - 50% representation of women on candidate lists
- ▶ **Draft decision** on "Economic Aid and Social Services"
- ▶ **Draft Law** on "Social Assistance and Care"
- ▶ **Draft decision** on "Children in conflict with the law"
- ▶ **National Strategy** for Gender Equality 2021-2030

# What are some of the best practices?

The work of Local Alliances has been expressed through concrete initiatives undertaken by Alliance members. The best practices are summarized in a catalog that can be found at the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1c2Ct5nj50sgTsEz7BzB3MvrcillnAppv/view>

- ▶ Dedicated Fund for Women Entrepreneurship: Tirana Municipality
- ▶ Adaptation of public infrastructure to make a city more accessible for people with disabilities and mothers: Lezhe Municipality
- ▶ Support for education and vocational training of rural women: Vlore Municipality
- ▶ Support for women victims of domestic violence: Korçë Municipality
- ▶ Providing financial support for poor single mothers: Mat Municipality
- ▶ Support for women in need through social housing and tax exemption: Fier Municipality
- ▶ Support for single mothers through tax exemptions: Shkoder Municipality and Klos Municipality
- ▶ Advancing the local gender equality agenda (Gender Equality Commissions): Durres Municipality, Elbasan Municipality, Cerrik Municipality, Lushnje Municipality
- ▶ Mobilization of women for the interests of the community: Malesi e Madhe Municipality, Kukes, Has and Tropoje municipalities



# What are the objectives for 2021-2023?

The Presidency of NAWC has chosen in consultation with the Assembly 4 main directions and will work on a defined plan until the next local elections. These objectives are in line with the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030 and international standards for filling the gender gap.



## PRIORITIES

1

### **(i) Strengthen women's participation in politics and leadership by improving the quality of the political offer in elections.**

- Lobbying with political parties to increase the quality of representation of girls and women in politics and increase their public profile. The Alliance has identified the criteria of a quality local politician and will compile a list women candidates to be proposed to political parties in the upcoming local elections;
- Establish and implement gender quotas;
- Promote a broad discussion on the possibility of introducing a 30% quota for the position of Mayor.

2

### **(ii) Improve access to social services:**

- Equal distribution of social services, increase of social fund for women, with special attention to vulnerable groups of women: rural, those suffering from domestic violence.
- Monitor local social plans and improve the basket of social services (especially for women victims of violence, people with special needs and the elderly) by ensuring broad access to information about existing services;
- More efficient response of municipalities for dealing with cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence in general
- Documentation of gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming practices and outcomes in the country.

3

### **(iii) Economic empowerment of women and girls:**

- Economic empowerment of women and girls through local and national enabling policies.
- Legal initiative on opening kindergartens in public and private companies in cooperation with the local government, where there are female employees (girls/women) with over 25 children, in accordance with good social responsibility practices;
- Application of gender criteria in all grants that encourage development, promoting women's access, especially in rural areas;
- Raise local support funds for women starting a new business and relieve them of taxes for the first two years of business;
- Establish a network of women entrepreneurs in the diaspora and build twinning relationships with women and girls entrepreneurs at the local level;
- Promote career service at municipalities for future professions with the aim of increasing access by girls, in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM).

4

### **(iv) Implementation of the national legal framework in the field of gender equality at the local level**

- Publication of the barometer of law enforcement on gender equality at the local level
- Exercise the oversight function of the Gender Equality Commission on the financing of standards and legality related to gender equality.

## Our strategic partners:

- ▶ Political partners
- ▶ Civil society
- ▶ Alliance of Women Members of Parliament
- ▶ Ombudsman
- ▶ Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination

Support provided  
to the Alliance

The Alliance of Women  
Municipal Councilors is  
supported by Helvetas Swiss  
Intercooperation through  
Bashki të Forta project.

## NAWC PRESIDENCY



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