



The Community Center in Gjakova

Goals of the project.

The main goal of the project is to offer a common space that offers an opportunity for various activities to women of all ages.

Objectives of the project.

The main objectives of the project are to:

1. Create spaces for activities through the establishment of various clubs.
2. Provide a safe and trusted space for women to discuss physical and mental health issues.
3. Provide tools, ideas and mentors to engage women in handcrafts and learn or advance their skills.
4. Develop strategies and models that attract members of the community to partake in the activities offered.
5. Identify means of sustainability for the project in the long run through partnerships and community participation.

Need project is addressing

At present, Gjakova is experiencing a lack of a common area where women of various ages can engage in various activities that can showcase their talent and capabilities or help them develop new skills. Economic under-development, changes in the way of living (children moving away or living on their own) have had quite an impact in the social engagement of many women, particularly those who are near retirement or already retired. This lack of a common area where women could socialize while engaging on a group activity has come to our attention many times from our members and other women who know of the organization and its mission and work. As such, we have begun raising funds in an effort to initiate a project that would tackle this issue, initially at a smaller scale and then expand based on express of interest and need. Should the project be successful, SI Gjakova intends to expand it to include men of various age groups as well, as this issue is plaguing both genders.

Methods of implementing the project:

The proposed activities and their pertaining description are provided in the table below.



Activity	Description
The Crafts Corner	The Crafts Corner is designed to include activities such as: knitting, sewing, paper crafts, jewelry making. This will include two instructors who will teach the basics and give advice and support to participating women to develop their skills. Additionally, women volunteers who are already experience in such crafts can pass on their skills and knowledge to other women, with particular aim at younger generations.
The Book Club	The Book Club will offer the women the opportunity to have a place where they can come and read a certain book and discuss it there
Yoga Mat	Engagement in fitness activities has experienced an increase in Gjakova as of late and we strongly believe that it is essential to leading a healthy life.
Mama's Kitchen	Cooking is a big part of Albanian culture and that has been very well preserved among generations. Economic changes and longer work hours however, have made some women drift away from traditional, healthy cooking and opt for quick meals that may not necessarily be the best option.
Let's Talk	Let's Talk aims to offer a safe space where women can discuss issue whether it be health, family, politics, etc.

Each activity is proposed to have a set hour and days when it will take place and they will be managed accordingly by the leader of each club with support from SI Gjakova and the Center Administrator.

The Community Center is proposed to initially begin work with a reduced and depending on interest, hours of operation will be expanded. During the operation hours, an Administrator will be on site to assist club leaders, members and serve as the point of contact with management.

Expected outcomes:

Activity	Expected outcome
The Crafts Corner	Learn new skills, which can also translate in employment opportunities, and create a culture of socializing.
The Book Club	Encourage more reading and diversity in reading choices as unfortunately, a decline in the number of readers has been noted in the recent years.
Yoga Mat	Raise awareness on the effect of exercise on the wellbeing of women and encourage women to create healthy habits, particularly in a group setting with mutual engagement. Create a book exchange library.
Mama's Kitchen	Redesign traditional recipes and encourage women to partake in cooking healthy meals for themselves and their families.
Let's Talk	Engage various generations and encourage them to talk about issues that trouble them without them being subjected to any form of discrimination regarding their mental health state.



Partners

At present, we are opening this project out to other organizations who would be interested in partnering with SI Gjakova in implementing this project. We have done a limited fundraising on our own, however, due to the nature of the project and its expenses that surpass our current budget, we are seeking potential partners.

Evaluation

The evaluation process will be done on a continuous basis since this is a project that will always seek to increase participation from community members. Therefore, the project will be evaluated according to the specific criteria (and some of the questions used to measure each criteria):

1. Schedule – a specific schedule will be put in place to efficiently coordinate all the activities as well as to ensure the center meets its goal and objectives in a timely fashion. (Do clubs run on time? Are weekly and monthly reports submitted in an effective manner by the club leader? Do the proposed milestones of the center fall within the agreed upon timeline?)
2. Quality – a continuous quality review of the activities will be conducted, followed by formal reports on the quality of services provided at the center. (Do the clubs offer an inclusive environment? Are the preset standards being met?)
3. Cost – cost is a crucial part to this project. Therefore, continuous monitoring of the expenses incurred as well as the status of membership fees will be essential in ensuring the continuity of the project. (Is the project operating within the set budget? Is the project attracting enough members to ensure membership participation ties in well with the budget?)
4. Satisfaction – this is the most important aspect of the project. Without member satisfaction, there is technically no need for such services. Membership satisfaction will also be continuous, with special emphasis on potential issues or complaints to ensure those are addressed properly and in a timely fashion. (How do members feel about the activities they participate in? What changes or ideas would help the activities better address their needs?)

NOTE: In regard to all the information provided above, in terms of project management, SI Gjakova will be the primary responsible party and the points of contact. However, the idea of the project is to also engage the community in running the center together, so as to create opportunities for everyone to work in harmony and develop sharing and collaborating skills. We believe that, the greater the involvement, obviously according to certain rules and standards, the greater will be the satisfaction of all the participating members and everyone will have the necessary space to express their ideas and address their issues.