

NEWSLETTER

LEGAL AID FOR PERSONS AT RISK OF STATELESSNESS/STATELESS

JANUARY - JUNE 2021



Senada and her six children - Photo by CRP/K

Great news for Senada! She finally received civil status documents of Kosovo together with her six children. For almost two years, legal staff of CRP/K was continuously engaged in representing and advocating for their rights at administrative bodies in local and central level. Senada's case was successfully processed by the Municipal Civil Status Office. Together with her children she can now access services, and fully enjoy her rights.

IN BRIEF:

- In addition to Senada, **90** undocumented individuals beneficiaries of free legal aid have been equipped with civil status documents which would ensure them the possibility to utilize other rights such as medical care, education, employment, social welfare and variety of other basic rights and services.
- Since January, **69** undocumented individuals mostly from Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian communities have been identified in need of legal aid.
- Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kosovo has provided stateless Identity card to 4 individuals with already stateless granted status.



With an aim to enhance the situation of undocumented members of Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian communities, CRP/K Coordinator of the project met with Mr. Habit Hajredini - Director of the Office for Good Governance.

At the meeting, activities of both were discussed and potential synergies related to provision of meaningful support to their integration in society.

Furthermore, the implementation of the activities from Poznan Declaration with special emphasis on the registration was mentioned, along side future cooperation in this context.



Continuous support was provided to all relevant stakeholders to prevent, identify and reduce the number of persons at risk of statelessness within the unregistered population.

In a meeting with Mr. Bekim Hoxha - General Director of Civil Registration Agency, - Ministry of Internal Affairs, several issues have been touched interrelated with identification of unregistered persons, development of a mechanism for reduction of unregistered birth, as well as necessary changes in relevant legislative framework which will contribute to further promote the efforts within the global UNHCR campaign "IBELONG".



The importance of having a legal identity, was highlighted in 2020 by the Ombudsman Institution through the publication of the Legal Opinion in the capacity of court friend (amicus curiae), as well as the Report with recommendations regarding the legal identity of unregistered persons.

Together with UNHCR, CRP/K is continuously advocating with Institution of the Ombudsman of Kosovo for the implementation of these recommendations, which mainly relate to acceleration of the processing of cases initiated in court procedure by the legal staff of CRP/K, as well as the undertaking of measures within the competencies and legal responsibilities of state institutions regarding the legal identity of unregistered persons.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO STATELESS INDIVIDUALS

The right to legal identity, as well as being effective members of a society with equal rights and obligations is the right of every individual.

Stateless persons are particularly vulnerable in matters relating to the services provided by State institutions, especially with regard to access to health care, education, employment and social assistance.

CRP/K continues to promote legal solution for all persons who are without any citizenship and cannot attain the citizenship in accordance with the prescribed legal rules in Kosovo.

Apart from several identified individuals meeting the definition of stateless person, through provided support by the legal staff of CRP/K in representing and advocating for their rights in administrative bodies, the application for identity card for stateless person for 4 individuals has become possible, thus providing them with legal identity as well as access to other rights and services. The equipment of parents with Identity cards, has enabled CRP/K to proceed further with the birth registration of their three children.



Lumturije has obtained stateless ID Card, enabling her to apply for registration of her children - Photo by CRP/K



Close cooperation with the Municipal Civil Status Offices (MCSO) is crucial for the proper addressing of the requests of unregistered individuals.

CRP/K's continuous cooperation with MCSOs has improved the civil status registration process of unregistered individuals and facilitated the implementation of the applicable legal framework.

Meetings held with MCSOs served as an advocacy tool to advocate for proper addressing of 20 complex cases.

During the meetings, CRP/K distributed the report "A Path Towards the Identity - Success Stories", the publication of which was funded by UNHCR - Office of the Head of Mission in Kosovo, as well as protective masks within UNHCR #IBELONG campaign.



In a meeting with officials from the Regional Office for Free Legal Aid in Pristina, discussions entailed issues regarding the current situation with Covid-19, the challenges in providing legal aid and the difficulties faced by community members regarding civil status registration and accessing different services.

Existing cooperation between CRP/K and Free Legal Aid Agency was assessed as very important in harmonizing a strategic and common approach to various concerns and issues faced by members of these communities.



The alternative communication means already established with persons of concern has enabled the legal staff and community advocate to continue communication with unregistered individuals as well as to identify the needs for provision of free legal aid.

Petrit, a community advocate of CRP/K which covers the region of Gjakova, is always close to unregistered persons in identifying their needs for registration and equipment with civil status documentation.



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