

# WOMEN'S STUDY IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO (2021/2022)

INSIGHTS ON SOCIETY, FAMILY, VALUES,  
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, POLITICS,  
SECURITY AND HEALTHCARE

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## IMPRESUM

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## FOREWORD

In 2020 the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Office in Northern Macedonia decided to conduct a women's study, to measure, describe and explain the status of women vis-a-vis society, family, values, education, employment, politics, security, and healthcare. As in previous FES studies, such as the comprehensive youth study in all countries of the region, FES offices in other countries of the Western Balkans Region will also conduct a women's study, so that it is possible to analyze and compare the results once all countries complete their national studies. These studies aim to provide the data necessary to serve as the basis for drafting and developing policies and projects regarding women's policies and gender equality.

The data obtained in this research is not presented in its entirety in this publication but will be available to the public. Interested researchers or institutions can use our freely available data set, to conduct other studies with a specific focus on one or more topics.

This study provides a comprehensive overview and analysis of the most relevant data obtained through a clear methodology, focusing on the most important issues relating to the situation of women in Kosovo.

This women's study is a thorough and detailed study of women's perceptions, statements, and attitudes in many areas of interest, and it is open to further interpretation and analysis. It is our wish that the results of the study are taken into consideration by respective institutions in Kosovo, in order to work together to achieve a greater level of gender equality and a better life for women and families in Kosovo.

The study confirms what is happening in Kosovo, and that is a society largely divided by gender, based on patriarchal norms, often accepted by women themselves.

Women value most having family and children at a personal level, and they do not mind performing almost all household chores, as long as the husband earns more. They even agree that the actual share is a quite fair division of roles within the family. Younger women disagree, and the results show that they are behaving

more progressively in this regard, involving their partners more in sharing responsibilities for family and children. They trust family members and religious leaders more than the institutions, NGOs, and political parties.

Only few women have their own property (4%), while most live with their partner and his family, in a rather weak financial situation, and only 4% manage the family budget. Thus, they are often dependent, and do not recognize, or accept the gender discrimination stereotypes and roles perpetuated in the family context, as well as sometimes in society and the workplace. Only 5% stated that they have ever felt discriminated against.

Their position in the labor market continues to be unfavorable, with only 21% of women employed, and less than 50% of women aiming for senior management positions in their workplace. They value education as important, but lack any non-formal education that might increase their chances for employment.

Of least value to them is being politically engaged, and although they do participate in voting, they are not convinced that their opinion and contribution will be acknowledged, thus they do not find it interesting to be active in political parties or other forms of political activism. They access information about political developments mainly from the media but do not trust them.

Many other interesting results are presented in each chapter, thanks to the contribution of each author, all area specialists, who analyzed and interpreted the data, and wrote the specific chapters.

We are thankful to the IDRA Kosovo team for their professional and ethical data collection and for their support also in the analysis and interpretation phases, helping authors to clarify or produce the additional requested analysis.

A special contribution to the finalization of the report was made by the professional work of our intern Kathrin Rief, who reviewed each page, graph and table to ensure that every chapter is equally and correctly represented in the final report.

Ed.D Besa Luzha, FES Program Coordinator  
January 2023





# INTRODUCTION

For many years, women have struggled against prevailing gender gaps and obstacles in various sectors of life: at home, in their workplace, and especially, in leadership and decision-making positions. Not only is gender equality a fundamental human right, but it is also essential to having a peaceful, flourishing, and sustainable world. There should be equal access to resources, opportunities, and protections, as well as equal representation, political participation, and decision-making, regardless of gender. In past years, there has been progress in gender equality. A higher number of girls attend school, early marriage of girls has decreased, and reforms of gender equality laws have occurred to improve effectiveness.

However, there are still many challenges related to discriminatory laws and social norms; the representation of women in political leadership is not at a satisfactory level compared to men; and, there are still cases where women report physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, a trend that intensified with lockdown measures throughout the world (UN, 2022). The main problem is that women are not informed of their rights. In many countries, most women are not aware of their legal rights, yet various abuses, such as domestic violence and employment discrimination, happen every day. Furthermore, reports about such crimes are rare. This is mainly because in many countries, the laws dealing with gender equality are recent (UNICEF, 2020).

Gender inequality is seen by both girls and boys in their homes, in their schools, and in their communities. In most families, there is unequal responsibility for unpaid household work, as in most cases this burden falls on women. There is less support for girls than for boys to continue studies at school, which in turn leads to girls not being employed, or having low-skilled and underpaid work. However, there is an increase in girls who attend and complete school. There are fewer cases of girls getting married and becoming mothers while they are still children. More and more women are raising their voices against gender inequality (UNICEF, 2020).

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo (adopted in 2008) notes the numerous binding national and international documents about gender equality, which prohibit gender discrimination, such as the Council of Europe's

European Social Charter, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Convention of United Nations on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo offers a legal basis for principles of gender equality and establishes gender equality as a fundamental constitutional right. Under Article 15 of the Constitution, "the state must guarantee equality between women and men and develop equal opportunity policies".

In 2015, the "Law on Gender Equality" was adopted, requiring all public authorities to follow principles of gender equality. Moreover, the Republic of Kosovo has fulfilled one of the objectives set forth in the Millennium Goals - MDG resolution signed by the Kosovo Assembly, respectively on "MDG action III - Promoting Gender Equality and Women Empowerment" (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2016). Nevertheless, in practice, women still do not enjoy the equal treatment prescribed by law.

The Friedrich-Ebert Foundation (FES) – Prishtina Office contracted IDRA Research and Consulting in Kosovo to conduct a nationwide empirical study on women in Kosovo. The study reviews the literature on relevant topics and specifically identifies the challenges that women in Kosovo face within their families, work environments, and society in general.

This research study provides a comprehensive overview and analysis of the most relevant data. This women's study is interdisciplinary, and we hope that will be used for policy development on gender equality in the Republic of Kosovo. Kosovar society is still considered patriarchal, with tradition a very important value; and accepting the way things are done, especially with regard to housework and care for children and elders. Nevertheless, women's awareness has increased about fighting for their rights and for more equality in their families and their surroundings.

The values that women in the Republic of Kosovo find most important are having a family and children, getting married, owning a home/property, living in a safe, prosperous country, being independent, living a religious life, and having a secure job. There is some progress in

women's attitudes about the perception of social gender roles in society.

Most women agree that there shouldn't be differences between gender; and thus, responsibilities shouldn't be assigned and differentiated between men and women. Family and social life have been discussed within the national context of the Republic of Kosovo. Kosovo still is considered to have a rigidly patriarchal society, where men have the final say in various matters, as well as access to social and economic resources. Women report that their leisure activities nearly always or often include spending time with the family. In general, women perceived a weak connection to COVID-19, meaning that not many have encountered problems, challenges, and risks during the time of crisis. Most of the women in this study are housewives and employed. Among the working environment statements, most highlighted positive attitudes of mutual trust and respect. Women reported somewhat satisfaction with promotion possibilities at the workplace.

It is also very important to highlight that women do not recognize discrimination, as 95% of them stated that they never felt discriminated against at work. They do not have high ambitions to start their own business, noting the following issues: financing, lack of assets, lack of affirmative measures, lack of women in business, lack of experience, lack of familiarity with the market and opportunities in the market, unwilling to take a considerable entrepreneurial risk, lack of the necessary experience to run your own business, lack of entrepreneurial and management skills, knowledge, skills, and ability to run a business, and lack of support from husband and/or close family. Women are

aware of the value of education, and believe that it should not be dependent on gender. The most dominant messages communicated by educational institutions include, "a woman should get married and have children instead of a career" and "a woman should be beautiful and attractive". Women in the Republic of Kosovo are not represented in politics at a satisfactory level as only 3% stated that they are active in politics.

Although the participation of women in politics is a precondition for gender equality and genuine democracy, this research finding indicates that women are not directly engaged in public decision-making and policy development. Few women respondents know what is happening in the global situation of women's equality, and only to some extent, are they familiar with the 50/50 political platform. When assessing political performance, most women agree that women politicians are more prejudiced than men politicians. But, they also agree that women politicians are more diligent, hardworking, honest, and brave than men politicians.

Most of the respondents stated that they have voted, because they feel this is the obligation of each citizen, and it is anonymous. According to them, the main reason why they vote in elections, is based on their personal political beliefs and political values.

In addition, women believe that their position will improve in the next 10 years, and when Kosovo joins the EU. The effects of Kosovo's membership in the EU would be positive for the economy, gender equality, as well as the political system.

## 2.

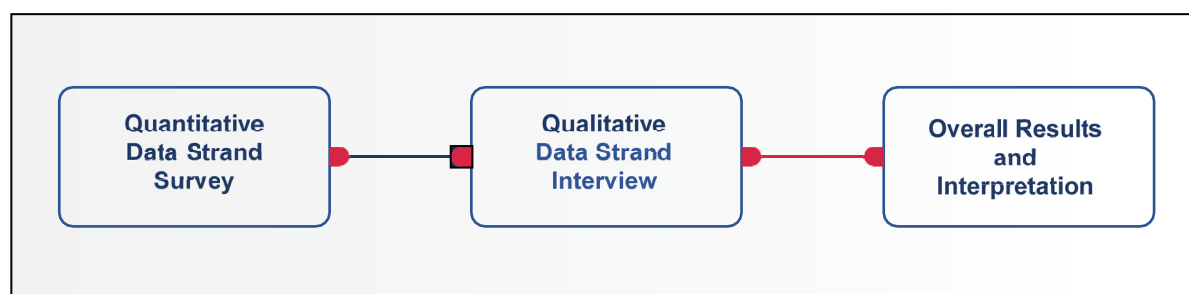
## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

### 2.1 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

This study incorporates quantitative and qualitative research methods and techniques (mixed methods design), as well as primary and secondary data analysis. More precisely, four research techniques were employed for the data collection:

- Literature review
- Document analysis
- Face-to-face computer-assisted personal interview surveys (CAPI), using a nationally representative sample (quantitative method)
- Semi-structured focus groups discussions, using a quota sample (qualitative method)

Figure 1:  
Explanatory sequential model



source: (Creswell, 2009)

Both the CAPI survey questionnaire and focus group discussions consist of the following thematic sections:

- DEMOGRAPHIC DATA
- VALUES, TRUST, AND RELIGION
- FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE
- EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
- POLITICS AND PARTICIPATION
- SAFETY AND SECURITY
- WOMEN'S HEALTH

The semi-structured focus group discussions are guided by two questionnaires, which differ slightly in their level of abstraction. Both questionnaires include open-ended questions and sub-questions aligned with the seven thematic chapters of the CAPI survey questionnaire.

Questionnaire no. 1 is used for the first two focus group discussions, held with female citizens, whose composition matches a nationally representative sample. This first questionnaire aims at further exploring women's individual experiences and perceptions, therein fleshing out the quantitative findings with individual impressions. Questionnaire no. 2 is applied to the third focus group discussion, involving CSO activists and NGO representatives as well as the fourth focus group discussion, held with representatives of central-level public institutions. The second questionnaire aims to obtain contextualizing perspectives on the state of women with regards to all thematic sections of the CAPI survey from women experts, working in the field of gender equality. All focus group discussions were held online via Zoom, with participants joining with audio and video.

## 2.2 RESEARCH SAMPLE DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

The CAPI survey research employs a multistage cluster sampling method to generate a stratified-quota sample based on the official 2011 census<sup>1</sup> data on population characteristics, published on the website of the Kosovo

Statistical Agency of the Republic of Kosovo (Kosovo Statistical Agency, 2011)<sup>2</sup>. The target population includes women aged from 18 until 65+ who resided in the Republic of Kosovo at the census date.

### RESEARCH SAMPLE

Region	Age group	Ethnicity	Level of education	Employment status
Place of residence	Religious beliefs		Relationship status	Has children
<b>By settlement</b>			<b>Age</b>	
Rural		637	18-24	209
Urban		363	25-34	191
<b>Total</b>		<b>1000</b>	35-44	183
			45-54	206
			55-64	107
			65+	104
			<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

The multistage cluster sampling employs as a primary sampling unit the Enumeration Areas (EA) employed in the 2011 Census, therein the geographic areas defined by polling/voting centers. The number of EAs, randomly selected within each statistical region (of which there are seven in the country) is proportionate to the number of households within that region and considers the total sample size of 100 EAs. To achieve a representative sample, the study then uses a two-stage stratified probability to size (PPS) cluster randomized sampling methodology.

Thereby, the first stratification occurs by region as well as by urban-rural division, generated through the PSS Systematic algorithm. The second stratification is done by number of households within the strata, with the intent of selecting EAs that cover 70-150 households in municipal districts. In the second cluster sampling stage, the enumerator selects housing units according to a randomized selection process until the assigned number of screener interviews in the voting centre is reached. In the third cluster sampling stage, the female member whose birthday is closest to the date of the interview, is selected as respondent for this housing unit.

Through this method, a total of N = 850 Albanian respondents were captured for the CAPI field research during February 09 to April 04, 2022.

To comply with the ethnic quotas depicted in the 2011 census estimates, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women (N = 50) as well as Kosovar Serbian women (N = 100) were over-sampled by targeting those EAs, which registered the highest numbers of residents belonging to the respective ethnicity. Further, post-stratification weights were added to account for a census-proclaimed distribution of age groups.

With an estimated population of 1 873 000 citizens across the ten municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo, a marginal error of 3.1 % is calculated given the representative sample of N = 1000. The questionnaire was administered in the Albanian language and Serbian language for Serb women, using electronic data capturing technology. With the assistance of mobile devices (tablets), enumerators from IDRA Research and Consulting conducted the CAPI surveys face-to-face, across the entire territory of the Republic of Kosovo. The average time taken to complete each survey was 90 minutes.

For the semi-structured focus group discussion, the sample consists of 27 female residents. For the first two focus discussions, the sample is composed of 6/7 female citizens aged 18-55, who were selected by the same method of multicluster and ethnic quota sampling with stratification based on the 2011 census data, employed also for the

<sup>1</sup> The conduct of the population census scheduled for 2021 has been postponed to the end of 2022. Consequently, at the time of the data collection, the 2011 estimates represented the most recent.

<sup>2</sup> Census 2011\_(rks-gov.net).

quantitative CAPI research. For the third focus group, the sample consists of 7 representatives of CSOs and NGOs from different regions of Kosovo, dealing directly with issues of gender equality and women's rights. For the fourth focus group, the sample consists of 7 representatives of public institutions knowledgeable on the topic or in positions related to the state of women in Kosovo. Enumerators successfully conducted four in-depth semi-structured focus discussions via Zoom, coinciding with the timing of the quantitative research.

## 2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

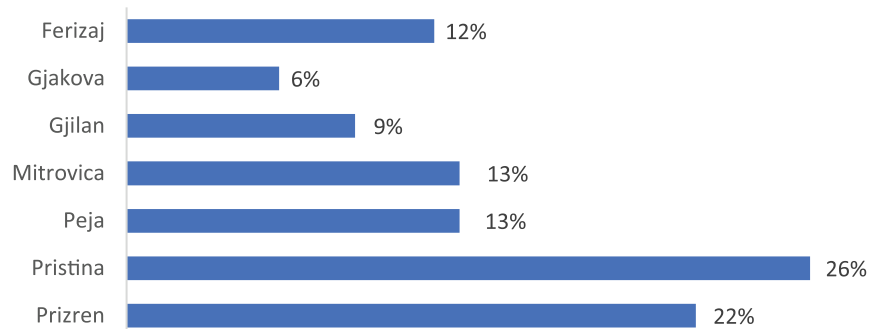
The Kosovo Women's Study 2022 deduced multiple (cross-)sectional analyses from the data collected during

the quantitative surveys as well as qualitative discussions. The following dimensions characterize this research study:

- Exploratory
- Descriptive
- Comparative
- Explanatory

Quantitative data secured from the CAPI surveys were analyzed at univariate, bivariate, and multivariate levels, employing appropriate statistical (descriptive and inferential) procedures in SPSS, visualized as images, tables, diagrams, and graphs, and interpreted with regards to the country-specific context. Qualitative data derived from the semi-structured focus discussions were anonymized, contextualized, and incorporated as anecdotes and quotations.

Figure 2:  
Participant by Regions



## 2.4. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

The first section of this report provides detailed information on the respondent profile. Most respondents fall in the age group 18-54 (79%). A significant number of respondents have higher education (36%), primary education (27%), and a university degree (about 18%). Most respondents come from rural areas (64%). Related to the region, most of them come from Prishtina (26%) and Prizren (22%). The sample includes 83% of Kosovo

Albanians, while only 17% include other ethnic groups.

The sample included the following participants: 21% aged 18-24, 19% aged 25-34, 18% aged 35-44, 21% aged 45-54, and lower participation, at 11% of those aged 55-64 and 10% of those aged 65 or higher. Even though the age of the respondents is well balanced, still the majority of respondents fall in the age range of 18-54.

Figure 3:  
Age

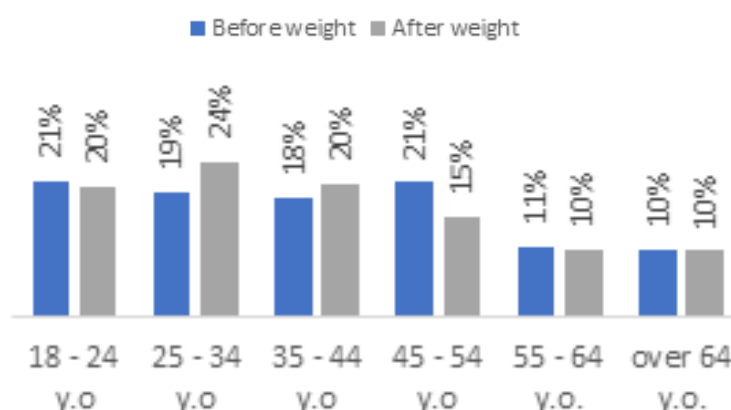


Figure 4:  
**Ethnicity**



Figure 5:  
**Level of education**

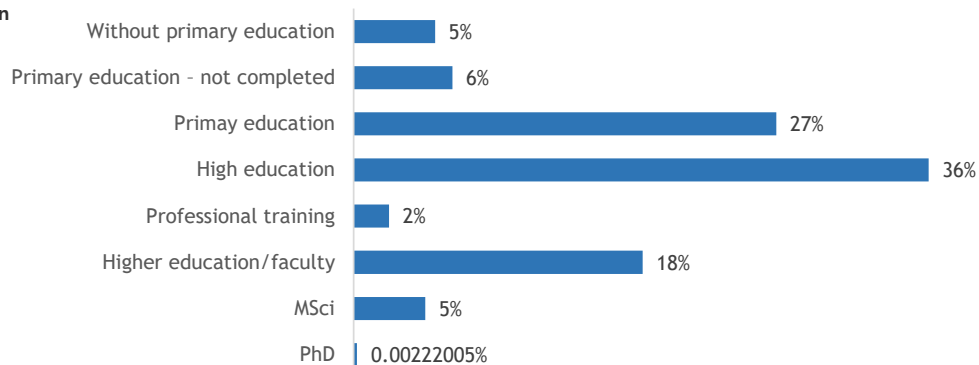


Figure 6:  
**Civil status**

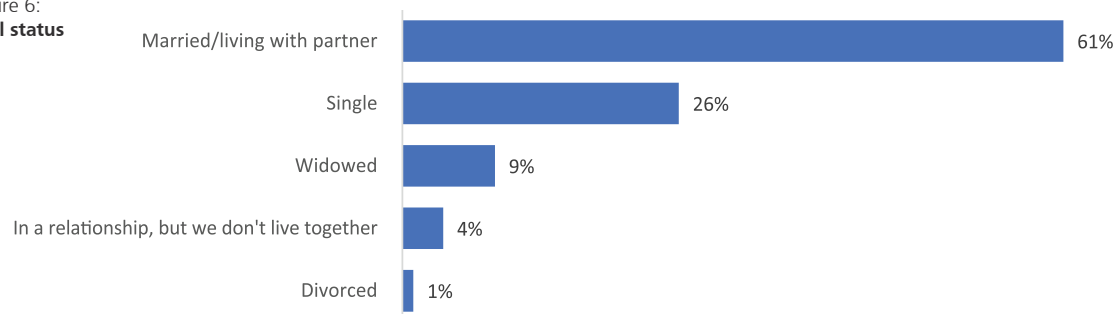


Figure 7:  
**Having children**

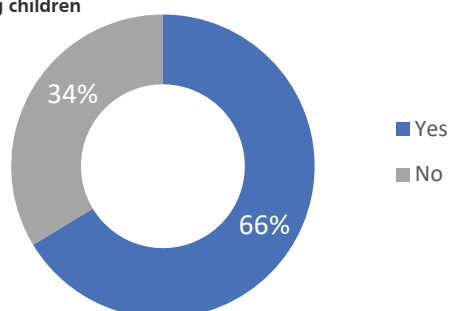


Figure 8:  
**Employment sector**

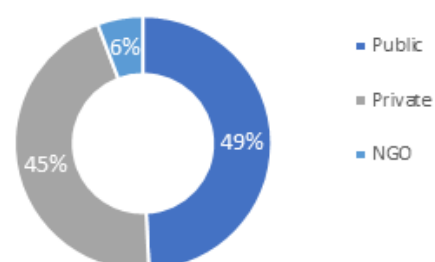


Figure 9:  
**Employment**

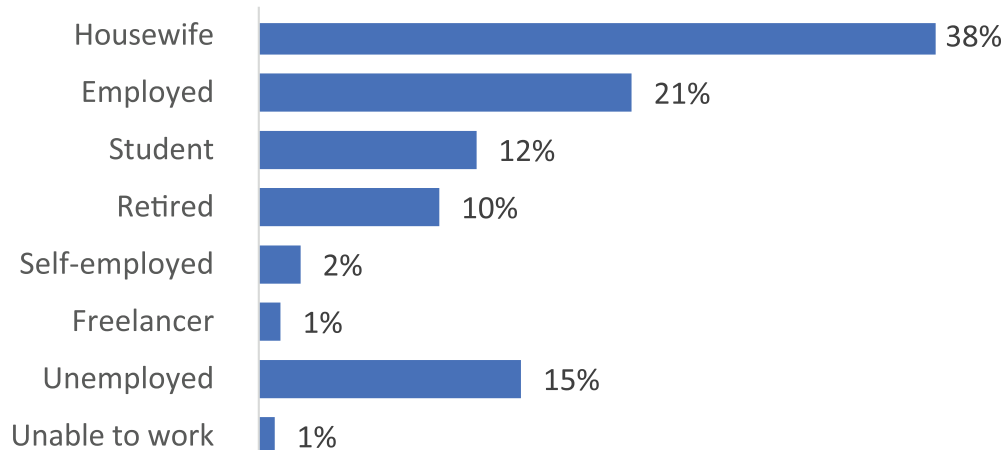


Figure 10:  
**Property**

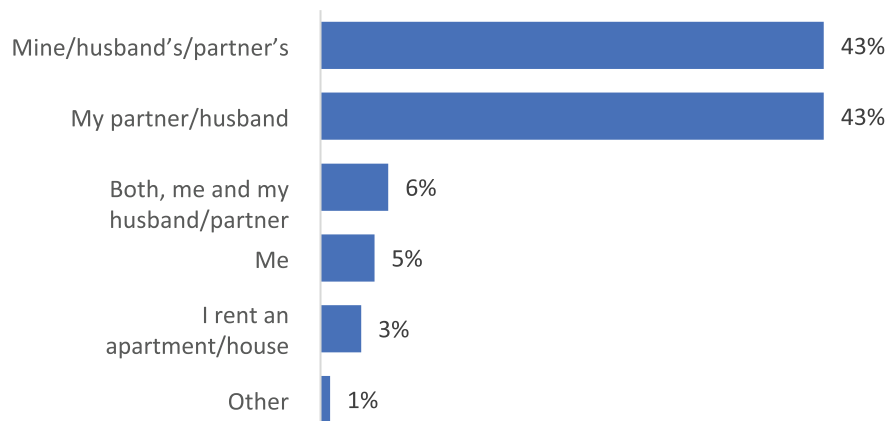
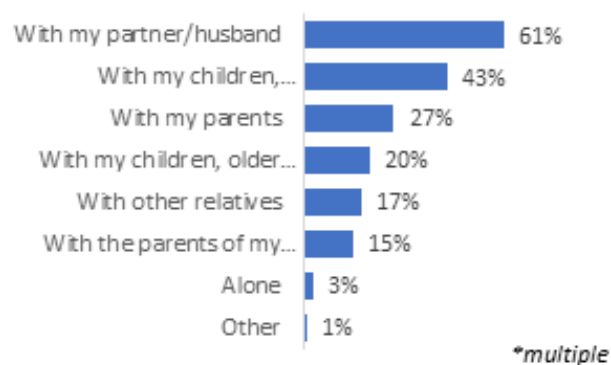


Figure 11:  
**Living with...**







## 3.

## VALUES, RELIGION, AND TRUST

### 3.1 VALUES, ATTITUDES TOWARD GENDER-BASED EQUALITY, STEREOTYPES AND SOCIAL ROLES

**Gender Equality** is one of the most important indicators of the level of democracy and of society's overall development. As such, it remains key for progressive societal development. According to the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung guidelines for gender equality, it is emphasized that they are a set of "preconditions for democracy, sustainable development, poverty-reduction and peacekeeping" (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2021)

**Gender stereotypes** are social and cultural patterns or ideas, preconceived in the mentality of the society where women and men have assigned roles limited by socially constructed ideas that are based on and restricted by their sex or gender. These stereotypes present an obstacle to achieving gender equality and feed into gender discrimination and can seriously hinder the development of girls and boys, women and men, and their education and life opportunities (Council of Europe, 2018). They are also the root and the cause of attitudes, values, norms, and prejudices, that justify power relations between women and men, and sexist attitudes which influence the situation of women in the private and public space. Stereotypical attitudes create structural inequalities, that affect women and girls in education, and all spheres of life, all the way to the labor market.

Due to such defined gender roles, women's value is always attached to the men in their lives (father, brother, husband, or son), or devalued if any of the men in the life cycle is missing (fatherless daughter, sonless mother, brother less sister or husbandless wife). Meanwhile, women are seen as mother figures, putting them into supporting roles, while men are considered the income providers, holding the central authority role in the family, and consequently in society too. The definition of gender stereotypes given by Office of Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHROH) shows the scope of harmful impact on women and girls that can result if such stereotypes are normalized and institutionalized:

*"A gender stereotype is a generalized view or preconception about attributes or characteristics, or the roles that are or ought to be possessed by, or performed by, women and men. A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and/or make choices about their lives. Whether overtly hostile (such as "women are irrational") or seemingly benign ("women are nurturing"), harmful stereotypes perpetuate inequalities. For example, the traditional view of women as care givers means that childcare responsibilities often fall exclusively on women." (United Nations, 2020)*

Historically, the woman's role in the family is connected to her reproductive ability. Women are trusted to raise children and complete household chores. On the other hand, men are responsible for decisions that are taken within the family, as well as for generating income to support their family. There are families who have abandoned these social norms, especially those living in cities in Kosovo (UNICEF, 2017).

Harmful social norms and gender stereotypes towards girls and women should be mitigated, and one way to do so is by confronting them to achieve transformative change. Moreover, family-friendly policies and interventions on positive parenting improve the well-being of children and increase the engagement of fathers in household responsibilities (UNESCO, 2020).

**Social norms and values**, are considered key barriers to gender equality. In many cases, social and cultural norms foster behaviors that lead to gender inequality, while power concentrations created imbalances, which are captured by dominant patriarchal elites. Human values are defined as guiding principles in peoples' lives. The patriarchal norms often become a source of gender-based violence (Kebingjin & Riyanto, 2022).

In this chapter of the study, the attitudes of Kosovo women toward gender equality, gender-based stereotypes, and social roles, are analyzed and reported, as well as what values are most important for them personally and for the society in general.

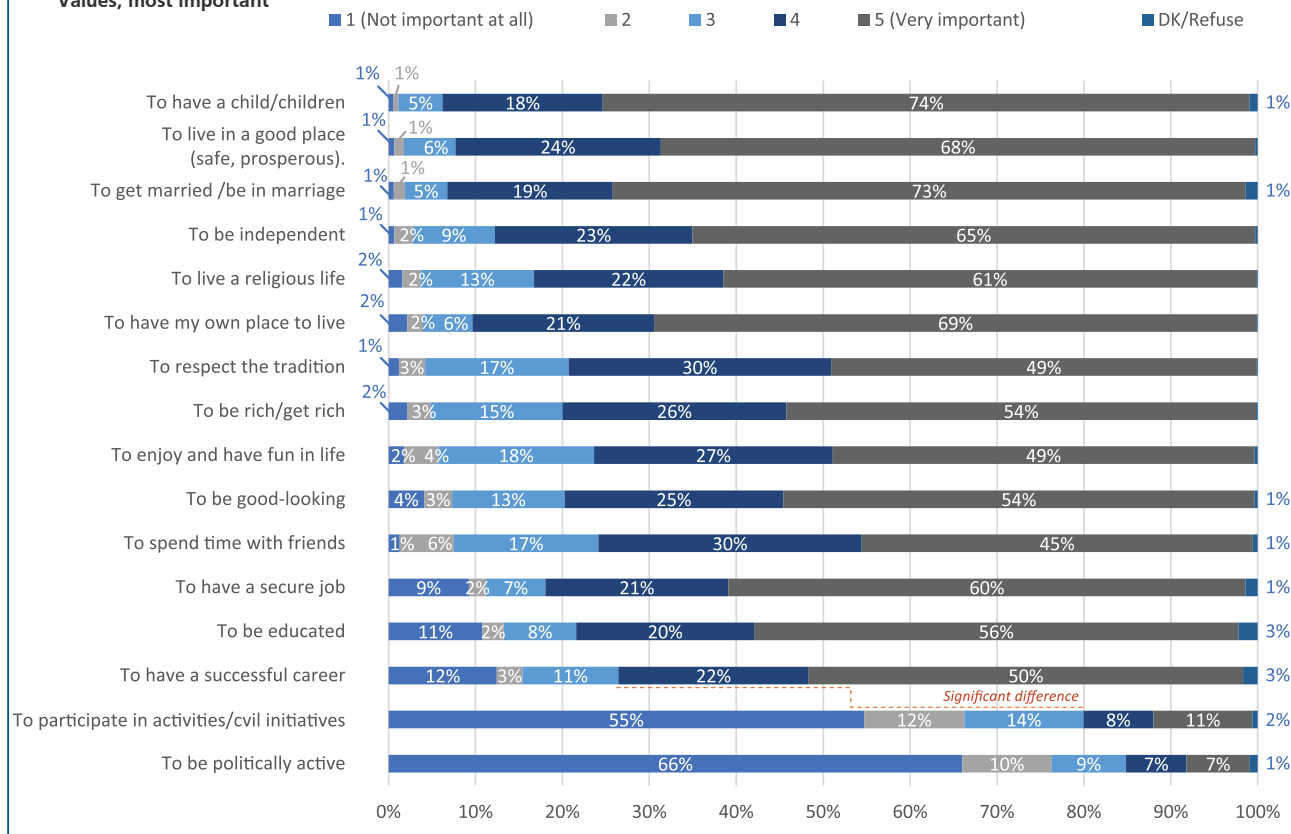
## VALUES

Values among people differ based on their motivational goals, such as security, achievement, and other factors. The priorities attributed to different values by individuals reflect their personality, experience, and surrounding culture (Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1998). The importance of certain life values to the target population, is ranked using a scale of importance from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important).

According to the analysis, women in Kosovo place the highest importance on **having a family/child (74%)**, getting **married (73%)**, **owning a home/property (69%)**, **living in a safe, prosperous country (68%)**, **being independent (65%)**, **living a religious life (61%)** and **having a secure job (60%)**.

Other life values, which are important to women, include being educated (56%), looking good (54%), having wealth (54%), having a successful career (50%), respecting tradition (49%), enjoying life and having fun (49%), as well as spending time with friends (45%). The values, which women consider to be of least importance in life, include **civic activism (11%)** and **political engagement (7%)**.

Figure 12:  
Values, most important



(Croson & Gneezy, 2009) highlight that woman tend to be more benevolent and averse to risk and competition, as well as open to discussing their feelings, while men tend to be more assertive, value power, hedonism, and achievement (Marcinkowska, et al., 2014).

Further, women have more life goals, but place less importance on goals related to power, and when compared to men, they tend not to take advantage of professional advancement (Gino, Wilmut, & Brooks, 2015).

**The correlation analysis shows that there is statistically significant correlation in responses according to education, ethnicity, age, and settlement (urban and rural) in these life values:**

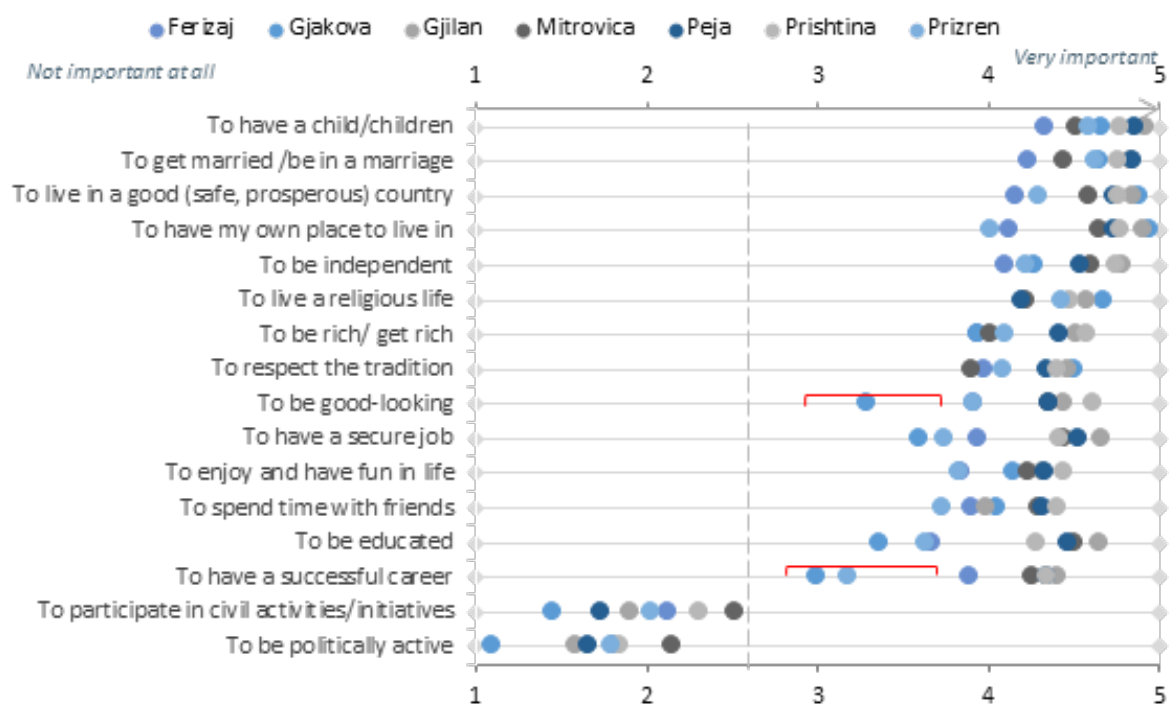
- Education is proportionally correlated to spending time with friends ( $r=.110$ ), being politically active ( $r=.127$ ), participating in civil activities/initiatives ( $r=.140$ ), enjoying and having fun in life ( $r=.125$ ), having a successful career ( $r=.362$ ), being independent ( $r=.191$ ), being educated ( $r=.342$ ), being good looking ( $r=.193$ ), having a

secure job ( $r=.330$ ), and being rich ( $r=.134$ ), statistically significant at  $p<0.01$ ;

- Education is inversely correlated to living a religious life ( $r=-.253$ ), respecting tradition ( $r=-.289$ ), getting married ( $r=-.125$ ), and having children ( $r=-.111$ ), statistically

significant at  $p<0.01$ . This shows that as the level of education increases, women prioritize values related to their social life, spending time with friends, being successful, independent, and educated, while less likely to consider tradition, marriage, or children as the most important values of life.

Figure 13:  
Importance of the following values in life for them personally, by region



**Bivariate analysis of data on life values have showed a statistically significant correlation between age and the following life values:**

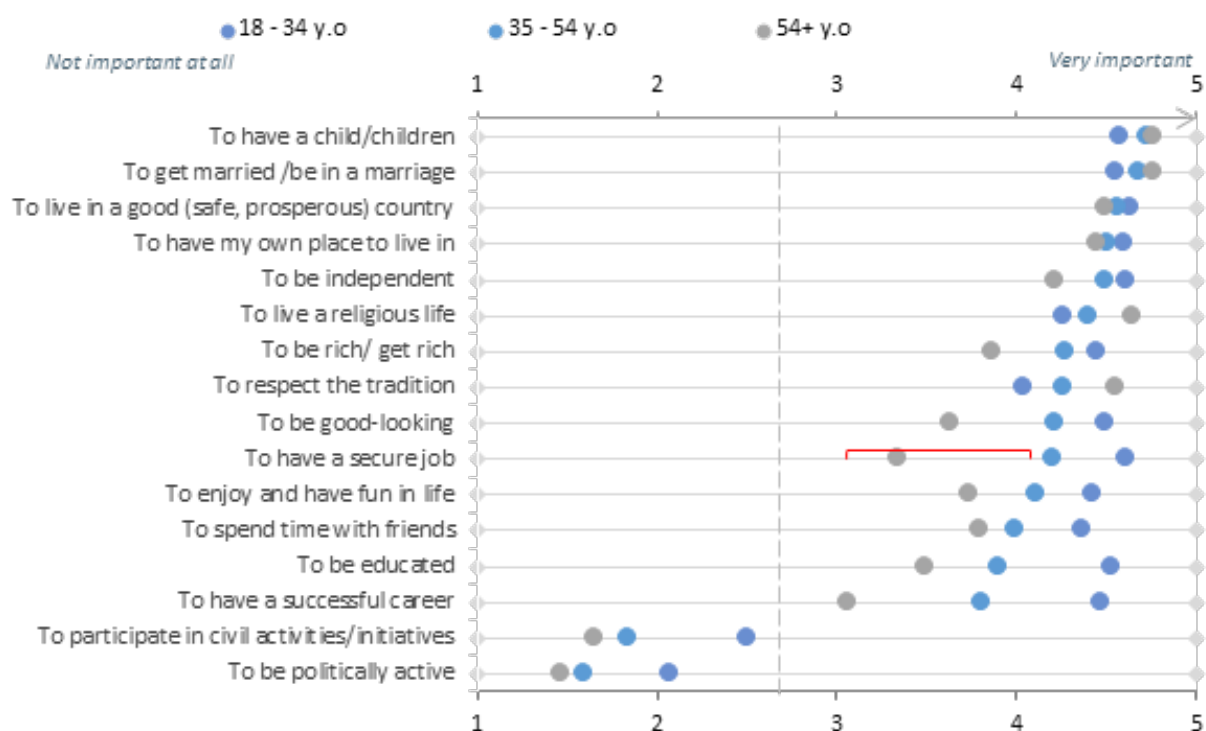
Life values such as: Living a religious life ( $r=.166$ ), respecting the tradition ( $r=.210$ ), getting married ( $r=.168$ ) and having children ( $r=.176$ ), have shown a significant positive correlation, statistically significant at  $p<0.01$ .

Life values such as: Spending time with friends ( $r=-.213$ ), enjoying and having fun in life ( $r=-.259$ ), being politically active ( $r=-.231$ ), participating in civil activities ( $r=-.248$ ), having a successful career ( $r=-.350$ ), being independent ( $r=-.146$ ), being educated ( $r=-.260$ ), being good looking ( $r=-.251$ ), having a secure job ( $r=-.273$ ), and being rich

( $r=-.183$ ), have shown an inverse correlation with age, statistically significant at  $p<0.01$ .

Appreciation of life values based on age group, shows that the importance of certain life values increases or decreases according to age. These analyses show that as age increases, women are more likely to consider that tradition, marriage, and children are more important, while assigning less importance to other life values, such as appearance, having a secure job, being politically active, or even having an active social life. Meanwhile the younger the women are, life values such as being good looking, enjoying and having fun in life, education, and spending time with friends, are more important.

Figure 14:  
Values by age



## ATTITUDES ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY

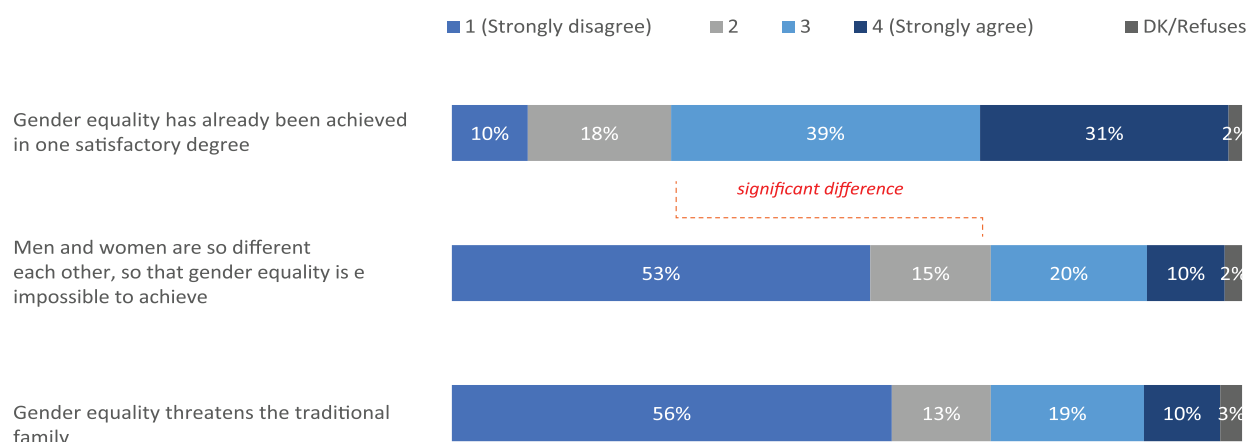
The extent, to which women agree with statements about gender equality and other issues, has been assessed on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Women in Kosovo demonstrate moderate support for gender equality. Data analysis collected on the level of agreement with attitudes about gender equality, in a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) show that women in Kosovo are aware and supportive towards gender equality, however, they are also satisfied with the level of gender equality achieved so far.

A majority of women (53%) strongly disagree with the statement that, "Women and men are so different that equality is impossible to achieve" and a majority of women (56%) also strongly disagree with the statement that "gender equality threatens traditional family". This indicates that more than half of the respondents are highly aware that gender equality does not depend on differences between women and men, nor is the traditional family more important.

Approximately 39% and 31% percent of women responded to scale 3 and 4 of agreement to the statement, "gender equality has already been achieved to a satisfactory level". This is the perception of participants, despite studies and reports arguing that gender equality in Kosovo is still low with regard to its implementation in practice (OECD, 2021).

Therefore, it remains unclear what women in Kosovo understand by gender equality. The Program of Kosovo on Gender Equality 2020-2024 (Kosovo Agency for Gender Equality, 2020) defines gender equality as a fundamental right and important factor for economic development and stability, as well as a fundamental constitutional principle which should be in the center of transformative processes in Kosovo, in all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, governmental, agency, civil society programs and practices, as well as among the private and public sectors and donor community.

Figure 15:  
Statements on gender Equality

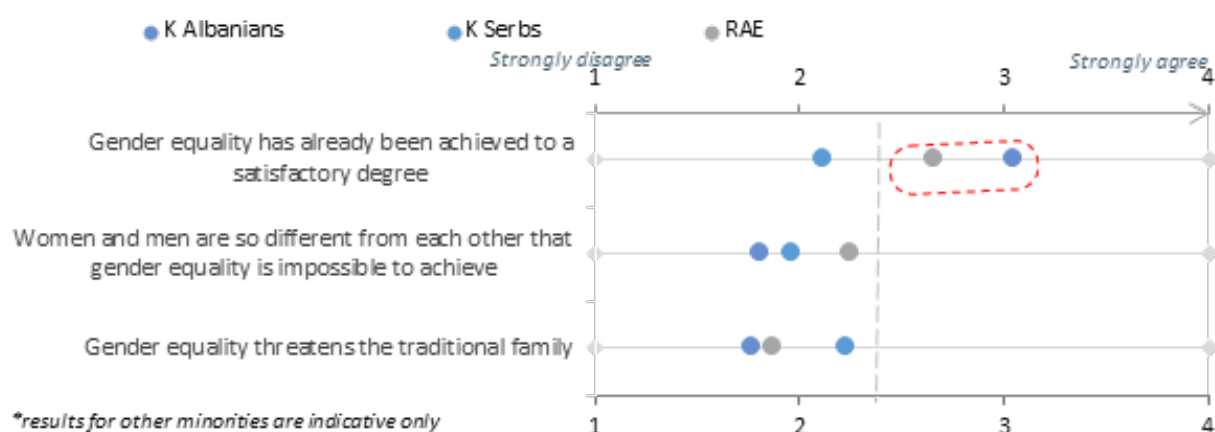


Further correlation analysis has shown that there is a statistically significant correlation between **education** and **age** and statements on gender equality and other issues:

- The statement "women and men are so different from each other that gender equality is impossible to achieve" is inversely correlated to education ( $r=-.189$ ) and proportionally correlated to age ( $r=.167$ , statistically significant at  $p<0.01$ ).
- The statement "gender equality has already been achieved to a satisfactory degree" is inversely correlated to education ( $r=-.138$ ) and proportionally correlated to age ( $r=.141$ , significant at  $p<0.01$ ).
- The statement "gender Equality threatens the traditional family" is negatively correlated to education ( $r=-.118$ ) and proportionally correlated to age ( $r=.101$ , statistically significant at  $p<0.01$ ).

The data indicates that women of an older age agree more with these statements regarding attitudes to gender equality, but the higher the level of education, the lower the agreement with these attitudes. Thus, as education increases, women are less likely to believe that gender equality has been achieved at a satisfactory level, or that gender equality is not possible due to the differences between women and men, and they strongly disagree that gender equality threatens the traditional family. Meanwhile further data show that there is a significant difference between the level of agreement about gender equality attitudes among women living in urban and rural areas. The extent, to which women agree with statements about gender equality and other issues, has been assessed on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). **Women in Kosovo demonstrate moderate support for gender equality.**

Figure 16:  
Statements on gender equality by ethnicity



## SOCIAL ROLES

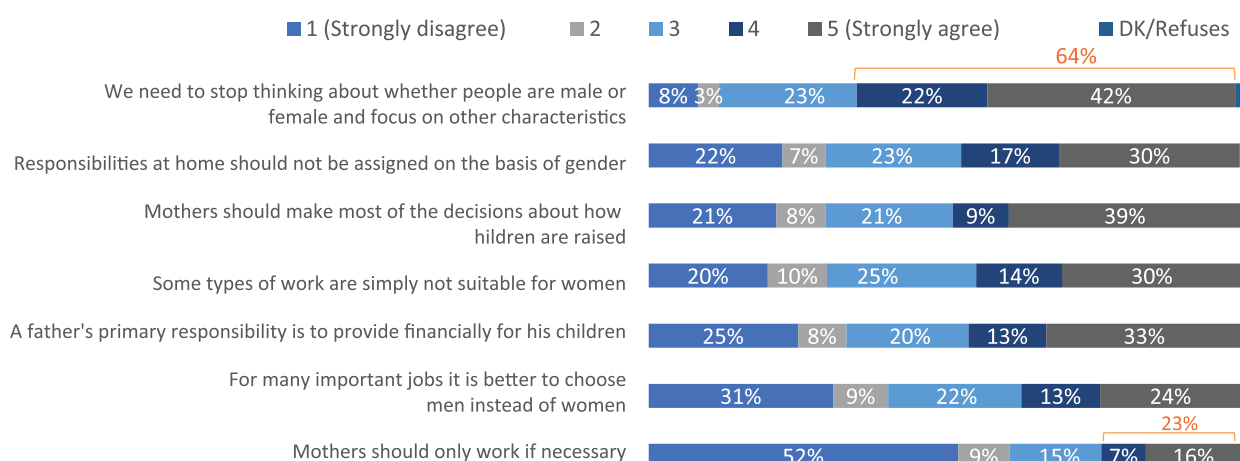
Various studies carried out by local and international organizations in Kosovo have stated a clear division of gender roles in the society, that start in the family and are reflected in almost all spheres of life. The study on Women in Kosovo 2022 used the Likert Scale to measure perceptions about gender roles. Seven statements were defined to measure the level of agreement and disagreement on the gender role divisions among women who were respondents. According to the analysis, paradoxically there is strong agreement among women with the statement, "we should stop thinking whether people are male or

female and focus on other characteristics" (42%) and "mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up," (39%) as well as "a father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children."

The following are some statements related to the perception of social gender roles, using an adapted and abbreviated scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree), taken from a social roles questionnaire (Baber & Tucker, 2006 ), a model used in the study conducted in North Macedonia in 2020.

Figure 17:

### Agreements with statements about gender e roles



**Further bivariate analysis has shown significant inverse correlation between education and the following statements:**

- Mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up ( $r = -.248$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )
- Mothers should work only if necessary ( $r = -.387$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )

- A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children ( $r = -.370$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )
- Some types of work are just not appropriate for women ( $r = -.278$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )
- For many important jobs, it is better to choose men instead of women ( $r = -.362$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )
- Responsibilities at home should not be assigned based on gender ( $r = -.067$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )

Figure 18:

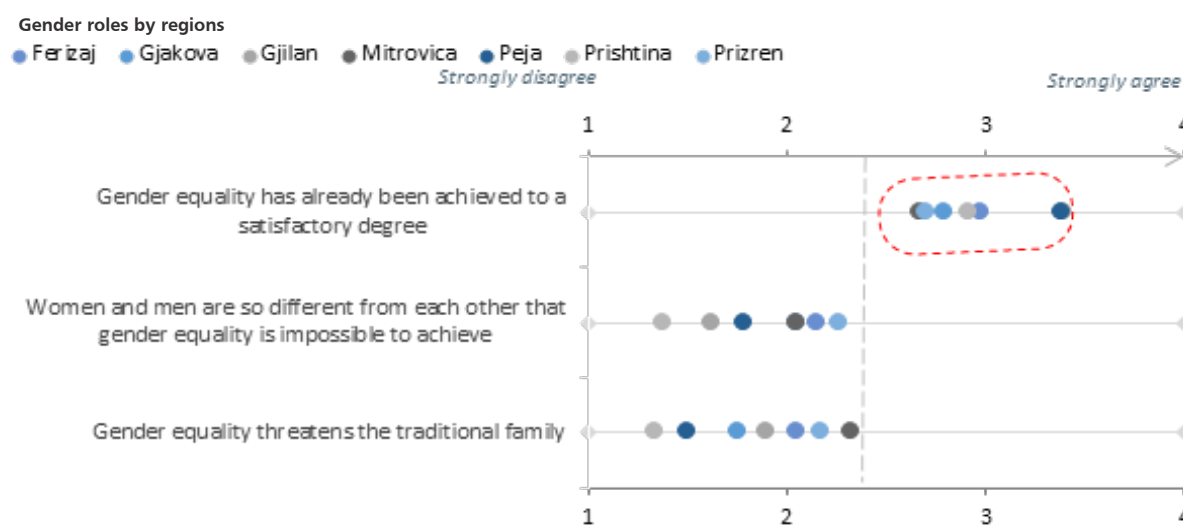
### Gender roles by level of education



Differences are noticed also based on the regions.

Figure 19:

**Gender roles by regions**



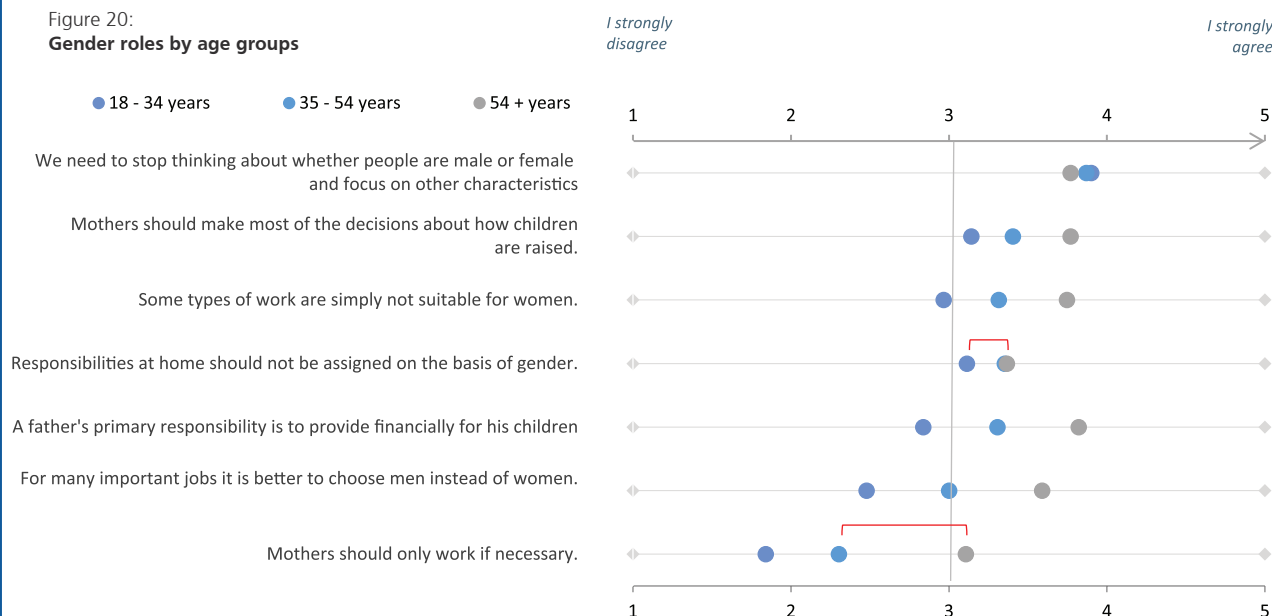
P4: Yes, there is a big difference. I live in the city, but I have friends from the villages, and they are amazed at how it is possible for me to go out freely from morning to evening, even though I am a mother. This is made possible by the understanding I have with my parents

in-law. Also, living in the city offers greater employment opportunities. Working and starting a family is only possible if you have the support of all family members, otherwise it is difficult.

Figure 20:

**Gender roles by age groups**

● 18 - 34 years ● 35 - 54 years ● 54 + years



**The bivariate analysis by age have shown statistically significant correlation between age, with the following statements.**

- Mothers should make most decisions about how children are brought up ( $r=.174$ ,  $p<0.01$ )
- Mothers should work only if necessary ( $r=.319$ ,  $p<0.01$ )

- A father's major responsibility is to provide financially for his children ( $r=.267$ ,  $p<0.01$ )
- Some types of work are just not appropriate for women ( $r=.221$ ,  $p<0.01$ )
- For many important jobs, it is better to choose men instead of women ( $r=.263$ ,  $p<0.01$ )



With regard to the statements about social and gender roles, the data shows that there is a rising scale of agreement according to education, among women aged between 18-34, with statements that they consider to represent less division of gender roles (the highest agreement is with the statement that gender characteristics should be eliminated, and the strongest disagreement is with the statement that mothers should work only if necessary). A slight difference is noticeable among women between 35-54 years of age, and women who are 54 +. This indicates that younger the woman, the more likely she is to be self-empowered.

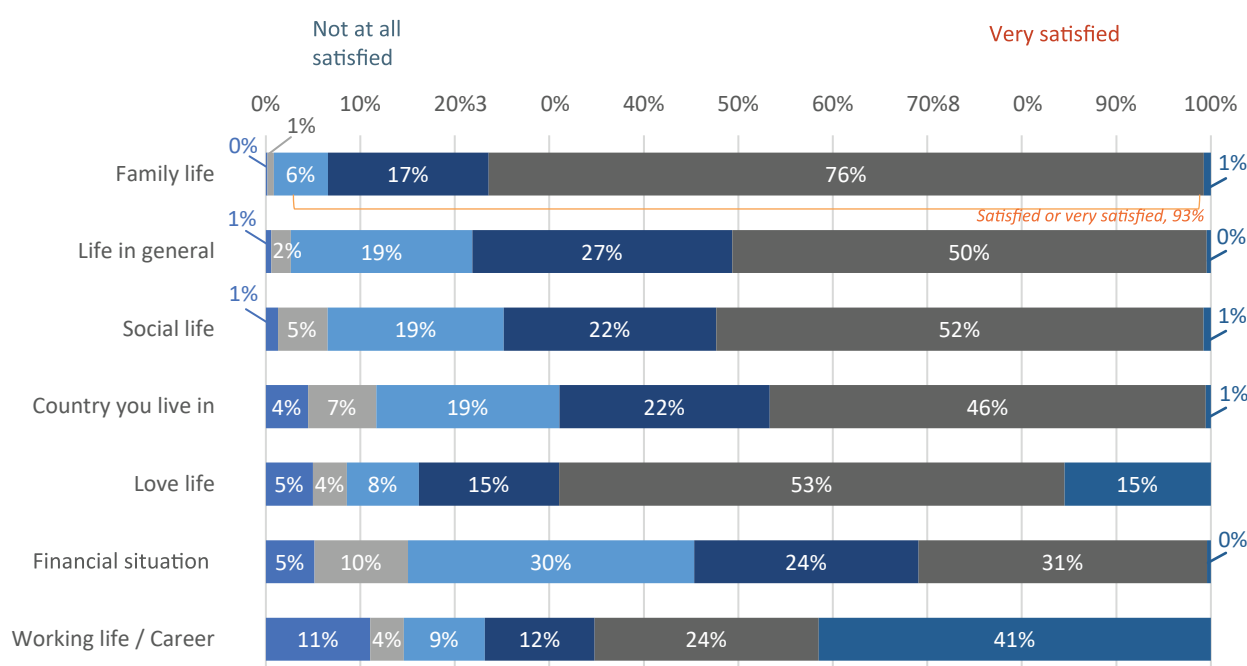
### 3.2 SATISFACTION & DISSATISFACTION AMONG WOMEN

The figure below show the level of satisfaction of women towards different issues according to the analyzed data.

Most women are satisfied or very satisfied with their family life (93%). The results show high satisfaction also in terms of life in general (78%), social life (74%), love life (68%), and with the country where they live (68%). It continues with satisfaction with financial situation (54%) and working life/career (35%). It is important to indicate that 40% of women didn't respond to the statement related to satisfaction with working life/career.

Similar results for satisfaction could also be observed across the different regions. The greatest satisfaction among regions is with family life, followed by the satisfaction with social life, life in general, and love life. Women from different regions are quite satisfied with the country where they live, with the highest satisfaction in Peja (m=4.4) and lowest satisfaction in Ferizaj (m=3.5).

Figure 21:  
Satisfaction and dissatisfaction

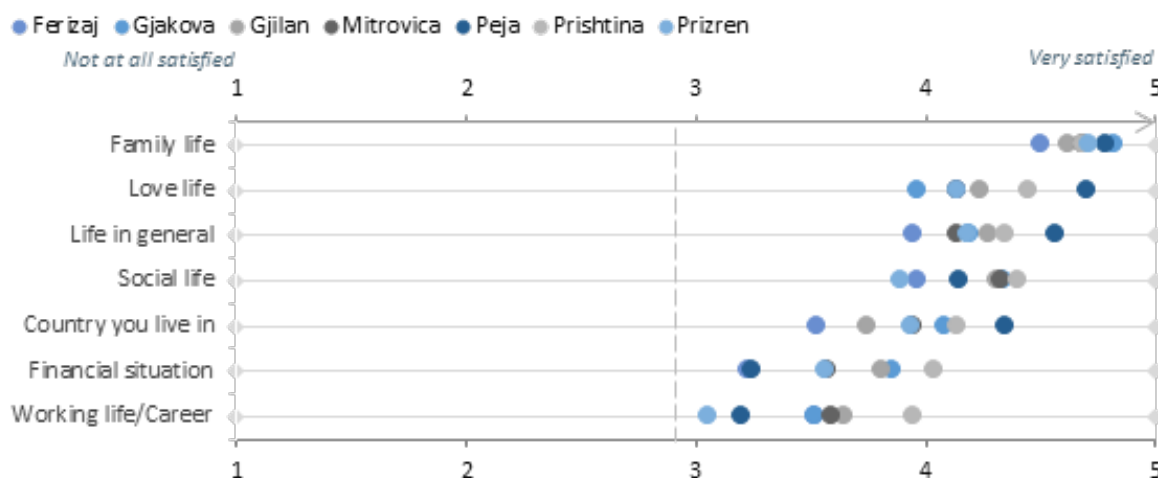


Regarding financial situation, the average level of satisfaction among the regions is 3.6, which is not a satisfactory level. The Prishtina region is the most satisfied (m=4.0), and Ferizaj (m=3.2) the least satisfied. The level of satisfaction with the financial situation indicates that in Prishtina, the capital of Kosovo, there are more job opportunities, more childcare, and institutions to care for the elderly, which enables women to work. Similar results were recorded for working life/career satisfaction, with an average of 3.5 in all regions, and the highest satisfaction in Prishtina (m=3.9), and lowest in Prizren (m=3.1).

Further analysis indicated small differences among women in various age groups. Women who are aged 18-34 are less satisfied with the country where they live (m=3.9), compared to women aged 55 or higher (m=4.3). For working life/career, there is greater satisfaction among women aged 18-34 (m=3.7), compared to those who are aged 35-54 (m=3.4), or 55 and higher (m=3.3).



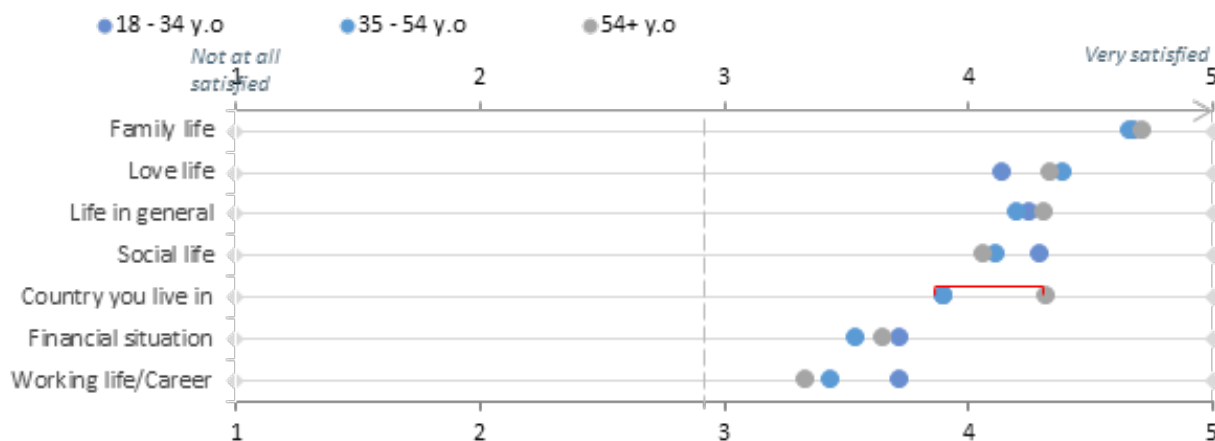
Figure 22:  
Satisfaction with.... by region



Correlation analysis has shown that there is statistically significant (inverse) correlation between education and the level of satisfaction with love life ( $r=-.116$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), country you live in ( $r=-.195$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and life in general ( $r=-.112$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and a proportional correlation between

age and love life and the country where you live and an inverse correlation with social life. Meanwhile, the data do not show a significant difference between the level of satisfaction among women living in rural and urban areas.

Figure 23:  
Satisfaction with...by age groups



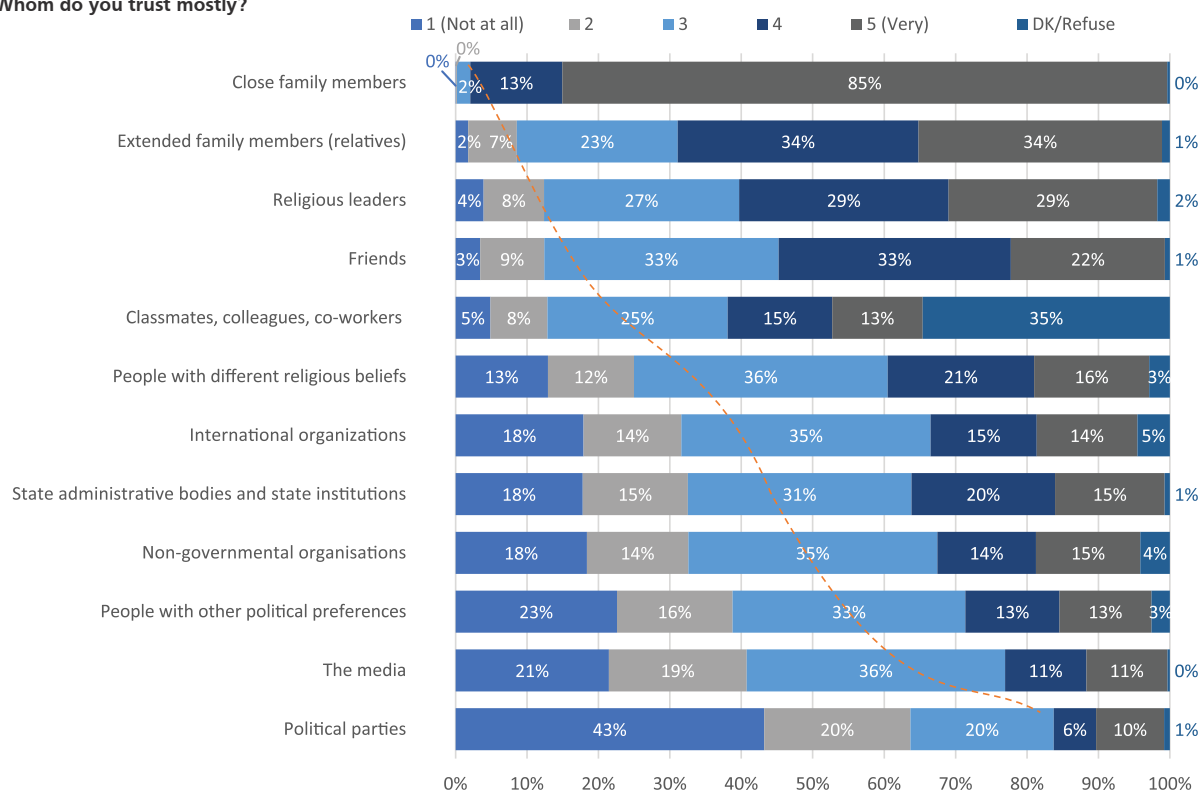
### 3.3 TRUST

Social trust is related to social capital and refers often to the relationship between citizens and public institutions. Welch et al, 2005 believe that social trust is a requirement for both social order and social relationships:

we believe that social trust provides the cohesiveness necessary for the development of meaningful social relationships, we treat trust as reflecting the functioning heart of a healthy society, economy, and democratic polity. (Welch, et al., (2005), p. 454)

The data in this study includes women's ratings on trust in several entities, on a scale from 1 (do not trust at all) to 5 (completely trust). Women in Kosovo place their greatest trust in their close family members (98%), followed by trust in extended family members (68%), religious leaders (58%), and friends (55%). Women indicated a lower level of trust for people with different religious beliefs (37%), state administrative bodies and state institutions (35%), international organizations (29%), non-governmental organizations (29%), classmates, colleagues, co-workers (28%), people with other political preferences (26%), the media (22%) and political parties (16%).

Figure 24:  
Whom do you trust mostly?

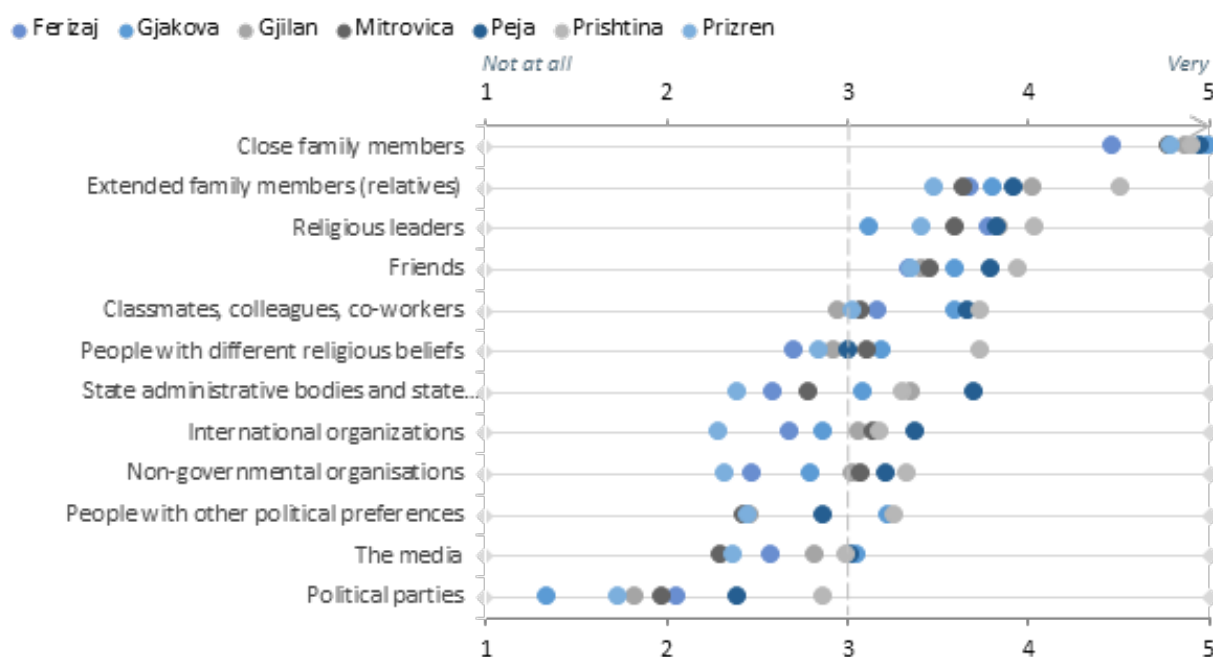


There are few differences among the women in the various regions regarding the trust they put in the listed entities.

Trust in close family members is high across all regions, with the highest being in Peja ( $m=5.0$ ) and Gjakova ( $m=5.0$ ), while the lowest being in Ferizaj ( $m=4.5$ ). Trust

in friends is the highest in the case of Prishtina (4.0) and the lowest in the case of Ferizaj ( $m=3.3$ ). Trust in political parties was not at a satisfactory level, with the lowest in Gjakova ( $m=1.3$ ), followed by Prizren ( $m=1.7$ ), Gjilan ( $m=1.8$ ), Mitrovica ( $m=2.0$ ), Ferizaj ( $m=2.1$ ), Peja ( $m=2.4$ ) and the highest trust in Prishtina ( $m=2.9$ ).

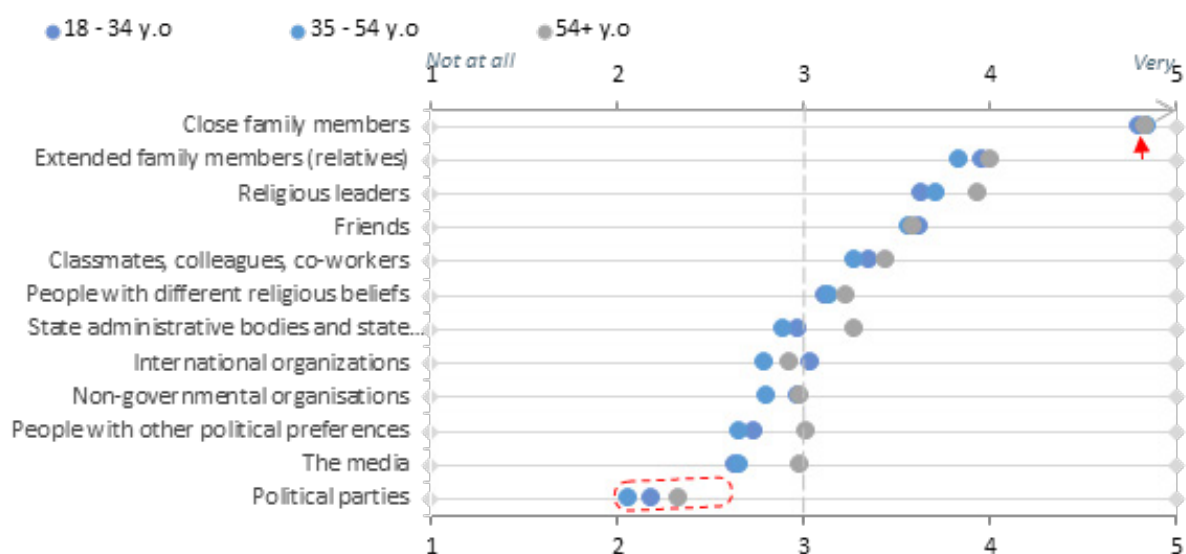
Figure 25:  
Trust by regions



The trust level in the various entities by age group is almost similar for all age groups. The results are the same in all three age groups for trust in close family members ( $m=4.8$ ) and friends ( $m=3.6$ ). Trust in political parties is low across all age groups: for the age group of 54 or more, it ranks at  $m=2.3$ , for the age group 18-34 ( $m=2.2$ ), and for the age group 35-54 ( $m=2.1$ ). Similarly, trust in international organizations is low among the age groups: it is lowest in the age group of 35-54 ( $m=2.8$ ), followed by the age group of 54 or higher ( $m=2.9$ ) and lastly, the age group of 18-35 ( $m=3.0$ ).

Further bivariate analysis shows that there is significant correlation between age and trust of women in the following aspects: Trust in the close family (close family members (mother/ father /sister /brother/ husband/ partner/ children); trust in religious leaders, state administrative bodies and institutions, and the media, and an inverse correlation with international organizations.

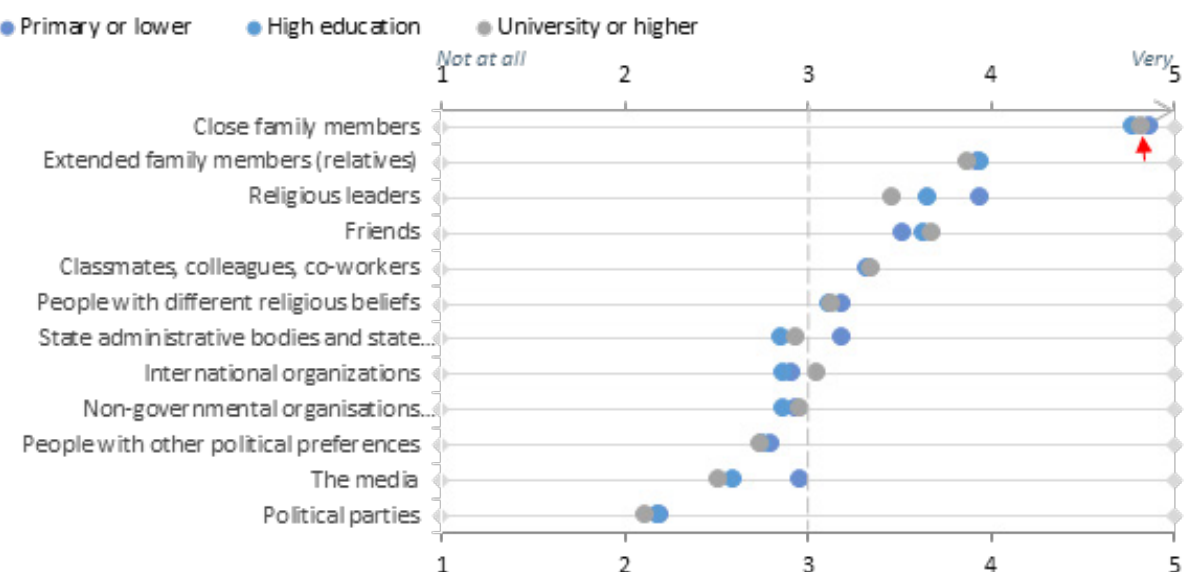
Figure 26:  
Trust..by age groups



There is a strong negative correlation between education and trust in the following aspects: Close family, religious

leaders, state administrative bodies and state institutions and media.

Figure 27:  
Trust by level of education



### 3.4 IMPORTANCE AND PRACTICE OF RELIGION

There is a complex relationship between religion and gender equality. Religion also plays an important role in cultural, social, economic, and political norms, which are rooted in the experiences of people and influence societies to a great extent. Religious institutions around the world tend to uphold the patriarchal social dominance within societal structures. Women's status in religion is more complicated, their voice is less heard because of the patriarchal traditions (United Nations, n.d.).

Religions around the world respect women's role in family life as mothers and wives, but still, they do not promote women's emancipation to the extent required for total equality with men (Klingorová and Havlicek, 2015). The interviewed women from different regions are mostly Muslim (88%), followed by Orthodox (10%), Catholic (2%), and Atheist (0.3%).

Figure 28:  
**Religion**

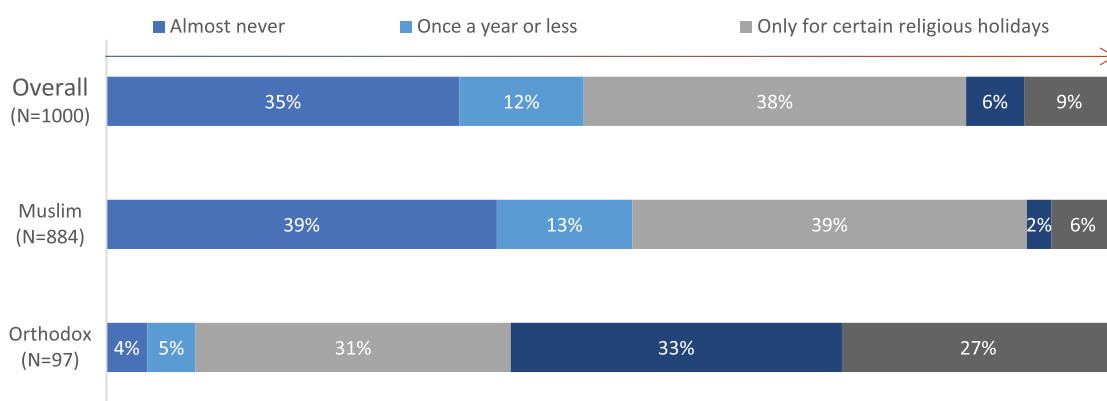


When asked if they attended religious ceremonies/rituals other than weddings and funerals, most of them almost never do (35%), while 38% of women highlight that they attend only for certain religious holidays. Similar results showed also for most Muslim women (39%) who responded that they almost never attend other religious ceremonies/rituals, and they go only for certain religious holidays (39%).

The results for Orthodox women are somewhat different. Approximately 33% of Orthodox women go once a month, and 31% of them go only for certain religious holidays (31%), while only 4% almost never attend other religious ceremonies/rituals. The findings indicate that Orthodox women (mainly of Serb ethnicity) practice religion more frequently compared to Muslim women.

Figure 29:

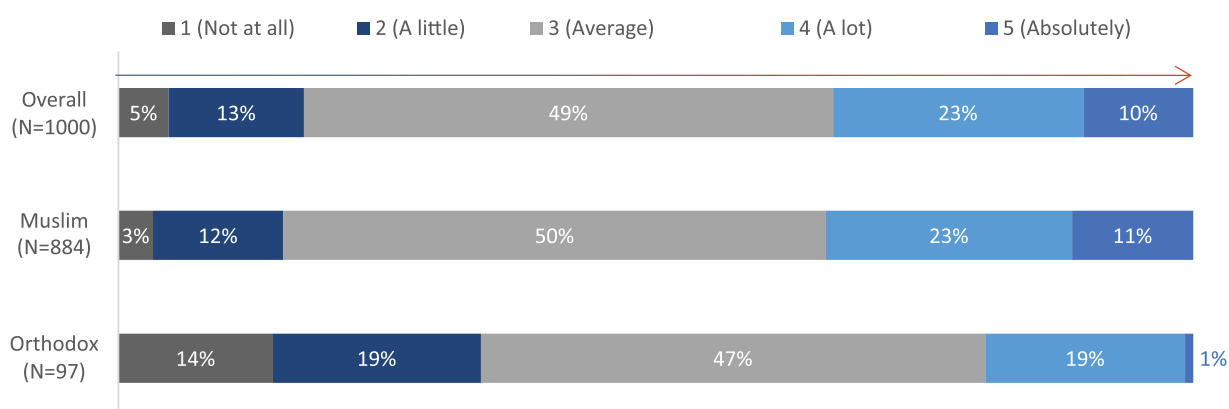
**Frequency of attending religious ceremonies/rituals, besides weddings and funerals, by religious faith**



The level of women's acceptance and their efforts to fulfill the request/expectations of religion is similar among different religions. On average, Muslim women (50%) and Orthodox women (47%) accept and strive to fulfill requests/expectations from religion. A smaller proportion of Muslim women (23%) and Orthodox women (19%), accept and strive a lot to fulfill these request/expectations.

Comparing the two questions reveals that even though there is a high percentage of Muslim women (39%), who almost never attend religious ceremonies/rituals, a majority of Muslim women still accept and strive to fulfill the requests /expectations of religion.

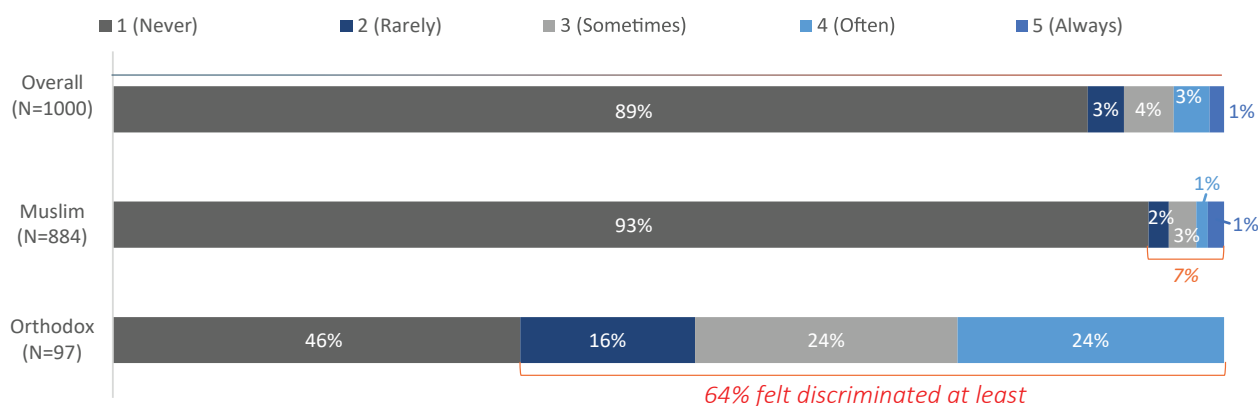
Figure 30:  
Acceptance and striving to fulfill request/expectations from religion by religious groups



We asked women whether they have felt discriminated against by the Kosovar society based on religion. In the case of Muslim women, most of them have been never discriminated against because of religion (93%). However, while 37% of Orthodox women agreed

they have never been discriminated against because of religion, 24% of Orthodox women reported having been discriminated against often and another 24% said they have been discriminated against at least once.

Figure 31:  
Have you ever felt discriminated against in the Kosovar society because of your religion?



Regarding the places where they felt most discriminated, 76% of respondents reported that it was in society, followed by school (12%), work (5%), and others (7%).

Figure 32:  
places where felt discriminated at...



## FINDINGS FROM THE QUALITATIVE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

As discussed in the research methodology, four focus group discussions were also held to foster a deeper understanding of the six modules of the survey. Indeed, two were held with randomized women from different regions in Kosovo, separated into two different age groups, namely 18-35 years old and 36-55 years old. One focus group was held with representatives of CSOs dealing directly or indirectly with issues of gender equality and women's rights, and one was held with representatives of public institutions knowledgeable on the topic or in positions related to the topic.

Participants answered questions related to the values, religion, and trust of women aged 18-35 coming from different regions. Considering that the percentage of religious residents is higher in the area of Prizren and Mitrovica, trust and faith are very important. Some other participants said that this is less important for younger generations. Religious rites are generally limited to fasting during Ramadan and going to the mosque for Eid. Women also reported that they respect the religion of the society, and they do not think there is discrimination against those who are not of the same faith. The findings from the focus group, held with representatives of public institutions, familiar with the topics or in positions related to the topic, echoed the perception by women who say that faith and tradition are very important factors within the society of the Republic of Kosovo. Others stated that especially in recent years, there has been an increase in practitioners of religion among young people.

Regarding values, some women believe that because of the mentality, it is more important to create a family than work. Others highlighted that women need to work and create financial independence.

In relation to the degree of women's equality one participant stated that, "the woman is expected to wash, clean, and take care of the family. In addition, women usually do not take their shares in inheritance, for instance, one respondent relayed: "My husband told me that if I ask for my share of my family's inheritance, he will not talk to me anymore."

Women believe that it is possible to work and still create a family, with the support of other family members. The Republic of Kosovo is still a patriarchal society, but the work that is being done by various organizations, which aim to promote gender equality, has greatly influenced the situation in this regard to change for the better.

The women stress that gender equality has not been achieved at a high level, and institutions should be engaged more to fight inequality. One of the main problems according to them, continues to be the issue of property inheritance, as currently only 17% of women and girls inherit property. Another problem is the lack of financial incentives and support for women. Also, for many unemployed women, a key factor for not raising the issue of gender inequality is the lack of knowledge regarding the legal framework and concrete rights they have.

The following are the results of the focus group from representatives of CSOs, dealing directly or indirectly with issues of gender equality and women's rights. One of the participants stated that women in Kosovo are only considered successful if they get married and have children. According to her, this means that having a job is something superfluous, but marriage is what in most cases characterizes women as successful in the eyes of the community, and society.

They identified some reasons as the burden of care, gender discrimination, as well as access to the labor market. For example, as maternity leave must be paid, the employer chooses the man, even if women and men have the same qualifications. It is of crucial importance to see changes within society, tradition, and patriarchy, in order to promote employment, especially for young women. They also said that there are gender prejudices against women, especially divorced and single mothers. Career achievements will be seen as a failure, as society rather focuses on how much they go out and what they do. In the past women have experienced prejudiced from family and friends based on their reproductivity. Women have often been divorced simply because they have not been reproductive.

**P6 F4:** ...The way families are organized, and family life in Kosovo, is a reflection of the overall organization of society. If we look from the perspectives of roles, 14% of women are focused on the labor market, and approximately 80% are inactive, while the employment of men is much higher. Consequently, I think that it affects family relationships. The husband is the main financial provider in the family, so he decides on financial issues in the family. Of course, there are outliers, as personally I am part of this 14% of women that are employed, but it has been shown that financial decisions are made by those who are the main financial providers, and usually they are men. There are studies, not just that of MCC, but also some of ours, that show that women are more dedicated and pay more attention to education of children as they have more free time – in terms of payment, as P7 said. But they have more free time if they are not employed, and so it remains their responsibility to take care of children's upbringing, education, homework, so to conclude all, the organization of the family is a reflection of social life in general in Kosovo.

**P6F1:** I think that the individual should decide for herself, regardless of religion, tradition, etc., that she will start a family, make a career, do both or neither. So, it is the individual right of everyone to orient themselves in life. I think there is a significantly higher level of educated girls compared to the pre-war period, so they have been given an equal opportunity for development.

**P2:** I think trust is very important. Especially here in Prizren, people are very religious.

**P5:** Even in Mitrovica people are very religious, there are complaints from foreigners since here during the month of Ramadan alcohol is not served in any bar.

While now there is a decline in such prejudices, there is still work to be done in this regard.

**P6 F2:** Traditionally in our families there is such a division, which is somewhat "natural," because this was done by the family. So, it is known to us that a woman takes care of children, the elderly, household chores, and food. Such a division I think should not happen, and to some extent it has begun to change, but there is still a lot of work and time. Unlike in the past, when women did not work, but were fully engaged in housework, today women also work, but at the same time, they take care of all the above jobs. But something positive in this regard is that men have already started to take more responsibility for household chores, which should be seen as normal and not as an aid to women. These things should start to be learned from an early age, i.e. from kindergarten.

**P4F1:** Yes, for example I am not separated from lack of love. I am separated because my husband's family did not allow me to work, they decided for me. I do not even know that mentality. I too am from a village, but I have worked before and supported my family financially. I did not finish college because I started to work, and when I got married, they told me that their daughter-in-law should not work. But they allowed their daughters to go to college. So, the mentality differs from family to family, not just village-town.

**P6F1:** I have the opposite case. When I started my studies, I was very focused, but then I met my boyfriend, now my husband, and I got pregnant. For a short period after giving birth, I quit my studies, but after three months I returned. My husband's family supports me a lot, they take care of my daughter when I have commitments and they do not mind at all when I participate in various trainings, even though I am from a village in Gjiilan.

**P3F1:** For a woman it is very important to work, she must have financial independence, she must have her money. It helps, complements a woman, when she should not depend on family members. So, I think it is very important for a woman to have her job.

**P2:** There is equality but not so much, there are still many differences. The woman is expected to wash, clean, take care of the family. In addition, women usually do not take shares in inheritance, for instance, my husband told me that if I ask for my share of my family's inheritance, he will not talk to me anymore.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed attitudes toward gender equality, values, satisfaction and dissatisfaction of women, their trust and importance/ practice of religion.

- Values that women in the Republic of Kosovo find most important are having a family/child, getting married, owning a home/property, living in a safe, prosperous country, being independent, living a religious life, and having a secure job. The life values results are similar based on region. Due to the ethnic composition of Kosovo, and the unequal participation of women based on ethnicity, the statistical analysis of women based on ethnicity related to life values has not been performed, especially because of the low sample of women from other communities besides Albanian and Serbian communities.
- The importance of particular values in life has shown significant correlation (positive) with women's appreciation to being politically active and participate in civic activities, have fun in life and enjoy time with friends, being educated and having a secure job. Although in the overall list these values are not the most appreciated, the number of women surveying participants based on education is also not proportional to education categories. Meanwhile, the data has shown a negative correlation between education and living a traditional and religious life, getting married and having children, which shows that the more educated women are, they do not consider these values to be the most important ones in their lives. In parallel, the data analysis has shown that based on age, women change their stance towards life values. While women who are aged 54+



and 25-35, still consider that having children and getting married are the most important life values, the data shows a positive correlation with these values, meaning, the older women are, these values become more important. Meanwhile, with age increase, spending time with friends, enjoyment of life, career, independence, education, appearance, and political activism is less and less important. Nevertheless, this also shows that younger women consider that these values are important, while the change of intensity of interactions and activities for women of older age, influences their discouragement and distance from values that make them more part of the society.

- Women in the Republic of Kosovo demonstrated **support for gender equality only to some extent**. The highest agreement is shown in the statement that gender equality has been already achieved to a satisfactory degree. On the other hand, most women strongly disagree with the statement that women and men are different, indicating an increase in women's awareness that actually they have to be treated equally.
- Additionally, most women disagreed with the provocative statement that gender equality threatens traditional families. Data analysis has shown that with the increasing level of education, disagreement with the statements also increases (having a negative correlation between education and the level of agreement on gender equality statements), while the correlation between age and level of agreement is positive, which shows that with the increase of age, the agreement with the statements on gender equality increases.
- It is important to observe particularly the statement that "gender equality threatens the traditional family" which shows a dual-angled response, that the traditional family is strong and gender equality cannot threaten it, as well as the nuance of response that gender equality and the traditional family can co-exist and one does not threaten the other.
- There is some progress in women's attitudes about the perception of social gender roles in society. Most women agree that there should not be differences between genders and thus, responsibilities should not be assigned exclusively and differentiated between men and women. Also, they should work not only when necessary, but also to advance in their career. Nevertheless, there is still a strong belief that women should decide how children are brought up; that some jobs should only be taken by women; that some jobs are not appropriate for women; and it is the father who should be responsible for the financial stability of the children.
- When comparing women's attitudes on social gender roles based on region, the research findings show a somewhat better balance of gender equality among the regions of Prishtina, Prizren, Mitrovica, Ferizaj, and Gjakova compared to Peja and Gjilan. Moreover, the results show that women, who are more educated and younger are capable of making more progressive judgments on social gender roles.
- Related to the level of satisfaction regarding different issues, women expressed satisfaction mostly in terms of family life, life in general, social life, love life, and the country they live in. Slightly lower satisfaction is reported regarding women's financial situation and working life/career. Similar results for satisfaction with these aspects were observed across the different regions. The value is higher for the financial situation in the capital of Kosovo, Prishtina, as there are more job opportunities, childcare and institutions to care for the elderly, which enable women to work. Women also reported that they place their greatest trust in close family members and further trust extended family members, religious leaders, and friends.
- Related to the political parties, the greatest trust was reported by women in the Prishtina region. Analysis shows that the more educated women are, they are less satisfied with the concept of love life and the country where they live, as well as with life in general, while older women are more satisfied with their love life and the country where they live, but less satisfied with their social life.
- In the Republic of Kosovo, the majority of people belong to the Muslim religion. Similarly, most of the women interviewed are Muslim, while others included Catholics, Orthodox, and atheists.
- Research findings show that Orthodox women practice religion more frequently than Muslims, as they attend other events, except for religious ceremonies/rituals. Nevertheless, Muslim women accept and strive to fulfill the requests/expectations at some level, even though they almost never attend different religious events. With regards to feeling discriminated based on their faith in Kosovar society, the majority of Muslim women reported that they had not been discriminated against, while some Orthodox women expressed feeling discriminated, especially, by society.
- The findings from the focus groups show that because of tradition, women in the Republic of Kosovo are considered successful if they are married and have children. Even if they reach senior positions in their career, they are not valued if they are single. Also, as maternity



leave has to be paid by the employing company, employers prioritize men candidates, even if women and men have the same qualifications. The evaluation of data in 2017 has shown that there is a gender payment gap in Kosovo, meaning women with the same education, background and capacities are paid less than their male colleagues. Further there are gender prejudices against women, especially divorced and single mothers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- One of the key strategies for all relevant actors should be working towards promoting and practicing equal roles and responsibilities among girls and boys as well as women and men in families and in the entire society.
- Moreover, actors should work with parents and educational institutions to ensure that children have equal opportunities and choices on a personal level, such as getting married and raising a family, or at a professional level, pursuing different careers – such as STEM or social sciences and leadership positions. The media specifically should promote and practice gender equality to increase public consciousness by critically examining examples of gender stereotypes and gender roles.
- This study has shown that there are strong gender stereotypes that exist in society, especially present at a lower education and older age. Thus, more measures should be undertaken to increase the level of qualitative education, especially in rural areas, and eliminate all gender stereotypes from schoolbooks.
- Society in general should focus on changing the use of language when sending messages to little children such as not saying how beautiful girls are or how strong boys are because these messages perpetuate differences in gender from early childhood. The state institutions should form a triangle of cooperation between institutions, schools and parents, where working with parents is equally important as working with children and their proper education in the sense of gender equality.
- In terms of job opportunities for different positions, employers should use gender-neutral language, or plural language for positions that can be considered traditionally male positions such as police officer, rather than policeman. Elimination of the belief in gender roles is also related to the attitude that “for some positions it is better to employ men rather than women,” but also important are the values that women consider important for their lives. Women’s belief that the highest value for women is to have children and a family, whereas political participation and activism is the lowest priority, is an indicator of the insufficient incentive and promotion of women’s successful political careers in society, instead focusing on their caring and emotive nature, rather than decision making powers.
- The Agency for Gender Equality should provide more training and programs to promote gender equality, and implement procedures taken in case of gender inequality.
- Women comprise half of the population, marginalized by traditional myths and stereotypes, which contradict the values that the law and Constitution of Kosovo promote. Therefore, this study should particularly serve as a basis to identify the gap between women in urban and rural areas, and to draft specific and gender sensitive labor market and social policies.
- Non-governmental and international organizations should allocate more funds to awareness campaigns and activities that support women and promote gender equality and should be concentrated more towards measurable impact.
- Political parties should promote engagement of more women in all party structures and levels, but also promote power sharing.
- Political parties should strictly implement programs to address Kosovo women’s needs and concerns in all aspects.
- The government should work closely with NGOs in their attempts to ensure the implementation of existing laws that promote gender equality, and change/amend the ones that conflict with international women’s rights standards.



## 4.

## FAMILY AND SOCIAL LIFE

### 4.1 FAMILY AND MARRIAGE IN THE KOSOVO CONTEXT

Family is very important for Kosovar citizens, regardless of ethnicity. It serves as a kind of safety net and often as a “major source of group solidarity and the primary defensive-and-attack unit, strictly organized along corporate and patriarchal lines,” (Duijzings, 2000, p. 6). Scholars in different contexts have suggested that disadvantaged social groups such as racial/ethnic minorities, may rely on informal sources of support such as kin because economic and social barriers restrict their access to more formal sources of social assistance (Landale, Orpesa, & Bradatan, 2006).

Kosovo Albanians traditionally have been treated as an ethnic minority in different periods under various regime, and this is why family was almost an institution and shares the elements of “familism”, which is generally used to describe the importance of family in Latino culture context (Almeida, Molnar, Kawachi, & Subramanian, 2009). This concept treats family interests to have much more importance than individual interests. This approach is transferred also at other levels, with collective values being more important as individual ones.

The famous sociologist Anthony Giddens (1997) suggests that family should be analyzed on basis of three main aspects: **kinship, family, and marriage**. In Kosovo, the traditional family consists of parents, and children, but also grandparents, and sometimes even aunts, uncles, or even cousins are part of the kinship, often living together. Usually, the men of the family worked outside of the home, and the women of the family took care of almost all household chore duties (children, food, maintenance, etc). Women sometimes also joined men in the field work, especially in rural areas.

Albanian families in Kosovo in the past, were more like a corporate group where only men are entitled to rule, and women to care and serve (Latifi, 2018, p. 151).

“Women were not considered part of the corporate group, and consequently, they had no property right. Even at this point in time, there are very few cases of them having rights to property” .

The importance of the family's credibility, and image, is so high, that members are forced or feel an obligation to strive to adhere and protect, often sacrificing their individual wishes or desires.

.....a strong fixation on the family or lineage, distrust towards those who are not one's kin, a strong pressure to protect the family's integrity and to avenge infringements upon its reputation, a tendency to conceal information or to mislead or deceive others, which corresponds to an instrumental view of relations outside the family (ibid).

The Albanian families are often large and the **custom of living together** with one's (mainly husband's) parents is still widely shared. FES Youth study (FES, 2019) results showed that young people are still living in large families, with 7 and more members in one household. The study argued that “these extended families are the main factor in transmitting the values of the family from the older generation to younger ones” (p.32). In recent years, young couples are moving away from large families and living only with the smallest family nexus (Parents+ Children) influenced by the building industry's increasingly attractive offers for new apartments that can be purchased with long term installments in combination with loans. It is becoming more common in Kosovo for both parents to work and in that case, grandparents who live in the same house or in a separate house, still take care of the children, in the absence of sufficient childcare institutions (private or public).

There were 19,249 marriages according to official statistics in 2021 (ASK, 2022), showing almost a positive increasing trend on a yearly basis since (2017), except in 2020 where a decrease was evidenced, with 12,793 new marriages, much less than in previous years. This may have been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing large social gatherings as part of marriage rituals in Kosovo. At the same time, divorces increased significantly in the same period, from 674 in 2017 up to 1,987 in 2021.

**The age of marriage** for Kosovo citizens is on average 29.7 (overall), 31 for males and 28 for females (UNFPA, 2022). This age range is also confirmed by the FES Youth study that asked young people in Kosovo about their preference for the age when they would prefer to get married. The study results show that: "Boys prefer a lower age for marriage for both males and females. Girls prefer on average an age of 26 for themselves and 29 for marriage of males" (FES, 2019, p. 37). The phenomena of child marriage is relatively rare in Kosovo, but some cases are evidenced among communities and/or ethnic groups, most notably, but not exclusively, Roma, Ashkali, Balkan Egyptians, and Gorani. (UNFPA, 2022).

**Children**, as we saw in the values chapter, are important for women - the most highly ranked value on a personal level. The number of children desired is still high and the number of children born, according to official statistics has been on a positive trend every year, since 2017. 28,549 children were born in 2022 (14,366 boys and 13,713 girls). The surveyed youth in the FES Study (2019) indicated that around 41% of young people in Kosovo want to have three or more children.

**The structure of family** in Kosovo is transforming a lot slower than in other countries, mostly because of the economic circumstances that requires families to live together in absence of effective affordable housing policies. Another reason for the slow change is the role of women within the family regarding unpaid care, e.g., cleaning, cooking, and care for children, the elderly, the sick, and so forth. A possible change that can happen through state policies is the creation of family-friendly policies, for instance, allowing equal parental leave, a concept proposed by civil society organizations, in amendments of the maternity leave articles in the Labor Legislation (Kosovo Women Network., 2022). Civil society organizations and

experts believe that this would enable women to be more active in the labor market. Yet, this process of discussion has continued for many years and the Law has not been amended properly yet.

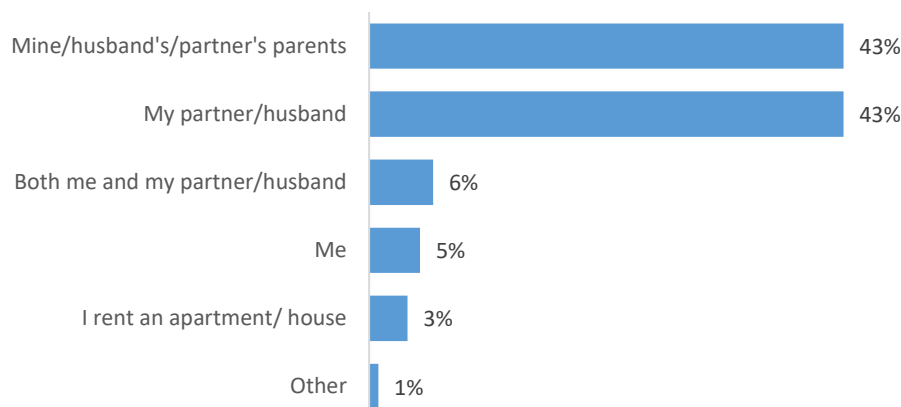
In Kosovo, **housing and property** is an important individual right, and although the state has no role in ensuring it, legislation protects the property rights of citizens. The state often plans to address disadvantaged citizens with social housing policies, that are still being developed and monitored. In the absence of adequate social housing policies and mechanisms, the solidarity of family and the social network address those groups faster than state institutions. A lot of self-organized individuals or group humanitarian activities have equipped people in need with proper living conditions.

The results of this study show that most of the study participants are **married or live with a partner**, and only 1% of them have stated that they are divorced. 66% of study respondents have children, while 34% of them do not. **Most women have 3-4 children** (45%) and 1-2 children (41%), followed by more than 4 children in 14% of cases. The age of the children differs, with most being more than 23 years old (43%), 4-12 years old (38%), 13-18 (27%), 19-22 years old (20%) and 0-3 years old (18%).

When women were asked who they are living with, most responded that **they live with a partner/husband** (61%), followed by with children, younger than 24 (43%), with parents (27%), with children, older than 24 (20%), with other relatives (17%) and only 3% live alone.

Among the interviewed women, most of them indicated that the owners of the house were women with their husband's/partners' parents (43%), as well as their partner/husband (43%), while only 6% of them responded that the apartment/house is owned by women and their partner/husband and only 5% of them own their apartment / house. Official data shows that the participation of women in the ownership of property is very low in Kosovo at 15.2% compared to men, which is 74.1%. Especially in rural areas, property is mostly registered in the husband's name. Despite inheritance law, which grants equal inheritance rights to men and women, the existence of discriminatory traditions and social norms undermine this right, even more so in rural areas.

Figure 33:  
**Ownership of property**

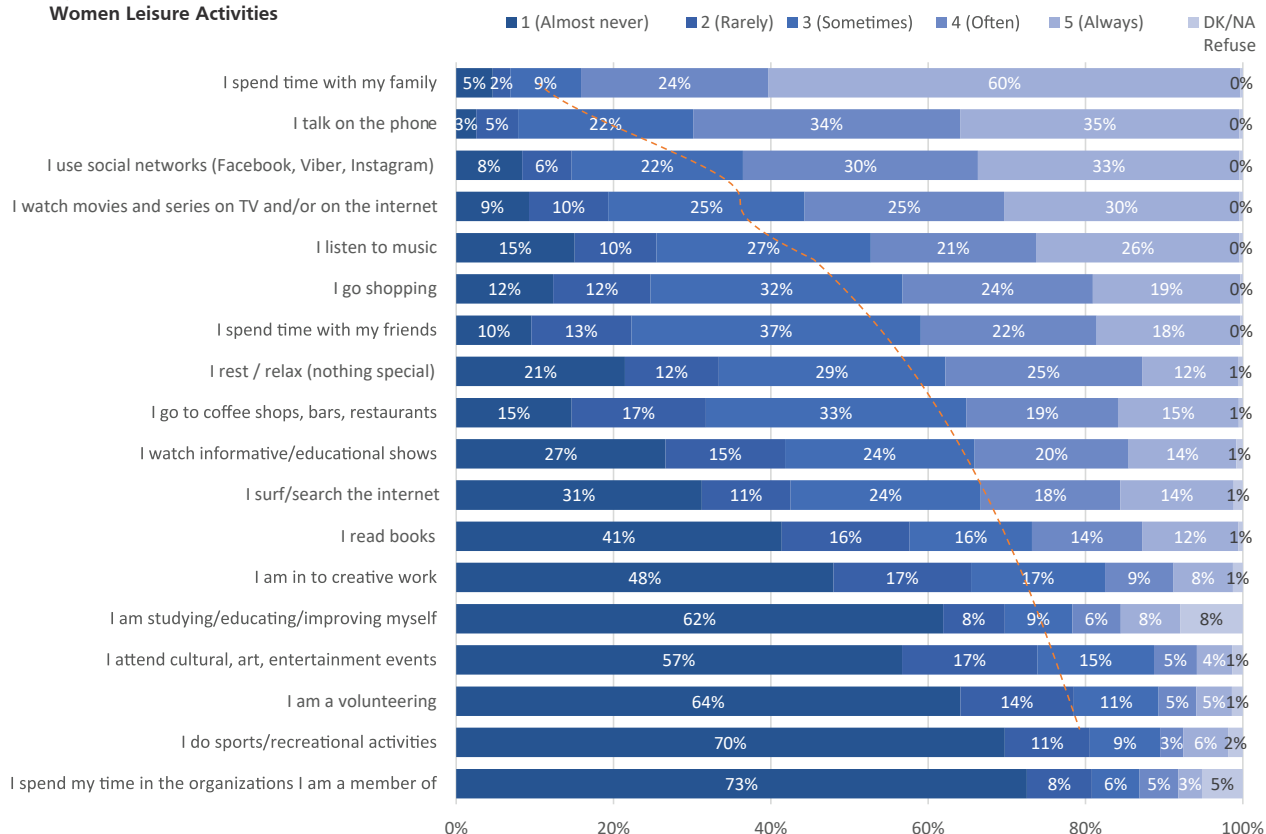


Further, women often lack access to guidance and information about their rights. This is an obstacle for women to establish a business or to have access to external funds (World Bank, 2017). Many women in Kosovo find it shameful to ask for the right of property inheritance within their family. On rare occasions, when women don't give up their property rights, they are being coerced or physically threatened (Kushi, 2015).

## 4.2 WOMEN'S LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

It is very important to have a work-life balance, in order to combine family commitments, leisure and work effectively. Studies show that throughout the world, men have more time for leisure activities. Only in the Netherlands and Norway, do women spend more time on leisure activities and personal care compared to men (OECD, 2020)

Figure 34:  
**Women Leisure Activities**



The **figure above** shows how women spend their time. Most of them reported that they always or often spent time **with the family (84%)**, followed by **talking on the phone (69%)**, using **social media (63%)** Viber, Facebook, Instagram, etc., as well as **watching movies** and series on TV or online **(55%)**.

Next on the list of preferred activities are listening to music (47%), going shopping (43%), spending time with friends (41%), relaxing/resting (37%), going to coffee shops, bars, restaurants (35%), watching informative /educational shows (33%) and browsing/surfing the internet (32%). Women indicated they were **less in favor of reading books (26%)**, **being into creative work (16%)**, **studying /educating /improving themselves (14%)**, **attending cultural /entertainment sites /events (10%)**, **volunteering (9%)**, **sport/recreational events (9%)**, and **spending time in organizations they are members (8%)**.

The bivariate correlation analysis, against age, shows the following activities are inversely proportional to age (i.e., become less popular with age): go to coffee shops, bars ( $r = -.504, p < 0.01$ ); watch movies ( $r = -.191, p < 0.01$ ); watch educational shows ( $r = -.182, p < 0.01$ ); listening to music ( $r = -.450, p < 0.01$ ); reading books ( $r = -.487, p < 0.01$ ); sports and recreation ( $r = -.304, p < 0.01$ ); spend time with friends ( $r = -.380, p < 0.01$ ); shopping ( $r = -.418, p < 0.01$ ); studying/learning ( $r = -.441, p < 0.01$ ); going to cafes or bars ( $r = -.504, p < 0.01$ ); creative work ( $r = -.241, p < 0.01$ ); surfing the web ( $r = -.477, p < 0.01$ ); using social media ( $r = -.357, p < 0.01$ ); going to cultural and entertainment sites/events ( $r = -.310, p < 0.01$ ); membership in organizations ( $r = -.218, p < 0.01$ ); volunteering ( $r = -.251, p < 0.01$ ); relaxing ( $r = -.096, p < 0.01$ ).

Figure 35:  
Activities of women by age groups

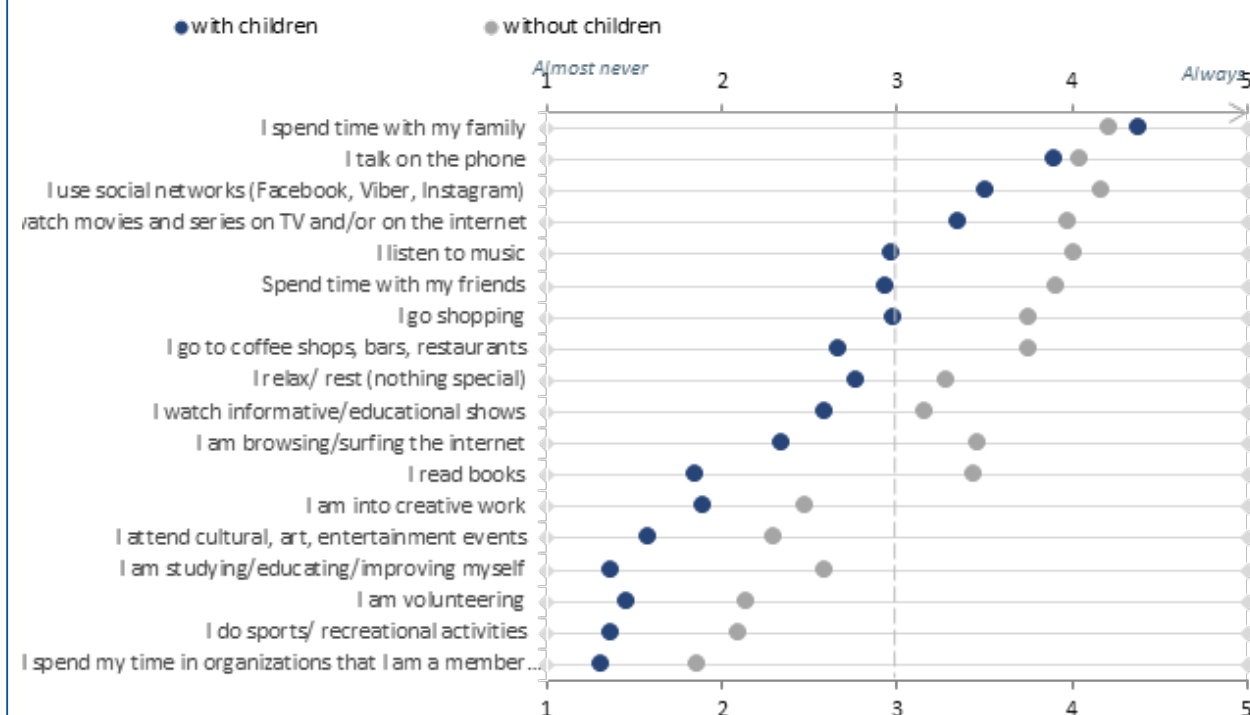


Data analysis of what women do in their free time, based on age groups highlights the fact that for almost all items listed here, younger women have scored higher than older women. Only for some items, women in the age group 35-54 and 54 or higher have scored the same, such as the case of talking on the phone, watching movies and series on TV, relaxing/resting, and watching informative/ educational shows. Remarkably the mean value is higher for the group aged 18-34 ( $m=4.4$ ) and 35-54

( $m=4.4$ ), compared to older women of the age group 54 or more ( $m=4.1$ ) for spending time with family.

Non-parametric tests show that, for all activities, there are statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.001$ ) according to motherhood status, with mothers being likely to choose time with family over other activities, compared to non-mothers, who not only favor spending time with family but also engage in a variety of activities.

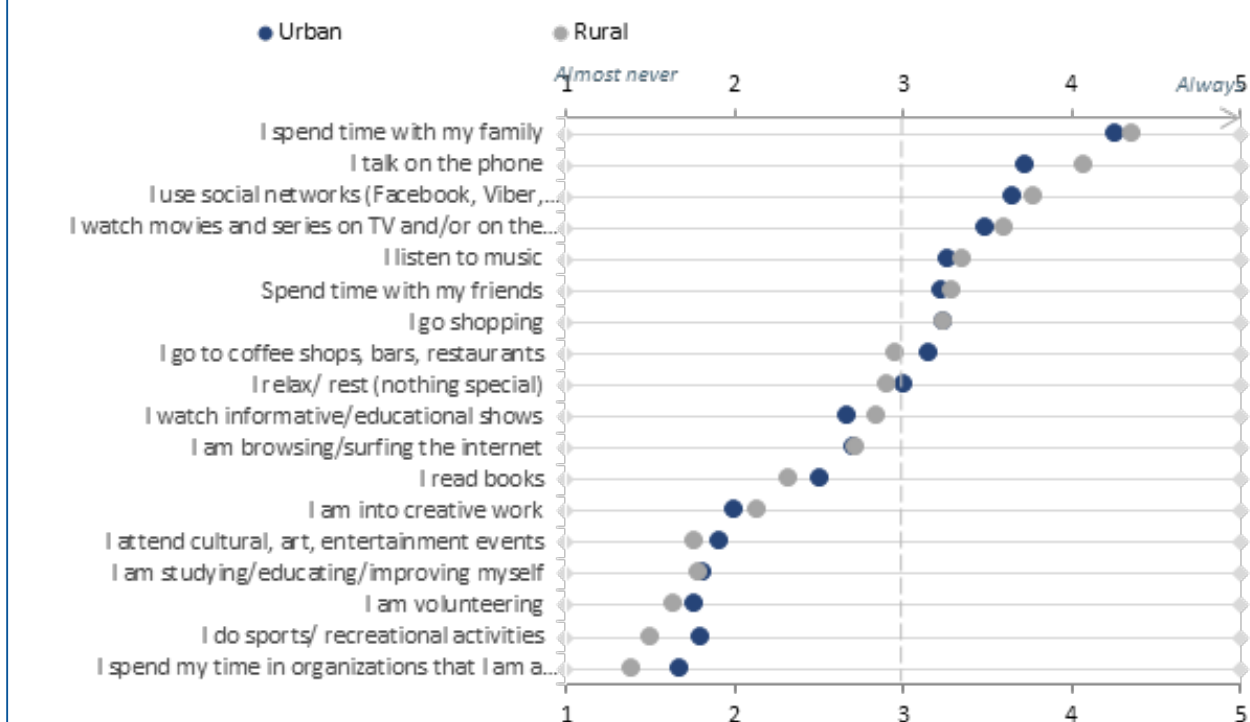
Figure 36:  
Leisure time by motherhood status



Non-parametric tests registered statistically significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the choice of leisure time activity and place of residence (urban/rural). Women in rural

areas spend more time talking on the phone, while women in urban areas engage more in sports activities or spend time in organizations, of which, they are members.

Figure 37:  
Activities of women by urban-rural



**P4:** It is known that women usually have more responsibilities in the family. A woman who works, after working hours at her job, she continues after returning from work, because she has to prepare meals, take care of children and so on, while usually men do not feel this same responsibility as women do. Living with parents-in-law makes everything easier, because if you have a job, you have someone to take care of the children. But in general, even if the wife brings the same income as the husband, it does not reduce the responsibility that falls to her as a woman.

**P2:** Households in rural areas are more characterized by higher unemployment, and this brings with it even more limited opportunities for early education of children, which is mainly due to patriarchal ideas. Unlike women in rural areas, those in urban areas have greater opportunities for labor market monitoring and professional development.

**P7:** Probably it is important to say, and also you mentioned it here, that our concern as organizations, is that housework is not recognized as work. Unfortunately, not by the family, because it is considered that house-work belongs to women because of their gender, and neither by state mechanisms, is it considered work, even though it contributes a lot to the economy. It is a very big informality and I think it is also a very big problem, and a difference that I can articulate more easily, is that women in rural areas have less access to public life. Therefore, I think it is very important how the council meetings are organized in villages and in cities. For instance, in the village from which I come there are no women members in the council, so most of the meetings are held in the evening, when women prepare meals, and as a result it is impossible for them to have access in the public life or have a say in the decision-making. However, there are women that travel daily to Prishtina and are employed here, but most of them do not have employment contracts, as they work as maids, so their pensions and taxes are not paid.

#### 4.3 HOUSEHOLD ORGANIZATION AND GENERAL EQUALITY OF ROLES

Gender roles are essential to understand their responsibilities related to work and home. Household chores are still more charged to women compared to men, which leads to conflict between them. Moreover, men do not feel an obligation to contribute to household chores as much as women, who perceive it as free of choice (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). Given the cultural norms and beliefs regarding the division of labor by gender in Kosovo, women and men spend their time in substantially different ways, with their roles and responsibilities heavily determined by the traditional, patriarchal family model. On average, women spend 300 percent more time on care-activities than men. Here, care activities include socially prescribed productive and reproductive responsibilities within homes that contribute to women's low participation in the labor force. Care activities are among the main reasons for women's inactivity in the labor market. This is further exacerbated by the lack of affordable childcare facilities (UNICEF, 2020).

In Kosovo, there is increased economic vulnerability and gender inequality due to the high amount of time that women devote to the care of family members, especially children, and elders (World Bank, 2017).

Preschool education is the first level of education that includes children up to six years old, and it is provided by public, private, and community-based preschools. Still, there is no satisfactory level of child enrollment in preschool education despite implemented education policies in Kosovo. The results from MES data show that only 6% of children ages 0-4 are enrolled in preschool education.

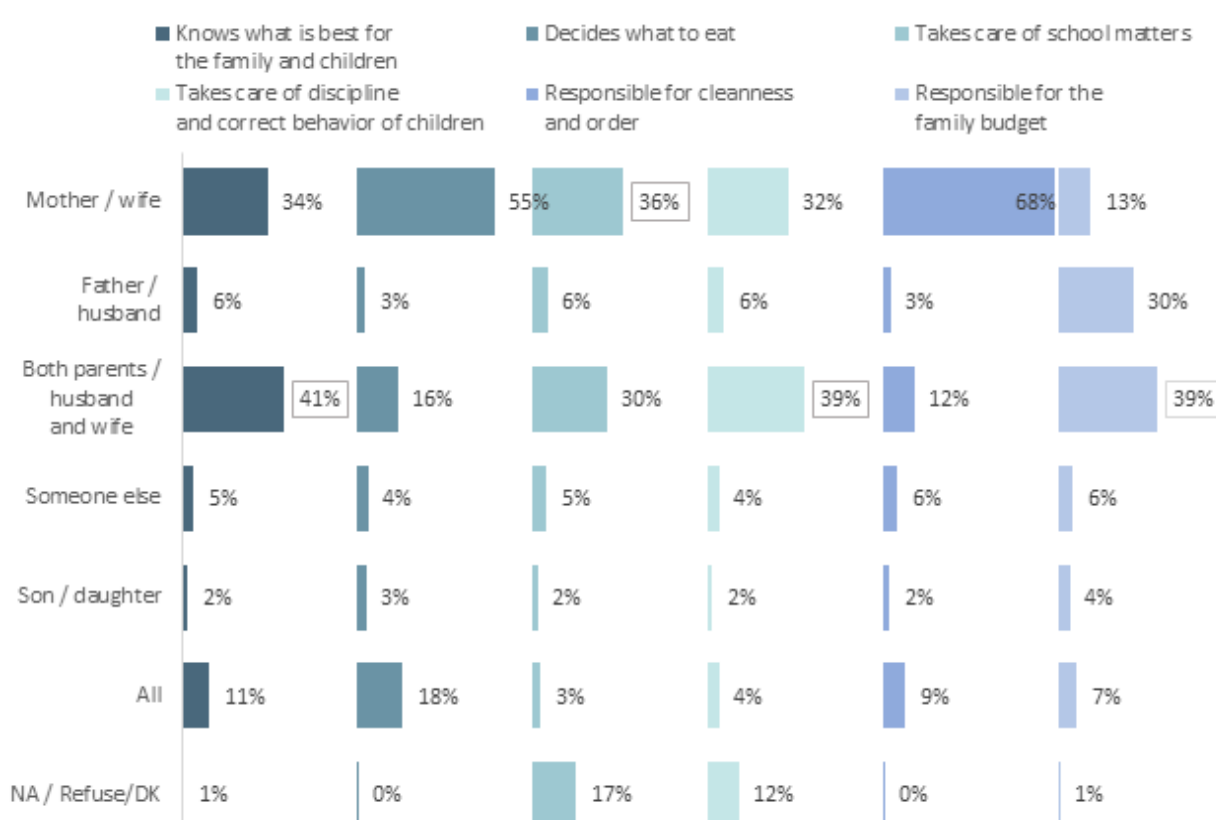
On the other hand, children aged 5-6 years are enrolled in pre-primary classes with a high proportion of 92.4%. Moreover, the private sector in preschool education has been developed lately, currently counting 113 preschools and with the capacity to accommodate 6,500 children, half of them established in the capital of Kosovo, Prishtina. One of the main reasons why women do not work is because they must take care of their children, especially in other cities apart from Prishtina, as well as in rural areas (UNICEF, 2020). This shows that the demand for childcare is unfulfilled by childcare services. Moreover, care for the elderly is not developed at a satisfactory level, either. There are a limited number of residential care centers, which are very costly. Moreover, due to social norms, taking elders to residential care is seen as inappropriate and to some extent it is deemed offensive that there is no one to take



care of them at home. Also, there is no adequate infrastructure and safety features for the special needs for care of the elderly (World Bank, 2017).

Indeed, women in rural areas are more disadvantaged than women in urban areas, due to limited opportunities for preschool education and care services for elderly (Ivanovska & Dimitrovska, 2015).

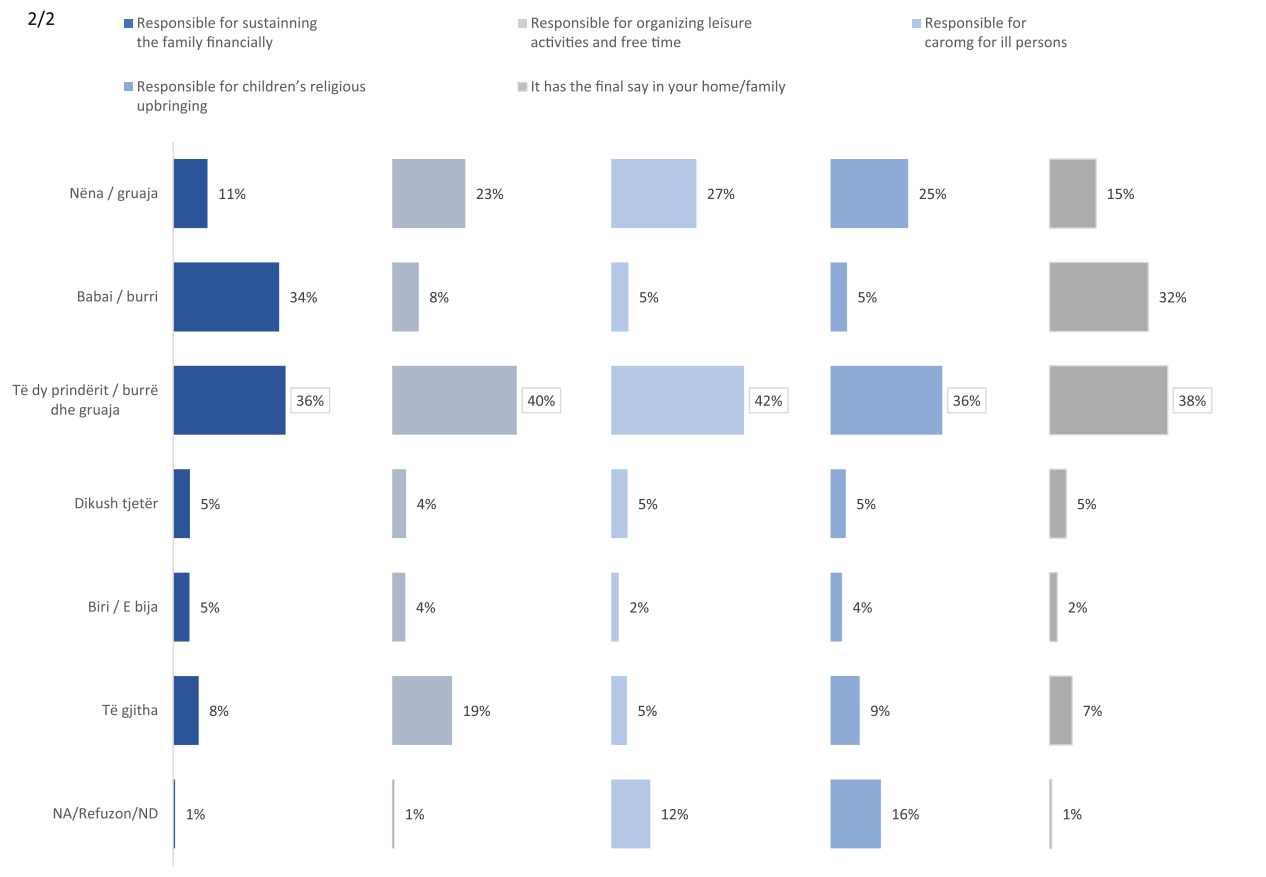
Figure 38:  
Household chores 1/2



- Most respondents (39%) said both parents discipline the children equally, while 32% said responsibility lies with the mother, 6% said it lies with the father, 4% said someone else, 2% said son/daughter and 4% said all.
- More than half (68%) of respondents said that women are fully responsible for household chores, cleanliness, and order, and only 3% said that it is men's responsibility. Both spouses/parents are equally responsible is in 12% of cases, someone else 6%, son/daughter 2%, and all 9%.
- Both parents/spouses are equally responsible for family budget expenditure in 39% of households, while the father/husband is solely responsible in 30% cases, and the mother/wife in 13%; 6% said someone else, 4% said son/daughter and all 7%.

Figure 39:  
Household chores 2/2

2/2



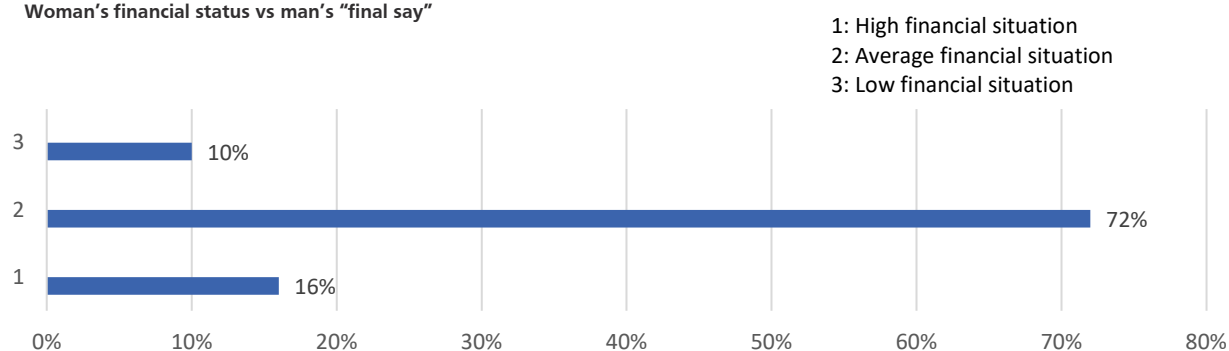
- Participants of the study stated that the father (34%) and both parents (36%) are responsible for sustaining the family financially, while only 11% stated that mothers should have this responsibility.
- Mothers (23%) and both parents (40%) are responsible for organizing leisure activities and free time, and only 8% said that it is the fathers' duty.
- 27% of women believe it is the mothers' duty for religious upbringing and 42% said it was a task for both parents, while only 5% stated that it was a task for fathers.
- 25% said mothers take care of ill persons, in comparison to 5% of fathers, but in 36% cases, both parents do this.
- Only 15% of mothers have a final say in comparison with 32% of fathers and 38% of both parents/husband and wife, and only 7% stated that all have a final say.

The cross-tabulation analysis of the statement "the husband/father is more likely to have 'final say' in a household" and status of the wife/mother's financial situation shows that in general the final say in the household is with the husband/father regardless of the financial status of the woman.

The cross-tabulation analysis of the statement "the husband/father is more likely to have 'final say' in a household" and status of the wife/mother's financial situation shows that in general the final say in the household shows this result:

- More women with average financial status (I can afford everything I need, but I have to save/economize (I live economically) and I can afford all the necessary goods without sacrifices, but I can't save for it the future (72%) think that men have the last word.
- Those with the weakest financial status (I can barely afford all the necessary goods, sometimes I lack money; I can't afford basic goods) (less think that the husband has the last word (16%) think that men say the last word.
- Women with a higher financial status (I can afford everything I need and am able to save) think less that men have the last word (10%).

Figure 40:  
Woman's financial status vs man's "final say"



The following data relates only to respondents who are married/live with a partner (N=652). We asked them about the status of employment of their husbands/partners. 52% of their partners are employed and only 8% are

self-employed. 26% of them are unemployed and 9% are unable to work. They also shared the information regarding their partners earning. 79% of them said that their partners earn more than them.

Figure 41:  
Partner's employment

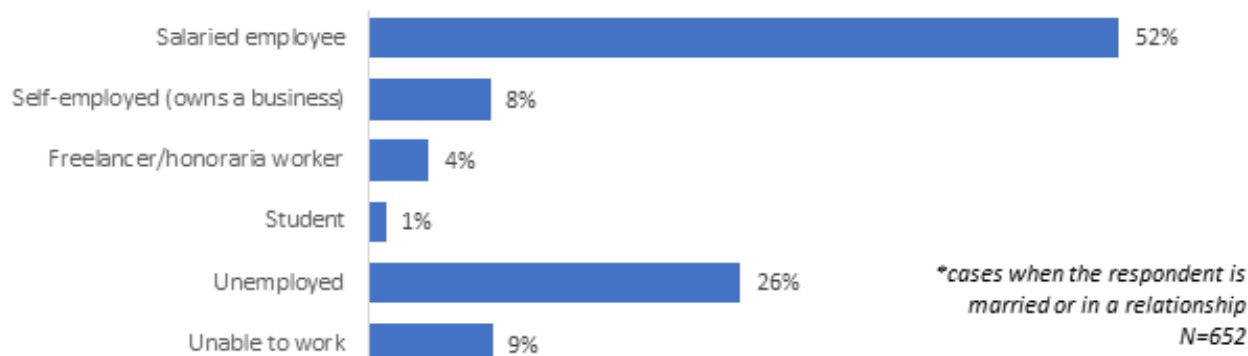
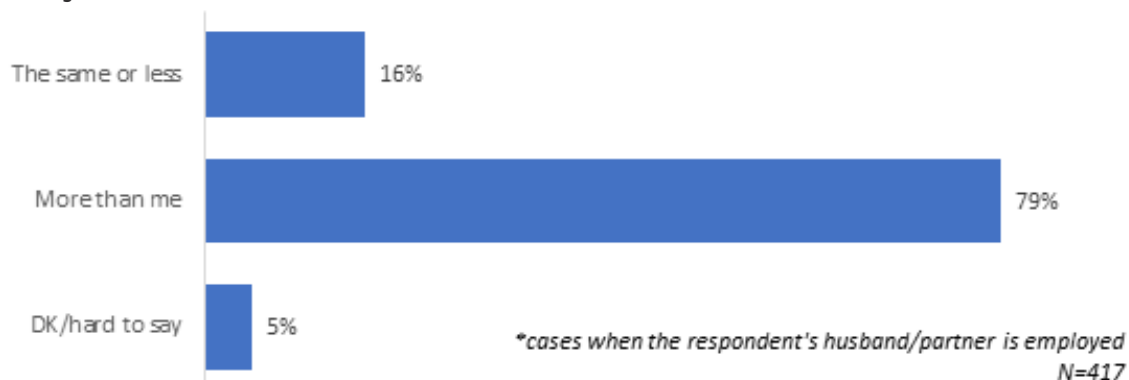


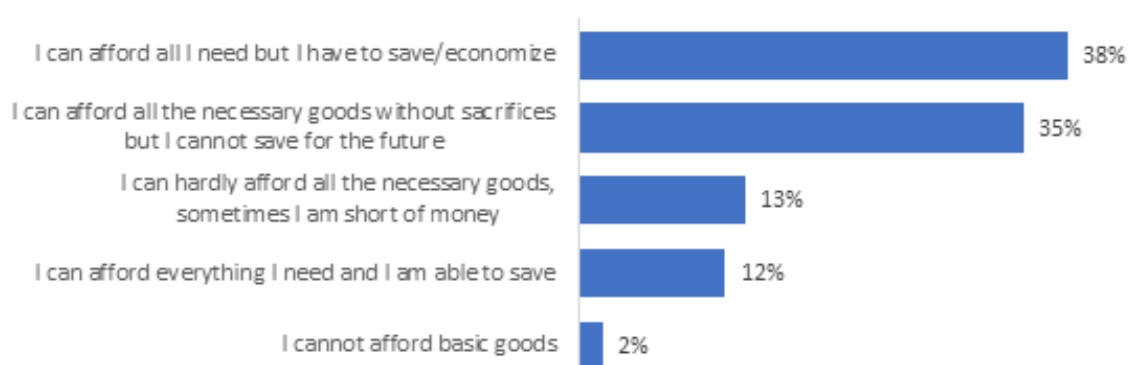
Figure 42:  
Partner's earning



A stark gender divide in the labour market persists in Kosovo. According to the Labour Force Survey, in 2019, only 21.1% of women were economically active as opposed to 59.7 % of men (KAS 2020). Although they have a much lower activity rate, the unemployment rate of women is higher than that of men. Whilst women represent 49.8% of the working age population, they constitute

only 22.9% of the total employed individuals in Kosovo (KAS 2020). This is due to women's low employment rate, recorded at 13.9% in 2018 as opposed to 46.2% for men - a rate more than three times higher than that of women. Between 2012 and 2019 the average gender gap in employment was about 31 percentage points. Gashi (2020)

Figure 43:  
Financial situation



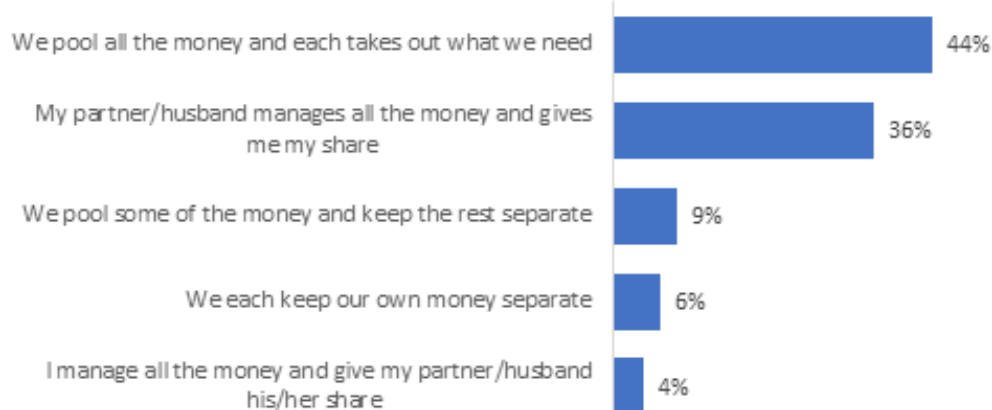
We also asked participants about their financial situation. Most respondents reported that they can afford all they need, but must save, while 35% said that without sacrifices, they can afford all they need, but cannot save for the future. Others reported that they can hardly afford all necessary goods (13%), and 2% said that they cannot afford even basic needs. Only 12% can afford everything they need and can still save for the future.

Many factors, maintained by the legislature in power, contribute to this worrying position of women in the labour market. The unequal gendered division of unpaid care work results in unequal relations, precarious employment when women participate in the labour market, and feminization of poverty over the life course (KGSC 2021). The current Law on Labour in Kosovo does not take into account the concept of social reproduction in understanding labour relations, given that its leave provisions regulate for the first six months, with 70% basic income compensated from the employer, and three consecutive months with

50% of the average income compensated from the government, and three additional months that are unpaid, entitled to the mother, and only two to three days paid leave and additional two weeks optional unpaid leave entitled for fathers. This can be interpreted as the main burden of the leave being put into the private sector, which directly impacts low hiring and promotion of women, as well as the occurrence of gender-based discrimination. The leave as per the current Law, mainly consists of maternity leave and only 5% of this time period can be used by fathers (KGSC 2021).

Participants were asked how they organize their household, and most women (44%) said that, "we pool all the money and each takes out what we need" followed by the statement, "my partner /husband manages all the money and gives me my share" (36%). Approximately 6% keep their money separate and only 4% of women declared, "I manage all the money and give my partner /husband his/her share".

Figure 44:  
How do they manage their household

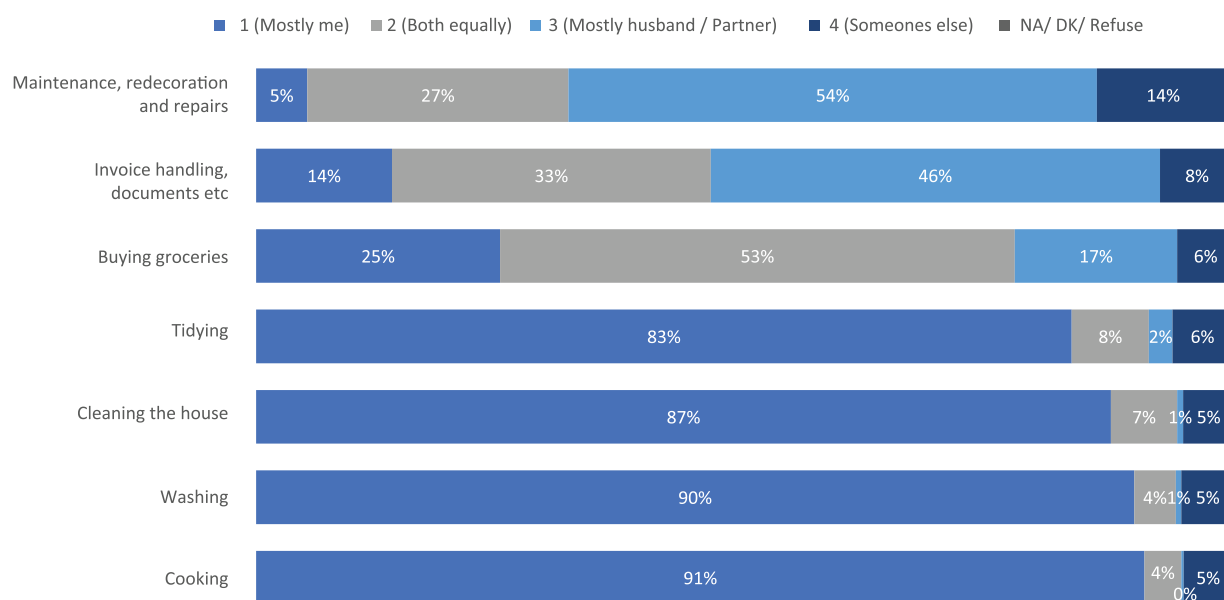


N=652

The study shows that most of the household chores are the responsibility of women. Approximately 91% of women cook mostly, 83% do the tidying, 87% do the cleaning, 90% washing, while duties that are taken care of mostly

by partners/husbands include maintenance, decoration, and repair (54%) and dealing with invoices, and bills (46%). Bills are also done by both (33%) and the other common activity for both is buying groceries (53%).

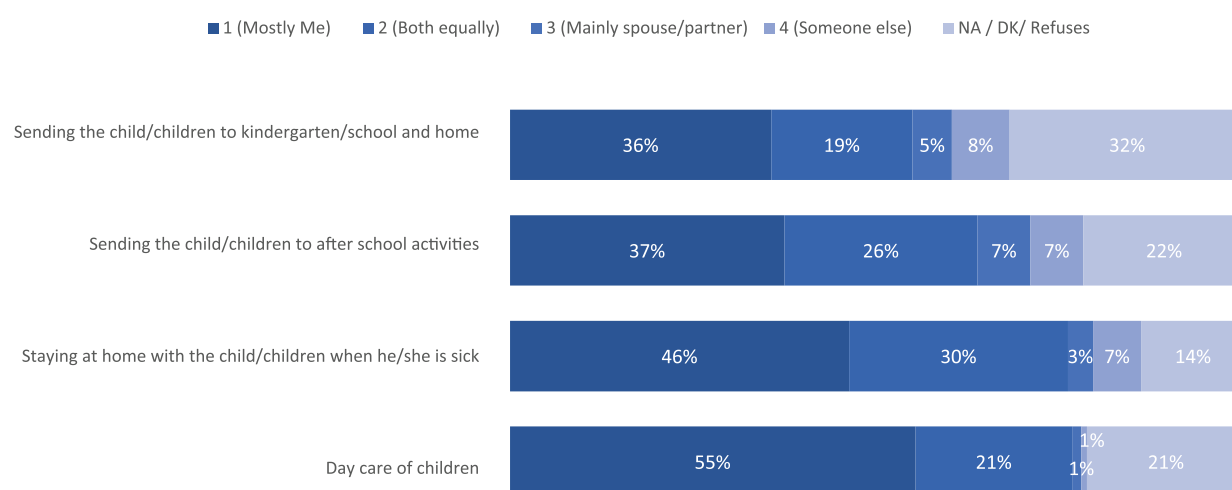
Figure 45:

**Who in your household does these tasks?**

*\*respondent lives with the husband/partner N=616*

Women with children answered the question of who is responsible for different activities. Their answers show that most of these are done solely by women:

Figure 46:

**Who takes care of children**

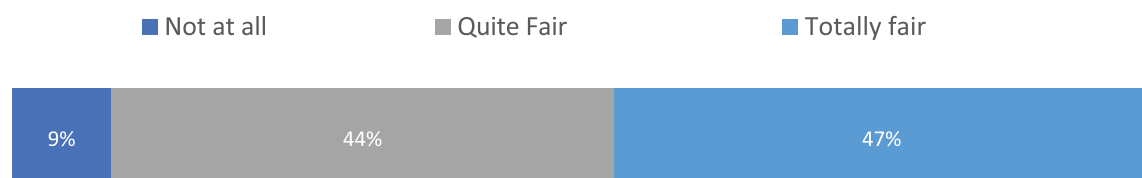
*\*respondents who had children N=675*

- Daily childcare (55%), staying at home with children when they are ill (46%), taking children to after school.
- Activities (37%) and taking children to kindergarten/school and back home (36%).

These results indicate that women are burdened with these household tasks to a much higher extent, but it seems that they do not mind. When asked about the division of responsibilities related to household chores, 47% of respondents

reported that there was totally fair division among them, while 44% said quite fair, and only 9% said that the division of household chores was not fair at all.

Figure 47:

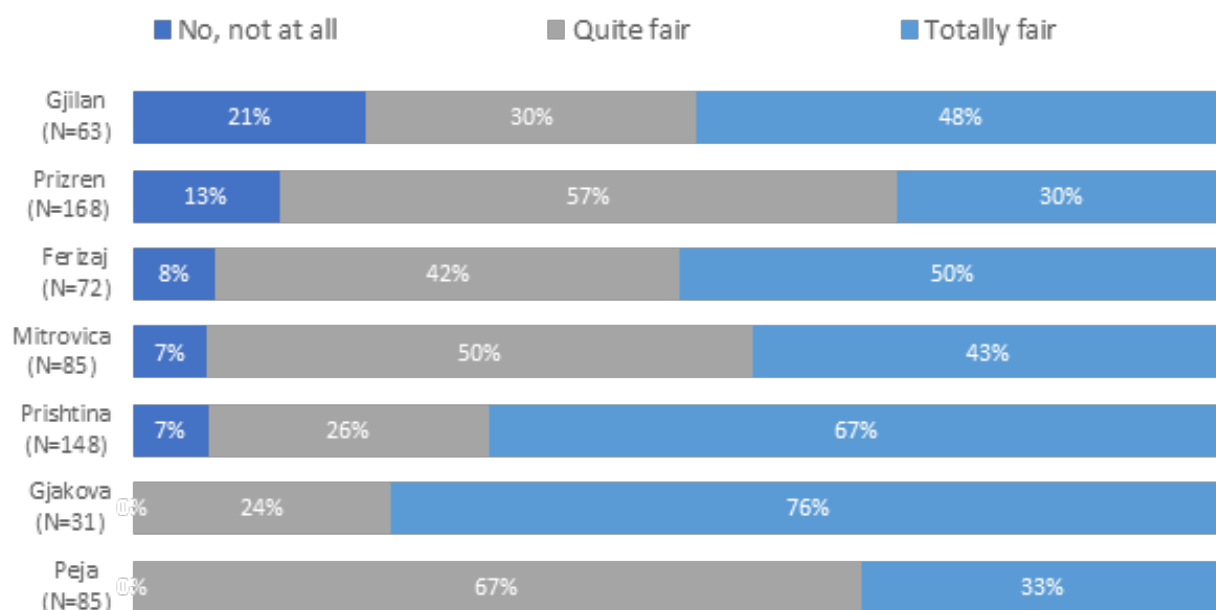
**Agreement that division of household chores is fair**

*\*cases when the respondent is married or in a relationship N=652*

This attitude that the share is quite fair, is reflected in all regions similarly, with the Gjakova region scoring the highest on the answer "totally fair" (76%). More women in

Gjilan believe it is not at all a fair division (21%), in comparison with women from other regions, including Prishtina (7%).

Figure 48:

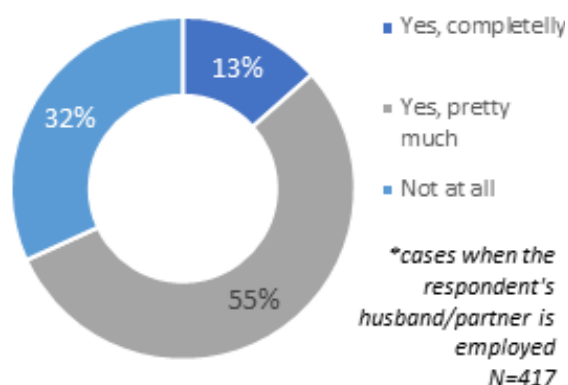
**Agreement that division of household chores is fair, by region**

*\*cases when the respondent is married or in a relationship N=652*

The data shows that women who are married or living with a partner have substantially less time for personal pursuits, socializing, or relaxing than their spouse/partner

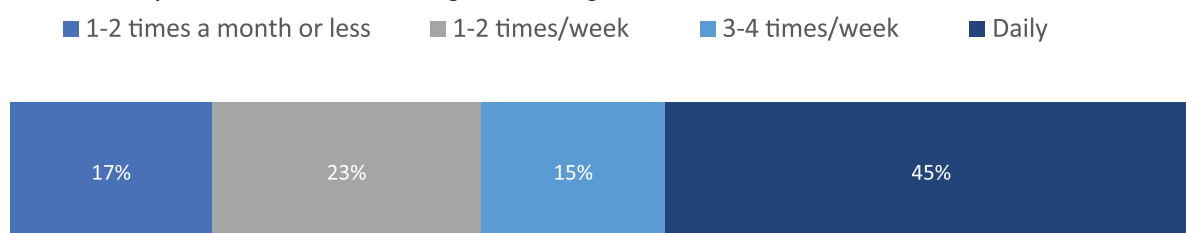
does. Approximately 55% of women in cases when the partners are employed said that the nature of the job restricts the time for a husband/partner to spend time with family.

Figure 49:  
The job of your husband/partner sometimes restrict the time he spends with family and friends.



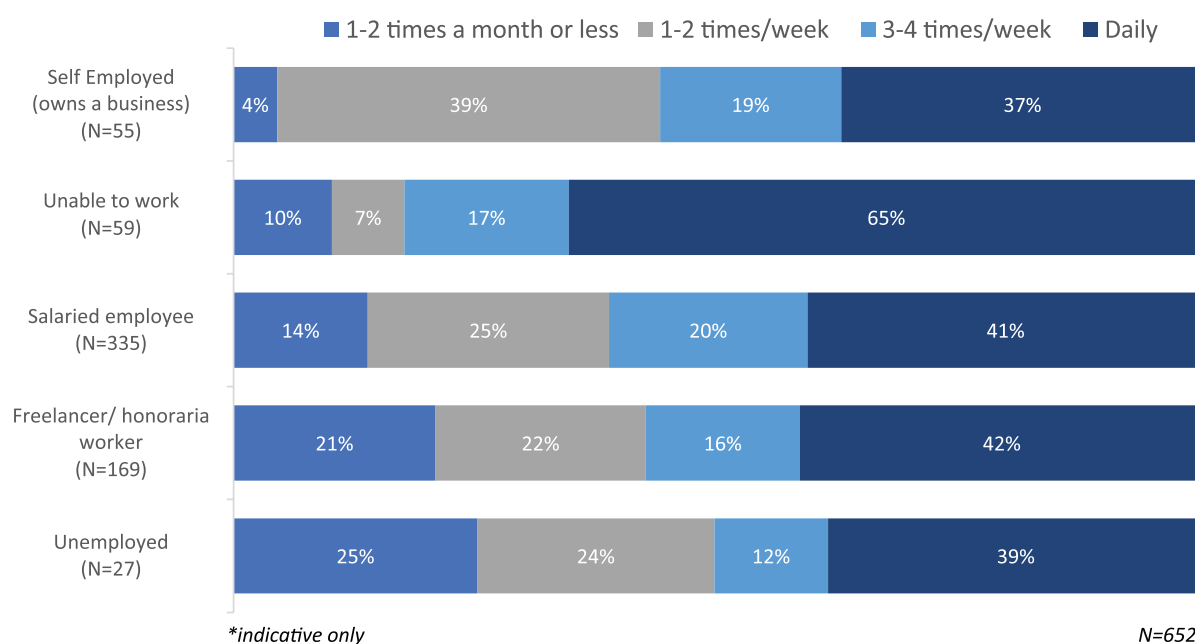
This is also reflected in less time for women's social life and to do activities they want to do.

Figure 50:  
Time to develop their own interests, for relaxing and socializing.



When asked how often their husbands / partners have time for them, it seems that despite the fact that they are working, they dedicate quite enough time for them on a daily basis.

Figure 51:  
How often does your husband/partner have time for you? By husband/partner employment



Respondents also rated the degree of gender equality within their marriage/relationship, on a scale from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). Approximately 49% reported that there was a very high degree of gender equality in their relationship (Figure 54). When comparing urban and rural areas, the percentage is slightly higher in ur-

ban areas at 55%, and 46% in rural areas. When contrasted with the earlier findings, which demonstrate an unequal division of household chores between the sexes, it is implied that women accept the patriarchal division of gender roles in Kosovo society to some extent.

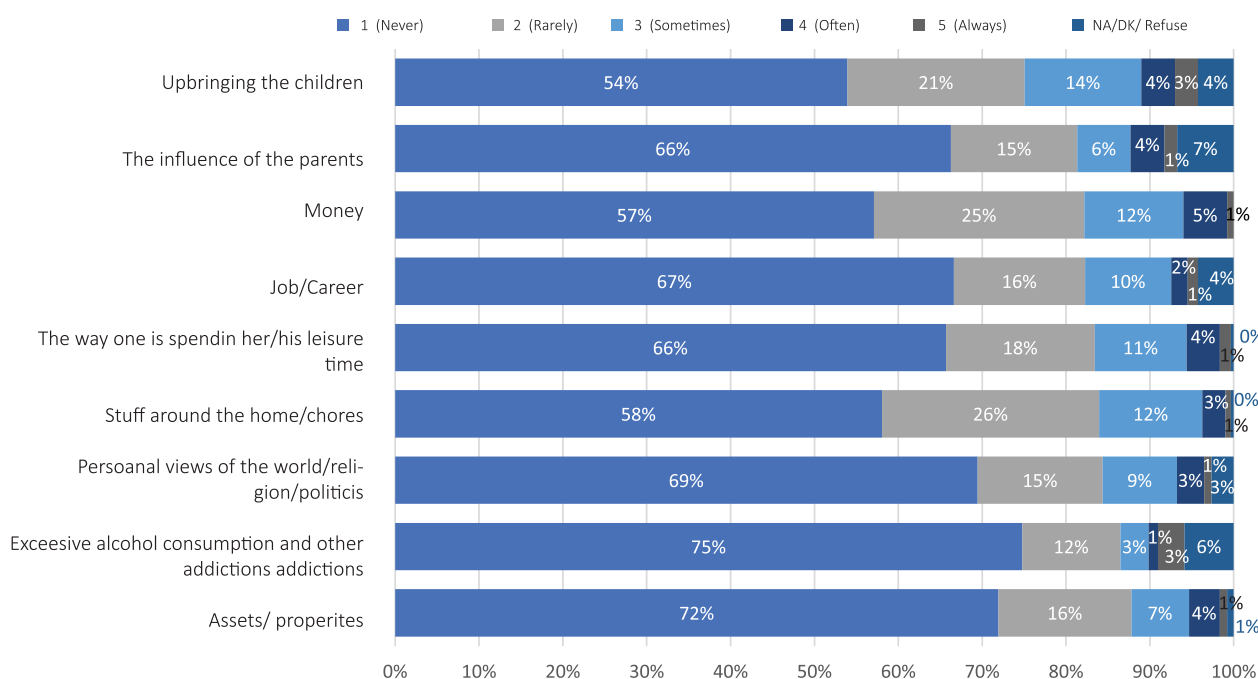
Figure 52:  
**Degree of gender equality in the relationship**



A further look shows that the issues that cause arguments between spouses /partners sometimes relate to the upbringing of the kids (14%), money (12%), household responsibilities (12%), and the way one is spending leisure

time and (11%), job/career (10%). This indicates that the highest-rated issues do not cause many arguments within the respondents' relationships. There were no significant differences based on education level, or urban/rural location.

Figure 53:  
**Issues of argument between spouses/partners**



#### Cluster 1:

Women who expressed gender equality in a marriage/ live-in relationship to a higher degree have the following profile:

Urban;  
Albanian ethnicity  
Group age of 18-34 y.o  
Higher education.

#### Cluster 2

Women who expressed gender equality in their marriage/ live-in relationship to a slightly lower degree are profiled as follows:

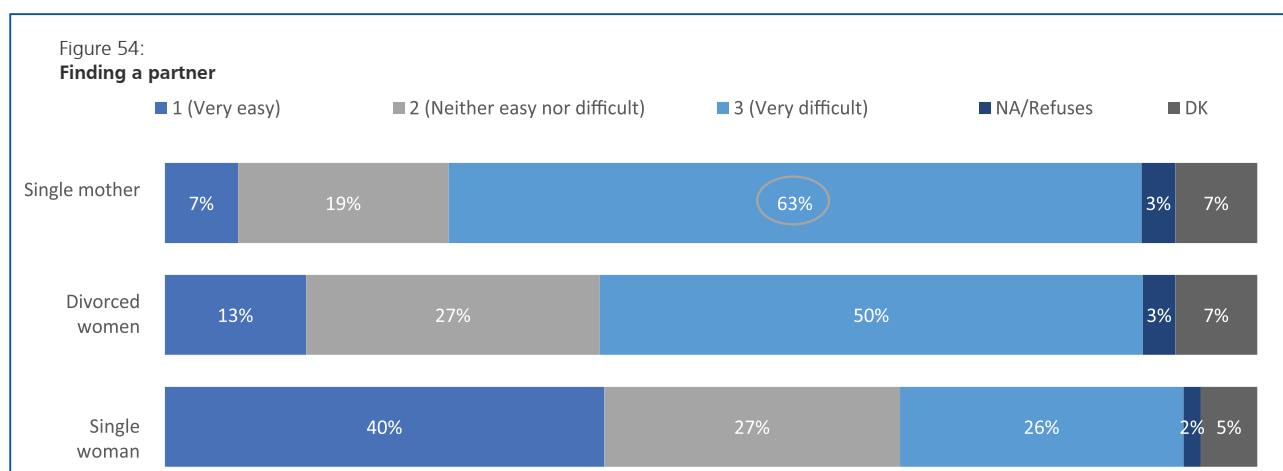
Rural;  
Serbian ethnicity  
Group age of 35-54 y.o  
Primary or lower education



## 4.4 FINDING A PARTNER

On a scale of 1 (very easy) to 3 (very difficult), respondents agreed that it is most difficult for single mothers (63%) to find a serious partner for an intimate relationship, followed by divorcees/widows (50%). This suggests the existence of prejudices in Kosovo society relating to a

woman's eligibility for a serious relationship/partner. That said, the perception of the level of ease for single women seeking a partner is quite high, 40%. Bivariate correlation analysis indicates this perception is not proportional to the respondents' age.



## 4.5 SITUATION OF WOMEN DURING COVID-19

The Women's Study 2022 asked respondents to rate the extent to which they faced various problems, challenges, and risks as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 crisis, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 4 (very high extent). The issues faced largely as a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis include reduced socialization with people outside the household (21%), decreased salary (15%), decreased family budget (11%), and others which were at a lower level. It is interesting to highlight that a high percentage of women didn't respond to the following issues: losing their job (58%), difficulties to learn how to use technology for remote work (57%), working from home/teleworking (57%), inability to advance in a career (55%), no one to help with the child/children (42%), inability to complete education (27%), and an increased number of work tasks (27%).

The issues faced less as a direct result of the COVID-19 crisis include: divorce/ending of an emotional relationship (1%), health issues (psychological) (3%), inability to complete education (3%), no one to help with the child/children (3%), inability to advance in a career (3%), health issues (physical) (4%), no one to help with running the household (4%), losing a job (4%), difficulties to learn how to use technology for remote work (4%), work from home/teleworking (5%), domestic/family violence (5%), and increased number of work tasks (6%). Since almost all percentages of these items are low, the overall perceived connection to COVID-19 is relatively weak.

Data analysis among the regions is similar to the extent that women personally faced problems, challenges, and

risks as a direct consequence of the COVID 19 crisis. Nevertheless, there are some differences in some items. In Mitrovica, the mean value of women who report having no help with running the household ( $m=2.1$ ) is higher compared to other regions, especially Gjakova ( $m=1.1$ ).

Women from the Peja region encountered a greater level of inability to advance in a career ( $m=2.2$ ), while the women in Prishtina reported the highest level of upward career mobility ( $m=1.2$ ).

Women in Gjakova face a higher increased number of work tasks ( $m=3.0$ ), with the lowest in Prishtina ( $m=1.2$ ). In terms of having "no one to help with the child/children", on average women from the Ferizaj region ranked highest ( $m=2.1$ ), while women in the Gjakova region scored lowest ( $m=1.0$ ).

Difficulties to learn how to use technology for remote work are the highest in Mitrovica ( $m=2.1$ ) and Peja ( $m=2.1$ ), and the lowest in Prishtina ( $m=1.2$ ). The problem of working from home/teleworking was most prominent in Gjakova ( $m=3.6$ ) and slightest in Prishtina ( $m=1.3$ ). The problem of having more household chores was perceived highest in Gjilan ( $m=2.8$ ), and lowest in Prishtina ( $m=1.4$ ). Gjilan was most affected by decreased family budget ( $m=3.0$ ), while the least affected was Gjakova ( $m=1.2$ ).

Ferizaj ( $m=2.7$ ) and Gjakova ( $m=2.7$ ) were confronted more with decreased salaries. In contrast, women from the Prishtina region were least affected (1.7).

Reduced socialization with people outside the household was more pronounced in the Peja region ( $m=3.2$ ), with the lowest result in the Prishtina region ( $m=1.7$ ). The find-

ings indicate that in general, the women in Prishtina were affected less by different problems, challenges, and risks as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 crisis.

Figure 55:  
**Challenges during COVID-19 crisis**

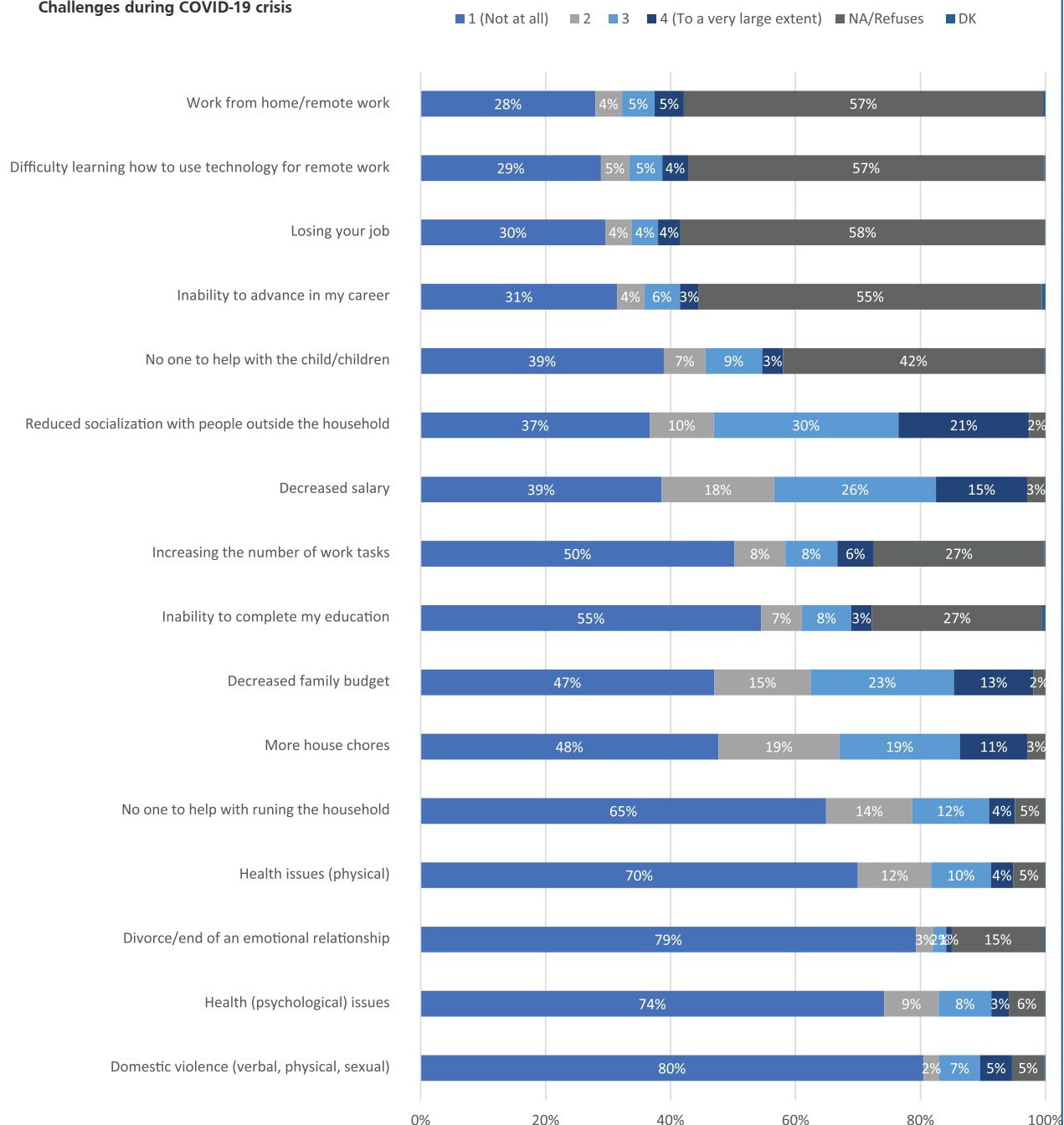


Figure 56:  
Challenges during COVID-19 services by region



This part includes a summary of focus group discussion with women aged 18-35 coming from different regions. With regard to family and social life, women from focus groups stated that family is very important to them. There are differences between people living in urban and rural areas. In villages, they usually live in communities and decision-making falls upon the head of the family, while in cities young couples usually live on their own. Moreover, one participant stated that she has been divorced from her husband because his family did not allow her to work.

In contrast another participant who lives in a rural area highlighted how her husband's family support her in continuing her studies. Even though she is from a village, too, it can be concluded that mentality differs from family to family. Moreover, some women highlighted that men are expected to have more financial responsibility while women deal with household chores. One of the participants (who was a teacher) reported noticing that in most cases it is the mother who cares more about children's' homework.

Women also reported that it is difficult for couples to spend much time together, mainly because of other obligations after work such as, having over guests. Others reported that phones are used excessively by everyone, which leads to fewer talks. Nevertheless, women conclude that it is possible to spend time when you want. Moreover, one divorced participant stated that it is possible to keep a healthy relationship/communication with their ex-husband for the sake of the child, but also because there is still love between them. (She was divorced because her husband's family didn't let her work). Others point out that it is difficult to keep healthy communication with ex-husbands, because of the mentality and gossip.

The second focus group discussion is from women aged 36-55, coming from different regions, and it shows that most women believe that it is a well-known fact that women usually have more responsibilities in the family. A working woman, continues to prepare meals, take care of children, and so on, after returning home from work while usually, men do not feel this same responsibility. Living with parents-in-law makes everything easier because in-laws can assist in providing childcare, should the mother work.

However, in general, even when the wives have the same income as the husbands, it does not reduce the household- and child-related responsibilities that fall to her as a woman. Households in rural areas are more characterized by higher unemployment, and this results in even more limited opportunities for early education of children. Unlike women in rural areas, those in urban areas have greater opportunities for labor market monitoring and professional development. Also, women in urban cities are freer to go out and do other leisure activities they like. Some participants stated that nowadays men take more responsibility for taking care of children and organizing family life. In the past, it was shameful for fathers to play with children, nowadays, this is not perceived as a problem.

There is still not a sufficient level of gender equality, especially in rural areas, where most of the responsibilities for educating children, as well as caring for the elderly and family members that need specific treatment lie with women. Nowadays, it is more difficult for married spouses to spend time together, considering that women have other obligations that they need to attend to at home after getting back from work, such as preparing meals. Despite everything that has happened, there is a possibility of continued communication between divorced couples, especially for those with children, except when the divorce happened because of violence.

The focus group from representatives of CSOs dealing directly or indirectly with issues of gender equality and women's rights revealed more insights into inequality among women about household chores and other issues. One of the participants highlighted that *"as a girl and as a researcher that I am, I can say that based on one survey done in 2018, women spend approximately 8 hours in a day doing housework, which includes taking care of the elders, taking care of the children, cooking and everything else, while men take care more of technical maintenance around the house."*

According to the discussion, the division of tasks is based on the roles that are culturally assigned to women and men in Kosovar culture. Many women living in rural areas do not have access to public life. Nevertheless, there are others who travel on a daily basis because they are employed in cities; still, many of them work without an employment contract. There are many women whose husbands prevent them from working, despite the women wanting to work.

Women also stated that there is much discrimination against women, especially in rural areas, that is why there is also a higher level of violence there. They argue that women are more educated than men, illustrated by a higher number of women in undergraduate studies. Women in this focus group discussion also argued that the husband is the main financial provider in most families, so he decides on financial issues, although women are more dedicated and pay more attention to the education of the children as they have more free time – in terms of payment.

Participants argued that in most cases, because many women are not employed, it falls on them to take care of children's upbringing, education, and homework. The employment of men is much higher than that of women, which affects family relationships. They mentioned some studies that have shown that women who are responsible for financial expenses spend more on education and health, while men spend more on food, drinks, and other consumer goods.

Others said that women spend more on cleaning products, and things for children, and rarely on themselves. Some participants said that there is a lack of maintaining communication among single mothers and ex-husbands. When mothers asked their husband to help with funding schooling, and others, they choose not to do it even if the ex-partners can afford it. Moreover, they send false evidence to courts to prove that they have no income and cannot support their children. The participant referred to data from 25 single mothers from Prishtina, and the District of Prishtina, which she considers alarming.

Another participant stated that regarding post-divorce relationships, if women have experienced violence, it is very difficult to recover a connection that has been broken, hence it all depends on the causes of the divorce. Most divorce cases that have been ruled over in court are because of violence, and in some cases also due to betrayal. Representatives of public institutions related to gender equality argued that girls and women in rural areas, in contrast to urban areas, are more rigid and less courageous in presenting their demands and needs.

They also argued that the division of responsibilities within the Kosovar family is a mentality installed in the past, so women have responsibilities that are not delegated to them by anyone but taken on by themselves. Even in cases when women work, they continue to feel this responsibility of work such as childcare, food preparation, laundry, care for the elderly, etc., in this case as if moving to the second shift of work. The gender differences in the family have in the past been inherited from generation to generation and to change a tradition, it needs a century to pass. They also stated that men are less likely to do the unpaid care work.

## CONCLUSION

- This chapter discussed family and social life, within the national context of the Republic of Kosovo. Kosovo is still considered to have a rigidly patriarchal society, where men have the final say in various matters, as well as access to social and economic resources. The chapter continues with leisure activities, challenges during COVID-19, household organization, and general equality roles, finding partners for relationship/marriage, as well as findings from focus groups.
- Interviewed women reported that their leisure activities mostly include always or often spending time with the family, talking on the phone, using social media such as Viber, Facebook, Instagram, etc., as well as watching movies and series on TV or online. If we compare leisure activities based on age groups, the importance/frequency of their free time is higher for younger than for older women.
- Women noted that limited socializing with individuals outside the household, as well as a decreased salary and a lower family budget, were all factors that contributed to the problems, challenges, and risks they faced during the COVID-19 crisis. The findings show that, in comparison to other locations, Kosovo's capital city, Prishtina, was less affected by various problems, challenges, and risks as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Most women reported that they live with a partner/husband and with children. Most of them either have a joint property with their husband's/partner's parents, or the ownership of the property is solely of the partner/husband.
- Respondents also reported having household responsibilities, regardless of relationship or motherhood status. They mostly agreed that parents/spouses almost equally know what is best for the family; the mother/wife makes meal decisions, the mother is responsible for tasks related to their children's schooling, both parents discipline the children equally, women are fully responsible for the household chores, cleanliness, and order, the husband/father is solely responsible for the overall financial well-being of the household, parents/spouses take equal responsibility for organizing leisure activities and free time, as well as parents/spouses taking equal responsibility for children's religious upbringing.
- Out of the married respondents, most of them reported that they have 3-4 children. The age of the chil-

dren is higher than 23 years in most cases. Moreover, most respondents reported that they can afford all they need but they must save, while only a small percentage said that they can afford everything and still save.

- The interviewed respondents were mostly married, followed by single, widowed, in a relationship but not living together, and divorced. Prejudices exist within Kosovar society, as single mothers and divorced/widows have been reported to have the highest difficulty in finding a partner for an intimate relationship again. For married women, husbands/partners are mostly salaried employees. Most married women reported that the husband/partner's job completely restricts the time he spends with family and friends. Regarding household income, most of them reported that they either pool all the money and each takes out what they need, or their husband/partner manages all the money and gives them their share.
- Results also show that most women have time daily for personal pursuits, relaxing, or socializing, followed by others who have time 1-2 times a month or less, 3-4 times a week, and 1-2 times a week. Less than half of them reported having husbands/partners who work and spent daily time with their women. In contrast, husbands/partners who are not able to work dedicated time to women mostly.
- Regarding household chore responsibilities, it is interesting to note that most women reported a totally fair or only quite fair division among them. The level of fairness is higher in the case of Gjakova, Prishtina, and Ferizaj, compared to Gjilan, Mitrovica, Peja, and Prizren. Most household activities are done by women, while repairs and dealing with bills are done by men. Moreover, the majority of women with children reported that these duties are done solely by women, such as daily childcare, staying at home with children when they are ill, taking children to afterschool activities, and taking children to kindergarten/school and back home. Some said that these responsibilities are shared, but very few responded that these responsibilities are done solely by men.
- Some issues that can cause arguments between spouses/partners include upbringing of the kids, money, household responsibilities, the way one is spending leisure time, and job/career.
- About half of them, even more women in urban areas reported that there is a very high degree of gender equality in their relationship. Nevertheless, the household chores are not equally divided between men and women. This could be an indication of acceptance of patriarchal division in gender roles to some degree.
- The results from focus groups show that the division of responsibilities within the Kosovar family is a mentality installed in the past, which can be changed only over time. Even employed women, continue to have a higher burden of unpaid care work, which results in them having to continue to work once they return home from work. The main problem is that women accept it as normal to do unpaid care work. Nevertheless, some respondents reported that nowadays, it is quite common for the father to play with kids, and things are changing but very slowly. The respondents stated that divorced and single mothers cannot maintain healthy relationships especially when they have experienced violence from their partner. In other cases, couples try to have a good relationship for the sake of children. In general, fathers do not support single mothers financially, and in some cases, they provide the courts with false evidence about their property and income.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- All actors of society should promote equal share of household chores and childcare. Families should involve boys and girls equally in care work and household chores from the childhood phase.
- All actors, especially children should attempt to change gender norms.
- State institutions should ensure compliance with existing Labor Law provisions and with the EU Directive on work-life balance.
- Supporting the private sector that offers services for children's care.
- Creating conditions that enable parents to take care of their children in the first three years of their lives and increasing the number of kindergartens.
- Offer preschool education programs for children above the age of three.
- Relevant stakeholders should create more diverse educational, cultural, and recreational activities at the local and central levels.
- Relevant stakeholders should increase access (information, transport, opportunity, free entrance) and mobility of women to educational, cultural, and recreational activities.
- In less than half (40%) of cases, parents/spouses take equal responsibility for organizing leisure activities and free time; 23% said that mother/wife takes such responsibility, followed by father/husband (8%), all (19%), someone else (4%) and son/daughter (4%). There should be more coordination among state institutions and different organizations, agencies, and local communities to increase educational, cultural, and recreational activities.





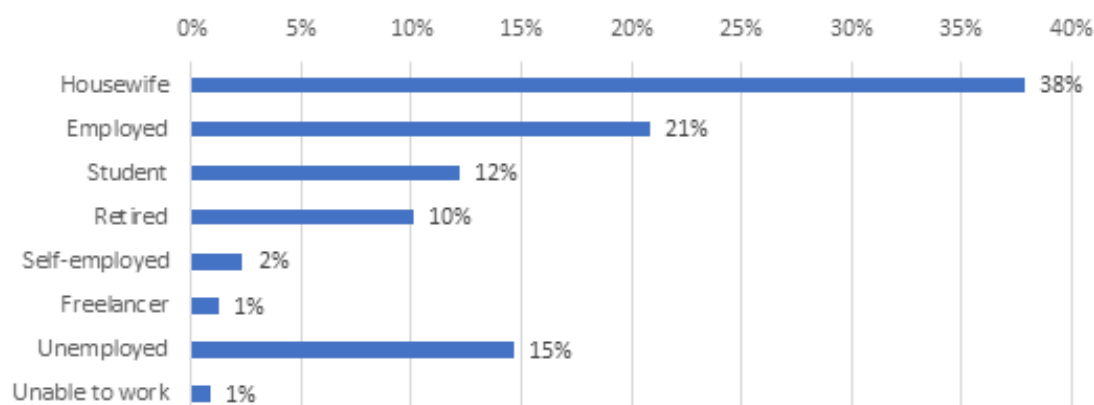
## 5.

## EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The education legislation in Kosovo provides for equal opportunities for girls and boys and women and men to access education at all levels. Equally, employment law provides for equal access to job opportunities, advancement and protection from discrimination and harassment. In the last decade there have also been several positive discrimination initiatives to increase the number of women in managerial posts and political representation.

Despite these legislative and policy interventions, the position of women in the labour market remains low (Avdullahi, Ademi, Salihu, & Krasniqi, 2022). The data collected for this study shows that only 24% of women participating in the survey are working (21% employed, 2% self-employed and 1% freelancer), while the rest of participants are unemployed (15% unemployed, retired 10%, unable to work 1% and studying 12%).

Figure 57:  
Employment



Reports from the Agency of Statistics of Kosovo (2022) for the third (TM3) and fourth (TM4) trimester of 2021 show a 25% and 24% unemployment rate, which can be interpreted as a slight decrease. The GAP<sup>3</sup> study in 2021, reports that only 1,954 (33%) out of 5,695 total employees are women in the public Kosovo municipal administration and only 3,189 (41%) out of total 7,855 employees are women in the central institutions administration. Meanwhile only 89 (9%) of those employed are in senior management positions and only 501 (32%) in management positions. According to the GAP Institute study (2021), 21% of appointments in government positions in 2020 were allocated to women, compared to 14% in the previ-

ous government, reporting that women have held about one third of the positions in management positions, civil service, and academic staff. Another report published by HERAS Plus (2022) for gender equality in higher education institutions also reveals men dominate in upper management positions compared to women.

The working women in this study are mostly in the public sector (49%), followed by the private sector (45%) and NGO sector (6%). Almost 90% of the working women declared that their contributions and taxes are paid by their employers and 81% of them receive their salary by bank transfer. Most of the women working have relatively little experience (1-5 years), and 16% of them have a long working experience (over 15 years).

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.institutigap.org/documents/22080\\_Employment%20of%20women%20and%20their%20representation%20in%20Kosovo2020.pdf](https://www.institutigap.org/documents/22080_Employment%20of%20women%20and%20their%20representation%20in%20Kosovo2020.pdf)

In this section the position of women regarding employment and education is presented by covering issues such as the attitudes of women towards the working environment, perceived discrimination in the workplace, opportunities for advancing to managerial positions, attitudes towards careers, unemployment issues and self-employment, attitudes towards education, the role of education in promoting the role model and values.

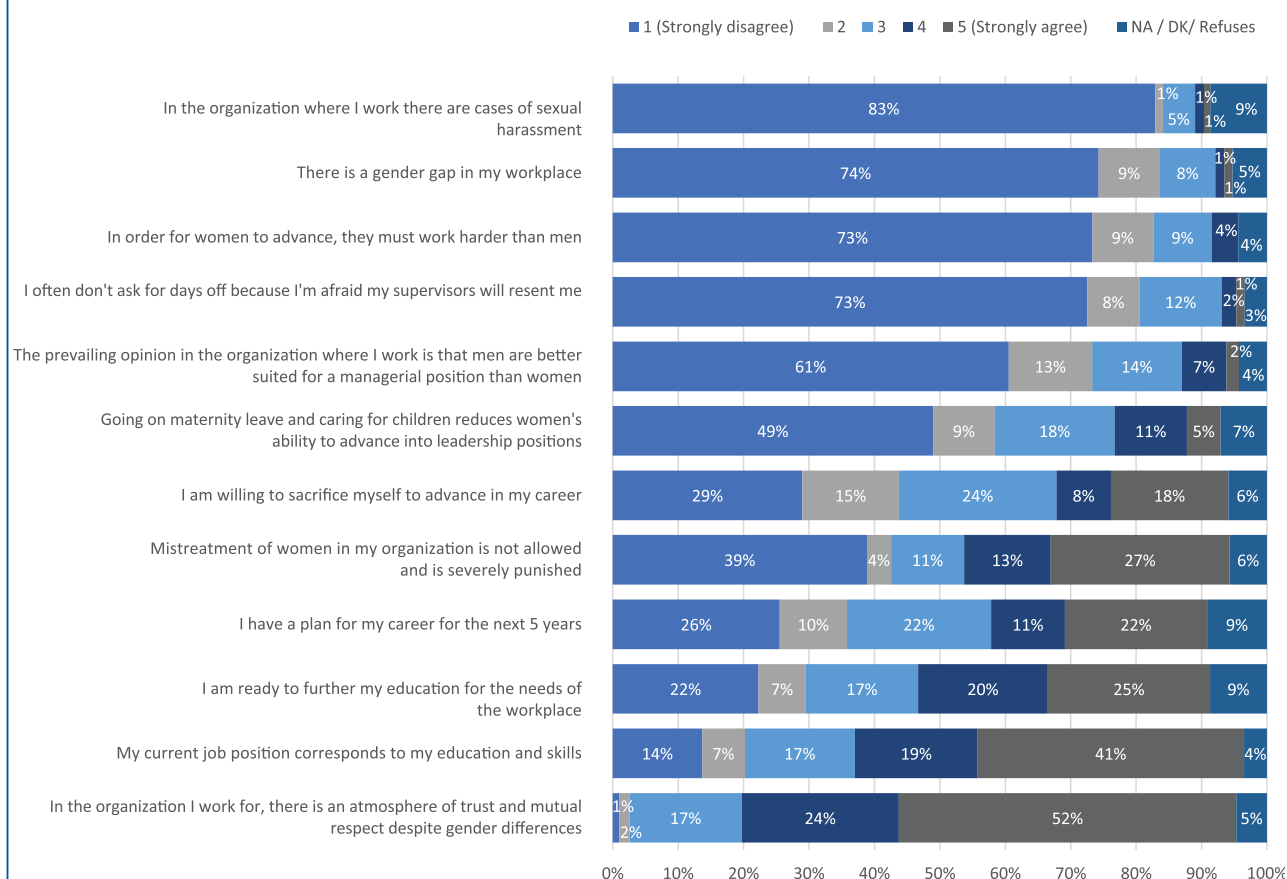
## 5.1 ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Data on position of women in the workplace and their attitudes towards working environment is generally lacking in Kosovo. This section offers important insights about women's perceptions and attitudes towards the working environment, even though the number of employed women in Kosovo remains low. All women have answered all questions regarding the working environment. For those not working we count their perceived attitudes and most of them are in general positive about the working environment, including mutual respect, no discrimination and no reports of indecent treatment. Fifty two percent of women strongly agree and 22.88% agree with the statement,

"in the organization I work there is mutual trust and respect" and only 16.95 reported neutral position. Women also reported somewhat similar agreement and disagreement with the statement "indecent treatment of women in my organization is illegal and severely punished" where 38.14 strongly disagreed, 3.81 % disagreed, 28.39 strongly agreed and 11.44 agreed and 10.59 were neutral. These findings suggest that the working environment is perceived in general as safe and equal, thus implementation of the regulation and addressing indecent treatment in workplace needs continued promotion and enforcement.

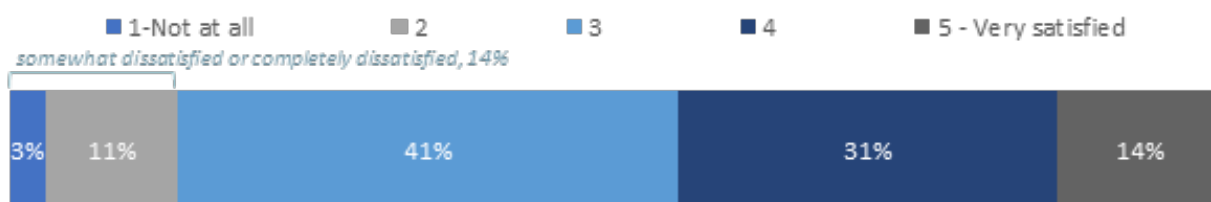
Higher disagreement is expressed with the statements concerning the position of men in the workplace where (69.49%) disagreed with the statement "I often do not ask for days off because I am afraid that my supervisor ...." and 72.88% disagreed with the statement "In order for women to advance they need to work harder than men". Similarly, 61% of respondents disagree with the statement that "the prevailing opinion in the organization I work at is that men are more suitable to managerial positions than women. These responses show that women perceive equal and adequate treatment in the workplace.

Figure 58:  
**Agreement with statements regarding workplace**



Regarding **salary** they are paid for the work they do, women remain largely indifferent (40.25%), generally satisfied (28.81 somewhat satisfied and 15.68 very satisfied)<sup>4</sup>

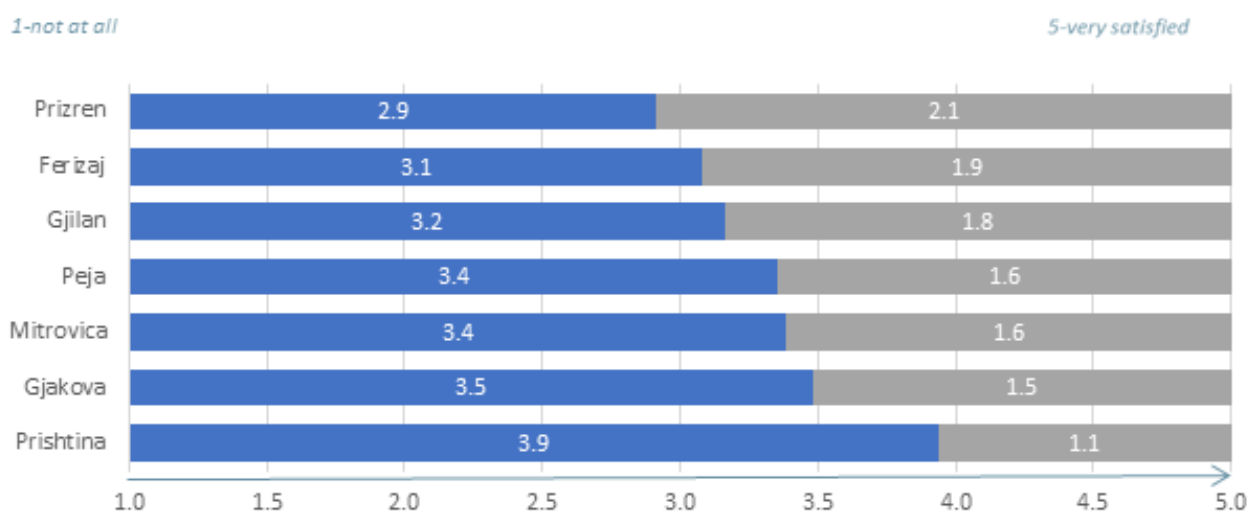
Figure 59:

**Satisfaction with the salary**

Women in all other regions report average satisfaction ( $m=3$ ) with their salary, except in Prishtina where women reported that they are very satisfied ( $m=5$ ). This may be

the case because Prishtina, as the capital, provides more opportunities especially in the service sector, where salaries are quite competitive.

Figure 60:

**Satisfaction with the salary, by region**

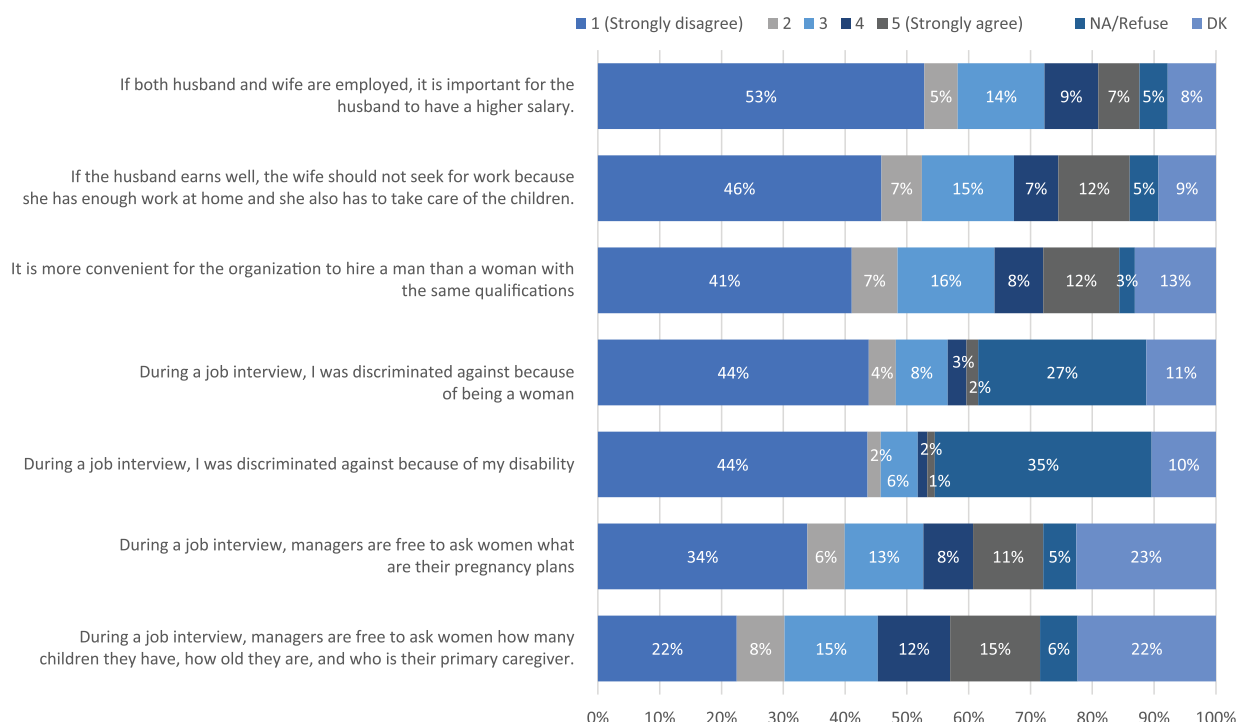
A gender pay gap was not reported by women in this study in the survey or in the focus groups. Only one woman reported that a gender pay gap is present in the private sector and not in the public sector. The gender pay-gap report published by the Agency for Gender Equality in Kosovo (2020)<sup>5</sup> reported an 8% gender pay gap in the public sector and 20% gender pay gap in the private sector with the highest percentages in elementary occupations and craft and related trades workers. The main problem remains the low number of the women employed in general and especially in lower paid sectors with short term jobs, mainly in the service industry (Regional Cooperation Council, 2021).

Women's attitudes towards employment were also investigated with targeted statements conveying attitudes working conditions. The highest ranked agreement was reported for the statements, "the husband should have a higher salary if they are both employed" (53%), and "if the husband earns well, the wife should not seek a job, because she has enough to do in the home and take care of children" (46%), "it is more convenient for the organization to hire a man, rather than a woman with the same qualifications" (41%) and "during the job interview, I have been discriminated against because of being a woman" (44%). They mostly disagreed with the statement, "During a job interview, managers are free to ask women how many children they have, how old they are and who is the main caregiver for them" (22%). These statements convey a different picture than those reported in Figure 2., especially regarding the equal treatment of women and men.

<sup>4</sup> The percentage value in the figure is rounded up.

<sup>5</sup> [https://abgj.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/AGE%20Gender%20Pay%20Gap%20RKS%20\\_compressed.pdf](https://abgj.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/AGE%20Gender%20Pay%20Gap%20RKS%20_compressed.pdf)

Figure 61:  
**Attitudes towards employment**

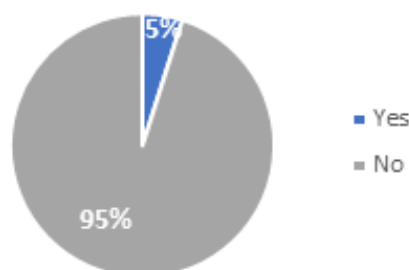


## 5.2 DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

When asked directly, have you ever felt discriminated against in the workplace, only 5.08% of respondents reported that they have felt discriminated in the workplace, while 94.91% said that they have never felt discriminated. Nevertheless, considerable research done in this area<sup>6</sup>

evidences the phenomenon of unrecognized discrimination and inequality including in the workplace. The research shows that<sup>7</sup> while the legislation framework is already comprehensive and progressively oriented, "the implementation remains weak"<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 62:  
**Discrimination at the workplace**



According to the research study done by the KWW on Gender -Discrimination and Labour in Kosovo (KWN, 2022) it is argued that the Labour Legislation

lacks substantial protection measures for the working contracts, tasks for pregnant women and specific discrimination in employment. (KWW, 2022, p.39)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> (Jose et al., 2017[13]; European Commission, 2019[7]).

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/d85c7786-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/d85c7786-en>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/country\\_level\\_implementation\\_plan\\_gap\\_iii\\_kosovo\\_eng.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/country_level_implementation_plan_gap_iii_kosovo_eng.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/GBD-Labour-Kosovo\\_2022\\_FINAL-1.pdf](https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/GBD-Labour-Kosovo_2022_FINAL-1.pdf)

The same report concludes that:

"The Law on Protection from Discrimination (LPD) lacks a clear definition of sexual harassment as per the Recast Directive; stipulations that severe forms of discrimination shall receive higher fines; and clarity regarding the violation procedure for imposing sanctions. The Law for Gender Equality (LGE) does not clearly prohibit various forms of gender-based discrimination or impose sanctions sufficient for prohibiting individuals or employers from engaging in gender-based discrimination. Little case law related to gender-based discrimination and labour could be found in Kosovo, which explains the omission of any discussion of case law in this section" (p39).

To explore more deeply inequality and discrimination issues, the study asked further several targeted questions.

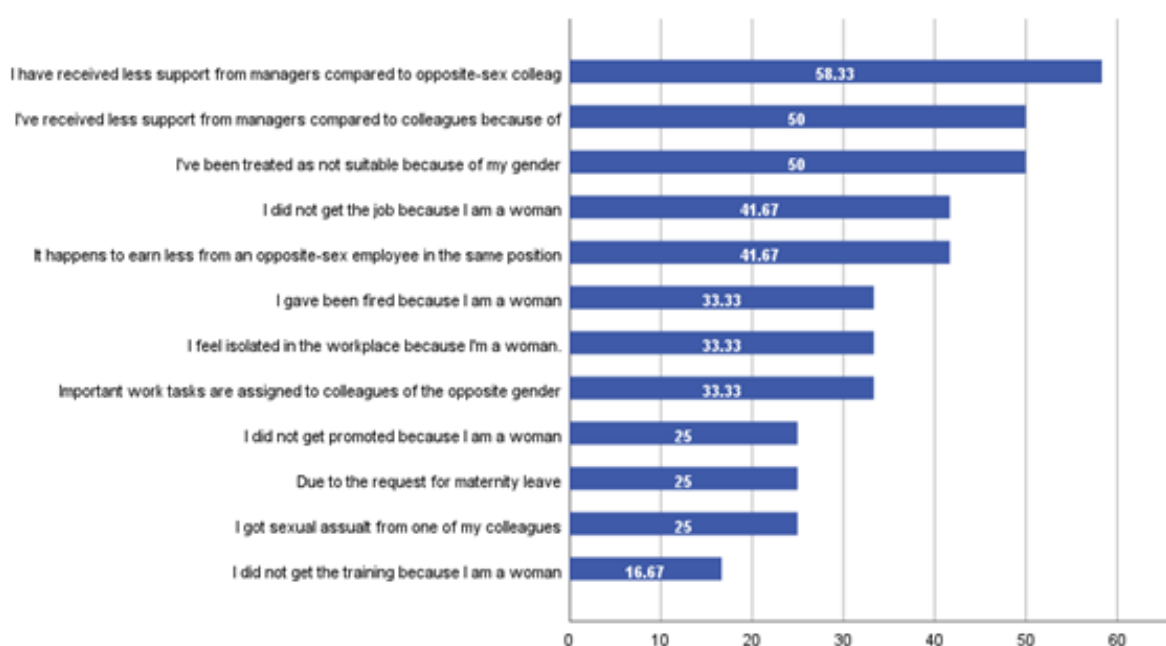
The responses show a perceived lack of support compared to men, where:

- 7 women reported to have received less support from managers compared to colleagues who are men,
- 5 reported they were treated as not suitable because of their gender
- 5 reported not getting the job because they are women,
- 4 reported they were paid less than men in the same positions.

Few women (3) also reported having been fired, feeling isolated and getting a less important task only because they are women.

Since only a few women stated that they have experienced discrimination, we report them in the graph below, by numbers and not percentage. This refers to the total 5% of women who stated they were discriminated in the workplace.

Figure 63:  
**Reports of discrimination experience.**



The discrimination statements were analyzed by level of education, confirming that the lower the education of

women, the higher is the discrimination. The focus groups also revealed reported discrimination during employment and promotion.

P1: There is still a lot of inequality. I studied industrial design and when I applied for a job, they did not accept me even though I had the required education, but they hired a guy from abroad who they had to send for training. So, it cost them more hiring him, but they preferred him because he was a man.

P3: There is a lot of discrimination, even personally when I look at open vacancies, especially in these positions related to logistics, Kosovar companies are always targeting men in job descriptions. On the other hand, in foreign organizations, e.g., USAID, UNDP always emphasizes that there is no gender discrimination.

(Focus Group Gjakova, Peja, Deçan, Prizren, Mitrovica, 2022)

Regarding institutions or persons whom they would turn to for help and support, more women said that they would turn to no one mentioned in the list (26.69%), 18.64%

would ask help from the manager, and 16.95% would turn to the commission for the prevention of discrimination.

Figure 64:  
Reporting discrimination.

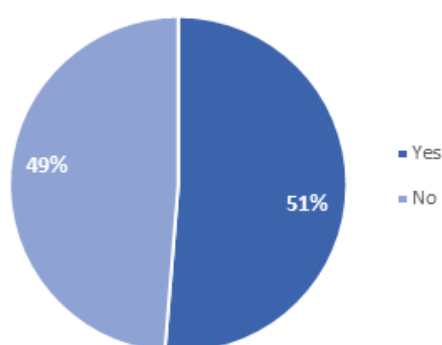


### 5.3 ADVANCING TO MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

Job promotion and managerial positions for women is generally perceived to require a lot of support by family and institutions, because of the barriers that women face in this process. The patriarchal style is reflected in public institutions as in political life, and the type of tasks related

to management positions such as traveling, meetings outside the working schedule, trainings and retreats, dinners and other types of activities are generally seen as barriers for women, as they have to take care of all duties related to home, family and children, and often also elderly care.

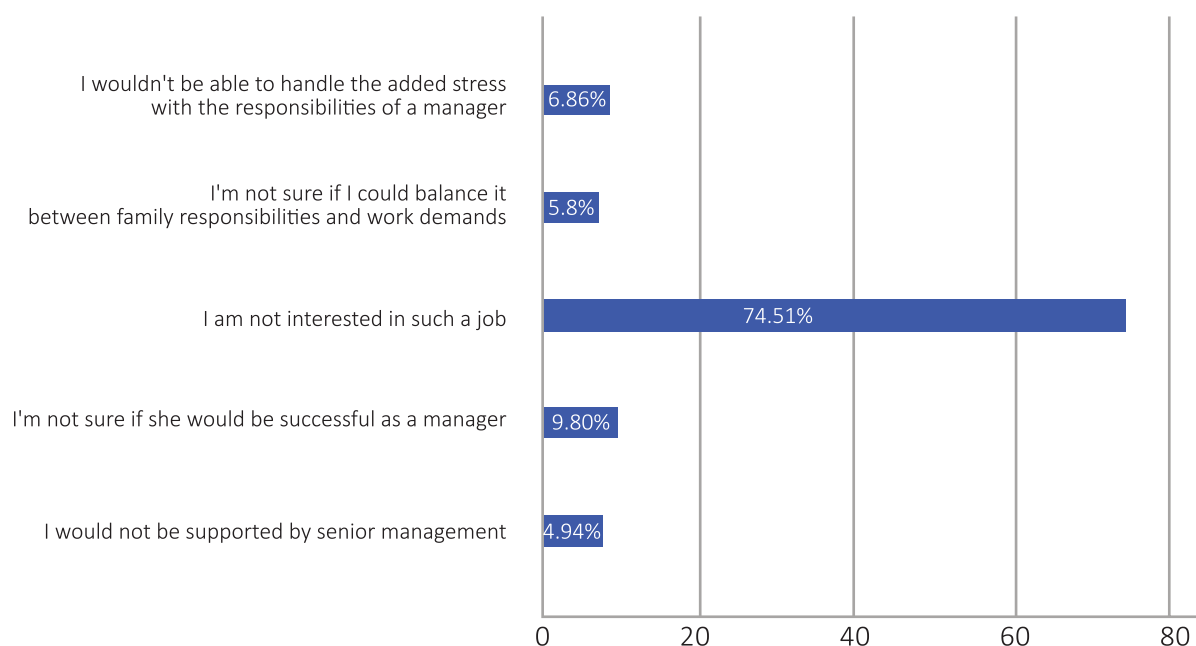
Figure 65:  
Willing to advance in managerial positions.



Responses from women in this study are striking as only 49.25% would like to advance in managerial positions and the reasons for this self-restriction are not strongly linked with the heavy burden, they carry in taking

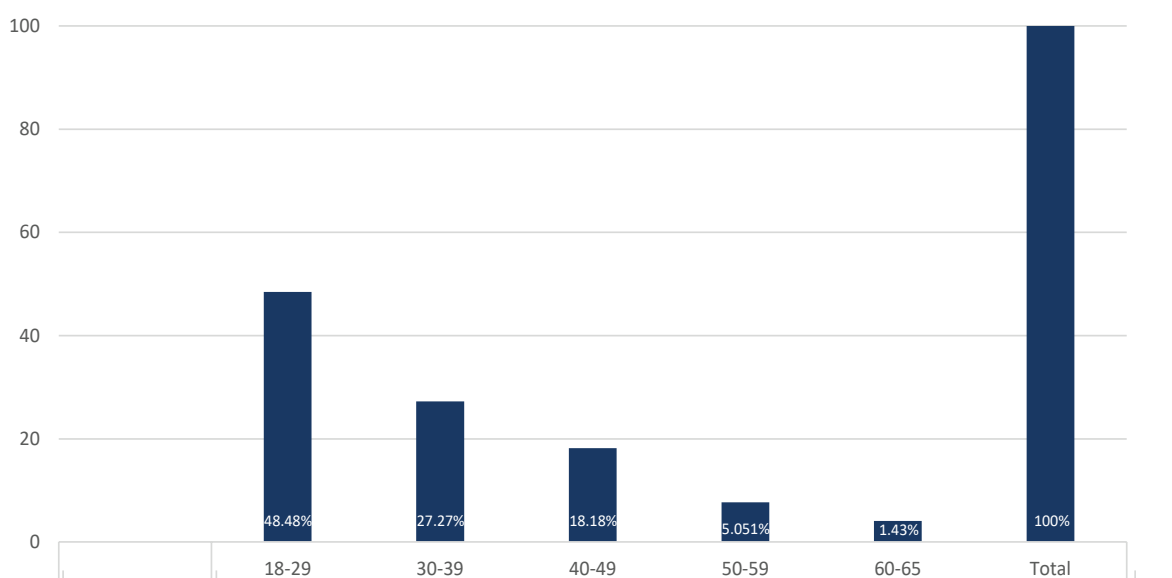
care of family and children, lack of self-confidence and lack of skills. The most common reason declared, by 74.51% of respondents, is "I'm not interested in that kind of job"

Figure 66:  
**Reasons for not taking managerial positions.**



The older the women become, the less interest they take in management positions.

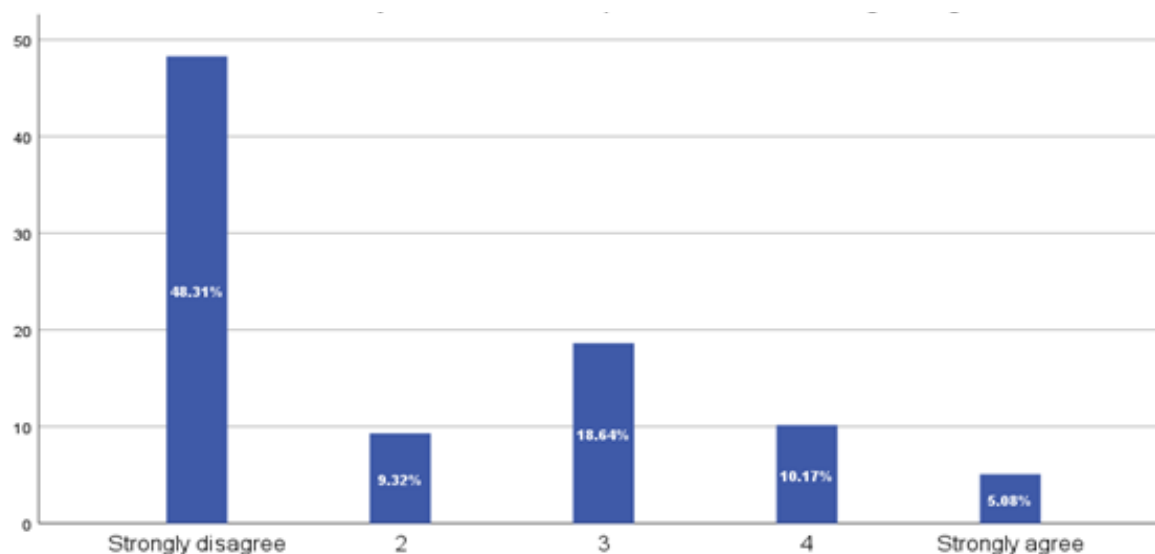
Figure 67:  
**Interest in becoming managers**



Women in this study also disagree that childcare duties is one of the factors preventing women from wanting senior roles, because this factor prevents young women in general from being employed, and it would be normally young

women desiring higher positions who would be hindered because they have to cease work during the maternity leave. Data from focus groups also do not offer more insight for women's hesitation to take on managerial positions.

Figure 68:  
Influence of maternity leave on managerial positions



## 5.4 WOMEN AND PERSONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS A CAREER

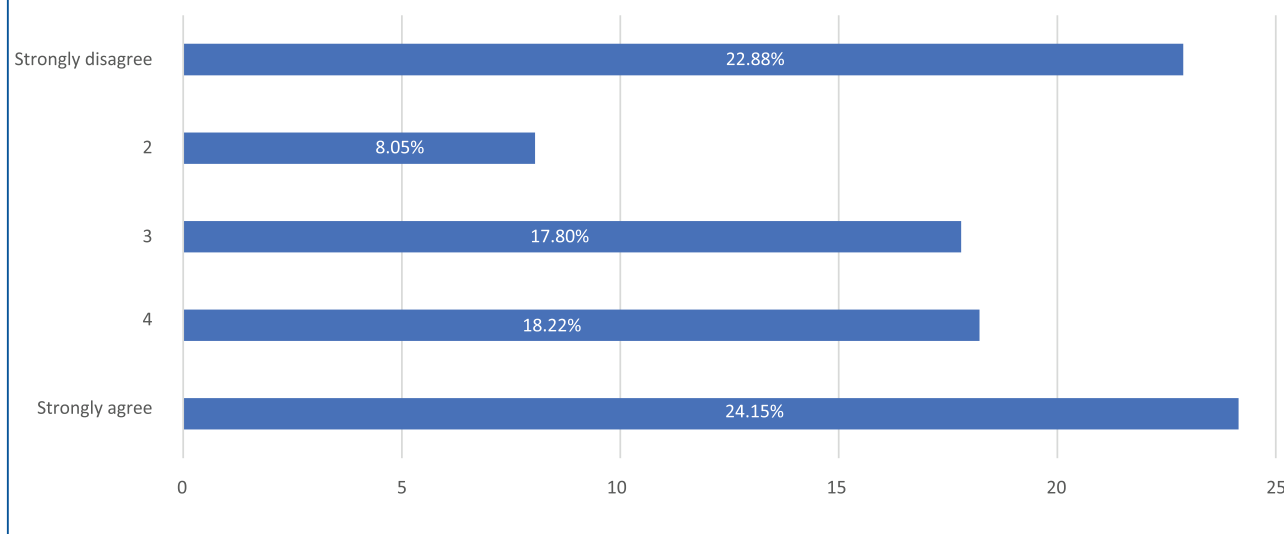
A career can be defined as a journey an individual makes through formal, informal, nonformal education and work. Career orientation refers to “information, orientation and counselling aiming at preparing students and job seekers to manage their career and make informed decisions” (Zeloth, 2011, p. 1; OECD, 2004, p. 19). From the individual perspective, career development refers to lifelong learning activities to reach personal and professional goals. From the institutional perspective it refers to activities undertaken by actors in society to organize career orientation, counselling, and development. The three most important skills for career development are: 1) self-evaluation and reflection; 2) searching for opportunities for development and work (search and analysis of job vacancies, preparation of application documents and 3) career management

skills that include making informed decisions and actions to reach career goals.

Women in this study reported moderate career development and promotion possibilities at the workplace ( $m=3.1$ ). In terms of the readiness for life-long learning for the purpose of being able to respond to the needs of the workplace, 24.15% of respondents agreed strongly, and 18.2% agreed with these statements, whereas 22.9% strongly disagreed and 8.8% disagreed with the statement, which means that the number of women ready to educate themselves for the needs of the workplace is higher than those who do not want to take on further education for the needs of the workplace. 17.5% of women are neutral on this question.



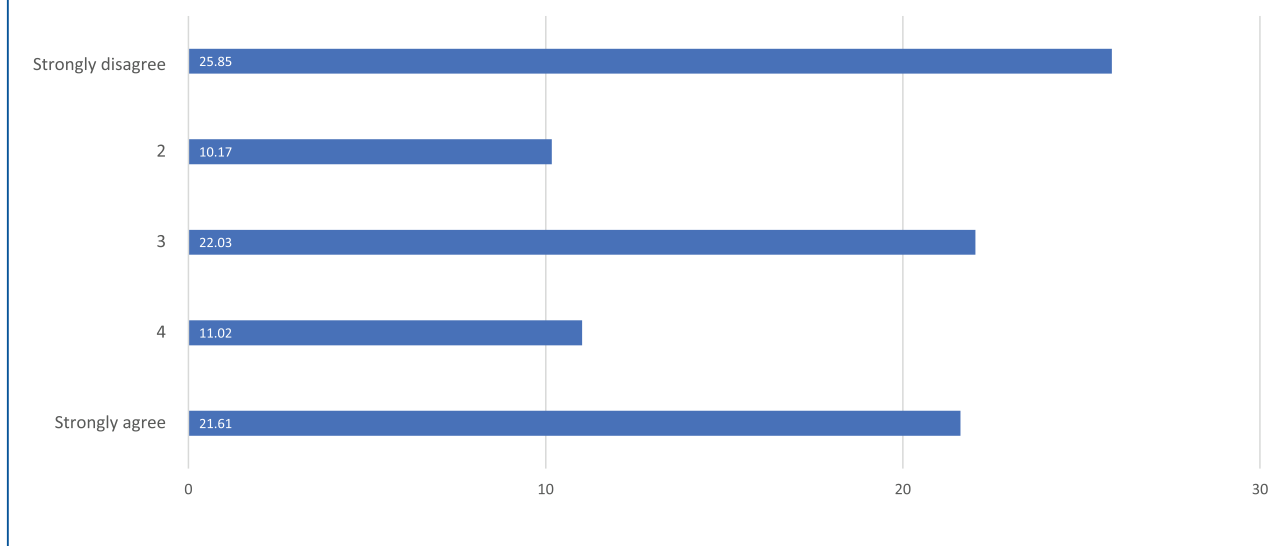
Figure 69:  
**Readiness for further education**



More women **have no plans** for their career for the next 5 years (25.8% strongly disagree and 10.2% disagree) than

those that have a career plan for the next 5 years (21.6% strongly agree and 11% agree), while 22.6% are neutral.

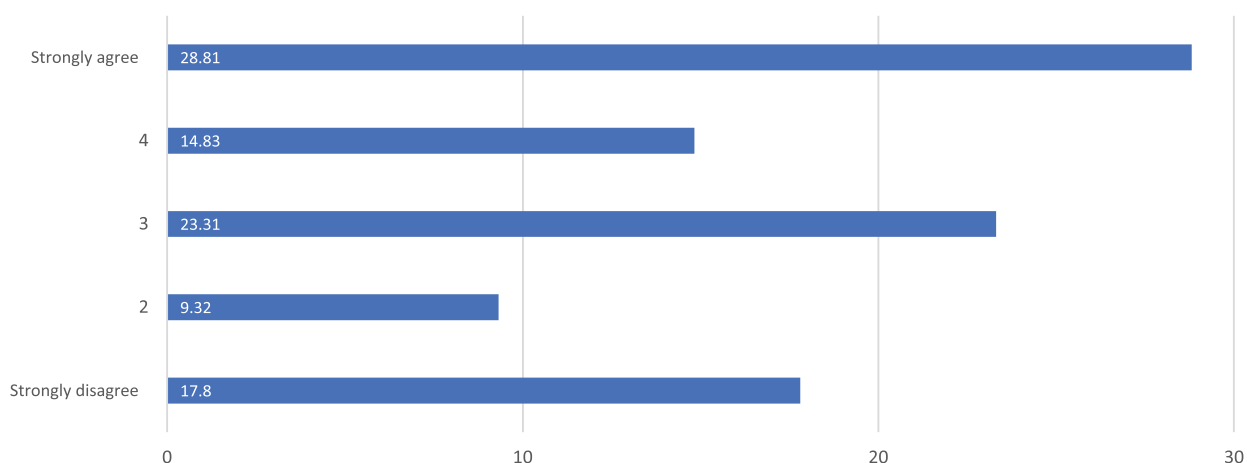
Figure 70:  
**Career Plans**



More women are not ready to sacrifice themselves, with 28.8% strongly disagree and 11% disagree with the statement "I am willing to sacrifice myself in order to

advance in my career." A total of 17.8% strongly agree and 9.4% agree with the statement. 23.3% are neutral regarding this question.

Figure 71:  
**Willingness to sacrifice for career advancement.**

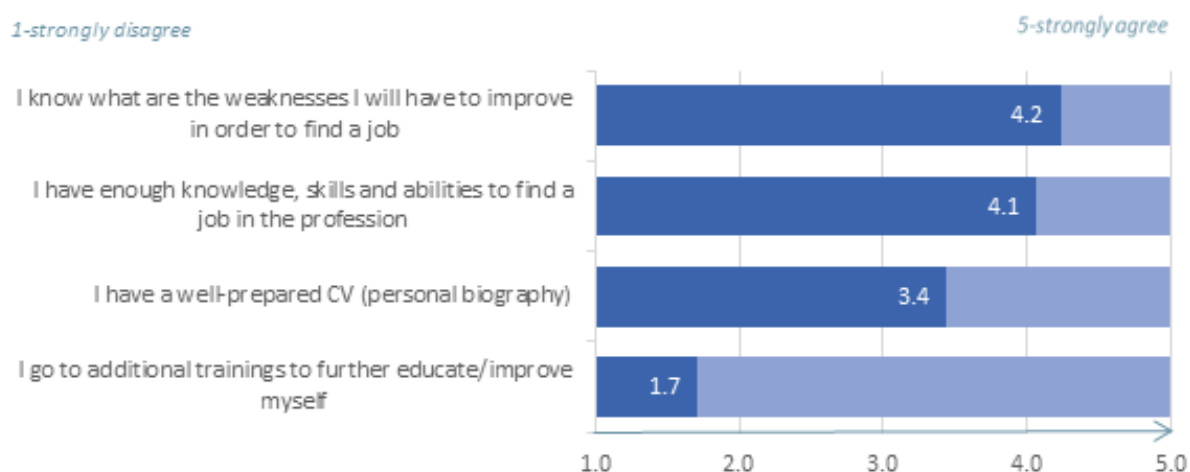


## 5.5 UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK

According to the Labour Force Survey (ASK, 2021) the activity rate among the population of women aged between 15-65 was 22%, whereas the inactivity rate was 78%. The most concerning data from this study is the percentage of women with higher Education (32%) that are jobless and seeking work. The data show 52% of women who have 1-5 years of experience showing a recent job entry position in this period. These data compared to oth-

er data that are expected to be published by ASK will give more information about the employment rate and sustainable employment of women during this period. Another striking finding is that only 6.26% of women respondents have attended non-formal education during the previous year, while 90.44% have not.

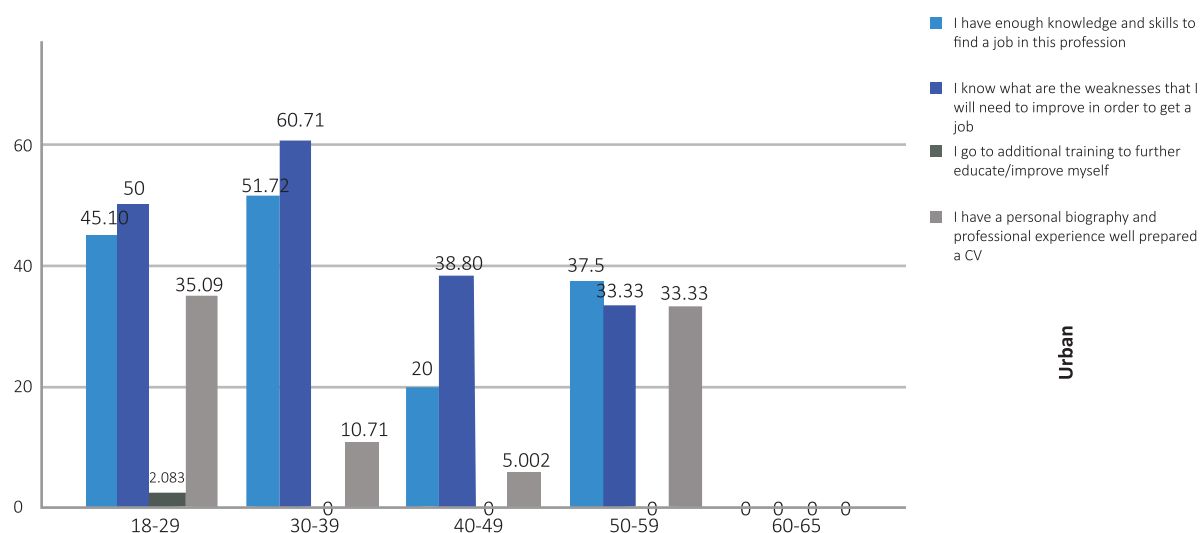
Figure 72:  
**Agreements with statements regarding the readiness for further education**



Most women of ages 30-39 in urban settlements (51.72% claim to have enough knowledge, skills, and ability to find a job in the profession, followed by those aged 18-29 (45.1%), those aged 50-59 (37.5%) and finally by those aged 40-49 (20%). Also, women aged 30-39 are aware of their weaknesses and are ready to improve in order to find a job with (61%), followed by women aged 18-29

(50%), 40-49 (39%) and those aged 50-59 (33%). The number of women who go to additional trainings to enhance their skills is symbolic for the ages 18-29 (2%) and is not present at all in the rest of the age groups. Women aged 18-29 lead in having a well-prepared CV (36%), followed by those aged 50-29 (33.3%), 30-39 (20.2%) and those aged 40-49 (5.8%).

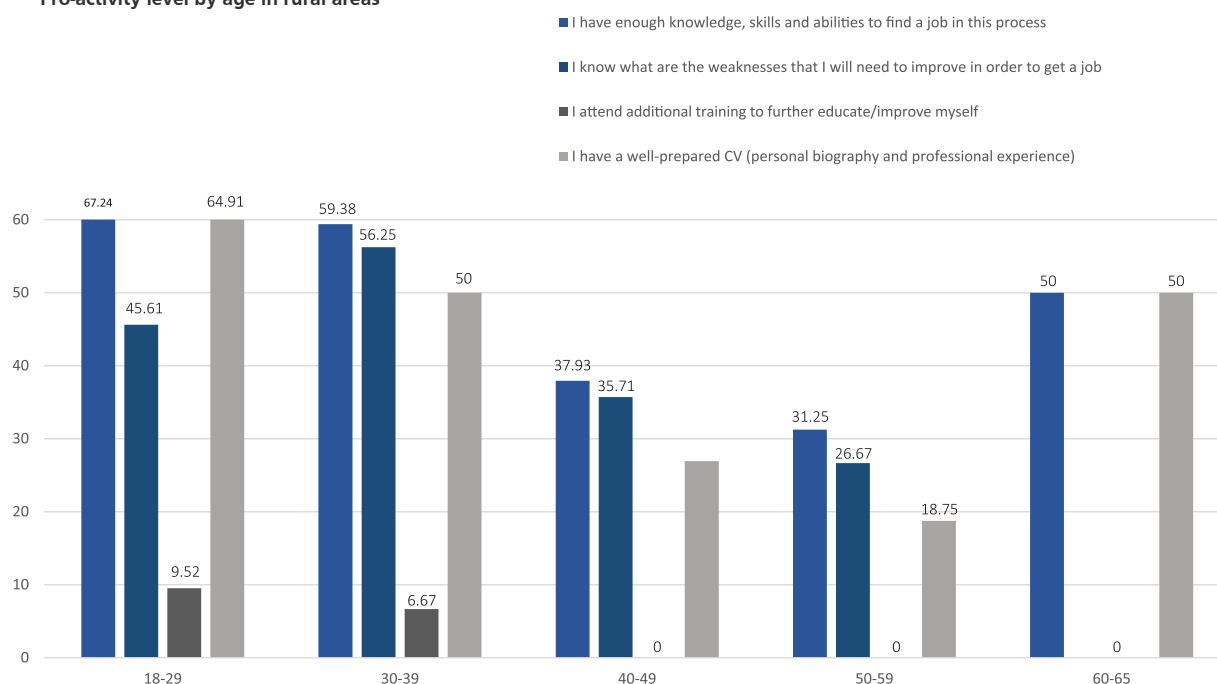
Figure 73:

**Proactivity level by age in urban areas**

In rural areas, the situation seems to be slightly different than in urban areas, with women aged 18-29 being most prepared for a job search. A total of 67.4% of women aged 18-29 claim to have enough knowledge, skills, and abilities to find a job in the profession, followed by 58.3% of women aged 30-39, by those aged 60-65 (50%), followed by women aged 40-49 (37.9%) and finally those aged 50-59 (31.25%). However, women of the age group 30-39 lead in knowing their weaknesses and are ready to improve in order to find a job (56.25%). They are followed by women aged 18-29 (46%), those aged 40-49 (38%), and finally, those aged 50-59 (28%).

A symbolic number of women go to additional training to enhance their skills, with those aged 18-29 being in lead with 9.5% attending training, followed by women of the age 30-29 (6.2%). Women of the ages 40-65 do not attend any work-related training. Most women of the age 18-29 declare they have a well-prepared CV (64.9%), followed by women of the age 30-39 and 60-65 (50%) and finally women aged 40-49 (26.5%) and those aged 50-59 (18.75%).

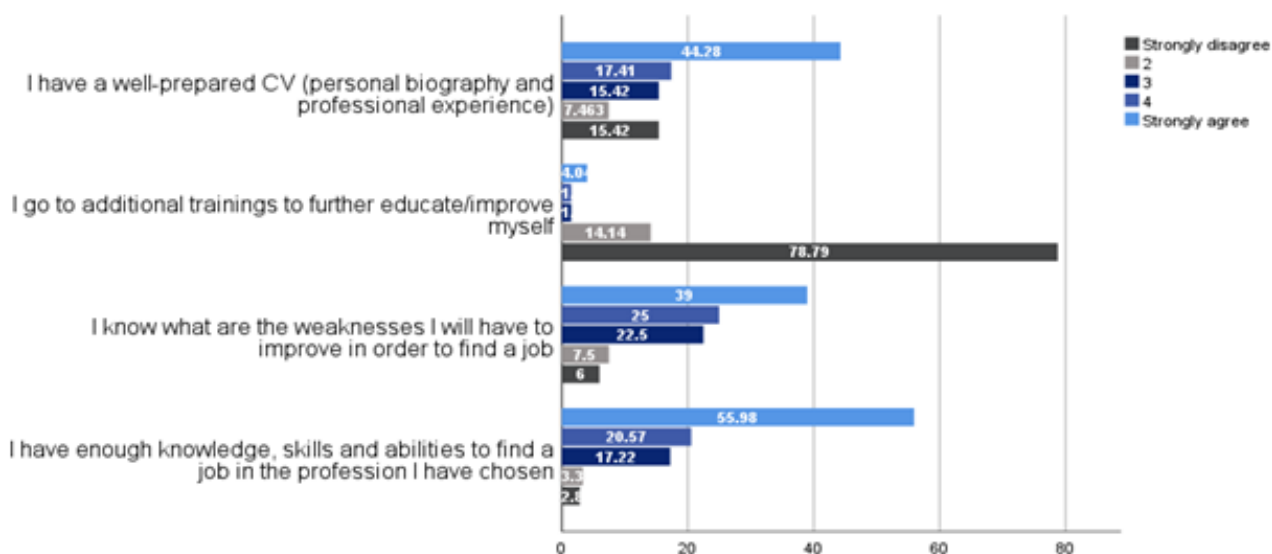
Figure 74:  
Pro-activity level by age in rural areas



As far as self-perception of proactivity in job seeking is concerned, 44.28% strongly agree they have a well-prepared CV and good professional background, and 17.1% agree to this claim. Only 5% go to additional training to enhance their professional capacities, while 64% strongly

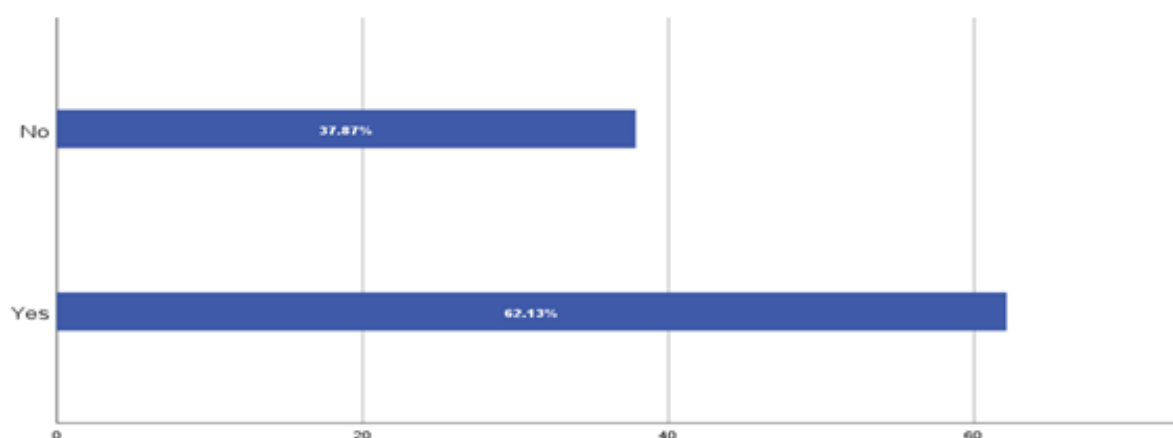
agree that they know their weaknesses and are ready to improve in order to find a job. Finally, 55.98% strongly agree and 20.57% agree that their knowledge, skills and abilities are sufficient to find a job.

Figure 75:  
Self-perception of proactivity in job seeking.



Most women (62.1%) are ready to invest (in terms of finances and time) in further education and training, in contrast to 37.57% who are not ready for such investment.

Figure 76:  
Readiness to invest in further education.



Most women believe that there are no sufficient training opportunities in Kosovo (39.41%), followed by those that have no knowledge about this (31.78%), and finally,

those women that think there are many training opportunities in Kosovo (28.81%).

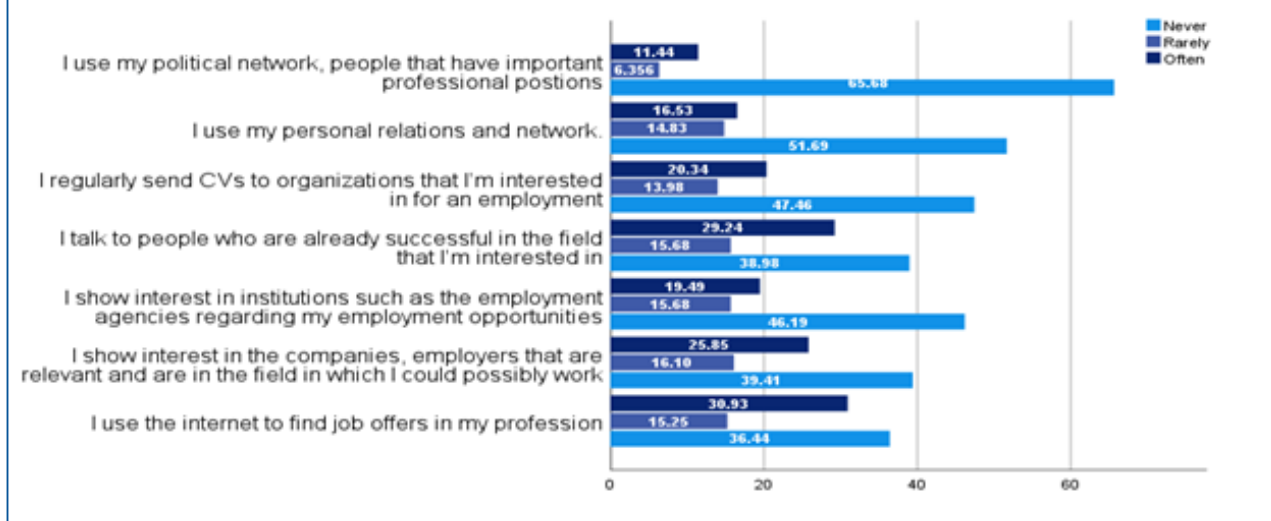
Figure 77:  
Perception about training opportunities



Only 11.44% of respondents use political connections to find a job, whereas 16.53% use their personal relations and network. A total of 20.34% send their CV-s to relevant organizations, and 29.24% seek help from people that are successful in the field. A total of 19.49% seek

jobs through employment agencies and 25.85% do so by showing interest in companies/employers that are relevant for their job hunt. Most women (30.53%) use the internet to seek jobs in their profession.

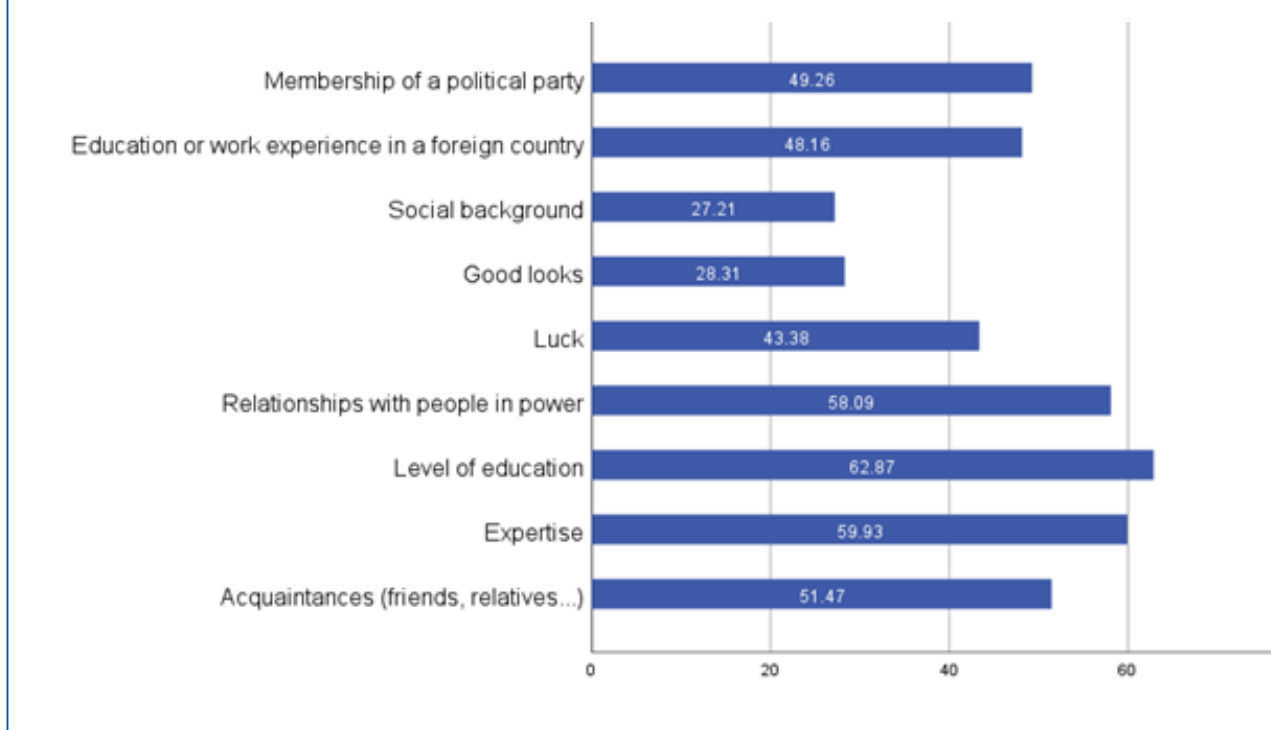
Figure 78:  
Resources used to find a job



In terms of factors that enable easier employment, respondents have identified the following three top merit based and non-merit-based factors: the level of education (62.87%), followed by expertise (59.93%), and relationships with people in power (58.1%). The rest of factors

include acquaintances (family and friends) (51.47%), membership in a political party (49.26%), international educational or working experience (49.16%), luck (43.38%), appearance (28.31%), and social background (27.21%).

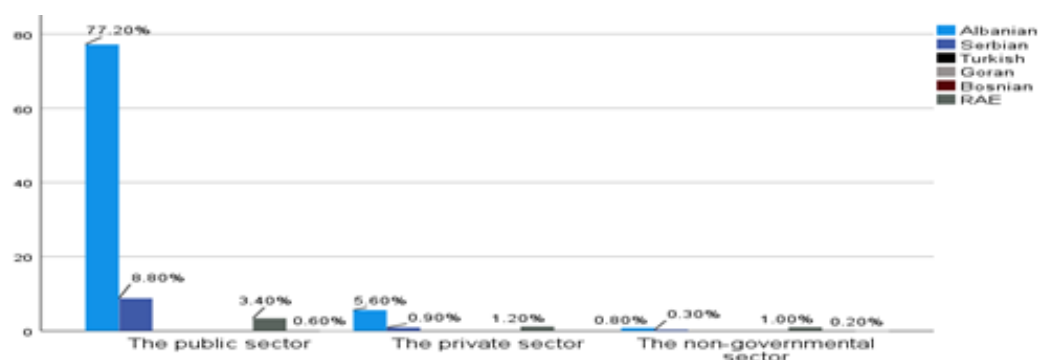
Figure 79:  
Important factors in finding a job



A total of 77.2% of Kosovo Albanian women consider the public sector as the most suitable workplace for women, followed by 5.6% who opt for the private sector

and 0.8% opt for the non-governmental sector. 8.8% of Kosovo Serbian women would prefer the public sector, followed by 0.9% who would prefer the private sector.

Figure 80:  
Most suitable employment sector



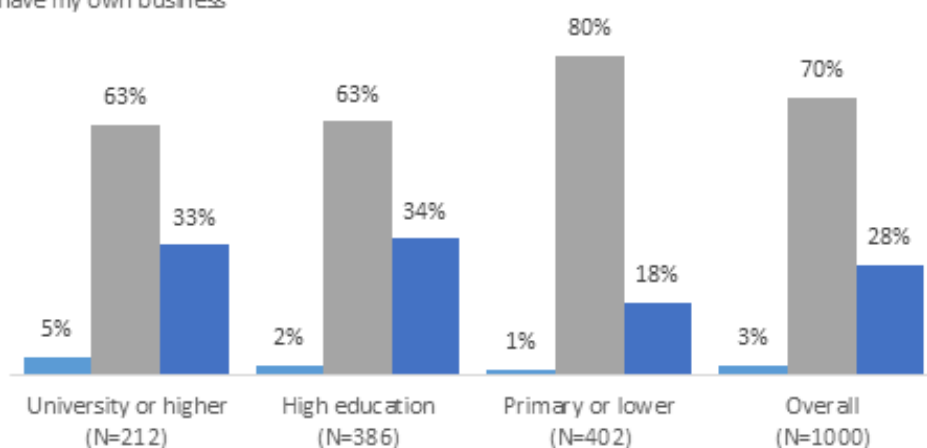
## 5.6 SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The percentage of women who would start their own business is low (28%). Only 3% of respondents have reported to already own a business. Women with higher ed-

ucation (34%) are more willing to start their own business than women with a primary and lower level of education.

Figure 81:  
Willingness to start a business by education level

■ Yes ■ No ■ I already have my own business



Most respondents would start or have started a business to improve the family's financial status (79.49%), followed by those who want financial independence (76.07%), those who want to improve their financial situation (75.21%) and those who want to increase employment and who want to have freedom and independence in their ap-

proach towards their job (71.79%). Other reasons why respondents would or have opened a business include those that want to make use of their skills, experience, and ideas (66.67%) and those who open a private business see this as a personal challenge (55.56%).

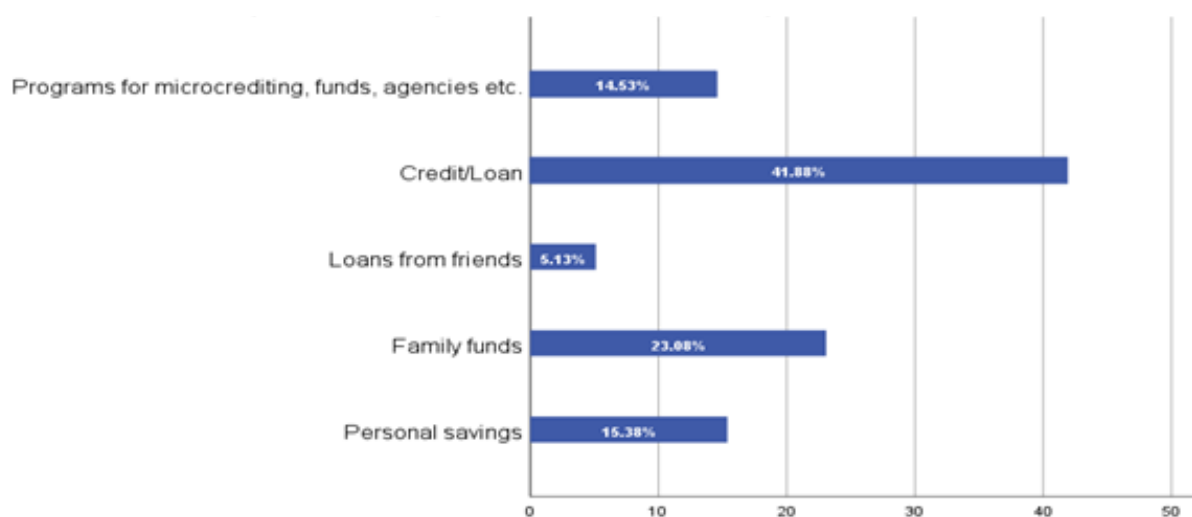
Figure 82:  
Reasons for starting a business.



Respondents were also asked how they would finance their business if they would start one. Most respondents (49.88%) would finance their business through a bank loan,

followed by use of family funds (23.08%), personal savings (15.38%), programs from micro-credit funds and agencies (14.53%) and least of all, loans from friends (5.13%).

Figure 83:  
Financing own business

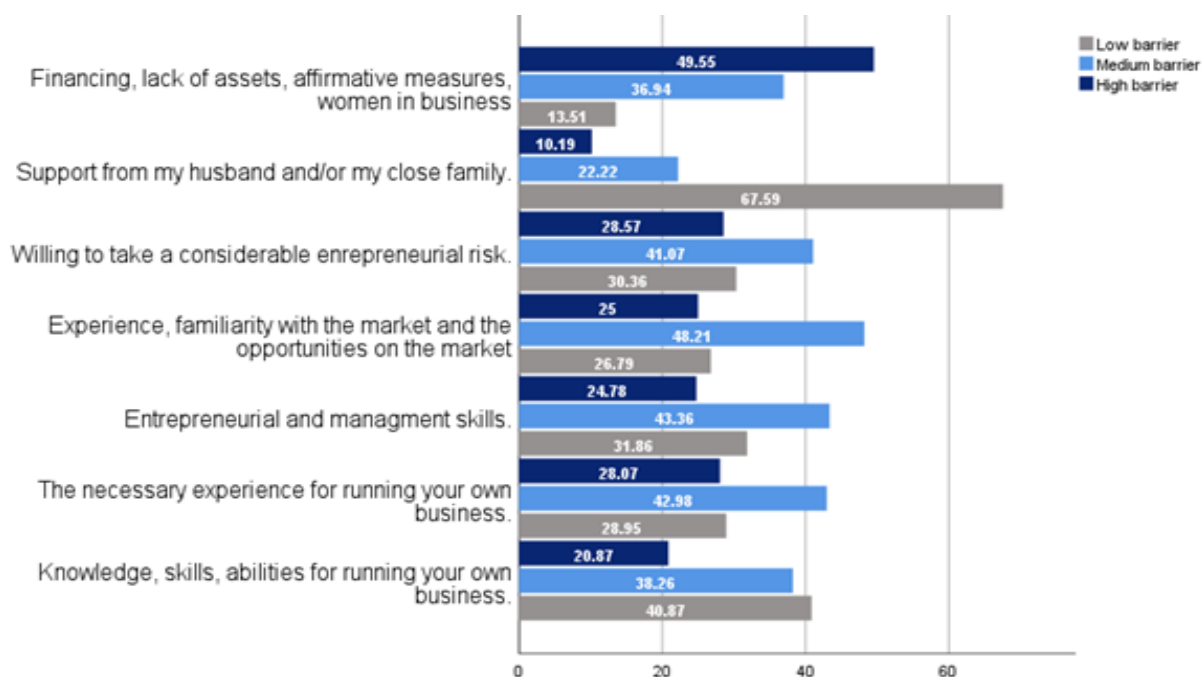


When asked to rank the barriers they anticipate to start-ing own business, the highest-risk barrier identified was the lack of financing, and assets, as well as lack of affirmative measures for women in business (49.55%), followed by lack of willingness to take entrepreneurial risk (28.57%); lack of experience (28.07%), lack of entrepreneurial ex-

perience and unfamiliarity with the markets (25%), lack of entrepreneurial and management skills (24.78%) and finally, lack of knowledge, skills, abilities for running their own business (20.87%). It is worth noting that lack of support by the husband and close family was identified as the lowest high-risk barrier for starting a business (10.19%).



Figure 84:  
Barriers to starting a business



## 5.7 SITUATION IN EDUCATION

Participation in primary and secondary education in Kosovo is high at 100% for primary, 91% for lower secondary and 79.6% for upper secondary (Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, 2022). There is a 3.4% drop out rate in obligatory education applying to both girls and boys. There is low participation in early education preschool for five-year-old children at 89% and for 3-5 years old children at 37%. According to the same data, 57% of students in gymnasiums are women and 42% in VET education are men. The ASK data also shows higher enrolment rates in bachelor, master and doctoral level and graduation rates for women than men (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2022).

Respondents in this study were asked about their views of education as women. In this section general views about

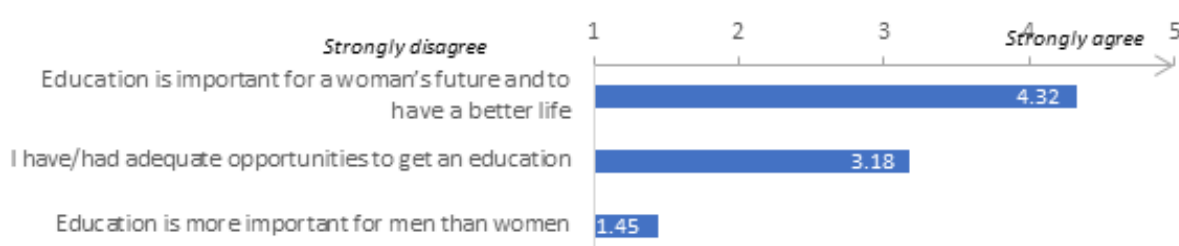
education, education experience and values, and roles the education system promotes, are analyzed.

## 5.8. ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION

To investigate general views on education, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on the scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The highest level of agreement was expressed for the statement, "education is important for a woman's future and to have a better life" (m 4.32) with no statistical difference in terms of place of residence, education level, age, and financial situation.

Figure 85:  
Views on education



A total of 60.3% strongly agreed and 20% agreed that education is important for a woman's future and to have a better life. A tiny fraction of women strongly disagreed with this statement (6.1%) whereas 13.6% were neutral in their responses. There is a slight difference regarding ethnicity where Albanian women have a lower agreement mean (m3.2) in comparison to Serb and RAE women (m.4.2). Data disaggregated by place of residence shows that women living in rural areas disagree less (1.6) with the statement that education is more important for men, than for women, than women living in urban areas (1.2).

Data disaggregated by level of education shows that the less educated respondents are, the less they disagree with this statement and vice-versa, the more respondents are educated, the more they disagree with this statement. For example, respondents with a primary or lower level of education record a value of 1.8, whereas the value for respondents with high education is 1.3, and the value for respondents with a university or higher degree is 1.2.

Regarding the statement, "I had adequate opportunities to get an education" (m 3.18), urban women have had slightly more adequate opportunities to get an education (m3.39) than rural women (m3.06). Data disaggregated by age show that most adequate opportunities to get an

education were enjoyed by women aged 60-65 (32%), followed by those aged 50-59 (27.2%), those aged 40-49 (20.4%), those aged 30-39 (13.6%) and finally, those aged 18-29 (6.8%). This shows a decline in satisfaction with education opportunities among younger generations. A total of 7.64% of those who have completed a master's degree have said that they have had adequate opportunities for education. Approximately 27.07% of those who have graduated said the same, followed by 2.24% of those with professional education, 41.08% with high school, 12.74% of those who have completed primary education, 3.50% who have not completed primary education, and 5.3% who have no education. Ethnically disaggregated data show that most adequate opportunities for education were enjoyed by Kosovo Albanian women (84%), followed by Kosovo Serb women (10.4%), and Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian women (4.8%).

Data disaggregated by the financial situation of respondents highlights the following trend: 37.6% of those who can afford basic goods but need to save have had adequate educational opportunities, followed by those who can afford basic goods, but cannot save for the future (28.8%), those who can hardly afford to buy basic goods (16.4%), those who can afford everything and are able to save (14%) and finally those who cannot afford to buy basic goods (3.7%).

Figure 86:  
Educational views by ethnicity

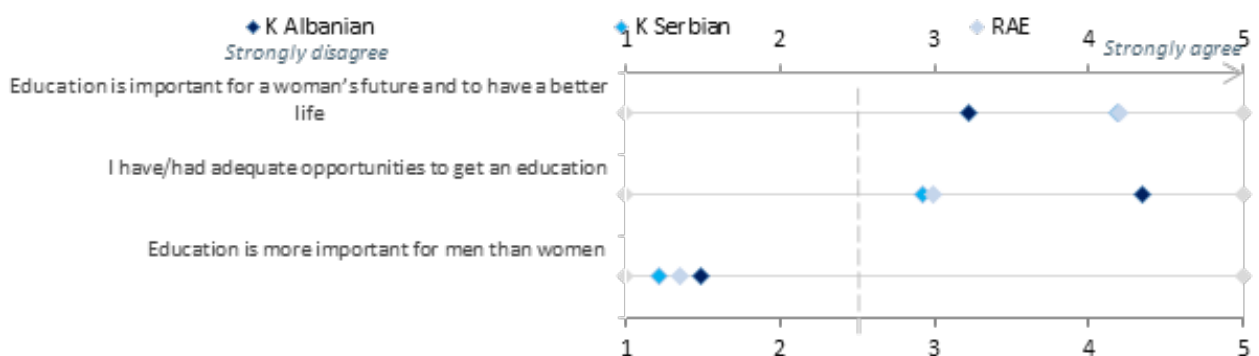


Figure 87:  
Views on education by place of residence

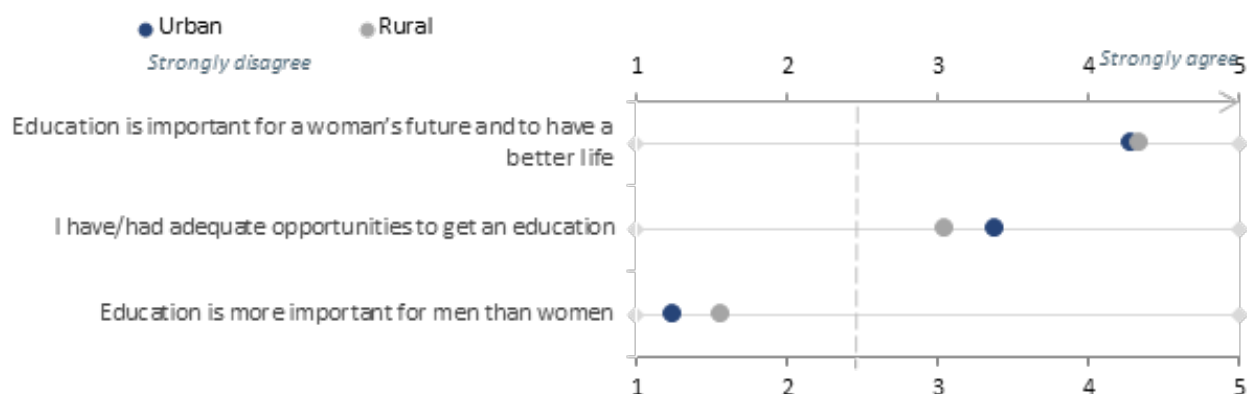


Figure 88:  
Views on Education by level of education

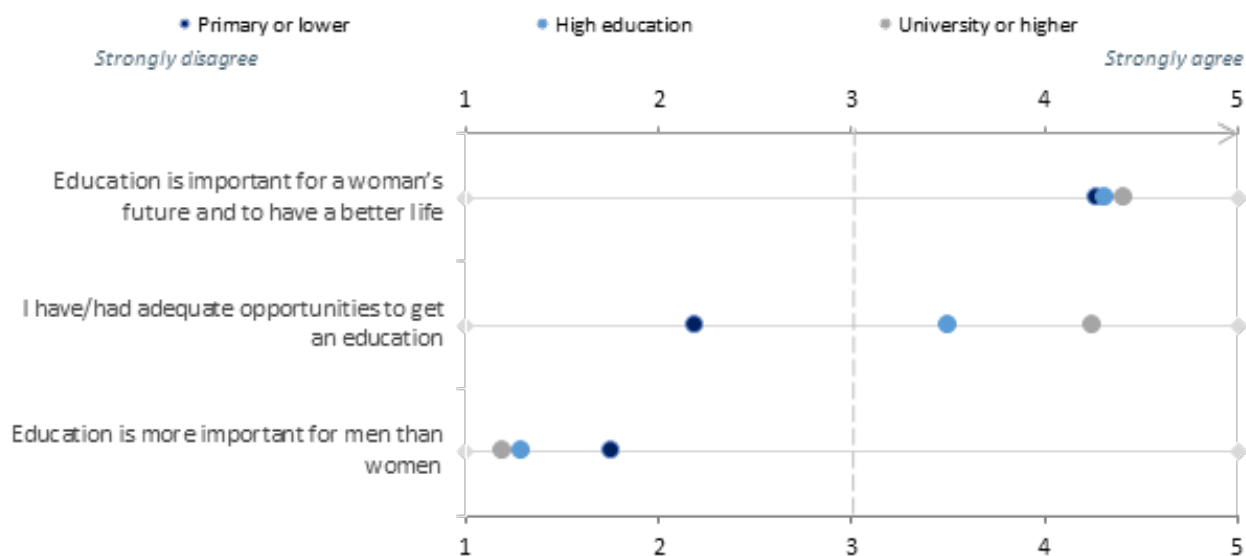
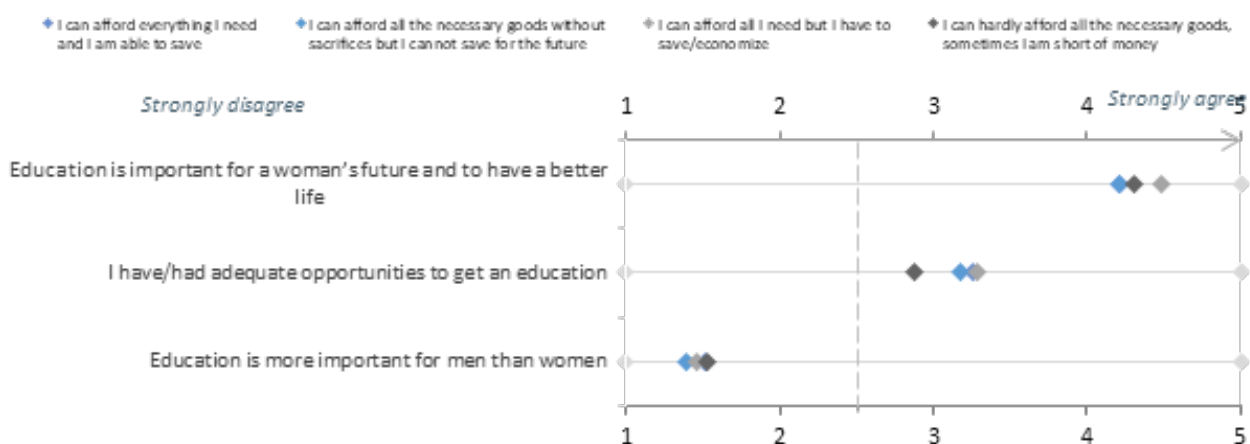
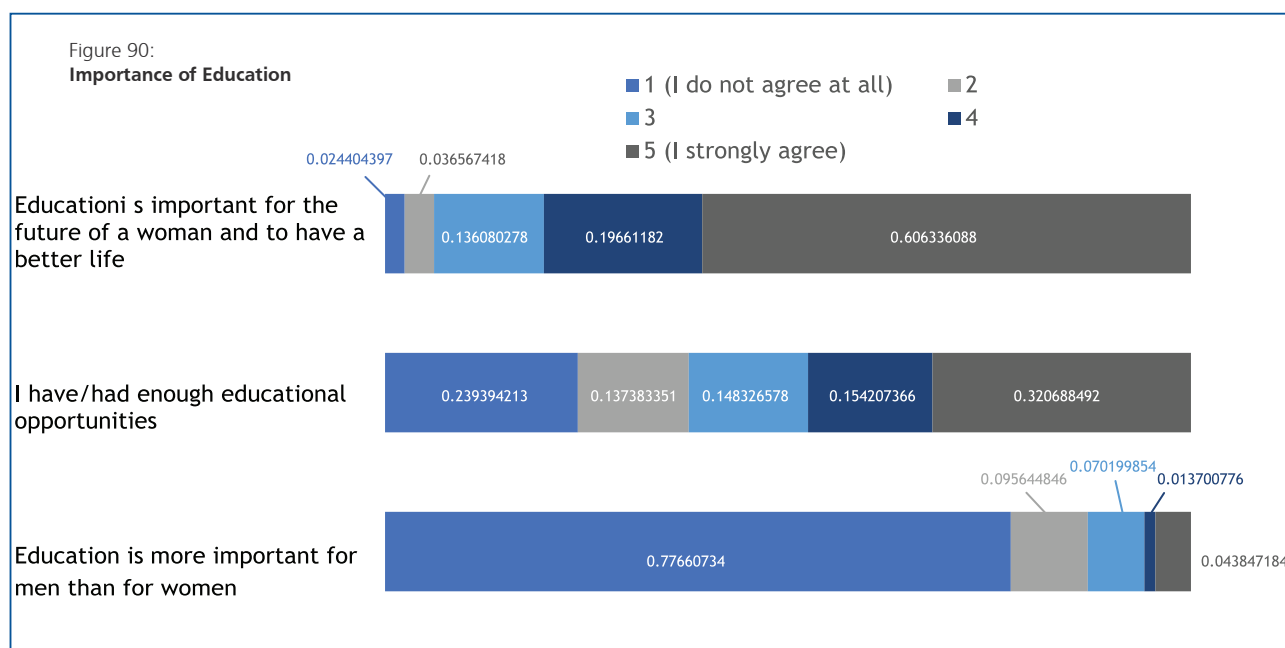


Figure 89:  
Educational Views by financial situation



Data disaggregated by financial situation show that all groups strongly disagree that education is more important for men than for women. The group that least disagrees with this statement is the one that can barely

afford all necessary goods and are sometime short of money ( $m=1.55$ ), while the group that mostly disagrees with this statement is the group that can afford all necessary goods but cannot save for the future (1.4).



## 5.9 WHAT DOES THE EDUCATION SYSTEM TEACH ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN?

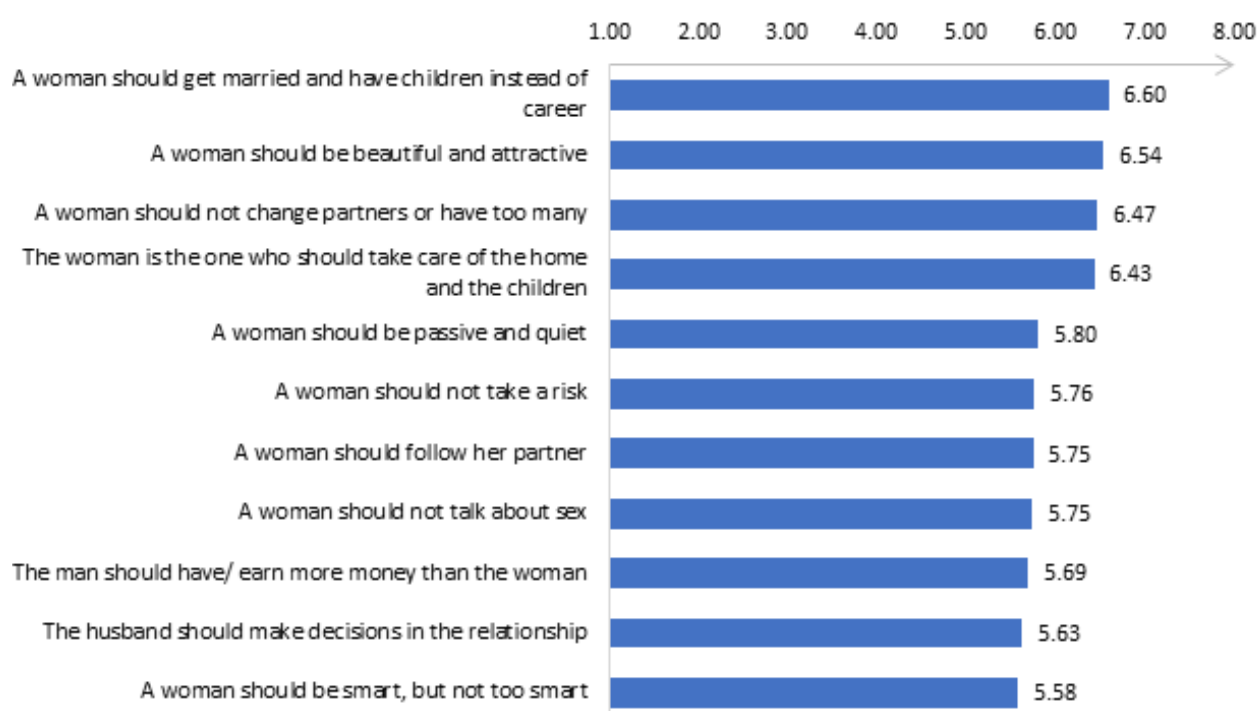
The education system plays an important role in forming values and practices in society. The most direct forms of influence are the curriculum, textbooks, and teaching practices. The curriculum is defined as “a selection from the culture of the society” where knowledge, attitudes, values, and other important aspects of social life are selected by decision makers to be transmitted to future generations (Lawton, 1975, p. 7).

The Kosovo Curriculum clearly addresses the human rights approach including gender equality; however, textbooks and teaching methodologies and practices are considered the main factor in promoting patriarchal values. For example, an analysis of textbooks by the Centre for Gender Equality identified stereotyping practices in all actors engaged in textbook writing including authors, illustrators,

reviewers and ministry officials, arguing that textbooks as the main source for teachers have a direct impact on what messages are transmitted to the population. Similarly, one of the main concerns regarding the implementation of the curriculum are teaching practices over reliant on textbooks.

Women in this study were asked what kind of messages were imposed on them during their formal education. They were presented with 11 statements containing stereotypes about women asking them to rate the dominance of the statement on 1-3 scale where 1 is not dominant at all, 2 is moderately dominant and 3 is very dominant. The results are presented showing the ranking of the most dominant messages reported by women.

Figure 91:  
Messages imposed by the educational institutions Friedman Mean Rank



The most dominant message imposed was that “women should get married and have children instead of a career” (45% of women rated the statement as very dominant). There is a significant difference shown by age with 62% of those aged above 54 (highest rate) compared to 32%

of those aged 18-29 (lowest rate). Primary educated women have reported hearing this message more (56%) compared to women with secondary education (43%) and women with higher education (29%).

Figure 92:  
A woman should get married and have children instead of career by age

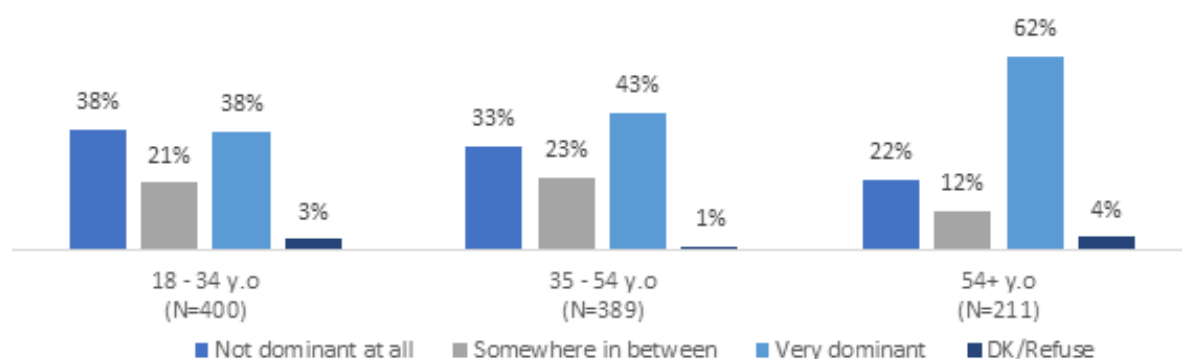
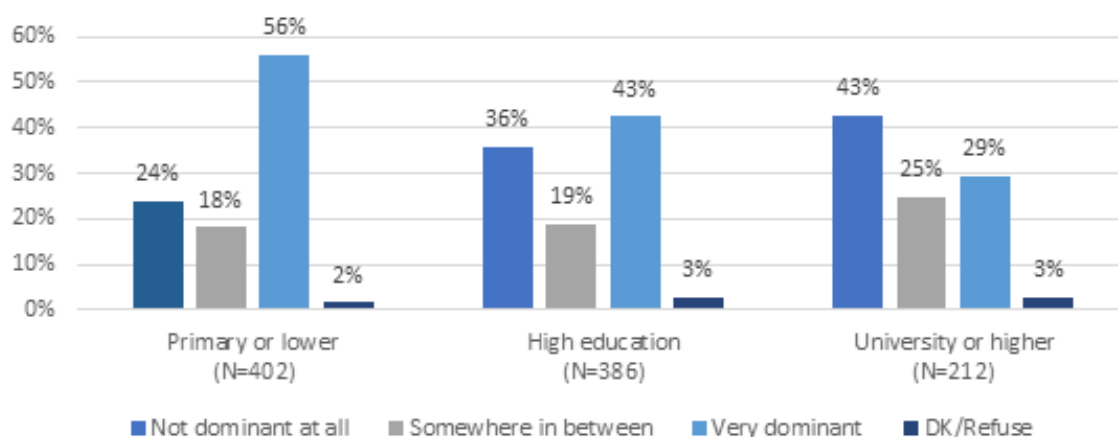


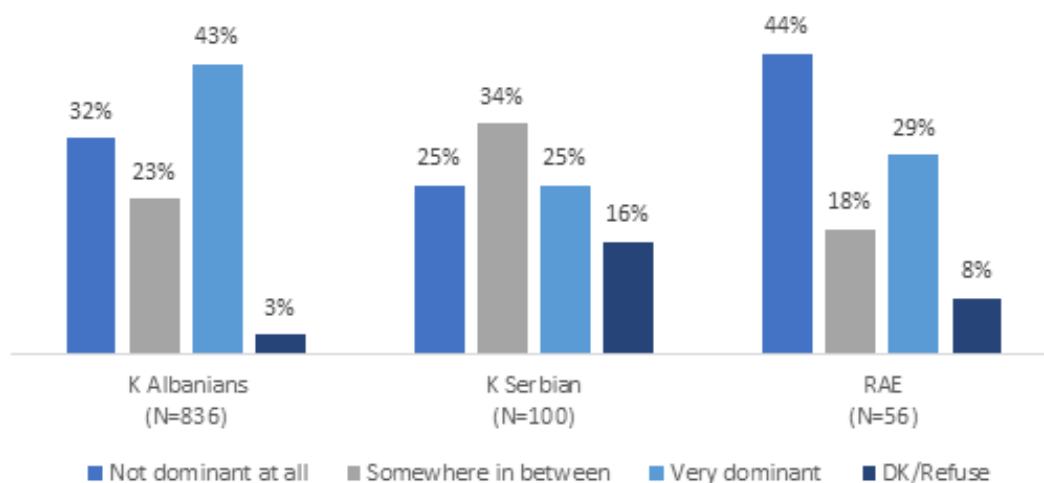
Figure 93:

**A woman should get married and have children instead of career by level of education**

The second most dominant message is “a woman should be beautiful and attractive” (40% reported the statement to be dominant) and “the women is the one who should take care of home and children” (39%). Statistical

difference was shown by ethnicity, with 43% of Kosovo Albanians saying this was very dominant message (highest rate) compared to other ethnicities Kosovo RAE (29%), Kosovo Serbs (25%).

Figure 94:

**Dominant messages by ethnic groups**

The third message was “women should not change partners” (39% said this was very dominant and 21% somewhat dominant). Women of the age

group 54+, reported to hear this message at the highest rate (58%) compared to other age groups.

Figure 95:  
A woman should not change partners or have too many, by age

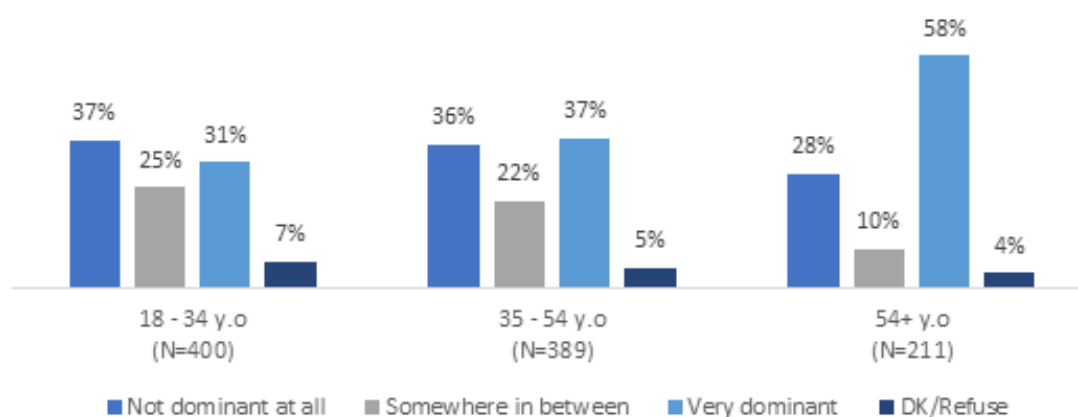
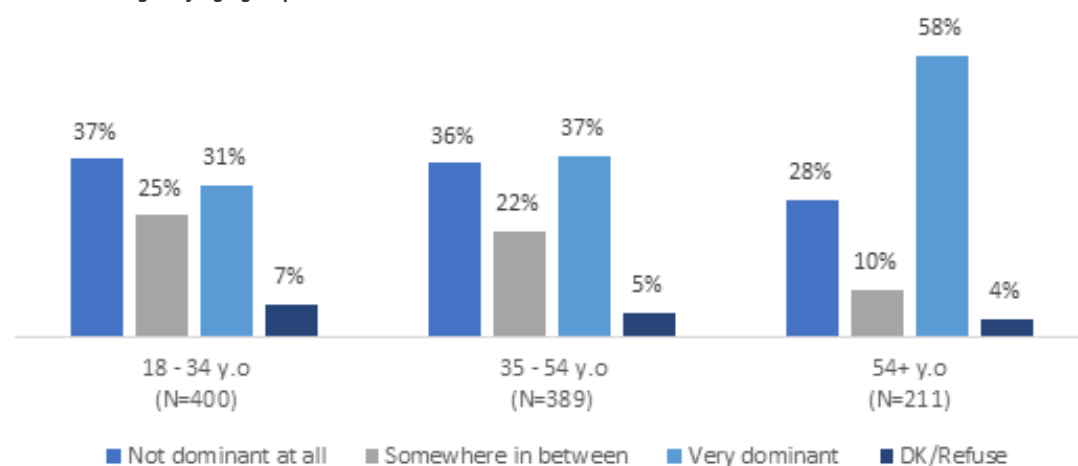


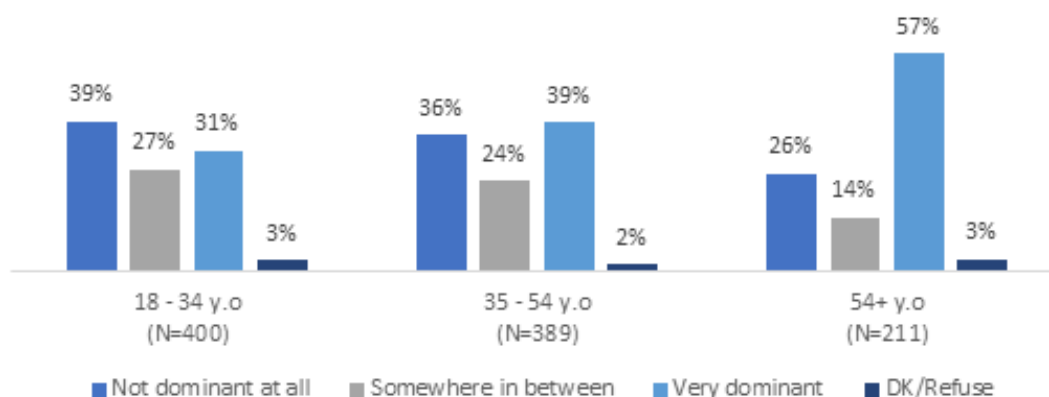
Figure 96:  
Dominant messages by age group



The fourth is, "the women should take care of the home and children", where 39% of women said this was a very dominant message and 23% of women said this was a somewhat dominant message.

A statistical difference is observed for women aged above 54 (57%) and women with primary education (53%) compared to other age groups and education levels.

Figure 97:

**The woman is the one who should take care of the home and the children, by age**

The fifth message is, “women should be passive and quiet” and for 32% of women this was a very dominant message. Statistical difference by age and ethnicity were observed where women of the age group 54+ report hearing

this message at higher rate (47%), compared to other age groups 18-34 (25%) and 35-54 (26%). Kosovo Albanians report higher rates for this message (34%) compared to Kosovo Serbs (26%) and Kosovo RAE (20%).

Figure 98:

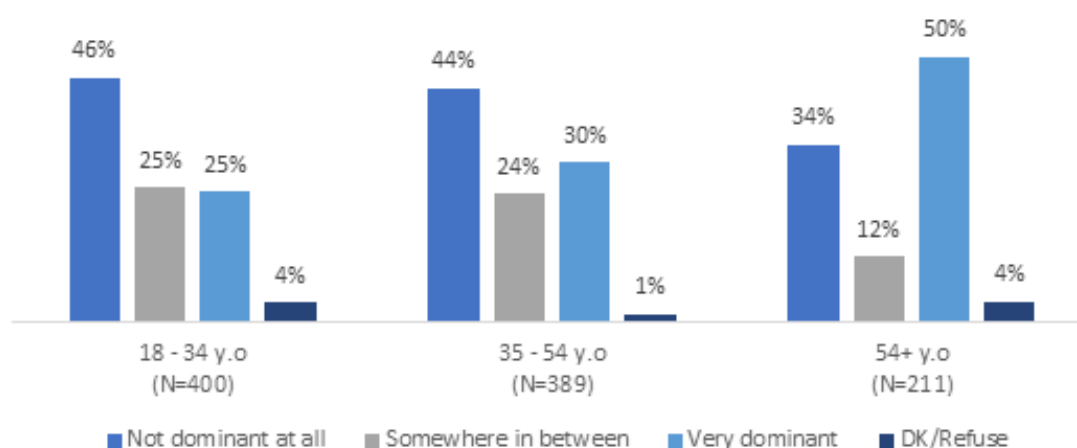
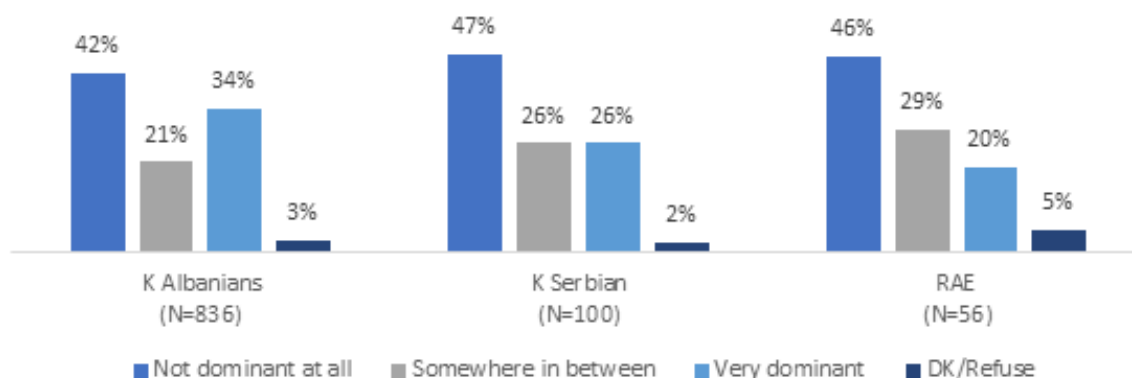
**A woman should be passive and quiet, by age**

Figure 99:

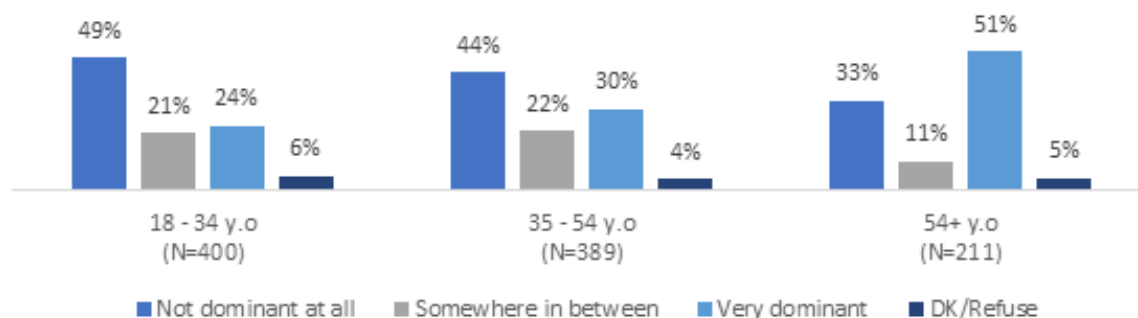
**A woman should be passive and quiet, by ethnicity**



The sixth message was “women should not take risks” and 32% of women reported the message to be very dominant. The statistical difference is observed ac

cording to age where women of the age group 54+ report this message as very dominant (51%) compared to other age groups.

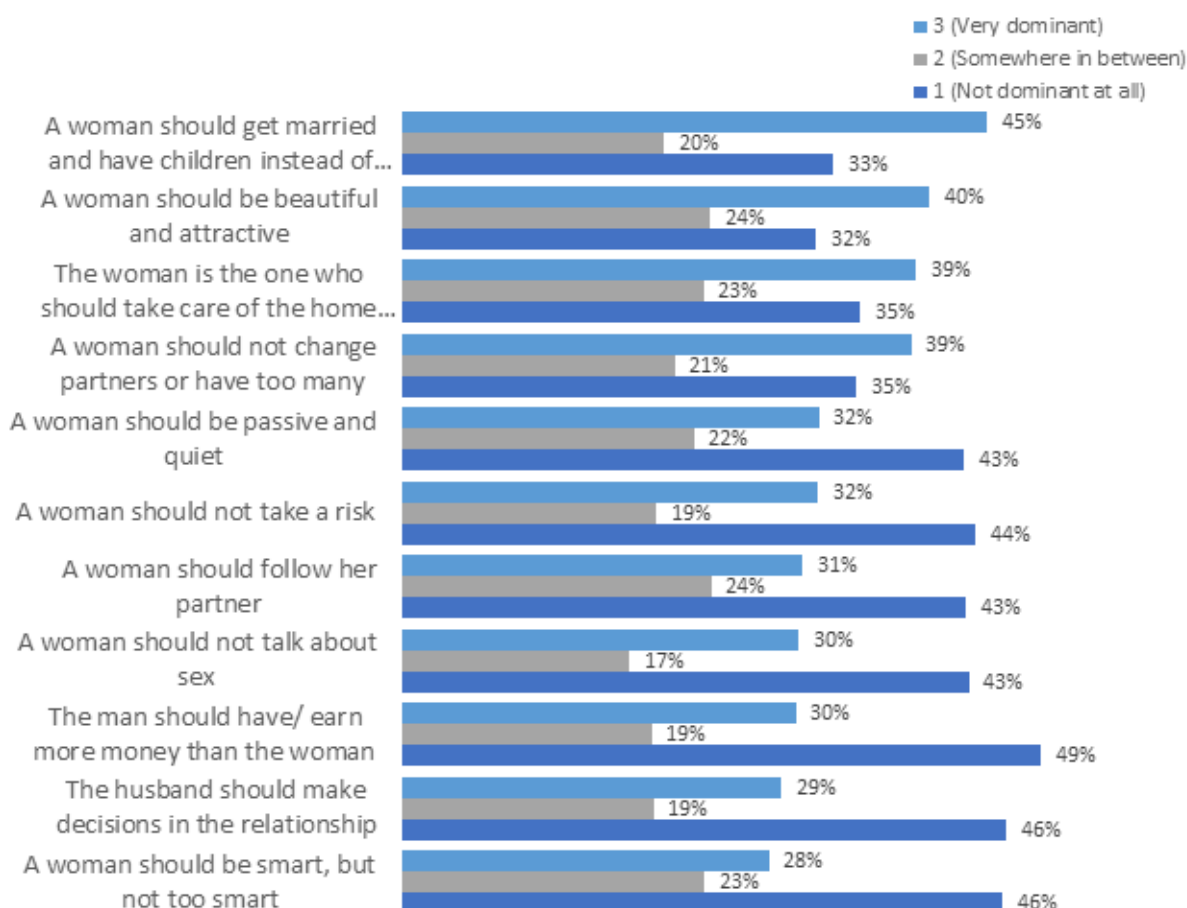
Figure 100:  
**A woman should not take a risk, by age**



A total of 30% of women were told that they should not talk about sex, whereas the least dominant characteristic (49%) is that men should have/earn more money than women. For 46% of women, the message that men should make decisions in the relationship was not a dom

inant attitude encouraged, while for 29% it was a very dominant message. Finally, only 28% of women believe that the attitude that a woman should be smart but not too smart was an attitude encouraged by the education system, versus 46% who do not think that this was a dominant message at all.

Figure 101:  
**Imposed messages during formal education.**



## CONCLUSIONS

- Only **24%** of women participating in the survey are working (21% employed, 2% self-employed and 1% freelance), while the rest of participants are unemployed (15% unemployed, retired 10%, unable to work 1% and studying 12%).
- Women in this study generally show **positive attitudes** towards their workplace in terms of their treatment reporting no discrimination and moderate satisfaction with the salaries
- The vast majority of women in this study (**95 %**) **indicated they had never felt discriminated**
- Women reported **indifference towards salary satisfaction (40.25%)**, reporting no specific discrimination regarding payment in the public or private sector, but satisfaction with salaries was higher in Prishtina (m=5) compared to other regions (m=3)
- Women show **little trust** in seeking help regarding discrimination where more women (26.69%) would turn to no one, 18% would ask help from managers and 16% would turn to anti-discrimination commissions.
- Only 49.25% of women would like to advance to managerial positions, showing mostly **little interest** but with no specific reasons identified, and **disagreeing** that the **childcare duties prevent** them from getting higher positions.
- Women show **moderate readiness** for lifelong learning. 42.17% of women strongly agree and agree regarding their readiness, 35.8 % have no career plans for the next five years, 32.6 % have plans for their careers in the next five years, and 39% are not willing to make sacrifices for career progression.
- Looking at the job proactivity, 30.53 % use the internet to seek jobs, 25.85 % contact companies directly, 29% seek help from successful people, 19.49 % seek jobs through employment agencies and 11.44% use political connections.
- Women are **not informed** and **have not had access to training opportunities** offered in Kosovo. 39.41% believe there are not sufficient training opportunities, 31.78% have no information about training opportunities, but 62.1 % are ready to invest in further education and training.
- Only **6.26 % of women** have attended non formal education during the previous year.
- The three most important factors (out of 9) to finding a job are the level of education, (62.87%), expertise (59.93%) and relationship with people in power (58%)
- Women in general prefer to be employed in the public sector
- Only 28% of women express the **interest to own a business**, identifying the highest barriers as lack of finance and affirmative measures for women followed business, identifying the highest barriers as lack of finance and affirmative measures for women followed by lack of entrepreneurial skills lack of experience and lack of knowledge and skills.
- Women have **positive attitude towards education** with high agreement (m=4.32) that "education is important for one's future and better life" with a slight difference according to ethnicity with Albanian women reporting lower agreement (m=3.2) in comparison to Serbian and RAE women (m=4.2)
- Urban women had slightly more adequate education opportunities (m=3.6) compared to rural women (m=3.06) with increasing satisfaction with education opportunities among for older women.
- The formal education system continues to teach traditional roles and the three most commonly ranked messages are: **"women should be beautiful and attractive (40.02%)", "women should take care of home and children" (39.9%), "women should be passive and quiet" (32.1%)**
- Messages imposing traditional roles and values are mostly reported by younger women aged 18-29, and older women aged 60-65, showing the presence of message imposition in the current education system.
- The message that women must be beautiful and attractive is mostly reported by young women aged 18-29 (30.32%), followed by women aged 60-65 (20.45%)
- Similarly, the message that the woman should take care of the home and children, is most prevalent for younger women (age 18-29, 24.11%) and (older women (60-65, 22.84%) and for rural women (58%) 42% of women thought that women should be beautiful and attractive.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended to **improve statistics about women's employment** in general and their assignment to management positions and boards in the public and private sector.
- **Improve employment and career development** opportunities information targeting women
- Create **career counselling programs** targeting women
- Encourage **proactive behavior for job seeking** and career development
- Identify women for **career advancement training** including for positions of leadership and management
- Inform women about **discrimination and mechanisms of protection** against discrimination
- Provide **training for managers** and the anti-discrimination committee to promote anti-discrimination and handle discrimination cases
- Provide **mechanisms for free legal aid** regarding discrimination in the workplace
- **Monitor the women's employment quota** according to the Law on Gender Equality in all institutions

- Develop formal and non-formal education programmes targeting areas for women employment.
- **Earmark funding for business start-ups** established and owned by women.
- Provide **mentorship programmes** for women entrepreneurs.
- **Analyse curricula and textbooks** with specific methodology and approval mechanisms to avoid gender stereotyping.
- **Conduct further research** in education institutions regarding their gender equality policies and practices.
- **Introduce school projects** focusing on gender equality and prevention of gender-based stereotyping.



## 6.

## POLITICS AND PARTICIPATION

A fundamental precondition for gender quality and genuine democracy is women's participation in politics, which leads to direct engagement in public decision-making and ensures accountability. There are restrictions on women's leadership and political participation at local and global levels. They are underrepresented as voters and do not participate equally in democratic governance. The path for women to hold elected office has been attained through the efforts of collective work from organizations rather than individuals. For instance, women's social clubs have been established in the nineteenth century, and by the end of the century, there was an increase in women's groups for politics (Beckwith, 2000). Women's organizations have evolved lately focusing on women's gendered experiences, with the aim to raise awareness about women's rights, and support them to run for office.

In 2021, the Republic of Kosovo marked the beginning of a new chapter with parliamentary elections with one political party that won the majority in the Assembly. Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu, was the most voted politician in the history of Kosovo. Moreover, there is a record of 43 women representatives in the 120-seat National Assembly, which surpassed the gender quota of 30%. In addition, Atifete Jahjaga was the first woman to be elected as president in 2011. Then in 2013, a woman mayor Mimoza Kusari was elected in the municipality of Gjakova. Osmani-Sadriu was elected president by the parliament for a five year term. This shows the increasingly active role of women leaders in politics, despite the presence of gender inequality (Balcani & Transeuropa, 2002).

Even though Kosovo has had two women presidents so far, there remain issues to be addressed to increase women's participation in political and decision-making processes. Political parties still include women in the election list in order to meet quotas, rather than empower them as future leaders. Moreover, women are not satisfied with the hostile political environment and challenges related to access to finance and political support (NDI, 2021). Thus, more efforts should be taken for the democratic progress of modern society, increasing the number of women actors in public decision-making and policymaking.

### 6.1 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN'S EQUALITY

This study analyzes the perception of respondents on the status of women's equality in Kosovo, including the expression of their political views, interest in political issues and in general their awareness on gender equality legislation. The data shows that the confidence of women in influencing political processes in the country is very low. It may be that low levels of confidence or low participation in political parties are a never-ending cycle. Either low levels of confidence regarding their ability to influence politics hinder women from joining parties or very few women ever join political parties (e.g., because without infrastructure for child and elderly care, women do not have the time to volunteer in political parties), which may result in them having little confidence in their ability to influence politics. Political activity of women in Kosovo is very low among the interviewed respondents of this study, (3%), while 97% of them have declared that they are not politically active. Those numbers are concerning bearing in mind that the number of women getting elected to parliament without the need for a gender quota has increased. Voters are voting more for women candidates in national elections. In the 2022 national elections there were municipalities such as Kamenica and Gjilan where more than 42% of the total number of votes cast were for women candidates.

Regarding the level of activity based on political issues, very few women highlighted that they are interested or very interested in local politics (11%), followed by regional politics (9%), national politics (8%), Serbia politics (8%), politics in general (6%), EU politics (7%) and US politics (7%). That women's interest in local politics is greater compared to national politics or even to international politics, can be confirmed by the greater participation of women in local elections than national elections. Women's engagement in public affairs is in the margins of 30%. Our findings show that women are a bit more active in membership in non-governmental type of organizations, and less in political parties or even business associations. Membership of a political party has a low potential to increase, since in this study when we have asked respondents for their willingness to join political parties the number is very low (3%).

Figure 102:  
**Membership in organizations**

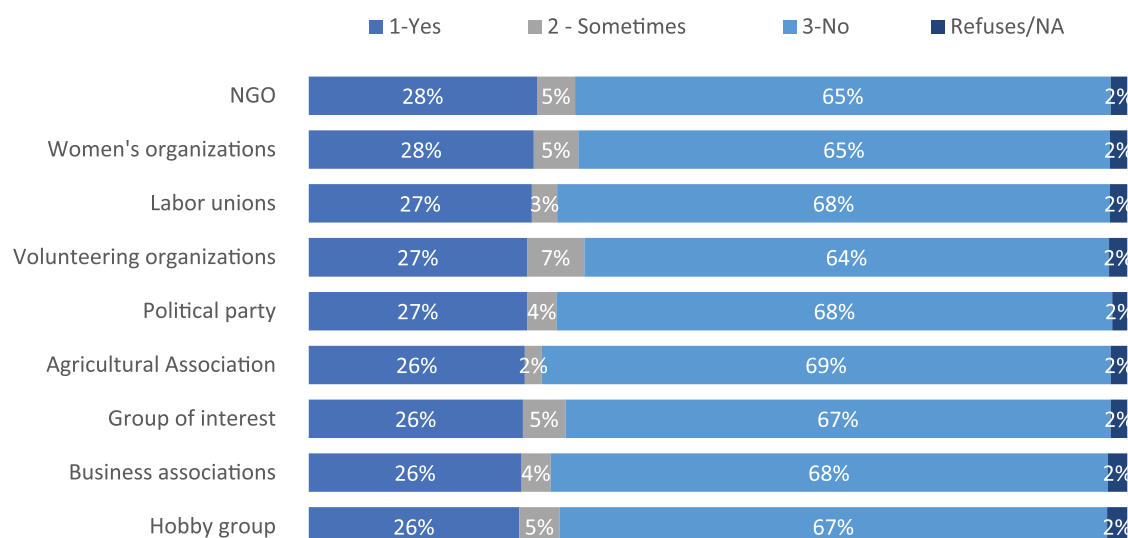
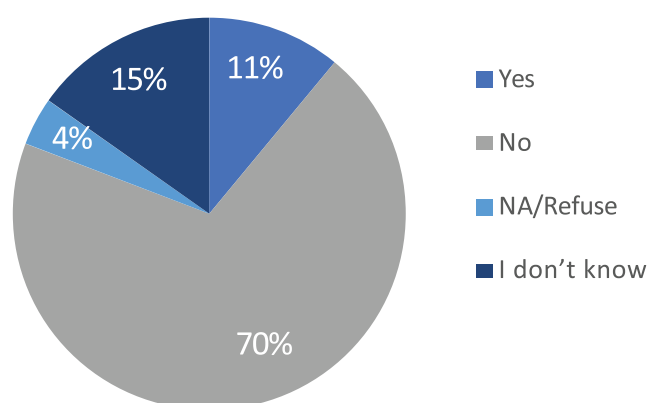


Figure 103:  
**Perception about own political views**

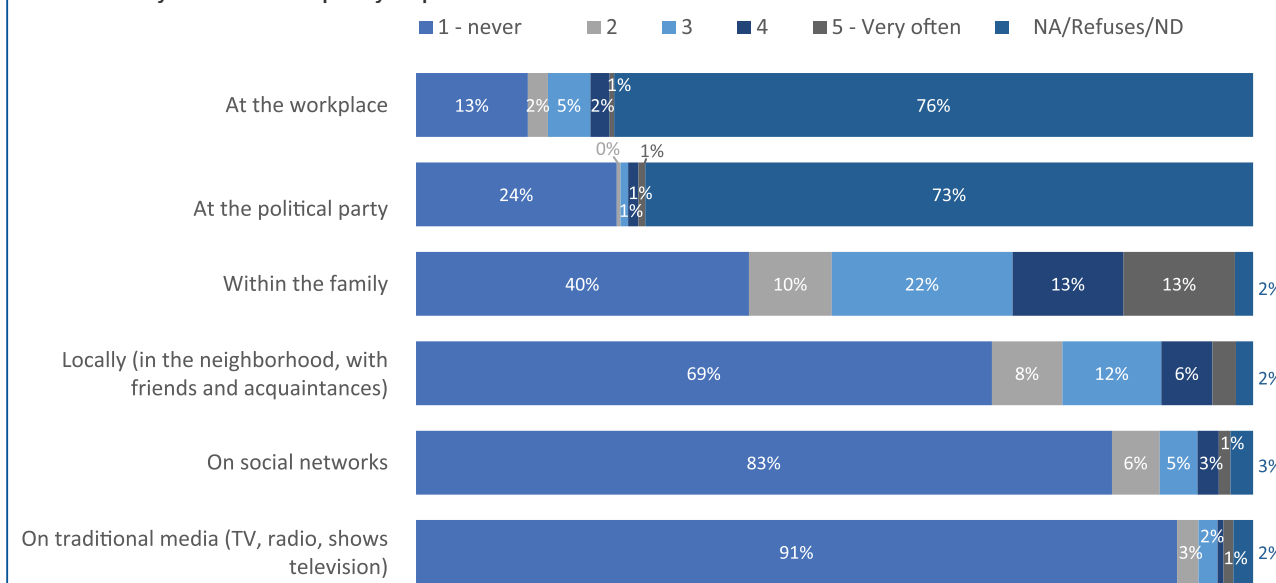


About 26% of women express their political views within the family, and then in the neighborhood (9%), with friends and acquaintances (9%), on social networks (4%), at the workplace (3%), at the political party (2%) and on traditional media, such as TV, radio, TV shows (2%). It is interesting to highlight that regarding the expression of political views in the workplace and in a political party, most respondents (between 73-78%) refused to answer

or said that it was not applicable. This data shows that women are more open about expressing their political views in close family circles

- where the fear of prejudice is less possible than in outside circles with larger audiences. This hesitation may be due to the fear of prejudice from others, or the high standard they set for themselves in order to present their political opinions publicly.

Figure 104:

**Where do you most often express your political views?**

Most women interviewed (70%) do not think that they can influence politics in their country by expressing their views. This result explains the low interest and expression of political views by women, as they don't believe that they can make a difference. Only 11% of women feel they should express political views as they can effectively influence politics. Findings on this question also might be read as an answer for the previous question, regarding women's hesitation to express their political opinion publicly, since they do not think that the expression of political views is an effective measure to influence politics.

The findings about awareness of the Law on Gender Equality are not surprising, since women living in urban areas are slightly more aware of the existence of such a law, compared to those living in rural areas, and similarly, those with a higher education are more aware than those with a lower education. A difference should be noted between being aware of the existence of such a law, as most women reported (72%) that they were aware, and having knowledge of what the legislation intends to regulate, as only less than half (42%) reported that they were familiar with the so-called "50/50" political platform. When we break down the data based on level of education, the data indicates that the higher the education, the higher the awareness about the existence of the Law on Gender Equality, 87% in the case of women with university degree or higher, 78% of those with higher education, and 58% of those with primary education or lower.

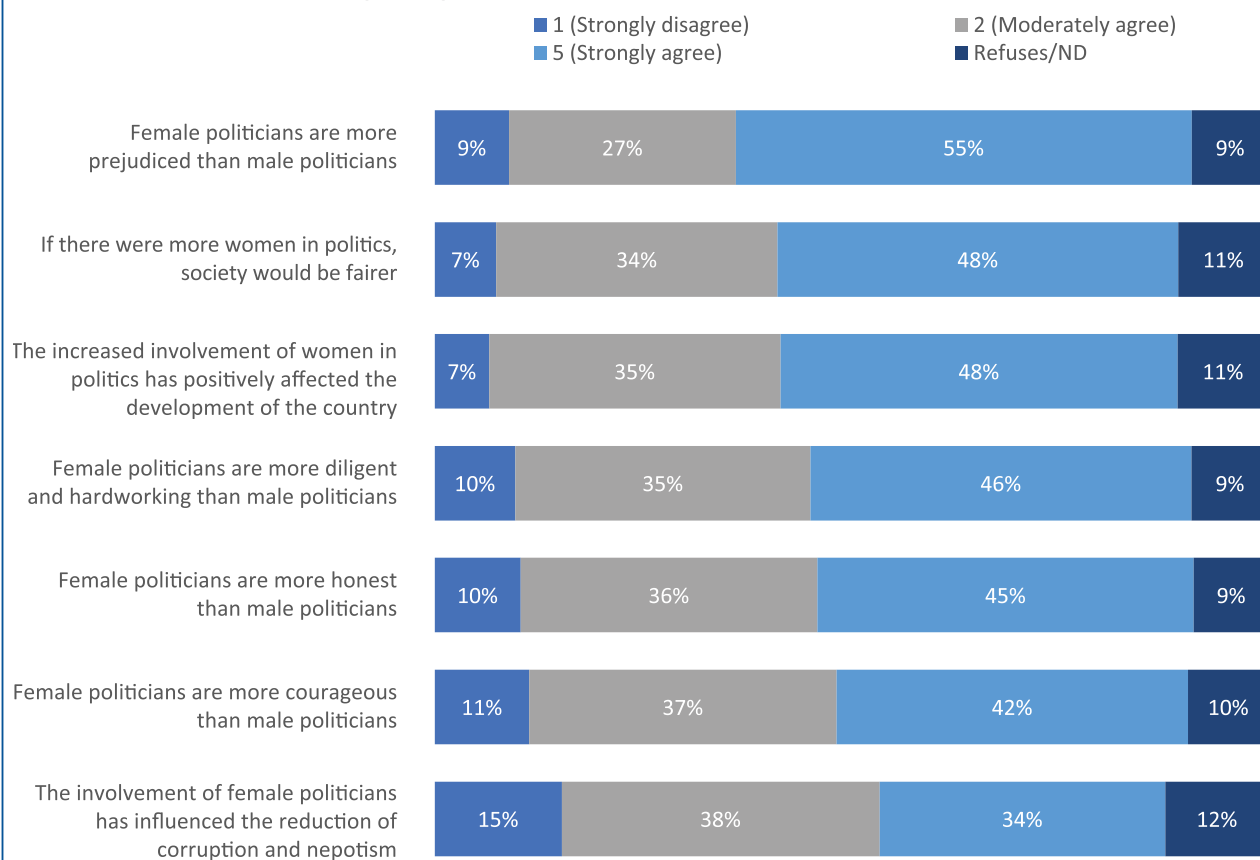
Regarding the assessment of the performance of women and men politicians, women reported that they

strongly agree with these statements:

- Women politicians are more prejudiced than men politicians (55%);
- If there were more women in politics, society would be fairer (48%);
- The increased involvement of women in politics has had a positive impact on the country's development (48%);
- Women politicians are more diligent and more hard-working than men politicians (46%);
- Women politicians are more honest than men politicians (45%);
- Women politicians are braver than men politicians (42%); and
- The involvement of female politicians has affected the reduction of corruption and nepotism (34%).

Our study shows an unfriendly environment for women who are involved in politics, since around two thirds of them think that women are more prejudiced than men politicians. But on the other hand, they believe that the greater involvement of women in politics would contribute to the creation of a fairer society and would have a greater impact on the development of the country. Even if the political environment turns out not to be favorable for women in politics, they believe that this environment can be improved by the greater involvement of women and this may serve to encourage institutions to undertake affirmative measures that enable greater involvement of women in politics.

Figure 105:

**Attitudes for women versus men political performance**

Even though the results of the assessment of the performance of women vs. men politicians are similar by region, women from urban areas reported that they tend to agree more than women in rural areas about each of these statements. When comparing women with different ed-

ucation levels, the results for the performance of women vs. men politician' is similar. The values are slightly higher in the case of more educated women compared to those who are less educated.

"I think there should be more involvement in order for women's interests to be represented at the national level, while participation is very small at the local level." (28, Mitrovica)

"In an ideal world, I wish there were no gender quotas at all. (...) There is a long way for us to reach at a point when we can say we're taking the quotas away." (Employed in NGO Sector)

"I think representation should not be limited to 30%, but it should be 50% because I think women are bolder in politics. And also, that we are less represented, we still need to increase the level of representation." (Health and Social Welfare Worker, Gjakova)

## 6.2 INTEREST IN POLITICS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

After the democratic level increase at the turn of the century, autocracies are slowly on the come-up with democratic backsliding happening even in the most established democracies. (Bertelsman Transformation Index, Polity IV, V-Dem etc.) Trust in institutions is decreasing. The more education citizens have, the less they trust institutions.

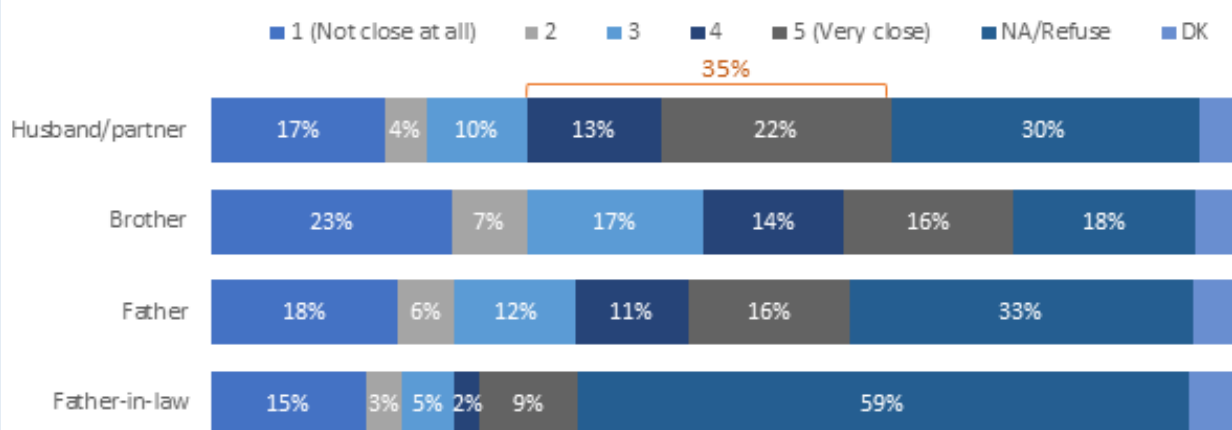
Cynicism towards politics is increasing, and political parties are not seen as attractive by young people for political engagement. Kosovo is no exception to these global trends. Our study shows the low level of political participation of women and the lack of willingness to join a political party. Women's political views and beliefs are closely shared



with men in their family. 35% of them reported close or very close political views and beliefs with their husband/partner, and about 21% reported not having close political views and beliefs. Similarly, 30% of women reported sharing close political views and beliefs with their brothers, while another 30% reported that they do not have close views and beliefs on politics. 27% of women

reported sharing close political views and beliefs with their father, while 24% said no. 11% reported close political views and beliefs with their father-in-law, while 18% reported that they do not have close views. 59% of women didn't answer or refused to answer the question about this statement.

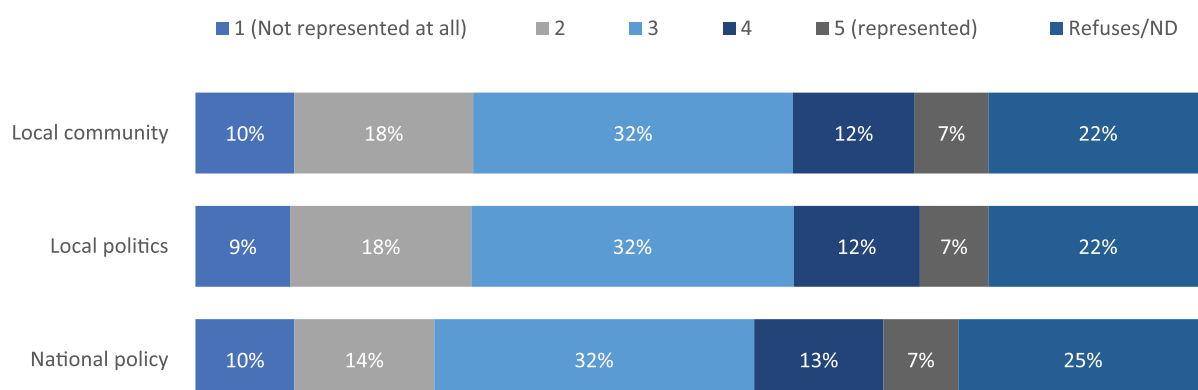
Figure 106:

**Political views compared to family members**

With regard to the representation of interests of women in the local community, local politics, and national politics, the results are not satisfactory. Only 19-20% of women reported that they are represented well, while 24-28% felt that their interests are not represented well. Those

findings are not surprising considering the low level of representation of women in local government and the lack of specific policies for women, as well as opportunities to cover the cost of projects for women by local authorities or communities.

Figure 107:

**Women interests represented in various levels**

The majority of the respondents (85%) believe that there should be more women in political positions, while 86% believe that there should be more women mayors in municipalities; 88% say the country should have a woman as prime minister, and 91% reported that they want a

woman as president. The findings indicate that there is strong support for the increased participation of women in politics. Support for women in local politics seems to be slightly lower compared to national politics, even though the electoral results of women are not satisfactory in local

elections compared to national elections. Since the declaration of independence in 2008, in 38 municipalities of Kosovo, only two women candidates have been elected, although 86% of respondents in our study said they support having more women as mayors of municipalities.

Regarding the election of the president of the country, it seems that having two women in that role has influenced levels of support.

Figure 108:  
**Attitudes about more women in senior positions**

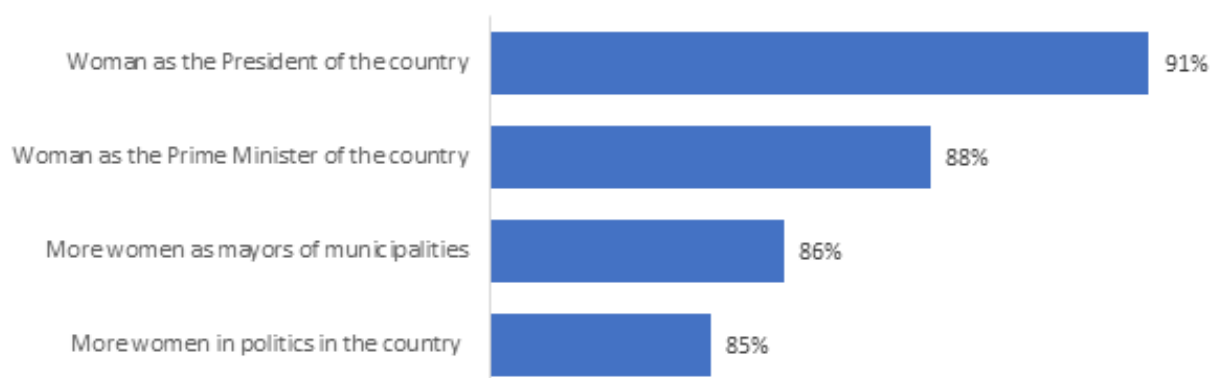
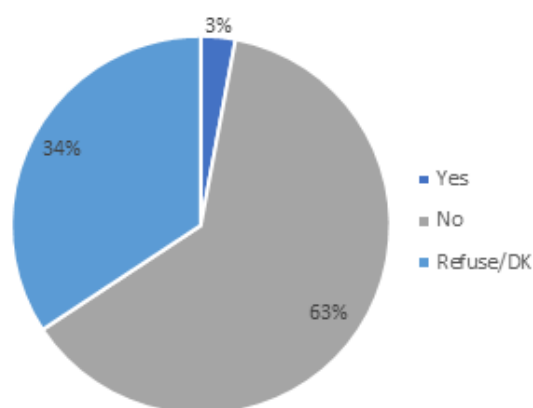


Figure 109:  
**If I become a member of political party.**



Women in the Republic of Kosovo show an extremely low level of motivation for political participation reflected in the findings that as many as 70% “do not bother with politics at all” and 16% are very rarely active. Only 1% of women reported a high level of political participation and 13% had a self-perception of moderate participatory performance. This indicates that there is a lack of participatory political culture and the feeling that they are not capable of making changes in their society.

Less than half of respondents (44%) reported that on average the increase in women’s participation in politics

has a positive impact on the development of the country, while 36% think that their participation matters or matters a lot, and lastly, 20% reported that it does not matter if they participate or not in politics.

The findings show that despite the strong belief that women’s participation in politics would have a positive development on the country, they are not participating in political life, which is a kind of abstention from the equal effort of men and women to develop the country.

Figure 110:  
Women's participation has positive impact

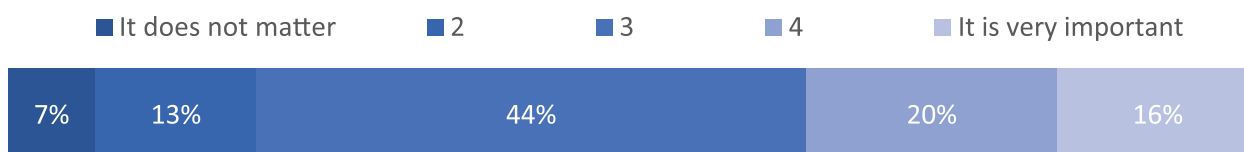


Figure 111:  
If i do become a member of a polical party, i will do it

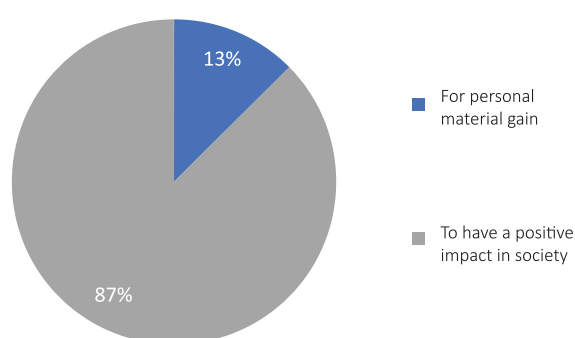
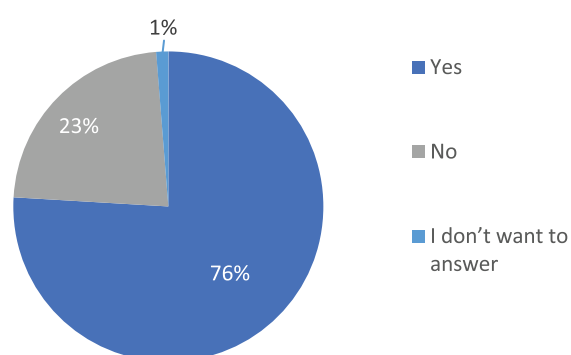


Figure 112:  
Vote in the last parliamentary elections



The majority of participants reported that the main reason why women politicians are involved in politics is because of their need to change society for the better, while only 13% believe that they are engaged for personal material gain. The findings are quite contrary to the general perception of politicians, who are seen more as people engaged in politics for the purpose of personal benefit rather than for the general good. This data is an additional indicator that confirms the attitude that

women are generally seen as less corrupt than men.

Only 17% of women reported that they would participate in a protest to show their disagreement with a certain policy. This indicates that women feel that they do not have the power to influence changes in policy development and are not ready to demonstrate their objection in a stronger form. According to this data, women are more likely to achieve their goals through softer methods.

Figure 113:  
Would you except a political position?

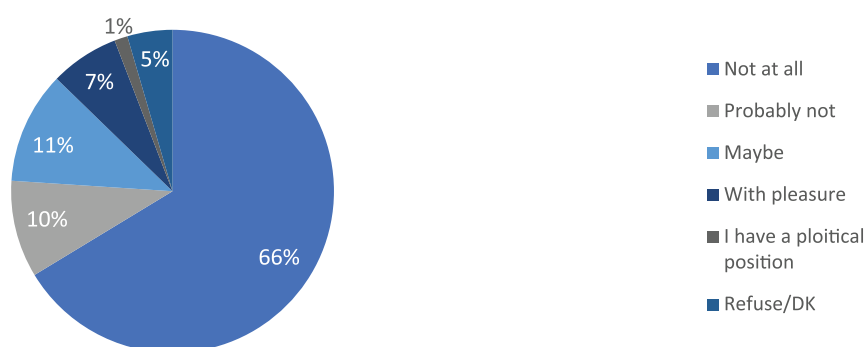
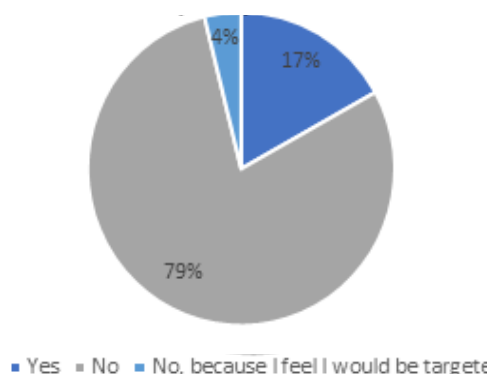


Figure 114:  
**Would you participate in protest to show your disagreement with a certain policy?**



Most women reported that if they became a member of a political party, they would do it to have a positive impact on society (87%), while only 13% of them reported that they would join for personal material gain.

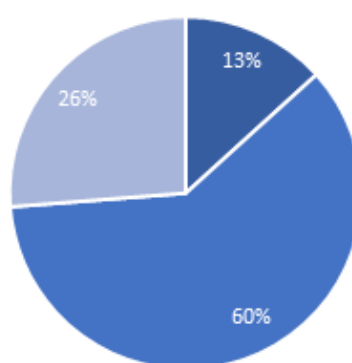
Most respondents (63%) reported that they would not become a member of a political party, and only 3% said that they would. This indicates that they either do not want to spend their time and energy in a political party, or they doubt that their voice will be heard.

The low level of readiness of women to join a political party has resulted in a men-dominated political space, and on men holding most political positions. On the other hand, political parties do not offer a friendly environment for women and have not undertaken any special measures or campaigns to attract more women to become members of their political parties.

A low level of women's participation in political parties has weakened political parties, in the sense of their comprehensive policy formulation and political representation.

Figure 115:  
**Why women politicians are involved in politics..**

- Mainly for personal material gain
- Mainly because of their need to change society for the better
- Refuse/DK



Most women reported that they voted in the last parliamentary elections (76%), while only 23% did not participate in the last voting process.

This indicates a strong interest among women for their voices to be heard, but only anonymously.

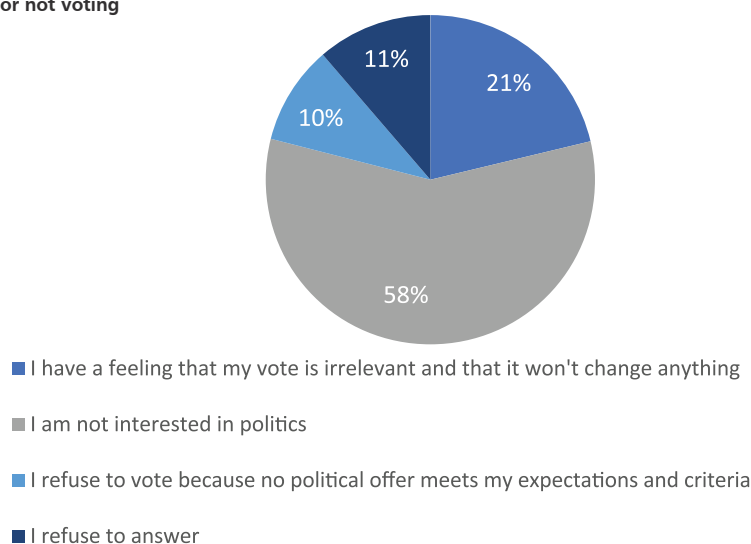
Most of the women who did not vote gave the reason that they are not interested in politics (58%), followed by women who felt their vote is irrelevant and it will not change anything (21%), and those who reported that no political offer meets their expectations and criteria (10%).

Most women (60%) reported that they vote in elections solely based on their personal political beliefs and political values, followed by those who vote in the same way as the male members of their family (11%), and some others vote for personal benefits (employment, business, etc.) (4%). Only 9% of women vote so that women's issues are addressed in institutions.

Regarding women's views on the right to vote, 42% reported that it is an extremely important tool for political influence, followed by those who think of it as a formal procedure (35%), then those who see it as irrelevant (11%), and those who believe it is a small opportunity to express a political preference (12%).

The number of women who would accept political positions is very low. Only 1% already hold a political position, while only 7% reported that they would accept such a position with pleasure. Most (66%) would not accept such a position.

Figure 116:  
**Reasons for not voting**



This high rate of rejection of political positions is related to the data below, where the promotion of women in politics is seen to be achieved only with the support of someone powerful, not by their merit.

The results of the statements for political positions show **higher agreement** reported for the following statements:

- Personal and professional capacities and qualities are crucial to have a political position (43%).
- The promotion of women in the political arena is a result of their personal and professional qualities (43%);
- Political positions are given exclusively to people who are members of a political party (45%);
- To have a political position one should have the support of someone very important politically (40%); and
- I do not feel competent to hold any political position (42%).

- On the other hand, the highest disagreements were reported for these statements:
- The promotion of women in politics is a result of family relations (49%);
- Politics is a "men" thing and that is why women should not be involved in politics (62%).
- A woman needs to be "immoral" in order to be part of a political position (68%).
- The promotion of women in politics is a result of their "sexual favors" or their appearance (69%); and I am very into politics (71%).

These indicate that women believe that they should have the capacities and skills to hold a political position, and many of them felt they are not competent. Moreover, they disagreed that women need to be immoral or ask for sexual favors to hold a political position.

Figure 117:  
The views on right to vote

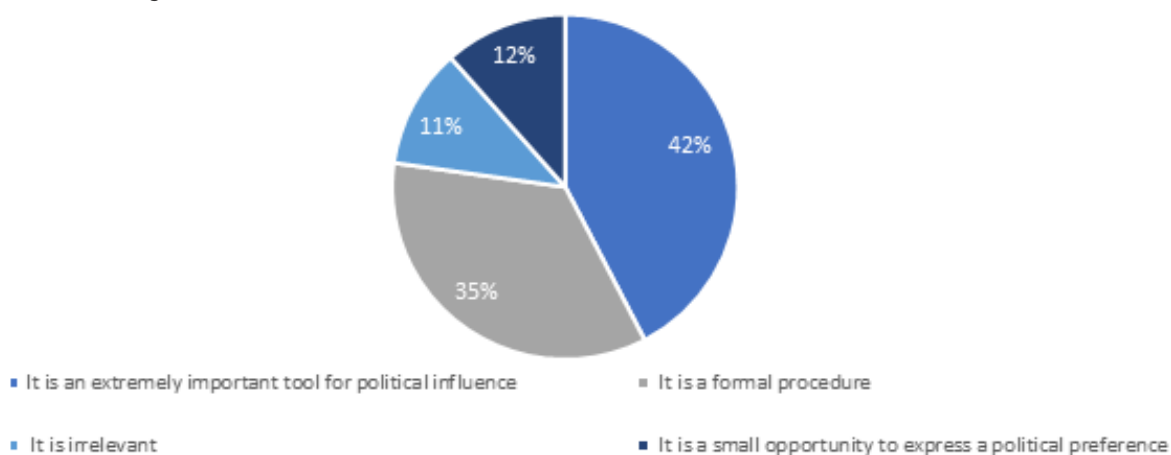


Figure 118:  
When I vote in elections

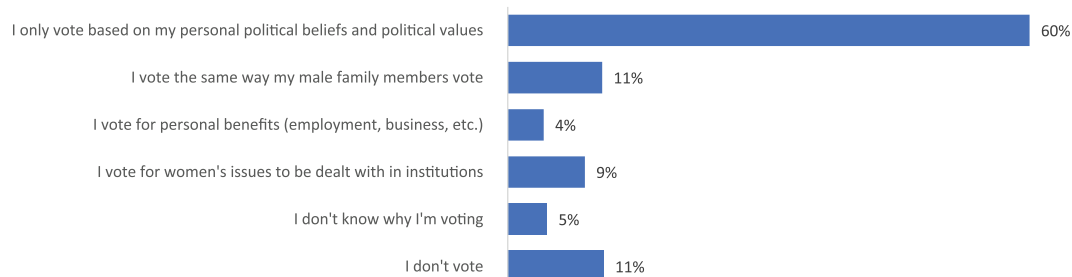
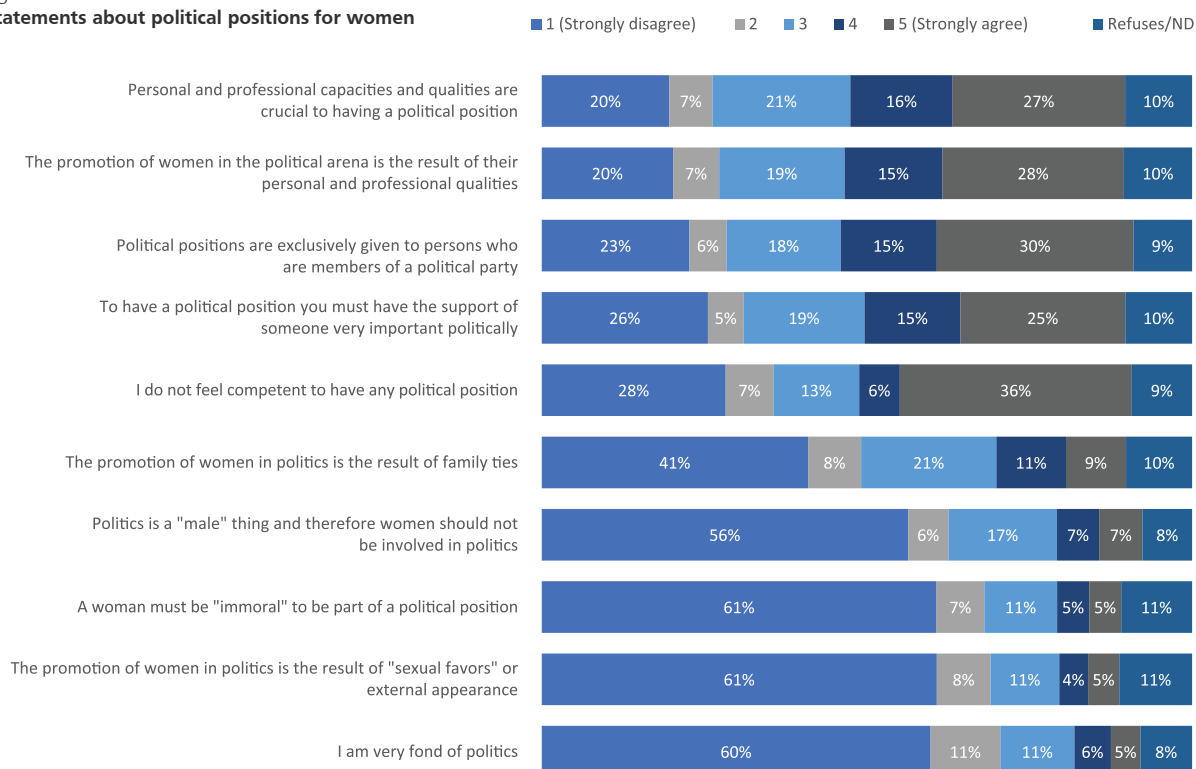


Figure 119:  
Statements about political positions for women



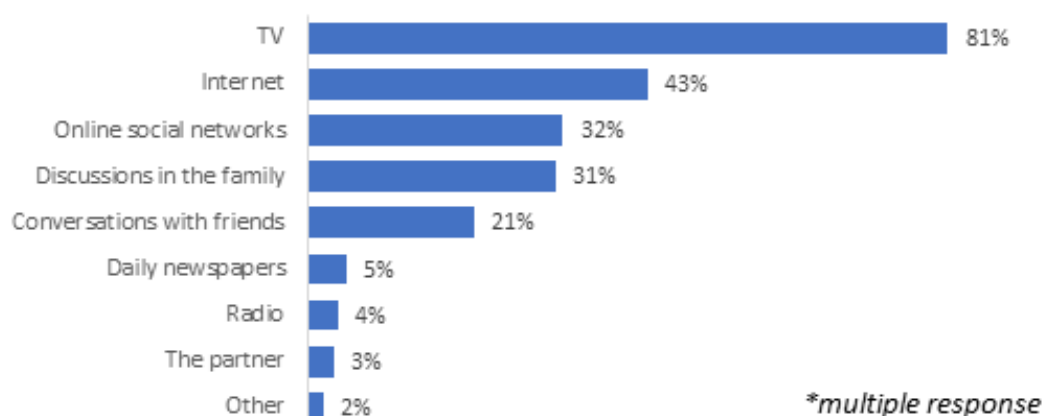
Regarding trust, more than half (53%) of respondents reported that they trust men and women politicians equally. 20% reported that they neither trust men nor women politicians. However, 14% indicated they trust women in politics more, compared to 3% who trust men more.

When it comes to sources of information, the findings are interesting. Women are using more traditional media as a

source of information for political events. More than two-thirds of women are using TV (81%) as a source of information for political events, followed by the Internet (43%), online social networks (32%), discussions in the family (31%), conversations with friends (21%), daily newspapers (5%), radio (4%), the partner (3%) and other (2%).

Figure 120:

**Sources of information for political events**



### Qualitative data from focus group discussions

"Once you open Facebook or a portal, you have political news all over, also on television." (34, Prizren)

"As a society, we are extremely exposed to the daily events that take place in politics, all this because of the many political debates that take place daily. And nowadays they are given the opportunity to be informed about developments in the region and the world, as is the case with the Ukraine-Russia war." (51, Prizren).

"Although not everyone deals with politics, we have too much information on political developments as a society, all this as a result of various portals, TV debates, etc., to which we are extremely exposed." (38, Peja)

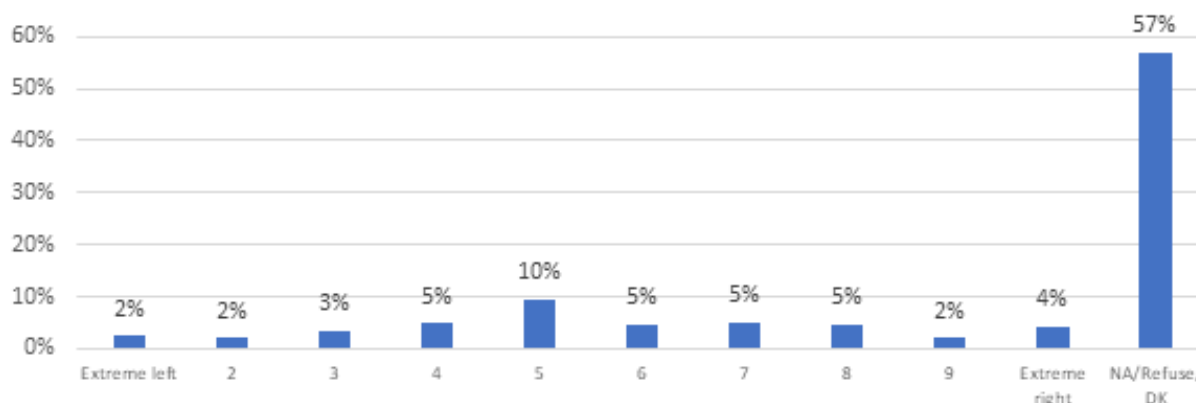
"What appears in the media is usually propaganda made by political parties and is not knowledge about politics, so I consider that basically as a society we do not know enough about politics." (44, Ferizaj).

## 6.3 DEMOCRACY, IDEOLOGY AND VALUES

Codification of ideological profile is very difficult to be done in Kosovo since neither political party has been clearly defined ideologically nor have election campaigns been focused on providing solutions to social problems through an ideological lens (D4D, 2021).

Despite this fact, analysis shows that women are self-positioned in the center (10%). Nevertheless, it should be reported that more than half of the respondents (57%) did not respond to this question, which is a clear sign of their ideological uncertainty.

Figure 121:  
Political views with regard to ideology



Despite ideological centrist self-identification, the research contradicts some of the dominant support for left-wing policies. In this direction, women show strong agreement on the following statements:

“The country should take greater responsibility in securing all” (57%);

“State ownership of business and industry should be increased” (47%), and

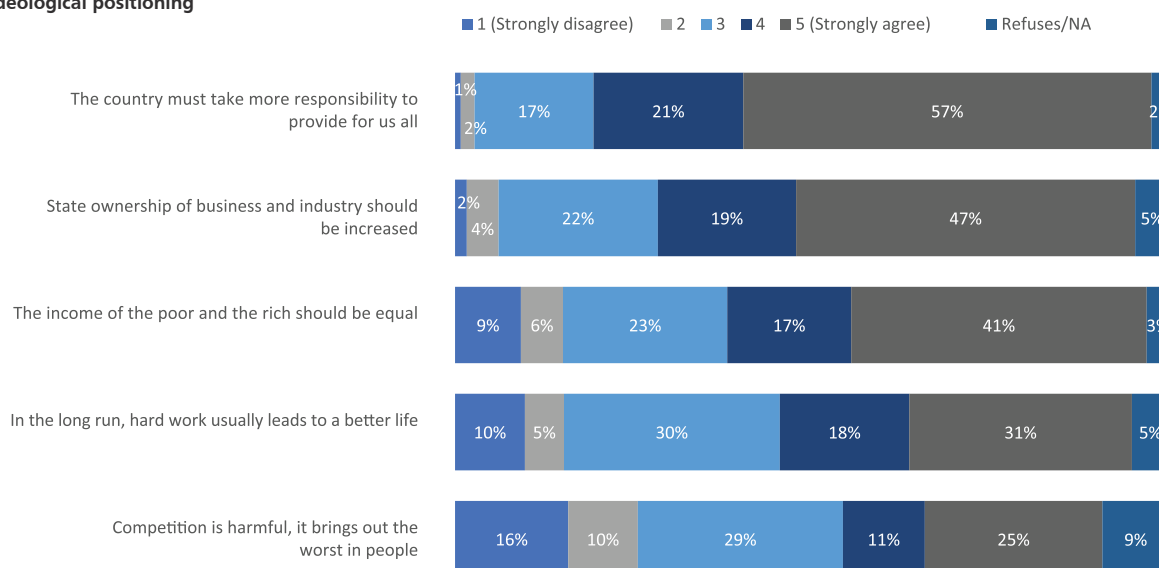
“The incomes of the poor and the rich should equal” (41%).

A lower percentage of women reported that they strongly agree with the other two statements, including

“In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life” (31%) and

“Competition is harmful, it highlights the worst in people” (25%).

Figure 122:  
Ideological positioning

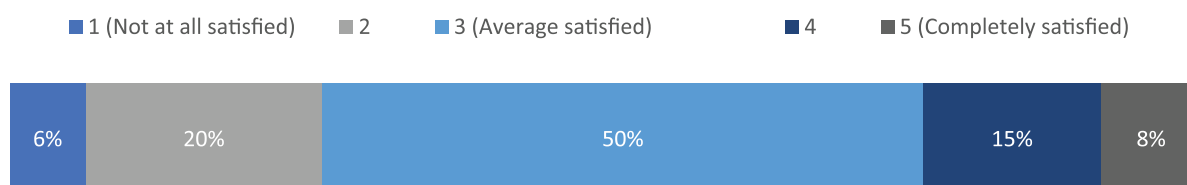


In general, half of the respondents reported moderate satisfaction with democracy. Others reported that they

are satisfied or fully satisfied (23%), or they show high dissatisfaction (26%).



Figure 123:  
Satisfaction with democracy



The following are some agreements with the statements that women reported.

There are agreements and strong agreements for the statements:

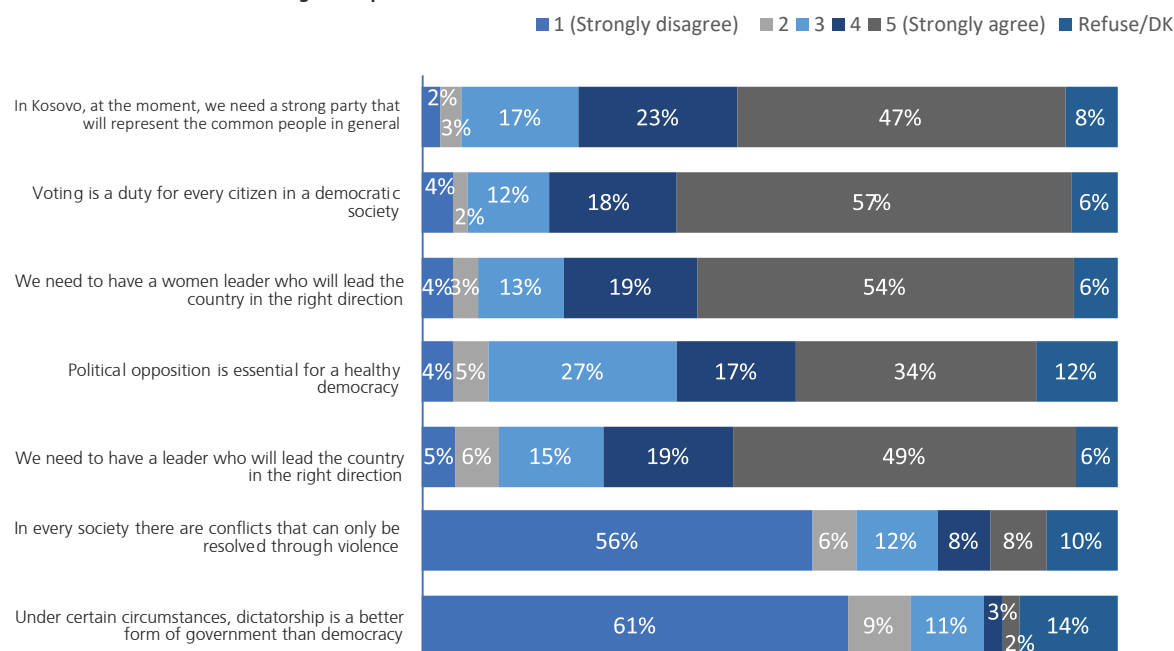
- "In Kosovo, at the moment, we need a strong party that will represent the common people in general" (70%);
- "Voting is a duty for every citizen in a democratic society" (75%);
- "We need to have a women leader who will lead the country in the right direction" (74%);

- "Political opposition is essential for a healthy democracy" (51%); and
- "We need to have a leader who will lead the country in the right direction" (68%).

Nevertheless, data shows that there is a high disagreement between these two last statements:

- "In every society there are conflicts that can only be resolved through violence" (62%); and
- "Under certain circumstances, dictatorship is a better form of government than democracy" (70%).

Figure 124:  
Agreement with statements with regard to political issues

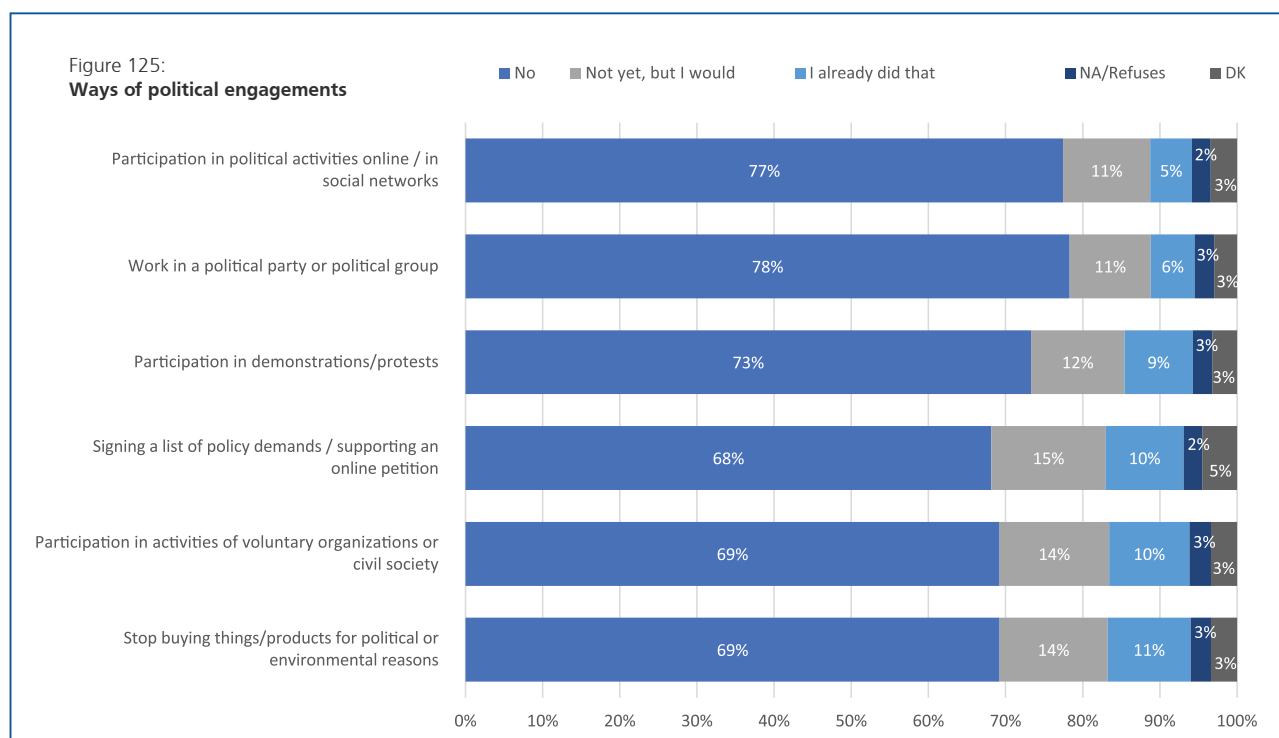


When asked if they had tried, or would try some of the political engagements listed below, most women said 'no': :

- "Participation in political activities online/on social networks" (no, 88%);
- "Work in a political party or political group" (no, 89%);
- "Participation in demonstrations/protests" (no, 85%);

- "Signing a list of policy demands/support an online petition" (no, 83%);
- "Participation in activities of volunteer or civil society organizations" (no, 83%); and
- "Stop buying things/ products for political or environmental reasons" (no, 83%).

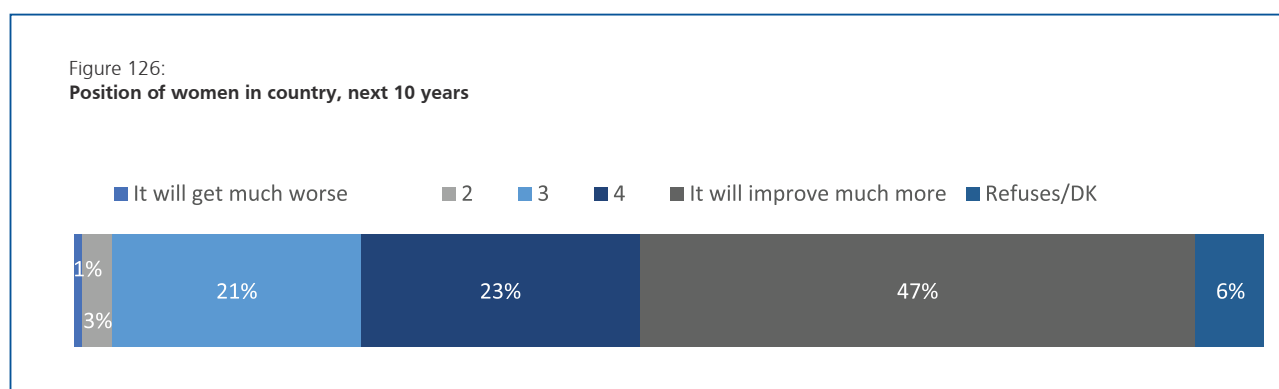
Participants were also asked about the agreement with following statements that underline the participation in various formats and types, related to the political engagement.



## 6.4 FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

This part of the study analyzes the expectation of women about their position in the country in the next 10 years. The findings show optimism for improvement since 70% of

respondents believe that women's position will improve, while only 4% are more pessimistic that it will get worse, and 23% are more neutral believing that will remain as it is.



However, improvements in women's situation in the country are more linked to the progress of Kosovo toward its aspiration of becoming a member of the EU. More than half of respondents believe that there will be an improvement in women's situation in the country when Kosovo joins the EU (53%). Whereas 31% responded that on average they believe so, and only 9% do not think such improvement will happen.

The expectations for economic development and gender equality are high in the event that Kosovo becomes a member of the EU. Respondents agree that there will be a positive effect on the economy (64%), gender equality (64%), and the political system (54%).

Very few (4%) reported that negative effects could come from membership in the EU, and some reported

no effect (18-21%). The data also might be interpreted as a high level of support for EU integration, which is not only a belief in the same values, but also an opportunity to improve welfare and respect for human rights. Those findings should be taken very care-

fully, since Kosovo is still struggling to get visa free travel within the Schengen Zone, remaining the only country in Europe facing a visa regime. In addition to that, there are five EU countries that do not recognize Kosovo's independence which makes its journey even more difficult.

Figure 127:  
Effects of country's membership in EU

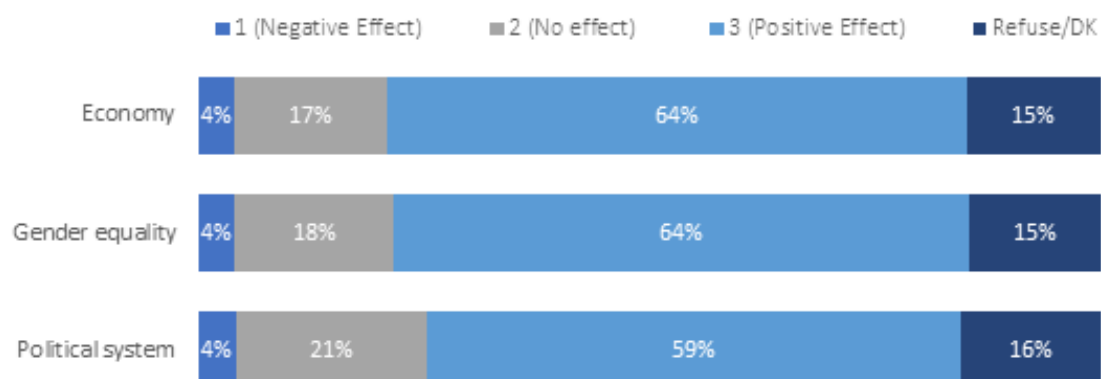
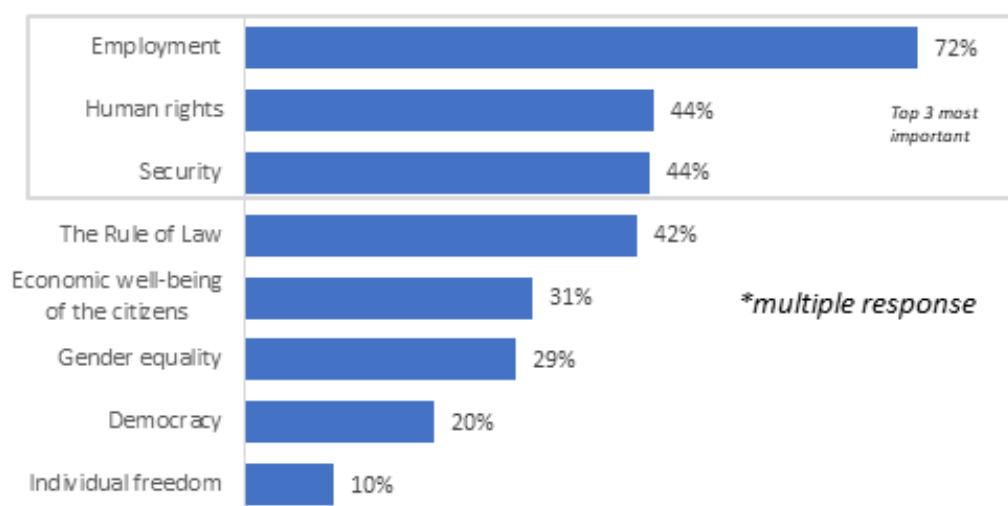


Figure 128:  
Most important values for



Women in Kosovo rank different values regarding their importance for the society. While the most highly rated values

in their personal life are linked to family and children, they think differently about what is important for society.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The data analysis shows the results from respondents related to politics. It can be concluded that women in the Republic of Kosovo are not represented in politics at a satisfactory level with only 3% stating that they are active in politics. Considering that the participation of women in politics is a precondition for gender equality and genuine democracy, this research finding indicates that women do not have direct engagement in public decision-making and policy development.
- There is very low participation in politics by women. The women surveyed do not have an interest in most political issues. Between 7-11% of women highlighted that they have an interest in local politics, regional politics, national politics, etc. Places where women mostly express political views are within the family and very few do so in the workplace, media, or even political parties. This may influence the finding that women do not believe that they can influence politics in their country by expressing their views (70%).
- Nevertheless, most women respondents are aware of the existence of the Law on Gender Equality, and this awareness is slightly higher among women living in urban areas. Also, women with higher education levels showed higher awareness about the existence of the Law on Gender Equality compared to those with less education.
- There is a low interest in the global situation of women's equality among women, and only 33% follow what is happening. About 42% are familiar with the "50/50 political platform". Also, less than half reported that they are familiar with the legally mandatory quotas for women's participation in politics in parliament.
- Most women agree that women's political performance is more prejudiced than men politicians; but they think that society will be better with more women in politics and it will have a positive impact on the country's development; women politicians are seen as more diligent, hardworking, honest, and brave than men politicians; also, reduced corruption and nepotism is thought to come with more involvement of women politicians. Moreover, women from urban areas reported that they tend to agree more than those in rural areas about each of these statements. Also, the values are slightly higher in the case of more educated women compared to those who are less educated.
- The majority of women refused to answer the question about the level of proximity of women's political views and beliefs with people in their communities.
- Nevertheless, some reported close political views and beliefs with their husband/partner, brother, and father. Moreover, respondents think that women's interests are underrepresented in the local community, local politics, and national politics. Furthermore, most of the respondents believe that more women should be engaged in politics, more women should be mayors in municipalities, and the prime minister and president should be women.
- Regarding voting in the last parliamentary elections, most stated that they have voted, as they feel this is the obligation of each citizen, and because it is an anonymous process. The main reason why they vote in elections is solely based on their personal political beliefs and political values. Others who did not vote said they are not interested in politics. Moreover, women reported their views on the right to vote, and most of them stated that it is an extremely important tool for political influence.
- The majority of respondents stated that they would not accept a political role. They think to have a political role one should have the support of someone very important politically, and they do not feel competent to hold such a political position. These results indicate that women have high expectations from people holding political positions, believing that they should have the capacities and skills for the role, and many of them feel they are not competent.
- Most respondents stated they trust men and women equally as politicians. The main sources of information for political events that women reported are TV, the Internet, online social networks, and discussions in the family.
- The majority of the respondents did not respond to the question of where they position themselves, and only 10% are self-positioned in the center. Nevertheless most women agree that there should be a greater responsibility of the country to secure all; increased state ownership of business and industry; as well as more equality of income between rich and poor. Half of the respondents reported moderate satisfaction with democracy.
- The majority of respondents believe that women's position could improve in the next 10 years, as well as when Kosovo joins the EU. The effects of Kosovo's membership in the EU would be positive for the economy, gender equality, as well as the political system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Political parties should create a more friendly environment for women, by promoting them to executive positions within the parties, introducing gender quotas for key party positions, providing trainings to increase communication skills and leadership, and organizing specific campaigns for women interested in joining political parties.
- Political parties should develop internal policies for fair distribution of financial resources among candidates running on elections, where affirmative actions should be foreseen for women candidates (D4D, 2021)<sup>10</sup>.
- Political programs and manifestos of political parties should foresee special policies for the advancement and promotion of women in society, until gender equality is achieved. During the drafting of policies, women must be included in all phases of consultation.
- Improve cooperation between public institutions and organizations that promote women's empowerment.
- Organization of periodic meetings for coordination of joint activities and experience sharing should be considered.
- Strengthen networking between women's organizations, civil society, as well as local and central governments to develop and disseminate gender-sensitive messages.
- Guarantee there is an adequate legal framework that ensures equal participation of women and men in politics. The introduction of a gender quota 50/50 on the list of candidates of political parties, additionally to the guaranteed 30% of seats in the parliament, should be considered in electoral reform.
- The media should make a commitment to provide more space for women on political debates. No TV political debate should be held with all men guests.

<sup>10</sup> D4D, The Cost of inequality: Funding for election campaigns of women candidates; [https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021-07-27-D4D\\_Raporti-02-ENG.pdf](https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/2021-07-27-D4D_Raporti-02-ENG.pdf)



## 7.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

It is widely recognized that women play an important role and contribution in all dimensions of social life including defense and security. A meaningful participation of women as active agents in security policy making and implementation is crucial as they represent 50 percent of the population. This makes them a vital part of society and without them, real and sustainable security at the local and national level cannot be achieved. Moreover, women bring different experiences and views of a wider section of society which can lead to developing strong frameworks around gender equality. Yet, this contribution is often under-valued and under-utilized as women remain still under-represented in political and decision-making positions including the security sector.

This was further enlightened in the global measure report—the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index (Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security; Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2021), which bridges insights from gender and development indices with those from peace and security. For the first time, Kosovo was also included in the last indexed ranking report of 2021/2022<sup>11</sup>, which analyzed women's social-welfare and economic empowerment in 170 countries worldwide. Kosovo was ranked 77th in the general ranking of this list which is an indication that significant progress is needed to improve this position regarding gender-equality and social-welfare.

A study on the well-being and safety of women conducted by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2019 ) revealed that the frequency of violence cases against women in Kosovo remains critical. As evidenced in the report, psychological violence was the most widespread form of violence against women in intimate relationships, where 53% of the surveyed respondents reported

ed having been victims of this type of violence. Concerning sexual harassment, 29% of the surveyed respondents claimed to having experienced this form of violence since the age of 15. Whereas 14% indicated that they have experienced some type of physical or sexual violence from their partners or other individuals since the age of 15<sup>12</sup>.

According to the same study, 48% of surveyed women still consider these forms of violence and especially domestic violence, a private matter, so gender-based violence often continues to be hidden and never reported. There were a total of 1,986 gender-based violence cases reported by the Kosovo Police in 2021. While, in the first half of 2022, a total of 1,324 gender-based violence cases were registered. This situation requires a systematic and harmonized response from the relevant authorities in the country through construction of policies that prevent gender-based violence.

The fight against domestic violence and violence against women has been listed as a priority in the four-year program of the Kosovo government. Whereas the Ministry of Justice program has defined the prevention and addressing of domestic violence and violence against women as one of the 5 strategic objectives. As a response, several initiatives such as national policies have been foreseen for improving the legal framework with concrete actions and the undertaking of other strategic activities intended to align with relevant international standards and their ratified instruments. More specifically, the actions foreseen in the Action Plan for the implementation of the 2022- 2026 National Strategy for protection from family violence and violence against women (Ministry of Justice, Republic of Kosovo, 2022) strongly support the implementation of the articles and provisions of the standards stemming from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the "Istanbul Convention", which is also a part of the country's constitution since 2020. Yet, one of the main gaps as identified in the national strategy, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for protection from domestic violence are not fully implemented mainly due to the lack of coordination between institutions.

<sup>11</sup> The index captures and quantifies the three dimensions of women's inclusion (economic, social, political), justice (formal laws and informal discrimination), and security (at the individual, community, and societal levels) through 11 indicators to construct a global ranking of 170 countries. <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WPS-Index-2021.pdf>

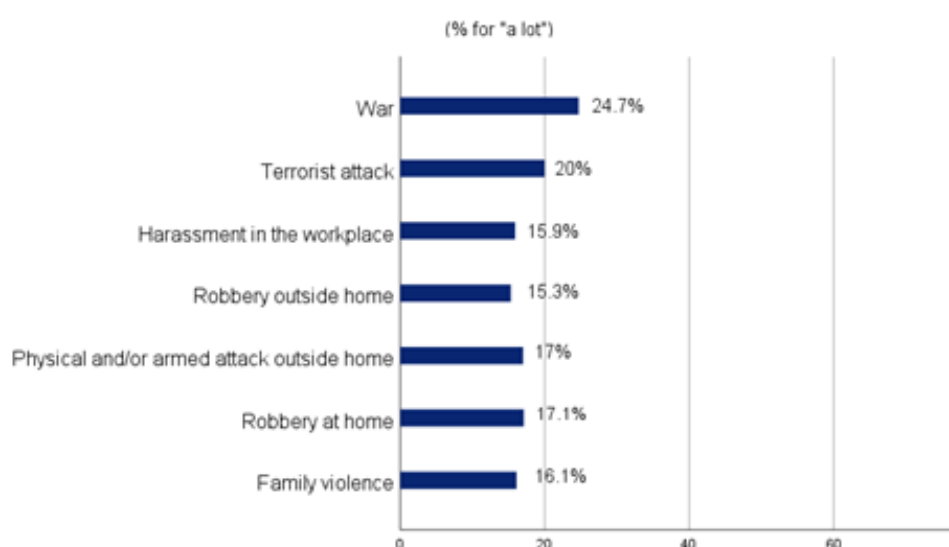
<sup>12</sup> Survey on well-being and safety of women in Kosovo, OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2019. [www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/439781.pdf](http://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/439781.pdf)

Regarding safety, women in Kosovo regardless of their ethnicity feel safest while in their respective homes whereas the results vary greatly in other categories among ethnicities with Serb women feeling least safe in the streets and in general in the country. This also correlates with the Public Pulse data conducted in April 2022 where it was reported that there was an increase in perception of safety in terms of violence and crime among Albanian women, but a slight decrease in the perception of safety among Serb women<sup>12</sup> (UNDP, 2022). RAE on the

other hand feel unsafe when traveling outside the country. Also, the degree of safety varies among various age groups with women aged 54+ expressing higher feelings of safety in respective locations than women aged 18-34.

The biggest perceived security threats for Kosovo women, according to the respondents are considered war and terrorist attacks, followed by home robbery and physical or armed attack outside their homes. Lower perceived threats are domestic violence, robbery outside their home and workplace harassment.

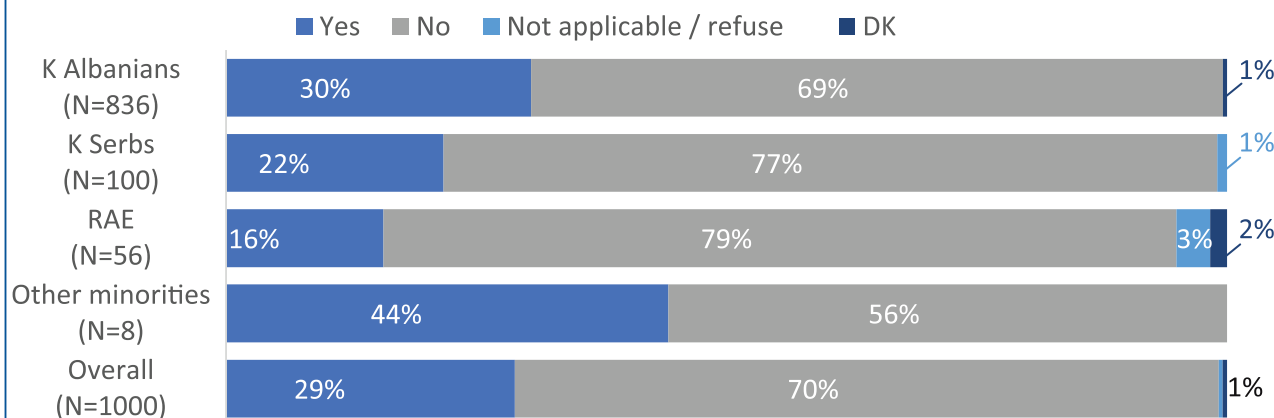
Figure 129:  
**Greatest threats perceived for security/safety**



Perception about the security threat varies greatly among individuals who have in fact faced or witnessed an armed conflict and those who have had no such experience. The data shows a correlation between facing or witnessing an armed conflict with the perception of war and

terrorism as the biggest security threat. Kosovo experienced an armed conflict in 1998-1999 and declared its independence in 2008. Consequently, 29.40% of the Kosovo women said they have faced or witnessed an armed conflict.

Figure 130:  
**Witnessed or faced an armed conflict**



\*results for other minorities are only indicative

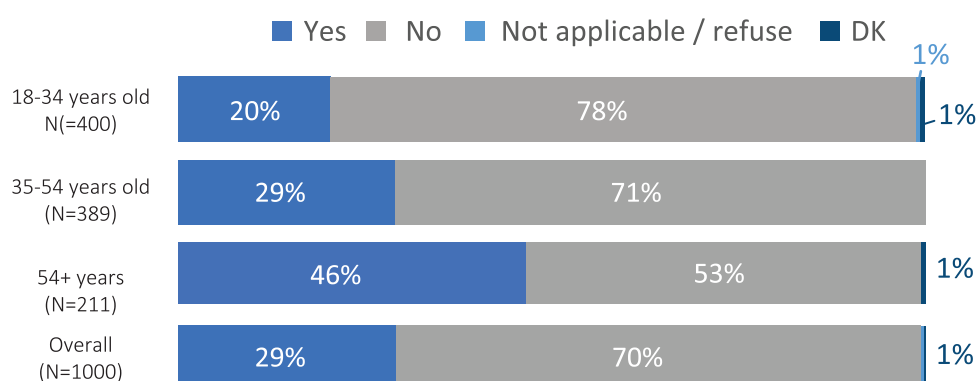


An armed conflict experience was more expressed among the Albanian women, followed by women of Serbian ethnicity, while a similar experience was lower for

women of other smaller ethnic communities. More women belonging to the age group 54+ have experienced armed conflict.

Figure 131:

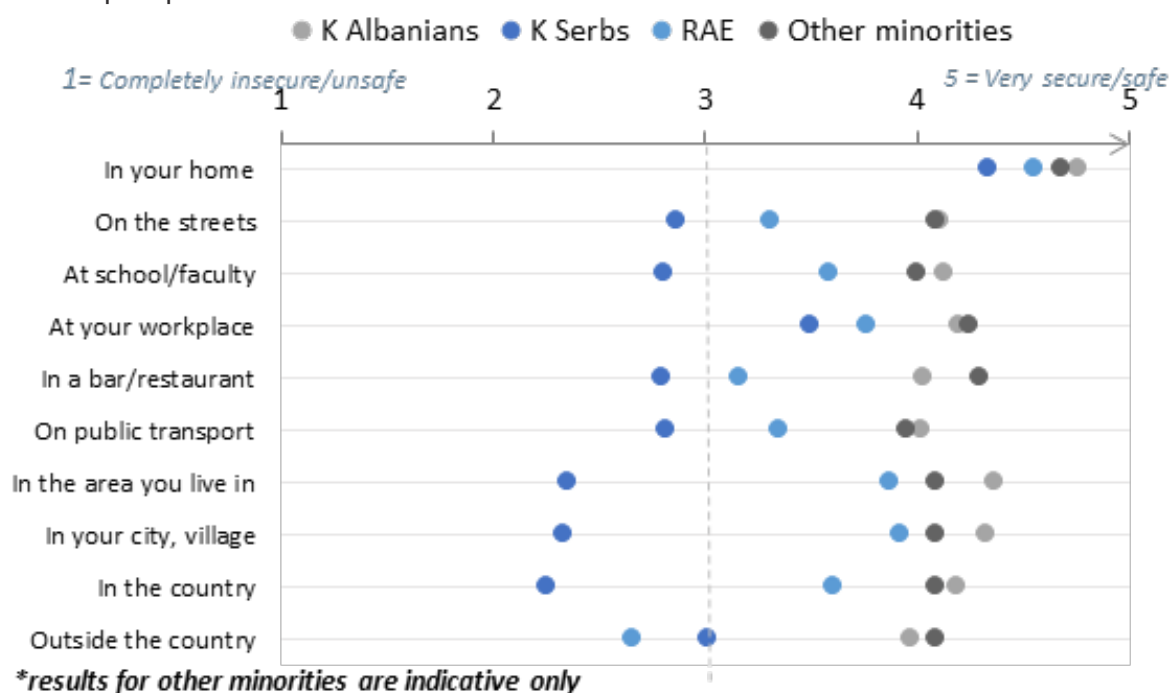
**Greatest threats perceived for security/safety Witnessing armed conflict by age**



Participants were asked to rank the safest aspects/places/ situation for women in Kosovo.

Figure 132:

**Most safe places perceived**



It can be seen that there is a difference between the different ethnic groups with regard to where they consider more or less safe. The Serb community appears to feel less safe in almost all sites, except at the workplace while Kosovo Albanians appear to feel quite safe, in almost all sites, and the safest in their homes.

Responses to the open questions, "how safe do you think women in Kosovo are?", and "what is the most threatening situation in terms of security for women in Kosovo?" in focus group discussions with women representatives of different professions and institutions, specify the existence of gender-based violence as one of the greatest threats to the female population, mainly in their homes, in the streets and then in the workplace.

"I'd go with this ranking: house, work, then road, neighborhood, transport, I see them more simultaneously" (P1, 2022).

"I think women are not safe at all, starting from family settings to public roads. Girls who start high school, who come at a certain age, I think are not safe" (P6, 2022).

"I think the key problem is domestic violence. There may be harassment in the workplace, but more so in private companies. And I think it's not just limited to the workplace. A safer environment should be created that allows everyone to report a case of violence or harassment" (P6, 2022).

"Not all women's homes are safe places, and this is shown by statistics. Last year alone, 54 women suffered from domestic violence that ended with fatality. There are many cases which are not reported, due to the stigma that occurs in society, lack of trust in institutions due to not taking seriously the presented cases. Regarding sexual harassment, as women we are exposed starting from the neighbourhood, school, street, workplace" (P2, Prishtina, 2022).

"So, women, in the streets, as well as at home, are not safe in our country. Even young girls, we have had young girls who have been very violated, exploited, in all respects" (P5, Prizren, 2022).

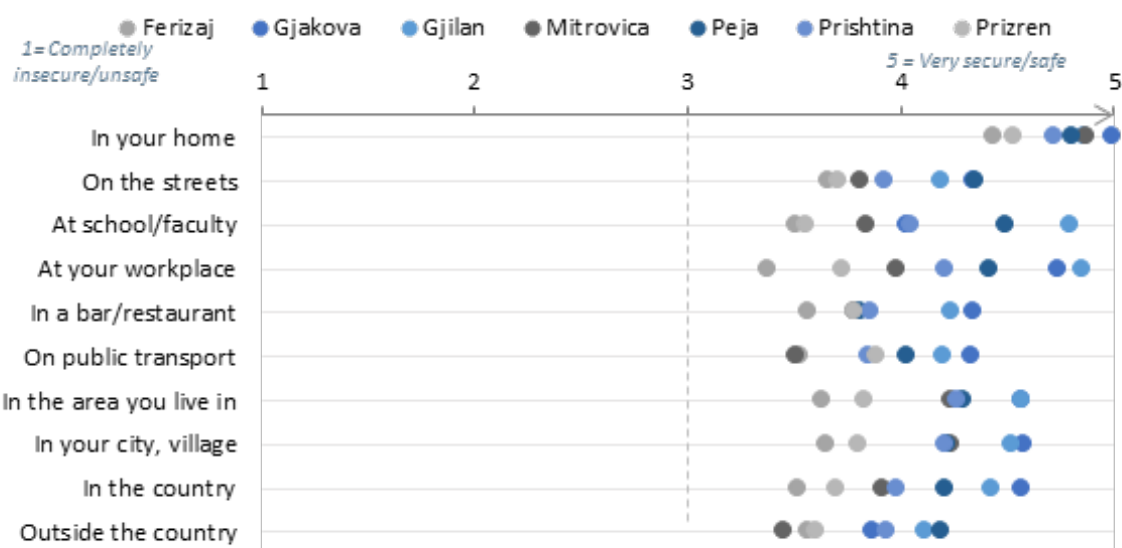
"Personally, I felt quite threatened at work, until I had to buy a ring to wear to leave the impression that I am engaged and thus bypass sexual harassment" (P1, Prishtina, 2022).

This information is in line with results from the OSCE 2019 study on the well-being and safety of women in Kosovo, based on which at least 53% of surveyed women experienced psychological violence from their intimate partner and 29% experienced sexual harassment. According to a global study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime conducted in 2019, almost 3 in 5 women killed were killed by their partners or family members in 2017<sup>14</sup>. (UNODC, 2019)

Whereas the World Health Organization reports that worldwide, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence, typically by an intimate partner<sup>15</sup> (WHO, 2013). We also checked the different regions, and how women from different regions feel about the safety of different places/sites/situations. There are differences, for example women from Ferizaj feel less safe in almost all listed sites, in comparison with other regions.

Figure 133:

**Most perceived safe places by region**



<sup>14</sup> Global Study on Homicide 2019, UNODC, 2019  
<https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet1.pdf>

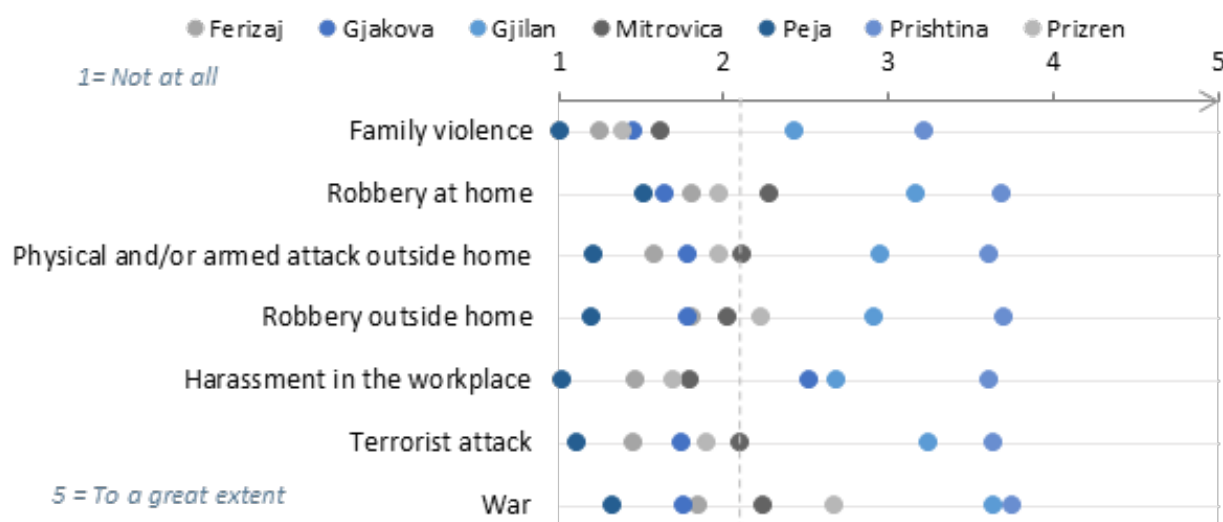
<sup>15</sup> Global and regional estimates of violence against women, WHO, 2013

On the question: *Which of the following situations do you feel are a potential threat/danger to your security/ safety and to what extent ...?*, women rated it differently based on ethnicity and region. The fear of a possible war and

terrorist attack dominates, especially for women from Prishtina. Comparing views of women based on ethnicity, Serb women also fear a possible war.

Figure 134:

**Which of the following situations do you feel are a potential threat/danger to your security/ safety and to what extent?**



## 7.1 PHYSICAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

A very small percentage (5%) of 36 of 1000 women in this study reported to have experienced some type of harm, where physical harm dominates (63%), followed by emotional harm (61%), psychological (48%), and financial harm (17%). Whereas 96% of surveyed women declared that they are not afraid of someone trying to hurt them.

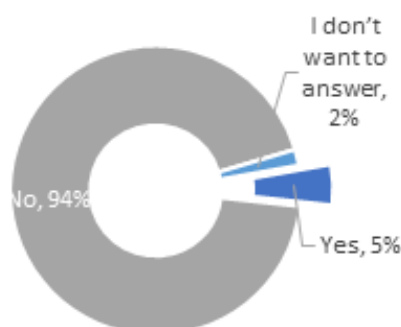
Regarding the occurrence of domestic violence, 42 respondents (5%) have admitted to having been victims of domestic violence, of these women 81% did not report it. The highest percentage of those who stated that they were victims of domestic violence were those from the RAE community (3%) and the lowest percentage

are Albanian and Serb women with (2%). The results are similar when compared across different age groups.

Moreover, only three respondents have been victims of sexual violence out of which only one reported it. Accordingly, reporting of sexual violence cases has been decreasing in the recent years. Whereas reporting on attempts of sexual assault cases is even lower according to a study on police response conducted by several non-government organizations under the leadership of the Equal Rights Coalition (ERC). The same report highlights a similar reporting trend for rape assaults and attempted rape.

Figure 135:

**Has anyone ever tried to hurt you physically?**



This according to the same study is mainly due to the “widespread stigmatization and victim-blaming by the Kosovo Police, lack of confidentiality on the identity of victims, lack of specialized services leading to overreliance

on DNA samples and tests, and a lack of guidelines and coordination mechanisms similar to those for Domestic Violence”<sup>16</sup> ( ERAC, 2019, p. 14).

Figure 136:  
**How has he/she tried to hurt you?**

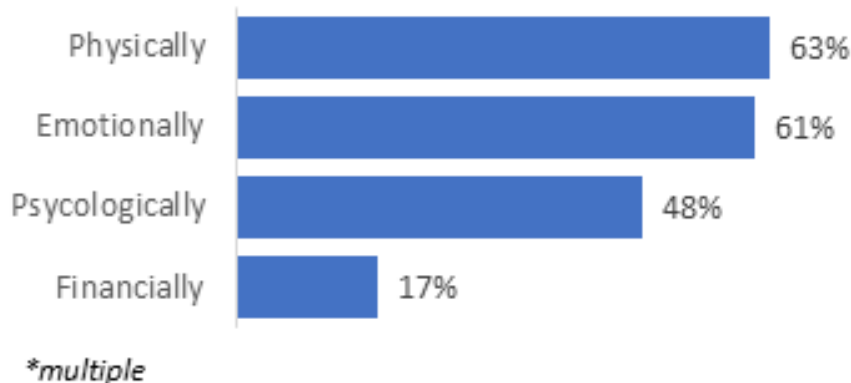
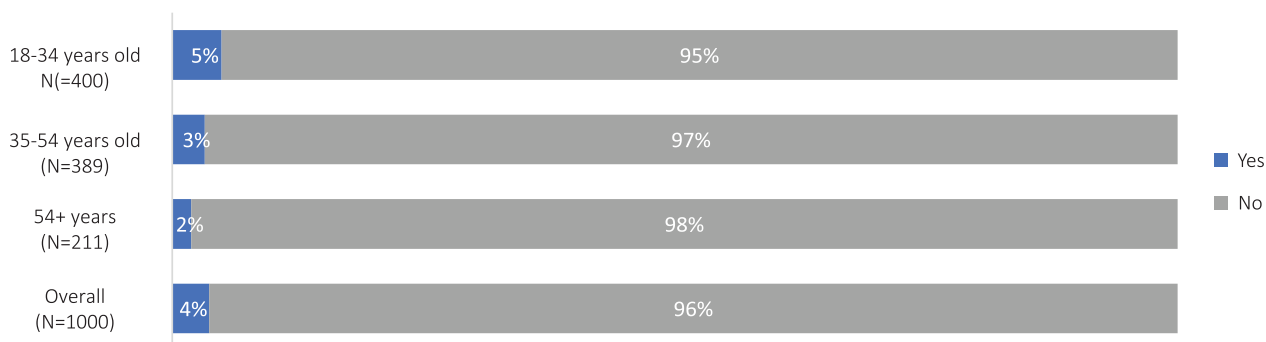


Figure 137:  
**Are you afraid now that someone will hurt you?**



Only 5% of the young women stated that they are afraid that someone may hurt them. Two decades ago, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (herein referred to as UNSCR 1325). The resolution is a legal instrument which recognizes the crucial role of women in peacebuilding efforts and in sustaining security at the local and national level aiming to embed women inclusion in all aspects and practices of the security sector. More significantly, it also promotes gender equality and women empowerment as a crucial factor for worldwide peace and security.

Since then, Kosovar authorities have taken several actions to ensure gender equality such as approving for instance,

the Law on Gender Equality, the Anti-Discrimination Law, and the Constitution itself and have established institutions to promote women’s participation in decision-making processes.

At the assembly level, there is a committee responsible for dealing with gender equality whereas the Ombudsperson Institution engages in gender-based discrimination matters. The program for Gender Equality 2020-2024 defines gender equality as a fundamental right and one of the significant factors for economic growth, development, and stability in society<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO, A critical Review of Police Response, 2019. [https://kgscenter.net/site/assets/files/1742/gender\\_base\\_violence\\_eng-1.pdf](https://kgscenter.net/site/assets/files/1742/gender_base_violence_eng-1.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Kosovo Programme for Gender Equality 2020-2024 <https://abgj.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/AGE%20Kosovo%20Program%20for%20Gender%20Equality%202020-2024.pdf>

More importantly, in 2014, the Kosovo government also approved the National Action Plan (NAP)<sup>18</sup> for the implementation of UNSCR 1325<sup>19</sup> which aims to improve and ensure women's active participation in decision-making and security forces at all levels along with providing access to justice for victims of sexual violence during the war.

However, it is not yet clear which institution is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the on implementation plan. Furthermore, the plan was originally designed to cover 2014-2017, and a new or modified plan has yet to be released.

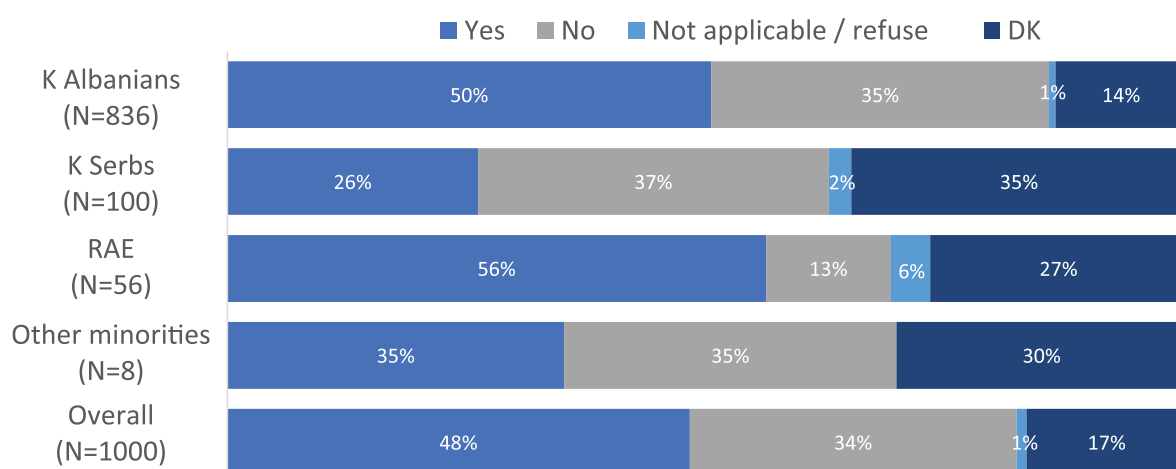
The efforts to promote gender equality and ensure women's participation in the daily processes of peace-building and security are to be admired, but much remains to be done. Based on the annual report from the Unit for Human Rights and Gender Equality in the Ministry of Defense, 2020<sup>20</sup> by the Agency for Gender Equality, women's representation in senior leadership positions in the security and defense sector has improved, however, it remains very low compared to the number of men assigned to leadership positions in the sector. From the total

of 48 leadership positions within the Ministry of Defense (MoD), only ten (10) of them are women, 2 of whom lead departments while seven (7) lead units. Over 10.91% of Kosovo Security Force members are Kosovar women and girls wearing the uniform of the Kosovo Army. In 2020, there was one female carrying the highest military rank as a brigadier general, four women in the rank of lieutenant colonel and five majors showing an improvement throughout the years.

Most respondents (71%) agree that women should have a greater representation in the army. This data correlates with respondents' sense of security for women's placement in key national security positions and 48.10% of the respondents answered that they would feel safer with women's involvement in such security positions, indicating that Kosovo's security policies are dependent on the gender representation of women and their significant contribution to conflict resolution, peace, and security processes. The same level of belief on greater women's representation in the army, police and other security institutions is shared by women from different ethnic communities and age groups.

Figure 138:

**Would you feel safer if women were placed on crucial positions related to the country's security (defense, military, police, CMC, etc.)?**



*\*results for other minorities are only indicative*

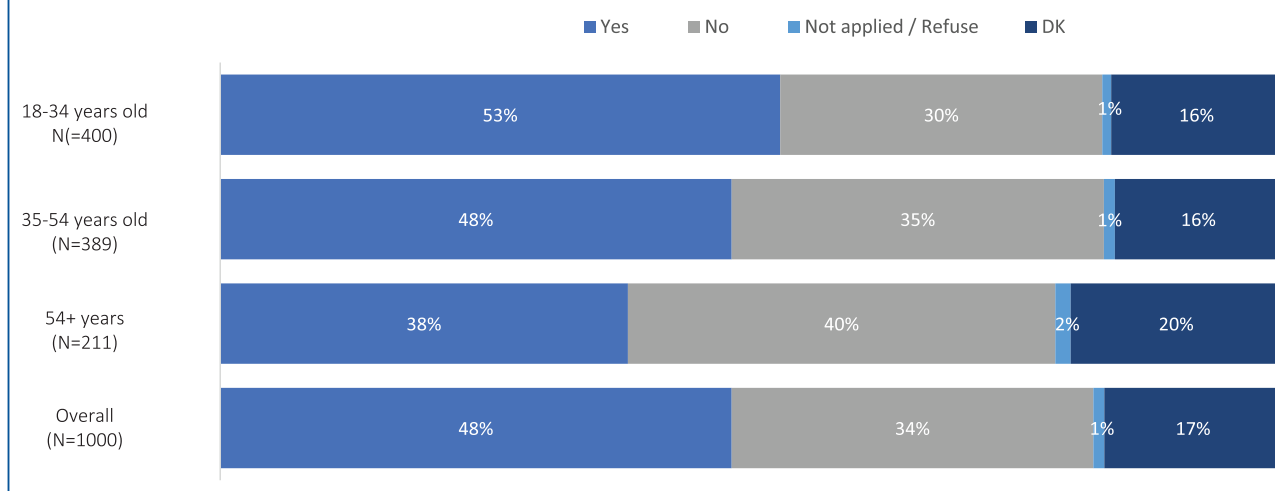
Women from all age groups are in favor of having women placed in crucial positions in the security institutions.

<sup>18</sup> Kosovo National Action Plan 2014 <https://www.wpsnaps.org/app/uploads/2019/09/Kosovo-NAP-2013-2015.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Resolution 1325, 2000. Adopted by the Security Council [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC\\_Resolution-WomenPeaceSecurity\\_SRES1325%282000%29%28english\\_0.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/SC_Resolution-WomenPeaceSecurity_SRES1325%282000%29%28english_0.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> The Annual report from the Unit for Human Rights and Gender Equality in the Ministry of Defense, 2020. The Agency for Gender Equality, Prime Minister's Office.

Figure 139:  
Would you feel safer if women were placed....by age



## CONCLUSIONS

- Nearly all women surveyed in this study (m=4.6 or 90%) highlighted **feeling safe in their respective homes** regardless of the data from secondary sources indicating a high rate of domestic and psychological abuse caused by their partners. Gender-based violence, predominantly domestic violence, is still prevalent.
- Albanian women reported greater safety in their town, at the workplace, on the streets, while in education facilities, on public transport or while traveling abroad. This varies for women from other ethnicities with Serb women feeling less safe in all other locations outside of their homes, while RAE women feel less safe when traveling abroad.
- Kosovo women **perceive war and terrorist attacks as the greatest threats to their security**. This perception is highly correlated with their experience of an armed conflict. It is also more expressed among middle aged women who witnessed or faced the Kosovo armed conflict of 1998-1999.
- Most respondents (**71%**) **believe that women should be better represented in the army** and approximately half (48.10 %) agree that women's participation in the country's security sector would have an impact of their sense of security.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue ensuring women's active participation in decision-making and leadership for a better contribution to conflict resolution and peace processes in diverse social settings.
- Continue improving women's representation in the armed forces by implementing promotion in ranks through a merit-based selection.
- Revise the National Action Plan and assign a responsible institution for monitoring and reporting on its implementation.
- Involve civil society in drafting, monitoring, and evaluating implementation of public policies and practices related to security especially in the revision of the national action plans.
- Intensify awareness-raising campaigns related to women's rights and opportunities outside violent domestic relations. Offer proper information regarding support and protection to violence survivors.
- Create proper coordination mechanisms among responsible institutions responsible for prevention and combating of gender-based violence.





## 8.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH & WELLBEING

### 8.1 PERSONAL AND HEALTH ISSUES

Health is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that involves the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being (Grad, 2002)<sup>21</sup>, influenced by personal and societal conditions or factors such as: personal and family lifestyle, environment, culture and socioeconomic well being, personal care, and healthcare services.

It is generally recognized that health, peace and security are interconnected because “diseases coupled with poverty and other social ills destabilize governments and societies” and “the achievement of any state in the promotion and protection of health is of value to all” (Grad, 2002, p. 898).

One other main point of reference to global sustainable development, such as the SDGs<sup>22</sup> is also goal 3 (UN, n.d.) on ‘good health and wellbeing’, which aims to “*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*” by addressing maternal and child mortality, epidemics, communicable diseases, substance abuse, sexual and reproductive healthcare issues and services, universal health coverage, as well as deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents, and deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and pollution.

The health system in Kosovo is a product of difficult times during the parallel system (1990-1999) and a terrible war (1999) thus the system has to start from scratch which was not easy (Shuey, Qosaj, Schouten, & Zwi, 2003). Nowadays, the health system faces the consequences of “short donor time horizons coupled with an ambitious reform agenda” as well as the fact that “socio-economic and political forces undermine the capacity of the state to oversee and implement reform measures” (Percival & Son-dorp, 2010, p. 3).

In 2017, the National Health Sector Strategy 2017-2021 was adopted, aimed at improving the sector through better financing plans and allowing for marginalized groups to have better access to healthcare providers. Kosovo's healthcare system comprises of a primary, secondary, and tertiary referral system, the implementation of which is critical to address public health. The Law on Health regulates the referral system and prohibits patient referrals from the public to private clinics. All the main health legislation is currently under review and the amendment process is influenced by a lack of coordination which “impacted on the overall stability and continuity of the current regulatory arrangements and service provision” (Osmani, Marušić, Halimi, Muharremi, & Rupel, 2017).

This complex context and background have led to a lot of challenges and shortfalls in accessibility, affordability, and the quality of health services in Kosovo.

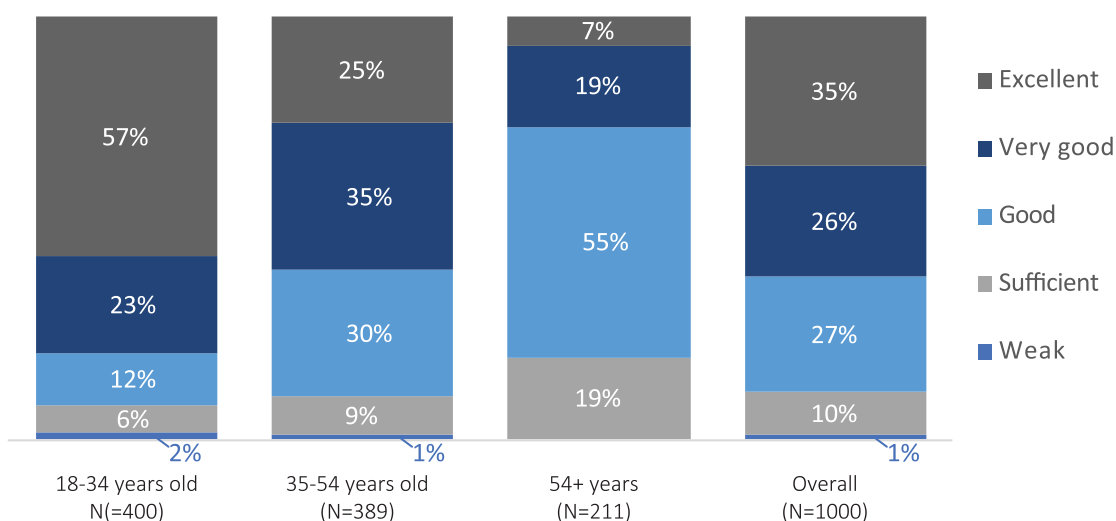
A full analysis of the health and wellbeing of women in Kosovo requires a professional health study based on measurements such as: evidence of health care services offered to women; standardized protocols by health professionals; and other types of collected evidence regarding women's health issues. This study is therefore somewhat limited, since it only analyses women's individual perceptions regarding some health and wellbeing issues..

According to the collected and analyzed data, the perception of women in Kosovo, about their health and wellbeing is in general positive. The majority, 62% of them perceive their health to be very good (26%) or excellent (36%); the remainder perceive their health to be good (27%), and only 11% feel their health is not very good (1% weak and 10% sufficient). This is evidenced also when compared by age groups. Even women belonging to the age group 54+ stated that their health is good (55%) and only 19% of women belonging to this age group stated that their health is weak. There are no significant differences when compared by ethnicity, or by region.

<sup>21</sup> Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2002, 80 (12) <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/268691/PMC2567708.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>22</sup> (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>)

Figure 140:  
In general, how would you rate your health/ by age groups



Women's perception of positive health may be the result of frequent medical checks and health services

offered by local medical centers, who recently have become better equipped in human resources and infrastructure

According to the public health statistics in Kosovo (ASK 2021): 3,168,800 visits were recorded at Family Medicine Centers (QKMF) at the local level, of which: 226,822 were dental visits; 1,301,151 were laboratory services; and 5,351,537 were special interventions and services.

In the General Hospitals there were: 319,824 days of recovery; 73,253 hospitalized patients; and 15,091 operated patients. Also, 715,185 outpatient visits were performed.

In 2021, in the University Clinical Center (UCCK) there were: 408,551 days of recovery; 90,595 hospitalized patients; and 15,034 operated patients. About 414,317 diagnostic visits for patients were also performed; 414,317 outpatient visits; 1,806,540 laboratory services (ASK, 2021).

## EARLY DETECTION OF MALIGNANT DISEASES

Malignant diseases affect women health in many aspects and are defined as a "socio-medical problem" and data collection for evidence of these diseases in Kosovo started only in 2012. In an earlier study conducted by a group of authors (Berisha, et al., 2018) who used as data the reports of malignant diseases from the National Cancer Register (NCR) in the Health Information System (HIS) at the National Institute of Public Health of Kosova (NIPHK)<sup>23</sup>, evidence for up to 7,437 cases was reported (2012-2014) with a light predominance of male cases (50.8%, as reported).

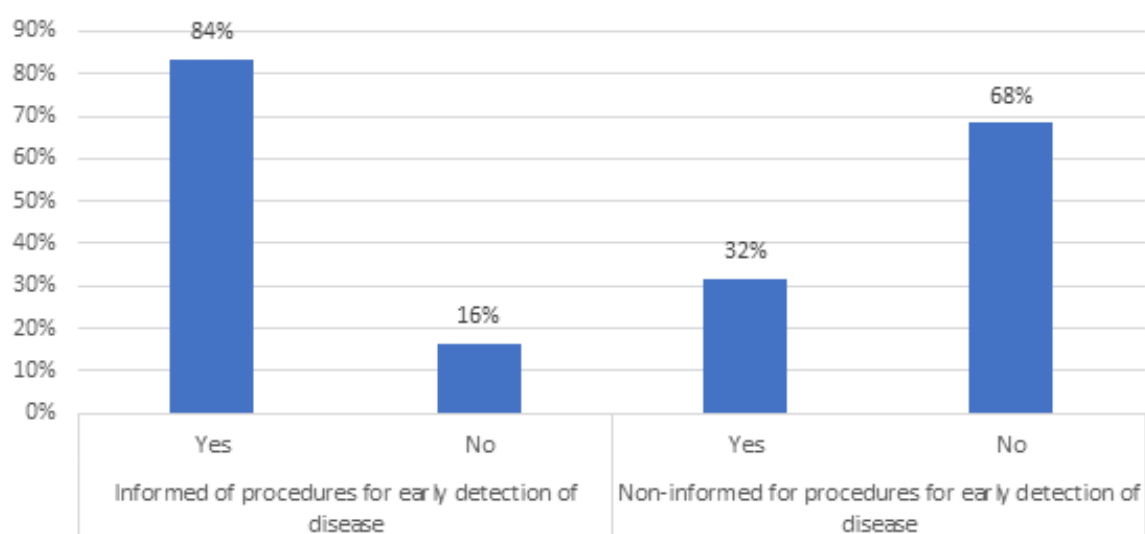
The most common malignant diseases affecting women, were reported to be **breast malignancies; malignant diseases of the female genital tract; melanoma and other skin malignant neoplasms** as well as malignant

**diseases of the digestive tract.** The study concluded among others, that investing in early detection of these diseases is the most effective investment in the public health system. According to the WHO, 2022, "early detection ... greatly increases the chances for successful treatment. The two main components of early detection of cancer are: 1) early diagnosis (or downstaging) and 2) screening. **Early diagnosis** focuses on detecting symptomatic patients as early as possible, while **screening** consists of testing healthy individuals to identify those having cancers (any malignancy) before any symptoms appear.

Women in this study were asked whether they are informed about the early examining procedures for some of the most common malignant diseases.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5869284/pdf/AIM-26-62.pdf>

Figure 141:

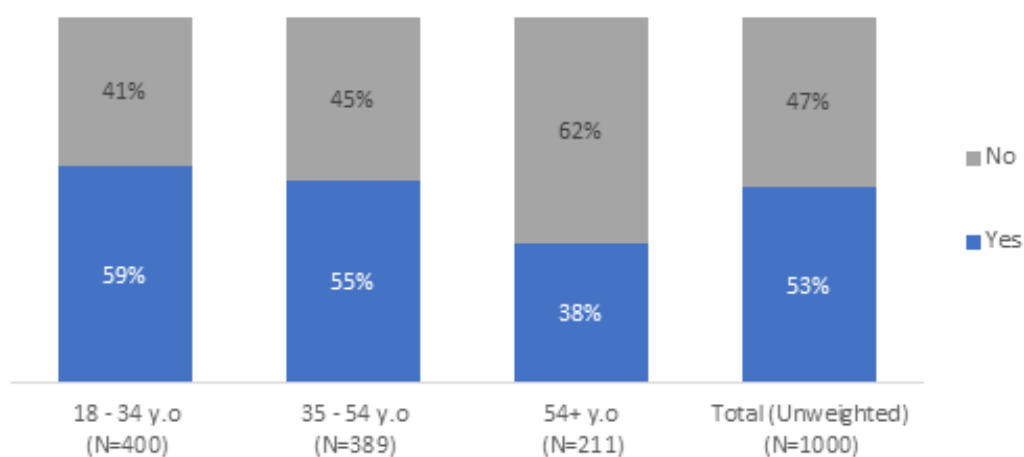
**Do you know how to self-examine your breasts?**

The data indicates that the majority of women are informed about early detection of malignant diseases (53%). This trend applies to all age cohorts, although in the age cohort 54+, only 38% of women say they are informed, and 62% stated that they are not.

The younger age cohort is most informed, with (59%) saying they have information about early detection.

Are you informed about the procedure for the early detection of malignant diseases ?

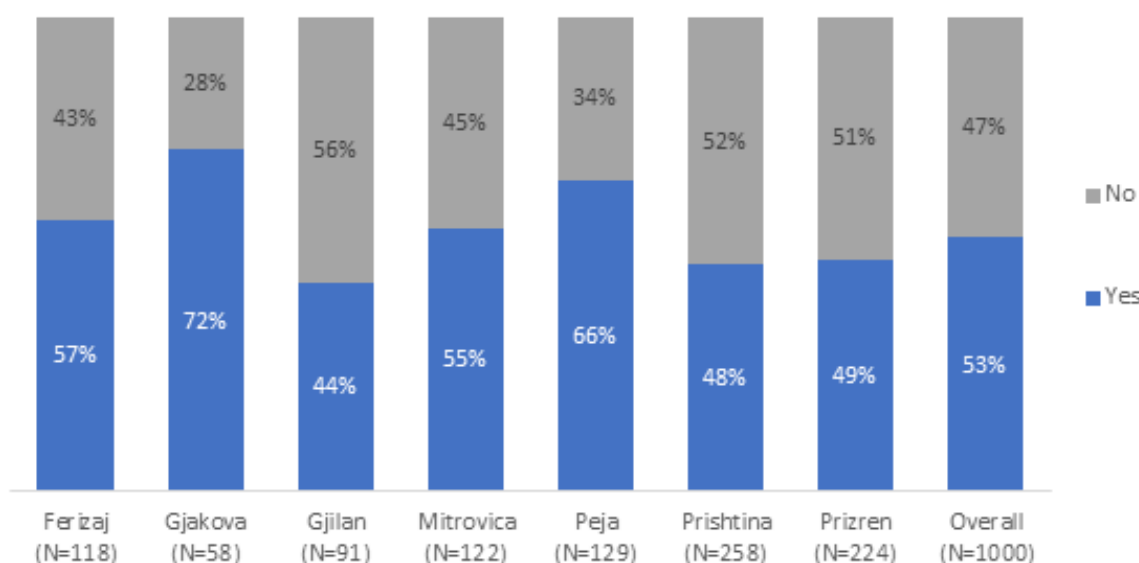
Figure 142:

**Information about early detection of malignant diseases**

In terms of regional comparison about the level of information women have about early detection, women in Gjakova lead (72%) followed by women in Peja, Mitrovica and Ferizaj, while women in Gjilan are the least informed (44%). According to this study and somewhat surprisingly,

only 48% of women in Prishtina said they were informed. A more thorough study could identify the reasons why in certain big cities like Prishtina and Gjilan, the number of women informed about early procedures of detection is less than 50%.less than 50%.

Figure 143:  
Information about early detection...by region



Focus group discussions revealed a confirmation of the need for early diagnosis, but women were concerned that it is not a habit to conduct early and regular checks. They recommend instead that the government, or health institutions should regularly campaign and organize regular checks for women.

**P1:** I do not think they have information, but the responsibility lies with the institutions to have awareness campaigns.

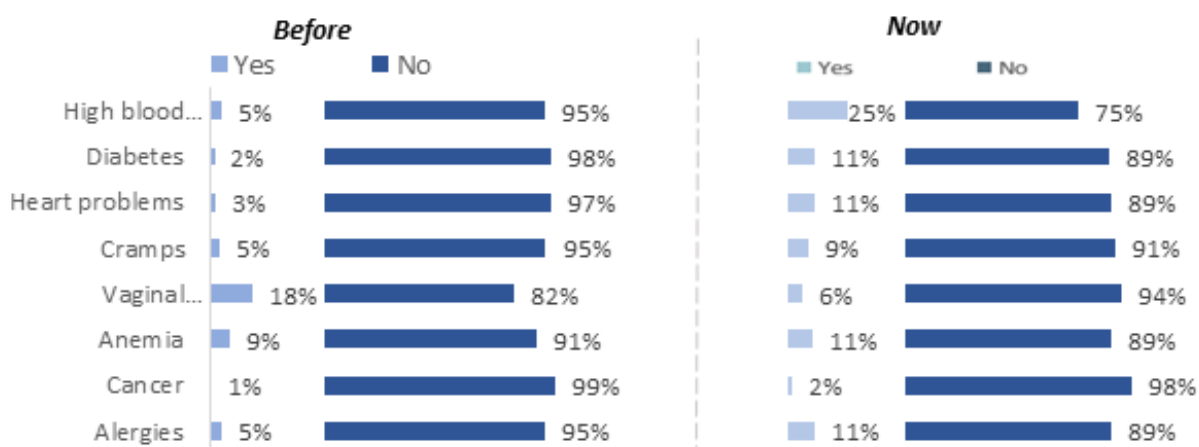
**P3:** I think they do not pay attention at all. In our country they are rarely checked, but I think that the institutions should take responsibility for this. I have studied in England and every 6 months I was notified about the mandatory checks I had, so I did not have any chance to miss my check-ups. I also think that it affects us that in public institutions the service is very poor, while private hospitals are quite expensive.

## CHRONIC DISEASES

Study participants were asked if they had/have any chronic diseases. CVS (cardiovascular disease) and in general chronic diseases are subject to clear definition and importance of proper diagnosis. The data below is based on women's perceptions and subjective answers to very general questions such as, "do you have certain disease or not or did you have it". The diseases listed in the questionnaire also exceed the definition of chronic diseases /illnesses. According to the WHO (2022) after a strong "battle" to define clearly what is exactly a chronic disease, it is argued that: "chronic diseases, are not passed from person to person. They are of long duration and generally slow progression".

The four main types of chronic diseases are cardiovascular diseases (like heart attacks and stroke), cancers, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructed pulmonary disease and asthma) and diabetes. Having in mind that these diseases kill more than 41 million people annually, worldwide, it is worth noting the importance of their prevention.

Figure 144:  
Chronic diseases



From the answers of participants, high blood pressure (25%), diabetes (11%), heart problems (11%) and anemia (11%) , as well as allergies (11%) are the most prevalent.

Other chronic diseases, that were not listed in the main question, are reported in the "other" section.

	N
Rheumatism	13
Hip Problems	6
Thyroid gland	6
Kidney problems	4
Breathing problems	4
Other	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

Detection, screening, and treatment as well as palliative care, are key components of the response to these diseases (WHO, 2022). The ideal "treatment" is modifying risk factors like behavior risk factors. These diseases are driven by forces that include rapid unplanned urbanization, globalization of unhealthy lifestyles and population ageing.

Unhealthy diets and a lack of physical activity may show up in people as raised blood pressure, increased blood glucose, elevated blood lipids and obesity. These are the so-called metabolic risk factors, and they can lead to cardiovascular disease, the leading disease in terms of premature deaths.

Looking at the results shown on the table above we can conclude that chronic diseases are prevalent in our society and this prevalence has not changed significantly. It should be noted that

perceptions data which is not valid in objective standardized health questionnaires and so this is a limitation for this chapter of the study.

Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. The solution proposed by experts, is a preventive system through healthier diet and lifestyle.

The breadth of behavioral, biological, social, environmental, and systems-level factors that contribute to cardiovascular disease necessitates multisectoral approaches across the life course that promote healthful lifestyles, reduce risk, and reduce cardiovascular-disease morbidity and mortality through the delivery of quality health care services. (Kelly, Narula, & Fuster, 2012, p. 1)

## 8.2 ADDICTIONS AND LIFESTYLES

Women in this study reported that they follow quite a healthy diet, corresponding with their satisfaction with their health. 51% of them have only one meal a day

with vegetables and fruits. However, 56% consume 2-3 beverages with caffeine, during the day and only 46% use only walking everyday as the main exercise.

Figure 145:  
Number of meals with vegetables

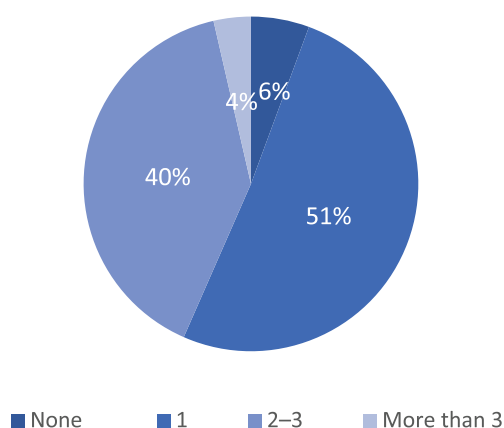
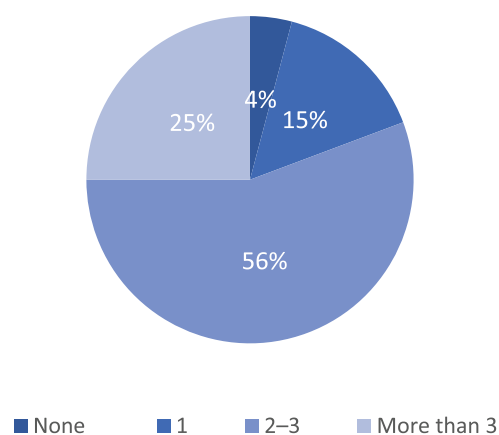


Figure 146:  
Number of beverages with caffeine



The cross tabulation by age, and level of education gives us the full picture, with regard to healthy lifestyle of women.

The women in the age group 35-54 seem to exercise more often.

Figure 147:  
Exercise periods by age

		Overall			18 - 34			35 - 54			54+
F146. Do you exercise for at least 20-30 minutes, 3 times per week?	Yes	20%	198	199	19%	84	78	24%	86	92	14%
	No	80%	802	801	81%	355	322	76%	270	297	86%
	Total	100%	1000	1000	100%	439	400	100%	356	389	100%

There is a direct correlation between health and lifestyle. Healthy nutrition and physical exercise are key components for a healthy living, including all aspects of physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Women are usually most affected by the factors that prevent them from adopting this type of a healthy lifestyle, since they usually have

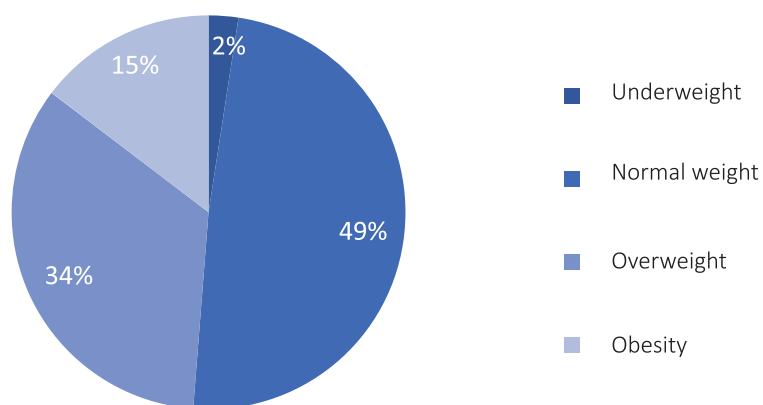
all the burden of care duties for the home, family and children, on top of their work if employed (Musida, C. Patimo, R.,2020). When asked which activities they use for exercise, it seems that walking is the most common activity, everyday (48%) and 2-3 times a week (16%)., followed by running (15%) and cycling (10%).

Figure 148:  
**Type of exercises**

	Walking	Bodybuilding/weight-lifting	Fitness/aerobics	Running	Professional sport	Amateur sport	Yoga	Mountain climbing	Cycling
Everyday	48%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	7%	6%	5%
2-3 times a week	26%	4%	13%	15%	3%	6%	7%	5%	10%
Once per week	16%	2%	3%	7%	3%	1%	4%	3%	4%
Once in two weeks	7%	8%	8%	8%	6%	8%	7%	9%	8%
Once per month	1%	3%	3%	6%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%
Never	2%	74%	64%	56%	77%	74%	73%	74%	69%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Most women perceive themselves as having a normal weight (49%) and the remainder perceive themselves as being over-weight (34%) and obese (15%).

Figure 149:  
**Perceived body mass index**

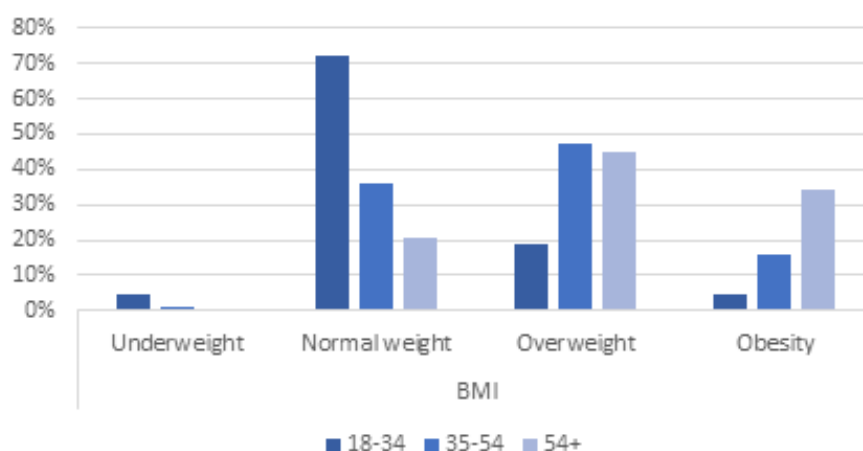


**\*N=968 who were able to report their weight and height**

The older the women, their perception tends to change from having a normal weight to being overweight and obese. Young women perceive themselves as mostly

having a normal weight (72%), while women aged 35-54 feel they are overweight (47%), and women aged 54+ feel they are obese (45%).

Figure 150:  
Body mass index by age



In focus group discussions, women stated that awareness of the need for healthier lifestyles in order to have good health has risen. However, they argue that due to the socio-economic situation, for most of the women it will be very costly to pursue such lifestyle routines.

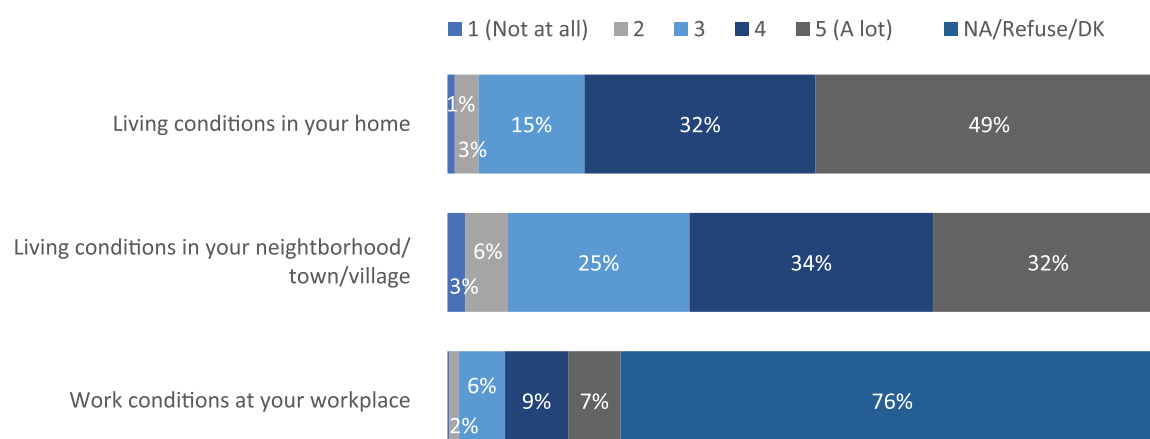
**P1:** I am glad that in recent years there has been an increase in awareness of the need for physical activities, which is affecting the improvement of both their appearance and their health. I also have friends who have started regular activities such as walking.

**P2:** A healthy ration of food in our country is expensive and this affects a lack of care.

### 8.3 LIVING CONDITIONS, ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND WELL-BEING

Women in this study have been asked whether they are satisfied with the living conditions in their home and neighborhood. They are mostly satisfied with the working conditions in their workplace (76%) followed by the living conditions in home (49%) and less with living conditions in the neighborhood (32%).

Figure 151:  
Living conditions

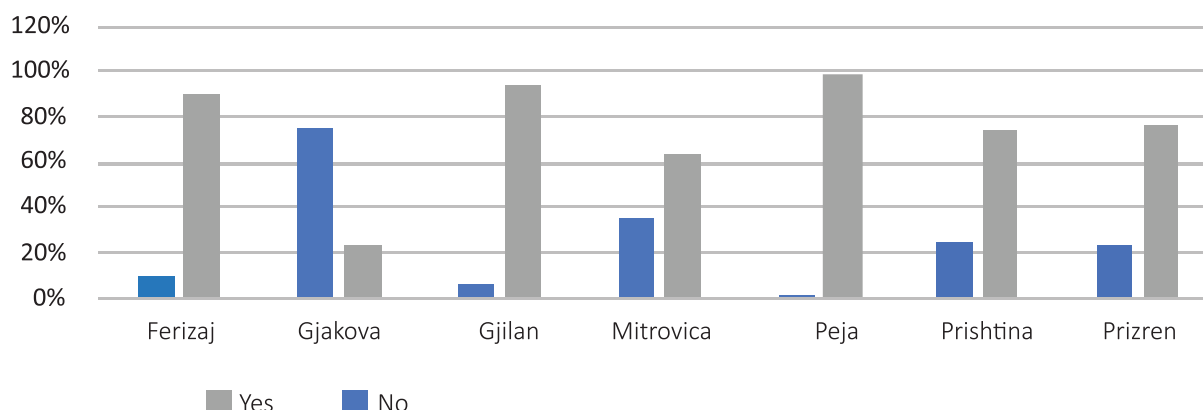


Air pollution is a problem reported by women in Kosovo, in almost all regions, but women in Gjakova and Mitrovica have reported higher scores. Considering other reports about the pollution in this region, it

is understandable for the Mitrovica region. The high score reported in Gjakova is unclear as it is part of the Dukagjin region known for its healthy environment.



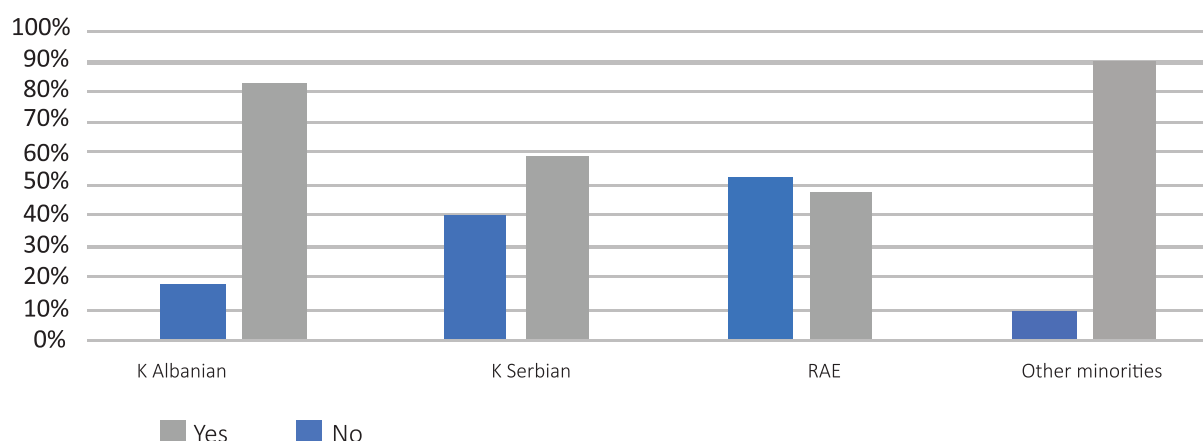
Figure 152:  
Pollution by region



Comparing the answers of different communities, the Serbian and RAE community members have

reported a higher score about the belief that there is a problem with the pollution in their neighborhood.

Figure 153:  
Pollution by ethnicity



The level of air pollution directly influences the cardiovascular type and malignant type of diseases (such as lung cancer), therefore it is important to be addressed in the context of the prevent mode of health care system.

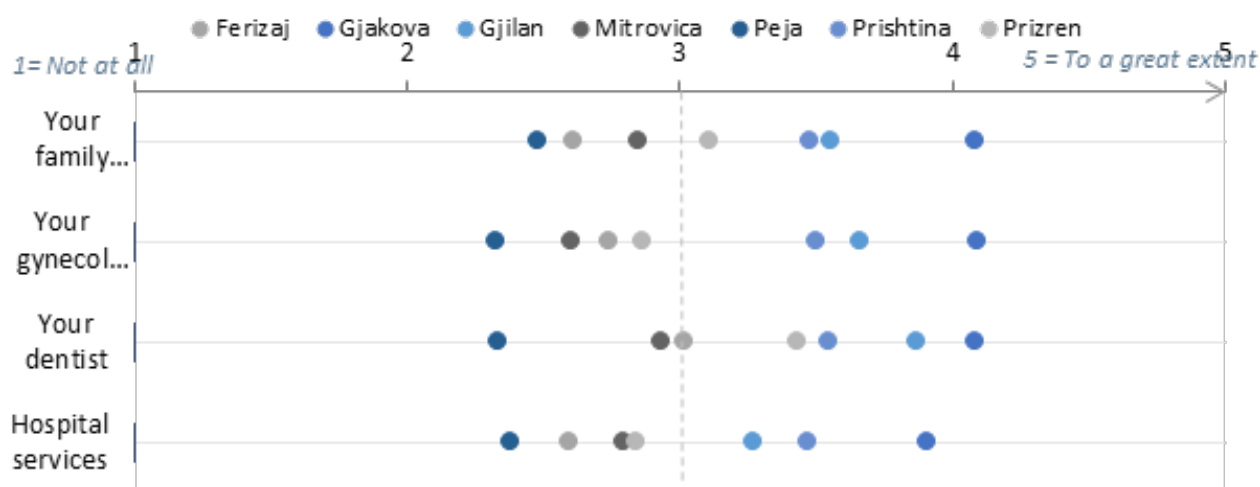
## 8.4 SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH SERVICES

The support of international organizations enabled the building of a new concept for the primary healthcare system based on family doctors and nurses (Carter, Jackson, & Bamfield, 1998). The previous system was based mostly in secondary care (hospital based), and primary care was based on the GP, general practitioners who were often underestimated doctors, as the population usually thinks GPs exist only for referrals to secondary care. Nowadays the system of primary health care has risen to a level

where it is now a beacon of excellence in the region with the main goal of preventive as well as curative duties, acting as gatekeepers to secondary care. The vision of the Kosovo Health System is that all citizens in Kosovo should have dedicated family doctors which will serve 2,000 clients with 2 family medical nurses who are responsible for prevention and curative treatment and will be available 24 hours.

Participants were asked whether they have access to and whether they are satisfied with the quality of the health services provided in their area.

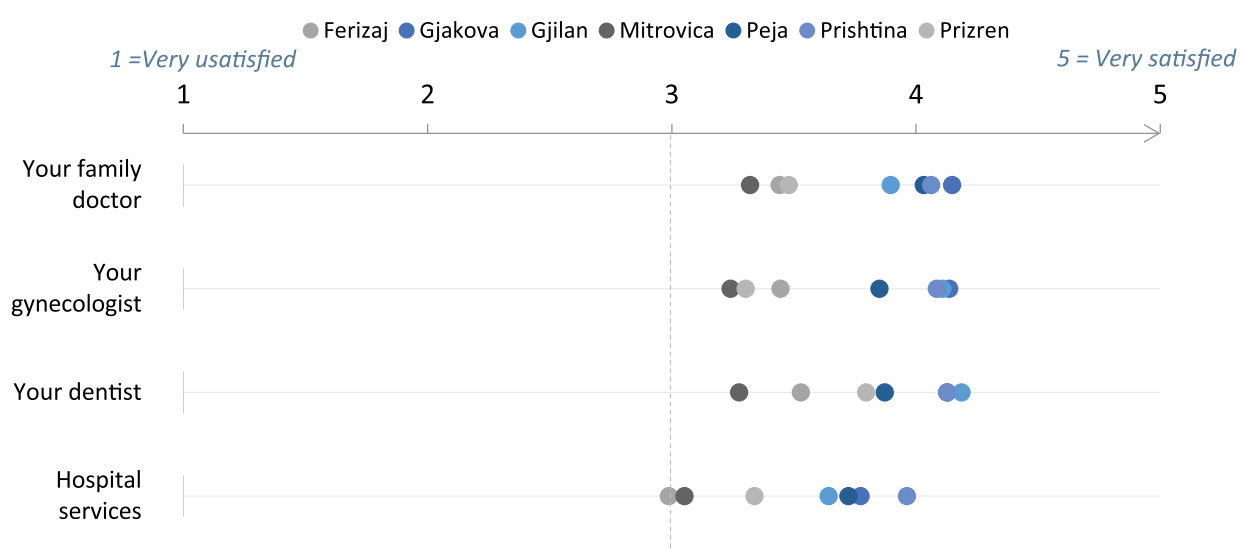
Figure 154:  
Satisfaction with health services by region



Some basic health services are not available in all areas as it can be seen in the figure above. In Gjilan, all listed services are less accessible, while in Gjakova they are accessible to a great extent, even more accessible than in Prishtina region. It is worth analyzing this issue further, in a separate study, identifying which services are missing in certain regions and why.

Participants were also asked whether they were satisfied with different services in different regions. For example, In Gjilan, they are highly satisfied with dentist services, while in Gjakova the highest satisfaction was reported for the family doctor. In Prishtina, they are most satisfied with hospital services, although Prishtina does not have yet a city hospital. The services offered by the University Clinic serve the citizens in Prishtina region, as a secondary health service.

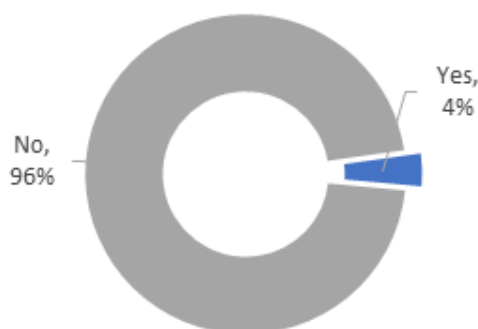
Figure 155:  
Satisfied with specific health services by region



## 8.5 MENTAL HEALTH-DEFINITION & STIGMA

Participants of this study were asked if they had sought help for mental health and emotional problems.

Figure 156:  
**Mental health and emotional problems**



Identifying oneself and accepting mental health problems, continues to remain a taboo topic in Kosovo. Therefore 96% have declared 'no' to the question about whether they have sought help, and this response is similar across age cohorts. We need to be aware that the concept of mental health and achievement and progress made so far in Kosovo, relies on clear definition/diagnosis and combating the stigma attached to mental and emotional health issues.

As in most areas in the world, mental health is still a stigmatized topic in the country and similarly, participants may not have responded truthfully about their depressive symptoms.

The prevalence of depression may therefore be an underestimation, which is particularly worrisome in the light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which may have increased the prevalence further.<sup>24</sup>

The end of the war increased interest in mental health, and this created an opportunity to reform Kosovo's mental health system, which until that time had been hospital focused and biologically oriented. Numerous mental health and psychosocial organizations and government donors were present in Kosovo to help to overcome PTSD and a number of them contributed to reform.

The strategic plan finalized in 2000 and officially approved in 2001 emphasized the strengthening of communi-

ty-based mental health services at the same time as closing Kosovo's **notorious asylum**.

The strategic plan served as the roadmap, through which all actions could be coordinated.

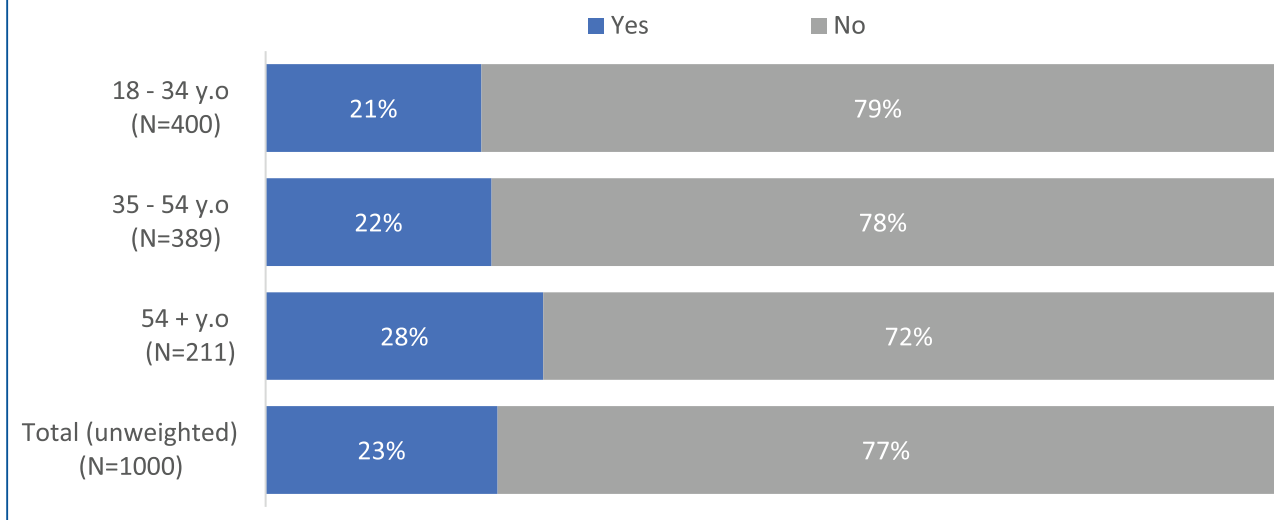
Mental Health Services in the community are usually organized at three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary.

- The primary level services include family medicine centers.
- The secondary level services include psychiatric wards at regional hospitals (4), community-based mental health centers (8) /integration houses (8) and mental health unit for children and adolescents (1). The center for integration and re-habilitation of chronic psychiatric patients in Shtime is also part of CBMHC.
- Tertiary level services include a psychiatric clinic, intensive psychiatric care, an Institute for Forensic Psychiatry, service for children and adolescents, and substance abuse services.

Community mental healthcare is successfully installed in Kosovo and despite ongoing challenges it does represent one of the Kosovo Health system achievements. In this context, the question participants are asked, "do you suffer from mental problems or anxiety or depression" may have been better replaced with the excellent standard tools/ questionnaires that would lead to a certain diagnosis by medical experts. DAAS – Depressive Anxiety Stress Scale. This limitation in the questionnaire used in this study can be addressed in future studies, focusing solely on the health issues of the Kosovo population.

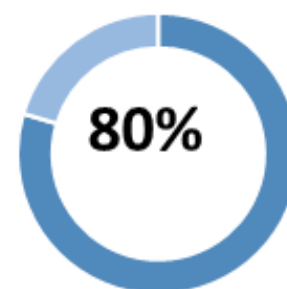
<sup>24</sup> 22.4.201819th Congress EPA Section of Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry, April 4-7, 2018 -Vienna, Austria

Figure 157:

**Use of alternative medicine**

Depressive symptoms can be measured using the Depressive Anxiety Stress Scale-DASS-21 (Addiction Research Center) a 21-item questionnaire consisting of subscales for depressive, anxiety and stress symptoms, each containing seven items scored on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (did not apply to me at all) to 3 (applied to me very much). The sum of scores from the depressive symptoms' subscale was then multiplied by 2. The depressive symptoms scores range from 0 to 42.

Interestingly, a considerable number of participants of this study are looking for alternative medical solutions for their health problems, regardless of age, ethnicity, or region.

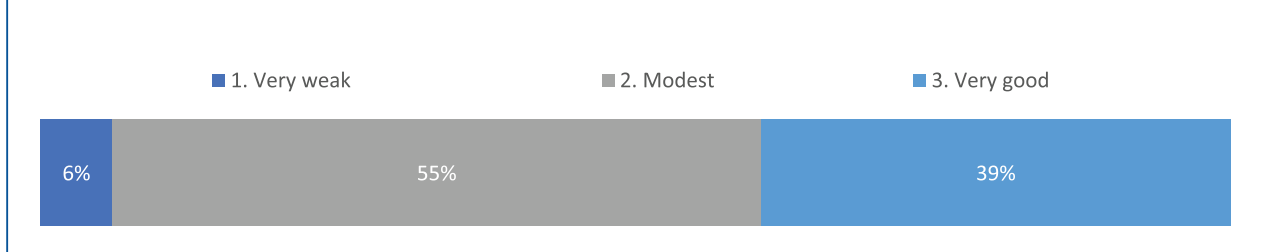
Figure 158:  
**Vaccinated women**

## 8.6 COVID-19 AND WOMEN

Since 12 March, even before the first case of coronavirus infection was reported, Kosovo introduced containment measures to limit the spread of the virus and protect the population's health. However, Kosovo reported a total of 272,154 corona cases with COVID-19, of which 3,192 cases ended fatally.<sup>25</sup>

Women suffered most during the COVID-19 period worldwide, and this was true in Kosovo as well. However, in Kosovo, 80% of women reported being vaccinated, while 8% have reported that vaccine has affected their menstrual cycle. 55% of women declared having modest knowledge about anti-Covid protection measures.

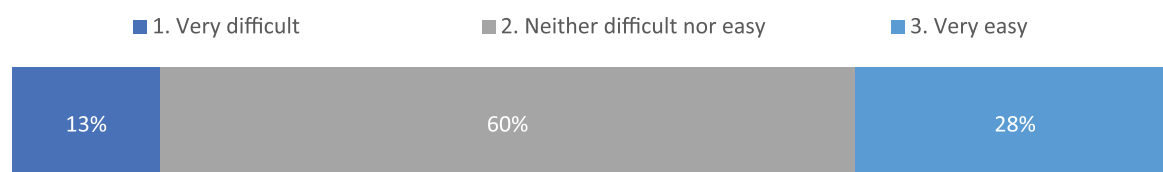
Figure 159:

**Level of knowledge about protection measures against covid-19**

<sup>25</sup>Sources: World Health Organization

In general, women reported that the struggle to avoid getting infected with COVID-19 was neither difficult, nor easy.

Figure 160:

**Situation of avoiding getting infected with covid-19**

## CONCLUSIONS

This analysis is focused on multiple determinants of physical, mental, and social health, and lifestyles relevant to women's health and well-being.

- According to the collected data, the majority of women perceive their health to be generally positive. Of those, 62% of women in the study perceive their health to be "very good".
- This is also evidenced when compared by different age groups. Women belonging to the age group 54+ stated that their health is good (55%) and only 19% of women belonging to this age group stated that their health is weak. There are no significant differences according to ethnicity, or region.

Women's positive perception of their health may also

- be the result of frequent medical checkups and health services offered by local medical centers, who have recently become better equipped in human resources and infrastructure.
- Early detection of malignant disease looks positive as the majority of women are informed about detection measures (53%) and this is evidenced in all age cohorts, except women in the age cohort 54+, where only 38% are informed and 62% are not informed. The younger age cohort lead with 59% informed about early detection.
- From what we have gathered from the answers of participants on questions about chronic diseases, high blood pressure (25%) is the most prevalent, followed by diabetes (11%), heart problems (11%) and anemia (11%), as well as allergies (11%).
- Other chronic diseases, that were not listed in the main question, are reported in the "other" section.

- Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. The solution proposed by experts, is a preventive system through a healthier diet and lifestyle.
- Participants were also asked whether they were satisfied with different services in different regions. For example, in Gjiilan, they are highly satisfied with dentist services, while in Gjakova the highest satisfaction was reported to be with the family doctor. In Prishtina, they are most satisfied with hospital services, although Prishtina does not have yet a city hospital. The services offered by the University Clinic serve the citizens in Prishtina region, as a secondary health service.
- The level of satisfaction with the quality of health services in areas where women live is reported to be between the mean values of 3 and 4, and the highest reported level of satisfaction is attributed to the dentist and family doctor ( $m=3.8$ ), gynecologist ( $m=3.7$ ), and in Ferizaj, Gjakova, and Gjiilan, hospital services ( $m=3.5$ ). Most of these health services have been rated with a mean value of around 4 in the case of Prishtina, Gjakova, and Gjiilan. A slightly lower rate for health services was reported by Peja, Ferizaj, and Mitrovica.
- Participants of this study were asked if they have sought help for mental health and emotional problems. Identifying oneself and accepting mental health problems, continues to remain a taboo topic in Kosovo. Therefore 96% declared 'no' to the question about whether they have sought help, and this response is similar across age cohorts. We need to be aware that the concept of mental health and achievement and progress made so far in Kosovo, relies on a clear definition/diagnosis and combating the stigma attached to mental and emotional health issues.

- Healthy food habits among the interviewed women show that more than half of women (51%) reported that they eat at least one meal with vegetables and fruits during the day, while 40% of them reported that they eat 2-3 healthy meals a day with vegetables and fruits.
- With regard to the body mass index (BMI) of the respondents about half said they have a normal weight(49%), 34% said they are overweight, 15% said they are obese, and only 2% said they are underweight.
- About 20% of the respondents indicated that they exercised for at least 20-30 minutes, 3 times per week. Table 3 shows the different activities women may engage in and walking is the most prominent. About half (48%) of women reported that they walk every day, followed by those who walk 2-3 times a week (26%), and once a week (16%).
- Other activities that they do rarely include bodybuilding/weightlifting, fitness/aerobics, running, professional sport, amateur sport, yoga, mountain climbing, and cycling less.
- Quality and adequate health care and related services for women of all ages and strengthening prevention programs that promote women's health.
- Continuous campaigns and awareness programs regarding mental health issues and malign diseases checks, focused on early prevention.
- Develop an integrated health system with health insurance to address women's health needs.
- Raise awareness around regular health check-ups to improve detection and have earlier treatment and diagnosis of different diseases.
- Make regular health check-ups mandatory for all citizens.
- Provide training to health professionals to better address women's health and access to health care.
- Promote gender-responsive health systems that support the essential rights of women for health which leads to a safe and healthy society.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Urgent reform is needed in preventive health care and investment and proper management of resources already available, in order to offer quality services to all citizens.
- Urgently revamp and make use of the integrated health information system. without it, other recommendations will also fall short.
- Educate, counsel, and empower women and adolescent girls about their rights and reproductive health, addressing unsafe pregnancies and abortion.
- Develop a women's education program to improve health literacy.

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## Appendix – Focus Group Participant Demographics

FG1

Gender: Women

Employment: Mixed

Education completed: Mixed

Municipalities: Gjakova, Peja, Deçan, Prizren, Mitrovica

Number of participants: 6

Code	Employment Status	Completed education	Gender	Age
P1	Employed	Bachelor	Woman	24
P2	Unemployed	Bachelor	Woman	34
P3	Employed	Master	Woman	31
P4	Unemployed	High school	Woman	27
P5	Employed	Bachelor	Woman	28
P6	Student	High school	Woman	24

FG2

Gender: Women

Employment: Mixed

Education completed: Mixed

Municipalities: Mixed

Number of participants: 7

Code	Employment Status	Completed education	Gender	Age
P1	Employed	High school	Woman	47
P2	Unemployed	Master	Woman	36
P3	Employed (part-time)	Bachelor	Woman	38
P4	Unemployed	Bachelor	Woman	36
P5	Employed	Master	Woman	47
P6	Employed	Bachelor	Woman	44
P7	Employed	Bachelor	Woman	51

FG2

Gender: Women

Employment: Mixed

Education completed: Mixed

Municipalities: Mixed

Number of participants: 7

Code	Employment Status	Gender	NGO
P1	Employed	Woman	GLPS - Group for Legal and Political Studies
P2	Employed	Woman	Women's Shelter Prishtina
P3	Employed	Woman	Kosovar Center for Gender Studies
P4	Employed	Woman	GAP Institute
P5	Employed	Woman	Women's Shelter Prizren
P6	Employed	Woman	D4D
P7	Employed	Woman	Kosovo Women's Network

FG4

Gender: Mixed

Employment: Mixed

Education completed: Mixed

Municipalities: Mixed

Number of participants: 7

Code	Employment Status	Gender	Public Institution
P1	Employed	Woman	N/A
P2	Unemployed	Woman	M. of Lipjan
P3	Employed (part-time)	Woman	M. of Prishtina
P4	Unemployed	Man	M. of Shtime
P5	Employed	Woman	M. of Prishtina
P6	Employed	Woman	Agency for Gender Equality
P7	Employed	Woman	M. of Gjakova

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INSIGHTS ON SOCIETY, FAMILY, VALUES, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT,  
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