



# **Social – Economic situation of women in Kukes**

Conditions and opportunities

The study is an attempt to bring a “picture” of the situation of women in Kukes under the affect of the development factors.

**YFI**  
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# Social – Economic situation

## Of women in Kukës



### Youth in Free Initiative, Kukës

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*The opinions and approaches in this study are the responsibility of only the team preparing it and at no means they represent the opinion of OSFA*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The study came as a need to evaluate the social economic situation and identify needs of girls and women in Kukes. Based on the specifics of the group and the social relationship and status women are in Kukes Region, despite interventions in the legislations and the Electoral Code, this social group is excluded and underrepresented.

Lack of gender based equality and lack of representation, demands attention and support from all actors on implementation of strategies and legislation in power. As well, this study brings to the attention that the disfavored situation women and girls are, should be taken into consideration by the group itself, aiming to increase understanding, capacities and active participation in the society, otherwise the situation will continue to be similar and unchanged.

Despite the work and the contribution that this study brings into the light of the actors interested on the field and those who have the legal obligations to help improve the situation, we do not pretend that we have the key to solving the problem. As well it is needed a lot of energy and efforts to increase in numbers and improve in quality similar studies, by including more data and contributions which could help the actors involved in improving the life of girls and women in Kukes Region.

## **RECOGNITION**

The study was made possible through OSFA support.

A special recognition goes to the youth, girls and boys, volunteers of Youth in Free Initiative, who have provided a valuable contribution with their work on the field filling questionnaires and organizing focus groups with the targeted women.

Thank you to all girls and women interviewed who have cooperated during the process and have participated in the focus groups. Thank you and our appreciations to the leaders and members of the political forums, youth forums, Directors and managers of local institutions, councilors of Kukes Municipality, civil society activists and businesswomen/businessmen, social workers etc who have shown readiness and seriousness, and have helped us prepare and successfully finalize this study.

This study is a direct contribution of the team of YFI organization who has shown commitment and coordination at their best on collecting and analyzing data, translation into English, reaction and evaluation of the work conducted by colleges, etc which contributed to the successful finalization in time and good quality of the study.

As well, we appreciate the contribution of all local actors as: municipalities, Communes, Directories etc whom have provided the necessary data for the study.

## ACRONYMS

ALB-AID:	Association of Albanian Assistance for Integration and Democratic Development
CEDAW:	The convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
ECHO:	European Community Humanitarian Office
EA:	Economic Aid
GTZ:	German Organization for Technical Cooperation
INSTAT:	Institute of Statistics
LSE:	London School of Economic
MPCSSHB:	Ministry of Labour, Social affair and equal opportunities
MDG:	Millennium Development Goal
NPO:	Non Profit Organization
NGO:	Non Governmental Organizations
OSCE:	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSFA:	Open Society Foundation for Albania
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
YFI:	Youth in Free Initiative

## **I. FIRST CHAPTER: General description of the study**

### **I.I. Objectives of the study**

The study's objective is to bring into the attention of local actor such as local government, civil society, local media, community groups and all other involved actors, the problems and views of the real socio-economic situation of women in Kukes region. The data collected in the field throughout focus groups, a survey, interviews and other findings, studies and different reports will be referred accompanied by recommendations, which may be valuable for improving the socio-economical situation of women in the local level. Objectives of this study are closely connected with those of the project "Social inclusion through promotion of gender equality and implementation of the law" which the organization "Youth in Free Initiative" Kukes has implemented with the financial support of OSFA in Albania.

Part of this study's aims were to provide information on the Gender equality law and non-discrimination to women, encourage women's involvement in the public debates organized around topics that concern women and young girls, evaluate the situation of social exclusion of women and identify the needs of marginalized groups with the purpose to draw a real picture of the situation and estimate the possibilities for improving the actual situation. The study remains "loyal" to the situation in the field and in an objective way identifies the needs and the level of women's involvement from the social and economical aspect and also provides recommendations for improving the actual situation in the field.

### **I.II. Methodology of the study**

In this study are combined data and information obtained from primary sources such as surveys, interviews (half-structured) and 2 focus groups. As well, the study is based in secondary sources such as statistics and reports relating to Kukes region. The variety of sources used during this study have facilitated and made possible for us to collect reliable information regarding the situation in Kukes.

There have been conducted 7 interviews (half-structured) during the period of October-November 2011. They were held with Political Forums' Directors, journalists, civil society activists, local government and public administration of the local level. Interviews took place in Kukes Municipality and in Shtiqen and Bicaj communes which were facilitated by project assistants.

Regarding secondary sources, during our research we are based on the latest reports published by international organizations in Albania, especially on the social and economical situation of women in Kukes region. Data are obtained from INSTAT and local statistical sources updated with the latest official reports of local NGO-s and local units information Municipality/Communes.

During this study 235 interviews have taken place out of which 198 were women and young girls and 37 men. The survey was focused in the territory of Kukes Municipality and communes Shtiqen and Bicaj. This survey was based in structured questionnaire, printed and

conducted on site directly with the respondent. First, a pilot survey was conducted to understand if changes were necessary in the structure of the interview. After the format was approved by the project directors, interviews were conducted on site with the assistance of project facilitators and collaborators of the organization.

Focus groups were organized in Kukes Municipality. The first meeting was held on 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 with the participation of women and young girls of different age, near the natural park of the city, in an open space. The meeting was held purposefully in this place trying to take advantage from the usual gatherings of women in this area during the favorable weather. The second meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 in the Meeting Room of “Youth in Free Initiative” organization with the participation of 13 women and young girls between 19-30 years old.

### **I.III. Challenges and Limitations**

During this study, different obstacles have surfaced which have influenced the timely completion of the study i.e. scarce official information etc. One of the challenges has been lack of interest from women to participate in the focus groups. Other difficulties are faced in regard to interviewing the female members of the political forums, directresses, local institutions etc. Lack of participation of women especially in the rural areas has been also a concern which may have influenced data collection and perception of the situation and problematic of these women’s everyday lives.

This study also has encountered difficulties in the finding of secondary sources, such as reports and related studies to this area, with the exception of UNIFEM from which so far we have been able to obtain complete and verifiable data.

Kukes Region presents difficulties based on its geographical location and difficult terrain characterized by under developed infrastructure, which becomes an obstacle to work and to easily connect between the city and villages. In the area covered in this survey in Kukes Region besides being quite extended in space and there exist numerous problems regarding the social-economic situation and political representation. All these components are interconnected and form an obstacle to be overcome. Due to the specifics of this area, its economic opportunities, recent developments and them of early transition years, in particularly regarding gender issues, women's rights, their situation and their status, this survey and the analysis and acknowledgment of the situation becomes even more difficult.

The lack of organized social structures in women’s service the impossibility of being part of the labor market, the existence of national policies not translated in realistic interventions has made the women feel excluded.

#### **I.IV. Definitions**

During this study are used theoretical terms related with social exclusion and inclusion, gender equality and political representation of women. These definitions are based on relevant studies, of national and international nature in the above mentioned fields.

#### **I.V. Area of Study**

This study has focused in Kukes region covering Kukes Municipality and communes Shtiqen and Bicaj. These local units are selected based on the population number, the possibility of access to collect information for the preparation of the study. This is because other communes are characterized from a smaller population, distant habitats from each-other, situation which would have made difficult or even impossible in some cases, the realization of the interviews and the collection of information<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to table 2



## II. SECOND CHAPTER: Social and Economic Development

### II.I. Demography and internal migration

Demographic movements are an influencing factor but also a consequence of social and economical conditions of the regions that are most affected by them. In this context, the phenomena of transferring from one given region to another, testifies for the existence of various social and economic problems in these areas. Until 2001, according to the registration of the demographic movements conducted by INSTAT it showed that 36.5 % (92 300) of the internal migrants situated in Tirana, originally came from Kukes prefecture.<sup>2</sup> According to INSTAT this trend regarding the internal migration, will continue constantly until 2021<sup>3</sup>. With the preemptory results from Census 2011, the trend is noticed unchanged since 2001 regarding internal migration. Actually according to Census 2011 it results that the population of Kukes region has continued to diminish with 23 % in the last decade.

Internal migration in Albania is obviously a migration in only one direction: around 91% of the internal migrants between regions have moved towards the center of the country and the coastal regions. According to INSTAT Tirana constitute more than half of the displacements with a great number of internal migrants from Kukes and Dibra. The high rates of migration from north towards the central part of the country testify about a high degree of economical underdevelopment of the northern part of Albania, where investments have been lacking and scarce. From Census 2011 it results that during the last decade 2001-2011 only 2 cities have faced a continual increase of the population such as Tirana and Durres, meanwhile for all other Albanian cities the population number seems to have shrank further. Kukes continues to be placed in the top positions of the list among the cities with the highest migration rate<sup>4</sup> despite lower than during the previous decade. Actually, infrastructure improvements in Kukes District with the implementation of the Albanian Motorway Project (Durres–Kukes) which has diminished the distance between northeastern parts of Albania with the Metropolis can bring change in the trend of the internal migration from Kukes region. This situation results even from the information collected from “Youth in Free Initiative” organization and Census 2011 according to which results that this trend is decreasing in the latest decade.

Northeastern part of Albania is considered as one of the poorest regions in the country and with the highest rates of unemployment. Low economical development of the region however is not the only reason for abandoning the region towards the center. Other factors such as family compositions, education and health service conditions may play also a relevant role in the level of migration from this area. In Kukes Municipality there are a considerable number of families that are supported with Economical Aid by the state. This number has somehow decreased in the last decade. According to INSTAT reports during 2000 the number of the families treated with economical aid reached over 40% in Kukes.<sup>5</sup> Malfunction of regional politics of employment or their inexistence have caused these families to remain for a long

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<sup>2</sup> INSTAT report on the demographic movements of the population until 2021

<sup>3</sup> Data collected from INSTAT

<sup>4</sup> Ibid supra note

<sup>5</sup> Data collected from INSTAT and Kukes Municipality

time part of these schemes. Part of the families treated with economical aid, approximately 150 of them are run by women as head of the family.

Migrants coming from northeastern Albania towards the center are characterized by relatively young age : 68% of the migrants are under the age of 12-39 years old, against the 45% that this age represents in the national population.<sup>6</sup> From Kukes region during the period of 1989-2001 more than 1/3 of the population have transferred towards the center and the coastal regions of the country. Meanwhile migration in the neighboring countries and farther has appeared as a characteristic of the male members of the family especially reaching the peak in the last two decades. This trend seems to differ among women, who tend more to migrate within the country rather than abroad in difference from men. The same trend is noticed regarding internal migration of women as registered from Census 2011.<sup>7</sup> Big demographic movements and especially migration abroad of the male family members has influenced negatively in the economical situation of this region and especially in that of the women living in the northeastern part of the country. This is due to scarce possibilities for women to get employed, be it in the public or private sector. Even more difficult is presented the situation of women and young girls that due to a conservatory mentality after they get married, they remain in the position of housewives and financially dependent from the head of the family like their husband. In the moment when this category of women will not be capable to obtain any economic support from their husbands for different reasons, the reliability of this economical resource would overturn suddenly into a situation with no possible means of income.

## **II.II. The economic situation**

Economical rights of women are represented from the level of participation as a work force, time length of keeping a job position and the salary level. In Kukes region there are many factors that obstacle the development of opportunities for women and young girls and their respective employment. Numerous obligations towards the family, raising of the children, lack of proper professional qualification, courses and little access against property and incapability in this way to obtain loans for private business initiatives, are only few of the various obstacles encountered by women. The economical situation of women in Kukes city results difficult even due to high level of unemployment in comparison to men, and such a fact results even from the survey done recently from “Youth in Free Initiative” . Among men and women interviewed in the rural and urban areas between the ages of 40-59 years old, the male respondents results employed in the level of 45.95%, while the situation appears overturned among the female respondents, where most part of them are unemployed in the level of 43.43%. Among the male and female respondents, it results that the perception of the reasons holding back development and women’s empowerment are the traditional mentality and lack of family support. Most part of the respondents male and female are of the opinion that women are less or not at all economically independent.

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<sup>6</sup>Migration in Albania-Registration of the population and habitats INSTAT 2001 p5

<sup>7</sup>See <http://census.al/> [ last accessed 10/01/12]

From the survey also results that the possibilities for support of women that would like to open a business or engage in political activities are very small, due to their economical situation and lack of autonomy. The economical situation results even more difficult for the families run by women rather than men, due to external migration of the male members of the family or other reasons, these women are obliged to handle the whole weight of family structure. Due to the traditional mentality that is noticed both in the rural and urban areas, few possibilities of employment without the proper education or to the living conditions of a housewife, in most of the cases the only economical resource remains the economical aid provided from the Municipality/commune or alternatively the financial help of the relatives. In Kukes region are actually still preserved the traditional social structures that does not leave much space to the independent engagement of women in the business sector and entrepreneurship, their economical empowerment and independent initiatives. The high level of migration abroad of especially the male members of the family and the old family structure based on patriarchal relations have overloaded women with work in the private and family sector, leaving outside of the her sphere of interest activities that would require her serious engagement in a different area such as that of the business and politics. The patriarchal structure of the families continues to make men the first responsible partner for the financial support of the family even in the conditions of migration abroad through remittances. Regarding the question: Do you think that providing for the financial support of the family is also obligation of the women, 94.59% of the men and 98.99% of the women responded that yes it is an obligation of women as well. However, according to the site observations it results that the reality is not very much so in respect to the real situation of women inside and outside the family.

Observations of the everyday life show that the participation of women and young girls in decision- making processes it is also related with their access to property, their education level, their living place and age. For issues within the family, when the decision relates with the financial expenses, number of children, their education, migration internal or abroad of the family or of one of its members, they are mainly taken from the male head of the family<sup>8</sup>. As far as concerns women's participation in politics, according to the discussions held with 2 focus groups from "Youth in Free Initiative" it was emphasized from women that the only period when the political structures turned their attention towards women was during the electoral processes. Even in such a case, women agreed that the political engagement of the political structures was minimal. The main reason for this seems to be the fact that political parties still are unaware of the importance of female presence in the political structures. This is also due to the fact that political parties do not feel "threatened" and afraid to lose women's votes in case they do not include enough women within the political structures. In contrary, it seems as the Albanian voters still vote the political subject or the party and not the candidate, not to mention that in Albania politics still continues to be considered as a "men's job"<sup>9</sup> condition which causes women to doubt of their own capabilities and hesitate to support a female candidate more than a male one during electoral campaigns.

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<sup>8</sup> The National strategy for gender equality and against domestic violence (2007-2010) MPCSSHB

<sup>9</sup> Albanian Elections Survey 2008- UNIFEM

This situation does not seem to have changed a great deal even after the enactment of the legal quota of 30%<sup>10</sup>, according to which for the political parties that did not include in their lists 30% female candidates alternated in ranking with the male candidates would have to pay a fine of 30,000 Lek during the local elections. This type of sanction has resulted highly ineffective for law implementation from the political parties due to the symbolic monetary amount, but also due to lack of the execution of the sanctions from the respective organs. This is one of main reasons of a great vacuum in the female political representation, in the local level despite the legal changes.

The engagement of the local structures towards these problems has been very small or totally lacked in some cases. The level of information among the inhabitants especially in the rural areas has totally lacked according to the data provided from the survey. The citizens' perception regarding women's involvement in business activities and politics is also very low among male and female respondents. In rural areas the engagement of women both in the business or political sector seems not an ordinary phenomenon. In the situation of economical hardships, gender equality issues seem totally put aside from the attention of the inhabitants.

### **II.III. Job Market**

Kukes District is highly affected from the problems that have to do with the youth migration, black and informal employment in agriculture, lack of professional training for increasing the productivity and lack of safety and health conditions at work place.<sup>11</sup>

The economical crisis in the neighboring countries (particularly Greece) during the year 2010-2011 has increased the number of migrants returned in Kukes, whom are added to the numerous group of the unemployed category. As with regard to the women's unemployment, the possibility to find a job and the time women pass unemployed waiting for working opportunity is relatively longer than those of men. Also it is noticed a disproportional distribution of the employed women between the public and the private business sector. Number of women engaged in small businesses still remains very small in comparison to men, despite the fact that the unemployment is higher among women rather than men in Kukes region. Women are faced with a high level of unemployment and despite that, they are less in search for a job than men, and for this reason they do not constitute an active workforce in the job market.

In rural areas, women are engaged most of their time in agricultural and familiar activities. According to the survey, unemployment rate in the rural areas is in the level of 52% while in the urban area is around 37%. Among male respondents 45.95% of them are employed. Among female respondents both in rural and urban areas, 43.43% of them are unemployed. The high unemployment rate is more typical for the rural area where in general exists only the agricultural type of employment. In the city, the level of unemployment is very disturbing, where it is noticed a concentration of the female employers in the public sector

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<sup>10</sup> The electoral Code (approved by the Law 10019, date 28<sup>th</sup> of December 2008)

<sup>11</sup> Official Webpage of Ministry of Work, Social Issues and Equal Opportunities [last accessed 19/01/12]

and less in that of private business. This situation has led further to women's discrimination and their social exclusion.

In the municipality level, it results that the number of businesses that pay municipality taxes is 307 from which only 3.3% or 3 businesses are managed from women.<sup>12</sup>

According to the survey results, women lack the family support and especially the support of their partners to initiate any business activity. Among the female respondents, most part of them of about 62.86% do not possess any type of private activity. Furthermore most part of the existing activities in the region is managed by the male members of the family. According to the perception of the male respondents, the proportion of men and women who manage a private activity or business is in the levels of 40.54% for men and 8.11% for women.

Another concern regarding the job market situation is related with the effects of the informal employment increase and with the high levels of migration within the country. In the national level, according to INSTAT the employment structure shows that the economy is still dominated from the agricultural activities and other traditional products. The "modern" sector of employment is small. More than 60%<sup>13</sup> of the employment possibilities are concentrated in agriculture where the production is low and organized around family businesses. All these factors disfavor women's position and their possibility to change something in the existing order. The high level of informality in the job market, especially in the private sector very often is the cause of violation of employees' rights and their compromise to work with a lower salary.

Conditions of the job market are especially unfavorable for women, creating for them situation of discrimination and structural barriers against their employment possibilities. Women register low levels of social participation and high levels of unemployment. In the national level, women salaries are in average 35% lower than those of men, considering here their age, education and other personal characteristics<sup>14</sup>.

Programs to encourage employment in the local level are focused in small scale interventions that financially support employment and professional training of the unemployed category. Financial resources assigned to these programmes are limited and have gradually decreased since 2000 nationally. Meanwhile the northeastern part of Albania has traditionally been even more outside the attention of the governmental plans.

A concerning problematic remains that of creating new job positions in the region and especially in the formal sector of employment. This extended difficult situation in the northeastern region has created high level of informality which has followed with other negative phenomenon as the exclusion from the job market of several groups and especially of women, in the absence of social assistance to help them. Women as part of the job market face more difficulties to find a job, and if they lose it they remain in the conditions of unemployment for a longer time than men. Unemployment data suggest that there is a higher level of discouragement among women in the job market in the national and local level. Discouragement is evident also in the data for long-term unemployed people in the national

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<sup>12</sup> Data collected from Kukës Municipality 2011

<sup>13</sup> World Bank Study "Albania – An evaluation of the job market" (May 2006) p v

<sup>14</sup> Ibid supra note p v

level. In 2004, 72% of unemployed women had been unemployed for at least one year in comparison to the 65% that this resulted for men.<sup>15</sup>

Reasons for the lack of engagement of women in the economical sector are similarly percept from men and women interviewed during the survey. Most part of the respondents, think that economical independence of women is low or is totally lacking. The respondents in the urban area think that very often is discussed in regard to women's empowerment meanwhile in rural areas this perception is totally the opposite as these issues are rarely discussed neither from the local government or the community. In the rural areas the respondents have demonstrated more skeptics in regard to providing support to women for raising a business or participate in political activities. Both in rural and urban areas, the respondents in the most part of them think that women are not free to engage in politics or private businesses. In urban areas there exists a division between the group that think that women lack their individual freedom to engage in such activities and the group that does not. In the rural areas, the group of respondents who think that women do dispose a level of independence and individual freedom are in a greater minority.

#### **II.IV. Social wellbeing and social protection**

Despite there is no recent official data on the poverty level in the region, studies conducted by international organizations, show very high figures. According to a study prepared by UNICEF (2000) the past decade in Kukes Region, on average 45% lived under the poverty level and coped the major part of the expenditures needed with income from EA.<sup>16</sup> In some remote communes of Kukes more than 60% of the population have as their main income the EA. Such as Bushtrice, Surroj, Grykë e Çajës, Tropojë, Fierze Communes etc .

According to local data, the district counts 60,521 inhabitants, a figure that includes villages and the town. Despite that the urban population has increased during the last decade, it still remains less in percentage than that living in the rural areas. In 2011 the difference was as such, 35.8% with 64.2% urban compared to rural population. Meanwhile this ration has changed during the last decade on 61% with 39% accordingly rural and urban population.<sup>17</sup> This changing process has occurred very slowly and this is one of the causes of the current situation as informality on employment, small opportunities for industrial growth and opening new jobs specifically for women and girls. Under such circumstances even social protection of groups in need, like women and poor families, is not reached at a desirable level. One of the facts is that because of lack of clear data on this phenomenon we are not able to have a clear picture of the situation.

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<sup>15</sup> World Bank Study "Albanian- an evaluation of the job market" (May 2006) pg v

<sup>16</sup> Evaluation of socio economic condition of regions in Albania-UNICEF (Dec 2000)

<sup>17</sup> Registration of population and housing, INSTAT 2010

## II.V. Education

The influence of education on facing and solution of the gender equality problems is of great importance. Education remains one of the important means that modern society has and could use as awareness raising instrument target the whole society trying to reach gender based equality, avoiding differences, discrimination and gender based abuse by respecting the rights of women to have equal chances and opportunities.

The education sector at a first look, gives the impression that it is the sector that employs the greater number of women, including the low, middle and high level education and conserves gender based reports on the staff employment. Despite this, when analyzing statistics, we can notice lack of gender based representation specifically of women in managing positions of the education institutions

On the 9 year cycle, the pedagogical staff is as well not gender based balanced. During 2011, in Kukës District, (including schools in urban and rural areas) the ratio of the academic staff is 596 men and 359 women. From the above, in managing posts, at district level, are 46 men and 19 women. As well at the high level education, it results the same report of inequality of the staff employed. Only 72 are women and 135 men. Meanwhile in managing posts, women are less represented, at a rate of 5 with 15 or 1 woman to 3 men in managing positions.<sup>18</sup> *From the statistics we find out that with the growing responsibility, the number of women decreases for these functions.*

Because of the re-organizing of the social life under the Principle of personal freedom and market economy, the school abandonment, decrease of the level of education specifically in rural remote areas, is often noticed. There is no data on the gender based abandonment of the schools.

No clear data could be provided on the general level of education of the inhabitants of Kukës District. In any case, factors like concentration of the majority of the inhabitants in the rural areas, plays an abstractive role on increasing the level of education specifically of women and girls whom are under greater difficulty to continue their studies away from home.

From the survey, it results that the level of education of the majority of those interviewed (urban and rural) is the high education including man and women. Meanwhile, a distinction is noticed between men and women. From the men interviewed, the second larger group is the one with a university degree<sup>19</sup>. This tendency is not noticed from the women group interviewed as the second largest group is the one with low level education (8-years). Despite the data from the survey, the data from the registration of students in Kukës University branches on Economy, Nursery and Foreign languages, the number of female students is higher than the number of male students. This could be of different reasons, as the geographical access of the university which provides more facilities to study than the universities in the Capital or other towns. As well the changing level of rural-urban population might positively contribute to this increase of women registered and attending university.

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<sup>18</sup> The data is taken from RD of Education, Office of Statistics, November 2011, Kukës

<sup>19</sup> The number of the men interviewed is small, so the results are not representative.

## **II.VI. Health Care**

Based on study conducted by the MLSAEO at national level, I results that the knowledge of women on reproductive issues and family planning are constantly growing, specifically supported by the media, electronic or written. In Kukes Region, despite the unfavorable economic situation, the birth rate remains high compared with other regions of Albania. The national report is on child 0-4 years old for every 5 women at reproductive age, ( 15-49 years old), according to a study conducted by INSTAT<sup>20</sup>, in Kukes this figure reaches one child for two women. Not being able to have recent data we are tended to believe that the rate is almost equal even after one decade as the influencing factors on the phenomenon have not undergone much change like urbanization, level of information, conservator mentality etc. In this contest, needs to be analyzed even the sexual education performed at schools, the role of which should be primary on supporting an inclusive sexual education culture by affecting directly women and indirectly young men to serve the universal need as culture, education and standards of specific hygiene. The high number of births is in contrast with the few possibilities there are to generate income from employment or agriculture work from the population. Despite the above, this feature shows the dominance of the traditional model of the large family with many kids still affecting the social order.

The reasons aborts happen is influenced by lack of information on family planning, a characteristic of mainly rural areas and their few possibilities to economically large families with many children.

## **II.VII. Institutional policies and projects on gender equality**

The support to women to be equal in the society is closely related to some natural gender specifics and unfairly consolidated stereotype roles from the society, as her family obligations. As for the regional state policies on gender equality and encouragement of active participation of women, they almost do not fully exist or at best the level of the information of the community on these initiatives ort policies is very low, a factor that raises a question mark on the results and impact in the community.

At local level, according to the information collected by the Regional Employment Office<sup>21</sup>, there is an initiative of UNDP-Kukës which addresses the need to increase women participation in decision making and their involvement in politics.

Meanwhile, The Regional Employment Office initiated a programme to support local businesswomen at Prefecture level, Kukës, Has and Tropojë) where 11 women selected to raise a business were trained and on this phase two of them were able to benefit a grand of \$2000 to start their business. As well, other organizations have offered support to women. GZT has offered funds to support businesses set up by women. Based on this project, two women were supported (Has and Kukes) with a fund of \$2500 each on the field of artisan productions.

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<sup>20</sup> Migration in Albania- Registration of population and Housing INSTAT 2001, pg 44

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Mrs. M. Hoxha, Directress of the Regional Inspectorate of Employment, Kukës



According to the Employment office, the number of women requesting an employment is much lower than the number of men. This is due to the fact that the job market offers little to girls and women.

Projects and attempts have been continues from different actors in the region on addressing gender equality. The big difference is the intensity and the number of project at different times. During election campaigns, the number of projects and initiatives grows, and after that the number falls. Despite the positive results of these attempts, the sustainability is not guaranteed and in many cases, the results achieved do not produce the desired impact.

In Kukes, projects on the field of gender equality have been implemented by international, National and Local Organizations profiled on that field. OSBE has been running a specific programme supporting women, as well as UN WOMEN, UNDP, OSFA, OPIC etc. These programmes and initiatives request continuously the engagement and partnership of local actors, state institutions as well as NGO-s.

From the local actors, we can mention the women political forums, NGO-s like WCCS, YFI<sup>22</sup>, ALB-AID, Woman in Development etc which in partnership with local institutions and with the support of different donors, have contributed on the improvement of the situation, increase of gender representation and prepare clear priorities for the future.

## **II.VIII. Ngo-s and Media**

Gender equality and discriminations are relatively new terms in Albanian society despite that women discrimination in different fields has been always present. An important role on raising awareness of the society on these issues plays media and civil society, especially on promotion of women in politics.

### **Civil society and its characteristics in Kukes**

The descent from the system where voluntary work, reciprocal help and solidarity were misused and abused with in favor of the power, have contributed that the citizens' trust be problematic and common contribution into civil society and other organized structures be very small. This seems as a characteristic of small and poor communities, who lack even the necessary support. The lack of participation in public life of citizens today has its source at the past. A. Krasniqi, refers to this situation declaring that "This negative inheritance of the past jointly with some other less important factors contributed extensively on lowering the motivation and civic engagement (Krasniqi, 2004, pg.36). Civil Society Organizations which base part of their job on voluntarism of their supporters took a hit strait at the beginning of their work.

The needs of an active civil society, highlighted immediately after the democratic changes in Albania, as a strong necessity for the newly reformed social structure. Initially, they were considered not only as opponents of any government policy but also as new alternatives of offering new ideas. In the early years of transition, first national organizations opened their branches in Kukes<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> YFI is engaged on gender equality field with a clear contributions in years.

<sup>23</sup> Association for Democratic Culture, Helsink Comettee etc

The year 1999 marks the initial steps of civil society consolidation in Kukes. That period of time, corresponded with Kosovo war and massive evacuation of its citizens by Serbian genocide. The exodus of 1999 brought about several national and international organizations assisting in crisis management. The established organizations in Kukes, further continued to function even after the home return of Albanians from Kosovo. Many local actors involved in international NGO-s, got to know the way how non-governmental organizations operate and were those first who set up the local NGO-s in Kukes.

In 2001, with the support of CARE International and funded by ECHO, was implemented the community centers development project, aiming to provide small grants as a social service support for NGO-s and training their leaders (CARE, 2001, f. 7). Direct beneficiaries of this project were a small group of local actors that participated in the organized training by CARE International. Aftermath, they got small grants and implemented mini-projects for target groups they had selected. Hence, come up the first gender based organizations.

During 2002-2008<sup>24</sup>, part of UNDP program was the set up of community based organizations with the focus on individuals' voluntarism. It was aimed to advocate their interests and to propose development priorities of each community group. This initiative was extended to rural zones as well. Simultaneously, there were found a few community based organizations with the focus on women. Regardless the normal running of organizations during the project period, their later sustainability was not guaranteed. And the fact was that, they couldn't afford continuation of activities and they couldn't become active actors in their community.

The number of organizations and their level of functioning in Kukes, have a significant importance for the study being conducted. Their registration and way of operating are regulated by the Albanian state law that specifies not only organizational details but also mandates them to register nearby Tirana district court. Considering the number of registered organizations, the figures given out differ. For instance: according to the Social Service Unit in Kukes, out of approx 50 local NGO-s in total, only three of them are registered to the Regional Directory of Tax, which pay regularly financial commitments. Other 3-4 local NGO-s are seasonal<sup>25</sup>, mainly related to political campaign or similar with. The rest of organizations, are almost totally inactive and they do not represent any social group.

The civil society in Kukes has lack of capacities to create solid organizational networks, although there are individuals with strong capacity. The important role of civil society on life democratization, improvement of social services, strengthening of relations between community and target groups and to generate gender based organizations, obviously is difficult.

There are two to three women organizations that operate in Kukes, depending on the projects they get. The dependence on external financial sources, the lack of vision and development strategy, and their operation within a close staff, signify doubts for their existence.

### ***Media***

In Kukes region, the media broadcast is being delivered by a local TV and a local radio. The former has an experience of 14 years and the latter one has an experience of 51 years

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<sup>24</sup> During this period were established over 50 NGOs

<sup>25</sup> Data collected from Kukes Tax Directory (April 2011)

transmission. There 8 journalists employed (3 females and 5 males), but their proportion in administration staff is more balanced. In the regional level, there is also another local TV which operates in Barjam Curri with time limited broadcasting. Also, in Kukes there is a lack of local magazines and newspapers, even though contracted correspondents report local/regional news to the main national media. The local media transmission remains in the context of simply amusing and reporting programs, without concrete awareness initiatives and without any approach to current social topics. Mainly, it happens not only due to the financial reasons but also for the lack of staff capacities upon gender issues. Furthermore, this matter of concern has been constantly neglected by central and local authorities.

The same phenomenon is being remarked in national level too. It comes out by the fact that, the majority of national visual media are privately directed and the financial opportunities often define the program editions. The gender issues are included in the program and tv displayed, generally in the format of roundtables and open discussions, only when they have been part of local NGO-s' activities.

By means of interviews with local television employees<sup>26</sup>, it appears that issues of gender equality and woman discrimination bring up many obstacles during its treatment. Particularly, difficulties are found in gathering information on local level and in view of regional mentality towards this subject. Consequently, there aren't enough data ensured to raise concrete findings.

Based on national level conducted survey, it results that the role of local media in Kukes is not in the same level of national ones, re women concerns on economic affairs, political involvement and education problems<sup>27</sup>.

The media in Albania are much more occupied with other issues that attract public attention, rather than gender equality and women discrimination issues. In this respect, as long as the political affairs are more preferable and political itself does not show any interest on previous matters, ditto media will follow what is public community interested more. The media attitude toward against gender equality issues has not been proceeding of local / national mentality and level of politics in Albania. Gender equality and women discrimination, remain strong issues to be addressed for development of society and democracy in the country. All gender initiatives so far, are taken out with the assistance of international organizations and not like inner initiatives of Albanian society. Hereto, gender equality is not considered as a phenomenon inside Albanian society but as an imported concept from internationals, together with ratification of convections and other undersigned agreements. A very substantial role of media is to accelerate the distribution of information to the public, on purpose to raise their awareness, which unfortunately is hardly accomplished not only for the local media but also for the national ones.

Thereupon, the cooperation between media and local NGO-s, during awareness activities, addressing the issue of gender equality and the improvement of woman's situation, has been very fruitful. At the contrary, considering that NGO-s working in this field, are depended to financial sources, which in the most cases are quite modest and number restricted, can't fill the gaps leftovers by non-paid attention of state structures.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Mr. J. Hallaci ( Journalist of local media and reporter of national media)

<sup>27</sup> Albanian Woman and Gender Equality Issue – Study by MOLSAEO based on a national questionnaire

### III. THIRD CHAPTER: Social inclusion and exclusion

#### III.I. Social exclusion concepts

The concept of social exclusion is relatively a new term in Albania, used in both academic and political point of views. Knowing that this phrase is considered as a new term nowadays, it doesn't necessarily mean that the social exclusion phenomenon hasn't existed before, regardless of what was implied or how it was interpreted by the language times before. Whilst, this concept is recently used in Albania, they (exclusion, inclusion and social cohesion concepts) are widely used by scholars, international institutions and organizations. European Council has revised the European Social Charter<sup>28</sup> in 1996 aiming to adjust with the new social structures created after the years 1990. In this framework, Albania has ratified/undersigned it in the year 2002.

One of the most famous researchers on social exclusion is John Pierson, who defined this phenomenon as an action caused by humans, excluding themselves from society through violation of the moral values (Pierson, 2010). He generalized people, defining the social exclusion as a social phenomenon, which is mistreated and violated by society itself (like the above mentioned social charter).

Social exclusion tackles those who are not able to take part in public institutions. According to Pierson, social exclusion phenomenon consists on violation of standards for social justice and inability to effectively participate in politics as well (Pierson, 2010).

The social exclusion concept in Kukes, takes a broader meaning rather than sticking to a close perception that of material poverty, even though it is the predecessor core if we refer to social and economic conditions, gender equality, cultural and political rights, which create in this case favorable circumstances for social exclusion of specific groups. Aftermath, this process affects the life quality and cohesion of society.

Social inclusion concept might be defined as the opposite of social exclusion. It has to do with the opportunity to fully take part in social activities and the opportunity to live with dignity.

Another useful definition of social exclusion is that of Julian Le Grand who is Social Policy Professor in LSE<sup>29</sup> as follow: 'A British man is socially excluded if (a) he/she is resident in Great Britain, but (b) beyond his/her control, cannot participate in normal activities like the other UK citizens and (c) he/she wants to take part' (Le Grand, 1998). Under this definition, we might say that, if you want to take part and at the same time are directed by someone else, in this case we haven't to do with voluntary exclusion.

Moreover, Atkinson from LSE gets deeper into this definition explaining it via two articles: '1. the person doesn't take part because he/she is directed and 2. He/she wants to participate' (Atkinson, 1998:45). If someone would ask: what could be the problem of voluntary social exclusion? In our opinion, voluntary and non-voluntary exclusion have differences and the problem of voluntary exclusion is that it impacts directly the development of community and the cooperation of community actors for social solidarity.

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<sup>28</sup> The European Social Card is opened for signing in Torino on 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1961. It was revised on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1996 in Strasburg, France.

<sup>29</sup> LSE (London School Economic)

### **III.II. The impact of poverty on women social exclusion in Kukes**

Based on previous definitions, we may figure out the main elements that cause social exclusion like: poverty, low incomes, application of non-formal education and the lack of qualified education. All international institutions reports such as UNDP and WB shows that since 2001 till 2005, Albania has been the poorest country in Europe.

After the 90's, the poverty has been present in several regions in Albania especially in northern areas. According to a survey carried out in 2008 by INSTAT, WB and UNDP, rates the poverty scale in national level 25.4% (in 2002), it went down 18.5% in 2005 and 12.4% in 2008.

Regarding the 2009 UNIFEM report, the poverty situation and social services have remained almost at the same conditions. The 2002 national strategy, that aims to identify and address the extreme poverty, is not properly implemented at all (UNIFEM, 2009:7).

The women in Kukes Region are the one of marginalized groups who suffers more the consequences of social and economical transition.

Gender inequality, remains a serious concern because of gender traditions and manhood mentality, which has kept them away of increasing careers and fulfillment of familiar responsibilities.

Referring to UNIFEM study upon social and economic situations of women in Kukes Municipality will see that apart of mentality and current traditions, they have to face financial difficulties, being excluded by law from the economic aid scheme (EA).

The economic aid law quotes: "A family doesn't benefit financial assistance if at least a member of the family is abroad (outside the state) for education, medical treatment or duty charged by any international organizations" (Law No. 9355, 2006). This is a clear situation, where the law itself excludes its own citizens in need from basic services. There are many cases of emigrants who are reported to be arrested and kept in jail; unemployed or even missing people and their families are still not financial treated by EA.

### **III.III. Inclusion of women in decision making**

Women participation in governance through different democratic means is the best representation of this category playing an important role in democracy development and promotion of human values.

Citizens must have equal access in governance and exercise their rights without racial, gender, or cultural discriminations. The law provides justice and formal equality to all citizens, even though it is impossible to be applied to all of them if they are not real participants in governance.

Apart from the law, the women participation in decision making process in Kukes region has been at very low levels and the most typical case in Albania. Kukes district is composed by 14 communes and one Municipality. During the time period 2007-2011, out of 200 Municipal and communes' council members, no females have been members and none of them was candidate for the leading position.

After the by-election in 2011, out of 25 municipal council members in Kukes, only two of them are women. It is impossible to be represented by anyone who is not from disadvantaged neighborhood and to protect their interests. Likewise, women cannot be better represented by men. Suzane Dovi from Arizona University emphasized that only members of vulnerable groups have a common vision for development of their community (Dovi, 2004). In Kukes district, the gender equality law and the 30% quota of women participation in politics, is not realized even though the gender issue campaigns are carried out by media and civil society.

If the trend in urban areas has progressive increase, on the other hand the rural zones remain a serious problem and rural women are even more excluded and unrepresented. In the last 5 years, potential donors like UN Women and UNDP have constantly addressed gender equality issues and strengthening of women's role in decision making process. They have also provided financial and technical support for local initiatives, programs or projects based on gender. Youth in Free Initiative organization (YFI) has undertaken such initiatives serving as a potential actor in the avocation of gender representation and their related issues. In this respect, can be mentioned the monitoring of local and parliamentary elections. It is monitored women participation in voting process and their electoral campaign activities too. With the support of UN Women and UNDP, YFI organization monitored the process of local elections on May 2011, involving 19 observers throughout the Kukes region aiming to monitor women participation in voting process and women commissioners in voting centers.

Findings from monitoring report, show that out of 8 voting centers throughout the region, which have had women commissioners, 6 of them with one per each and the two voting centers with 2 women commissioners, whereas, out of 133 commissioners in total, only 10 of them or 7.5% were women. It must be pointed out that all women commissioners have been members of political parties. Another issue noticed during the campaign activities was the low participation of women in electoral meetings, particularly in rural areas. Also the respective political candidates, presented discourse and platforms without referring to women concerns and their problem solutions.

The women representation in local level and in political parties forums is quite low, besides the women forums in regional level that function formally (as per communes, these forums don't exist at all). The local parties' forums have little participation of women members and there are rarely cases where they own leading positions, but do not have power enough to influence in decision makings. The involved political women in Kukes, are appeared only on political meetings during electoral campaigns, mainly as listeners or simply to create the perception that these forums have women in their innings.

Based on the responds of interviewers, indicate the reasons why women development and their strengthening in business and political fields have remained backward, are just because of traditional mentality and the lack of family support. Their perception for women involvement in these fields is very low. Both males and females asked in the questionnaire are answered that women are responsible for domestic work and men are responsible to ensure incomes. In rural areas, it is put aside as a second hand issue not only by inhabitants but also by local responsible state institutions. Moreover, when males were asked about the freedom of women to take part in political forums, they responded that women are not free but they have to be preoccupied with domestic work rather than politics or else. At the same time, women pronounced that do not feel free due to familiar and social barriers. But

certainly, their perception of freedom concept remains subjective. These findings require utmost joint efforts between civil society and political structures to change the gender balance in decision making.

Another frustration taken out from interviews and focus groups discussions is the women lack of trust to local political leaders as long as they ignore gender issues and have all the power to make decisions; Women also show no interest at all to participate in election because of corruption and arbitrary judgments in local governance. They have uttered that men are easier corrupted than women, that's why they do not offer leading position to women, because would be more difficult corrupted. Likewise, interest of community at large to participate on election has gone down for the non-realized promises of elected candidates voiced out during election campaign.

The concern raised under this study, has to do with the lack of marginalized groups representation, such as women in Kukes. The politics take them into consideration only on electoral campaigns and often they speak on behalf of women, but in reality they do not try to solve any of their problems. Being in these circumstances, it is impossible to improve their life conditions. What means can be used by women in Kukes district, who mainly come from low income families, to set against the political power that seems to have also the economical power? Actually, the democratic means are provided by law, but the question stands on the lack of initiatives and trust in solving the problems through democratic process. The long transition itself has shown that democratic means are not applied to solve normal situation.

The democratization process in Kukes local governance has failed. It can be easily verified from the official statistics that, females compose half of population and they are not represented, as a result they are automatically excluded from the decision making. As long as social groups are excluded from decision making process, then the democratization issue will not be solid and the social exclusion will remain inevitable problem for the same people of this region.

#### **III.IV. Social inclusion policies for women at local level**

Regarding the women social policies, they do not exist neither at regional level nor local or communes' level. Meanwhile, there have been a national strategy for gender equality and domestic violence (2007-2010), but this strategy has never been applied at least in Kukes. If we pass through the main parts of this strategy: gender balance in decision making, economic strengthen of women, social or health care etc..., all these components are not attached to local policies and are not achieved as the national strategy demands. In accordance with the interview findings, 80% of interviewees declared that do not have knowledge about social policies and 70% of women interviewees responded that they have not benefited from these social policies.

In general, the interviewees were not aware of strategic plans or/and other additional documents for gender balance. National strategy provides social aid for different families like large families, Roma families, Egyptians, family with orphans. But in reality, the financial assistance provided to these families is inconsiderable to build up basic conditions for a normal life, not to mention health care insurance or hygiene just as interviewees answered.

### **III.V. Women's rights, legislation, referring mechanisms; (ref documents and laws)**

#### Albanian Documents on Gender Equality Support

##### Constitution

##### Article 18

The article 18 of constitution (1998) defines that all are equal in front of the law and no one may be unjustly discriminated against for reasons such as gender, race, religion or philosophical beliefs, ethnicity, language, political, economic condition, education, social status, or ancestry. This principle is unique for all citizens both men and women. In fact, this specifies constitution as neutral regarding the gender equality.

#### Law No.9970, dated 24.7.2008 FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SOCIETY

##### Article 1

##### Object

This law regulates fundamental issues of gender equality in public life, the protection and equal treatment of women and men, equal opportunities and chances to exercise their rights, as well as their participation and contribution in the development of all social fields.

##### Article 2

##### Aim

The aim of this law is:

- a) to provide effective protection from gender discrimination and any other form of behaviour that encourages gender discrimination;
- b) to define measures that provide for equal opportunities among women and men, to eliminate any form of gender based discrimination in any of its forms;
- c) to define responsibilities of central and local state authorities for developing and enforcing normative acts, as well as policies in support of encouraging gender equality in society.

##### 30% of quota for women participation

On 19 November 2008 – the Assembly ratified New Electoral Code which includes the 30 percent of quota for women's participation in politics. This code binds all political parties to set at least 30% of women as candidates in elections.

#### National Strategy for Gender Equality and Domestic Violence

On July 2006, Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities decided to frame out National Strategy for Gender Equality and against Domestic Violence and Action Plan.

This document constitutes an important basis for policy and legislative progress towards gender equality and non – violence families.

#### International Documents in Support of Gender Equality

##### CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) requires member states to condemn discrimination against women in political, social,



economical and cultural fields, also must take all the necessary measures including legislation in order to modify or eliminate laws, regulations, current practicalities that constitute women discrimination. Albanian government ratified the convention in 1993.

#### Beijing Declaration

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, promoted by 180 countries, supports the solemn acts of governments and represent a detailed elaboration of what CEDAW Convention requires to build upon national mechanisms. One of the most important topics of this platform is Women and Economy

#### OMD (Objectives of Millennium Development)

The Millennium declaration, signed on September 2000 in the high level meeting of United Nations, urges member states “to promote gender quality and women empowerment, as an effective way to fight poverty”. The third OMD objective is “to promote gender equality and women participation in decision making”. Objective of 11th: “to eliminate gender discrimination in elected and decision making positions in the central and local levels as well.

## **IV. FOURTH CHAPTER: Findings and situation evaluation**

### **IV.I. Women opportunities for financial incomes**

The employment concern is one of the most serious problems along which are related other situations too. In the whole length of this study, it is noted the need of contacted for greater employment opportunities.

The labor market differs from urban to rural areas based on specific needs of respective communities. The proximity between the two areas (urban and rural), doesn't favor small businesses in rural zones.

Regardless the primary perception of greater employment opportunities for women in urban areas, it is actually a wrong thought because the huge number of women can't find a job and turned it into an opportunity of economic engagement.

The business still has not managed to employ women who suffer the lack of traditional employment. The only initiative launched last year for opening of a private shoe make company<sup>30</sup>, which has been positively in creating employment opportunities for round 100 women and young ladies.

If we have a quick overview on labor market and business development in general, we will confirm that the service sector like café-bars<sup>31</sup>, restaurants, hotels etc, is a good opportunity for women to work. Although this trade market seems to be more potential in the first sight, in fact it is exceptive for women. You can find absolutely no females serving in the bar just because of the old mentality of society at large.

The state administration remains one of the sustain source of incomes for women. Even though, the number of women working in public state institutions is equal to men, still they are more appointed in the service sectors.

Other financial sources for families and women are unemployment assistance and economic aid. The number of families treated by economic aid in Kukes Region is 71%<sup>32</sup>. This undoubtedly indicates high level of poverty but doesn't show if these incomes are sufficient to meet the basic needs. NE ranges from 600 to 7000ALL<sup>33</sup>. Being aware of increased family numbers included in the financial aid, makes urgent and quite necessary the reformation of current scheme<sup>34</sup>.

The unemployment financial assistance if benefited by a small number of former employees for 1 year. Then if not registered as employed, pass to economic aid.

As we mentioned above, another economic opportunity is agriculture working in rural zones. But the land category, arable land, segregation of private properties and high costs of

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<sup>30</sup> This is the first private investment in Kukes after more than 20 years and about 18 years after the clouser of manufacturing enterprises

<sup>31</sup> Presume that in Kukes can be found the biggest number of coffee – bars / number of population

<sup>32</sup> CENSUS 2011

<sup>33</sup> Economic assistance is obtained based on the number of family members, and varies from 600 to 750 per family member

<sup>34</sup> Kukes Municipality 2075 Famies, Shtiqlen Commune 460 families, Bicaj Commune 680 families (check table 2)

agricultural works, makes the incomes be very low. There are very few families that actually invest and generate income from their work.

The state recognizes the farmers as self-employed because they own land, which means exclusion of this category. The incomes they receive from their work in “farms” are very small.

Remittances are one of the most discussed financial elements in Albania, due to the contribution at different times given to Albanian families. Kukës Region has a considerable number of emigrants or migrants youngsters who economically support their families. However, the trend of emigration and financial support from abroad is declining due to economic crisis of the countries where they do live.

Women and other community individuals perception is almost the same re women economic opportunities. Most respondents agree that contribution of women in family support is necessary, but their involvement opportunities are very small.

#### **IV.II. Poverty**

*The poverty map in Albania seems unchanged from more than two decade. Despite many investments, the north and east areas constitute the poorest part of the society in Albania. Kukës Region is on the first place regarding poverty where 71.7% of the population benefits EA<sup>35</sup>.*

*The economic geography of the country for the first time comes officially by INSTAT, telling that the north of the country is the poorest and has the lowest income per capita compared with the center of the country which has 20% more than the average income of the Republic. The main indicators of poverty are the % of the population that lives in poverty and the % of those on extreme poverty. Based on data and surveys, it results that in 2008, around 12.4% of the population lives in absolute poverty (around 373,137 persons), from 25.4% in 2002 (around 813,196 persona)<sup>36</sup>*

*The north of the country continues to be the poorest in Albania. This poverty is noted more in the rural areas of some north towns.<sup>37</sup>*

The above data only enforces further the fact that poverty is widely present in the study area, both in that rural and the urban. Taking into account that in such a situation vulnerable groups are more inclined to be exposed towards the negative impacts of poverty, we believe that women are quite affected and victims of this situation.

During the monitoring of the recent elections with the support of UN WOMEN-UNDP, it was observed that women, who were economically dependent upon men and outside sources, are predisposed to refrain from expressing their own opinion in voting and more inclined to comply with others' will (i.e. husband's will) The large families, considered poor, are targets and part of the election rigging. Women of these families cannot express their will freely

<sup>35</sup> <http://news-al.com/shifrat-tronditese-71-e-kukesit-dhe-dibres-jetojne-me-ndihme-ekonomike.html>

<sup>36</sup> <http://lajme.shqiperia.com/lajme/artikull/iden/1047099318/titulli/Studimi-Kukesi-rajoni-me-i-varfer-ne-vend>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.albeu.com/shqiperi/ja-cilat-jane-zonat-me-te-varfera-ne-shqiperi/56821/>

because the decisions are preliminarily taken by the head of the family. So, poverty would be a factor that generates stake-holders with a highly questionable legitimacy. Moreover, this is reflected even in the lack of political visions and strategies to support the citizens out of poverty. However, regardless of the affirmation that Kukes District is the poorest in Albania, the issue of that HOW poor we are remains unclear, which are the most affected groups, or which is the way out from this situation.

#### **IV.III. Women's engagement in business**

According to the National Registration Center<sup>38</sup> (NRC) in Kukes District there are enlisted 350 businesses where 41 of them are directed or co-chaired by women. 11.7% of the businesses are run by women. These data pertain only to businesses registered in the NRC, since there are small businesses which are registered in the respective Local Government Units. However, the trend is clear. This indicates that business sector is dominated by men.

The main obstacles are enlisted: lack of family support, credit difficulties, lack of commitment necessary for business management and the lack of information and knowledge. Besides the above mentioned obstacles, it seems to be no clear policies to guide women in business and in taking individual or group initiatives.

One of the areas, where according to the data, is focused the support and the initiative of those actors with small financial resources is the handicrafts produced by women. Despite the heavy physical work of women working in this sector, it seems to be a functioning market which generates incomes.

The promotion of successful models of women in business would serve as encouragement to all those women who would have new ideas and the initiative to implement them. The lack of new inflows of women in business in Kukes for the last decade reflects their lack of initiative, the high risk of this sector and existing barriers that women may encounter to join.

#### **IV.IV. Groups of women with special problems**

Among the groups of women with special problems, based on the categorization done by the state institutions and also according to the general perception taking into account the data and findings from this study are they are enlisted as follows:

- ✓ Women as the head of their family who have responsibility for family care and providing the necessary conditions of living;
- ✓ Single mothers<sup>39</sup> who are confronted even the pressure of public opinion, apart from the difficulties of integration and socialization.
- ✓ Women with a low level of education, which are almost excluded from the labor market due to the specifics of this market. Similarly, in many cases the women of this group are the victims of violence and abuse within the family

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<sup>38</sup> Data obtained by NRC December 2011

<sup>39</sup> The phenomena is little noticed but it exists

- ✓ Unemployed women, regardless of their status or economic level of their families tend to be socially excluded and suffer psychological pressure that comes from it.
- ✓ Lack of organized structures among women's groups have caused them to be more dependent from others and focused on household chores.
- ✓ Women whose families receive economic assistance are numerous. By assuming an average of one woman per each NE beneficiary family, only in the study area we may have about 3100 women included in this group. This constitutes already a very high number of women at risk of social exclusion.
- ✓ Women employed in agriculture, due to the conditions and income that is ensured from their work is threatened by exclusion such as: lack of social and economical integration.
- ✓ Women with disabilities or coming from families with a disabled family face even greater difficulties. In both cases, the sacrifice is outstanding and the exclusion level too high.

Lack of vision for the social integration of the women from the above groups, in order to reduce their contingent number, the chaotic economic social and political development, and have not created so far the base for a multilateral inclusion. Creation of favorable conditions for their integration remains a challenge for the rest of society.

#### **IV.V. The findings from focus groups, interviews and questionnaires**

There are accomplished 2 focus groups, completed 235 structured interviews (questionnaires) and conducted 7 interviews with active individuals, who better know the social, economic, and political situation of women for the realization of this study. Below you will find the main findings of the above-mentioned activities.

##### **The findings from Focus Groups according to the issues**

###### **The first focus group**

###### **1. Provide income for your personal needs**

Participants stressed that the main source of income was their family, their parents (if they are unmarried) or their husbands when married. Housewives and unemployed women were obliged to ask their husbands for money in order to meet their needs, while women who worked were able to afford their costs, even though they delivered their salary at home to their parents or their husbands.

###### **2. The decisions in your family are taken by:**

###### **a. You**

###### **b. Head of the family**

###### **c. Together**

###### **d. Other**

Participants stated that decisions are generally made together in their families, but there were cases when the head of the family makes the important ones. The same trend results within the family according to the information obtained by other study means. Decisions are jointly taken in most cases, but the important decisions are taken by the head of family despite that.

### **3. Business development and women's commitment, the opportunities and obstacles for establishing a business;**

All participants said they had no private business and were not motivated to do so, considering their difficult economic situation and the obstacles they encounter to take such an initiative. The first obstacle they faced was their family and their lack of support. Other barriers were related to difficulties that they may encounter to get loans and to finance their business, considering that women have little or no access to the property, other obstacles are the insufficient time, the conservatory opinion and traditional mentality, lack of information etc

### **4. The possibility of women to influence the decisions of the municipality council for important issues such as employment or investment;**

Women expressed rather skeptical about this question. They generally felt that women could not attend the meetings of the council of the municipality council city without the permission of their husbands. If they would have to address a problem to the board, this would have been done by their husband, on wife's behalf.

### **5. The existence, recognition of initiatives and programs for women;**

Participants said they rarely discussed in the community for women's employment and this mostly occurred during the election campaign and, even at that case sometimes women were not asked.

### **6. Family support for women in setting up a business in order to provide income;**

Some participants said they would need approval from their husband for the undertaking of a private activity, while other participants stated that if they had economic opportunities, then there would have their family support for sure.

### **7. Women's involvement in state administration;**

The number of women working in state administration, compared with men's, particularly at leading levels is small. However there are some sectors, which are dominated by women, which focus on services like education or health.

### **8. Inclusion of women in political forums;**

Participants stated that very few women are involved in political forums, due to the lack of time, conservatory mentality, lack of support from both their family and society.

### **9. The basic requirements addressed to the local government and other influential actors;**

Women put on top of their list of demands issues such as more employment opportunities and all-included social services. As they do perceive, the job commitment and contribution to family income improve their social status both within and outside the family.

## **The second focus group**

### **1. The difficulties that women/girls face in the local context;**

Participants noted that one difficulty lies in not having a proper job market. There are many Kukes new graduates each year in various fields such as economics, law, etc, and cannot find a job in this city, as the only options that exist are the employment in the state administration. The other obstacle is that everyone wants to be employed in the state according to their profession for which they studied, while the positions are limited or one would need a personal connection with the officials to take the job, and meanwhile there is a lack of information about vacancies in these sectors. On the other hand, women themselves consider difficult the application to a job because of the mentality of the time, fear of labor market adjustment, lack of experience etc.

Another issue that emerged during the focus groups discussions was the opening a shoe factory recently in Kukes. During the discussion were mentioned the difficult conditions of the work, the lack of employment contracts and lack of minimum working conditions, and also the lack of state supervision in private enterprises.

### **2. Participation and engagement of women in business and local decision making in Kukes;**

Participants stated that women's initiative to open a business depends heavily on women's initial capital, education, mentality, confidence in women's skills, family support etc.

On the other hand, participation of women in politics is limited firstly due to the lack of family support and also from the party leadership structures. Women themselves are not united as a single force; there exist competition and barriers between women themselves for engaging other women and young girls in politics. No trainings for capacity building of young female politicians are organized as well. Women's originations shall propose new models as part of their own structure and organization.

### **3. Current employment opportunities offered to women and girls in Kukes;**

All participants stated that the only alternatives of employment currently offered are the employment in public administration or in a small private family business. However, in the first case the application may be very large, but places are limited, while to open a private business it is required much more sacrifice and support, initial capital, management and leadership skills, family support, facilities in taxes and fees etc.

### **4. The difference between employed and unemployed women / girls in social relationships (family, society);**

The difference between employed and unemployed women / girls stands on gaining economic independence of women / girls from the family or the husband. At the same time employed women and girls have more opportunities and can better meet their needs for achievement and development.

In our perception, employed women would also serve better to their family. Unemployed women spend most of their time dealing with unpaid household chores that are not considered and appreciated.

## **5. Perceptions about the future, the possibilities provided for in terms of employment of women, participation in decision making and business;**

Given the fact that today in the state administration there are more employed men than women, while more women are graduating, this can bring some changes in the ratio of employed men and women in the future. The engagement of women/girls in business, politics, and decision-making in the future will be improving, always seeking self awareness of women and girls themselves, but by having the state favorable to these policies.

### **Findings from interviews**

**Interviews were conducted with** seven women<sup>40</sup>, key actors and participants in economic, political and social life within the territory of Kukes Municipality, in order to get different opinions and views on socio-economic situation of women in Kukes. Interviews were directed around the following questions, but there were other questions that emerged during the interview<sup>41</sup>:

#### **1. Participation of women in business and local decision making in Kukes;**

Respondents stated that women's participation in local decision making or in business is insignificant, it's because they do not have a decisive role and lobby for a greater involvement of women and girls. There are only 2 women in the director's position in state institutions and only 2 businesswomen. Also it suffices to mention the fact that there are, only 2 women out of 25 members in the City Council of Kukes. However this is still considered a step forward in comparison with previous elections, where there was no female member in the council. According to the focus groups discussion it is not due to lack of capacity, but due to deficiencies in the electoral code and its wrong application and the lack of political support. In business, women's participation consists only within the category of small businesses.

#### **2. Obstacles for successful women in politics or in business in Kukes;**

Respondents listed several factors that hinder women to be successful in politics and business. According to them, what prevents women from being successful in politics has to

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<sup>40</sup> Interviewed:

- L Gjana – Directress of the Center for Social Service of Kukes Municipality
- T Cengu – Member of Kukes Municipality Council
- T Kërshalju – Businesswoman
- M Brati – Directress of The Regional Inspectorate of Employment, Kukes
- V Istrefaj – Directress of the Council Center and Social Services for women Kukes
- L Baja – Executive Director of “Women in Development” Organization”
- Bank employee (anonymous)

<sup>41</sup> Questions asked:

1. What is your opinion on women and girls engagement in local politics and business?
2. What hinders women to be successful in politics and business?
3. What is the difference between unemployed and employed women/girls in their social relationship (family, society)?
4. Who do you think is a better family administrator? The woman or the man? What happens with other private or public positions in terms of management?
5. What needs to be done to include more women in politics and business?



do with the mentality of the community and distrust towards them as it is believed that politics is “men's work”. Also women themselves see it as impossible the confrontation with a reality dominated by men (inequality in selection). Other influencing factors are the political struggle within the same class, political instability, the lack of will of party leaders, the misapplication of relevant legislation and lack of policies advantageous to women.

Low level of participation of women in business is affected by an unstable economic situation, poverty level, lack of initiative, the mentality, the lack of a genuine market sales etc.

### **3. The difference between employed and unemployed women / girls in the social context (family, society);**

The difference between unemployed women and those employed is related to the economic independence, which makes employed women more powerful, able to express their thoughts and opinions on certain issues at work, family and society. According to interviewed groups, the economic independence makes employed women/girls more active in the political, social sphere and they have more authority in their family. The unemployed women are morally dependent, and economically and, psychological, they often feel inferior in comparison to the category of employed women. With the change of the social environment on the other hand, the employed women can get more information, more recognition and culture.

However, there were women who thought that employment does not make a difference because it's in women/girls own nature to be social, committed to their family and to society relations. According to them the difference may be in the information obtained. An employed woman is likely to get more information and face more opportunities than a woman without work (household). However being employed does not solve at all women's commitment to the family.

### **4. Who do you think is the best manager in the family, a man or woman? What about in society, in a business or does the running of an institution change this position? If so why does this happen?**

Respondents stated that they are not against the administration by men, but women are more committed naturally both in society and in business, to the same degree as to their family. According to women's perceptions, they are much less corrupt, are serious and go to the bottom of things with honesty.

However, they emphasized that there is no strict cut between the different categories. There are also men that run well the familiar life as women. The same can be said even for the business sector, there are skilled women and men working in such a sector<sup>42</sup>.

The woman manages, plans, sets the direction and key goals of the family. Women in business works, manages, faces competition, with vision and foresight in their enterprise. In institutional affairs women are less corrupt, accurate, quiet, sincere, and do offer understanding, fruitful tactics and strategies for solving and performing tasks<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> According to M Brati

<sup>43</sup> According to T Kerxhaliu

Also there was also another view that a women are the best administrators for the family, for they do better know family problems, have more sensitivity to the children problems and are more committed to family<sup>44</sup>.

#### **5. A greater involvement of women in business, politics, and women's organizations and forums;**

Respondents thought that women themselves must work for a common purpose. This is a war that should be won because no one bestows it upon them. More organizations for women / girls, associations need to lobby and cooperate together for a larger involvement of women in all fields. If there was applicability to the law and full authority, if the policy were more favorable, if women themselves had respect for the laws and rules, if they had support from women themselves, the involvement of women would then be higher in politics and women's organizations.

On the other hand, women may be more involved in business through grants that may be given by the Labour Office or the Municipality/Commune. Economic stability is a factor that influences, as well as financial independence of women, the existence of a secure market sales etc.

Including more women in business or in politics can be helped by state policies, by changing laws in parliament.

- Changing the electoral code,
- The implementation process
- Establishment of committees at the local governments for gender equality
- Favorable policies for providing soft loans, favorable taxes for enterprises run by women,
- Opening of professional courses to increase the capacity of women entrepreneurs,
- Orientation of the businesses ran by women towards utilization of resources in rural areas.

#### **6. The difficulties faced by women in Kukes District;**

Unemployment is one of the greatest difficulties faced by women in our city. Generally speaking, there is no transparency regarding job applications in which they rival and in most cases they are not hired based on merit, but based on the personal connections , or even worse through bribes. Since women are not seen as appropriate for such actions similar to bribe, for similar reasons they are less viewed as appropriate candidates for such job positions.

Other difficulties relate to:

- Lack of social activities;
- Lack of social and cultural facilities for women;
- Less access to employment and education;
- Unproductive use of leisure time;
- Representation rules (the law does not favor women to participate in politics, 30% participation - restriction);
- Deficiency and lack of social services;
- Unpaid work;

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<sup>44</sup> According to V Istrefaj

- Discriminatory mentality;
- The existence of large families;

### **7. Employment opportunities offered to women / girls in Kukes District**

The possibilities are very slim. There is a lack of employment policies. Women face difficulties in finding a job because of prejudice and discrimination. Because of this bias even those women who are employed - especially in business - are self-employed in private business.

The reality consists of the lack of job vacancies, due to the absence of job providers, as businesses, apparel (shoes, bags, tailoring)

It is often found the incongruity of education to the labor market.

Yet as employment opportunities can orient by:

- The tradition of traditional handicrafts, carpet and rugs;
- Tourism;
- Milk (slot opening);
- Shoe-factory;
- Mineral-wealth that our district does have;

### **8. What is your perception of the future in terms of engagement of women / girls in the business, politics, or decision-making, or the possibilities that can be offered in future about the employment and education of women and girls?**

- a. The future will belong to women/girls. They are a great strength, but it is required that all should work and support those women who enter the path of politics, of business. I think that their decision-making role would serve to the improvement of the negative image the current politicians they have created. The number of more women in politics will soften the communication of men who leave much to be desired, because a small number of women have made them take a manly look to deal with male cruelty, which characterizes all decision-making institutions in our city<sup>45</sup>.
- b. If politics was respectful, if there was no restriction on % participatory, if there was economic stability, empowerment of women, if we had a safe market of products made by women, if they had facilities in taxes, the engagement of women, then, will be even greater. If women are capable, let them be the first. We, women, have to create a positive outlook for the other women<sup>46</sup>.
- c. I think that the problems of engagement of women/girls in business, politics, decision-making in the future about the employment and education will be improved, always seeking awareness of themselves as women and girls and a positive willingness of local politician and central<sup>47</sup>.
- d. I do not believe, as the political classes have monopolized everything.
- e. The legislation, which governs the inclusion of women, should be improved<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Comment from L Gjana

<sup>46</sup> Comment from M Brati

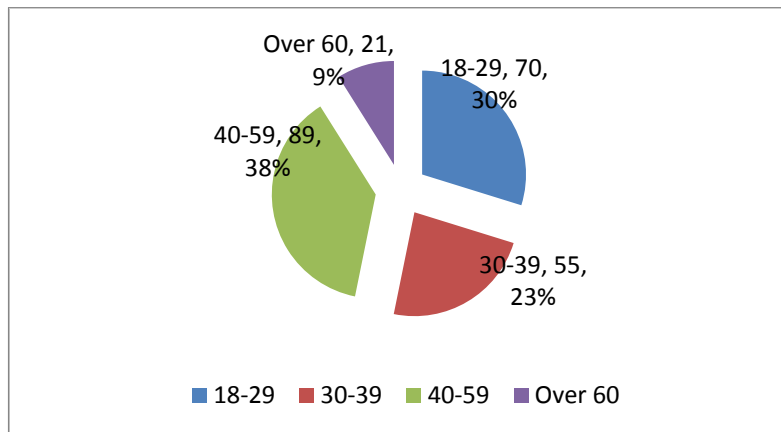
<sup>47</sup> Comment from T Kerxhaliu

<sup>48</sup> Comment from T Cengu

- f. Their involvement will be on the increase, but I wish that responsible actors would work more so this increase will be more satisfactory<sup>49</sup>.

### Findings from questionnaires

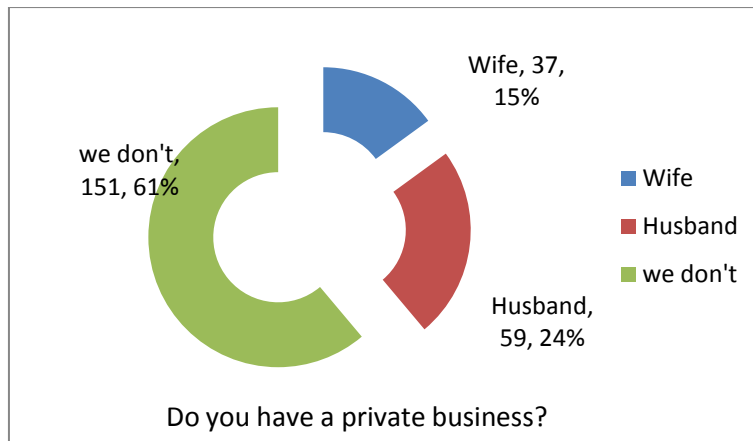
- During this study, 235 questionnaires were completed, with 44 or 19% were completed in the study rural areas, and 191 or 81% were completed in Kukes Municipality<sup>50</sup>.
- The report of the respondents through questionnaires is 37 or 15.5% males and 198 females or 84.5%
- The age group of interviewees is divided as follows:



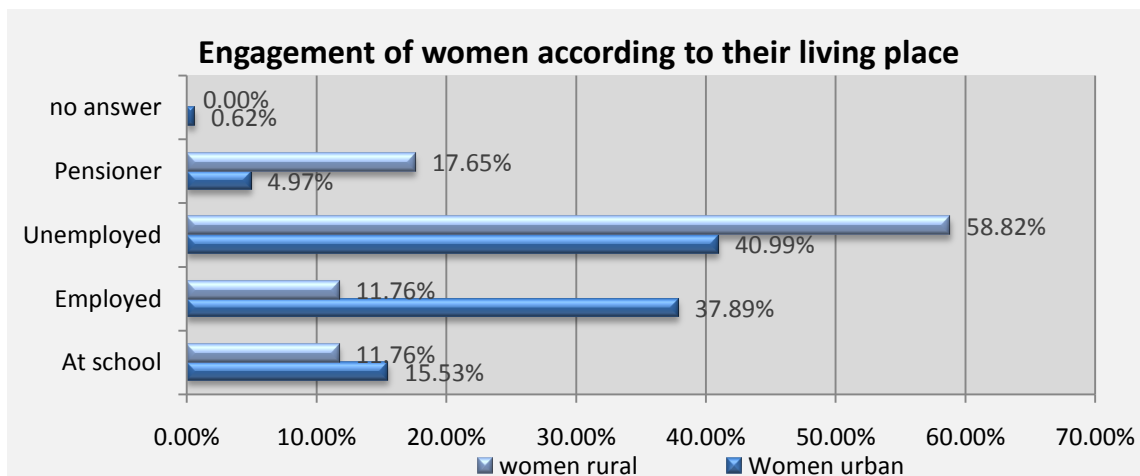
- Decision-making in the family is divided between family members where 55% or 129 interviewees stated that decision-making is common and 38% or 89 individuals claimed that the head of the family makes the decisions. However, the trend of this percentage is different from the rural and urban areas.
- The interviewees on a large scale (61%) say that they do not have a private business and only 15% have a business in which a woman is involved.

<sup>49</sup> Comment from V Istrefaj

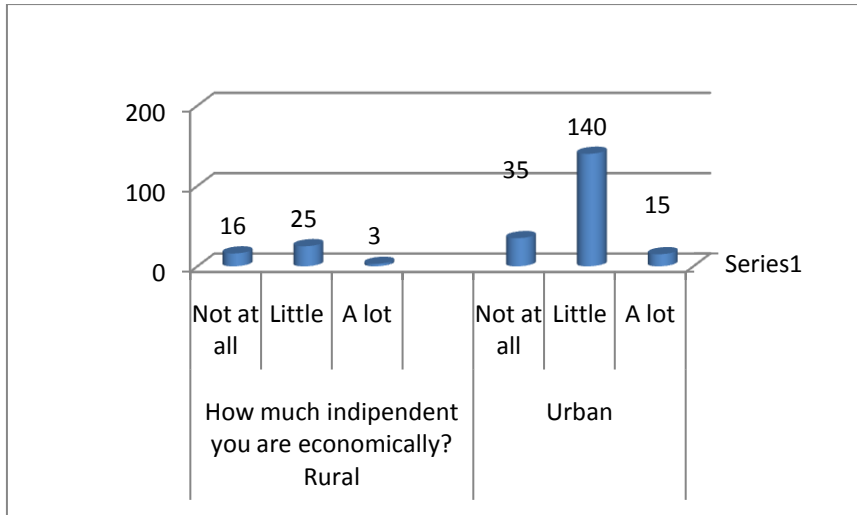
<sup>50</sup> It should be mentioned that Kukes Municipality includes three villages and the informal area based on the characteristics is likewise the rural areas.



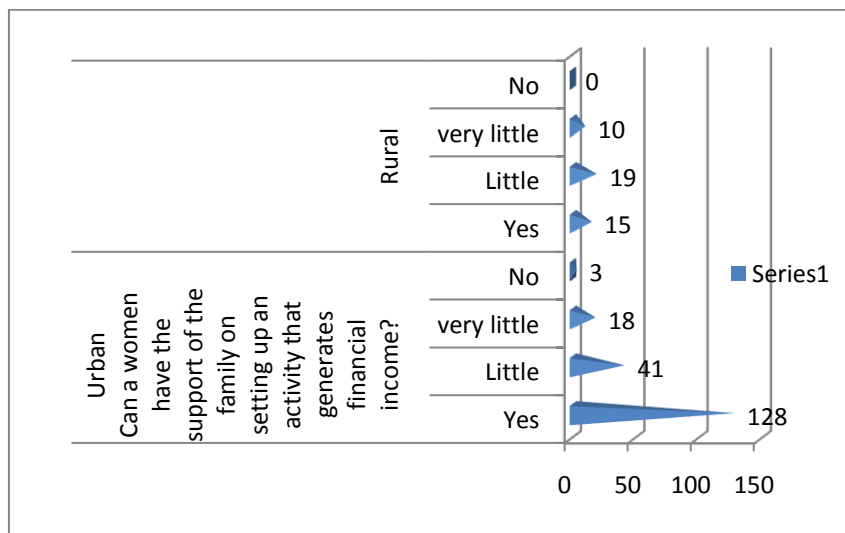
- According to the interviewees, it is observed the difference in % of the women's employment between urban and rural. There are 58% of unemployed women in the village and 49% in the city. This confirms the high level of unemployment, despite the contradictory figures and data from institutions.



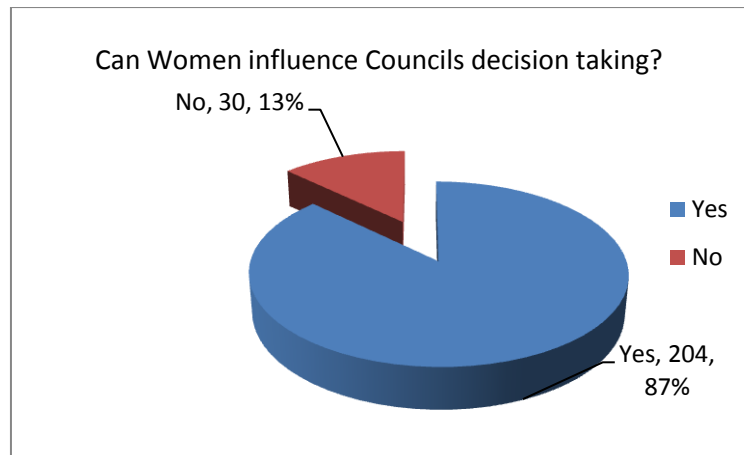
- According to the interviewees, women are far less independent from men to a very large extent (92%). Only 8% think that women are economically independent from men.



- Notwithstanding the above responses, in addition, it is significantly estimated the optional contribution of women in providing income and their family support to do so.

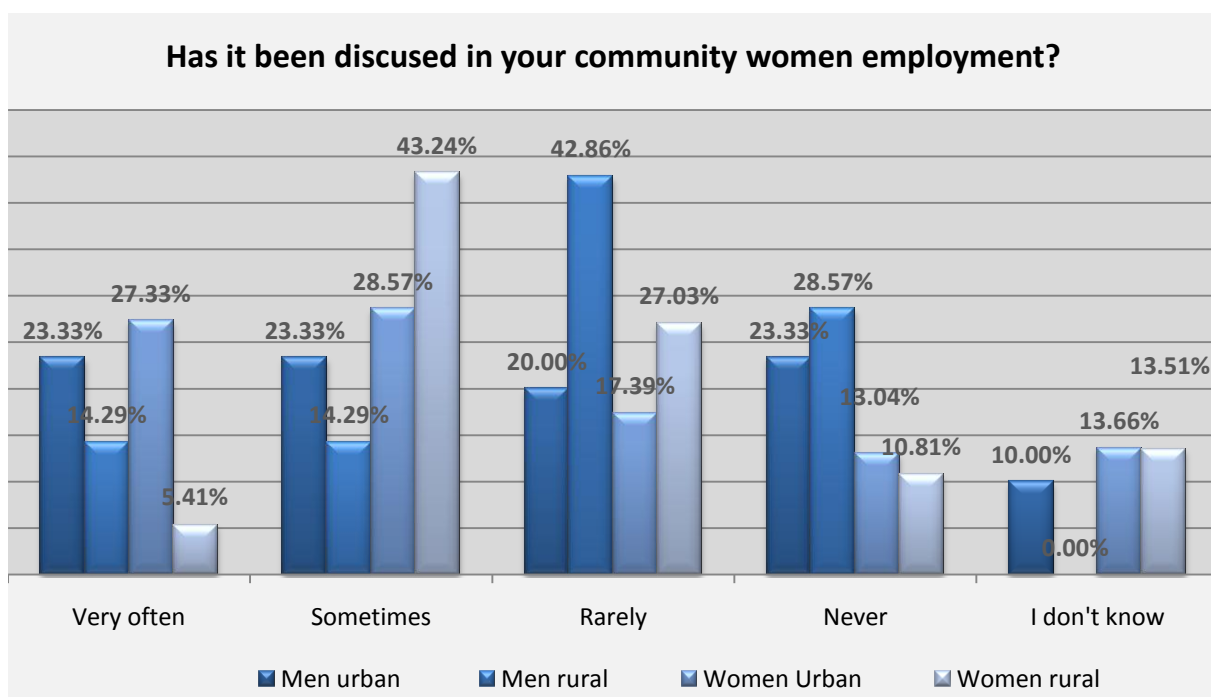


- While the impact of women on important decisions in the councils of the communes and the municipalities from the answers appears to be possible, despite our perception that such a thing is hard to occur.



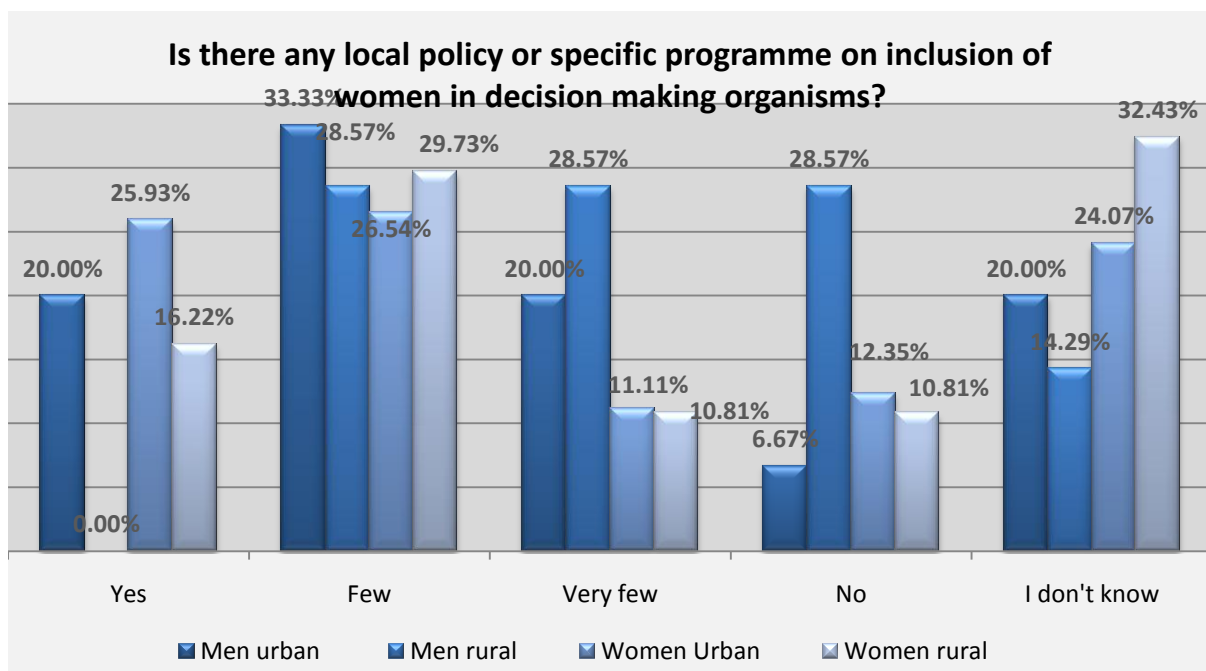
- The employment of women, as one of the problems addressed by the interviewees, does not seem to have been the focus of politics or public discourse of local leaders. It appears that it is very necessary to discuss and take action in this field.

21. Has it discussed in your community women employment?				
	Males in the city	Males in the country	Females in the city	Females in the country
Often	23.33%	14.29%	27.33%	5.41%
Sometimes	23.33%	14.29%	28.57%	43.24%
Rarely	20.00%	42.86%	17.39%	27.03%
Never	23.33%	28.57%	13.04%	10.81%
Don't know	10.00%	0.00%	13.66%	13.51%



- Local policies are based on the national policies. However the perception of the interviewed category is that such policies and programs are not present in a sufficient manner. The presence of local policies is confirmed, but they are mainly valued as few or very few.

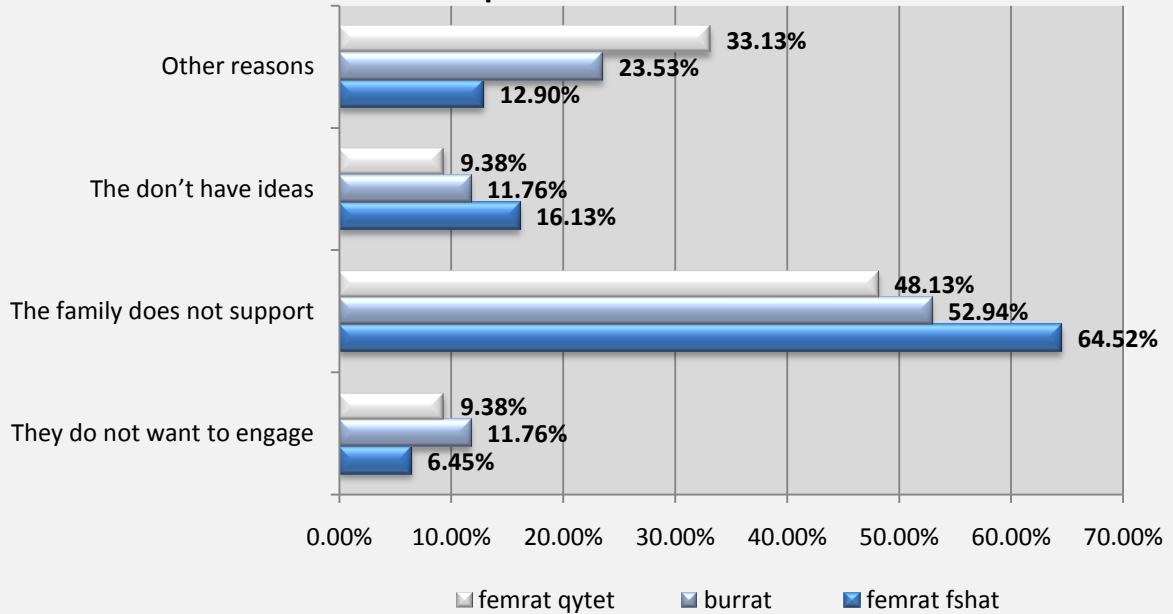
24. Is there any local policy or specific programme on inclusion of women in decision making organisms?				
	Male urban	Male Rural	Women urban	Women rural
Yes	20.00%	0.00%	25.93%	16.22%
Few	33.33%	28.57%	26.54%	29.73%
Very few	20.00%	28.57%	11.11%	10.81%
No	6.67%	28.57%	12.35%	10.81%
I don't know	20.00%	14.29%	24.07%	32.43%



Women's commitment in public life, politics or business is conditioned to a large extent by the family support. Lacks of ideas or women's unwillingness remain still smaller reasons for non-participation.

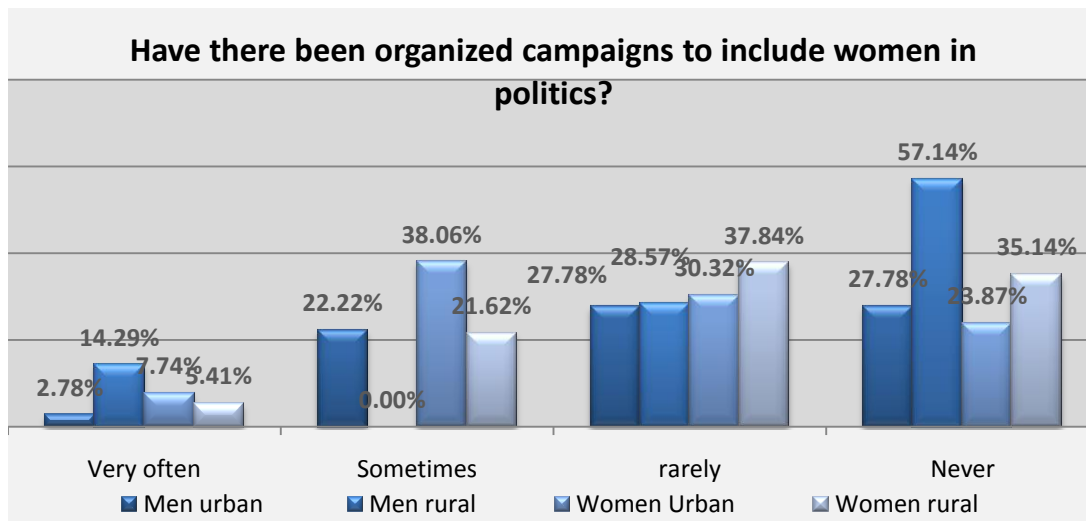


**Women are not part of businesses and political parties; This happens because of:**



- Lack of campaigns for increasing awareness and women's empowerment is confirmed by the interviewed category. This should be reflected as a special need and important recommendation.

25. Have there been organized campaigns to include women in politics?				
	Men urban	Men rural	Women Urban	Women rural
Very often	2.78%	14.29%	7.74%	5.41%
Sometimes	22.22%	0.00%	38.06%	21.62%
rarely	27.78%	28.57%	30.32%	37.84%
Never	27.78%	57.14%	23.87%	35.14%



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ***Increase women's participation in local decision making processes;*** supporting the increased participation of women in decision-making must be turned in one of the initiatives, policies and ongoing programs of the various players. We think that no one can better represent group interests better than its members. Gender equality should not just be a daily political discourse but also a concrete action with measurable results.

2. ***Strengthening women's economic autonomy and increasing their contribution through increasing their access to crediting.***

Interviews with bank employees show that women are less credited than men in Kukes region. However, if we refer to the rejection rate given to loan application, there is no great difference between the rejected applications for women and men. This means that the nature of the loan application is not granted with the purpose of developing a business or manufacturing initiatives, but in most cases, loans “of a consuming nature” for buying houses or covering other familiar necessities. Crediting schemes for women who want to run or open a business exist in the region.<sup>49</sup> Also with the support of the Regional Directorate of Employment 6 women initiatives are supported last year with the amounts from 800 to 2000 USD. Such initiatives and other facilities for crediting from banks would assist women empowerment and transmit a clear message for the promotion of equal development.

3. ***Familiarization with the national and international legal framework,*** local policies and contribute for their improvement It would be of great interest that organized women's groups, institutions and NGOs that target women, and in general women should be informed about the legal responsibilities of everyone in order to improve the situation. Acknowledgement of national and international legal documents will serve as a strong lobbying pressure and in respect to obligations and policy making in tune with them.

4. ***Strengthening civil society organizations that target and serve to women and gender initiatives;***

Strengthening of such organizations would be a milestone in women's awareness of the situation and their commitment to improve the situation. The support of these organizations will create a strong and specialized partnership addressing the gender issues. They will mediate between parties; women and policy makers, government or other partners.

5. ***Developing local strategies and policies where the "pro-gender" orientation*** should be a clear and feasible objective on its own. These policies aim to provide education, employment and non-discriminating social engagement by setting up the foundations of the gender equality concept in all sectors. Gender budgeting or gender analysis of budgets and investment policies shall support gender strategic sectors, providing services of inclusive approach would allow the gap between the sexes. Commitment to policy making must be comprehensive for central and local governments, NGOs, interest groups, local partners and important documents should be consulted nationally and internationally.

6. ***Implementation of frequent surveys on gender issues*** for an in depth, clear apprehension of the issues related to women's supports as part of local policies. Institutions and civil society organizations must commit to developing these detailed studies. It is important that the surveys to be implemented be in the district-level or even on a more detailed level considering the specifics of the problems to be addressed and the possibility to

influence local policies. Also we must keep in mind to coordinate the intervention with the local government and on the basis of strategic national and international documents.

**7. *Gathering statistical gender data at all levels***, for an in-depth knowledge of the current situation from a gender perspective and to develop and implement specific programs locally. While making this survey, one of the main challenges was to collecting and analyzing gender-based data. In most cases they are absent or presented in such a way that makes very difficult the interpretation of their gender. Also the matter of concern is that there are some identified data, presented in a contradictory manner from different institutions on the same issue. Gathering gender data would make the situation clearer to be understood and programming and implementation of interventions easier in order to improve the situation more effectively.

**8. *Strengthening the educational role of local, electronic and printed media*** which can become a powerful ally to gender equality issues and social justice is essential. Despite of the local media is less developed and the national media dominates all the media time of individuals and families, we believe that, as the current and prior collaborations have shown, the media can influence the rapid spread of initiatives and interventions based on gender, by increasing the number of supporters of these interventions. Re-conceptualization of gender issues in the broad political-economic-social spectrum of media, around gender equality and equality between people in general, will make possible the realization of what is called the multiple effect of the initiative while the clear message reaches to as many people as possible.

**9. *Application of inclusive practices***; up to date methods of public consultation and civic participation, distribution of services at local level, as housing, education and healthcare, aiming at reaching out to historically excluded groups. There are two we suggest to reach out to poor and excluded community members: a) by directly working with community leaders and b) through NGO-s which could work close with the excluded.

**10. *Information sharing***; continuously informing the participants on the results and impact of their engagement. This should be done avoiding wear out of consultation and mutual trust, by convincing them that they did not spend their time not productively during their participation and their suggestions will not be manipulated.

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### **Interviews and statistics collected from different sources**

## ANNEX 1

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Location: Country\_\_\_\_\_ City\_\_\_\_\_
2. Members of the family nr. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Relationship with the family chairman: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sex: M \_\_ F \_\_
5. Age: a) 18 -29, b) 30 to 39, c) 40 to 59, d) 60 and over
6. Marital Status: Married \_\_\_ (number of children \_\_\_) Single
7. Education: a) No education \_\_ b) 8 years \_\_ c) \_\_ Secondary, d) High \_\_, e) \_\_ No answer
8. Commitment: a) School \_\_ b) Work \_\_ (specify \_\_\_\_\_), c) \_\_ Unemployed, d) \_\_ Retired, e) No answer \_\_\_
  
9. What is the overall monthly income of all your family from all sources \_\_\_\_\_
  
10. How do you receive income for your personal needs?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
11. Do you pay any of the following duties: \_\_ Rental housing loans, \_\_, \_\_ gas, energy
  
12. Who makes the decisions in your family: You \_\_\_\_\_; Family chairman\_\_\_\_\_;  
Both\_\_\_\_\_; Other\_\_\_\_\_
  
13. Who carries out household chores? \_\_\_\_\_
  
14. Do you run a business? \_\_ Yes, \_\_ No, If yes, who is running it? a) Woman \_\_ b) Man\_\_\_\_;
  
15. if not, have you ever thought of running a business of your own? What are the reasons that have not been.
  
16. What are the barriers for a woman to run her own business?  
a) \_\_\_\_\_ b) \_\_\_\_\_ c) \_\_\_\_\_
  
17. How economically independent from men are women in Kukes?  
a) \_\_ Not at all b) Less \_\_ c) \_\_More
18. How can I help you to involve your spouse in the provision of income? (Women only)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
19. Do you think that providing financial income to your children is an obligation for a woman?  
a) Yes \_\_\_ b) Jo\_\_\_

20. Do you think that women can influence the decisions of the commune / municipality concerning the employment or investments?

a) \_\_\_ Yes b) No \_\_\_

21. Did community ever discuss about the employment of women?

a) Many times b) Sometimes c) Rarely d) Never e) No idea

22. Are there local policies or programs designed to involve women in decision-making bodies?

a) Yes b) Few c) Very few d) No e) No idea

23. A woman can have a family support for running a business and providing financial income?

a) Yes b) Few c) Very little d) No

24. Do you think women can successfully manage an industrial / agricultural business?

a) Yes b) Few c) Very little d) No

25. Did you ever organize awareness campaigns for women's engagement in politics?

a) Often b) Sometimes c) Rarely d) Never

26. How are women involved in the administrative positions in your community?

a) Many b) Few c) Very little d) Not at all

27. How are women involved in the forums of different political parties in your community?

a) Many b) Few c) Very little d) Not at all

28. The family allows a woman to participate in political forums? Yes \_\_\_\_ Jo \_\_\_\_

29. Women are not part of political parties and members of the council in numbers as men, this happens because they: a) Do not wish to engage, \_\_\_ b) Forbidden by their family \_\_\_\_

c) Other reasons; \_\_\_\_\_

30. Women are not part of the business and political parties in numbers as men, this happens because they: a) Do not wish to engage, \_\_\_ b) \_\_\_ Family supports

c) No idea \_\_\_ e) Other reasons; \_\_\_\_\_

31. What would you ask the local government chairmen for women?

Other Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**TABLE 1**

Gender representation in the Municipal Councils after the local elections of May 8th 2011

Nr	Municipalities	Nr of women elected	Total Representatives	Region
1	Kukës Municipality	2	25	Kukës
2	Bushtricë Commune	3	13	Kukës
3	Kalis Commune	1	13	Kukës
4	Ujmisht Commune	1	13	Kukës
5	Shishtavec Commune	1	15	Kukës
6	Topojan Commune	1	13	Kukës
7	Surroj Commune	1	13	Kukës
8	Tropojë (fshat) Commune	1	15	Tropojë
9	Zapod Commune	1	13	Kukës
10	Bicaj Commune	0	15	Kukës
11	Shtiqën Commune	0	13	Kukës
12	Tërthore Commune	0	13	Kukës
13	Gryk qajë	1	13	Kukës
14	Arrën Commune	0	13	Kukës
15	Kolsh Commune	0	13	Kukës
16	Malzi Commune	0	13	Kukës
17	Krumë Municipality	0	15	Has
18	Fajza Commune	0	13	Has
19	Gjinaj Commune	0	13	Has
20	Golaj Commune	0	15	Has
21	B Curri Municipality	6	15	Tropojë
22	Bujan Commune	0	13	Tropojë
23	Bytyq Commune	0	13	Tropojë
24	Margegaj Commune	1	13	Tropojë
25	Llugaj Comunne	1	13	Tropojë
26	Fierzë Commune	1	13	Tropojë
27	Lekbibaj Commune	1	13	Tropojë
	Total Nr. of Women	23	375	
		6%	100%	

**Table 2**

The area referred in the study

<b>Nr</b>	<b>Local Government unit</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>No of families</b>	<b>No of families beneficiaries of EA</b>	<b>Beneficiary families in %</b>
<b>1</b>	Kukës Municipality	22256	4663	2075	44.5%
<b>2</b>	Bicaj Commune	6529	1733	840	48.5%
<b>3</b>	Shtiqën Commune	4128	820	460	56%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32913</b>	<b>7216</b>	<b>3375</b>	<b>46.8%</b>