



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# KOSOVO GENDER PROFILE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS





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Required citation:

FAO. 2024. *Kosovo gender profile of agriculture and rural livelihoods*. Budapest. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cd1154en>

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ISBN 978-92-5-138858-7

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# Acknowledgements

The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) commissioned the research and writing of the *Kosovo<sup>1</sup> gender profile for agriculture and rural livelihoods* to the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN). KWN is a multi-ethnic network of 190 diverse women's rights organizations in Kosovo, which supports, protects and promotes the rights of all women and girls, including through research and evidence-based advocacy. Its strategy incorporates integrating a gender perspective into laws, policies and programmes, as well as women's economic empowerment.

The report was written by Nicole Farnsworth, Erin Brown, Dita Dobranja, Kaltrina Zhushi and Aurora Maxharraj. Linda Abazi wrote initial sections of the draft assessment. The Riinvest Institute and its researchers, as well as researchers contracted by KWN, including Ejona Neziri, Mirjeta Dibrani, Ernera Dushica, Ramadan Sokoli, Dragana Petrovic, Sredjan Simonovic and Resmije Rahmani, contributed to the field research. Naser Krasniqi, FAO Local Team Leader, guided the process; and Anna Jenderedjian, FAO REU Gender and Social Protection Specialist, provided technical guidance. Froniga Greig, international gender consultant, and Donjeta Morina, local gender consultant, contributed valuable inputs during the peer review process. Dono Abdurazakova, FAO REU Gender and Social Protection Adviser, provided oversight to this assessment.

The authors would like to thank the authorities of Kosovo, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD), the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) in the Office of the Prime Minister, and the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS) for their engagement in the process. They are also grateful to the KWN member organizations for their contributions in reaching out to diverse rural women and men to engage them in this research. The assessment benefited from the contributions of a wide range of stakeholders, namely the Kosovo authorities at central and municipal levels, civil society organizations (CSOs), farmers' groups, academia, and individual women and men. KWN extends gratitude to them for sharing their time for this research.

FAO would also like to thank the public officials, international organizations, civil society representatives, and academics who participated in the validation meeting for their substantive inputs. The information, data and comments they provided have enriched this report overall.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).



# Abbreviations

<b>AGE</b>	Agency for Gender Equality
<b>ALMM</b>	active labour market measure
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GEIA</b>	Gender Equality Impact Assessment
<b>GEO</b>	Gender equality officer
<b>ha</b>	hectare
<b>ICT</b>	information and communications technology
<b>KAS</b>	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
<b>KIESA</b>	Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency
<b>KWN</b>	Kosovo Women's Network
<b>LFS</b>	Labour Force Survey
<b>LGBTQIA+</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual and other identifying persons
<b>MAFRD</b>	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
<b>MCC</b>	Millennium Challenge Corporation
<b>MESTI</b>	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
<b>MICS</b>	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organization
<b>NWFP</b>	non-wood forest product
<b>SAS</b>	Kosovo Social Assistance Scheme
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SOP</b>	standard operating procedure
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WCSO</b>	women's civil society organization



# Currency equivalents

As of 1 May 2024

Currency units

euro (EUR)

United States dollar (USD)

EUR 1.00 – USD 1.06

USD 1.00 – EUR 0.93



# Executive summary

The development goals of reducing poverty, achieving food security, improving agricultural productivity, furthering gender equality, and improving the lives of people in rural areas all depend on ending political, social and economic inequalities among women and men (FAO, 2020). Mainstreaming gender in digitalization and information and communications technologies (ICTs) is also important for agricultural and rural development. In working towards achieving these goals, and considering the dearth of gender analysis on agriculture, rural livelihoods and digitalization in Kosovo<sup>2</sup>, MAFRD, FAO and other actors identified the need for a comprehensive gender analysis. This resultant *Kosovo gender profile for agriculture and rural livelihoods* aims to improve knowledge on gender-related issues in agriculture, including the state of digitalization. It proposes evidence-based recommendations for advancing gender equality and women's economic empowerment in agriculture and rural development, including inclusive digital strategies. The recommendations seek to inform several strategies and programmes being drafted, as per the authorities' commitments to ensuring that these are informed by gender analysis. In the context of the European Union's accession process, the Kosovo authorities and the European Union can use this gender analysis to inform policies and investments, as foreseen by the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2020–2025.

FAO commissioned the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN)<sup>3</sup> to prepare this analysis, using the FAO Country Gender Assessment methodology. It involved mixed methods, including desk research, a statistically representative Kosovo-wide survey of women and men in rural households, interviews, and focus groups, conducted in 2022. This section summarizes the key findings of this assessment.

This report defines women farmers as women who engage in agricultural production, including those who are registered farmers, farm managers, agricultural labourers, and contributing family workers (often unpaid family members). This broad definition encompasses women who own or lease land, cultivate crops, raise livestock, manage fisheries, or perform other agricultural activities as a primary or secondary occupation or means of livelihood.

## Kosovo: an overview

Generally, Kosovo's legal framework on gender equality aligns with international law and policies. Yet, sector-specific laws and strategies related to agriculture, rural development and climate change lack gender analysis and sufficient steps towards gender equality. Secondary legislation still needs to clarify responsibilities and processes, ensuring that legally required Gender Equality Impact Assessments (GEIAs) inform all policies and that officials are better able to track gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries.

Approximately 62 percent of Kosovo's population lives in rural areas. Yet, 27.3 percent of rural women and 24.3 percent of rural men are interested in migrating, and an estimated 17 percent of young people migrate to cities. While men migrate for jobs and education, women tend to migrate

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<sup>2</sup> All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see the Kosovo Women's Network website at [www.womensnetwork.org](http://www.womensnetwork.org).

for family reasons. Meanwhile, remittances from migrants contribute to a high reservation wage and labour force inactivity. Migration thus affects the availability of a rural workforce. Yet nearly two-thirds of rural women and men have no interest in migrating, which suggests the significance of rural spaces and economic potential for development opportunities in agriculture and related sectors.

Women tend to have lower levels of education than men, which can hinder women's access to knowledge, information and subsidies. Moreover, inaccessible preschools and child care contribute to women's labour inactivity.

## **Gender, labour, employment and poverty**

Only 14.1 percent of all working age women are employed officially, compared with 42.8 percent of men. Women earn 20 percent lower wages than men in the private sector and 8 percent lower in the public sector. Approximately 5.5 percent of all employed men and 4.6 percent of all women work formally in the agriculture, forestry or fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Women comprise 49 percent of the agricultural workforce and men represent 51 percent. Meanwhile, this study found that 64 percent of rural households have at least one family member engaged in agricultural activities, formally or informally, including a fairly equal share of women and men. Differences in reported engagement and formally registered employment relate largely to informality and unpaid work. Women's inactivity, informal work, unpaid work and lower salaries all contribute to poverty, particularly for women-headed households and in retirement when women receive lower pensions than men.

## **Women and men's involvement in unpaid work, including agricultural work**

Agricultural workers account for 72.2 percent of all unpaid family workers in Kosovo. Half of rural women (50.5 percent) and men (49.0 percent) engage in informal or vulnerable work. Rural women are twice as likely as men to be engaged as unpaid family workers. Hesitancy to lose public social assistance prevents some women and men from engaging in formal labour. Furthermore, informality can limit farmers' access to capital, land and training.

## **Time use among women and men in rural households**

Considering all paid and unpaid work, on average, rural women spend 83 percent of their time working, while rural men spend only 66 percent. Rural women dedicate approximately twice as much time as men to cooking, cleaning and caring for family members, including children and older people.. Women's socially ascribed household responsibilities limit the time that they have for paid labour, agricultural activities, education, training, and engaging in local decision-making processes. Men have more time for rest, self-education, and expanding their businesses, including applying for funds.

## **Knowledge, access, ownership and use of time-saving, productive infrastructure and technologies**

Less than 0.3 percent of all agricultural holdings are registered as businesses. Of all farms, women own only 4.9 percent and comprise 5.8 percent of registered farmers. Women own only 17 percent of property in Kosovo, which limits their access to land, grants, subsidies and loans. Approximately one in ten women said that they need family permission to access vehicles, mechanized agricultural equipment and agricultural inputs. Women's unequal ownership of property, combined with low educational levels and restrictive criteria, limit their access to subventions, grants and loans. Rural



women identified several income generation opportunities, including developing their capacities to access information, apply for financial resources, access markets, and enhance their digital skills, particularly by investing in rural infrastructure and contracting women’s civil society organizations (WCSOs) to support them. Women owned one-third of agriculture, forestry and fishing enterprises in 2019, while men owned the remaining two-thirds. Only one-third of the surveyed rural respondents owned businesses, with men owning a larger share than women. This unequal ownership impacts on opportunities for women and young people, especially young women, to engage in agriculture.

## Gender and rural infrastructure

Inconsistent electricity supply, inadequate water quality and supply, and poor public transportation all affect rural populations’ economic activities. Due to gender roles, women face more transportation barriers than men, which hinders their access to markets, training, networking, institutions and other opportunities. Rural women also face more challenges accessing public services, including for gender-based violence and health care, which can affect their economic participation. Women in vulnerable groups including Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Gorani, Bosnians, persons with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and other identifying (LGBTQIA+) persons often face added barriers. The war in Ukraine has contributed to increased costs for energy, oil and food, and general inflation of 14 percent. This crisis occurred after the research phase for this assessment was completed, so its adverse effects on rural livelihoods could not be examined thoroughly.

## Women’s and men’s access to and use of technologies and digitalization

Women and men (98 percent of both) have equal access to smart phones and the internet. However, 23 percent of rural women and 20 percent of rural men feel that they lack knowledge for using digital technology. Furthermore, 41 percent of rural women and 33 percent of men say that they lack the digital skills required by the labour market. Neither women nor men use digitalization much for their work in rural economies. One-third use phone applications for the weather and one-quarter for market prices. Fewer than one in ten use digital tools for information about agriculture or to find nearby markets. Only 16 percent of rural women and 19 percent of men would want to access public services “through a website”; and 14 percent of women and 24 percent of men would use “a mobile application” for this.

Given rural women’s comparatively lower levels of education, limited time, lack of capital, poor access to finance, weak public transport systems, and patriarchal social norms, they have even less access to opportunities for using ICTs in economic activities. Women’s minimal participation in business networking predated digital transformations, so few engage in such online networking. Nearly a third of rural women (and men) consider insufficient information the main challenge preventing them from using modern technologies. Yet, both rural women (56 percent) and men (61 percent) have an interest in “embracing new technology solutions”. More specifically, 51 percent of women and 66 percent of men showed interest in using technology, including the internet, automation machinery, and/or robotics, which signals opportunities for supporting learning and use of digitalization in agriculture.

## Gender and participation in local decision-making, networks and rural advisory services

Women are underrepresented in political decision-making at all levels. Furthermore, 91 percent of rural women do not engage in political activities, compared with 79 percent of rural men. Only 3 percent of women and 12 percent of men said that they participated in community or municipal

meetings in the last year, such as those relating to agriculture, natural resources or municipal budgets. Contributing factors for women's non-participation included disinterest, insufficient information, lack of transport, household duties, and sociocultural norms, whereby men have tended to represent their families in decision-making processes. Ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ and persons with disabilities face additional barriers to participation. Only 3 percent of surveyed rural women and 12 percent of men were members of a farmers' or agricultural association, cooperative or union. Only 5 percent of rural women and 16 percent of men knew about rural advisory services in their area. This relates to the fact that extension services only reach registered farmers, and few agricultural businesses are registered. The research demonstrates a disconnect between municipal officers' perceptions of accessibility and women farmers' actual ability to access services and subsidies.

## The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural livelihoods

The authorities responded quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic, adopting economic recovery measures, including those specifically for agriculture and women's empowerment. However, it did not use the legally required GEIA to inform the content of measures, nor has the impact of measures been assessed from a gender perspective. At the same time, the closure of care and education facilities increased women's workload and placed them at greater risk of job loss or burnout. Women (53 percent) also faced greater challenges accessing food and services in comparison with men (46 percent). Agricultural production was affected, which contributed to economic insecurity for farmers. At the same time, some farmers identified new methods, including using ICTs, which can inform improvements to their agricultural activities and business models.

## Recommendations

Addressing gender inequalities requires that agriculture and rural development policies and programmes use gender analysis such as this, considering differences in access, information, knowledge, ownership, resources, perceptions and power that affect diverse women and men's access to and participation in development opportunities. This analysis concludes with specific recommendations for the authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), FAO and other development actors.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Why is gender relevant to sustainable agriculture and rural development in Kosovo?

Approximately 61 percent of Kosovo’s population lives in rural areas (KAS, 2012). At the same time, the agriculture sector accounts for 6.9 percent of Kosovo’s gross domestic product (GDP), 14 percent of formal employment, and a significant share of informal employment (World Bank, 2021a; KAS, 2021a). Despite Kosovo’s abundant productive land and natural resources that favour crop production, the agriculture sector accounts for only 18 percent of all exports (European Commission, 2022).

Although not a signatory to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals at the United Nations General Assembly because of its status as a non-member, Kosovo remains committed to the implementation of both the agenda and the goals. Kosovo has worked to align its frameworks on gender equality with the key international and European standards and benchmarks. It demonstrates promising potential for the development of sustainable, efficient, inclusive and resilient agrifood systems to deliver benefits to diverse women, men and children. Reducing poverty, achieving food security, transforming food systems, furthering gender equality, and improving the lives of people in rural areas all depend on ending political, social and economic inequalities among women and men (FAO, 2020).

Global experience indicates that although rural women are vital contributors to the rural economy, their rights and needs “remain insufficiently addressed or ignored in laws, [central] and local policies, budgets, and investment strategies at all levels” (United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2016, p. 3). The inequalities faced by women, known as the “gender gap”, also reduce women’s contributions to agriculture in different ways: they negatively affect family well-being, and impact on the economy because of the loss of productivity.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has the mandate to promote gender equality, women’s rights as human rights, and eliminate discrimination against women (FAO, 2020). Gender equality is central to FAO’s mandate because goals of achieving food security, increasing agricultural productivity, and improving the lives of people in rural areas depend on eliminating the social and economic inequalities among women and men (ibid.). Thus, gender equality is central to FAO’s mandate to achieve a world free from hunger, malnutrition and poverty. FAO’s Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030 aims at advancing equality in women’s and men’s participation in decision-making, rights, and access to and control over resources and services. It also aims to support decent work and to reduce women’s work burden through access to technology, practices and infrastructure, towards sustainable agricultural production and rural development (ibid.).

## 1.2. Scope and purpose of the gender assessment

In Kosovo, this is the first comprehensive gender assessment on agriculture and rural livelihoods. This assessment seeks to aid FAO, the central and local authorities, civil society, and international actors in better integrating a gender perspective in programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation related to agriculture and rural livelihoods. Following the guidance of the European Union's (EU) Gender Action Plan III 2021–2025 (2020), this serves as a much-needed sector-specific gender analysis on agriculture to inform the European Union's and Kosovo's policies and programmes in the context of the EU accession process. It can inform gender impact assessments that the authorities of Kosovo must conduct for all new legislation in accordance with its Better Regulation Strategy 2.0 for Kosovo 2017–2021 ("Government of Kosovo", 2017). It will also be useful for professionals working in this sector and researchers.

The assessment's purpose is to analyse how gender intersects with agriculture and rural livelihoods. It identifies ways to enhance inclusive agricultural development and the sustainable development of rural communities, considering gender roles and differences among diverse women and men in access to productive resources, inputs, information and participation. It proposes evidence-based recommendations for gender-responsive strategies towards women's empowerment in the agriculture sector, rural development, and sustainable and transformative agrifood systems, and inclusive digital strategies.

## 1.3. Methodology

The methodology followed the FAO guidance on preparing a Country Gender Assessment (FAO, 2017). The Agency for Gender Equality's (AGE) guidelines for conducting a Gender Equality Impact Assessment (Office of the Prime Minister, 2019) also informed the research design. The main research questions included:

1. How does diverse women's and men's time use differ in rural households?
2. How does their involvement in unpaid work differ, including agricultural work on family farms?
3. To what extent do they have access to time-saving and productive infrastructure and technologies?
4. What are women's perspectives on income generation opportunities?
5. To what extent are diverse women and men using digitalization in their work in rural economies?
6. What challenges do women face in accessing time-saving, productive infrastructure, technologies, and income generation opportunities, including those related to digitalization?
7. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected agricultural production and income generation activities?
8. To what extent do women have access to support networks, leadership opportunities and life outside the home? To what extent do they use effective extension services, that is, rural advisory services?

To respond to these questions, the research used the following mixed methods.

- **Literature review, gender statistics and data mining:** The gender assessment involved a review of literature, laws, policies, central and local authority reports, institutional data, and statistics on agriculture, digitalization and rural livelihoods. Although KAS produces regular agricultural household surveys on the use of agricultural land, crops, livestock, agricultural inputs and farm expenditure, these lack gender-disaggregated data on inequalities in agriculture, access to and control over resources, time use, labour patterns, and use of agriculture to secure rural livelihoods. The last Agriculture Census was conducted in 2014 and included 34 municipalities.<sup>4</sup> It provides statistical information on

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<sup>4</sup> Very few inhabitants of the four northern, Serbian-majority municipalities (Leposaviq/Leposavić, Zvečan/Zvečan, Zubin Potok, and Mitrovicë e veriut/severna Mitrovica) participated in this or the 2011 general population census, which affects the availability of data about Serb women and men.

agricultural activities, creates a Statistical Farm Register, and provides the authorities with information for designing, planning and implementing policies to support agricultural development. However, the only gender-disaggregated data are the number of agriculture holders, agriculture business holders, and members of holders' families working in agriculture. This assessment sought to address these identified data gaps.

- **Data requests:** KWN requested data on public subsidies distributed to the agricultural sector and the beneficiaries of public programmes. KWN sent data requests to ten central institutions; seven sent data, and three did not reply (see Appendix 1, Table A1.11). KWN also sent requests to finance and agriculture directors in all 38 municipalities; only 6 municipalities provided data,<sup>5</sup> and the data were not always complete.
- **Survey:** To address data gaps and respond to the research questions, this gender assessment involved a Kosovo-wide, statistically representative survey of 809 rural households with 400 women and 409 men of working age (18 to 65 years), conducted in March and April 2022 (see Table 1). KWN developed the survey in consultation with FAO, KAS, MAFRD and the Office of the Prime Minister. The survey used Eurostat and European Institute for Gender Equality question phrasing on time use, labour, and health and safety at work to collect this currently unavailable data and to enable comparisons across countries based on the EU Gender Equality Index.<sup>6</sup> In close cooperation with KWN, the Riinvest Institute tested, piloted and implemented the survey using Kobo Toolbox software. Multi-staged random sampling was used. There were three stages, with an additional zero stage sampling frame at the Kosovo level. The first stage of specific sampling was carried out with municipalities as the sampling frame; the second stage of the sampling frame was further narrowed to rural/urban areas in each municipality to ensure representation of households in both; and final sampling was conducted to ensure a sub-sample of non-majority communities in both urban and rural areas. Then, the random walk method was used to select households, using a five-household skip interval. Trained enumerators randomly selected respondents within households using the nearest birthday technique. To enable a statistically significant analysis by ethnicity, the Serb ethnic group was overrepresented. This has been done through sub-sampling of non-majority communities in both urban and rural samples. Because random sampling based on general attributes within the census data could result in the non-representativeness of non-majority communities, the team ensured that non-majority communities were statistically representative in both the rural and urban samples. The absolute margin of error was approximately 3.5 percentage points with a 95.0 percent confidence level. Appendix 1 has further information about respondents' characteristics.

**Table 1. Survey respondents, by gender and ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Women	%	Men	%	Rural	%
Albanian	293	73.0	333	81.0	626	76.9
Serb	91	23.0	53	13.0	144	18.3
Bosnian	6	2.0	9	2.0	15	1.9
Turkish	5	1.0	9	2.0	14	1.7
Roma	4	1.0	3	1.0	7	0.009
Ashkali	0	0.0	2	0.0	2	0.002
Egyptian	1	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.001
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>		<b>409</b>		<b>809</b>	

**Source:** Authors' own elaboration.

<sup>5</sup> These municipalities included: Gllgoc/Glogovac, Dragash/Dragaš, Istog/Istok, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Pejë/Peć and Prishtinë/Priština.

<sup>6</sup> While these survey data cannot be used to establish Kosovo's Gender Equality Index because KAS did not conduct the survey officially, the survey data do provide much needed data relating to Gender Equality Index dimensions for which data have not previously existed.

- **Focus group discussions** were conducted with diverse groups of women and men in different geographic regions, selected using variation sampling. These aimed to better understand the situation of women and men in rural areas and their attitudes on development opportunities, particularly related to agriculture, ICT use and digitalization. A moderator of the same gender as the participants used a semi-structured guide to lead the discussion. Focus groups involved eight to twelve participants and averaged 1.3 hours. Ten focus groups were conducted, including seven with women and three with men (see Appendix 1). In total, 60 women and 18 men participated.<sup>7</sup>
- **Interviews:** The team conducted semi-structured interviews with rural women, women farmers, business associations, institutions at local and central levels, CSOs, and digitalization experts. Representatives of institutions included extension providers at the municipal level, gender equality officers (GEOs), finance officers, and officials engaged in agriculture. The team selected respondents using variation sampling (see Appendix 1). Interviews focused on the situation and roles of women and men in agriculture, their engagement in decision-making, use of extension services, use of ICTs, access to subsidies, and opportunities for digitalization. Each respondent had a tailored interview guide. In total, KWN conducted 35 interviews with 26 women and 9 men.

Data analysis used an intersectional approach that considered the social and economic positions and needs of diverse women and men. Towards validity, two teams analysed the survey data using SPSS, STATA and Excel. Four researchers coded and analysed qualitative data in reference to the research questions. Triangulation of researchers, methods and data sources contributed to validity. Researchers used reflexivity throughout the research process towards estimating potential error.

The research and resulting assessment have the following limitations:

- **Lack of gender-disaggregated data and gender analyses in Kosovo:** These include data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, rural/urban location, and other social and demographic factors. Official data on agriculture include data on forestry and fishing, so data could not be disaggregated by these subsectors and gender. Institutions generally lacked systems for collecting and reporting gender-disaggregated data, though such data should be publicly available in accordance with Law No. 05/L-020 on Gender Equality (2015).
- **Insufficient time and capacities:** The institutions responsible for collecting and providing data lacked systems and necessary capacities to provide requested data. Officials said that they have data in physical copies and digitizing it takes too much time. Little official data was received, and the information received was often incomplete.
- **Potential sampling error:** In a few instances, enumerators may not have used the nearest birthday technique in randomly selecting household members or may not have checked back if the randomly selected person was not home. KWN and Riinvest constantly instructed enumerators to do this, and Riinvest removed surveys with incorrect sampling, but the potential for error exists. This could contribute to bias by underrepresenting employed persons not home when visited.
- **Underrepresentation of Serb officials:** Serb officials said they could not engage in interviews because they were on strike or not working at all for political reasons, and thus could not respond to interviews, so their perspectives are underrepresented.
- **Potential underrepresentation of some men's views on gender equality:** During focus groups, some men refused to speak about gender relations in their households and communities, changed the topic, and/or showed signs of discomfort. This suggests persisting social norms, whereby men may not feel comfortable talking about gender norms and relations, particularly when among their peers. Nevertheless, during the survey, men were interviewed individually, which provided greater anonymity. Thus, via surveys, men provided more of this information.

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<sup>7</sup> Since the focus groups sought to gather qualitative information from a broad spectrum of respondents and did not seek to obtain the quantitative information already gathered through the survey, the number of women and men participating was not as relevant as the quality of diverse perspectives collected.

- **Insufficient gender-disaggregated data on inflation and impacts on livelihoods:** The war in Ukraine has contributed to increased oil prices and food costs, and general inflation (Krasniqi-Veseli, 2022). Consumer prices increased by an average of 10 percent in March 2022 compared with March 2021 (KAS, 2022a), and inflation had hit a 14-year high of 14.2 percent as of July 2022 (KAS, 2022b). This crisis occurred after the research phase for this gender assessment was completed, so the gender assessment does not examine its adverse effects on rural livelihoods.

## 1.4. Content of the gender assessment

This gender assessment begins with an overview of gender equality in Kosovo, examining the agriculture sector, legal framework, demographics, migration, politics, education, food security, nutrition, vulnerabilities to climate change, health, gender-based violence and intersectional inequalities affecting vulnerable groups. The third chapter examines gender differences in women's and men's labour participation and income, and how these contribute to poverty. While these two chapters draw primarily from existing literature and data, the chapters that follow use original data collected through the gender assessment to respond to the respective research questions. Thus, the fourth chapter discusses social gender norms and time use. Chapter 5 examines gender equality in the agriculture sector, and Chapter 6 explores rural infrastructure through a gender lens. Chapter 7 looks at gender and digitalization in agriculture and rural livelihoods. Chapter 8 discusses women and men's participation in decision-making within the household, local politics and civil society. Chapter 9 explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and affiliated measures on agriculture and rural livelihoods from a gender perspective. Finally, the gender assessment provides recommendations for the central and local authorities, development actors including FAO, and CSOs.





## 2. Kosovo overview

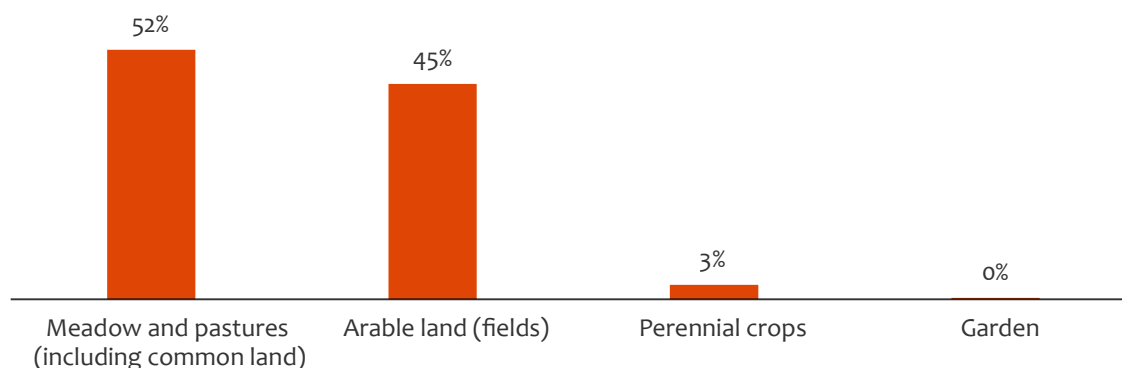
This chapter provides an overview of the legal, demographic, political, social and economic situation in Kosovo. It begins with an overview of the agriculture sector. Following this, it summarizes the legal, policy and institutional framework on gender equality and agriculture. The chapter then presents gender-disaggregated data, where available, relating to key demographic, migration, political, educational, economic, environmental, health and social indicators, discussing intersectional inequalities and vulnerabilities. The chapter provides background information crucial for understanding contextual issues that affect diverse women's and men's ability to engage in agriculture and various aspects of rural livelihoods. The chapter draws primarily from existing literature and official statistics, supplemented by data collected through this gender assessment.

### 2.1. The agriculture sector: key facts

The agriculture sector accounts for 6.9 percent of Kosovo's gross domestic product (GDP), 14.0 percent of formal employment, and a significant share of informal employment (World Bank, 2021a; KAS, 2021a). Despite Kosovo's abundant productive land and natural resources that favour crop production, the agriculture sector accounts for only 18.0 percent of all exports (European Commission, 2022).

According to the Agriculture Holdings Survey 2020 (KAS, 2021a), the total area used for agricultural land is 420 209.54 hectares (ha).<sup>8</sup> The average size of arable land per agricultural holding cultivating this land was 1.6 ha, and the area of arable land per inhabitant was quite low (0.10 ha per person) (KAS, 2015). In 2020, Kosovo had 186 289 farms; most were small farms with 3.2 ha being the average size per agricultural holding (KAS, 2021b). The small size of farms is a serious challenge to increasing agricultural productivity.

**Figure 1. Structure of the area of used agricultural land**



**Source:** Adapted from KAS. 2020b. *Agriculture Holdings Survey 2019*. Series 2: Agriculture and Environment Statistics. Pristina. <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5618/aeb-2019-anglisht.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> This includes meadows and pastures (including common land) amounting to 217 931.84 ha (51.9 percent) and arable land (including open field vegetables and greenhouse vegetables) accounting for 188 364.69 ha (44.8 percent; KAS, 2020b, p. 11).

“The properties are too small to be able to organize a serious business on them.”  
(Serb man, Zubin Potok, focus group discussion)

Horticulture and livestock rearing are traditional economic activities in Kosovo that hold development opportunities (World Bank, 2017). Farming communities also strongly prefer these subsectors (ibid.).

## 2.2. Legal and policy framework on gender equality and agriculture

### 2.2.1. Key international commitments to gender equality

Since Kosovo is not a member of the United Nations, it cannot become an official signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, the 2030 Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nevertheless, Kosovo has worked to align its legal, institutional and policy framework on gender equality with international law and policies.

Kosovo’s Constitution renders CEDAW directly applicable and superseding other laws and policies. Article 14 of CEDAW acknowledges rural women’s significant contributions to their families’ economies and calls upon states to take measures to protect the rights of rural women (1981). CEDAW also mentions women’s rights: “To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes” (ibid., p. 6).

The Assembly of Kosovo adopted an amendment to the Constitution in 2020, including the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Council of Europe, 2011). The Istanbul Convention defines and requires States Parties to criminalize or sanction all forms of violence against women.

Kosovo has committed to supporting progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals through the Development Strategy 2016–2020 and Plan for Sustainable Development (under revision as of 2022), the European Reform Agenda, and by way of an Assembly Resolution formally endorsing the SDGs (2021). The Resolution aims to connect Kosovo with global processes and to facilitate partnerships with different stakeholders for implementing and monitoring progress on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Although Kosovo’s adoption of the 2030 Agenda is voluntary, and Kosovo does not have to report on progress, the Assembly has committed to taking steps towards achieving the 2030 Agenda (Kalludra and Ejupi, 2019).

The 2030 Agenda forms a key component of Kosovo’s EU Accession goals, including its commitment to several SDGs that are relevant to gender and rural livelihoods. Sustainable Development Goal 1, “No Poverty”, emphasizes supporting vulnerable women:

By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance (United Nations Kosovo Team, 2022, no pagination).

The 2030 Agenda also highlights the importance of increased productivity for marginalized groups in agriculture in SDG 2 “Zero Hunger”:

By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment (United Nations Kosovo Team, 2022, no pagination).

Sustainable Development Goal 5, “Gender Equality”, underlines the significance of women’s political participation, their ownership of property and use of technologies, including information and communications technology. Moreover, Goal 5 includes the importance of women’s property ownership and equal access to economic resources: “Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with [central] laws” (ibid., no pagination). Lastly, the “Gender Equality” SDG mentions the importance of technology in empowering women: “Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women” (ibid., no pagination).

The SDGs set by the United Nations 2030 Agenda establishes goals for Kosovo to work towards when crafting policies that support women in agriculture and rural livelihoods. SDG 1 and SDG 2 set the international standards that Kosovo should aim to meet in supporting vulnerable agriculture groups. Additionally, SDG 5 details reforms needed to support women.

### 2.2.2. Laws and policies on gender equality

The Constitution of Kosovo (2008, Article 7) commits to gender equality and equal political, economic, social and cultural opportunities for women and men, and the Law on Gender Equality (2015) guarantees accountability for gender equality. It defines gender broadly:

This Law applies to men, women and persons who have a protected characteristic of gender identity or sex determination, and guarantees equal opportunity and treatment in public and private areas of social life, including political and public life, employment, education, health, economy, social benefits, sport and culture and other areas set out by the present or other law (ibid., 2.1).

The Law also defines and prohibits both sex- and gender-based discrimination (ibid., 2.2).

Article 3.1.15, defines “unequal representation” as “when the participation or representation of one gender is less than fifty percent (50 percent) at any level of decision-making body in political and public life”. The Law calls for equal gender representation in “legislative, executive, judicial bodies at all levels and other public institutions” (ibid., 6.7), extending to all governing and decision-making bodies. The electoral laws for central and municipal levels have not yet been harmonized with this Law; they foresee that the “minority gender” hold at least 30 percent of the total seats (Article 8).

Furthermore, Article 5 of the Law on Gender Equality calls for the gender mainstreaming of all Kosovo policies, including budgets to prevent and eliminate gender discrimination and achieve gender equality:

1. 1.3 gender mainstreaming of all policies, documents and legislation; [and] 1.5 inclusion of gender budgeting in all areas, as a necessary tool to guarantee that the principle of gender equality is respected in collecting, distribution and allocation of resources.

Article 5 mandates that public authorities collected gender-disaggregated data and that it “shall be recorded, registered, processed and [institutions] shall be obliged to submit these data to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics”. Moreover, the Law sets forth the responsibilities of institutions specialized in furthering gender equality. Based on the Law, central and local authority bodies must have GEOs, and the AGE exists within the Office of the Prime Minister, at the highest level of decision-making (Assembly of Kosovo, 2008b).

Although Kosovo has committed to gender-responsive budgeting, Kosovo uses line-item budgets rather than programmatic budgeting and does not have any system in place for analysing revenues or expenditures towards gender equality, or on women and men, respectively. The Law on Gender Equality has not yet been harmonized with the public finance law, and systems for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating budget expenditures from a gender perspective have not yet been established (Assembly of Kosovo, 2015).

The Law refers to “agriculture and family economy” in Article 18.1.4 when recognizing the unpaid work of women and men “as a contribution to the development of the family and society”. As such, Article 18.2 states that persons engaged in such unpaid work “shall benefit from community services, labour policies and employment, and vocational training”.

Article 11 obliges AGE to coordinate preparation, monitoring and annual reporting to the authorities on the implementation of a programme on gender equality. The current Kosovo Program for Gender Equality (KPGGE) 2020–2024, aims to “ensure that gender equality is placed at the centre of the transformation processes in Kosovo, within all structures, institutions, policies, procedures, practices and programmes of authorities, agencies, civic society, the private sector and the donors’ community” (“Government of Kosovo”, 2020a, p. 24). The programme considers the legal framework and main international and Kosovo policies to ensure gender equality and the economic empowerment of women. It has an Action Plan for 2020–2023, which has measures for achieving the objectives, their timelines, and funding needs.

Recognizing the economic vulnerability of women working in the informal sector, the programme highlights the need to provide and enhance workers’ equal access to rights, freedoms, decision-making, resources and services, and to improve workplace conditions. The current programme prioritizes the recognition of women’s contribution to the agriculture sector, especially through informal labour, with a view towards increasing women’s income and economic stability.

As cited in the programme, the Sector Strategy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare 2018–2022 aims to address “gender inequalities in the labour market by designing services and active employment measures in line with women’s demands, addressing occupational gender segregation, and includes activities to enhance social welfare by expanding and enhancing the quality of protection and social and family services, with a special focus on vulnerable groups and gender equality,” including women, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, people with disabilities, and the long-term unemployed (“Government of Kosovo”, 2020a, p. 13).

Additionally, the programme required AGE to develop a manual on gender impact assessment for public policies and legislation. Furthermore, AGE should strengthen capacity-building for public officials, training them to conduct gender impact assessments. The agency has developed the *ex ante* Gender Equality Impact Assessment (GEIA) Manual (Office of the Prime Minister, 2019), and the Kosovo Better Regulation Strategy 2.0 (2017–2021) requires public officials to use it to inform all draft laws and policies, as part of the required Regulatory Impact Assessment. Thus, gender analyses, such as the present report, must inform all agricultural, economic, development and digitalization strategies.

However, the KWN interviews for this assessment and prior research findings suggest that officials rarely conduct the required GEIA when drafting new laws or policies (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2020; KWN, 2022). The fact that Kosovo does not yet have an EU Gender Equality Index, lacks several key gender statistics, and that public bodies rarely submit gender-disaggregated data to KAS, despite legal requirements to do so, all undermine efforts to ensure that policies and decision-making are appropriately informed by evidence-based gender analysis.

### 2.2.3. Agricultural, economic and other sectoral policies relevant to gender equality

Despite the laws and policies for furthering gender equality in Kosovo, agriculture and rural development strategies insufficiently consider gender inequalities. Article 13 of the Development Strategy 2016–2021 refers to the significance of strengthening women’s property rights and rights to inheritance (“Government of Kosovo”, 2016a); and the Private Sector Development Strategy 2018–2022 underscores the potential of women’s entrepreneurship as a means of closing the gender gap in the private sector by increasing employment and productivity. The strategy states that “active women in the private sector will add diversity to the range of voices in product development, research, forward-thinking ideas” (“Government of Kosovo”, 2018a, p. 17). The Action Plan includes

a specific objective (1.4) to increase the number of new support measures launched for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), including women in business and tourism (ibid.). Although this objective is of relevance to rural women, the strategy does not explain how the objective will be achieved, nor does it provide a gender analysis of constraints facing rural women.

The authorities have created an Economic Reform Programme for 2022–2024 to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance employment. It aims to support economic growth through capital investments and structural reforms. One planned reform is reducing the informal economy, which, it says, makes up an estimated 30 percent of GDP (“Government of Kosovo”, 2022a). The programme foresees that reducing the informal economy will increase formal employment, revenues for public services, and women’s and men’s wellbeing. Moreover, it aims to reduce labour rights violations related to the informal economy that affect women’s labour force participation, contributing to gender equality. However, no comprehensive gender analysis of the informal economy exists to ensure that these efforts consider the various positions and needs of diverse women and men.

The 2022–2024 Economic Reform Programme also calls for structural changes in the agriculture sector, such as the digitalization of systems, the alignment of policies with Common Agricultural Policies, an increase in local production, and an increase in the local workforce through processing and the service chain. However, the programme’s proposed structural changes only vaguely describe gender equality. The programme does not specify how it will prioritize women in the application process, nor does it explain how structural development of the agriculture sector will engage rural women and empower women economically. The Economic Reform Programme 2022–2024 lacks sufficient gender mainstreaming.

Kosovo’s Agriculture and Rural Development Plan (ARDP) aims to improve quality of life and diversify job opportunities in rural areas by fostering employment, facilitating social inclusion, and balancing territorial development. The Programme for Rural Development 2020–2027, under the measure Farm Diversification and Business Development 2020–2021, includes that priority will be given to projects implemented in rural areas proposed by women entrepreneurs and young farmers.

As of October 2022, Kosovo was developing a new Development Strategy, Digital Agenda, and Strategy for Education, inclusive of attention to digitalization. As stated, the Better Regulation Strategy 2.0 for Kosovo 2017–2021 requires that each new policy undergo a Regulatory Impact Assessment, which must include a GEIA. In the present context, this gender assessment can inform the finalization and implementation of these strategies.

#### 2.2.4. Institutions responsible for advancing gender equality

The Law on Gender Equality describes the institutions responsible for advancing gender equality. The Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Victims of Sexual Violence during the War, Missing Persons, and Petitions should ensure the application of the principle of gender equality within legislation and monitor its implementation.

The Agency for Gender Equality within the Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for protecting, promoting and advancing gender equality in all spheres of life. The agency is responsible for gender coordination. It has four divisions: 1) Division for Legislation; 2) Division for Cooperation; 3) Division for Administration, Budget and Finances; and 4) Division for Reporting and Monitoring. Other key functions of the agency are strengthening the ability of public officials to conduct gender mainstreaming and monitoring the work of GEOs within ministries.

Gender equality officers work within each ministry, including MAFRD. Article 12 of the Law on Gender Equality states that all ministries and municipalities must appoint GEOs with professional capacity and allocate sufficient resources from the budget for them to implement the law. Gender equality officers’ responsibilities include:

1) Coordination of the implementation of this law and of the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality; 2) Inclusion of gender mainstreaming and budgeting in drafting and implementation of policies; 3) Cooperation with the Agency for Gender Equality and other relevant actors in the field of gender equality; [and] 4) Preparation of annual reports on implementation of the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality and other reports that are submitted to the Agency for Gender Equality.

Gender equality officers at the municipal level have the responsibility to gender mainstream policies, programmes and budgets. They also cooperate with CSOs. Despite this structure, municipal budgets for gender mainstreaming efforts remain low and GEOs often work in isolation. Several GEOs lack the technical skills needed to advise municipalities on the integration of gender equality in all sectors. Gender equality officers have tended not to participate in budget planning for different sectors but have provided recommendations on allocations.

### 2.2.5. Institutional profile of the agriculture sector

The Assembly of Kosovo Committee of Environment, Food, Agriculture, Planning and Development is responsible for monitoring the implementation of laws, monitoring independent agencies and administrative departments, and reviewing sector strategies, plans, ministries' annual expenditure reports, and annual reports of independent agencies on agriculture, food security and safety, forestry, rural development, environmental protection, water, spatial planning and cadastre, among others.

According to Law No. 03/L-098 on Agriculture and Rural Development (Official Gazette, 2009), MAFRD is responsible for preparing and implementing seven-year and annual agriculture and rural development programmes.

Regarding decision-making in the agriculture sector however, women have remained consistently underrepresented. As of August 2022, the Minister, two Deputy Ministers, and Permanent Secretary are men. The Minister has five political advisors, two women and three men, while two administrative assistants are women.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development provides direct support, grants and subsidies to local farmers. In addition to this budget managed by MAFRD, municipalities are allocated small budgets for rural development and agriculture. The law on municipalities ("Law on Local Self-Government") outlines the 38 municipalities' competencies. Each municipality has a Directorate of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development. Within each Directorate, there are three sectors with directors responsible for agriculture, forestry and rural development, respectively (Assembly of Kosovo, 2008a).

Central authority grants comprise 84.4 percent of municipalities' income while other sources of revenue (for example, municipal revenues, investments and borrowing) make up 15.6 percent of their income ("Government of Kosovo", 2020b). On average, municipalities spend 2.35 percent of their budgets on agriculture (ibid.). In the budget for agriculture, municipalities spend approximately 33.1 percent of their budgets on agricultural subsidies (ibid.). Since Kosovo does not use programmatic budgeting, no system exists for analysing the amount of agricultural subsidies distributed to women and men by municipality or by MAFRD. Municipalities are responsible for data collection and analysis, but they do not always keep adequate data, and it is not always reported to MAFRD, which makes it difficult to monitor gender-disaggregated Kosovo-wide trends in the use of public funds.

In conclusion, Kosovo's legal framework related to gender equality largely aligns with international law and policies. However, sector-specific laws and strategies related to agriculture and rural development are not based on sufficient gender analysis and do not include specific steps towards furthering gender equality. Secondary legislation needs to clarify responsibilities and improve systems, such as

for ensuring that GEIAs inform all sectoral policies, institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting within the public finance management system, and better tracking and reporting on beneficiaries using sex-disaggregated data. Moreover, the authorities need to invest further in strengthening officials' capacities so that they can perform their responsibilities. Thus, laws and policies have not yet translated into substantive gender equality in the daily lives of women and men, as the following sections illustrate.

## 2.3. Demographic profile

As of 2020, Kosovo had an estimated 1 782 115 inhabitants (“Government of Kosovo” and KAS, 2021). In 2011, the average household size was 5.9 residents (KAS, 2012). An estimated 48.5 percent of Kosovo’s population was female, while 51.5 percent was male (KAS, 2020c). In 2019, the sex ratio at birth or coefficient of masculinity was 110.6 males per 100 females (ibid.), which suggests a continued social preference for sons, realized through sex-selective abortions (UNFPA, 2019). The live birth rate has decreased over time for all members of the population, attributed to youth emigration and the absence of would-be young parents (KAS, 2020c). The fertility rate has also slowed in recent years to two children per woman (ibid.). The number of births per year has decreased from 27 626 in 2011 to 21 925 in 2020 (Behrami, 2022). This can have implications for the availability of labour, particularly on family farms.

Kosovo still has the youngest population in Europe, where more than half of the population under 25 years of age. According to KAS (2017), at the time of the 2011 Census, 92.9 percent of the population was Albanian, 1.5 percent Serb, and 5.6 percent other minorities, including Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Bosnians, Turks and Gorani. As noted, Serb residents boycotted the last census, however, contributing to inaccuracies. Estimates have suggested that Serbs make up 7.8 percent of the Kosovo population (European Centre for Minority Rights in Kosovo, 2013). Since the war, some people remain displaced internally or internationally (UNHCR, 2018). Displacement and ongoing property ownership disputes continue to affect women and men’s access to property for agriculture and rural development.

Approximately 61 percent of Kosovo’s population lives in rural areas (KAS, 2012). With such a large rural population, development relies on increasing agricultural production and delivering benefits to diverse women, men and children. Understanding the demographic profile of rural communities and recognizing that Kosovo’s rural population is not homogeneous is necessary for understanding and resolving the intersecting and multiple forms of marginalization experienced by some rural women (for example, based on gender *and* location, ethnicity, age, ability, and/or socioeconomic status).

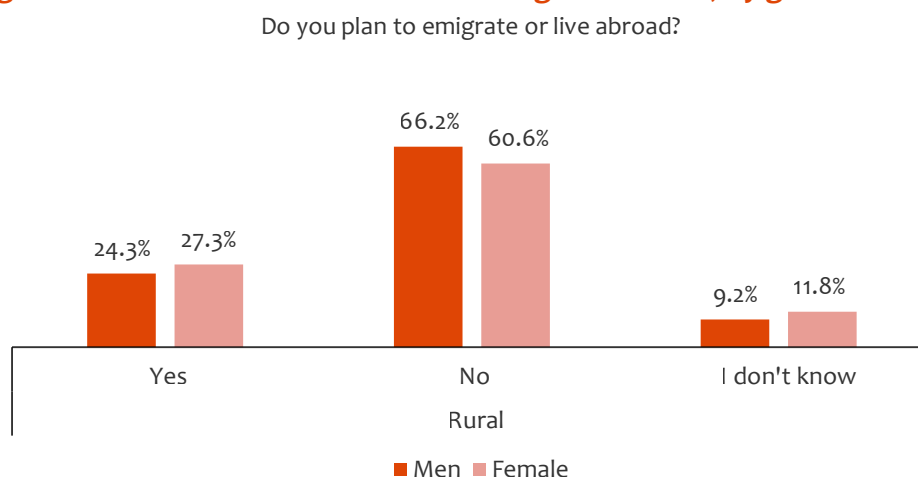
## 2.4. Gender and migration

Migration has affected demographic changes both within and outside Kosovo through history. This has implications for labour force participation, particularly in rural areas, as discussed in this section.

### 2.4.1. Emigration

Kosovo faced a mass expulsion of the population during the 1998–1999 war (Hajdari and Krasniqi, 2021). Since then, the average age of migrants rose from 19 years of age in the 1990s to 29 years of age in 2009 (ibid.). According to somewhat outdated World Bank (2011) estimates, 73 percent of emigrants were from rural areas, migrating primarily to European countries.<sup>9</sup> According to KAS, between 2000 and 2020, on average, more than 19 000 people left Kosovo annually, though it is estimated that even more people are likely to have emigrated without proper documentation (Behrami, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> According to KAS estimates (2015), 90 000 people emigrated between 2011 and 2014, and more than 10 000 emigrated to a Western European country. As of 2014, it was estimated that approximately one-third of people born in Kosovo resided outside of its territory, and the intention to migrate continued, especially among young people aged 14 to 29 years (UNDP, 2014). No sex-disaggregated data are available.

**Figure 2. Plans of rural inhabitants to emigrate abroad, by gender**

**Source:** Adapted from UNDP. 2022a. *Public Pulse Brief XXII*. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/kosovo/publications/public-pulsebrief-xxii>

Over the last decade, 220 000 residents have emigrated (Hajdari and Krasniqi, 2021). In addition, “emigration was highest in 2015 when 75 000 left in one year [then] decreased in succeeding years, although 2018 was an outlier with 28 000 emigrants departing, mainly seeking employment in Germany, Slovenia and Croatia according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kosovo” (ibid., p. 4).. By 2019, an estimated 1.96 percent of people of Kosovo lived abroad, including legal and illegal migrants (“Government of Kosovo”, 2019). In 2020, an estimated 8 724 inhabitants emigrated, legally and illegally (“Government of Kosovo” and KAS, 2021). The Migration Policy Institute (MPI; 2022) has estimated Kosovo’s net migration rate at -1.07 migrant(s)/1 000 population in 2022. Data disaggregated by sex or rural/urban location are unavailable. Meanwhile, in this gender assessment’s 2022 survey, 31 percent of respondents said that a man in their family had emigrated abroad, and in approximately 12 percent of families, more than one male relative had emigrated. More than 20 percent of families had a female relative who had emigrated.

Reasons for emigration included employment, education or family reunion (Balkans Policy Research Group, 2020). More than 90 percent of migrants surveyed by the Balkans Policy Research Group were between 20 and 35 years old, which is the same age group most likely to face unemployment in Kosovo. While this relationship does not necessarily imply a causal relationship between age, unemployment and migration, it does illustrate that members of Kosovo’s prime-age workforce are leaving. Meanwhile, 35 percent of the surveyed migrants were female, reportedly leaving primarily for marriage or family reunion (ibid.).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) “Public Pulse” survey (2022a), involving a representative sample of the population, showed a slight increase in the intention to emigrate from 20.5 percent of respondents in November 2021 to 24.1 percent in April 2022 (24.7 percent of women and 23.5 percent of men). As shown in Figure 2, interest in emigrating was highest among rural women (27.3 percent), followed by rural men (24.3 percent). In contrast, 66.2 percent of rural men and 60.6 percent of rural women were not interested in emigrating.<sup>10</sup>

According to the slightly older Millennium Challenge Corporation’s (MCC) Labour Force and Time Use Survey, 20.2 percent of men intended to work abroad, while 11.6 percent of women claimed to be planning to work abroad in the next 12 months (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018).<sup>11</sup> The difference between residents in rural and urban areas was insignificant (Rinvest Institute, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> Published data were not disaggregated by gender, age or rural/urban location, but were requested by KWN.

<sup>11</sup> In 2017, MCC conducted an extensive Kosovo-wide survey with 8 533 households, collecting employment information on 32 742 individuals (50.2 percent female and 49.8 percent male).



Emigrants contribute substantially to Kosovo's economy, with remittances accounting for an estimated 15 percent of GDP (Riinvest Institute, 2021). Remittances have served as a safety net for many people of Kosovo, ensuring their livelihoods amid the highest unemployment and poverty rates in Europe (World Bank, 2010). The diaspora has invested primarily in the construction (25 percent) and agriculture (20 percent) sectors, mainly through existing family businesses, with smaller amounts of investment in hospitality (12 percent), trade (7 percent), real estate (6 percent), transportation (5 percent) and tourism (2 percent; Basha, 2021). According to economic experts, while the diaspora's investments are visible, they have not met the full potential for diaspora investment opportunities (ibid.).

Remittances play a key role in Kosovo's economy, but they also can contribute to an increase in inequalities, creating gaps between areas in which the diaspora gives more versus those where they give less (for example, between municipalities, and urban and rural areas, among others; Behrami, 2022). Furthermore, remittances can contribute to a "culture of dependency", which decreases incentives to look for a job (ibid.). Remittances can negatively affect the labour force participation of remittance recipients by increasing the reservation wage and encouraging inactivity (Riinvest Institute, 2021). Statistically, households with emigrants participate less in the labour market than households without emigrants (ibid.). The Millennium Challenge Corporation's survey similarly found that "the labor force participation rate for individuals belonging to remittance receiving households was 2.5 percentage points lower compared to individuals belonging to non-remittance receiving households" (Siddiqui et al., 2018, p. 18).

A 2014 analysis similarly showed how a steady flow of remittances increases the reservation wage of receivers and lowers the likelihood of them registering at unemployment offices (Rudi, 2014). Moreover, studies in other developing countries show that remittances have a negative impact on labour force participation, especially for women (Kozel and Alderman, 1990). A gender-disaggregated analysis of the impact of remittances has yet to be conducted in Kosovo, though prevailing norms of household responsibilities suggest that men tend to make decisions about income, including remittances.

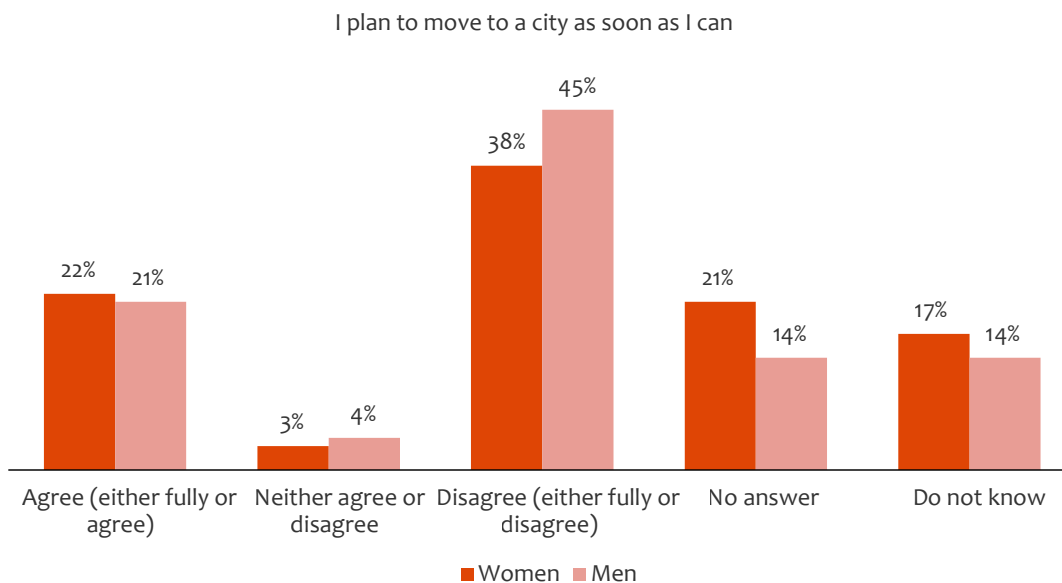
The interrelationships of emigration and economic development represent both challenges and opportunities; local authorities can transform emigration into a "development opportunity" through careful consideration in development strategies (Behrami, 2022). Yet, Kosovo currently lacks evidence-based policies at central and municipal levels that could harness remittances and other resources in contributing to development strategies, particularly inclusive of gender analysis.

#### 2.4.2. Internal (rural-urban) migration

Internal migration also exists in Kosovo, primarily from rural to urban areas. According to the last population census (2011), approximately 61 percent of the population lived in rural areas; migration was influenced primarily by job opportunities, better salaries, higher quality education, and available health services (KAS, 2012; Behrami, 2022). Unfortunately, KAS's population data are not disaggregated by sex and rural/urban location, making it difficult to monitor trends.

In 2021, Riinvest found that 17 percent of surveyed young people had migrated, primarily to Prishtinë/Priština for study (73 percent).<sup>12</sup> Individuals also migrated for work and marriage (14 percent of migrants). Regional differences existed. The least number of migrants came from Ferizaj/Uroševac (9 percent), while the most came from Gjakovë/Đakovica (27 percent). Prishtinë/Priština was the main destination, attracting 76 percent of internal migrants. Again, no data disaggregated by gender or urban/rural location were available. At the same time, in the survey for this gender assessment, 13 percent of households said that one or more women in their immediate family had migrated to an urban area, and 12 percent said one or more men had. Moreover, 22 percent of women and 21 percent of men agreed with the statement that they would move to a city or urban area as soon as they could

<sup>12</sup> They surveyed a statistically representative sample of 966 young people aged 15 to 29 years on their employment status, skills and employability.

**Figure 3. Survey respondents' plans to move from rural to urban areas**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

(see Figure 3), suggesting a continued potential for migration. In contrast, 38 percent of women and 45 percent of men respondents disagreed with this statement.

Interviews and focus groups conducted through this gender assessment confirm a continued possibility of youth migration from rural to urban areas. Poverty, insufficient income-generating opportunities, disinterest in agricultural activities, and interest in living in urban areas are the reasons that young people provided for wanting to move to cities or abroad. Research participants suggested that people leave villages because they do not want to invest time and money in making a living from agricultural work, particularly given the difficulty of this work.

“Youth are leaving. They go to the city or leave [Kosovo] if they can.”  
(WCSO, interview)

“Villages are becoming emptier every day. People are moving abroad.  
There are also lazy people who do not want to work in agriculture.”  
(Woman fish farmer, interview)

Migration from rural to urban areas has influenced depopulation, especially in rural and mountainous areas, and this has been accompanied by reductions in some public services for the people who remain (for example, schools and ambulances), worsening their quality of life (Behrami, 2022).

No comprehensive analysis exists of the impacts of rural to urban internal migration on rural development or the agriculture sector in Kosovo. Broader research has found that migration contributes to lost labour on agricultural farms (Sauer, Gorton and Davidova, 2015). No gender-disaggregated data could be found.

In conclusion, while gender- and geographically-disaggregated data have not been consistently published, most migrants have been from rural areas. Men tend to migrate for work and women for family. The fact that both genders leave rural areas is likely to affect the extent to which the labour force is available for agricultural and other work. However, at the same time, nearly two-thirds of rural women and men have no interest in emigrating, which suggests that there are opportunities for identifying policies that can encourage and support rural development and agricultural work, particularly if investments can ease agricultural work, making it less physically demanding, so that rural residents, particularly young women and men, see economic opportunities for decent work in their communities.

## 2.5. Gender equality in politics and decision-making

Women’s equal participation in politics and decision-making *can* contribute to policymaking that considers women and men’s potentially diverse needs, including related to agriculture and rural development. At the central level, women’s political participation has improved, including their representation in parliament (from 28.0 percent in 2001, to 35.8 percent in 2021) and in the number of ministers (from 11 percent of ministers in 2011, to 33.3 percent in 2022). Following the February 2021 parliamentary elections, women received 43 of 120 seats (Kosovo Central Election Commission, 2021). Of these women, 34 secured enough votes for their seats without the quota, which marked an improvement compared with prior elections. As of 2022, women governed 5 of 15 ministries (Office of the Prime Minister, 2022).

In the last municipal elections in 2021, of 165 candidates for municipal mayors, only 13 were women. As of December 2021, only 2 of 38 municipalities (5 percent) had women mayors: Graçanicë/Gračanica and Ranillug/Ranilug (NDI, 2022). In total, since 1999, only 3 municipalities have had a woman mayor. In 2021, women made up 36 percent of municipal assembly members (Ahmeti, 2022); and in 2018, women comprised 20 percent of the 829 employees in the municipal administration (Limani, 2019).

While important for democracy, women’s participation in decision-making does not necessarily translate into improved attention to gender equality in policymaking, including related to agriculture and rural development. Sometimes, women leaders may reinforce patriarchal gender norms, due to lack of support, confidence or knowledge, as interview and focus group respondents observed. Meanwhile, as per Kosovo law, men also have equal responsibilities for ensuring that laws and policies address the needs of diverse women and men; men can be important advocates for gender equality.

**“Most of the women do not have enough courage to stand for themselves.”**  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

In conclusion, despite the Law on Gender Equality’s requirement for equal representation of women and men in all decision-making, data illustrate that the authorities and assemblies have not achieved this at local or central levels. At the same time, all men and women policymakers have a responsibility to ensure that GEIAs inform policymaking in all sectors, including agriculture and rural development.

## 2.6. Gender, literacy and education

This section examines overall literacy and education levels in the population, including differences in enrolment and graduation rates by gender and other demographic and social indicators, where available. Education levels can affect the social, technological and economic opportunities that diverse women and men have, including access to agricultural development opportunities, participation in the digitalization of agricultural work, and access to financial assets, such as public subsidies.

### 2.6.1. Literacy and illiteracy rates

According to the 2011 Census, very few men (2.69 percent) and women (3.06 percent) aged ten years or older were illiterate (KAS, 2012).<sup>13</sup> The more recent 2019–2020 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) shows different results because it assessed literacy based on the respondent’s ability to read a short, simple statement or based on school attendance (KAS and UNICEF, 2020).<sup>14</sup> The survey found that illiteracy rates are higher among women, those in the poorest wealth index quintile, and those

<sup>13</sup> It measured literacy by asking individuals if they can “read and write a letter” (KAS, 2012, p. 10).

<sup>14</sup> The sample included 2 102 men aged 15 to 49 years and 5 275 women aged 15 to 49 years.

aged 35 to 49 years. Additionally, non-Albanian and non-Serb ethnic groups have the highest illiteracy rates. Among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, the MICS report shows that 9.1 percent of women who have no education or incomplete primary education are illiterate, and 10.6 percent of women who completed primary or lower secondary education are illiterate. In comparison, the illiteracy rate among men is 6.6 percent and 6.0 percent, respectively.

### 2.6.2. Educational attainment by gender

The Kosovo 2011 Census provides an overview of education levels among the whole population, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity. As Table 2 shows, among persons aged 15 to 65+ years, men tended to be more educated than women.

Women's lower levels of formal education can affect their access to information and resources related to agriculture and rural development, as discussed in later chapters.<sup>15</sup>

The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) does not disaggregate data on educational enrolment and completion by both gender and rural/urban residency, though they plan to begin collecting and providing such data after the forthcoming census (correspondence with KWN, 2022). Without such regularly published data, it is difficult to monitor trends in educational attainment by gender and rural/urban residency.

### 2.6.3. Early education, preschool and child care

Kosovo has both public preschool institutions (nurseries and kindergartens) and private preschool institutions, including community-based centres, kindergartens and preparatory classes. Of 38 municipalities, only 23 have at least one public kindergarten for children up to 6 years of age; in total, there are 124 preschool institutions (Gjelaj, Rraci and Bajrami, 2018). Data on the availability of preschools and enrolment rates disaggregated by rural and urban areas are unavailable. Evidence from institutions and interviews suggest that children who live in rural areas and come from marginalized groups have unequal access to preschool education due to their distance from these institutions and insufficient finances. Only 15 percent of children (aged 3 years) in Kosovo attend early childhood education (KAS and UNICEF, 2020). The number of children in child care increases to 33.9 percent for children aged 3 to 6 years and to 87.7 percent for 5 to 6-year-olds. According to Education Statistics (MESTI and KAS, 2022), in 2020/2021, the number of children in kindergartens and preschools was 32 397 (52 percent female and 48 percent male). As a relevant benchmark, the European Union's "Barcelona Objectives" aimed to ensure in all EU Member States the "availability of high quality, affordable childcare facilities" for at least 33 percent of children under age 3 and 90 percent aged 3 to 6 by 2010 (European Commission, 2013, p. 4). Kosovo remains far from achieving these EU objectives (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2016c). Although the central authorities have not committed to them officially, the Barcelona Objectives serve as a relevant target amid Kosovo's aspirations to join the European

**Table 2. Highest completed level of education, disaggregated by sex**

% of population that completed:	No formal education	Primary school	Lower secondary	Upper secondary	Faculty/ bachelor
<b>Total</b>	4.7	10.4	39.8	34.2	6.0
<b>Male</b>	2.1	7.0	34.1	44.1	7.3
<b>Female</b>	7.3	13.8	45.6	24.4	4.7

Source: Kosovo 2011 Census.

<sup>15</sup> Although sex-disaggregated data are unavailable, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians are less likely than other ethnic groups to have attended formal education. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women may face added challenges. Census data are not disaggregated by rural/urban location, only by municipality, so further analysis was not possible.

Union. The lack of affordable, accessible child care limits women’s ability to participate in the labour force, given social expectations that they serve as caregivers.

“The child care centres are only in the city. Women in villages have to leave their kids with family members if they have to work.”

(Gender Equality Officer, interview)

“I am looking to find a job in the village because of family and child care.”

(Albanian woman, Krushë e Vogël/Mala Kruša, focus group)

Thus, inaccessible preschools and child care contribute to women’s under-participation in all economic activities, including in agriculture and rural economies.

#### 2.6.4. Compulsory education: primary and lower secondary school

Kosovo has a compulsory education system comprising nine years of primary education, split into three cycles. Most primary and lower secondary school-age children are enrolled; 48.3 percent of enrolled children are girls and 51.7 percent are boys (MESTI and KAS, 2022). Enrolment rates are nearly universal among Kosovo Albanians and Serbs, but are comparatively lower among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (ibid.). According to MESTI, 0.04 percent of students in primary education dropped out during the 2020/2021 school year (0.05 percent boys and 0.04 percent girls). The percentage of dropouts in the lower secondary level for the 2020/2021 school year is 0.05 percent. The rate of dropout students in lower secondary education is the same for the two genders (MESTI, 2021).

#### 2.6.5. Upper secondary school and vocational training

Upper secondary school is not compulsory, and thus enrolment decreases between lower secondary and upper secondary school levels. In the 2021/2022 school year, among the young people entering secondary education, 49.1 percent were girls and 50.9 percent were boys; 53.8 percent of them enrolled in gymnasiums and 46.2 percent in vocational schools (MESTI and KAS, 2022). Girls made up 41.6 percent of students enrolled in vocational schools and boys made up 58.3 percent. In gymnasiums, girls comprised 57.4 percent of students and boys made up 42.6 percent. In upper secondary education, dropout rates were higher (1.19 percent), with more boys (1.82 percent) than girls (0.53 percent) dropping out. During the 2020/2021 school year, 1.19 percent of students dropped out (1.82 percent of boys and 0.53 percent of girls; MESTI, 2021). Generally, evidence suggests that boys drop out of pre-university schooling at higher rates than girls; and furthermore, the reasons why boys and girls drop out of school differ, based on social norms and gendered expectations (Morina, 2020). Additionally, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children, and children with special educational needs, especially girls, remain underrepresented in pre-university education (ibid.). Early marriage is among the reasons why Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls drop out of school.

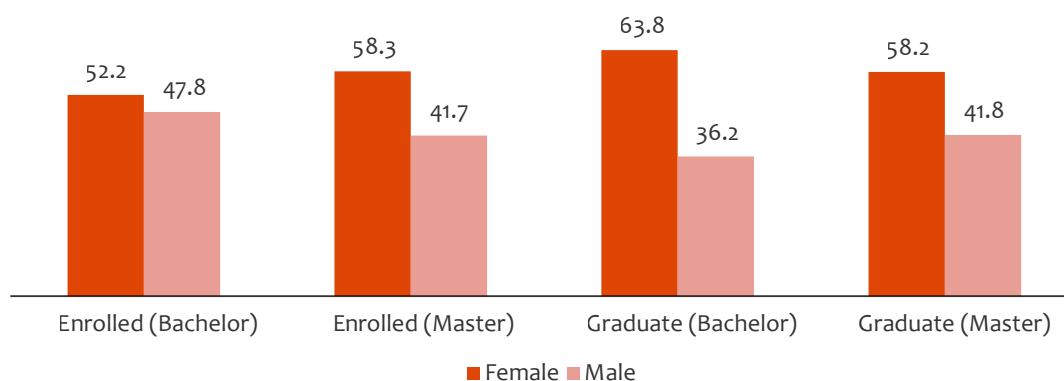
#### 2.6.6. Higher education

As Figure 4 illustrates, more women than men have enrolled and graduated from public higher education (MESTI and KAS, 2022). Data from private colleges demonstrate similar trends (see Figure 5). Notably, women’s enrolment in private colleges has increased compared with previous years (Morina and Farnsworth, 2016). In recent years, women have consistently outnumbered men in their enrolment and graduation from university at bachelor and master levels.

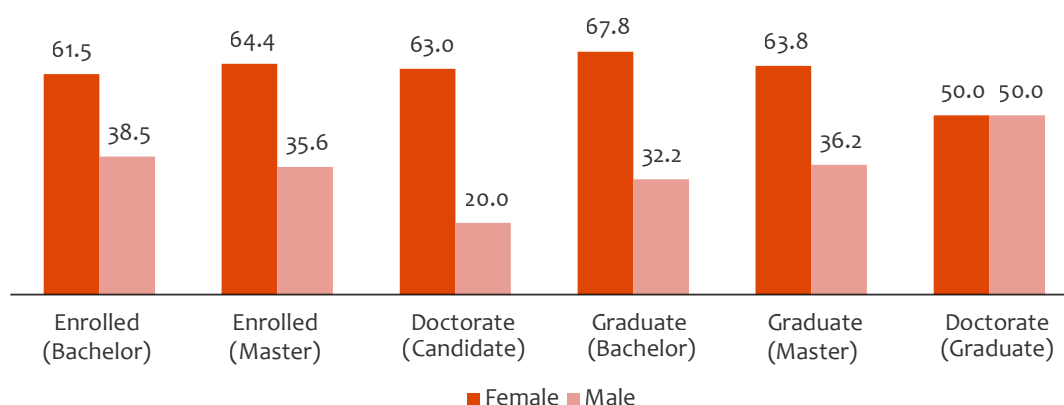
More women studied education (93 percent) or languages and philology (81 percent), while more men studied mechanical engineering (79 percent), and architecture and construction (69 percent) (MESTI and KAS, 2021).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Data on fields of study for more recent years were unavailable.

**Figure 4. Percentage of students enrolled and graduating from private colleges, by sex**



**Figure 5. Percentage of students enrolled and graduating from university in the 2021/2022 academic year, by sex**



**Source for Figure 4 and Figure 5:** Adapted from KAS. 2022c. *Education statistics in Kosovo 2021/2022*. Pristina. <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovoagency-of-statistics/add-news/education-statistics-in-kosovo-20212022>

Limited gender-disaggregated data were published regarding the study of various disciplines. The University of Prishtinë/Priština has a Faculty of Agriculture that includes within this broad area of study specific programmes related to Plant Production, Economics of Agriculture, Animal Production, Veterinary Medicine, Food Technology with Biotechnology, and Forestry. During the 2015/2016 school year, the University of Prishtinë/Priština had 118 students graduate at a bachelor level in Agriculture, including 49 women (41.5 percent) and 69 men (58.5 percent; MESTI and KAS, 2017).<sup>17</sup> The University for Business and Technology in Prishtinë/Priština offers an agriculture and environmental engineering degree, but there are no data available on the number of students.

Patriarchal social and gender norms and perceptions regarding appropriate academic disciplines for women and men, respectively, affect the subject choices of women and men. Even so, the limited data available suggest women's relatively high enrolment in agricultural fields.

In conclusion, while illiteracy rates have decreased over time, particular groups may have lower literacy rates than others, particularly Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. MESTI and KAS do not publish sex-disaggregated data regarding the rural or urban location of children. The absence of such data makes it difficult to assess whether differences in access to education exist for rural and urban girls

<sup>17</sup> The report states that these data are in reference to the "2015-2016 school year". However, all other data within the report refer to the 2016/2017 school year. KAS and MESTI stopped publishing gender-disaggregated data on students enrolling and graduating from various subjects in 2018, which makes it difficult to monitor trends.

and boys. Data by ethnicity and ability are also lacking. Within the general population, adult women tend to have lower levels of education than men. As this gender assessment later discusses, illiteracy and low levels of education can hinder diverse women’s access to knowledge, information and participation in capacity-development activities, and to securing support from the authorities, for example through subsidies, as part of agricultural and economic development activities. At the same time, although few students study agriculture overall, women and men’s similar graduation rates in this field suggest opportunities for furthering gender equality in this sector.

## 2.7. Gender, food security and nutrition

High poverty levels correspond with consumption poverty and the inability to meet more than basic food requirements.<sup>18</sup> However, information about food security and nutritional status among the rural population, including gender-disaggregated data, is unavailable in Kosovo.

According to the Household Budget Survey, in 2017, households spent 40 percent of their expenditure on food (meat, milk, cheese, eggs, bread and cereals contribute to more than half of all food consumption) and non-alcoholic beverages (KAS, 2018c). Household annual consumption of food and non-alcoholic beverages amounted to EUR 3 089 in urban areas and EUR 3 088 in rural areas. However, inflation in 2022 contributed to significant increases in food prices. According to the Harmonized Index of Consumer Prices, prices increased by an average of 14.2 percent in July 2022 compared with July 2021 (KAS, 2022b). During this period, prices for edible oils and fats increased by 54.1 percent, for cereals and bread by 32.1 percent, for dairy products by 26.3 percent, and for vegetables by 7.7 percent, alongside increases for other food products. Moreover, fuels like fuelwood and pellets increased by 43.5 percent and gas by 26.8 percent. This can affect food security and nutrition, though more recent gender-disaggregated data are unavailable.

There are no data that show levels of malnutrition within the population. However, some negative trends exist in underweight and overweight children younger than 5 years old, indicating signs of malnutrition (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Percentage of children under age 5 years, by nutritional status and gender (Mean Z-score SD), 2019–2020**

Status	Girls	Boys
Underweight	0.2	0.2
Stunted	0.0	0.1
Wasted	0.5	0.6
Overweight	0.3	0.2

**Source:** Adapted from KAS and UNICEF. 2020. *2019–2020 Kosovo Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and 2019–2020 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Survey Findings Report*. Pristina, KAS and UNICEF, pp. 271–272. <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/media/1871/file/Kosovo%20MICS%202020.pdf>

Additionally, several issues have been identified as potential threats to food security and safety, including insufficient “monitoring of food production, highly processed food items that do not promote a healthy and nutritious diet, [and] poor food waste management” (Abazi and Musa, 2021, p. 5).

## 2.8. Vulnerabilities to climate change and adaptation

Climate change and environmental degradation can pose risks to agricultural activities and rural development. This section examines potential vulnerabilities and steps that the authorities have taken.

<sup>18</sup> For more on gender differences related to poverty, see Section 3.8.

Due to its unrecognized political status under international law, Kosovo has not participated in or signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. Nevertheless, Kosovo should respond to the requirements of the Convention and the Protocol as a signatory of the Energy Community Treaty. The Kosovo Climate Change Strategy 2019–2028 and its Action Plan 2019–2021 aim to effectively anticipate and respond to the impacts of climate change, considering international principles for sustainable development (“Government of Kosovo”, 2018b). Two strategic objectives are “Developing Kosovo’s capacity to meet its future obligations under the UNFCCC Convention and the EU” and “Reducing greenhouse gas emissions”. While ambitious, the strategy does not refer to the potentially different needs and priorities of diverse women and men. As stated earlier, all policies and legislation should be subject to a GEIA, but it is not clear that this was performed to inform this particular strategy. Generally, environmental laws and policies have lacked gender impact analyses and attention to furthering gender equality (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2016a).

Kosovo-specific studies of climate trends, projections and impacts are limited, and gender analysis is even more limited. However, it is known that “rising temperatures and unregulated harvesting impact on the health and cover of Kosovo’s extensive forests, increasing forest fire incidence” (Climatelinks, 2024, no pagination). Although the service sector in Kosovo (representing 67 percent of GDP) is less vulnerable to climate change, agriculture and industry are nonetheless significant to the economy (14 percent and 19 percent of GDP, respectively) and vulnerable to factors such as water shortages, earthquakes, heatwaves, drought, landslides, heavy snowfall and flooding (Climatelinks, 2017).

Worldwide, extreme weather events have grown in frequency and intensity, often wreaking havoc on agriculture, fisheries and other livelihoods (FAO, 2015). Even though climate change effects on ecosystems and livelihoods differ in terms of region and season, “they are harsher on those living in already marginal conditions, for example, women in rural areas” (UNDP, 2016a, p. 3). The impacts of climate change on women and men in rural areas differ. Women face an increased vulnerability to climate change given their lower socioeconomic status and as users of natural resources such as water, fuelwood and forest products (UN Women Watch, 2009). At the same time, women play a critical role as agents of change due to their local knowledge and potential leadership for use of sustainable resources and practices at the household level (UNDP, 2016a). Women’s role in long-term solutions to climate change is often unrecognized despite the effectiveness of their contributions (*ibid.*). Their ability to adapt to climate change is linked to their control over and access to economic and financial resources. Hence, women in Kosovo are more prone to economic poverty (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2018).

Research in Prizren has found that women are severely underrepresented as decision-makers in the energy, public infrastructure and solid waste management sectors (EC Ma Ndryshe, n.d.).<sup>19</sup> When asked what limits women’s participation in interventions to address climate change, individuals stated that “traditions and socio-cultural norms prevented women from involvement in professions of construction, transportation, public infrastructure, and solid waste”. Women’s roles as primary caregivers meant that they lacked time to pursue full-time employment or to contribute to sustainable practices. Generally, research shows that women participate less than men in public discussions regarding new policies affecting environment and climate change, which could contribute to an under-consideration of their needs (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2016a).

## 2.9. Gender and health

In 2020, the average life expectancy in Kosovo was 71 years: 69 years for men and 74 years for women (World Bank, 2020a). Women’s life expectancy at birth is lower than the average for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries; however, the gender gap in life expectancy is consistent with global trends (*ibid.*). KAS were not able to provide sex-disaggregated data on life expectancies for rural and urban areas (correspondence with KWN, 2022).

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<sup>19</sup> EC Me Ndryshe conducted an analysis in the Municipality of Prizren on the “Gender-related climate change risks and priority needs to mainstream into urban cross-sectoral intervention plan”. A survey was administered to 51 respondents with a gender and ethnic distribution that reflected the population.



Research shows that women tended to use health services more than men, and that they also assessed their health status as slightly worse than men did (Farnsworth, Goebbels and Ajeti, 2016). In addition, while women and men tended to experience similar barriers in accessing health care, “women seemingly had more sociocultural barriers than men [and] faced more financial, cultural and patient-provider relationship barriers in accessing healthcare than men or urban women” (ibid., p.5).

On average, travel time to and from a health care institution takes 40 minutes (Farnsworth, Goebbels and Ajeti, 2016). Considering factors such as waiting time, diagnosis, treatment, obtaining a prescription and payment, one visit to a health care facility can take up a substantial amount of time. Rural women’s access to health care was further hampered by their lack of access to personal vehicles and the expense of using a taxi or other vehicle due the unavailability of public transport (ibid.). Some rural women needed to ask their family members for permission before visiting a doctor. In addition, Farnsworth, Goebbels and Ajati (2016, p. 50) also observe that “perhaps related to their average educational levels, rural inhabitants had less awareness of their rights to health care than their urban counterparts”.

Utilization of preventive care remains low with 53.9 percent of Kosovo inhabitants reporting never having received a general health examination (Farnsworth, Goebbels and Ajeti, 2016). Data on outpatient visits to public facilities demonstrated “an average of 1.99 visits per inhabitant per year in 2016, of which 1.94 visits are to primary health care physicians ... less than one-third of the average in countries in the WHO European Region – 7.4 in 2014” (WHO European Region, 2019, p. 5).

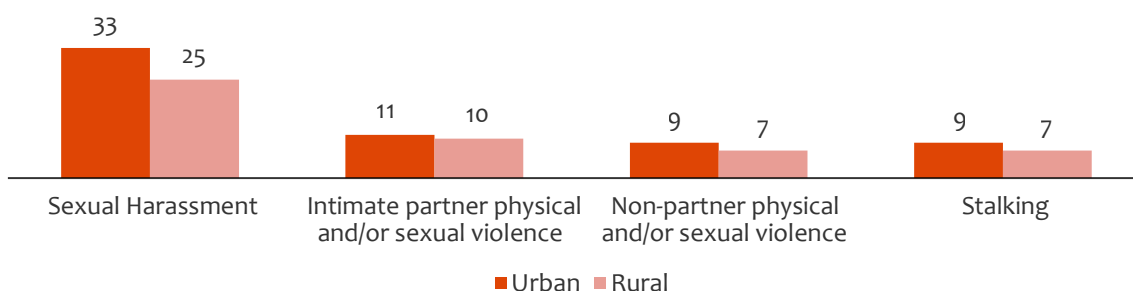
In 2014, the Law on Health Insurance was passed to create a legal foundation for public health insurance. The Health Insurance Fund detailed in this law has yet to become a reality (Assembly of Kosovo, 2014). In 2016, only 6 percent of people in Kosovo had purchased health insurance in private institutions, including significantly fewer rural women (Farnsworth, Goebbels and Ajeti, 2016). Data provided by the Kosovo Insurance Association in 2019 found that only 3 percent of the population have health insurance (Telegrafi, 2019).

In conclusion, rural women’s comparatively poorer access to health care can affect their overall well-being, including their ability to work and contribute to rural economies.

## 2.10. Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence, defined as violence perpetrated against a person *because of* the person’s gender, is one of the most common human rights violations worldwide and in Kosovo. Gender-based violence has many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence, perpetrated by a family member, intimate partner, or by others. Gender-based violence affects women and girls disproportionately. An estimated 54 percent of women “have experienced psychological, physical or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner since the age of 15”, and 29 percent have experienced sexual harassment (OSCE, 2019, p. 8).<sup>20</sup> Another Kosovo-wide representative survey found that 68 percent of women and 56 percent of men have experienced at least one form of domestic violence in their lifetimes (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2015). The same survey found that 48.5 percent of residents experienced some form of sexual harassment in their lifetime (Qosaj-Mustafa *et al.*, 2016). The study also found that 58 percent of women and 47 percent of men believe violence is normal. No correlation seemed to exist between experiencing gender-based violence and geographic location, education or socioeconomic status (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2015). Meanwhile, OSCE found slight differences in the prevalence of different forms of gender-based violence in urban and rural areas, as shown in Figure 6 (OSCE, 2019).

<sup>20</sup> The representative survey involved 1 990 women aged 18 to 74 years living in urban (864) and rural areas (1 126). It specifically examined the prevalence of intimate partner violence among women aged 18 to 74 years living in urban areas (736) and rural areas (978).

**Figure 6. Percentage of women suffering gender-based violence in rural and urban areas**

**Source:** Adapted from OSCE. 2019. *Survey on well-being and safety of women in Kosovo*. Pristina, OSCE Mission in Kosovo, p. 15. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/c/439781.pdf>

The Constitution of Kosovo commits to ending gender-based violence as per international human rights commitments, including CEDAW and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, known as the Istanbul Convention. In 2022, the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (2008) was under review to harmonize it with the Istanbul Convention.

In 2013, Kosovo also passed the Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Protecting Victims of Trafficking (Assembly of Kosovo, 2013) and established standard operating procedures (SOPs) for assisting foreign and domestic victims of trafficking. These SOPs set the standard for care in the referral of victims, protection and reintegration.

In 2013, Kosovo adopted the SOP for Protection from Domestic Violence, defining the responsibilities of institutions in addressing domestic violence cases and establishing institutional coordination. Kosovo Police domestic violence investigation units, judges, prosecutors, Victim Protection and Assistance Officers, Centres for Social Welfare, health care workers, educators, the Free Legal Aid Agency, Ombudsperson Institution, and CSOs, particularly shelters, must work together to deliver prevention, protection and response services. This SOP was being reviewed in 2022 to harmonize it with the Istanbul Convention. Coordination mechanisms that should support case management exist in a few municipalities. Shelters, primarily run by women's rights CSOs, provide short-term accommodation and services. A public sector budget line exists for financing shelters, but it is not always sufficient or distributed in time, placing women and girls at risk. Telephone numbers for reporting gender-based violence operate throughout Kosovo, including in rural areas, and are free of charge. However, limited access to justice in courts exists in the north (Banjska *et al.*, 2021). Rehabilitation and reintegration services, particularly treatment for persons who have suffered sexual violence other than trafficking, are nearly non-existent.

The Kosovo "Strategy against Domestic Violence 2016–2020" defined actions and measures for institutions to address domestic violence. KWN's monitoring found that approximately 27 percent of the strategy was fully implemented, and 52 percent was partially implemented, with particularly weak implementation of commitments to establishing rehabilitation and reintegration services (Banjska *et al.*, 2021). The report showed several areas where Kosovo's legal framework needs to be better harmonized with the Istanbul Convention, as well as where institutions need to improve their response to treating domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. A new "Strategy on Protection against Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women for 2022–2024" was adopted in 2022 ("Government of Kosovo", 2022b).

Kosovo Police data suggest an increase in the reporting of domestic violence cases, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kosovo Police Information Centre, 2022).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, survey data suggest that many cases are not reported, particularly in rural areas (OSCE, 2019).

<sup>21</sup> In 2020, 2 101 cases were reported and 2 486 in 2021 (Kosovo Police Information Centre, 2022). From January 2022 to May 2022, 1 132 cases of domestic violence were reported (*ibid.*).

Limited information exists on how gender-based violence may affect urban and rural women and girls differently. One qualitative study found that it can affect the reproductive health and well-being of women working in rural areas and agriculture; for example, performing strenuous agricultural labour can have particularly negative effects on pregnant women (Farnsworth, 2008). Considering the data on rural women's comparatively limited access to health services (Farnsworth, Goebbels and Ajeti, 2016), rural women who live in violent domestic situations may face even more obstacles to accessing health care. The poor availability of psychological counselling services in Kosovo, particularly in rural areas, poses a challenge for both victims of violence and for perpetrators' rehabilitation. As women in rural areas have less access to public transportation and family members can control their movement more easily, they may have less access to information about services and may not be able to travel to institutions or shelters. All of these issues can affect women's ability to participate actively in economic opportunities. Women with disabilities face added challenges in accessing services. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other identifying persons (LGBTQIA+) who have suffered violence do not have customized support, and CSOs may refer them to shelters in Albania.

In conclusion, gender-based violence is widespread in Kosovo, affecting women and girls disproportionately. Rural women and girls, LGBTQIA+ persons, and persons with disabilities face added barriers in accessing services. Violence can impede women's and girls' ability to benefit from economic opportunities, including education, training and employment.

## 2.11. Intersectionality: gender and vulnerable groups

Gender can intersect with other characteristics or identities, such as ethnicity, age, ability, geographic location, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, affecting the lives and situations of diverse individuals in compounded ways. While Kosovo does not always have data disaggregated by various demographic and social indicators, data in prior sections of this report indicate that these factors can limit access, rights and opportunities. This section discusses how multiple or compounded inequalities can undermine women's economic engagement in rural economies.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians are among the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Kosovo. They have faced difficulties obtaining personal documents, which impedes their access to health care, social assistance and education (Office of the Prime Minister, 2017). Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women have lower levels of education, greater isolation, language difficulties and limited access to information, and face prejudices, which further hinder their engagement in society, as one activist stated during an interview conducted for this gender assessment. Most Roma and Ashkali individuals live in urban areas, while Egyptians tend to live in rural areas (KAS, 2013b). Data show that 20 percent of the poorest Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians live in rural areas (Office of the Prime Minister, 2017). Their life expectancy is 6 years fewer in rural areas than in urban ones (ibid.). Information is lacking on their role in agricultural and rural development.<sup>22</sup> However, interviews conducted for this gender assessment suggest that few Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian women engage in agriculture. Rather, they tend to work in tailoring, and Egyptian and Ashkali women work in hair and beauty salons. Generally, the interview data suggest that very few are employed at all.

*“I don't know any Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian women working in agriculture even though I work on a daily basis with them. I do know one case we supported, a woman selling milk. We were worried if she could manage to sell the milk due to prejudice from society, but she managed to do her work without any problem.”*  
(WCSO, interview)

<sup>22</sup> Existing data on these ethnic groups are rarely disaggregated by ethnic group, gender, and/or rural/urban location. The KWN survey did not have a large enough sample to identify substantive trends in their rural livelihoods, particularly as few reside in rural areas.

The Gorani ethnic group, usually living in isolated, mountainous areas, as well as Bosnians, may face additional barriers in accessing social services and assistance due to their geographic location and language.

In order to examine the situation of persons with disabilities, the 2011 Census used the term “difficulties”, defined as:

Deafness or severe hearing impairment, blindness or visual impairment, a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting or carrying things, a learning/intellectual disability, a longstanding psychological or emotional difficulty, and longstanding illness (KAS, 2012, p. 108).

Based on this definition, 2.38 percent of the population experiences “difficulties” (ibid., p. 106). However, the precise number of persons with disabilities is unknown (Hunt and Belegu-Caka, 2017), partly because institutions and stakeholders use various definitions of disability. According to Social Welfare Statistics (KAS, 2021c), 19 023 persons with disabilities received public pensions, including 9 332 men and 9 691 women.<sup>23</sup> The monthly pension for persons with disabilities differs based on the disability, ranging from EUR 150 to EUR 375 (Dushica and Farnsworth, 2022). As this is below the minimum wage, most persons with disabilities rely significantly on their family members (ibid.). While some personal assistants for persons with disabilities are minimally financed by the authorities, the financing is insufficient for their needs (ibid.). Thus, persons with disabilities are particularly vulnerable because many rely on their families for financial and social support (Sida, 2017). Public transportation, spatial planning, and access to institutions are generally not available for them, hindering their use of services. Qualitative research conducted through this gender assessment suggests that persons with disabilities in rural areas are likely to face additional challenges in reaching services due to their families “hiding” or isolating them, inadequate public transportation, and limited interaction with the relevant institutions. Until now, their potential role in agriculture and rural development has not been analysed or discussed. Meanwhile, as addressed later in this report, digitalization presents opportunities for their enhanced engagement.

The precise number of LGBTQIA+ persons living in Kosovo’s rural areas is unknown. Interviewed activists working with CSOs that support LGBTQIA+ persons estimate that they comprise between 5 and 10 percent of the population. LGBTQIA+ people face social pressures, threats to their privacy and discrimination, so some may not want to be publicly identified as LGBTQIA+. Reportedly, rural trans women are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, activists interviewed for this gender assessment said. To avoid discrimination, LGBTQIA+ persons growing up in rural areas try to migrate to Prishtinë/Priština. Since stereotypes and prejudice can make finding a job very difficult, LGBTQIA+ persons are often financially dependent on family members; some live a double life, not daring to come out to their family because of the fear that they may be denied financial support, property rights, and even expelled from their homes (USAID, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, economic hardship led some LGBTQIA+ persons to return to their families where they faced discrimination and tense living situations, interviewed activists explained.

## 2.12. Conclusion

Kosovo lacks data disaggregated by gender, rural/urban location, and ethnicity, among other demographic and social indicators. This hinders tailored, evidence-based policymaking to address the often intersecting barriers that diverse women, men, girls, boys, and other identifying persons face, including policies and programmes related to agriculture and rural development.

Despite the existence of several laws, policies and institutions that seek to contribute to gender equality in Kosovo, data show that gender differences and inequalities exist. Women do not participate equally in politics and decision-making. Low levels of education can hinder women’s

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<sup>23</sup> Of them, 92 percent are Albanian, and 8 percent are other ethnicities. KAS did not have data disaggregated by rural and urban areas.

access to economic empowerment opportunities. More rural women lack access to health care, which can impact negatively on their well-being and ability to contribute to rural economies. Women are also more likely to face gender-based violence. Vulnerable groups living in rural areas, including persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ persons, and minority ethnic groups, particularly Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Bosnians and Gorani, face additional obstacles relating to education, employment and access to public services. Officials need to consider these barriers, and the needs of diverse women, men, girls, boys, and other identifying persons, when designing tailored agricultural and rural development policies.



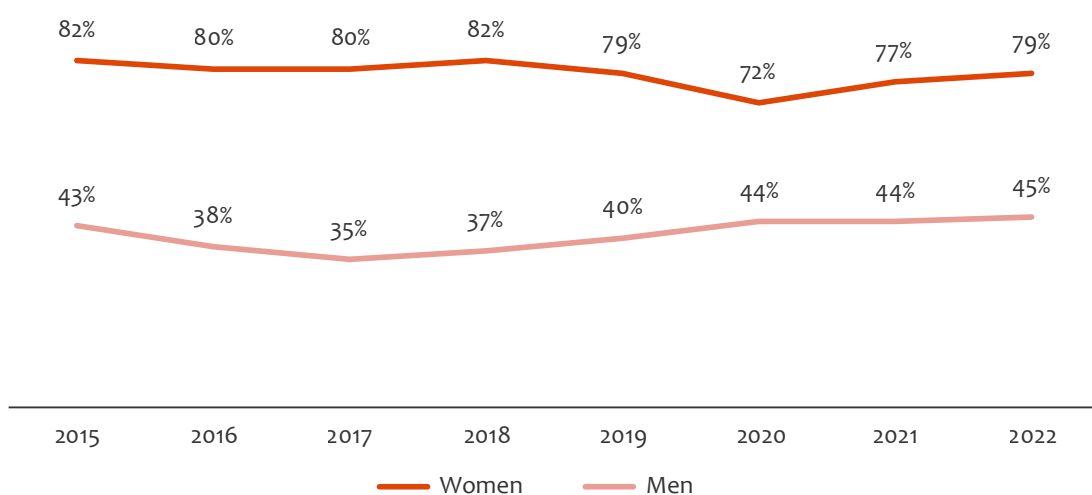
# 3. Gender, labour, income and poverty

Although Kosovo’s economic growth in the past decade has outperformed its neighbours, it has not provided enough formal jobs, particularly for women and young people, nor has it significantly reduced Kosovo’s staggeringly high unemployment and inactivity rates (World Bank, 2021a; Riinvest Institute, 2019). This chapter examines women and men’s engagement in labour and employment, differences in income, and how these relate to poverty.

## 3.1. Labour force participation and inactivity

According to the 2019 Labour Force Survey (LFS), 68 percent of the population are of working age (15 to 64 years; KAS, 2020a). Of the working age population, 61.7 percent were “not economically active”, that is, not employed, not actively seeking employment during the past four weeks, and/or not ready to start work within two weeks (ibid., p. 11). Women and men’s inactivity rates differ substantially. In 2021, 79.4 percent of women were inactive, compared with 45.1 percent of men (KAS, 2022d). Women’s inactivity rate in Kosovo exceeds that of all other countries in the region (ibid.).<sup>24</sup> The rate has remained concerningly high over time and has even increased (see Figure 7). Notably, 33.6 percent of persons aged 15 to 24 years were not in education, employment or training (NEET), including 33.2 percent of young women and 34.0 percent of young men (KAS, 2021d). KAS has not published sex-disaggregated labour force data by rural and urban location.

**Figure 7. Women’s and men’s inactivity rates, 2015–2022**



Source: Adapted by the authors from KAS LFS data.

<sup>24</sup> For example: Albania (38.8 percent), Bosnia and Herzegovina (53.9 percent), Montenegro (45.3 percent), North Macedonia (46 percent) and Serbia (39.4 percent; ibid.).

Millennium Challenge Corporation data indicated that “18.7% of the inactive population were discouraged workers, i.e. those who have stopped looking for work because they believe that no work is available” (Siddiqui et al., 2018, p. 16). The rate was slightly higher among men (24.6 percent) than among women (16 percent).

Significant gender differences exist among women and men as to why they are inactive. Men were much more likely to cite education or training (30.2 percent), the belief that no work is available (24.6 percent), or retirement as their reason for inactivity (Siddiqui et al., 2018). Meanwhile, women’s main reasons for inactivity were child care duties (30.2 percent) and the belief that no work is available (16 percent). Strikingly, in comparison, only 1.1 percent of men said that child care responsibilities are a reason for their inactivity. Several other studies have corroborated that caregiving and family responsibilities have remained the main reason for women’s high inactivity rates (Farnsworth et al., 2016b; UNDP, 2016; KAS, 2016). Caregiving responsibilities can also contribute to women’s inactivity in the agriculture sector and in rural economies.

### 3.2. Unemployment

According to the KAS LFS (2021c), among people in the labour force, women’s unemployment was higher than men’s (29.7 percent and 24.2 percent respectively). Young people were twice as likely to be unemployed; 49.1 percent of people aged 15 to 24 years were unemployed. The unemployment rate was even higher among young women, aged 25 to 29 years (57.2 percent), compared with young men aged 25 to 29 years (45.2 percent). Following restrictive measures by the authorities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, registered unemployment increased, most likely from informal job losses (World Bank, 2022d). The Kosovo Agency of Statistics does not report gender-disaggregated data by rural and urban location, which makes it difficult to assess the situation in rural economies. Moreover, within this gender assessment’s sample of survey respondents, unemployment rates in rural areas were 55 percent among women and 34 percent among men, compared with 39 percent and 17 percent, respectively, in urban areas. This suggests that women in rural areas face higher unemployment rates than men, but also than women in urban areas.

Research demonstrates that “the average time individuals spent looking for a job was 18.8 months (over 1.5 years)” and, using Eurostat’s definition of long-term unemployment as looking for a job for more than one year, that “one-third of unemployed individuals were long-term unemployed” (Siddiqui et al., 2018, p. 13). In addition, research by Riinvest showed that women working in the Gjakovë/Đakovica and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica regions spend more time searching for employment (Mehmeti, Dobranja and Hashani, 2017). Gender-based discrimination affects women’s unemployment. The current Labour Law leads employers to discriminate against women of childbearing age in job hire because the costs associated with maternity leave are the responsibility of the employer (Banjska et al., 2022).

### 3.3. Employment

Significant differences exist in women’s and men’s employment rates. According to the 2020 LFS, 42.8 percent of working age men are employed compared with only 14.1 percent of women (KAS, 2021e). Again, KAS does not have rural and urban gender-disaggregated data. However, among the respondents to this gender assessment’s survey, employment rates for women in urban areas (50 percent) were almost double that of women in rural areas (26 percent). Differences also existed among men; 43 percent of men in rural areas were employed compared with 64 percent in urban areas.

Occupational gender segregation has continued. Approximately 53 percent of employed women have worked in the education, trade and health sectors, while 43.6 percent of employed men worked primarily in trade, construction and manufacturing (KAS, 2021e). Nearly all of the women employed in 2019 were in the following types of occupation: professional (32.5 percent), sales and



service workers in stores and markets (22.6 percent), elementary occupations (11.7 percent), and a diverse range of occupations in a variety of industries and sectors (KAS, 2020c). Employed women are overrepresented in low-paying, low-skill sectors, performing jobs such as cleaning or babysitting (Dobranja *et al.*, 2018). While sex-disaggregated data is absent, the agriculture sector, which accounts for 7.0 percent of Kosovo's GDP, provides 11 percent of formal employment, and a significant share of informal employment (World Bank, 2017).

### 3.4. Informal work

Various definitions of informal work exist, which affect estimates of the size of the informal economy. Using 2012 LFS data and a definition of informal work that included workers in small firms, unpaid family workers, and self-employed people in small firms or nonprofessional occupations, the World Bank estimated that approximately 35 percent of workers were informal as of 2012 (Cojocar, 2017).<sup>25</sup>

In 2013, a Riinvest survey similarly estimated that 37 percent of the total labour force was not registered. However, they measured perceptions but not prevalence, and businesses rather than individuals; it is likely that farms were underrepresented (Zeka *et al.*, 2013).<sup>26</sup> According to the Southeast Shadow Economy Assessment, it is estimated that approximately 80 percent of employed persons in Kosovo work informally (SELDI, 2016), defined as respondents working without a contract, with official remuneration in the contract lower than the actual salary paid, without social security coverage, and social security contributions not matching the contract.<sup>27</sup> Using MCC survey data, another study calculated that 24 percent of women and 40 percent of men from the 8 367 identified "waged employees" also had informal employment (Gashi and Adnett, 2020). The authors did not define informal employment.

To provide newer data on informality and to measure informal work more comprehensively, this gender assessment's household survey considered women and men who stated that they are engaged as unpaid family workers; those who were employed and working without a contract; and/or whose employers did not pay taxes. In rural areas, half of the women (50.5 percent) and men (49 percent) were engaged in at least one of these forms of informal or vulnerable work. In urban areas, around 45 percent of women and 36 percent of men were within these categories, as fewer people in urban areas had unpaid family workers.

Rural women and men who said they were employed in any sector were asked whether they have a contract in their present work. More employed rural women (74 percent) than men (64 percent) said that they have contracts. The difference may be attributable in part to women working in lower-paid jobs in formal employment. Nevertheless, this still suggests that 26 percent of employed women and 36 percent of employed men work without contracts, and thus are among those in the informal economy. In rural areas, 74 percent of employed women have a contract, compared with 70 percent

25 The methodology was not without limitations. The author observed that, "The extent of employment in small firms is highly correlated with the size of the shadow economy and a significant share of employees without contracts work in small firms. In Kosovo, salaried workers in large firms are more likely to have contracts than those in small firms and, further, firm size is negatively correlated with informality (Era Dabla-Norris *et al.*, 2008). The main disadvantage of classifying small firms as informal is that many small firms are in the formal sector and, conversely, there are large firms that use unregistered workers. Using firm size to measure informality will miss each of these" (Cojocar, 2017, p. 41).

26 They asked: "What percentage of the total labor force of a typical firm in your area of activity would you estimate is reported to the tax authorities, bearing in mind difficulties with complying with taxes and other regulations?" According to Riinvest, then, "Respondents were asked to provide a single answer on the proportion of labor reported to the authorities, measured as a percentage". This method of asking about others may contribute to increased response rates on sensitive questions, but the findings are inaccurate regarding the actual extent of informality, particularly as the respondent does not have first-hand knowledge and the potential for error from guessing is high. Furthermore, the Riinvest methodology involved a survey of 600 businesses, randomly selected from the Kosovo Tax Administration's database; this would only produce information about persons employed (formally or informally) and not regarding persons working informally, outside of structured employment in these businesses, such as on family farms, for example.

27 They used the Hidden Employment Index, which involves five practices "common in the hidden economy": "(1) Working without a written contract with the employer; (2) The 'official' remuneration written in the contract is lower than the wage actually paid to the employee, as agreed upon verbally between the two parties; (3) The employee has no social security coverage; the specifics of these different practices, taking place in the region; (4) The base for the social security contributions paid is the amount written in the contract, and not the higher amount actually received; (5) There is no health insurance on the main job" (SELDI, 2020, p. 8). Based on these, the Hidden Economy Index for Kosovo was 81 percent in 2016, and 83 percent in 2019 (SELDI, 2020).

of women working in urban areas. The reverse is true for men, where 64 percent of men in rural areas have a contract, but almost 78 percent in urban areas hold one.

Another measure of informality is whether employers have registered employees and thus pay their income taxes.<sup>28</sup> Aside from the more than half of rural men and women who stated that they do not know whether their employer pays their income taxes, 34 percent of employed women and 24 percent of employed men said that employers do not pay. In terms of ethnicity, 46 percent of rural Serb respondents said that their employer pays their income tax, compared with only 21 percent of Albanian respondents and 20 percent of Bosnian respondents. While the sample size was small, all Egyptian respondents and 67 percent of Roma respondents said their employer does not pay their income tax.

Another form of informal work can involve unpaid work. Women and men may conduct various forms of unpaid, unrecognized work, including in family-owned businesses, on farms, and in construction, among others. In the fourth quarter of 2020, 3.8 percent of men, and 4.8 percent of women had the status of unpaid family worker (KAS, 2021h). Furthermore, 17 percent of men and 50.6 percent of women worked as unpaid family workers in the skilled agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors. Meanwhile, 16.9 percent of men and 12.4 percent of women worked in service and sales in shops and markets as unpaid family workers (*ibid.*). KAS has not published data on rural and urban differences.

The MCC survey found that significantly more people engage in “unpaid family work”, which they found amounted to 23 percent of jobs in Kosovo (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018, p. 54).<sup>29</sup> They also found that higher rates of women’s unpaid family work existed in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors. Workers in these sectors accounted for 72.2 percent of all unpaid family workers (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018). The percentage of women unpaid family workers (39.3 percent) was more than double the number of men unpaid family workers (17.3 percent; *ibid.*). Also significant was the high proportion of unpaid family workers in rural areas, 27.8 percent, compared with 6.1 percent in urban areas (*ibid.*).

This gender assessment similarly found that women are twice as likely as men to be engaged as unpaid family workers in rural areas. Around 13 percent of women, compared with 7 percent of men said that they conduct unpaid family work. In comparison, in urban areas, only 2 percent of women and 1 percent of men engage in unpaid family work. Focus groups and interviews confirmed that women often help relatives with their economic activities, without having a contract or pay. This assessment’s research participants emphasized that the non-declaration of family members as employees is more widespread among small farmers and family businesses. High tax rates, few income generation opportunities, and no secure market for their products were among the main factors discouraging women from declaring their labour.

“Most family businesses are small, and they do not register because they tend to engage in this activity only seasonally. There is no possible way for them to generate much income. Therefore, they do not register their family members as employees. Nor do they register as a business.”  
(WCSO, interview)

“Usually, people working in family businesses don’t even consider [registering] as employees because they do it out of their free will to help their family, and due to traditional norms where helping your family members is a must. Most people are not aware of the negative effects this can have.”  
(WCSO, interview)

Moreover, informality among farmers can limit their access to capital, land and training (IADK and FAO, 2022).

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28 In examining perceptions of informal work among employers, similar to Riinvest’s (2013) approach, respondents were also asked how often they think employers pay tax and pension contributions to their employees. Approximately 8 percent of women said that this happens rarely or never, compared with 11 percent of men. Men were also less optimistic, with only 20 percent stating employers always pay taxes, compared with 33 percent of women.

29 The MCC survey asked employed individuals, “whether they were employees, self-employed with employees, self-employed without employees, or unpaid family workers”, and in which sector they were employed (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018, p. 54).

What factors contribute to informality? Approximately one-third of the surveyed women and men believed that people entitled to public assistance commonly request to be paid in cash and to work without a contract so that they can continue to receive social assistance. Approximately 10 percent of women and 12 percent of men gender assessment survey respondents said that this happens “very often”. At the same time, one-third of women and one-quarter of men said that they do not know whether this happens or not. Nevertheless, this suggests that keeping social assistance is likely to be a factor contributing to some people refusing formal employment opportunities or working in the informal labour market.

During focus groups and interviews held for this gender assessment, some women said that they agreed to engage in economic activities without a contract or paying taxes because it is the only way that they can secure much needed and difficult to find employment. Such informal labour can place them in a precarious position in terms of labour rights.

Recognizing the economic vulnerability of women working in the informal sector, the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020–2024 highlights the need to enhance workers’ equal access to rights, freedoms, decision-making, resources, services and improvements to workplace conditions (“Government of Kosovo”, 2020a).

### 3.5. Child labour

According to the Labour Law, officially, children under age 15 years should not engage in formal labour (Assembly of Kosovo, 2010). Therefore, children engaged in labour work in the informal economy. The MICS report found that 5.3 percent of children perform economic activities and daily household chores (4.1 percent of females and 6.4 percent of males; KAS and UNICEF, 2020). This included 6.8 percent of children in rural areas and 3.2 percent of children in urban areas. It also found that 9.3 percent of children work under hazardous conditions, such as working with dangerous tools, operating heavy machinery, and exposure to unsafe processes or conditions (5.2 percent of girls and 13.1 percent boys). This included 12 percent of rural children and 5.4 percent of urban children (ibid.).

### 3.6. Working conditions

The LFS defines vulnerable employment as “self-employed persons (own-account workers) who have no employed persons or unpaid family workers. These ... employees are less likely to have formal work arrangements [and] ... appropriate working conditions” (KAS, 2021e, p. 8). Men are more likely to work in unstable jobs with 18.8 percent of employed men reporting such working conditions compared with 9.2 percent of employed women (KAS, 2020a).

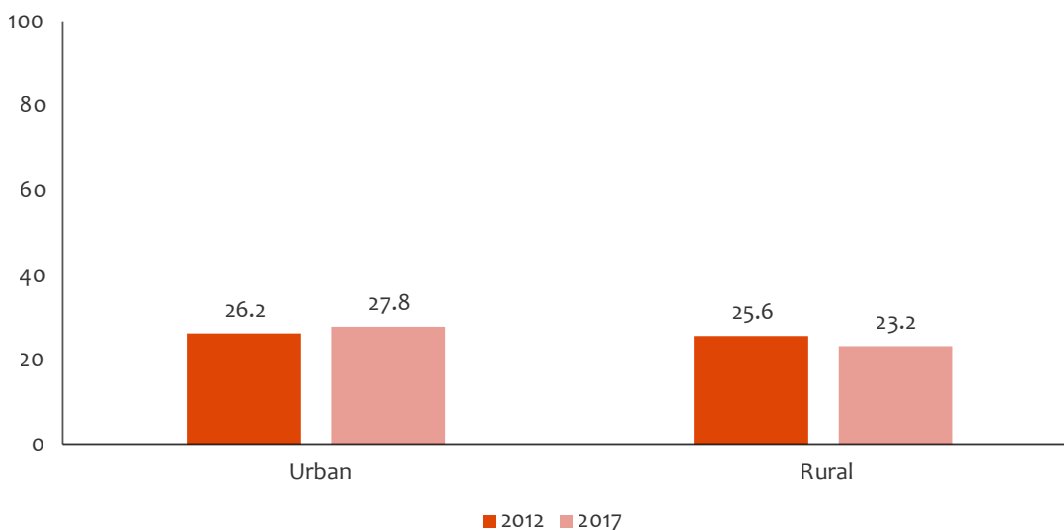
Meanwhile, MCC has estimated that 39.2 percent of employed persons work in vulnerable employment, including 46.0 percent of women and 30.7 percent of men, and that, “of those who were in vulnerable employment, the highest proportion, 57.9%, worked in the agriculture sector” (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018, p. 11). According to KAS, 17.0 percent of employed persons work in vulnerable or unstable jobs (KAS, 2021e). The MCC report further highlights that “vulnerable employment was more than twice as prevalent in rural areas (39.5%) than urban areas (17.5%)” (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018, p. 63). The level of vulnerable employment was highest among agriculture, forestry and fishing workers (92.6 percent) and those employed within households (89.8 percent; Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018).<sup>30</sup>

### 3.7. Income

The World Bank (World Bank and KAS, 2019) has calculated Kosovo’s Gini coefficient – a single number that shows the degree of inequality in income or wealth distribution – in 2012 and 2017. The Gini index

<sup>30</sup> This was defined as “undifferentiated goods and services; producing activities of households for own use” (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018, p. 66).

Figure 8. Gini index for Kosovo in 2012 and 2017



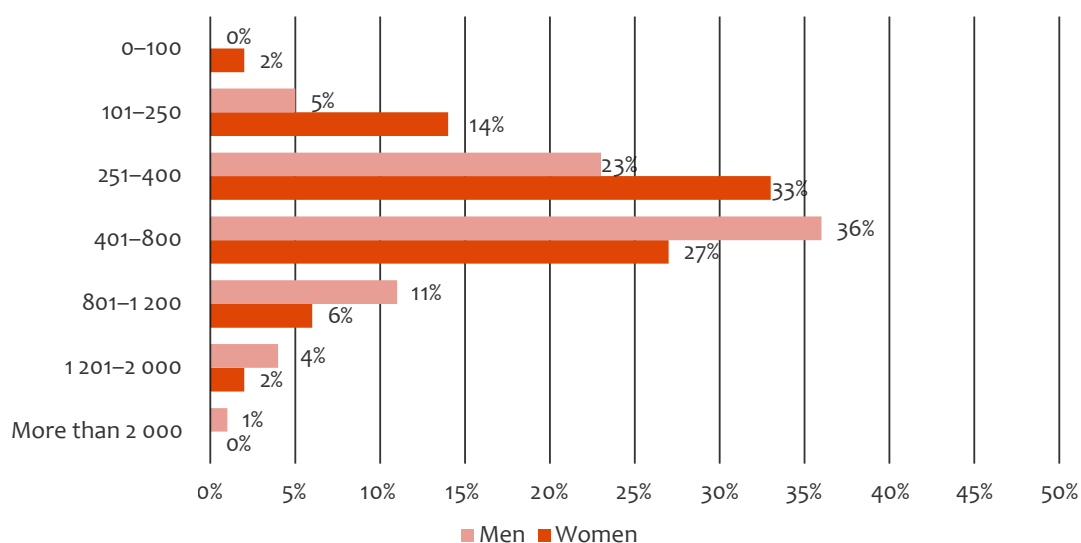
Note: Estimates based on 2012 and 2017 Household Budget Surveys.

Source: Adapted from World Bank. 2019a. *Kosovo Country Report: Findings from the skills towards employment and productivity survey*. Washington, DC, World Bank Group. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/31720/Kosovo-Skills-Towards-Employment.pdf?sequence=4>

measures, “the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution” (World Bank, 2022a, no pagination). A Gini coefficient equal to zero means perfect equality, while as it approaches one hundred it represents greater inequality (ibid.). The World Bank found that between 2012 and 2017, inequality declined slightly in Kosovo’s rural areas (see Figure 8). However, economic inequalities increased slightly in urban areas (World Bank and KAS, 2019). The Gini index does not measure inequalities in income among women and men.

Differences in the rate of paid employment between women and men contribute to gender disparities in income. As of 2020, net wages among employed persons ranged between EUR 400 and EUR 500 per month; slight gender differences existed with women receiving 0.4 percent higher wages than men (KAS, 2021e). However, based on the survey conducted through this gender assessment, rural men earn more than women (see Figure 9). In rural areas, 60 percent of employed women earn

Figure 9. Earning distribution for employed women and men in rural areas, in euro



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

between EUR 250 and EUR 800 per month, 16 percent earn EUR 100 to EUR 250 per month, and more than 3 percent earn between EUR 0 and EUR 100 per month. Comparatively, no men earn up to EUR 100 monthly, only 4 percent earn up to EUR 250, and while no women earn more than EUR 1 200 per month, around 3 percent of men do.

Clearly gender disparity exists in earnings, with men making more than women. Another study involving only waged employees found that the unadjusted gender pay gap, using the net wage in Kosovo, is 9.8 percent (AGE, 2020). The report found that in the private sector in Kosovo, women earn 20.0 percent lower wages than men, while in the public sector this difference is 8.0 percent. Lower income levels can place women at a greater risk of poverty.

### 3.8. Poverty

According to data from the 2017 Household Budget Survey, an estimated “18.0 percent of Kosovo’s population lives below the poverty line, with 5.1 percent living below the extreme poverty line” (World Bank and KAS, 2019, p. 4). Moreover, nearly two-thirds of the poor and extremely poor lived in rural areas. Larger households with seven and more members, typical of those in rural areas, tended to be poorer, indicating that poverty increases with household size. Women-headed households are more likely to be poor than are men-headed households (World Bank and KAS, 2019). In 2017, 18.9 percent of women in Kosovo lived in poverty compared with 17.2 percent of men (ibid.). Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women are particularly likely to live in poverty (Sida, 2017).

The World Bank later reported that, “Kosovo’s poverty rate (measured at US\$ 5.5/day, 2011 PPP [purchasing power parity]) decreased from 21.6 percent in 2017 to an estimated 19.8 percent in 2018, owing to sustained positive economic performance (growth averaged 3.4 percent annually over the period 2012–2017)” (World Bank, 2019b, p. 1). According to the World Bank, “Kosovo’s economy experienced a strong recovery in 2021, supported by a rebound in domestic demand and record export growth. Inflation also intensified, driven by increases in import prices. Growth is expected to decelerate to 3.9 percent in 2022. The medium-term outlook remains positive, but prone to elevated risks; with the war in Ukraine significantly increasing inflationary pressures” (World Bank, 2022b, no pagination). Focus groups organized as part of this gender assessment also suggested that women-headed households, where older and rural women tend to be economically dependent, have even fewer economic and social opportunities than men and are more vulnerable to living in poverty.

### 3.9. Conclusion

Women and men do not participate equally in the labour force. Women have substantially higher rates of inactivity and unemployment than men. This, as well as work in lower-paid positions, contribute to less income and poverty among some women. This poverty can follow women into their retirement, as they tend to receive lower pensions than men, on average, because they have not participated in the labour force. The Kosovo Agency of Statistics does not publish data on the gender gap in labour force participation disaggregated by rural and urban residency, though such information could help inform policymaking and programming.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> They plan to start disaggregating data after the forthcoming census (email correspondence, 2022).



## 4. Division of labour and time use by gender

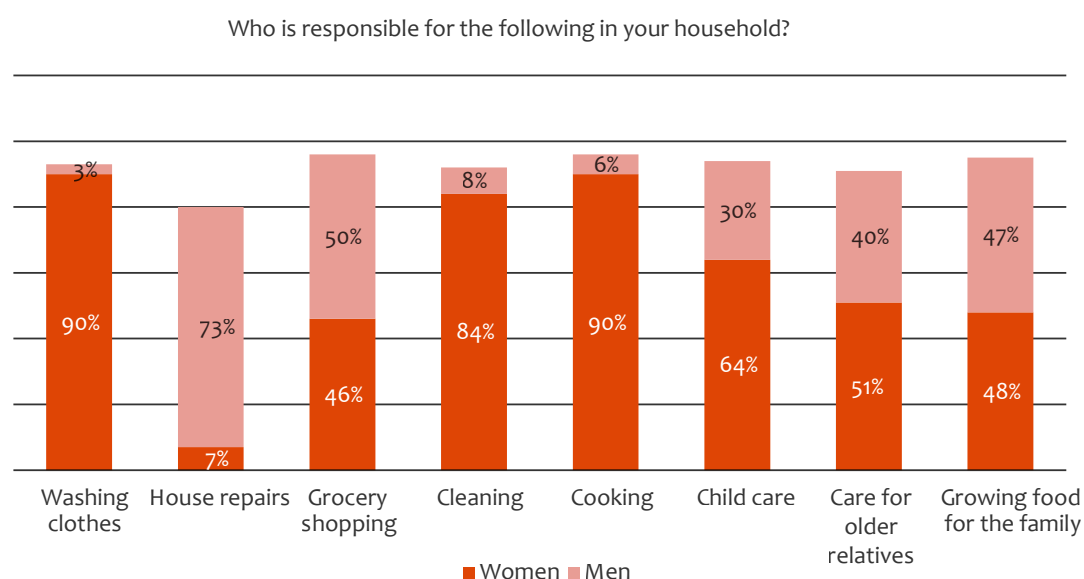
Studying differences in the time that women and men spend on economic and social activities provides insights as to the value placed on unpaid care and domestic work, gender equality, and barriers to social, economic and political participation. Moreover, studying time use can shed light on obstacles that may inhibit women's and men's labour force participation, so that such challenges can be addressed through policymaking and programmes. This chapter responds to the research questions: **how does diverse women's and men's time use differ in rural households and how does diverse women's and men's involvement in unpaid work differ, including agricultural work on family farms?** The chapter draws from existing data, as well as the Kosovo-wide survey, interviews and focus groups conducted for this gender assessment in 2022. It examines socialized gender norms, roles and relations within households, and their relationship with rural livelihoods.

### 4.1. Gender roles and responsibilities

Gender roles and responsibilities are socially determined and reinforced in the family, community, school and society. Often, society accepts them automatically, without challenging them. Thus, women and men have tended to have distinct roles and responsibilities within their households. However, gender roles and responsibilities can change with time. This section discusses women's and men's perceptions and experiences with different gender roles and responsibilities.

Women and men respondents to this assessment's 2022 survey tended to agree on women's and men's responsibilities within the household. In 90 percent of rural households, they said women family members cook and wash clothes, and in 84 percent, women do the cleaning (see Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Household responsibilities, by gender**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Meanwhile, men family members did repair work in 73 percent of households, though 18 percent of households hired help for repairs. Depending on the household, both women and men performed other responsibilities, such as grocery shopping and growing or producing food for family consumption. While approximately one-third of women and men were engaged in food production themselves, one-fifth said that their partner was responsible, and others said their or their partners' parents did this.

In households with children, more women (64 percent) are responsible for child care than men (30 percent). However, in households stating that men care for children, the survey respondents tended to be men, self-reporting that they participated in child care, often jointly with their partners. More specifically, 19 percent of women said that both they and their husbands were responsible for child care, compared with 28 percent of men who stated that they shared care work with their wives. This suggests that some men and women have different perceptions of what constitutes child care and who bears this responsibility. Meanwhile, in 51 percent of households, women cared for older relatives, while in 40 percent, men did.

Riinvest similarly found that 85 percent of women are responsible for cleaning, compared with only 1 percent of men, and 92 percent of women are responsible for cooking, compared with 1 percent of men (Riinvest Institute, 2022). Data from this gender assessment, Riinvest, and MCC all concur that women spend more time on household and care work than men do.

Focus group and interview respondents tended not to consider rural women's unpaid contributions as work, but rather as their responsibility.

“In rural areas, women do enormous work, and they are all very hardworking women, but nobody acknowledges it.”  
(Woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“I cook all by myself. I work all day long within the house, and, in the end, I do not gain anything.”  
(Albanian woman, Skënderaj/Srbica, focus group)

Women respondents tended not to consider their unpaid contributions as valuable or valued by others. Some expressed frustration with this. Riinvest similarly found that 56 percent of women respondents fully disagreed that “being a stay-at-home wife is just as valued as having a paid job”, and only 10 percent of women agreed with this statement (Dobranja et al., 2018). Only 7 percent of employed women agreed, compared with 13 percent of unemployed women.

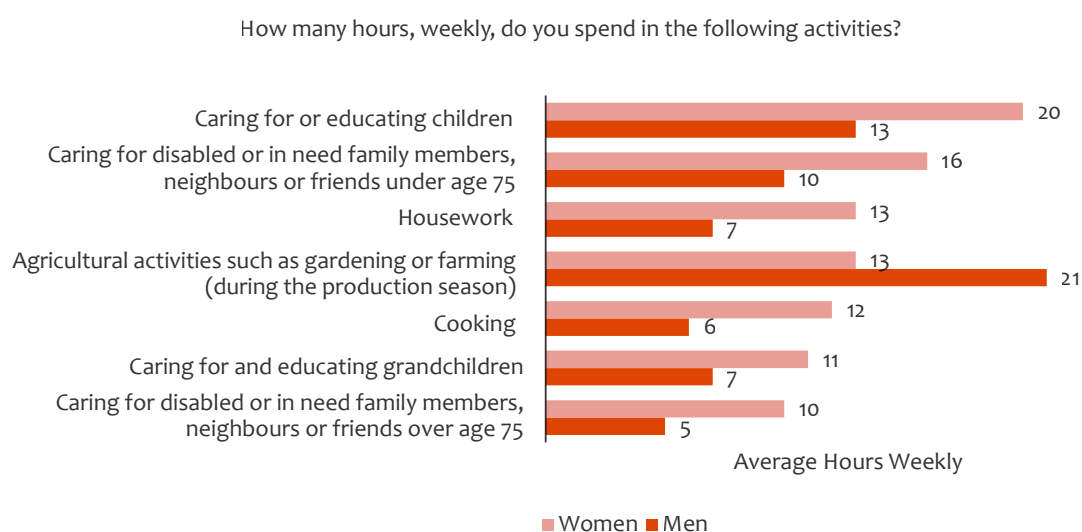
In conclusion, social expectations that women should perform household cleaning, cooking and care duties are deeply rooted in socially taught gender roles. Due to these socialized gender roles, in most households, women have more responsibilities than men. This limits the time that women have available for participating in paid labour. Respondents said that it is only when women have prioritized finishing their household duties that their families considered it acceptable for them to engage in income-generating activities. Thus, social assumptions about women's roles in the family can hinder their participation in paid employment in agriculture and rural economies.

## 4.2. Gender and time use

The Millennium Challenge Corporation found substantial variation in time use by sex, highlighting that, on average, men spent “400% more time on employment than females (3.9 hours and 0.9 hours, respectively). In contrast, women [spent] 300% more time on household and family care than men (7.1 hours and 2.3 hours, respectively)” (Siddiqui et al. 2018, p. 16). The report also shows that men spend more time than women on travel, mainly because of work-related travel. While differences may exist in how urban and rural women and men spend their time, these data were unavailable. At the same, the survey conducted for this gender assessment tended not to find significant differences in rural and urban women and men's time use.



**Figure 11. Average hours spent per week in rural areas on household activities, by gender**



**Source:** Authors' own elaboration.

Employed individuals worked an average of 44.4 hours a week (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018). On average, men worked approximately 12.8 hours per week more than women, who worked 35 hours per week. Additionally, “the plurality of males (40.5%) and females (43.0%) spent 40–50 hours working per week, and on average, urban and rural males worked a similar number of hours a week, however urban females reported working more hours (40.7) compared with their rural counterparts (32.9 hours)” (*ibid.*, p. 59). The survey conducted through this gender assessment similarly found that employed rural women worked in a paid job approximately 38 hours per week, while rural men spent 42 hours. Notably, this includes the time that employed individuals spent at work; it does not include domestic work. Indeed, when all work activities are considered, including unpaid work at home, rural women spent on average 139 of 168 total weekly hours working (83 percent of their time), while rural men spent only 111 hours (66 percent). Considering social gender norms regarding women’s and men’s responsibilities in the household, this gender assessment’s survey found that women spent more time than men performing household chores. On average, rural women spent twice as much time as men caring for and educating their own children (26 hours weekly), and older women spent 4 more hours per week than men caring for grandchildren (see Figure 11). Women also spent twice as much time (10 hours per week) caring for older people and 6 more hours per week than men (16 compared with 10 hours among men) caring for family members, neighbours or friends who are disabled or in need and under the age of 75 years. Women similarly spent twice as much time as men on housework and cooking. Women tended to underestimate the time that they spent on housework and cooking, since they cannot fully separate the time spent on each activity; women often engage in multiple tasks simultaneously, interview respondents explained.

Rural women participating in the focus groups said that household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning and caring for children and older people have affected the amount of time that they can spend on agricultural activities.

“We are responsible not only for house chores, but also taking care of kids and family. We have a lot of stress.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“We are constantly working within the house. It keeps us busy all day.”  
(Albanian woman, Skënderaj/Srbica, focus group)

**Figure 12. Hours spent per week in rural areas on various activities, by gender**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Generally, women farmers stated that when they engage in agriculture, it is in types of activity that allow them to be flexible with their time, so that they can fulfil their housekeeping tasks, as well.

Men have comparably more time for their work and for identifying business development opportunities. On average, men spend almost twice as much time as women on agricultural activities such as gardening or family farming during the production season (21 hours per week, compared with women's 13 hours per week).

On average, rural men also spend one-third more time than rural women on volunteer or humanitarian work and on leisure activities such as sports (see Figure 12). If they engage in such activities at all, women and men spend a similar amount of time in political or union activities (4 hours per week for men and 3 for women), in training and education courses, and in producing food preservatives. Rural men reported spending twice as much time as women collecting wood.

During the season, in rural areas, women spend, on average, 9 hours weekly producing *ajvar* (a traditional condiment made of red peppers), pickles or cheese, which is 2 more hours per week than urban women. Meanwhile, women in urban areas spend 2 hours more per week on leisure activities outside their homes than rural women.

In conclusion, these survey findings provide evidence that rural women may have less time than men or urban women to participate in leisure activities, learning, paid employment, or community decision-making, given their other responsibilities. Nevertheless, the fact that rural women have spent a similar amount of time as others participating in training or education activities suggests that there are opportunities for reaching them with knowledge and new skills related to rural development and agriculture.

### 4.3. Conclusion

Socially constructed perceptions regarding women's and men's gender roles, and the actual time that they spend on these roles, affects the extent to which women and men can engage in paid labour, including in the agriculture sector. These roles can limit rural women's access to knowledge, information, and opportunities for expanding their businesses and generating income. Yet, rural women, on average, do participate in educational courses, which suggests that there are opportunities for engaging them in economic development programmes. In comparison, men have more time for rest, self-education, and expanding their businesses, including applying for funds.

Meanwhile, the socialized assumption that care work is not valuable and therefore should not be paid has arguably slowed broader investments in transforming currently unpaid care work into paid care work. Investing in the care economy holds substantial opportunities for transforming unpaid labour into paid labour, investing in early education to transform gender roles (for children), and enabling more women to enter the labour force (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2016c).



# 5. Gender equality in the agriculture sector

This chapter examines the agriculture sector in Kosovo from a gender perspective. It responds to the research questions: **to what extent do diverse women and men have access to timesaving and productive infrastructure and technologies; and what challenges do women face in accessing these and income generation opportunities?** At the end, the chapter seeks to answer the research question: **what are rural women's perspectives on income generation opportunities?** This aims to inform recommendations for policies and programmes that could improve women's participation in the labour force in rural economies and the agriculture sector. The chapter draws from existing data, official statistics, and the survey, interviews and focus groups conducted for this gender assessment.

First, the chapter examines women and men's labour participation in agriculture. Separate data are seldom available for agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and other subsectors, so all references to agriculture in this chapter refer to all subsectors unless otherwise stated. Second, the chapter discusses women and men's access to and ownership of assets, including property, machinery and financial resources (for example, grants, subsidies and loans), and agricultural businesses from a gender perspective. Third, it summarizes rural women's perspectives on income generation opportunities.

## 5.1. Agricultural labour

In 2019, 270 181 people were engaged in agriculture, totalling 15.5 percent of the population (KAS, 2020c). Women comprised 49 percent of the agricultural workforce and men 51 percent.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, according to KAS, approximately 5.4 percent of employed men and 3.1 percent of employed women work in agriculture, forestry or fishing (KAS, 2021b).<sup>33</sup>

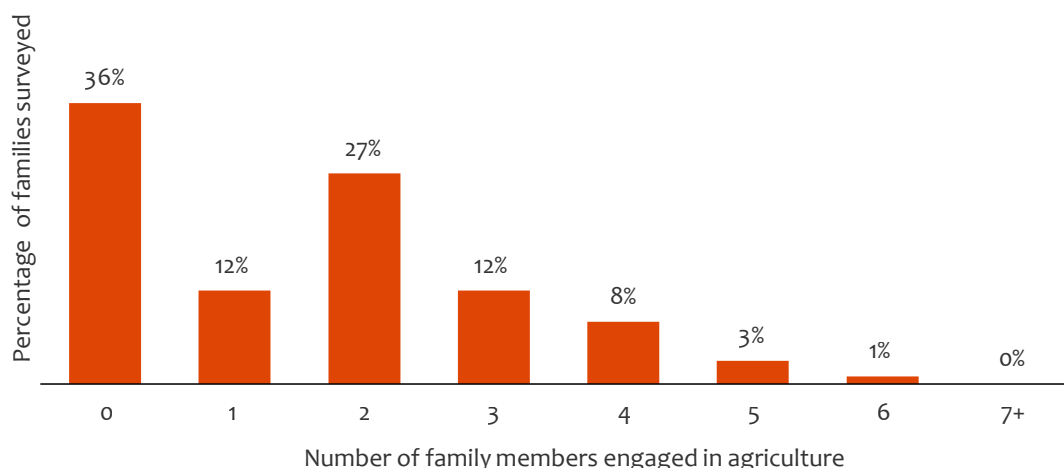
Considering that 61 percent of the population lives in rural areas (KAS, 2012), the small proportion of people officially engaged in agricultural work suggests a significant opportunity for potential development. Low employment in agriculture reportedly reflects the reality that agriculture is less profitable than other sectors, such as the public sector, which pays wages that are 7 percent higher (World Bank, 2017). Moreover, workers with contracts (public and private) earn 28 percent more than comparable workers without contracts (ibid.). As agricultural work may involve work without contracts, this may dissuade workers from engaging in this sector. Furthermore, even if they are engaged in informal agricultural work, their employment would not be reported officially. Thus, it is likely that more people work in the agriculture sector than official statistics suggest.

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<sup>32</sup> The more recently published 2020 Agricultural Holding Survey (KAS, 2021a) did not contain similar gender-disaggregated workforce data that would enable comparison.

<sup>33</sup> As noted, KAS (2021b) conflates data on agriculture, forestry and fishing, which makes it difficult to assess the number and percentage of women and men formally employed only in agriculture, forestry or fishing, respectively.

**Figure 13. Share of families with members active in agriculture, by number of family members active in agriculture**



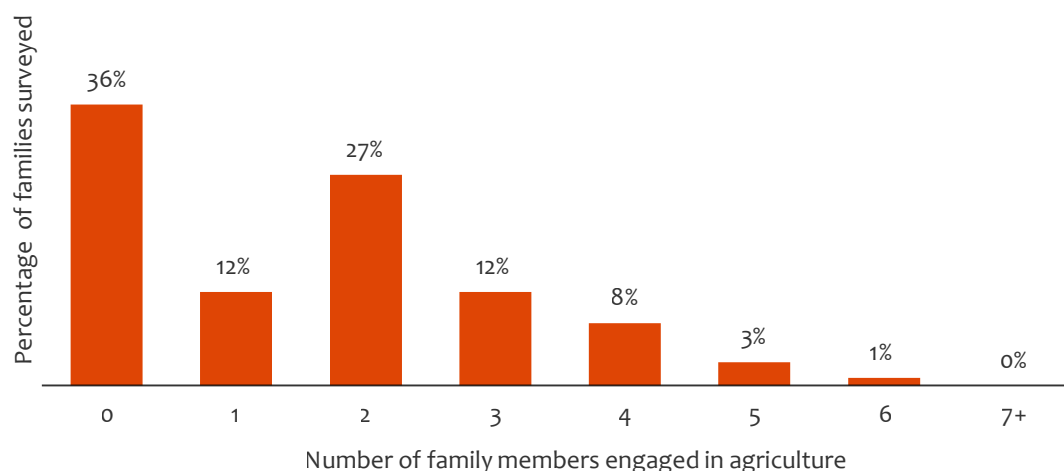
Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The survey conducted through this gender assessment found that at least one family member was engaged in agricultural activities in almost two of three surveyed households (see Figure 13). Moreover, 75 percent of the rural households that had members engaged in agricultural activities said that two to four family members were engaged directly in agricultural activities (paid or unpaid).

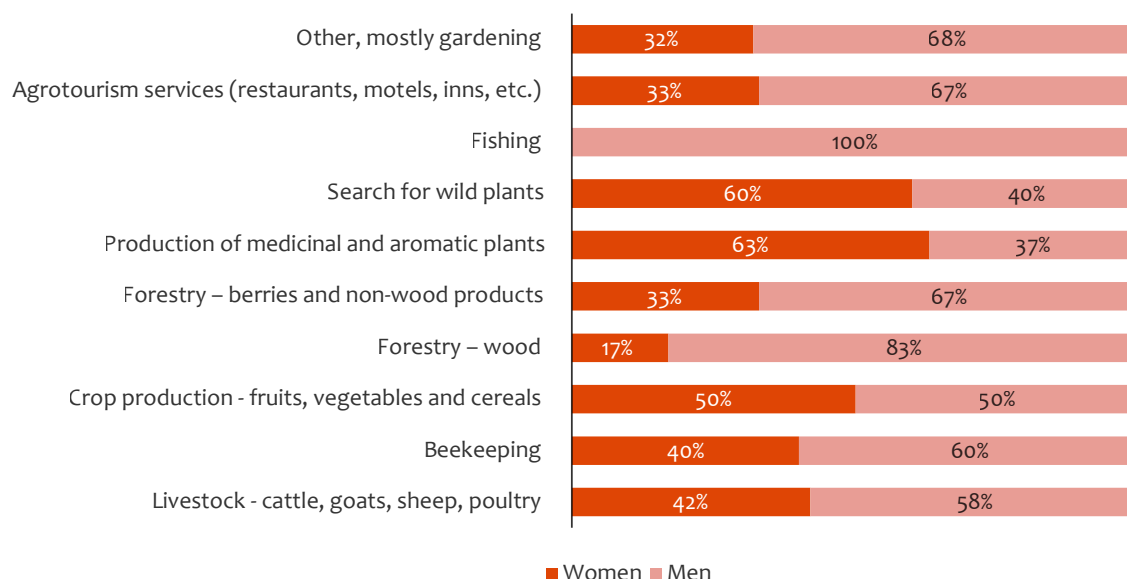
Based on the findings, the distribution of family members involved in agriculture varied across households. In 67 percent of the families involved in agriculture, it was observed that between 20 and 60 percent of all family members were involved in agricultural activities. In 12 percent of the families, the involvement ranged from 10 to 20 percent. Conversely, in 14 percent of families, a significant proportion, 60 to 80 percent of all family members, were involved in agriculture. In addition, 7 percent of families had more than 80 percent of all members involved in agricultural activities. Notably, respondents generally indicated that approximately equal numbers of female and male family members were involved in agricultural activities (see Figure 14).

Both men and women respondents said that they engaged in crop production, including fruits, vegetables and cereals, as well as in livestock rearing of cattle, goats, sheep and poultry. Women

**Figure 14. Share of women and men family members engaged in agricultural activities**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

**Figure 15. Engagement in types of agricultural activities, by gender**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

were more likely than men to be engaged in certain activities, such as searching for wild plants and the production of medicinal and aromatic plants (see Figure 15). Men were more likely to work in forestry, beekeeping, and especially in fishing.<sup>34</sup> Women's and men's engagement in different agricultural subsectors is discussed in the following subsections.

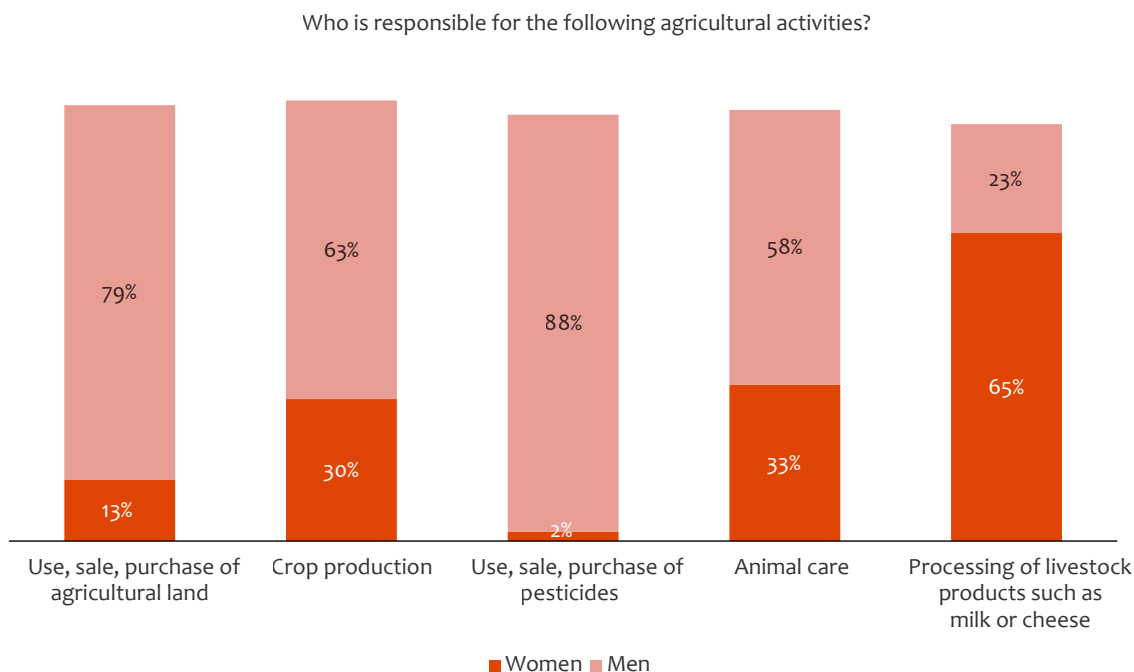
When asked who within their households was responsible for particular agricultural activities, respondents named various family members involved. While the share of women and men respondents who said that they are directly engaged in crop production was relatively balanced, respondents tended to state that more men family members were responsible for this activity (63 percent) than women family members (30 percent; see Figure 16). Meanwhile, in 88 percent of relevant households, men family members handled the use, sale and purchase of agricultural land, pesticides and agricultural equipment.<sup>35</sup> In only 2 percent of these households was this women's responsibility. In 86 percent of households, men bought and sold livestock. Meanwhile, the processing of livestock products, such as for milk or cheese, tended to be women's responsibility, as reported in 65 percent of the households where this activity took place. Similarly, in 79 percent of households where they processed agricultural products such as *ajvar*, women had the main responsibility for this.<sup>36</sup> Several men and women respondents said that this was their mothers' responsibility. Rural women also said during focus groups that they produce agricultural products for their family's use through gardening and subsistence farming.

<sup>34</sup> Focus groups and interviews conducted for this gender assessment corroborated these findings.

<sup>35</sup> The survey asked which specific family members performed agricultural activities (for example, respondent, mother, father-in-law, and so forth), and the research team categorized these by gender.

<sup>36</sup> Focus groups and interviews conducted for this gender assessment corroborated the survey findings in this chapter. Women engaged in income-generating activities, such as beekeeping and livestock (cows, goats, chicken, etc.); preserving foods (*ajvar*, jams, honey, pickled vegetables, yoghurt, cheese, etc.); and making traditional food and pastries (*pite*, *baklava*, *flija*, cakes, etc.). Meanwhile, men tended to engage in crop production and activities that require heavy machinery, participants said.

Figure 16. Responsibilities for agricultural activities, by gender



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

“I have my small garden. I have bees. I do milk production and processing, and also, I prepare flija with orders.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“These women are engaged in everything: gardening, cows, chickens, all of it.”  
(WCSO representative, interview)

Meanwhile, in 72 percent of the households that sold products produced by the family, men had this responsibility.<sup>37</sup> In the rarer cases that women sold such products, this tended to be through local fairs, focus group and interview participants said. They also said that men tended to set prices independently, while women consulted with each other before setting prices.

“The men go to market more often. If women go to a fair, they mostly decide together on the prices of products, whilst men decide or put the price without consulting others.”  
(WCSO, interview)

“A lot of women cannot join the fairs and markets due to lack of transportation and the distance to the city.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

During interviews and focus groups, women said that the key obstacles preventing them from taking their products to market included lack of time and poor access to (public) transportation. Some women also mentioned facing prejudice and social pressure when going to market or joining fairs.

“Oppressed by the mentality: there are still people who judge a woman if she goes to a fair or a market to sell her products. I have been bullied by people for going to the market 15 years ago, but this phenomenon is still present, even though I do not care and neither does my husband.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

<sup>37</sup> This was confirmed during focus groups and interviews.



**Figure 17. Household agricultural responsibilities, by gender**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

“There is still this mentality, that some people still talk about ‘those’ women, and, as a result, their husbands do not allow them to go to market.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

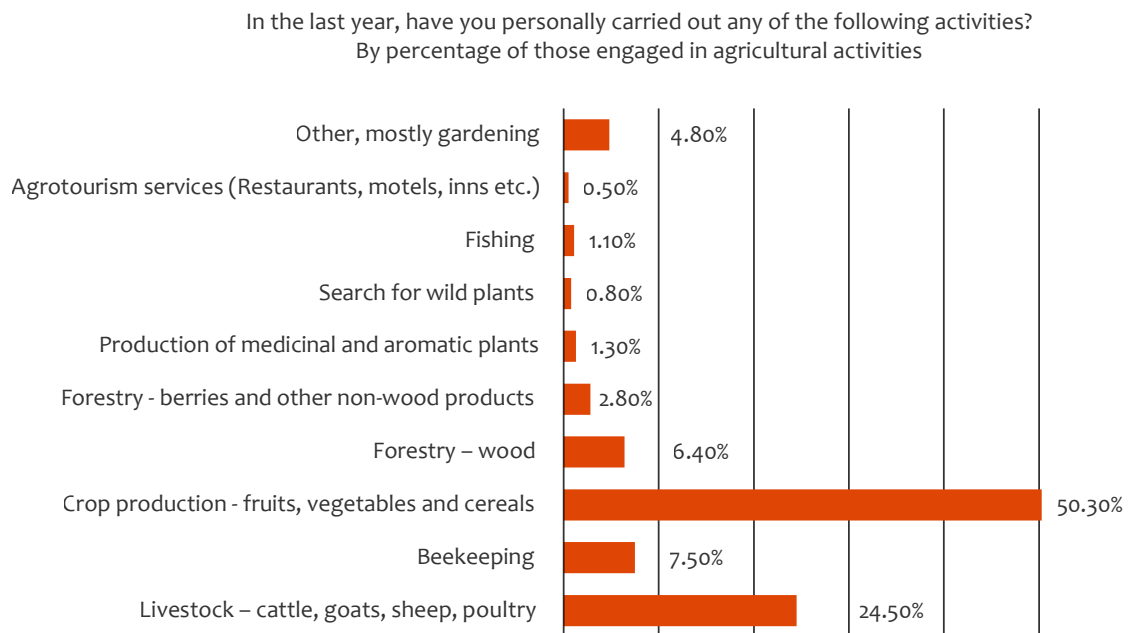
At the same time, few women engaged at all in the sale of expensive goods (see Figure 17). The purchase and sale of equipment used for agricultural production were almost solely the responsibilities of men (84 percent of households). Management of the family business was also considered to be men’s responsibility in 82 percent of households; in only 8 percent were women responsible for this.

In conclusion, both women and men are engaged in agricultural activities, but their responsibilities differ. Women’s activities enable them to remain in or near the household, where they can conduct other household work. Activities performed by men guarantee their access to and control over resources, information and decision-making on purchases, sales and business management. Women’s limited participation in purchasing and selling agricultural products restricts their access to and control over earnings, as well as access to information, extension services and training opportunities, all of which could increase their skills and improve production. Addressing these obstacles will require reducing women’s double burden by sharing responsibilities within the household in a more just and balanced manner and improving access to care services in rural areas. Meanwhile, opportunities exist to invest in developing the sectors where women already play socially accepted and active roles, and which involve flexible working hours, such as livestock rearing, horticulture, collection and production of medicinal and aromatic plants, and the processing of vegetables and fruits. Data suggest that food processing, particularly *ajvar* production, could offer opportunities for employing middle-age to older women, who would otherwise face challenges securing employment due to educational levels, insufficient prior work experience, location, and age-based discrimination. Investing in these subsectors could improve income for women via flexible work, as well as help to offset Kosovo’s trade imbalance in agricultural products.

## 5.2. Crop production

Overall, most surveyed agricultural labourers worked in crop production (50.3 percent) and raising livestock (see Figure 18). Very few worked in other agricultural subsectors.

**Figure 18. Engagement in various agricultural activities, by subsector**



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

In Kosovo, cultivated land is used primarily for growing cereals (65.9 percent), forage crops (19.9 percent), vegetables (4.7 percent) and fallow land (4.3 percent; KAS, 2020b). One typical strategy used by family farms is crop diversification, “to minimize risk that might come from ... crop failure and stabilize family income” (Miftari, Hoxha and Gjokaj, 2016, p. 12). Average yields per hectare are far below the European Union country average due to insufficient investment in modern techniques to treat diseases and poorly targeted advisory services (Miftari, Hoxha and Gjokaj, 2016).

The Kosovo Agency of Statistics does not publish sex-disaggregated data on patterns of agriculture production, harvest or yields. Approximately half of the gender assessment’s surveyed agricultural labourers worked in crop production, including a fairly equal balance of women and men. As mentioned earlier, evidence suggests that this is an area with potential for growth (World Bank, 2017).

### 5.3. Livestock and livestock products

Seventy percent of agricultural holdings were engaged in breeding animals in 2014 (KAS, 2015). Most agricultural holdings involved in breeding livestock raised cattle (73 percent). Among these cattle, more than half were dairy cows (51 percent). Kosovo’s livestock productivity was the lowest in Europe (KAS, 2015). One-quarter of persons engaged in agricultural activities, surveyed through this assessment, said that they raised livestock, including cattle, goats, sheep, or poultry; and of these, 42 percent were women and 58 percent men. Moreover, women and men engage at different points in the livestock value chain. There are no gender-disaggregated data on livestock ownership in Kosovo. However, men tend to be responsible for the purchase, sale, breeding, slaughtering and marketing of animals, indicating that they are likely to possess greater control over earnings. In 58 percent of agricultural households, men cared for animals, while women did in 33 percent of households. Women prepared livestock products (for example, milk and cheese) in 65 percent of households and men did in 23 percent of agricultural households. Historically, women have also been engaged in using by-products to make items such as traditional wool carpets, though this research did not look explicitly at this.

## 5.4. Fisheries and aquaculture

Fisheries and aquaculture were not included in the KAS 2014 Agriculture Census (2015) and data on this sector are very limited.<sup>38</sup> Fewer than 4.8 percent of employed persons work officially in this sector. As mentioned, the KAS LFS (2020a) stated that “agriculture, forestry, and fishing” combined employed 4.8 percent of employed persons aged 15 years and older. From this total percentage, 5.4 percent were men and 3.1 percent were women. The Kosovo Statistics Agency did not publish gender-disaggregated data on employment in the fishing sector alone. Only 1.1 percent of persons engaged in agricultural activities, surveyed through this assessment, said they worked in fisheries, and they were all men.

According to the interviews conducted for this assessment, fish farmers face difficulties related to water supply, access to markets, particularly transportation, and insufficient financial support. The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to financial losses in this sector amid the authorities’ restrictions affecting the gastronomy sector, which decreased demand and sales. One woman fish farmer said this forced her to apply for high interest loans, which created an added financial burden. While transportation for the distribution of products poses a general problem for fish farmers, women in this sector have less access to transportation than men. Another woman fish farmer said that she does not own a vehicle or have a driving licence. A suggested solution was to create collection points near areas where women conduct fishing activities.

“A lot of women need to have collection points for their products, considering that some depend on others to help them with the transportation.”

(Albanian woman fish farmer, Istog/Istok, interview)

## 5.5. Forestry

In Kosovo, forests comprise 44.7 percent (481 000 ha) of the total land area (Tomter *et al.*, 2013). Kosovo’s forests provide natural resources, high productivity and biodiversity. If managed sustainably, forests offer potential for employment, especially for rural people, and revenues for the central budget.

Around 60 percent of forests are public, while more than 120 000 individual forest owners privately own the remaining 40 percent. Although there are no gender-disaggregated data on forest ownership, FAO assessments found in 2017 and 2020 that men owned approximately 98 percent of forests.

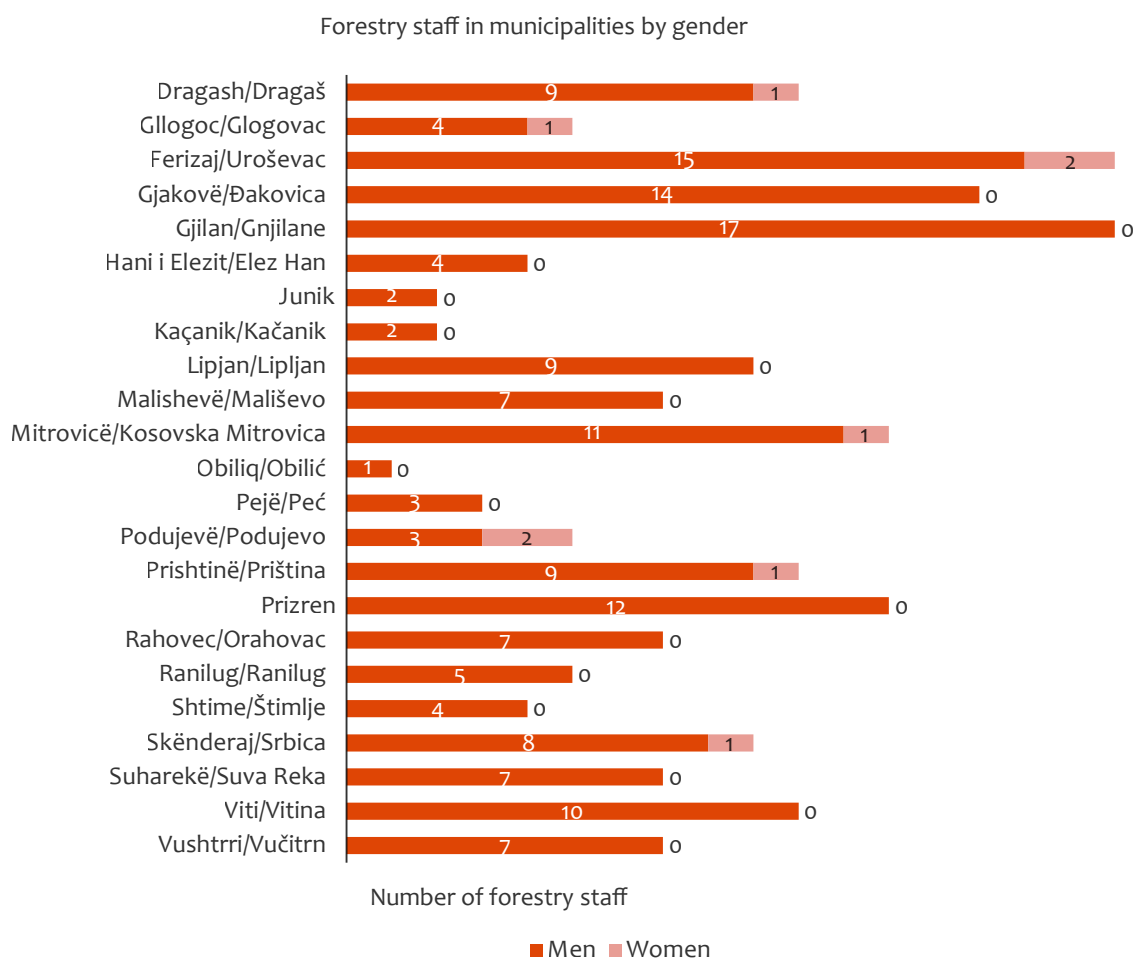
Women are often marginalized in the sector’s decision-making processes (FAO, 2017). A clear gender imbalance persists at managerial and decision-making levels, and men have managed formal forests since their establishment in Kosovo. Women’s participation in MAFRD, but also in local forestry institutions, is low. No women are present in MAFRD’s Department of Forestry’s decision-making bodies. In 22 municipalities, approximately 90 percent of management positions are held by men (see Figure 19).

Generally, few women are engaged in planning and drafting local development strategies for forestry or in their implementation, including GEOs, and “only 5.95 percent of women stated that they would participate in meetings about forest-related issues” (*ibid.*, p. 27). Most women thought that men (a husband, father-in-law, brother or adult son) should take part in meetings on behalf of the family (FAO, 2017). As a result of women’s minimal participation and insufficient gender-disaggregated data, forestry planning and policies do not consider the needs, priorities and constraints of diverse women and men.

Women also face barriers to accessing education in forestry. Universities in Kosovo do not offer forestry degrees; students must travel abroad to study and the cost of this can be prohibitive.

<sup>38</sup> The Kosovo Women’s Network tried to conduct interviews with women and men working in fisheries but faced access issues because businesses did not want to cooperate. Furthermore, they did not want to provide data on employees disaggregated by gender.

Figure 19. Forestry staff at the municipal level, by gender



**Source:** Data gathered by FAO under the “Developing the forestry sector in Kosovo” project in 2020.

Consequently, women have been historically underrepresented among forestry experts, including those employed by MAFRD (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2018). A study by FAO (2017, p. 32) shows that “[MAFRD] has subsidized opportunities for women to study forestry. In the academic years 2006 to 2010, they supported 15 students to study forestry abroad, and half of the group were females”. However, this support for study abroad has not continued, reportedly due to insufficient funds.

Women’s underrepresentation in the forestry sector is also shaped by sociocultural norms that suggest the physical demands of forestry work (measuring forestland, woodcutting and operating heavy machinery) are too difficult for women (FAO, 2017). Moreover, women have less access to and control over forestry resources, property rights to the forest and land (*ibid.*). FAO concluded that, “gender disparities in forestry are still largely related to social norms and the notion that women cannot benefit from engagement in forest-related activities” (*ibid.*, p. 11), and considered increasing knowledge on gender rights, roles and responsibilities in forestry important for overcoming perceptions that forestry is a “male domain”.

Approximately 6.4 percent of households engaged in agricultural activities surveyed through this assessment said that they worked with wood (83 percent of these respondents were men), and 2.8 percent with non-wood forest products (NWFPs; 67 percent were men). FAO (2017) similarly found that men were primarily engaged in fuelwood collection, while women and children collected NWFPs. They tended to collect fuelwood on land that they considered to be theirs, even if they did not have an official title to that land. This research also demonstrated that “in general, forest work was not considered to be ‘decent work’, especially for women [and that] poor families who have no

other means of generating income were more active in forest work” (ibid., p. 27). Regarding NWFPs, women participating in this assessment seemed to collect products from their own land, their family’s land, public lands, and lands where ownership was unclear, including in fields and mountains.

Non-wood forest products comprise 35.2 percent of all industrial crops in Kosovo making up nearly half of industrial agricultural holdings and support the livelihoods of an estimated 11 400 collectors, 100 cultivators, 40 collection centres, and 10 processing centres (KAS, 2015). Of persons engaged in agricultural activities surveyed by this assessment, only 0.8 percent searched for wild plants, 1.3 percent produced medicinal and aromatic plants, and 2.8 percent collected berries and NWFPs. Of those working with plants, 60 percent were women, while women made up 33 percent of persons collecting berries and NWFPs. While quantitative data are lacking, qualitative data based on conversations with women suggest that such work is normally seasonal, part-time and informal, so women rarely, if ever, accumulate benefits for pensions based on such work.

Larger regional collectors have small collection centres within villages where women and men can sell their products (FAO, 2017). Focus group participants for this gender assessment reported that foreign companies have trained farmers on how to grow organic plants for international certification, and that farmers also process plants and produce herbal tea, creams, lotions, and other organic cosmetic products. However, they also said that selling flowers and herbs directly offers greater benefits than processing the products themselves.

“I have cultivated medical plants for 15 years now, and I have been registered as a farmer and business for 12 years. I sell them, produce tea, oils, and other stuff with flowers ... tea, oils, vinegars.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

Cultivating NWFPs holds significant promise for economic development, assessment participants said. Collection points, medical companies and cosmetic manufacturers have expressed interest in purchasing these products at fair prices. Women currently engaged in collecting NWFPs said that they saw opportunities for other women to become involved as well, and to collaborate with them in collecting NWFPs from various properties, potentially so that they could bundle products together for sale in larger quantities. However, some women said that they have faced difficulties in finding other women willing to work with them. Awareness-raising about the benefits of engaging in this activity could encourage other women to generate income through NWFPs.

“It’s the idea of medicinal plants: if a woman wants to work with me and win, I can do that with them. There are many plants from which women can earn, but they need labourers [seasonal workers] and to know where to sell them [products]. The market is secure. Only me and two other women started working with plants.”  
(WCSO, interview)

Another challenge facing rural women is that they have limited mobility and thus tend to sell their products to intermediaries at comparatively lower prices. Women who are highly dependent on the sale of NWFPs for their livelihoods have limited access to financial services and loans; they may not be aware of the availability of public programmes supporting poor women or microcredit opportunities. Furthermore, women who collect NWFPs, like other women, lack time due to household care work, focus group participants confirmed. Despite their heavy workloads, many women said they were willing to work more if doing so would improve the economic situation of their family, particularly their children. This suggests potential for improving the livelihoods of rural women through their engagement in NWFPs, and other medicinal and aromatic plants. At the same time, sustainable collection methods that would protect the environment and avoid over-harvesting also require further attention, including training for women engaged in NWFPs.

## 5.6. Beekeeping

Officially, almost 5 percent of agricultural holdings kept bees, and most were located in Prishtinë/Priština (KAS, 2015). In 2022, 7.5 percent of surveyed rural households engaged in agricultural activities said that they participated in beekeeping. Of them, 40 percent were women and 60 percent were men. Women farmers who cultivate and collect NWFPs also tended to engage in beekeeping, since NWFPs provide bees with nutritious flowers, interview and focus group participants said. Beekeepers' associations exist in Kosovo, including associations of women beekeepers. Other associations and organizations, particularly women's organizations have also supported women beekeepers with supplies (for example, bees and hives), and training on beekeeping and honey manufacturing. Women beneficiaries of such programmes have emphasized the psychological support and benefits that such programmes have had for them, in addition to financial benefits as explained during the gender assessment interviews.

*“I have bees and also cultivate medical flowers. I also produce creams and lotions from them.”*  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

Focus group participants said that the most significant risk they face as beekeepers is that of bee species extinction. They had witnessed substantial losses in their bee populations in the last four years. Climate change and pesticide use by neighbours caused the most harm. Beekeepers believed that improved regulation of pesticides by the authorities, particularly during the pollination season, could help to address this.

*“My neighbours have used pesticides for their flowers, and my bees have gone to those flowers, and they were poisoned. I lost all my bees, but my neighbour only cares about his production.”*  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus groups)

An additional challenge faced by women beekeepers has been the minimum criteria for receiving beekeeping subsidies; a beekeeper must own at least 30 beehives to qualify for subsidies. Many women beekeepers do not have this many beehives and cannot access start-up funds to build more beehives, research participants said. They considered this a discriminatory criterium, particularly towards women because they tend to own fewer beehives than men.

## 5.7. Agrotourism

Fewer than 1 percent of the survey respondents said that they engaged in agrotourism activities, such as agro-hotels, guest houses and restaurants. Of this small subsample, 67 percent were men and 33 percent women. Yet, potential exists in this subsector, particularly related to tourism in the Western Balkans region. Agrotourism locations in Europe are drawing in tourists and incomes to rural areas, and nearby Albania holds several examples of successful rural businesses and improvements to rural livelihoods linked to agrotourism and ecotourism. According to UNDP, before the COVID-19 pandemic more than 12 million tourists visited the Western Balkans in 2019, supplying 10 percent of the region's total GDP and 25 percent of its exports (Spoljaric Eger and Bregu, 2021). Tourism employed 11 percent of the region's workforce, and 55 percent are women (ibid.).

In Kosovo, communities have considered men more suited to running mountain tourism businesses, and men have tended to manage tourism businesses (Swisscontact, 2015). Moreover, local policies have not encouraged women's engagement in rural tourism (ibid.). Limited gender-disaggregated data exist on agrotourism. A 2015 study of tourism in the mountainous and largely rural region of Western Kosovo provides some insight into general trends (ibid.). Of the women working in tourism, 31 percent worked in kitchens, 28 percent in maintenance, and only 5 percent in management. Moreover, even though the required minimum wage at that time was EUR 220, women's average wage ranged from EUR 100 to EUR 150 and most worked informally. Obstacles identified included women's low levels of educational attainment, insufficient access to information, minimum prior work experience, and little to no access to family finances. The tourism businesses studied were

“family-driven”, so women worked informally and based on the needs of their families. Only 7 of the 30 CSOs engaged in tourism development in this region were managed by women.

The report recommended that CSOs and municipal authorities cooperate to develop strategies for increasing access to markets, including marketing women’s handmade textile and food products to tourists; engaging more women as local guides; providing training and education to women in skilled jobs with better pay; creating child development activities and services for tourists; and supporting women’s businesses, including food processing and making traditional products, which can be branded and sold. Opportunities exist to invest in home stays and eco-businesses along tourist routes, such as the Peaks of the Balkans Trail, among others, where visiting hikers need accommodation and food. Again, development investments would need to consider environmental impacts, focusing on sustainable approaches in any type of tourism support.

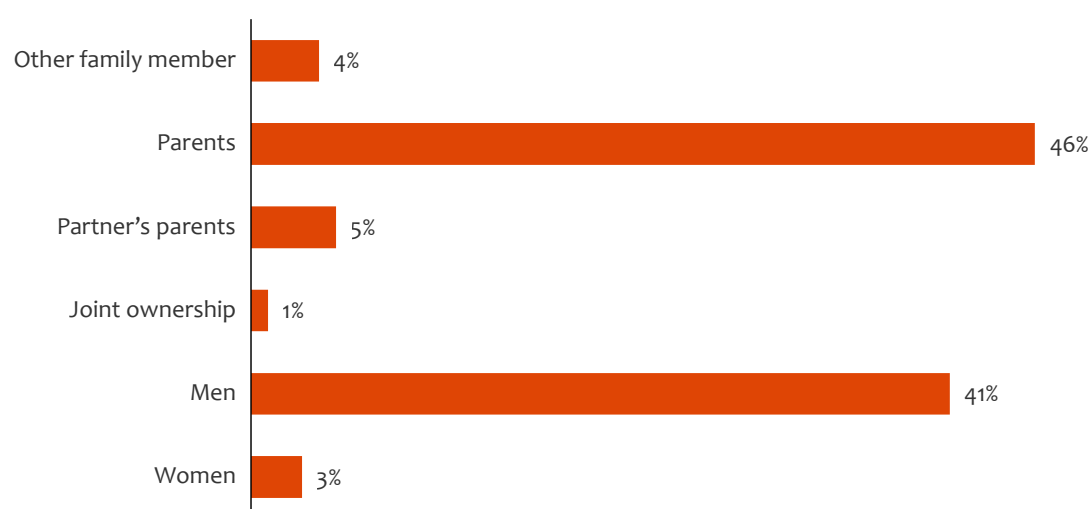
## 5.8. Access to and ownership of assets

This section examines women’s and men’s access to, and ownership of, assets needed for the operation and development of agricultural enterprises, including land and property, agricultural business holdings, machinery, inputs, loans, subsidies and grants, respectively. Access to these can affect the extent to which diverse women and men have the resources they need for engaging in and expanding their agricultural activities.

### 5.8.1. Land and property ownership

The Law on Property and Other Real Things (Assembly of Kosovo, 2009b) provides for equal rights for both women and men to own and inherit property. However, significant gender disparities exist in ownership. Men own 79 percent of land in Kosovo and women own 19 percent (Kosovo Cadastral Agency, 2022). Only 17 percent of women in Kosovo own immovable property, including land (Joireman, 2015). According to the last Agriculture Census (2015), men owned 95.1 percent of agricultural land and women owned only 4.9 percent.<sup>39</sup> An estimated 2 percent of forest owners are women (FAO, 2017). Only 3 percent of the rural women surveyed for this gender assessment said that they own agricultural land, compared with 41 percent of men (see Figure 20). Approximately 46 percent of all respondents stated that the family’s agricultural land was owned by their parents, in the majority of cases by their fathers. An additional 15 percent of respondents said that their partner’s parents

**Figure 20. Owners of agricultural land, by gender and family relationship**



**Source:** Authors’ own elaboration.

<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, the regular Agricultural Holding Survey does not contain data on the gender of landowners, so no more recent data are available.

owned the land. Notably, almost 4 percent of the women and men said that their family's agricultural land is owned by another family member. Meanwhile, rural women owned approximately 12 percent of houses, according to this assessment's survey. Even so, more than 70 percent of houses are owned by men. The remaining share are either owned by other family members or the respondents' partner's parents.

Under Kosovo's Law on Inheritance (Assembly of Kosovo, 2018), women and men have equal rights to own and inherit property. Legally, spouses and children are members of the first "rank" of inheritors when a person dies. Despite women's legal right to an equal share of property, in practice families usually divide property based on social customs. Due to gender norms, society tends to perceive men as heads of households. Vuniqi and Halimi (2011, cited in Joireman, 2015, p. 18) reported that, "Women do not always know that they are entitled legally to inherit from their parents or spouses". Notaries often act on the family's expressed wishes to transfer property ownership to men. Wives and daughters rarely make claims to property; they refuse to seek their inheritance rights to prevent conflict within their families or because they do not want to contest their parents' legal will.<sup>40, 41</sup>

To promote the registration of property in the names of both spouses as an affirmative measure, the authorities adopted an Administrative Instruction for the joint registration of property, which waives property registration fees for couples jointly registering their property ("Government of Kosovo", 2022c). The Administrative Instruction does not apply to single women, including widows. During interviews, GEOs said that more women and men farmers are jointly declaring their property when applying for grants, though further improvements are needed. Moreover, interview and focus group respondents said that the affirmative measure prioritizing subsidies for women farmers by applying an additional five points to women applicants during the scoring of applications for grants or subsidies has reportedly contributed to an increase in the joint registration of property.

Property and landownership continue to present problems for farmers generally, but particularly for women, respondents confirmed. Farmers said that their lack of official papers proving their property ownership has posed serious problems, especially if they want to apply for grants or subsidies. Farmers explained that they use inherited land that their ancestors have not always transferred legally into their names. They said that the property registration process was complicated, time-consuming and very costly, which dissuaded them from transferring property ownership officially. The interviews found that lack of property ownership posed an even greater challenge for people with disabilities, especially in rural areas.

"A woman cannot inherit from her family, and when she gets married, she cannot inherit from her husband's family either. When [women's] relations with their families are normal, they use [land and property], but if they are in the process of divorce, they cannot. Because of this, [women] cannot get a loan from the bank."  
(Gender equality officer, interview)

"However, when it comes to property rights, namely the transfer of landownership and immovable property, it is still in favour of men, and the property is transferred through the male line."  
(Serb man, Zubin Potok, focus group)

"The biggest challenge for women in business is property ownership, and this limits our opportunities."  
(Businesswoman, interview)

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<sup>40</sup> This is well documented, also by KWN and its members. In addition, it was raised during a workshop on gender and land in the Western Balkans, organized by FAO, GIZ, World Bank and UN Women in Durres, Albania, 16–18 September 2015 (further details are available at FAO. 2016. *Gender, agriculture and rural development in Albania*. Country Gender Assessment Series. Budapest. <https://www.fao.org/3/i15413e/i15413e.pdf>). This information was provided by notaries, staff from cadastral offices, IT professionals working on land data systems, and representatives of the ministries of agriculture and justice.

<sup>41</sup> For more information on land access see GIZ and FAO. 2021. *Guidelines on strengthening gender equality in land registration – Southeast Europe*. Rome. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb2857en>; and GIZ and FAO. 2022. *Achieving SDG Indicator 5.a.2. in the Western Balkans and Beyond. Partnerships for gender equality in land ownership and control*. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9475en/cb9475en.pdf>



“Women do not own land. Most of them use their families’ land, but it is not written in their name. They cannot benefit from it. The procedures are too complicated and there are only a few men who would put their wife’s name on their property documentation.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

Lack of property ownership leads some businesswomen to have to pay high rent to keep their businesses, and sometimes their expenses are higher than their incomes, gender assessment interviews found. Women’s minimal ownership of land, including agricultural land, can hamper their access to capital, loans, subsidies, grants and opportunities for starting or expanding agricultural businesses.

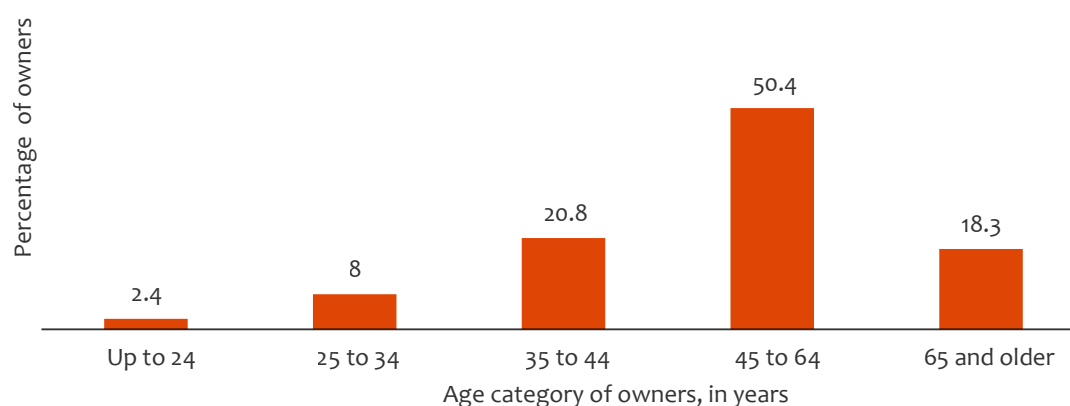
## 5.8.2. Agricultural business ownership and management

According to the Agriculture Census in 2014, Kosovo had 130 775 agricultural holdings, including 130 436 agricultural households and individual businesses (KAS, 2015).<sup>42</sup> Agricultural holdings need not be registered officially as businesses under Kosovo law. Thus, out of all agricultural holdings, only 339 were legal entities, comprising less than 0.3 percent of agricultural holdings.

Family members have tended to carry out most of the farm work in agricultural households, where the managers (usually the same person as the farm holder) performed almost half of the farm work (44.6 percent) and other family members contributed labour (49.6 percent; *ibid.*). Most farm holders were men (95.1 percent), while 4.9 percent were women. Women comprised 58.2 percent of the family members working in agricultural households and businesses, while men comprised 41.8 percent of these family members. Although it is mainly men who own agricultural properties, it is women who represent the majority of family members working on the properties. The age group with the largest number of agricultural property holders was 45 to 64 years, and only 2.4 percent of such properties were owned by young people under the age of 25 years (see Figure 21).

As of May 2022, Kosovo had 4 607 women (5.8 percent) and 74 989 men (95.2 percent) registered as farmers (KWN correspondence with MAFRD, 2022). This has changed little over time, as women comprised only 5 percent of registered farmers in 2018 too (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2018). In 2019, women owned 28.8 percent of agriculture, forestry and fishing enterprises, while men owned 71.2 percent (KAS, 2020c). Meanwhile, only 7 percent of the rural respondents surveyed in this assessment owned businesses (11 percent of men and 2 percent of women). Unequal ownership of agricultural businesses may affect opportunities for women and young people to engage in agriculture, particularly young women.

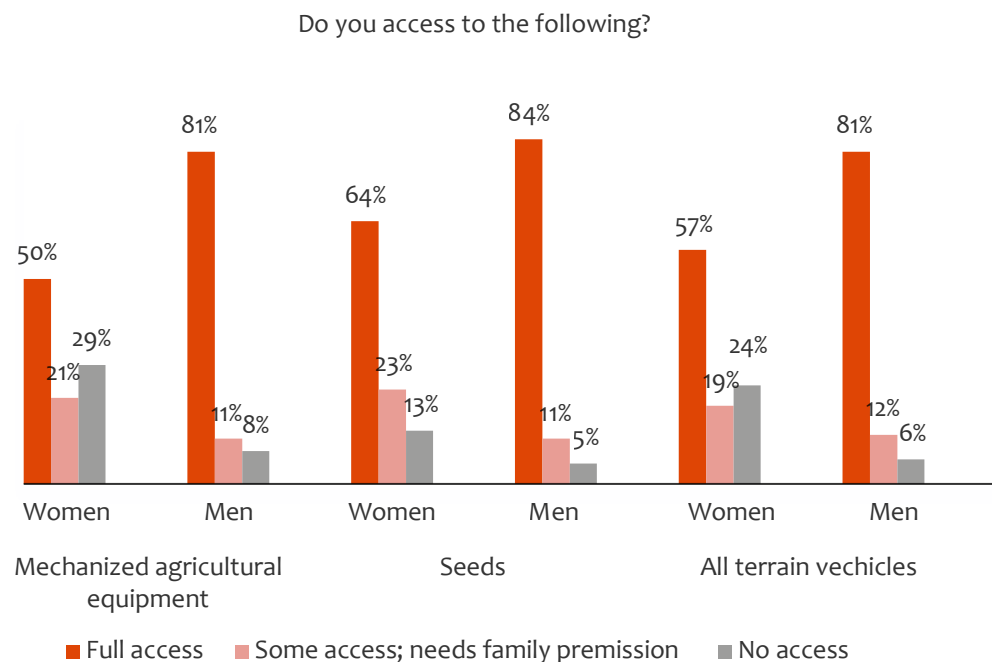
**Figure 21. Age structure of agricultural property holders**



**Source:** Adapted from KAS. 2015. *Agriculture Census in Kosovo 2014 – Final Results*. Pristina. <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/1375/final-results.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> The census does not provide any explanation of the difference in numbers.

Figure 22. Access to equipment, seeds and vehicles, by gender



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### 5.8.3. Agricultural machinery and inputs

No known prior analysis has examined women's and men's access to and ownership of farming machinery and inputs. Approximately one in ten gender assessment-surveyed women said that they need family permission to access all-terrain vehicles, mechanized agricultural equipment, and agricultural inputs like seeds (see Figure 22). An additional one in ten did not have access to these at all because they were not allowed to use them. Moreover, two in ten women said that their household needed vehicles or mechanized agricultural equipment, but that they did not own or have these, which meant that they could not access them. Inputs such as seeds tended to be more accessible to women, with one-third reporting full, independent access.

Focus group participants observed that in some cases, men do not allow women to select the type of seeds or plants they want to cultivate.

“A lot of women also struggle with deciding on their own what to cultivate. Men tend to insist on cultivating a certain type of seed and do not let women [choose]. Nor do they support them to cultivate anything else. Thus, a lot of women do not have a word in what they can or should cultivate, even though they do most of the work.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

### 5.8.4. Grants, subsidies and loans

The authorities provide grants and subsidies to businesses and agricultural enterprises through the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency (KIESA), MAFRD and municipalities. Regarding subsidies for all businesses provided through the Ministry of Trade and Industry, in 2017 women received 17 percent of KIESA grants and men received 83 percent (Farnsworth et al., 2018). Furthermore, “women-owned enterprises received 25 times less funding in subsidies, though the ratio of female to male-owned enterprises is one to six, suggesting

**Table 4. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development agricultural subsidies in 2019–2021, by beneficiaries' gender**

Beneficiaries	2019	2020	2020 <sup>43</sup>	2021
Total number of beneficiaries	25 863		28 503	24 904
Men	24 841		27 145	23 649
Women	1 022		1 358	1 255
% of beneficiaries who are women	4.0%		4.8%	5.0%
Total amount of support (in EUR) <sup>44</sup>	30 679 393	36 730 415	32 871 003	28 822 042
Men	29 229 743	34 676 290	31 026 911	26 967 632
Women	1 449 650	2 054 124	1 844 092	1 854 411
% of funding provided to women	4.7%	5.6%	5.6%	6.4%

Source: MAFRD, correspondence with KWN, 2022.

disproportional funding” (ibid., p. 2). Since then, the authorities have introduced affirmative measures towards increasing support to women. Between 2019 and 2021, out of 116 beneficiary enterprises, women led 32 percent of these; the total financial value was EUR 615 078 (KWN correspondence with KIESA, 2022).<sup>45</sup>

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development provided subsidies specifically for agriculture. Despite slight improvements over time, women have consistently comprised fewer than 5 percent of the beneficiaries and have received approximately 6 percent or less of the total funds (see Table 4).

Data were requested from all municipalities regarding their expenditures on agricultural subsidies in the 2019–2021 period, disaggregated by gender. Only six municipalities responded, and they provided only some of the data requested (see Table 5). Thus, it is difficult to examine trends over time or across municipalities. Nevertheless, these examples suggest that municipal subventions have tended to benefit men more than women. Based on these cases, it also can be observed that although women and men both benefited from subsidies, men tended to receive a disproportionately larger amount of the expenditures.

When asked about their access to agricultural subsidies, “No, we haven’t heard about this”, was the unanimous response in focus groups held with women farmers in Prishtinë/Priština, Skënderaj/Srbica and Vushtrri/Vučitrn. In contrast, the municipal officials interviewed tended to think that subsidies were accessible to women farmers. Focus group and interview findings suggested a disconnect between municipal officers’ perceptions of accessibility and women farmers’ actual ability to access such subsidies.

Several obstacles affect women’s access to subsidies. First, as stated in Subsection 5.8.1., women’s limited property ownership hinders their access to loans, grants and subsidies. The minimum requirements do not take into consideration the structural inequalities in access to property faced by women.

43 Additional funding was allocated in 2020 under the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Program.

44 All numbers have been rounded to the nearest euro.

45 Data were not publicly available to enable a calculation of what percentage of funding this constituted.

**Table 5. Municipal subsidies, by beneficiaries' gender**

Municipality	Dragash / Dragaš	Istog / Istok	Fushë Kosovë / Kosovo Polje	Pejë / Peć	Klllokot / Klokot	Total
<b>2019</b>						
Number of beneficiaries			641	533		1 174
Number of women beneficiaries			380	40		420
Percentage of women beneficiaries			59%	8%		36%
Total expenditure (EUR)				315 455		315 455
Spent on women (EUR)				14 912		14 912
Percentage spent on women				5%		5%
<b>2020</b>						
Number of beneficiaries			690	588		1 278
Number of women beneficiaries	17		420	40		477
Percentage of women beneficiaries			61%	7%		37%
Total expenditure (EUR)	196 718			322 762		519 479
Spent on women (EUR)	12 483			10 793		23 275
Percentage spent on women	6%			3%		4%
<b>2021</b>						
Number of beneficiaries		262	890	960	116	2 228
Number of women beneficiaries		41	520	120	37	718
Percentage of women beneficiaries		16%	58%	13%	32%	32%
Total expenditure (EUR)		66 393		431 130		497 523
Spent on women (EUR)					615 078	615 078

Source: Municipalities, correspondence with KWN, 2022.

“Property ownership is a huge problem because a lot of farmers, including me, use the land of their family, grandparents and so on, but do not have papers for that. This does not allow them to win any grants, increase productivity, or expand their business.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

During interviews, municipal officials concurred that cadastral issues are one of the most common challenges faced by farmers who want to apply for grants or subsidies. They cannot apply because they do not have evidence of property possession. They observed that women farmers tended to face these issues more often than men.

Second, the criterium for applicants' educational achievement also prevents rural women from applying for subsidies because they do not meet the minimum educational level required, usually a secondary school diploma. Focus groups and interviews found that this challenge persists in 2022. Limited education and access to information about subsidies and grants present obstacles for women to complete application forms. Many farmers and especially women farmers lack soft skills and knowledge. Women struggle to write a proposal or complete an application, research participants said. As a result, they tend not to apply for grants, loans or subsidies. In some cases, they had to request help from others or pay someone to prepare their application. Respondents requested training to strengthen their soft skills so that they could complete application processes themselves.

“They should ease the procedures for applying for a grant or subsidy. They are too complicated. I need to ask my son to come and help me with the applications.”  
(Albanian woman, Krushë e Vogël/Mala Kruša, focus group)

“In three hours you can train farmers how to use the platforms and give them access to apply online.”  
(Municipal advisory official, interview)

Third, farmers, especially women, emphasized that the criterion of a 20 to 30 percent co-payment also presented a burden for them, especially for those engaged in small income-generating activities or those who wanted to start engaging. If they had the means to invest 20 or 30 percent in their activities, they would not need to apply for subsidies, they said, providing examples of their struggles to apply for beehives, cows or greenhouses. As a result, research participants said that subsidies primarily benefited well-developed farmers and not those most in need. Removing this criterion would increase women's ability to apply and benefit from grants and subsidies, expand their activities, and generate more income, they affirmed.

“Usually, the subsidies are won by people who already have good living conditions.”  
(Albanian man, Has, Prizren, focus group)

“The criteria for 30 percent is difficult to achieve for beginners. A woman who starts with one or three bee colonies, cannot reach 30 for many years. Why shouldn't I benefit? Why not help me with beehives? Those farmers who have larger farms benefit more, while smaller farmers remain small.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“The application criteria for subsidies are very strict [like] you have to have 30 beehives to apply. There are women who have 10 or 15 hives and cannot apply. They have to help those who are not big.”  
(WCSO, interview)

Banks can also be a source of capital for expanding agricultural activities. Despite requests, banks refused to share data on loans distributed to women and men for agricultural purposes (KWN correspondence, 2022). Rural women reportedly have very limited access to finance through commercial banks and microfinance institutions (Kosovo Women's Network, 2020). Only 15 percent of surveyed women business owners have a commercial bank loan (ibid.). Informality and unemployment were key challenges for rural women to meet the eligibility criteria for securing loans.

During interviews and focus groups, farmers said that interest rates are so high that they are unable to apply for a loan. As a result, farmers face difficulties in investing in their agricultural activities or expanding their businesses.

“We have taken loans to invest in our farms and business, and we are fed up with the high rates and percentages they take from us. It is too much.”  
(Albanian man, Prishtinë/Priština, focus groups)

“Foreign banks are plundering us; they are harming us. We're almost shutting down our agricultural activities.”  
(Albanian woman fish farmer, Istog/Istok, interview)

## 5.9. Rural women’s perspectives on income generation opportunities

Considering the findings in this and other chapters, this section summarizes the findings in response to the research question: **what are rural women’s perspectives on income generation opportunities?** While women did not always identify possibilities, their reflections on key constraints were used to inform potential prospects (see Table 6).<sup>46</sup>

**Table 6. Constraints and opportunities for women’s income generation in agriculture based on interviews and focus groups**

Constraints	Opportunities
Low levels of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove minimum criteria for educational attainment for women farmers applying for small grants.</li> </ul>
Lack of access to information about subsidies and grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use public service announcements on television and social media, and collaborate with WCSOs in rural areas to raise awareness about opportunities.</li> </ul>
Insufficient soft skills for completing applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide grants to WCSOs to train, mentor and further the capacities of rural women to apply, assisting them with applications via a “learning by doing” approach.</li> </ul>
Poor access to continuing education and skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide grants for tailored training and mentoring, delivered by WCSOs and contracted agricultural experts.</li> <li>Reinstate subsidies for accessing education in agriculture, ensuring a gender balance among scholarship recipients.</li> </ul>
Limited property and landownership, affecting access to capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require all subsidy recipients of family agricultural enterprises to have jointly registered property.</li> <li>Broaden the affirmative measure for the joint registration of property, waiving taxes and fees for all women registering property.</li> <li>Continue training and monitoring notaries, ensuring that all women who should inherit are notified and counselled by officials on their right to inheritance during inheritance proceedings.</li> <li>Support WCSOs to continue assisting women to register their property, including legal aid to navigate difficult administrative procedures in property registration.</li> <li>Where possible, simplify and digitalize property registration procedures.</li> </ul>
Small area of properties hinders growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage farmers’ associations to collaborate in selecting what they grow and jointly selling their products to reach a better economy of scale.</li> </ul>
Lack of public transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure regular, daily public transportation is available to rural areas at least twice per day (mornings and evenings).</li> </ul>

<sup>46</sup> The research team used the feminist research method approach of ensuring that research participants had the power to engage in identifying what they consider suitable recommendations.

Constraints	Opportunities
Poor access to markets for products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the establishment of more collection points in rural areas.</li> <li>• Support awareness campaigns that counter social gender norms, showcasing successful women and the importance of their role in taking their products to market.</li> <li>• Create permanent market stands where rural farmers can sell their products in nearby urban areas and host regular market days or fairs.</li> <li>• Establish and promote digital marketplaces where farmers can promote their products and increase online sales.</li> <li>• Pilot establishing professional “open kitchens” in rural areas where women can bake traditional foods and receive support in management, sales and distribution.</li> <li>• Consider making agreements with local school lunch programmes for women’s collectives to prepare and supply food.</li> </ul>
Inability to provide co-pay for subsidies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review criteria to consider removing this obligation for microbusinesses and start-ups.</li> </ul>

## 5.10. Conclusion

Women and men continue to have different roles and responsibilities in agriculture and their families. Social structures created by society through socialization processes (for example, within families, schools and communities) contribute to these different roles and responsibilities for women and men. These differences often exacerbate inequalities among women and men. Women tend to have less access to and ownership over important assets including property, land, equipment and inputs, which are necessary for them to expand and have power over decisions made regarding their engagement in agricultural labour and business management. Women’s unequal ownership of property, combined with low educational levels and restrictive criteria, limit their access to subventions, grants and loans, as well as their life choices and opportunities. Since gender norms, roles and relations are socially constructed, institutions, organizations and individuals can work together to change these so that women and men have more equal opportunities in all areas of life. Addressing these inequalities in property ownership, decision-making, education, and access to financing, among other constraints, can all contribute to improved equality for both women and men.





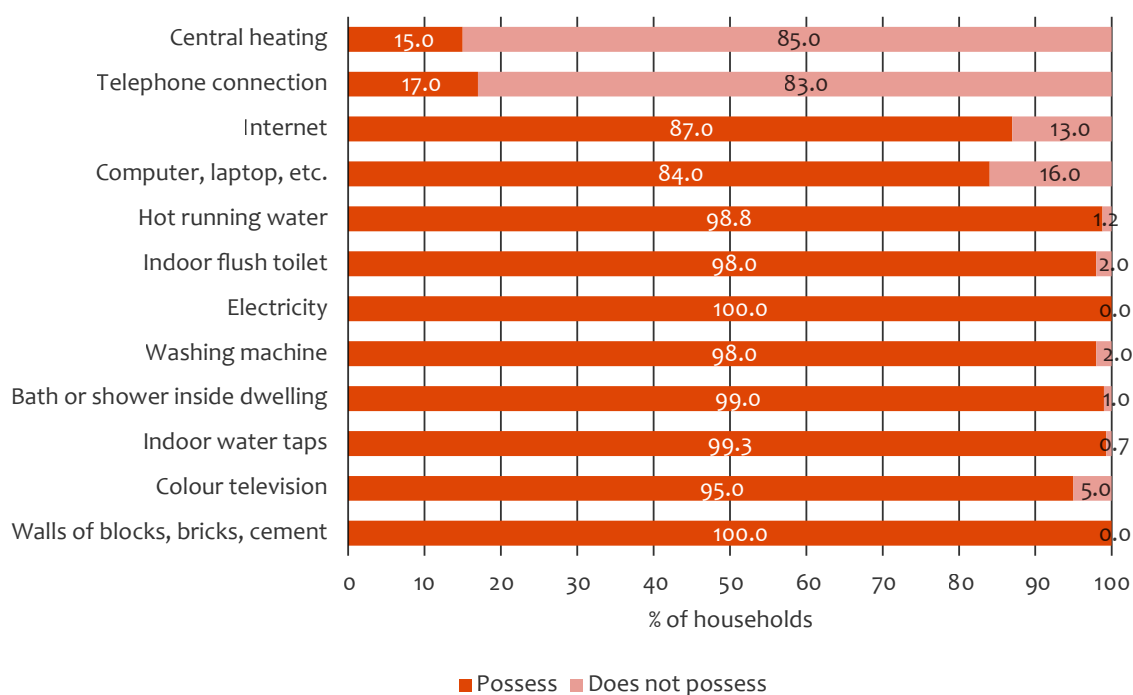
# 6. Gender and rural infrastructure

This chapter examines the general infrastructure available in rural areas, with the aim of identifying investments that would improve the quality of life in rural communities. While Kosovo lacks gender-disaggregated data, several rural infrastructure challenges impact on both women and men, posing barriers to agricultural and rural development, as well as to rural livelihoods in general. Women face added barriers and challenges because they spend more time carrying out care work.

## 6.1. Household equipment

Most households have equipment and tools considered to be labour-saving or time-saving, such as washing machines, indoor water taps, hot running water and dishwashers (see Figure 23; KAS, 2018c). Such tools and equipment enable women to complete more domestic chores in less time, given their social gender roles at home. This can provide women with more time to engage in other agricultural and economic activities.

**Figure 23. Percentage of households with selected durable goods**



**Source:** Adapted from KAS. 2018c. *Results of the Household Budget Survey 2017*. 5: Social Statistics. Pristina. <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/4169/results-of-the-household-budget-2017.pdf>

## 6.2. Energy

According to the KAS Annual Energy Balance in Kosovo 2021, the structure of primary energy consumed in Kosovo in 2021 consisted of coal, petroleum products, biomass, hydropower, wind power, solar power and biofuels (KAS, 2022e). Households consumed the most electricity, amounting to 52.1 percent of total consumption (ibid.).

The most consumed energy product in households was biomass, which constituted about 51 percent of total energy consumption in this sector, followed by electricity, which comprised 44 percent of consumption; coal made up 3.36 percent (ibid.). Meanwhile, specifically for heating, 70.3 percent of households use fuelwood, 18.8 percent use only electricity, 7.1 percent use coal, 4.02 percent use central heating or local heating, and 0.35 percent use alternative sources (KAS, 2018c).<sup>47</sup>

Electricity access is purportedly universal (World Bank, 2020c). However, energy cuts have continued to hinder economic activity before, during and after the war in Kosovo. Despite improvements since the war, electricity shortages in rural areas have increased since 2021 according to focus group participants. The negative effects of electricity cuts are immediate, posing additional challenges for agricultural activities, the participants said. Irregular electricity supply negatively affects production, resulting in the loss of products and profit.

“One of the main problems we have been facing this year is the lack of electricity supply. Two or three times more than 200 to 300 eggs have been ruined due to lack of electricity supply.”  
(Albanian man, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“Water shortages [are a challenge]. Fruits and vegetables need to be watered. We have a well that is 100 metres deep, but if we do not have electricity to pump the water, we are screwed.”  
(Albanian woman, Skënderaj/Srbica, focus group)

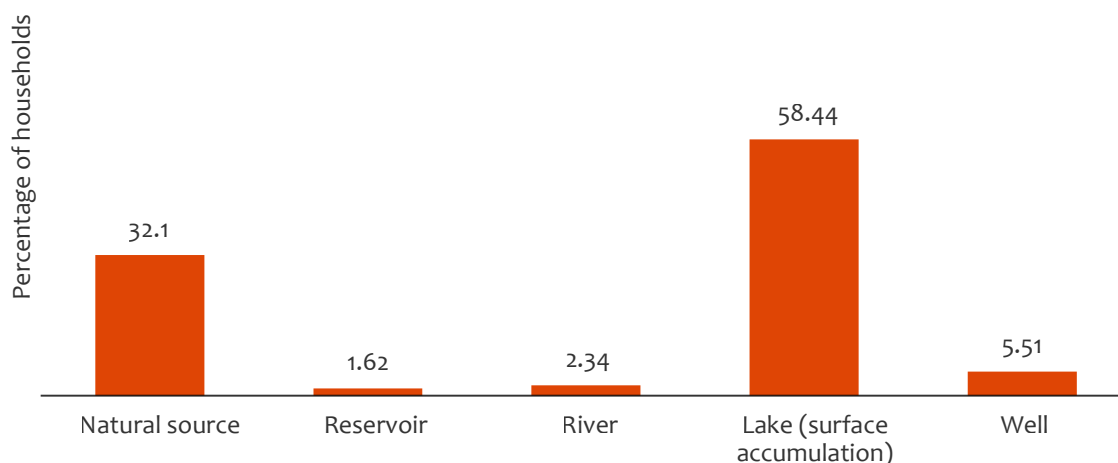
Following the worldwide energy crisis related to the war in Ukraine in 2022, Kosovo declared in August 2022 that it could no longer afford to import electricity (Davies, 2022). As a result, the energy distribution company, KEDS, introduced the rationing of electricity in August 2022, according to which all consumers received six hours of power at a time, followed by two-hour electricity cuts. Rationing later subsided, but at the time of writing, predictions suggested that it could worsen in winter when consumption increases.

## 6.3. Water and sanitation

Kosovo relies almost solely on its rivers for water. Increasing pollution in rivers coupled with poor wastewater treatment and disposal has had drastic adverse effects on water quality (World Bank, 2018). Water contamination, poor hygiene and water supply issues are estimated to cost Kosovo more than EUR 30 million annually. Kosovo lacks more accurate measures of the long-term public health and environmental consequences.

Almost 92 percent of the population has piped water in their dwellings, though 8.42 percent have no access to a water service network (KAS and UNICEF, 2020). Public companies provide 84.32 percent of water services and residents independently manage local area public networks in 7.26 percent of cases. In the 2018–2019 period, 86.31 percent of the population received water through a public system managed by Regional Water Companies, while 13.69 percent did not have access to public water supply (“Government of Kosovo” and KAS, 2020). Most households have basic drinking water (92 percent) and sanitation services (90 percent; KAS and UNICEF, 2020). In rural areas, 84 percent of the population has access to sanitation services, compared with 90 percent of urban residents. Overall, 87 percent of households have somewhat safely managed sanitation services (for example, a

<sup>47</sup> KWN similarly found that fuelwood is a primary heat source (Farnsworth, Goebbels and Ajeti, 2016, p. 102).

**Figure 24. Main sources of drinking water in rural and urban households**

**Source:** Adapted from KAS. 2018b. *Water Statistics 2017*. Series 2: Agriculture and Environment Statistics. Pristina.

sewer connection, removal for treatment). However, only 3 percent have safely managed sanitation services, that is, improved facilities that are not shared with other households and where excrement is disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite.

Although water is generally accessible, rural areas lacked a consistent supply. During focus groups and interviews, participants said that access to quality drinking water is one of the main issues they face. Women farmers in Skënderaj/Srbica said that water supply reductions can last at least a few hours per week or per day but can also last much longer; some villages receive water for only one hour per day. This makes it impossible for them to conduct basic household activities, let alone agricultural activities. Irregular supply has forced them to dig wells, which is an extra expense.

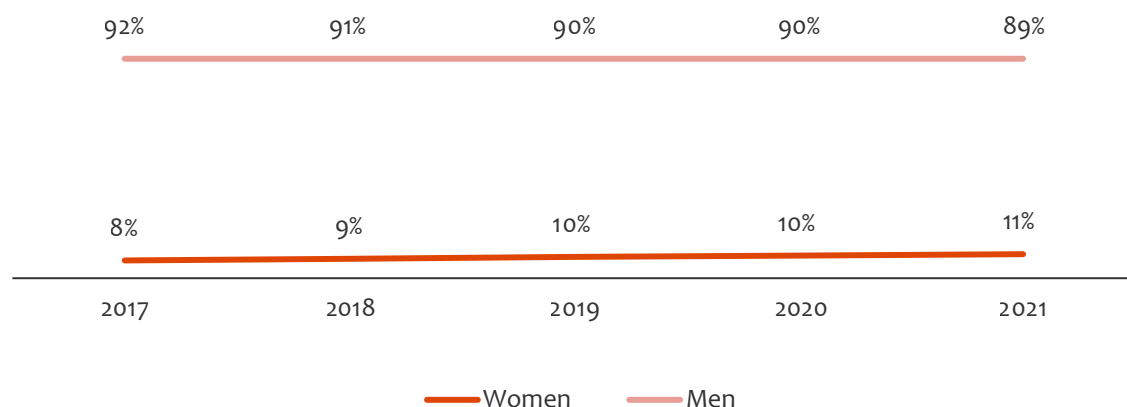
*“We are located in a lower part of the village and the water is not enough for our fish farm. We have struggled with water, but my son now has opened three water wells to maintain our farm, since we need to produce more, considering we sell to restaurants.”*  
(Albanian woman fish farmer, Istog/Istok, interview)

Thus inconsistent, clean water supply clearly poses a challenge for some farmers, including women, which hampers their economic activities, as well as their general well-being.

## 6.4. Roads and rural transportation

Officially, 97 percent of Kosovo’s roads are asphalt and only 3 percent are not (KAS, 2021g). However, the quality of roads in some rural areas is problematic. Beyond road quality, women farmers struggled to access transportation, and compared with men, substantially fewer women own cars (see Figure 25; KWN correspondence with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2022).

Thus, women tend to depend more on male relatives or public transportation than men. Kosovo lacks regular public transportation networks between several villages, towns and cities. Women with disabilities in rural areas face additional challenges because public transport rarely meets their specific needs. Focus group and interview participants reported that poor access to transportation limits women’s ability to sell and buy products, take orders, attend training, and engage in other activities. Women said that they depend on their husbands or other men in their families to make deliveries, go to markets, sell products and interact with institutions.

**Figure 25. Percentage of vehicles registered in women's and men's names**

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs, KWN correspondence, 2022.

“A lot of women cannot join the fairs and markets due to lack of transportation and due to the distance to the city.”

(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

Additionally, women said that they face social criticism if they travel on their own or if they drive a car.

“People judge me because I drive a car. These words affected my husband and family.”

(Albanian woman, Skënderaj/Srbica, focus group)

Lack of access to transportation thus presents a challenge for many rural women, hindering their ability to socialize, network with other farmers and engage in income-generating activities.

## 6.5. Agricultural extension and rural advisory services

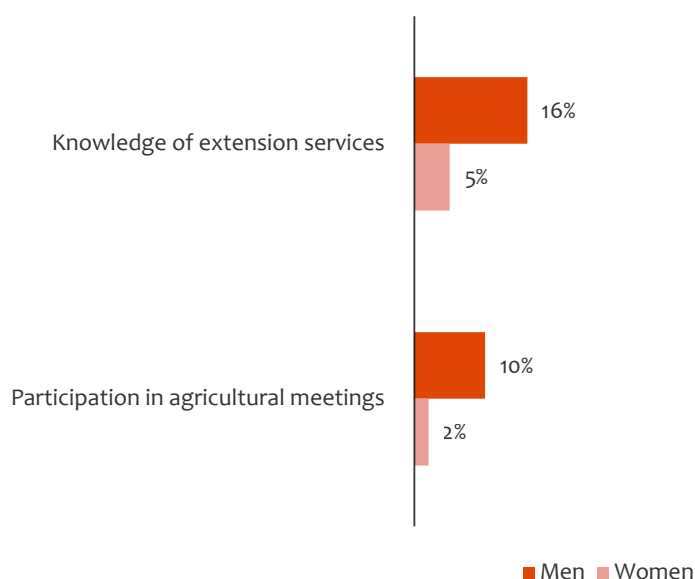
The MAFRD Advisory Service Department provides agricultural extension and rural advisory services in all 38 municipalities through Local Public Advisors. Advisors are part of the municipal level administration in Kosovo. Public advisory services are free and funded by the authorities.

A report assessing human capacity development needs in agricultural services found that with this organizational set-up, decision-makers engaged in extension service provision within ministries usually have little say over the selection of extensionists (who are paid by the municipality), the organization of their work, or the facilities they use for advisory work (FAO, 2011). The relative advantage of having advisors who are close to the field and its actors, as well as the apparently positive ratio of farmers to advisors, is quite often counteracted by a deficiency of funds for transport and several administrative tasks, which minimize the time available for advisory work (FAO, 2016). Although no more recent assessment exists, anecdotal data suggest that the situation has not improved. Continued challenges include poorly equipped, understaffed and underfunded services.

In addition to public services, private advisors also provide agricultural extension and rural advisory services. However, their services are limited as most farmers either cannot or will not pay for services unless they receive an immediate financial return (FAO, 2011).

As of May 2022, Kosovo had 445 licensed agricultural advisors, but only 38 worked in the public sector, including 7 women (18 percent) and 31 men (82 percent; KWN correspondence with MAFRD, 2022). Meanwhile, 407 licensed advisors worked in the private sector, which involved 133 women (33 percent) and 274 men (67 percent). While there are 13 advisory companies licensed by MAFRD in municipalities, only one is owned by a woman (ibid.).

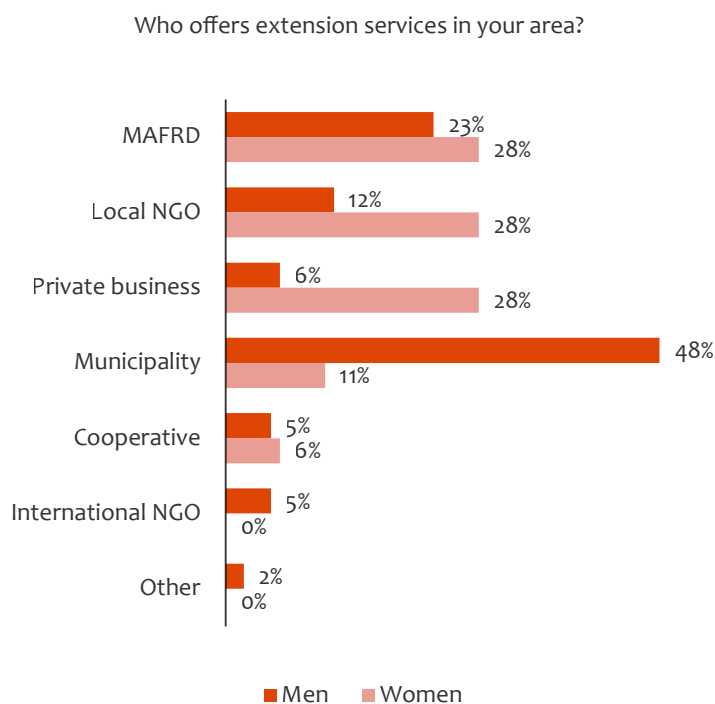
**Figure 26. Knowledge of and participation in agricultural advisory services, by gender**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

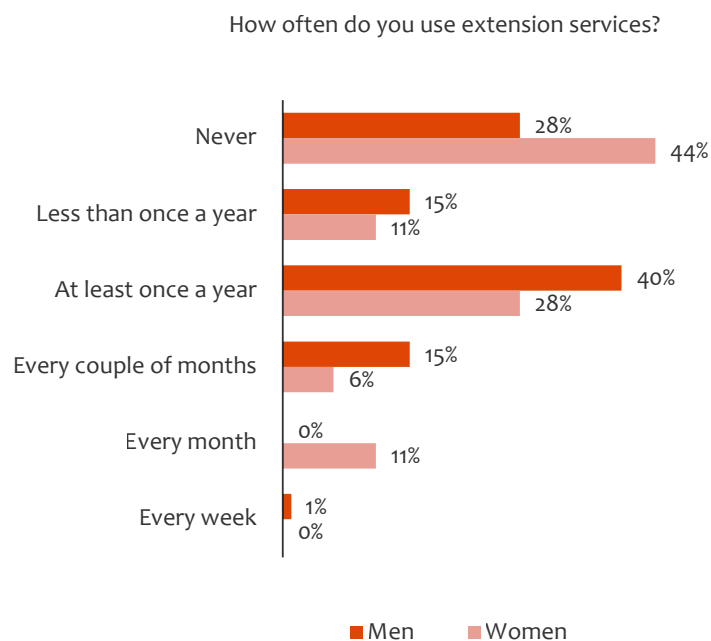
Only 5 percent of rural women and 16 percent of men surveyed through this assessment knew about the extension services offered in their area (see Figure 26). Only 2 percent of women and 10 percent of men participated in agricultural meetings. Of the total respondents in rural areas, 19 percent (18 percent of women and 20 percent of men) had participated in training and education at least once in the past year. They spent an average of four hours per week in training or education.

**Figure 27. Knowledge of types of extension service providers, by gender**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

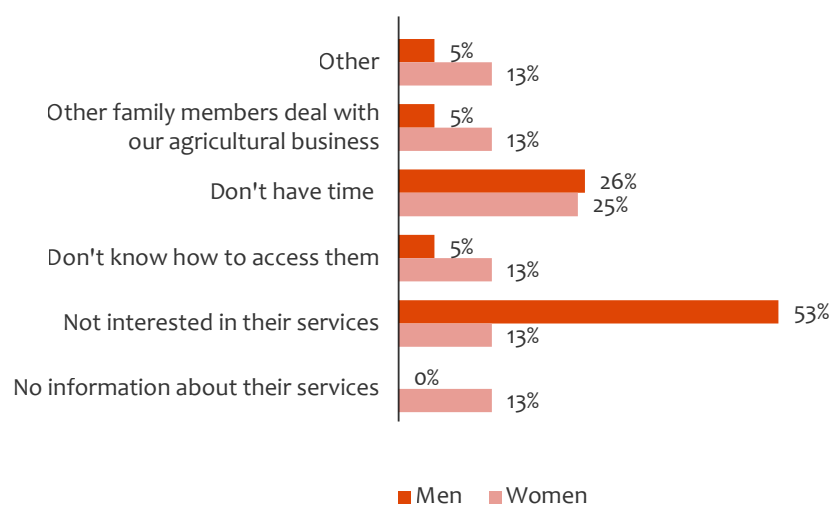
**Figure 28. Use of extension services, by gender**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Of the very few survey respondents who knew of extension services in their area, 28 percent of women and 23 percent of men said MAFRD offered these extension services (see Figure 27). Meanwhile, 11 percent of women and 48 percent of men said their municipality offered these services, suggesting that men know more about available municipal services than women. More women (28 percent) than men (23 percent) knew about services offered by local NGOs and private businesses (28 percent compared with 6 percent of men). Fewer, albeit a similar percentage of women and men, said cooperatives offer extension services. Only a few men (5 percent), and no women, knew of services provided by international organizations.

**Figure 29. Reasons for not using extension services**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

In accordance with the Law on Gender Equality, MAFRD and municipalities are required to collect gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries. However, they could not provide gender-disaggregated data on use of advisory services. Of the 7 percent of survey respondents who were engaged in agricultural activities and knew about extension services, women and men alike rarely used these services; and 44 percent of women and 28 percent of men stated that they never had used extension services (see Figure 28). Men's periodic usage of extension services was higher than women's usage. For men, 40 percent had used extension services at least once a year, compared with 28 percent of women. A further 15 percent of men used extension services every couple of months, compared with 6 percent of women.

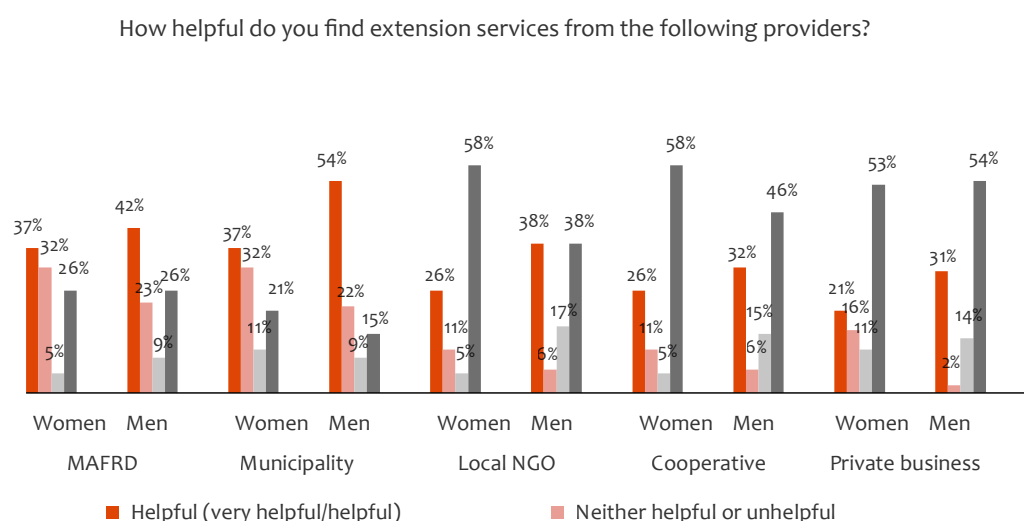
Although survey respondents are aware of these services and their providers, of those who stated that they never use extension services, approximately one in four said they did not have time. Substantially more men were disinterested (53 percent) in using such services than women (13 percent; see Figure 29). Moreover, women were less likely than men to have information about extension services or to know how to access them; and another reason more women (13 percent) than men (5 percent) did not use extension services was that other family members dealt with these issues.

The very few survey participants who had used extension services assessed the helpfulness of these services, based on different service providers (see Figure 30). Both men and women users seemed to have a higher level of satisfaction with services provided by institutions: 37 percent of women users and 54 percent of men users found municipal extension services helpful. At the same time, 37 percent of women and 42 percent of men considered MAFRD's extension services helpful. Moreover, 38 percent of women found extension services from local NGOs helpful, compared with 26 percent of men. Both women and men had lower levels of satisfaction with cooperatives and private businesses.

The rate of extension service users who refused to answer this question was noticeably high. One potential explanation is that they may not feel comfortable rating providers in case this jeopardizes their access to benefits and services in the future. Although responses were anonymous, they might have feared responding anyway. Another potential reason is that respondents said they knew about services, but then could not recall or rate them due to memory issues.

Some women interviewees had participated in training organized by municipalities, and sometimes they went to their municipalities for consultations. Yet, they tended not to be satisfied with the results. They said that services could have been improved and provided more often, including training. Women struggled to find information about training services, and some said they could not attend because of their husbands.

**Figure 30. Assessed helpfulness of extension services, by gender**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

“There are women who do not have any information. Some of them are not allowed by their husbands to have access.”  
(WCSO, interview)

Rural women may have easier access to training if they are led by women, rather than men, due to social and gender norms. For this, the imbalance in certified women and men advisers would need to be addressed.

A disconnect also seemed to exist between women farmers and municipal extension advisory officers regarding the extent to which rural women had access to municipal services. The advisory officials interviewed stated that they have daily contact with farmers, primarily related to monitoring subsidy applicants, recipients and the appropriate implementation of subsidies. Few undertook field visits to discuss farmers’ needs or the situation in rural economies. Officials said that they held at least monthly meetings or contact with farmers, though the COVID-19 pandemic had limited the number of meetings held in recent years. Additionally, farmers, especially women farmers, tended to state that they rarely had any contact with advisory officials. During interviews and focus groups, women reported that they lacked access to these municipal services. In contrast, municipal officials believed that women farmers had access to agricultural extension services. “For the past 5 years, a woman farmer has not contacted us and told us that she is not informed about extension services,” a municipal rural advisor said. This statement assumes that women would have the information available to know such services exist or know who to contact if they wanted such services, which the survey and interviews suggest is not the case.

One reason for this disconnect between women farmers and municipal officers is the insufficient outreach to farmers. Furthermore, municipal officers only advertise and provide extension services to registered farms. As evidenced in prior sections of this report, few women farmers are registered, and therefore they probably do not know about or have access to agricultural extension services.

## 6.6. Social assistance and pensions

Kosovo’s Social Assistance Scheme (SAS) targets poverty reduction through monthly monetary assistance to families; household income and assets are used to identify beneficiaries (World Bank, 2019a). To receive social assistance, all household members must meet the requirements in one of two categories: Category I beneficiaries include families where all members are dependent and no such dependent is employed; and Category II includes families with one member able to work, but who is unemployed, with at least one child under the age of five years, or an orphaned child under the age of 15 years in full-time care. According to Social Welfare Statistics (Q4, 2021), 25 895 families with 102 904 members received SAS benefits, and 2 460 families benefited from material support for families with children with special needs (KAS, 2022f, 2022g).<sup>48</sup> Men tend to collect these benefits as the officially registered heads of households, though most beneficiaries are women. This may affect the extent to which women family members have access to use of the aid (Morina and Farnsworth, 2015). Social assistance is terminated when someone in the family is employed, even when the household’s income remains below the poverty line.

Some SAS beneficiaries may refuse formal employment or be reluctant to accept short-term jobs in the formal labour market because they fear losing their social assistance.<sup>49</sup> For similar reasons, some small farmers do not register their businesses or their family members as employees, as the participants in interviews and focus groups confirmed. Furthermore, some employers said that they struggled to find employees willing to sign contracts because potential workers did not want to lose their social assistance.

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48 As documented in KAS and World Bank (2017), 8 percent of rural households received SAS, while the poverty incidence is 19 percent in rural areas.

49 As discussed, approximately one-third of women and men believed that people entitled to SAS frequently work informally so that they can continue receiving social assistance; approximately 10 percent of women and 12 percent of men said that this happens “very often”.



They [people] hesitate [to be formally employed] because they lose social assistance from the [authorities].”  
(WCSO, interview)

This could be a factor hindering women’s and men’s official labour force participation, including in agricultural activities, while contributing to the informal economy. The benefits of formal employment, including income levels, pension contributions and working conditions would have to be accessible and known to outweigh the benefits of social assistance.

In addition to social assistance, other social protection programmes provide financial assistance to people with disabilities, pensioners, veterans, disabled war veterans, families of martyrs, and survivors of sexual violence in war. Historically, women and men have not always benefited equally from these programmes (Morina and Farnsworth, 2015). Gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries by rural and urban areas were unavailable. Persons with disabilities also receive public financial support for personal assistants, though they are under-paid and under-qualified (Dushica and Farnsworth, 2022). As a result, people with disabilities and particularly women (who tend to be less likely to have personal assistants) may not have sufficient help to enable them to engage in economic and other activities outside their households. Moreover, women carry out a disproportionate share of the unpaid care work in assisting persons with disabilities, which also hinders their access to paid employment.

Due to the commonly informal and unregistered nature of their work on farms, rural women tend to be eligible only for the basic pension, but not to benefits from an Individual Savings Pension or Supplementary Employer Pension Funds.

## 6.7. Conclusion

In rural areas, basic physical infrastructure is available, however, energy cuts, irregular water supply, poor quality water, and inaccessible public transportation create challenges for women due to their domestic responsibilities and also limit opportunities for the expansion of agricultural activities. Due to socialized gender roles, women tend to face more barriers than men, particularly because they may not have drivers’ licences or access to vehicles, and because they may face social disapproval for travelling alone. They also have less time. These issues hinder women’s access to markets, but also their access to information, education, training, networking, interacting with relevant institutions, and other opportunities that could support their agricultural activities. In addition, very few men and even fewer women knew about and thus had benefited from rural advisory services.

Kosovo provides basic social assistance to impoverished households, but women may not benefit equally from this aid because men tend to be registered as the collectors of social assistance on behalf of their family members. Furthermore, social assistance benefits may deter some people from entering formal employment. Persons with disabilities receive basic financial assistance, but women may have less access to this assistance than men.



# 7. Gender and digitalization in agriculture and rural livelihoods

Digitalization and specifically ICTs are essential for successful and competitive agricultural and rural development (FAO, 2018). Information and communications technologies can transform how farmers and entrepreneurs operate in rural areas, improving access to knowledge, information, innovation, financial services and markets. Yet digitalization processes must ensure attention to the barriers and potentially different needs of diverse women and men (FAO, 2018, 2020). As mentioned earlier in Subsection 2.2.3., Kosovo is drafting several new laws, strategies and programmes related to digitalization,<sup>50</sup> which need to be informed by GEIA. This assessment seeks to support this process by providing crucial data and evidence-based recommendations.

Considering the dearth of data and information on agriculture and digitalization from a gender perspective, this chapter responds to three interrelated research questions: **to what extent do diverse rural women and men have knowledge of, access to, ownership of, and use time-saving and productive infrastructure and technologies, particularly ICTs; to what extent are they using digitalization in rural economies; and what challenges do rural women face in accessing time-saving, productive infrastructure, technologies and income generation opportunities, including those related to digitalization?** The findings draw upon the limited existing data, UNDP's recent Kosovo-wide survey on digitalization (2022b), and this gender assessment's survey, interviews and focus groups.

## 7.1. Knowledge related to digitalization

At present, educational opportunities in ICT are far from universal, with only 38 percent of school computers connected to the internet (48 percent of urban schools and 31 percent of rural schools; UNDP, 2022b). Only 31 percent of children use computers at school, and 26 percent of children attend schools with no computers. Interestingly, 17 percent of children attend schools with computers that go unused, and 9 percent attend schools where computers do not meet the needs of students. This paints a bleak picture regarding current efforts to ensure girls and boys have access to education in digital technology. Slowness to ensure universal education in digital technologies undermines efforts to introduce such technologies in the labour force and specifically within rural economies.

Rural adult women's limited educational levels present a challenge to digitalizing their current agricultural activities. During the gender assessment interviews, rural women reported lacking knowledge and skills on how to use phones, laptops and the internet. Approximately 30 percent of gender assessment-surveyed rural women and 28 percent of men consider that they do not have enough information about the digital services and technologies available. Furthermore, 23 percent of women and 20 percent of men state that they lack sufficient knowledge for using digital technology.

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<sup>50</sup> For example, these include a specific digitalization agenda, while other higher-level development, economic reform and education strategies all include steps towards furthering digitalization in Kosovo.

Among rural women, 23 percent “strongly disagree” and 18 percent “disagree” that their digital skills are “up-to-standard” with labour market expectations in their field of activity or interest (ibid.). Thus, in total, 41 percent of rural women do not believe they have the digital skills required by the labour market. In comparison, 18 percent of rural men “strongly disagree” and 15 percent “disagree”, totalling 33 percent of rural men.

More specifically, related to previously mentioned difficulties in applying for grants and subventions, women farmers faced challenges applying online because they lacked knowledge in using online forms, the gender assessment interviews found. Women emphasized the need for training to advance their digital skills.

## 7.2. Access, ownership and use of digital technologies

Generally, people in Kosovo are technologically well-connected. Approximately 98 percent of both women and men have mobile phones, and no significant differences exist between rural and urban areas (UNDP, 2022b). The average household has 3.44 smart phones (rural, 3.49, and urban, 3.36). Moreover, only 3.75 percent of rural men and 3.9 percent of rural women thought that any difference existed “between men/boys and women/girls in access to/use of digital devices” in their households (ibid.).

Internet use is high in both urban (99.5 percent) and rural areas (98.5 percent; ibid.). Most people access the internet via mobile phones, followed by desktop computers, laptops and tablets (KAS, 2021f). Similarly, 98 percent of both rural women and men use the internet (UNDP, 2022b). Of them, 94 percent of women and 96 percent of men primarily use a smart phone to connect. Only 21 percent of rural women and 18 percent of rural men have access to free public wireless networks compared with 41 percent of urban women and 40 percent of urban men, which may affect their autonomy and privacy in using the internet outside the household. Additionally, the use of public wireless networks presents security risks when users do not have the proper knowledge of steps needed to protect personal data.

While most people of Kosovo have access to smartphones and the internet, vulnerable groups can face difficulties. In one study, the survey participants perceived that certain groups are “vulnerable to being digitally excluded in the community” and in rural areas, these groups included individuals with disabilities (34 percent of respondents), low-income households (30 percent of respondents) and people aged 60 years and over (26 percent of respondents; UNDP, 2022b, no pagination). In addition, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, particularly women, may have less access to phones and the internet primarily due to economic hardship. Only 1.25 percent of Ashkali women in rural areas have a smart phone, compared with 7 percent in urban areas, while 5 percent of Roma women in urban areas had a smart phone (ibid.).

“[Communication] remains a problem due to lack of mobile phones, where often Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women have to use their husband’s or son’s mobile phone for communication, which is also caused by economic difficulties.”  
(WCSO, interview)

Among rural women, 67 percent have an email address, compared with 78 percent of rural men (ibid.). Of rural women, 87 percent use the internet for “communication that is mainly one to one”, compared with 85 percent of rural men; 79 percent of rural women and 77 percent of rural men use it for “social/communication to lots of people at once”; and 61 percent of rural women use it for “entertainment”, compared with 65 percent of rural men. Few women or men use the internet for professional purposes. Only 44 percent of rural women use the internet for “information seeking”, 14 percent for “looking for a job or career advice”, and 7 percent to “support their business”. Compared with women, men seemed to use social media more for work; and, as the gender assessment interviews suggest, men’s comparatively better opportunities as pre-existing members of networks and participants in income generation activities mean that men have established contacts whom they can now engage with online.

“Men have more access to social media and networks and are more active than women. Maybe it is because women lack contact with others. They do have access to phones, but men use ICT more.”  
(WCSO, interview)

The gender assessment focus groups and interviews also suggest that women and men working in rural economies usually communicate via social media, such as Facebook, Viber and WhatsApp, and rarely use email. For business networking, while they used social media to schedule meetings or exchange information related to their agricultural activities, they preferred physical meetings to online communication, considering physical interaction “more effective”. Women involved in agricultural activities, including WCSOs, preferred face-to-face meetings for networking and sharing information with other farmers, associations and agriculture officials.

Farmers tended to use traditional methods of production, observing during focus groups and interviews that they had outdated technology. Lack of modern equipment and technology contributes to longer working hours for the same amount of product. More advanced equipment could save them time, they said. Women faced added challenges due to unequal access to resources, support and property. Moreover, some women said it was impossible to use modern equipment for the production of traditional products, such as *ajvar*, *flija* and *pite*.

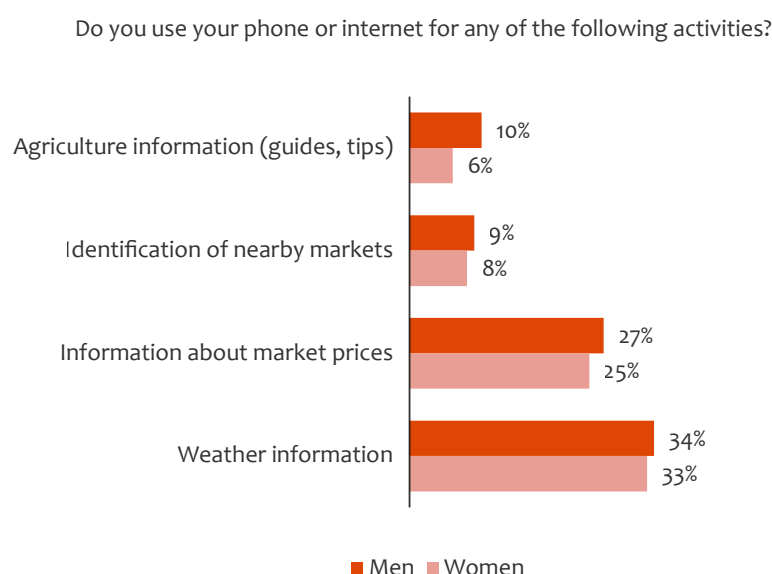
The lack of equipment, electronic devices, access to the internet in remote villages, and knowledge about how to use ICTs to increase profit, including for marketing, were among the main reasons why people in agriculture face challenges with digitalization, gender assessment interview respondents confirmed.

“Digitalization creates a problem for women who do not know how to access the internet, technology, and how to formulate projects.”  
(WCSO, interview)

The traditional ways women and men in agriculture have worked is also a challenge to digitalizing their businesses, because they are afraid of losing their customers and find it safer to use old methods.

Approximately one in three women and men respondents use ICTs for weather information and one in four use it for information about market prices (see Figure 31). Fewer people use technology for information about agriculture (10 percent of men and 6 percent of women) or to find nearby markets (9 percent of men and 8 percent of women). Minor differences existed among women and

**Figure 31. Use of phone or internet for agricultural activities, by gender**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

men. While women used social media for social communication, they rarely used it to advertise their products, preferring open-air markets and fairs, participants said during the focus groups and interviews. This is a potential lost opportunity. In 2021, 22.9 percent of Kosovo’s residents bought or ordered goods/services for private use from online retailers (KAS, 2021f). This suggests untapped potential for online marketing and sales.

Opportunities also exist for using ICTs to access public services that are necessary for agricultural activities. However, people tend not to prefer using the internet to access public services. Only 16 percent of rural women and 19 percent of rural men would want to access public services “through a website”, and 14 percent of rural women and 24 percent of rural men would use “a mobile application” (UNDP, 2022b). Instead, they preferred to “call” (46 percent of rural women and 39 percent of rural men) or “visit an office in person” (38 percent of rural women and 41 percent of rural men). Only 5 percent of rural women and 12 percent of men said that they would want online services for communication between their municipality and residents. To seek help for domestic or date-related violence, rural women would prefer to call the police (68 percent) or a telephone hotline (16 percent), rather than use online chat services (8 percent) or “online groups or communities—social services” (6 percent). Rural women’s and men’s discomfort and disinterest with accessing public services via the internet could contribute to their lack of access to such services, including those related to agricultural activities.

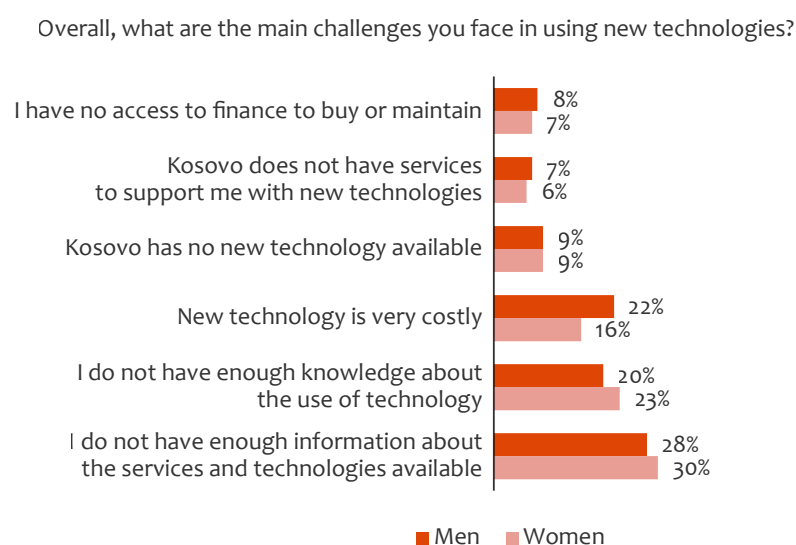
Intersecting vulnerabilities can affect the use of ICT for agricultural activities, including related to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age and educational level; older and potentially less educated rural women may be less inclined or able to use it, the gender assessment interviews suggested.

“We prefer face-to-face communication with women. It is almost impossible for our members to communicate via email because they lack information on how to use it. The situation is better for young Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian girls.”  
(WCSO, interview)

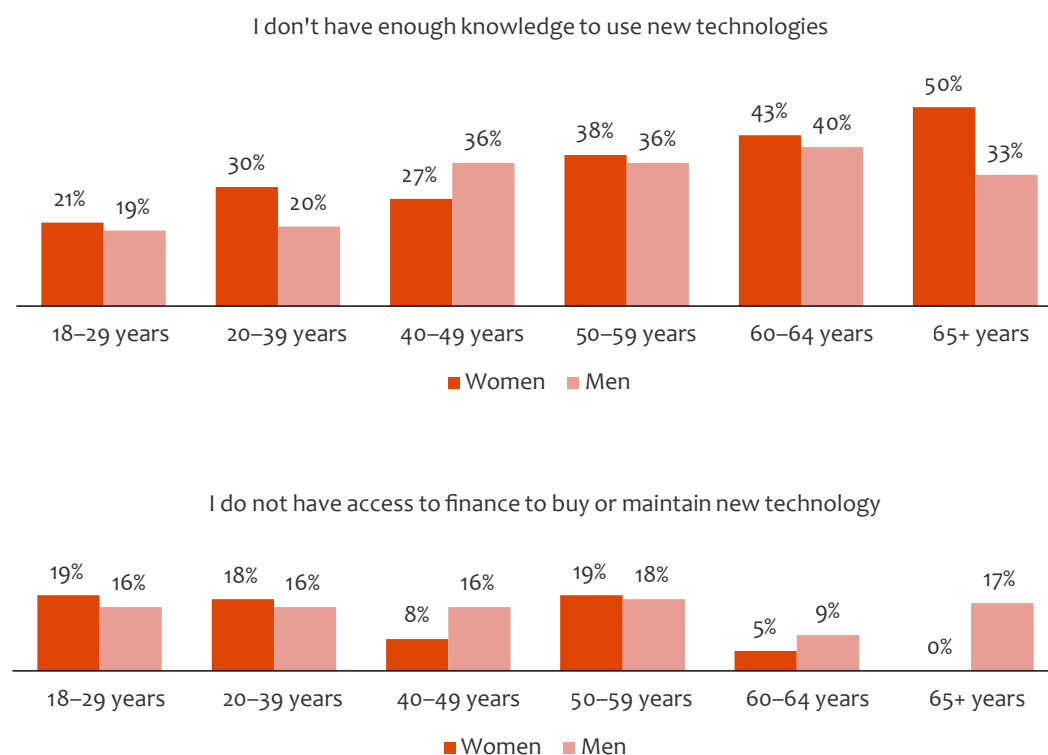
“Digitalization also means complication. There are cases when they [women] do not even know the technological language. Simpler and more understandable terms are needed for a farmer.”  
(WCSO, interview)

Thus, lack of knowledge and education may hinder ICT use for enhancing agricultural activities. Insufficient knowledge on how to use technology affected farmers’, particularly women farmers’,

**Figure 32. Challenges to using new technology, by gender**



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

**Figure 33. Knowledge and access to finance as barriers to using new technologies**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

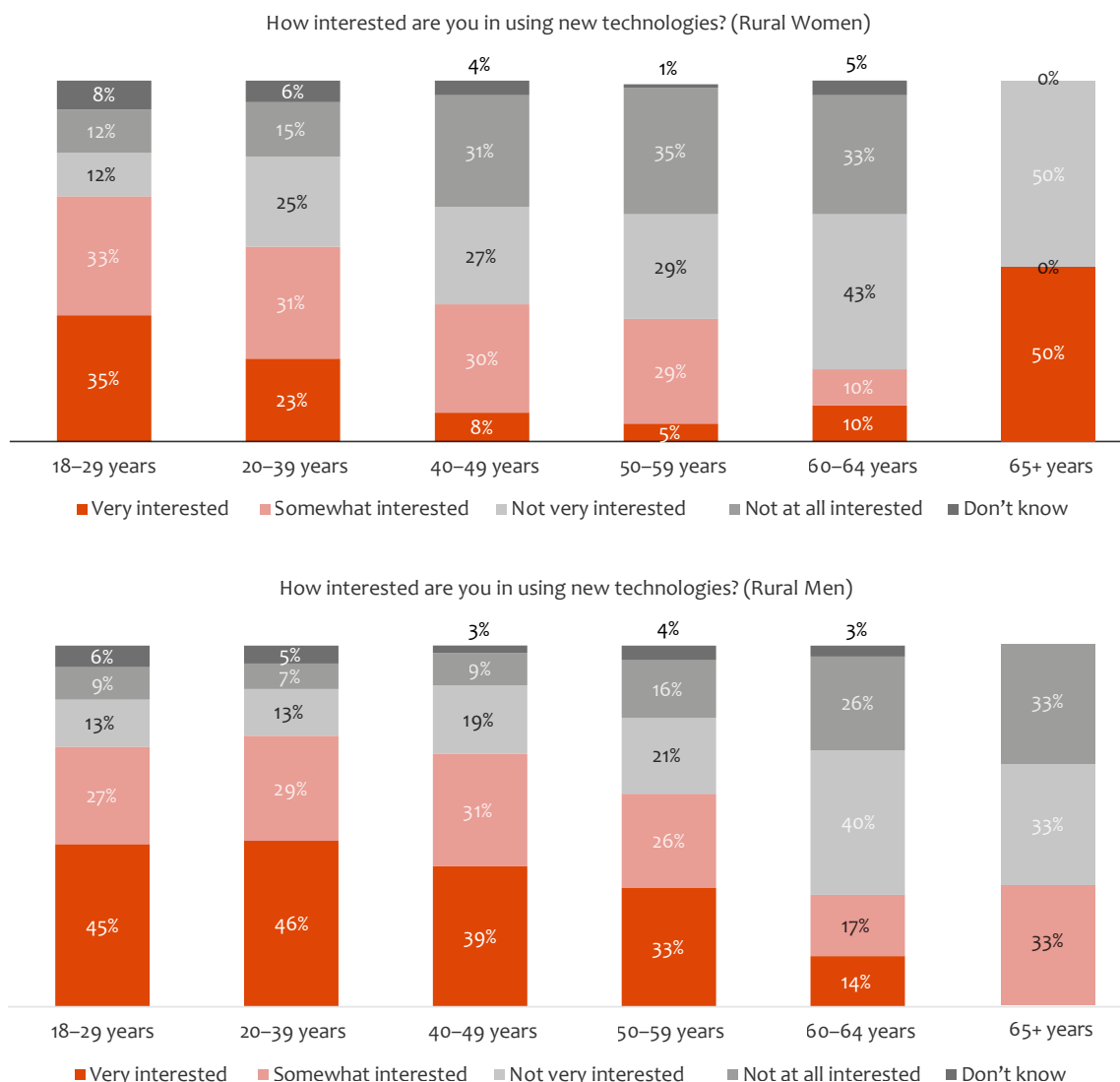
use of technology, such as for applying for subsidies online, interviews found. In fact, nearly a third of the gender assessment-surveyed rural women and men considered insufficient information the main challenge preventing them from using modern technologies (see Figure 32). Relatedly, one in five felt they had insufficient knowledge about technology, which prevented them from using it.

When considering age, no substantial difference seemed to exist across age groups regarding their knowledge of how to use new technologies. Survey participants under the age of 35 years were more likely to say they lacked finances for buying or maintaining technology, particularly young women (see Figure 33).

Moreover, the gender assessment interviews suggested that neither officials nor people involved in agriculture seemed to have a clear understanding of what digitalization means. Although both claimed that digitalization is very important, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, they lacked information and ideas about how digitalization can be used for businesses and for individual services. Interviewed officials tended to see digitalization solely as an “online web page platform” where people can find information about what institutions offer, such as open procurement processes and applications for grants or subsidies. They advised the gender assessment researchers to “check their web page” but could not provide further information about the digital services they offer. They also observed that digitalization is a long and complicated process. Yet, some officials did note that the digitalization process can provide faster, easier and more effective forms of communication with farmers. They said that digitalization could include updating their websites, expediting the download and upload procedures of relevant documentation, and training farmers on how to use smartphones, computers and different websites.

“Digitalization can be accelerated with training, having an office where someone can come from the ministry and train farmers how to use a computer or phone. [Also, the Ministry could] offer specific training for different sectors.”  
(Municipal official, interview)

Figure 34. Interest in learning new technology, by gender and age



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Farmers tended to associate digitalization with the possession and use of advanced technical equipment and agricultural machinery, towards increasing their capacities, production and quality.

*“They should help us with new technologies and equipment. Farmers need tractors, machinery.”*  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

*“We do not have electronic devices [and] do not have access to electronic digital equipment for agriculture because we do not have equipment that could be connected electronically and digitally. We do everything by hand instead of with equipment. We only have small hand-held devices.”*  
(Albanian man, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

Farmers tended not to think about digitalization in terms of improving their communication with the authorities.

The interviews also suggested that although farmers prefer face-to-face communication and sales, they also believe that modern equipment will help them save time and increase production. This presents opportunities for expanding knowledge and investing in the introduction of modern technology for agricultural activities.



Interestingly, some research participants with disabilities preferred communicating through software applications, as among the only ways that they can interact given their lack of access to transportation, interview respondents said.

**“Our only connection to persons with disabilities in rural areas is via cell phones and internet.”**  
(Woman with disabilities, interview)

People with disabilities’ knowledge and use of software applications and digital solutions could be an asset to their families in rural areas and an opportunity for their enhanced engagement in family businesses, such as researching new techniques and marketing products.

Both rural women (56 percent) and men (61 percent) have an interest in “embracing new technology solutions” (UNDP, 2022b). An additional 31 percent of rural men and 35 percent of rural women are “somewhat” interested in using new technology solutions. Similarly, 51 percent of rural women and 66 percent of rural men participants in this gender assessment’s survey showed some interest in using technology, including the internet, automation machinery, and/or robotics.

There is a clear difference in age groups in terms of willingness to learn and use new technologies. Younger gender assessment survey participants tended to be “very” or “somewhat interested” in learning to use new technologies. This declines significantly for those older than 50 years. Moreover, respondents aged 45 to 59 years were the most likely to decisively state that they are not interested at all in learning new technologies.

By gender, young women tended to show slightly less interest in learning to use new technologies than young men. The share of those who stated that they had little to no interest in learning about new technologies is spread across age groups, but it is more prevalent among older women and men, especially men older than 50 years (see Figure 34).

### 7.3. Conclusion

Rural women and men have equal and almost universal access to smart phones and the internet, which can support digitalization. However, few rural women and men use technology for agriculture. The main reason is that both women and men lack knowledge about how to use ICTs, including for public services, accessing subsidies, researching new methods, information on prices and weather, marketing products online, business networking, and expanding their agricultural activities. They also lack access to modern, time-saving technologies and equipment that could expand their production. Given rural women’s comparatively lower levels of education, limited time, poor access to finance, and social norms, they have even less access to using ICTs for economic activities. Women’s minimal participation in business-related networking predated digital transformations, so, unsurprisingly, few engage in online business networking. Rural women are particularly uncomfortable accessing essential public services through digital platforms. Yet, substantial interest exists among women and men in using modern technologies, particularly among persons under age 34 years. The main challenge for women seems to be accessing information about *how* to improve use of technology in agriculture.



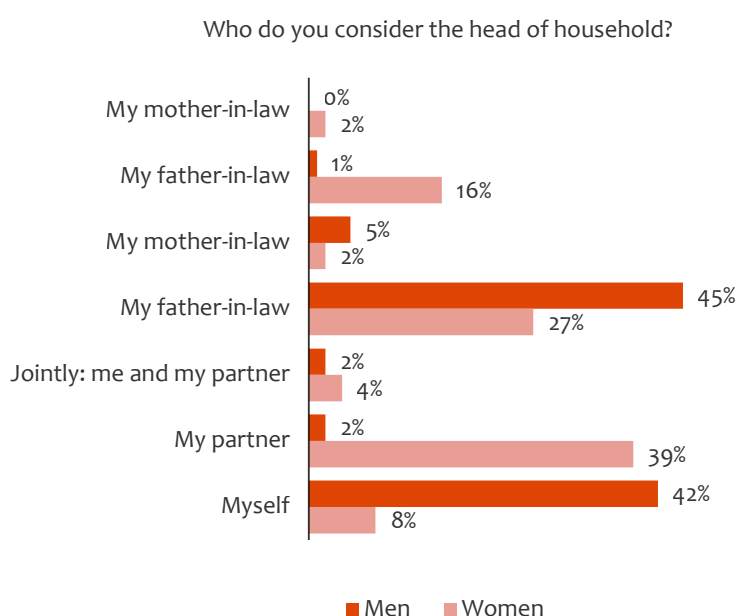
# 8. Gender and participation in local decision-making and networks

This chapter responds to the research question: **to what extent do rural women have access to political participation, support networks, leadership opportunities and life outside the home?** It examines women’s and men’s participation in decision-making within households, politics and civil society, including farmers’ associations. It also assesses women’s and men’s access to, knowledge about, and use of extension services. It draws on data from this gender assessment’s survey, focus groups and interviews.

## 8.1. Decision-making within the household

An important factor to consider is whether a household is led by women, men or both, and the extent to which the person in charge has power over decision-making within the family. In Kosovo, it tends to be automatically assumed that the head of the domestic unit is the oldest male (Siddiqui *et al.*, 2018), and this gender assessment confirms this assumption (see Figure 35). In rural families, 37 percent of respondents considered the head of household to be the father. Forty-two percent of male respondents stated that they themselves headed the household, whereas 39 percent of

**Figure 35. Perceptions of the head of household, by gender and family relationship**



Source: Authors’ own elaboration.

women respondents considered their husbands to be heads of their households. Thus, in just over 80 percent of households, men were considered the heads of households. A surprisingly low 3 percent of respondents said that they head the household together with their partner. The results were similar in both urban and rural areas among men and women considering themselves alone as heads of households. However, significantly more respondents reported that they jointly headed their households in urban areas (7 percent of women and 4 percent of men, compared with 4 percent of women and only 2 percent of men in rural areas).

Nevertheless, rural people seem not to think that men should take all decisions at home: 83 percent completely disagreed with the statement “the husband should have the final say in home decision-making” (Dobranja et al., 2018). Only 3 percent of women fully agreed, and approximately 14 percent agreed to some extent. Most rural respondents (79.6 percent) thought that both partners should make important decisions (ibid.). When disaggregated by gender, 23 percent of men thought men should make important decisions, while more than 83 percent of women thought important decisions should be made by both partners together (ibid.). Together these findings suggest that although men tend to be considered heads of households, more people and particularly more women think that decisions should be made together.

The gender assessment interviews and focus groups suggested that partners managing money together also seemed to be an increasing trend; both men and women said that they tend to consider small amounts of agricultural income as “family money”, usually used for family needs.

“Usually, agricultural families do not stand well economically, so the family uses the money together.”

(Woman fish farmer, Istog/Istok, interview)

“They decide and use the money together. Only if a woman is the head of the household or single mother, then she decides on her own.”

(WCSO, interview)

“Money goes to the family. Maybe the husband sells honey, but he brings the money to his wife, so they can use it for family use, and they use this money together.”

(WCSO, interview)

When women decide over money, this tends to occur in households led by women who are widowed, single mothers, or have husbands working abroad, the gender assessment findings suggested. For example, in Krushë e Vogël/Mala Krusa, women farmers emphasized that they manage their family income because they have been heads of households since the war.

“Most of the women here are heads of households, so they manage their money themselves.”

(WCSO, interview)

In contrast, some interview respondents said that men control the family’s money, referring to property inheritance and men controlling products sold at market.

“For those families who don’t let women take their products to market, I believe they [men] also take the money.”

(WCSO, interview)

People with disabilities who can generate income spend their money on family needs. During the interviews, they said that this was a way of proving that they are capable of working, earning and showing gratitude to their family members.

“Us, people with disabilities, when we have the chance to earn money, we want to give our income to the family, as a sign of gratitude for the dedication they have for us, but also to prove that we are capable.”

(Woman with disabilities, interview)

In contrast, interview participants said that rural LGBTQIA+ people tended to detach from their families, living independently as soon as they entered the labour market or found an opportunity to move to the nearest city. They wanted to escape social pressure and stigma.

“There are cases when at the end of the month they take the child’s salary and use it for the household, but in most cases when LGBTQIA+ people are employed and financially independent, they leave their families and start living independently. Especially in rural areas, where they have more difficult conditions and try to escape from there.”

(LGBTQIA+ activist, interview)

In summary, while men may be considered heads of household, decision-making including over income seems to be largely shared by women and men household members.

## 8.2. Participation in politics and decision-making in rural areas

As mentioned in Subsection 2.2.2., the Kosovo Law on Gender Equality requires equal participation of women and men at all levels of decision-making, defined as 50 percent participation of each gender (Assembly of Kosovo, 2015). However, this has not been achieved in practice as women remain underrepresented at all decision-making levels, as described in Section 2.5.<sup>51</sup> Although not aligned with Law on Gender Equality provisions, central and local electoral laws contain quotas for the underrepresented gender to hold at least 30 percent of seats in the Kosovo and municipal assemblies, respectively, and this has been implemented. At the same time, several other opportunities exist for women and men to engage in policymaking, budget planning and other decision-making processes.<sup>52</sup> These can provide opportunities for women and men to share their priorities with officials, including those related to agriculture, rural development and improving rural livelihoods in general.

The gender assessment found that women and men in rural areas are less politically active than those residing in urban areas. Half of the surveyed rural women said that they do not participate in any political activities, and an additional 41 percent said that questions about political participation are inapplicable to them, suggesting that they do not participate either.<sup>53</sup> In total, 91 percent of rural women said that they do not engage in political activities (see Figure 36). Similarly, 40 percent of men said that they never participate in political activities, and 39 percent considered this inapplicable, totalling 79 percent. Only 3 percent of all rural respondents said that they participated in political or union activities once per week up to a couple of times per week. For the few that did, rural women spent an average of three hours per week on these activities, while men spent four hours per week.

Additionally, survey participants were asked whether in the last year they had participated in “any community or municipal meetings related to agriculture, natural resources, municipal budget, or any other decisions to be made” in their communities. Only 3 percent of women and 12 percent of men said they had participated in this type of meeting.

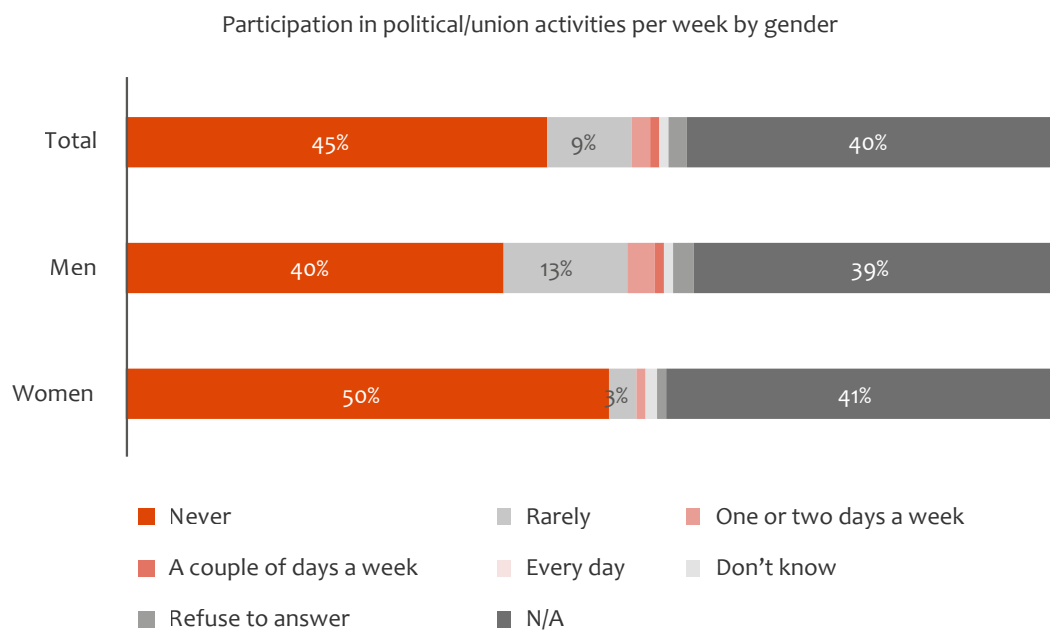
When asked why women do not participate, women focus group and interview participants mentioned disinterest, insufficient information, lack of transportation and household duties as barriers. They explained that although most rural women engage in agricultural activities in and around the household, men participate in meetings and activities outside the household, on behalf of their families. Gender stereotypes and patriarchal gender norms continue to shape social expectations that men are responsible in the public sphere and women are responsible for domestic duties, leaving women with little time to participate in public life.

<sup>51</sup> See Section 2.5. on “Gender equality in politics and decision-making”, and, for the relevant legal framework, see Section 2.2. “Legal and policy framework on gender equality and agriculture”.

<sup>52</sup> Notably, at the central level, public consultations are required on all new laws and policies through the online public consultation platform (<https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/consultationsList.php?OpenPage=0&ClosedPage=40>), and municipalities must hold public consultations regarding their annual budgets (“Government of Kosovo”, 2016b).

<sup>53</sup> The question asked about their participation in “political or union” activities, aligning it with the European Institute for Gender Equality question phrasing. However, other research has shown that union participation in Kosovo is very low as well (Banjska et al., 2022). As the question asked if they were engaged in either, it can therefore be determined that they were not engaged in political activities.

Figure 36. Participation in political or union activities per week, by gender



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

“There are women who are not allowed by their husbands to participate at public hearings.”  
(Albanian man, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“There are some rural women in decision-making positions; some work as school principals, in assemblies and directorates, but generally [other rural women] do not participate at all.”  
(GEO, interview)

“We invite them to public hearings, but they do not participate as much as they should. Yet, we aim to increase the number of women. It is an increasing trend, but not at a scale we want to see.”  
(GEO, interview)

“Women do not have any right to make decisions. Such situations are often in the family due to the mentality that prevails here, and this is further transferred to the institutions, and men are mostly asked when some important decisions are made.”  
(Serb woman, Zubin Potok, interview)

Education levels could also affect women’s ability to contribute to public hearings and decision-making processes. Interviews suggested that insufficient education affected Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women’s participation in particular, while Roma women also lacked knowledge and access to political processes in Kosovo.

Ethnic minority women have been particularly underrepresented in decision-making.<sup>54</sup> They struggled to participate in local politics, interview participants said. For example, Bosnian women in Prizren said that information was unavailable in the Bosnian language, hindering their participation. Serb men in Zubin Potok said that they are more attached to institutions in Serbia and are unfamiliar with the Kosovo system.

“[I] do not know whether the [authorities] support agriculture at all and how much money is allocated.”  
(Serb man, Zubin Potok, interview)

54 This is also observable in their underrepresentation in the Kosovo and municipal assemblies.

“We, as women, do not participate in decision-making regarding budget allocation and spending. We only find out through local media (TV) how much funds are allocated to agriculture. We do not participate and do not get any information in our mother tongue.”  
(Bosnian woman, Prizren, focus group)

Interviewed activists said that LGBTQIA+ persons were not engaged either:

“The only way for them to engage is if they do not come out as LGBTQIA+ and if they come to Prishtinë”.

LGBTQIA+ persons and persons with disabilities also said that they face social stigma as a barrier to political engagement.

Farmers and other stakeholders emphasized that even though women’s participation in decision-making processes, such as public hearings, is improving, more projects, training, information sessions, campaigns and policies should aim to increase women’s involvement in decision-making. They emphasized that face-to-face meetings with rural women are very important.

“Inform women about municipal decisions and get them involved in decision-making.”  
(Serb man, Mitrovicë e veriut/severna Mitrovica, focus group)

“They [NGOs, municipality, authorities] should organize more meetings with women.”  
(Albanian woman, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, focus group)

“Women should be motivated to stand for themselves, to be active and engage in whatever activity, including agricultural activities and decision-making.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“Women working in the municipality may have an impact, but not farmer women.”  
(WCSSO, interview)

### 8.3. Participation in civil society, including agricultural associations

Only 3 percent of surveyed rural women and 12 percent of rural men were members of a farmers’ or agricultural association, cooperative or union, and approximately 34 percent of survey respondents spent time volunteering or undertaking charitable activities. Specifically, only 30 percent of women in rural areas and 37 percent of men said that they spent time daily, weekly or rarely in volunteering or charitable activities. Of those who did, on average, women and men said that they spent two and three hours per week, respectively, and that this could involve engagement in civil society.

Focus group and interview participants said that some women did not join associations or networks due to the patriarchal attitudes that prevent them from attending, disinterest, the lack of associations near them, inaccessible transportation, insufficient information, and/or a lack of support from their husbands.

“There are women who are involved, but there are also women who cannot or are not involved because it is difficult in their villages. People can talk and say, “Where did she go?” [or] “Why did she go?”  
(WCSSO, interview)

Such social pressure may dissuade women from participating in CSOs or farmers’ associations. A successful strategy has involved establishing farmers’ associations led by and only involving women, which conservative communities can consider “safer” and more “honourable” for women to attend.

Meanwhile, rural Bosnian women again mentioned that they lacked information about such opportunities in their own language.

“Some women are not involved because of bad conditions, lack of education, lack of workshops and seminars in our language, lack of training, [poor] promotion, lack of experience exchange, lack of meeting of various farmers’ associations, lack of support for women farmers.”  
(Bosnian woman, Prizren, focus group)

Several women’s organizations exist in Kosovo that focus on supporting women in agriculture.<sup>55</sup> Additional WCSOs support women farmers in various ways, including by advocating for improved agricultural subsidies for women such as via affirmative measures, assisting women farmers with accessing extension services, providing training in various topics, giving financial support to women farmers for expanding their agricultural work and/or improving their livelihoods, and organizing meetings among women for psychological and social support.

## 8.4. Conclusion

Men are generally recognized as heads of households, though decision-making seems to be shared within families. Nevertheless, in many rural families, men continue to make the main decisions regarding major purchases and family businesses; men tend to hold the power, assets, information and access necessary for developing agricultural activities further. While both women and men show limited engagement in politics, women exhibit even lower levels of involvement due to constraints such as insufficient time, poor access, limited transport and social norms that discourage women’s active participation in local-level politics. Ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ persons face added barriers. Furthermore, language and geographic barriers also undermine women’s access.

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<sup>55</sup> For example, see a list at [https://womensnetwork.org/members-main/?municipalities=0&expertises=Agriculture&hide\\_expertise=0&hide\\_municipality=0&filter=Filter](https://womensnetwork.org/members-main/?municipalities=0&expertises=Agriculture&hide_expertise=0&hide_municipality=0&filter=Filter).



# 9. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural livelihoods

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on livelihoods and economies worldwide, including in Kosovo. This chapter responds to the research question: **how has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on agricultural production and income generation activities, as well as care work at the household level?**

## 9.1. Gender-responsiveness of measures by the authorities to address the COVID-19 pandemic

Prior to the official announcement of the first case of COVID-19 in 2020, the authorities closed schools, banned public gatherings and restricted incoming European flights (Tol, 2020). Starting on 13 March 2020, institutions introduced measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Initial measures included Kosovo-wide temporary restrictions, which affected all sectors, including the economy. Measures involved establishing quarantines in particular municipalities and prohibiting business activities except essential works. Restrictions on movement were imposed and online learning was started to help pupils and students continue learning at home (UNDP, 2020). Overall, the educational measures for online schooling did not consider gender, and no gender-disaggregated data were maintained. As Farnsworth *et al.* (2020, p. 65) note, “only by evaluating impact can it be deduced whether diverse girls and boys have had equal access”. Online learning placed an unequal burden on women to assist their children with learning at home, while also trying to balance other paid and unpaid household duties (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2020).

Immediately after the first cases, the authorities started providing financial assistance measures. To mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, on 30 March 2020, the authorities approved the Emergency Fiscal Package with 15 financial measures supporting residents and businesses to cope with restrictive measures, amounting to EUR 179 650 000 (*ibid.*). These measures were not informed by any gender analysis; thus, they did not include a gender perspective. One measure was “Grants and subsidies for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development to increase agricultural production”, amounting to EUR 5 million.

On 13 August 2020, the authorities approved the Plan for the Implementation of the Economic Recovery Package, totalling EUR 365 million, which aimed at long-term income growth (*ibid.*). The authorities sent the draft law and the plan to address the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic to parliament on 24 July 2020. However, the governing coalition parties failed to pass the law on the first seven attempts, and it was finally passed on 13 August 2020.

A EUR 30 million fund was launched to finance up to three monthly payments of EUR 300 for workers who lost their jobs between 29 February 2020 and 30 December 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The law also enabled pension savings contributors to withdraw 10 percent of their savings from the Kosovo Pension Savings Trust to boost consumption. The authorities' initial proposal did not contain a pledge to replace the voluntary savings withdrawals, but it refinanced all withdrawals by owners who have under EUR 9 999 in total pensions savings. Other measures contained in the law aimed to support business confidence. These included various tax incentives, public guarantees to enable businesses to access credit, and public subsidies (Mustafa and Berisha, 2021). This package did not mainstream a gender perspective either, because gender analysis did not inform it (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2020). However, Measure 10 of the plan involved EUR 2 million in financial support aimed at improving women's position in society and the economy (amounting to 0.55 percent of the plan's expenditures). According to AGE, Measure 10 aligned with goals of inclusive growth and preschool education outlined in the Kosovo Development Strategy, among other activities in the Kosovo Program for Gender Equality 2020–2024 (*ibid.*). Beneficiaries included private preschools and preschools registered as NGOs, licensed by MESTI, small businesses run by women, and CSOs working with minority groups.

Kosovo started the subsequent year, 2021, “under continued pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic and in expectation of a [change in administration] following the organization of early elections in February 2021” (World Bank, 2021b, p. 60). On 9 July 2021, the authorities approved a EUR 420 million Economic Revival Package. It prioritized improving social welfare and employment, including the following three measures targeting women (“Government of Kosovo”, 2021):

- Measure 1.3. – Women's employment support: targets women who have not been employed in the last three months, and those who are employed, the authorities will subsidize 50 percent of the wage for the first three months, up to a maximum of EUR 150 per month.
- Measure 2.1. – Subsidizing investment loans: states that businesses owned by women will also be supported if they obtain loans to increase their capacities, up to 20 percent, regardless of the sector they operate.
- Measure 3.5. – Payments for unemployed women after childbirth: all women who do not work will benefit from support at the minimum wage level for six consecutive months after childbirth.

Compared with the two previous packages, the Economic Revival Package contained better attention to gender differences and included more measures directly affecting women. Although the lists of beneficiaries reportedly were published, the amounts allocated to each beneficiary were not (GAP Institute, 2021), so a gender analysis for this assessment was not possible.

## 9.2. Gender and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, following the authorities' restrictions, some men and women lost their jobs or faced difficult working conditions. The United Nations Development Programme's third *Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment on COVID-19 in Kosovo* found that approximately 40 percent of persons employed in Kosovo were able to keep their jobs after the COVID-19 outbreak but were not working, while 22 percent reported working reduced hours of paid work (UNDP, 2020). Approximately one-fifth of respondents reported that they continued working the same hours as before the pandemic (22 percent). Eight percent of respondents lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most jobs were lost in the construction sector (23 percent) and the food and accommodation (hospitality) sector (14 percent). These are sectors in which about one-fifth of households' main income earners work. The shortened working hours and losses in household income are likely to have affected the agriculture sector as well, but no gender-disaggregated data specific to this sector could be found.

Historically, and particularly prior to this pandemic, employment has been traditional with a fixed workplace and few opportunities to work remotely or from home. On average, only 4 percent of workers claimed to work from home (Riinvest Institute, 2021). Inflexible working locations and hours can exacerbate challenges that women already face in seeking employment, given their socialized gender roles as caregivers. On the one hand, the COVID-19 pandemic forced many employers to provide more flexible working conditions for women who had to return home to care for children, given their gender roles and the lack of available child care. More women (42 percent) than men (19 percent) worked from home instead of their usual place of work during the outbreak (UN Women, 2020). On the other hand, 67 percent of women reported spending more time on unpaid work compared with 58 percent of men. The blurred boundaries between work and life, contributing to longer working hours and an inability to “unplug”, caused stress among women (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2020).

By March 2021, 11 percent of men and 10 percent of women reported losing their job, and more women felt challenged by “increased workloads and having to care for children and [older people] while working (54% each) ... compared to only around 40% of men” (Petрак and Jusufi, 2021, p. 7).

Pre-existing gender norms and power relations placed women in a particularly precarious economic position (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2020). Patriarchal gender roles meant that women had more caregiving responsibilities and thus faced a greater risk of losing their jobs. This trend disproportionately affected single mothers and women caring for persons with disabilities. The pandemic shed light on women’s previously hidden unpaid labour, which is essential to the functioning of a successful economy (*ibid.*).

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected food security. UN Women (2020) found that women in Kosovo faced more limitations than men when trying to access food (53 percent, compared with 46 percent) because of market closures and reduced opening hours of stores (UN Women, 2020). In May 2020, 53 percent of women and 46 percent of men experienced difficulties accessing food (*ibid.*).<sup>56</sup> Most respondents (96 percent) had not received any support from the local authorities, international organizations or NGOs since the pandemic began. Only 4 percent received support in the form of food from their local municipality (*ibid.*). Individuals in the municipalities of Gjakovë/Đakovica and Prizren reported having more difficulties accessing basic food supplies. By March 2021, 18 percent of men and 17 percent of women had reported difficulties accessing food products (Petрак and Jusufi, 2021). Still, only 3 percent received support from their municipality. People in the municipalities of Gjakovë/Đakovica (32 percent) and Gjilan/Gnjilane (34 percent) had the most difficulties accessing food, and in Prizren, although a lower amount, 14 percent still had difficulties accessing food. Food insecurity lessened as the pandemic continued. Even so, almost a year later, 18 percent of residents continued to face food insecurity or survived by changing their food purchasing habits, and the vast majority had received no support from the central and local authorities or international organizations (*ibid.*).

Compared with the previous year, research shows that in 2021 there were some increasingly positive trends, including that “the impact of the pandemic on household income [was] less severe and the number of respondents that reported issues with mental or psychological health due to the pandemic [had] decreased” (Petрак and Jusufi, 2021, p. 6). Nevertheless, in March 2021, job losses and businesses that had to stop their activities were still affected in the same ways as in November 2020 (World Bank, 2021a). The COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to an increase in gender-based violence, while simultaneously limiting access to public services due to the authorities’ closures and restrictions on movement (Farnsworth *et al.*, 2020).

<sup>56</sup> UNDP conducted three rapid assessments in May 2020, November 2020 and March 2021 respectively to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on households and businesses.

### 9.3. Gender and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural livelihoods

In interviews and focus groups, gender assessment participants reported that during the first months of the pandemic, the authorities' restrictions on movement made it difficult for farmers to continue their work on farms and find labour to help with the harvest. It was only when the authorities granted registered farmers special permission that they were able to return to work. Farmers faced difficulties with production as well as sales, due to travel restrictions that hampered the distribution of their products. Delays in the processes of producing, selling and buying agricultural goods contributed to a loss of products and profits. This negatively affected their household income.

“It has affected me so much; I could not even afford to take bees medicine and food. We had a lot of problems with bees. Bees could not develop properly and have failed to survive due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”  
(Albanian woman, Skënderaj/Srbica, focus group)

“Revenues were halved in that period since it was not possible to sell all products. In previous years, we exported abroad, but that was not possible during the pandemic. On the other hand, there was a deterioration of the product. When vegetables are harvested, they cannot last long if they are not sold quickly.”  
(Serb woman, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, focus group)

“The COVID-19 pandemic increased difficulties for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women. Women who worked cleaning houses or in beauty salons lost their jobs. Spending more time at home increased gender-based violence, and responsibilities to take care of their families.”  
(WCSO, interview)

As rural women had more responsibilities such as cleaning, cooking and caring for older relatives and children, they could not leave their homes, and this contributed to difficulties in following their everyday routines, including job loss. Interview respondents said that women were forced to close their businesses or work from home, which led to added difficulties in accessing the market and transportation. Farmers also said that the first months of the pandemic contributed to mental and physical health issues, due to a lack of knowledge about the virus, isolation and financial instability.

“It was stressful because we had invested too much and didn't know if it would be sold or not. It was a crisis.”  
(Albanian woman, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, focus group)

“We had health problems, me and my family. In addition, people got scared and did not buy milk or anything from me.”  
(Albanian woman, Skënderaj/Srbica, focus group)

When asked about their “survival strategies” for overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic, farmers mentioned the importance of remittances. They also adapted to the new circumstances by finding alternative methods, such as improved processing of food to ensure less product waste and using the internet more for taking orders, promoting their products and online sales.

“We processed food and made ajvar that could be stored for the winter.”  
(Serb woman, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, focus group)

“We started selling honey and medical tea through the internet.”  
(Albanian woman, Prishtinë/Priština, focus group)

“Food processors claimed that due to increased awareness on healthy food, there was a demand for domestic products that resulted in better placement in the market.”  
(Serb man, Zubin Potok, focus group)

## 9.4. Conclusion

The authorities responded quickly with economic recovery measures that sought to mediate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including some measures designed specifically for agricultural businesses and to support women. Overall, however, the measures were insufficiently informed by gender analysis, and the impact of these measures has not been assessed from a gender perspective. Simultaneously, the closure of care and education facilities substantially increased women's workload and placed them at greater risk of job loss or burnout, given their gender role as caregivers. Women also faced greater challenges accessing food and services than men. Agricultural production was affected, which contributed to economic insecurity for farmers. Nevertheless, amid this situation, some farmers found opportunities for trying new methods, including more use of ICTs. This experience could, therefore, inform future improvements to agricultural activities and business models.



# 10. Recommendations

The following recommendations have resulted from the findings and are organized for different stakeholders, including the authorities (divided by responsible institution), and development actors including FAO in Kosovo.

## 10.1. For the Office of the Prime Minister, including the Agency for Gender Equality, and the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers

- Prioritize that targets for achieving SDG 5 accurately reflect the issues impacting rural women. Mainstream gender throughout all Kosovo targets in the 2030 Agenda, especially those that relate to women and agriculture. For example, this could include Target 5.a.1 on “(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure”.
- Promote that all laws and policies are informed by GEIAs, required as part of the Regulatory Impact Assessment. To facilitate this, the Office of the Prime Minister, supported by AGE, should adopt secondary legislation clarifying ministries’ responsibilities, improving processes, and strengthening the role of AGE in monitoring and quality control.
- Ensure that the authorities’ response to different crises and emergencies does not exacerbate existing gender inequalities in agrifood systems. Undertake *ex post* gender impact analyses in consultation with AGE, WCSOs and gender experts. In this context, ensure use of gender-responsive budgeting. Monitor all expenditures, disaggregated by gender, and introduce affirmative measures where women and men have not benefited, based on their identified needs.
- Budget for increasing the availability and affordability of child care, and care of older people and persons with disabilities, particularly in rural areas. This is essential for transforming presently unpaid care work into paid work, engaging more women in the labour force, and enabling women to have time to engage more in economic activities. Consider supporting alternative models of child care in rural areas (for example, community-based and shared care).
- Expand the current affirmative measure on the Joint Registration of Property to remove all taxes and fees for all women registering property, including single women. Review property registration procedures to simplify them insofar as possible. Target rural areas with awareness campaigns on the benefits of joint registration of property towards transforming gender norms.
- Conduct an *ex post* GEIA and feasibility study of the Kosovo social protection system, considering the feasibility of recognizing women’s unpaid labour in agrifood systems officially as contributory labour that will qualify women for higher pensions, as per commitments in the Law on Gender Equality.
- Consider health insurance, temporary relief from income taxes, and subsidies to support transitioning from informal to formal employment.

- Train more labour inspectors, particularly women, in inspecting gender equality issues at work including in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector.
- Ensure that Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) consider gender differences among women and men, and incorporate affirmative measures to reach the most vulnerable women, especially women in rural areas, thereby increasing their employment. To achieve this:
  - ◆ Collect and publish data on participants and those completing ALMMs disaggregated by gender to enable monitoring and evaluation of these measures through a gender lens.
  - ◆ Assess the state of gender-responsive social protection measures and promote social support through child and older persons care support and upskilling.
- Facilitate access to capital through the Kosovo Credit Guarantee Fund, and ensure criteria are achievable by women and men. Improve cooperation between individual banks and the fund to ensure affirmative measures and recommendations for support to reach women and other vulnerable groups most in need, and consider providing banks with criteria defining size and risk to enable more small businesses to apply.
- Allocate sufficient budget to the Kosovo Institute for Public Administration (KIPA) to train public servants on gender equality and gender-responsive budgeting. Ensure that line ministries assign relevant officials to undertake this training, including those working in economic development and agriculture. Improve the availability of health care for persons in rural areas, including by activating the Health Insurance Fund.
- Transform socialized gender roles and assumptions regarding women's and men's responsibilities through official awareness campaigns, creating an enabling environment for more women to enter paid labour and men to share unpaid household labour.
- Distribute funds to WCSOs to further support rural women's engagement in decision-making processes and economic activities through door-to-door outreach, training, information sessions, campaigns and policies.

### 10.2. For the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development

- Ensure GEIAs are conducted for and inform all draft laws, policies, strategies and programmes on agriculture and rural development. Include WCSOs with gender expertise in working groups drafting laws and policies and in public consultation processes to review and comment on draft laws and strategies from a gender perspective.
- Increase women's participation in decision-making at MAFRD, in municipal directorates, and via public consultations in planning agricultural and rural development policies, towards better meeting diverse women's and men's needs. Facilitate implementation of the Law on Gender Equality to promote equal participation in decision-making.
- Utilize gender-responsive budgeting during the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of annual budgets.
- Improve the quality and inclusive outreach of rural advisory and extension services:
  - ◆ Use affirmative measures to increase the number and percentage of women providing advisory services, so that women farmers are more comfortable and able to participate in receiving such services.
  - ◆ Better promote advisory services, ensuring that rural women have access to this information.



- ◆ Raise municipal advisory officials' awareness regarding issues women face in accessing subsidies and extension services, train them on how to better reach rural women, and mandate regular sex-disaggregated data collection in their terms of references.
- ◆ Introduce into municipal advisory services training and follow-up mentoring on digital literacy, skills and ICT use for agricultural activities.
- Review and revise criteria for agricultural grants and subsidies:
  - ◆ Decrease the minimum criteria for investing in beehives, allowing women beekeepers to qualify for subsidies for expanding their beekeeping operations and businesses.
  - ◆ Alongside giving women-owned agricultural enterprises additional points, install other affirmative measures such as additional points for businesses that have a gender-balanced management and workforce, flexible working hours, and other family-friendly policies, towards women's increased participation in these businesses.
  - ◆ Require the joint registration of property for subsidy recipients from family farms.
  - ◆ Mandate that all businesses receiving subsidies have employees appropriately registered, pay tax and pension contributions, and review implementation of this through impromptu inspections.
- Promote investment in sectors where women already work and their engagement is culturally accepted, as well as in those that can employ low educated, middle-age and older women, who face added challenges in securing employment due to educational levels, experience, location, and age-based discrimination. To achieve this:
  - ◆ Allocate resources to horticulture, dairy and livestock rearing as preferred sectors where Kosovo can offer added value, and where both women and men are engaged in the value chain.
  - ◆ Invest in sustainable harvesting, processing and marketing of NWFPs, plants and herbs as promising activities that are convenient for women and raise awareness about such opportunities; improve knowledge on sustainable practices; support women to engage in formalized labour; and collaborate with existing producers to assist them in recruiting labourers.
  - ◆ Investigate opportunities to expand the production of speciality products such as *ajvar*, in line with EU standards for export.
  - ◆ Promote activities related to rural and agrotourism, such as handicrafts and the processing and packaging of agricultural products for sale to tourists.
- Facilitate online marketing and sale of products produced by women in line with EU standards.
- Support the establishment and operation of collection points in the subsectors where women are involved and register women as temporary or seasonal employees, paying their pensions and taxes.
- Improve the distribution and promotion of information on support measures and application processes, ensuring such information reaches diverse women in all local languages.
- Actively support outreach to raise awareness about modern technologies available, their benefits, and how to use them. Ensure targeting of rural women and services to address women's historically disproportionate access to services and educational constraints.
- Improve public knowledge and enforce regulation of pesticide use, particularly during the pollination season. Measures should consider the knowledge, needs and priorities of rural women and men.
- Promote stories of successful women in agriculture, thereby encouraging and inspiring more women.
- Organize an awareness campaign, encouraging the transfer of property to women and girls and the opening of businesses in women's names, and highlighting the importance of women's participation in agriculture and rural businesses. Collaborate closely with WCSOs, learning from their experiences with previous campaigns, including the use of door-to-door outreach efforts.

### 10.3. For the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation

- Actively work to institutionalize more publicly available child care and preschool programmes, including afterschool programmes, in rural areas.
- Introduce into education at all levels curricula towards transforming socialized gender roles that may prevent women from taking leadership roles within their families and communities, or from entering academic disciplines in agriculture, ICT and economics, and contextualize curricula with relevance to rural areas and agriculture.
- Install academic and career counselling and annual job fairs in all schools, particularly in rural areas, that inform young women about career opportunities in agriculture, the economy and ICT.
- Urgently invest in achieving universal access to computers and the internet within all Kosovo schools and ensure that digital skills are part of the curricula.
- Disaggregate all education statistics by gender, age, ethnicity and rural/urban location and publish these regularly, as per the Law on Gender Equality.

### 10.4. For the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure

- Ensure that climate change policy, including climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies, are gender responsive. To support gender mainstreaming, conduct the required GEIA (*ex ante* and *ex post*), mapping the potential vulnerabilities of rural women and men to climate change and involving women and men in planning adaptation approaches, in close cooperation with MAFRD.
- Improve the regular availability of affordable public transport between villages, towns and cities at least twice daily, which can support women in accessing education, information, advisory and other services, political decision-making processes, CSO activities, union organizing, markets, business networks and health care.
- Invest in the environmental protection of Kosovo's waterways and improve sanitation treatment in rural areas, decreasing pollution of the water on which people and their agricultural activities depend.
- Lead online and televised awareness campaigns to discourage the improper disposal of waste in Kosovo's waterways, highlighting the adverse effects on farmers and food security, towards preventing pollution.

### 10.5. For the Ministry of Public Administration

- Continue strengthening online public services, making them user-friendly for women and men with lower educational levels. Ensure their availability in all official languages.
- Instigate televised and online campaigns that advertise new online public services and how to use them, and emphasize how they will make women's and men's lives easier and cost less than face-to-face communication.

## 10.6. For the Kosovo Agency of Statistics

- Ensure that the next agricultural census includes a gender perspective in the planning, implementation and analysis stages. Consult AGE and knowledgeable WCSOs with expertise that can support this.
- Include the collection of gender-disaggregated data in the regular Agricultural Holding Survey.
- Require that all ministries and municipalities regularly collect and submit gender-disaggregated data, including data by ethnicity, age and rural/urban location. This should incorporate institutional data on beneficiaries of expenditures, disaggregated by gender. Support ministries in improving the quality of these data, together with AGE. Publish this data on a periodic basis.
- Regularly collect and analyse gender-disaggregated data by age, rural/urban location and ethnicity in all sector-specific publications and on the KAS website, enabling better gender analysis to inform policymaking.

## 10.7. For Municipalities

- Enhance information-sharing about draft policies and annual budgets, actively encouraging diverse women and men to contribute to the drafting of these policies through public consultation. Use social media, television and community meetings to inform inhabitants about these processes and encourage their engagement.
- Further develop the enabling environment for rural women's economic participation by ensuring that municipal coordination mechanisms provide access to rehabilitation and reintegration services for women who have suffered gender-based violence, and devising and implementing comprehensive case management plans.

### 10.7.1. For Municipal Directorates of Agriculture

- Undertake regular visits to households involved in agricultural activities and prioritize separate conversations with both women and men regarding their needs, supporting the development of their agricultural activities. Actively seek to engage more women as advisory service providers, towards facilitating communication with rural women.
- Based on gender assessments, develop tailored municipal plans and programmes for furthering the capacities of rural women and men. This may include, but not be limited to, available extension services, accessing information about agricultural development opportunities, obtaining resources, developing business plans, and using ICTs for information, research, marketing and sales, for example.
- Use affirmative measures to increase women's participation in agricultural and economic development activities, including measures to reach women farmers with information about advisory services and to address the barriers they face in benefiting from these services.
- For micro-grants, pilot removing the minimum criteria related to property ownership and co-pay to provide improved access to vulnerable, rural women who do not meet the criteria but have opportunities for small business development.
- Conduct further outreach to engage women and men farmers in local decision-making related to agricultural support, economic development policies, and municipal budget priorities, such as through advertising opportunities to engage in these processes online and organizing public meetings to consult farmers on development priorities.
- Better promote advisory services, ensuring rural women have access to this information on the municipal level.

- Raise municipal advisory officials' awareness regarding issues women face in accessing subsidies and extension services, and train them on how to better reach rural women, together with WCSOs.
- Given human resources, time, transportation and other resource shortages among municipal rural advisory service providers, initiate more outreach through mobile phones and other ICT software.

## 10.8. For development actors, including FAO

- Provide technical expertise and support to enable successful implementation of the aforementioned recommendations, particularly for MAFRD and municipal directorates of agriculture. Support MAFRD to identify long-term solutions for such programmes, so that they become sustainable.
- Coordinate with and encourage cooperation among AGE, GEOs in MAFRD, and GEOs in municipalities. Through technical expertise and mentoring, support their increased engagement in policymaking and programmes. Include in all programming mentoring for GEOs in policymaking, *ex ante* and *ex post* GEIA, and gender mainstreaming to hone their skills related to integrating a gender perspective in agriculture and economic development policies and programmes at all levels.
- Ensure the required GEIAs are conducted to inform all future laws and policies that development actors, including FAO, support and participate in drafting.
- Through technical support and mentoring, strengthen the capacities of MAFRD and municipal authorities to fulfil their responsibilities for gender analysis and using such analysis to mainstream gender in policies and programmes.
- Support gender analyses of specific subsectors for which information is lacking, including aquaculture, beekeeping and agrotourism.
- Raise awareness on the importance of conducting a gender-responsive agricultural holding survey and agricultural census, and provide technical support to KAS on how to design and implement such a census in close consultation with WCSOs and gender experts.
- Support the formulation and implementation of a gender-responsive e-agriculture strategy and its action plan and provide technical assistance to incorporate such concepts into existing policies on rural and agricultural development.
- Ensure that attention to gender equality is meaningfully incorporated into all FAO and other development programming in Kosovo. Continue measures such as performance indicators, adequate monitoring of women's engagement, and additional support to new gender-transformative interventions, as per the FAO Policy on Gender Equality 2020–2030 and UN-SWAP 2.0 indicators. To achieve this:
  - ◆ Consider and plan strategically to address key constraints to women's participation when implementing projects in rural areas (for example, limited time, poor access to transport, gender norms and power relations).
  - ◆ Increase support for women farmers and women with rural-based businesses, including reviewing criteria and processes to better meet their needs, and improving the advertisement of such programmes with diverse communication methods and in various languages. Consider working with WCSOs to share information about opportunities to rural and vulnerable groups.
  - ◆ Promote opportunities for women to engage in agricultural cooperatives, towards addressing issues of small farms and economies of scale.
- Support the authorities in ensuring that all ALMMs are based on gender analysis and that clear, affirmative measures are in place to support rural and vulnerable women in particular. In monitoring and evaluation, ensure that all ALMM data are disaggregated by gender.

- Provide intersectional gender training to institutions responsible for agriculture and rural development, together with AGE and using the KIPA curricula. Include training and mentoring to improve the production and regular, timely publication of gender statistics for agriculture and rural development. This is in line with Law on Gender Equality requirements.
- Support investment in technology that makes agricultural work easier and less physically demanding, including through digitalization.
- Promote investment in making private and public preschools and child care facilities more available, particularly in rural areas.
- Use opportunities to profile and widely publicize women's contributions to agriculture and the added value of women's participation in rural development programmes, towards transforming gender norms.
- Strongly encourage the authorities, particularly the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, and municipalities, to make public transportation regularly available at least twice daily in rural areas throughout Kosovo.
- Provide support for enabling rural women's access to transportation, including attending driving schools and use of vehicles for transporting products.
- Continue supporting qualified WCSOs to:
  - ◆ Enable rural women's engagement in decision-making processes through door-to-door outreach, training, information sessions, campaigns and policies.
  - ◆ Assist women farmers with subsidy applications, business plans, and furthering their soft skills to do so independently.
  - ◆ Provide legal aid and empower women to register their properties and claim their inheritance, including to navigate challenging and expensive registration processes.
  - ◆ Conduct gender analyses and use such evidence to inform policymaking at local and central levels.
- Provide affirmative measures in the scoring of applications for women-owned businesses, as well as businesses with a gender balance in management and/or among employees, and closely monitor the implementation of requirements.
- Support the establishment of fish and other product collection points to ease rural women's access to markets.
- Pilot engaging young women and women with disabilities in agricultural programmes, given their comparative advantage of knowledge, access and use of ICTs for communication and networking, towards enhancing their engagement within family businesses, such as for researching developments, information sharing, networking and marketing products online.
- Support strategically planned awareness campaigns that transform gender norms within households and society, creating an enabling environment for women's enhanced participation in decision-making and economic activities.
- Raise awareness about eco-friendly practices, health, environment and food waste issues, and support schools and local CSOs in creating programmes that address these issues.
- Promote this assessment's findings and recommendations to public officials, discussing ways to implement the recommendations.



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# Appendix 1. Methodology

This appendix contains additional information related to the gender assessment's research design and methodology. The full methodology, including survey instruments in all languages and examples of interview guides, are available upon request from KWN.

## Demographic and descriptive survey data

This section presents demographic and other descriptive information about the gender assessment survey sample.

**Table A1.1 Respondents, by region**

Region	Total	Women	Men
Prishtinë/Priština	22.40%	20.75%	24.02%
Mitrovicë/Mitrovica	17.33%	21.50%	13.24%
Pejë/Peć	9.03%	8.50%	9.56%
Prizren	18.56%	14.50%	22.55%
Ferizaj/Uroševac	11.63%	14.25%	9.07%
Gjilan/Gnjilane	10.64%	9.00%	12.25%
Gjakovë/Đakovica	10.40%	11.50%	9.31%

**Table A1.2 Respondents, by marital status**

Marital status	Total	Women	Men
Single	30%	29%	32%
Divorced	1%	2%	0%
Legally married	62%	61%	63%
Widowed	2%	4%	1%
Living with a partner	4%	5%	3%
Prefer not to answer	0%	0%	0%

**Table A1.3 Respondents with children**

Respondent has 1 or more children	Total	Women	Men
No	36.79%	34.50%	39.02%
Yes	63.21%	65.50%	60.98%

**Table A1.4 Children, by marital status**

Marital status of respondent	Have children
Single	0%
Divorced	1%
Legally married	57%
Widowed	2%
Living with a partner	3%
Prefer not to answer	0%

**Table A1.5 Number of children**

Children	Total	Women	Men
1	5%	6%	4%
2	23%	23%	22%
3	32%	32%	33%
4	24%	26%	23%
5	11%	10%	11%
6	3%	3%	3%
7	1%	0%	3%

**Table A1.6 Age distribution of respondents**

Age	Total	Women	Men
18–24	8%	8%	8%
25–29	12%	13%	11%
30–34	11%	12%	10%
35–39	9%	9%	9%
40–44	11%	10%	12%
45–49	9%	11%	7%
50–54	14%	14%	14%
55–59	13%	14%	12%
60–64	11%	8%	13%
65+	1%	0%	2%

**Table A1.7 Household size, by respondent's gender**

Members	Total	Women	Men
2	2%	2%	3%
3	6%	6%	5%
4	13%	12%	13%
5	22%	23%	20%
6	20%	21%	19%
7	15%	15%	15%
8	8%	7%	9%
9	6%	5%	6%
10	5%	4%	5%
11	2%	1%	2%
12	1%	2%	1%

**Table A1.8 Educational level of respondents**

Educational level completed	Total	Women	Men
No formal education	23%	28%	19%
Primary education and lower secondary education (ISCED 1–2)	22%	18%	27%
Upper secondary education (general) (ISCED 3)	30%	27%	33%
Upper secondary education (vocational) (ISCED 3)	12%	15%	10%
Tertiary education (ISCED 6)	8%	7%	8%
Master's or higher (ISCED 7–8)	4%	6%	3%

## Focus group discussion participants

Table A1.9 provides a breakdown of the location of the focus groups and the participants' ethnicity and gender.

**Table A1.9 Focus group participants**

Participants	Municipality
Albanian women	Prishtinë/Priština
Albanian men	Prishtinë/Priština
Albanian women	Krushë e Vogël/Mala Kruša
Albanian women	Vushtrri/Vučitrn
Albanian men	Has, Prizren
Albanian women	Skënderaj/Srbica
Bosnian women	Prizren
Serb men	Mitrovicë e veriut/severna Mitrovica and Zubin Potok
Serb women	Zubin Potok
Serb women	Novobërdë/Novo Brdo

## Interview participants

Table A1.10 summarizes the various individuals and groups that participated in interviews. The second column portrays the number of respondents, and the third column states the municipalities where the research participants were located.

**Table A1.10 Interview participants**

Institution/organization	Number	Municipalities
MAFRD Human Rights Unit	1	Prishtinë /Priština
Municipal Finance Officers	1	Podujevë/Podujevo
Municipal GEOs and Human Rights Officers	7	Podujevë/Podujevo, Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje, Prishtinë /Priština, Pejë/ Peć, Istog/Istok, Vushtrri/Vučitrn
Advisory Officials (3) and Directors (2) of Municipal Agriculture and Rural Development Departments	5	Prizren, Skënderaj/Srbica, Podujevë/ Podujevo, Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje, Vushtrri/Vučitrn
Digitalization experts	2	Prishtinë/Priština
WCSOs working with women in agriculture (and one working with women with disabilities)	17	Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, Graçanicë/Gračanica, Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Lipjan/Lipljan, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Obiliq/Obilić, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Rahovec/Orahovac, Prizren
CSOs supporting LGBTQIA+ persons	2	Prishtinë /Priština
Woman working in fisheries	1	Istog/Istok
<b>Total interview participants</b>	<b>36</b>	

## Institutions and municipalities contacted with requests to provide disaggregated data

**Table A1.11 Institutions and municipalities contacted**

Contacted institutions	Reason for contact	Replied
<b>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD)</b>	Disaggregated dataset of subsidies in last three years	Yes
<b>Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK)</b>	Disaggregated dataset of all businesses in Kosovo	Yes
<b>Business Registration Agency (BRA)</b>	Disaggregated dataset of all businesses in Kosovo	No

<b>Water Users Association</b>	Gender-disaggregated data of members by municipality, and in decision-making positions	No
<b>Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency</b>	Data on gender in policies, work of the agency, and challenges faced	Yes
<b>Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS)</b>	Dataset on gender-disaggregated, and urban/rural data	Yes
<b>Kosovo Cadastral Agency</b>	Disaggregated dataset of property owners	Yes
<b>Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency (KIESA)</b>	Dataset of subsidies by sector, gender, amount, and purpose for the last three years	Yes
<b>Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI)</b>	Dataset on disaggregated data on education	Yes
<b>Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers (MFLT)</b>	Disaggregated dataset on beneficiaries of schemes given by MFLT	No
<b>Municipalities</b>		
<b>Gjakovë/Đakovica</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Glllogoc/Glogovac</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Gjilan/Gnjilane</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Dragash/Dragaš</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Istog/Istok</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Kaçanik/Kaçanik</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Klinë/Klina</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Kamenicë/Kamenica</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Leposaviq/Leposavić</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Lipjan/Lipjan</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Obiliq/Obilić</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Rahovec/Orahovac</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No



<b>Pejë/Peć</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Prishtinë/Priština</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Prizren/Prizren</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Skënderaj/Srbica</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Shtime/Štimlje</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Shtërpcë/Štrpce</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Suharekë/Suva Reka</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Ferizaj/Uroševac</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Viti/Vitina</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Vushtrri/Vučitrn</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Zubin Potok/ Zubin Potok</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Malishevë/Mališevo</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Novobërdë/ Novo Brdo</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Mitrovicë e veriut/ severna Mitrovica</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Mitrovicë e jugut/ južna Mitrovica</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Junik/Junik</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Hani i Elezit/Elez Han</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Mamushë/Mamuša</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Gračanicë/Gračanica</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	Yes
<b>Ranillug/Ranilug</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Partesh/Parteš</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No
<b>Klllokot/Klokot</b>	Disaggregated dataset on subsidies given in last three years	No



# Appendix 2.

## Summary of findings by research question

Research question	Main findings
How does diverse women's and men's involvement in unpaid work differ, including agricultural work on family farms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural workers account for 72.2 percent of all unpaid family workers in Kosovo.</li> <li>• Approximately half of both rural women and men are engaged in at least one form of informal or vulnerable work.</li> <li>• Rural women are twice as likely as men to be engaged as unpaid family workers; 13 percent of women, compared with 7 percent of men, said that they conduct unpaid family work.</li> <li>• Hesitancy to lose public social assistance prevents some women and men from engaging in the formal labour force.</li> <li>• Migration and remittances also affect labour force participation by increasing the reservation wage.</li> <li>• Informality can limit farmers' access to capital, land and training.</li> </ul>
How does diverse women's and men's time use differ in rural households?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considering all paid and unpaid work, on average, rural women spend 83 percent of their time working while rural men spend only 66 percent.</li> <li>• Rural women spend twice as much time as men on cooking, cleaning and caring for children, older relatives and other family members.</li> <li>• Women's socially ascribed household responsibilities limit the time that they have to engage in paid labour, agricultural activities, education, training and engaging in local decision-making processes.</li> <li>• Men have more time for rest, self-education, and expanding their businesses, including applying for funds.</li> <li>• Women's inactivity, informal work, unpaid work, and lower salaries contribute to poverty, particularly for women-headed households and in old age when women receive lower pensions than men.</li> </ul>

To what extent do diverse rural women and men have knowledge of, access to, ownership of, and use time-saving and productive infrastructure and technologies, particularly ICTs?

- Women own only 17 percent of property in Kosovo, which limits their access to land, grants, subsidies and loans.
- Less than 0.3 percent of all agricultural holdings are registered as businesses.
- Of all farms, women own only 4.9 percent.
- Women comprise 5.8 percent of registered farmers.
- Approximately one in ten women said that they need family permission to access vehicles, mechanized agricultural equipment and agricultural inputs such as seeds.
- Women’s unequal ownership of property, agricultural businesses, productive equipment and inputs, combined with low educational levels and restrictive criteria, limit their access to subventions, grants and loans.

What are rural women’s perspectives on income generation opportunities?

- Rural women identified the following needs:
- Facilitate access to grants and subsidies by removing education, co-pay and ownership criteria (e.g. property and/or inputs), which hinder women’s access.
- Use public service announcements on television and social media, and collaborate with WCSOs in rural areas to raise awareness about opportunities.
- Provide training, mentoring and support in accessing information, applying for financial resources, and enhancing digital skills, particularly via WCSOs.
- Support women in selling their products, including through small kiosks, fairs, more local collection points, and online sales.
- Support awareness campaigns that counter social gender norms.
- Use affirmative measures linked to grants and subsidies to support joint registration of property, shared inheritance and a gender balance among registered agricultural workers.
- Ensure regular, daily public transportation is available in rural areas.

To what extent are diverse women and men using digitalization in their work in rural economies?

- Women and men have similar levels of access to smart phones and the internet (98 percent).
- Nearly one-third consider that they do not have enough information about the digital services and technologies available, and one in five felt they lacked knowledge for using digital technology.
- Furthermore, 41 percent of rural women and 33 percent of men felt that they lack the digital skills required by the labour market.
- Neither women nor men use much digitalization related to their work in rural economies; one-third used phone applications for checking the weather and one-fourth for information on market prices.
- Fewer than one in ten used digital tools for information about agriculture or to find nearby markets.
- Only 16 percent of rural women and 19 percent of rural men would want to access public services “through a website”, and 14 percent of rural women and 24 percent of rural men would use “a mobile application”.

- Yet, both rural women (56 percent) and men (61 percent) have an interest in “embracing new technology solutions”. More specifically, 51 percent of women and 66 percent of men showed interest in using technology, including the internet, automation machinery, and/or robotics, which signals opportunities for supporting learning and use of digitalization in agriculture.

What challenges do rural women face in accessing time-saving, productive infrastructure, technologies, and income generation opportunities, including those related to digitalization?

- Given rural women’s comparatively lower levels of education, limited time, lack of capital, poor access to finance, weak public transport systems, and patriarchal social norms, they have even less access to opportunities for using ICTs in economic activities.
- Women’s minimal participation in business networking predated digital transformations, so few engage in such online networking.
- Nearly one-third of rural women (and men) consider insufficient information the main challenge preventing them from using modern technologies.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted on agricultural production and income generation activities, as well as care work at the household level?

- Measures by the authorities contained some support, but this lacked a gender perspective, and it is unclear how these measures have benefited diverse women and men.
- The closure of care and education facilities substantially increased women’s workload and placed them at greater risk of job loss or burnout, given their gender role as caregivers.
- Women also faced greater challenges accessing food and services than men.
- Agricultural production was affected, which contributed to economic insecurity for farmers.
- Meanwhile, amid the pandemic, some farmers found new methods, including using ICTs more, which can inform improvements to agricultural activities and business models.

To what extent do rural women have access to political participation, support networks, leadership opportunities and life outside the home? To what extent do diverse rural women know about and use extension services?

- Women are underrepresented in political decision-making at all levels.
- Furthermore, 91 percent of rural women and 79 percent of men said that they do not engage in any political or union activities.
- Only 3 percent of women and 12 percent of men said that in the last year they had participated in community or municipal meetings related to agriculture, natural resources, municipal budgets, or any other decisions to be made.
- Contributing factors for women’s non-participation included disinterest, insufficient information, lack of transportation, household duties, and sociocultural norms whereby men have tended to represent their families in decision-making processes outside the household.
- Ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ persons, and persons with disabilities face added barriers to participation in decision-making processes.
- Only 3 percent of surveyed rural women and 12 percent of rural men were members of a farmers’ or agricultural association, cooperative or union.
- Only 5 percent of rural women and 16 percent of rural men knew about rural advisory services in their area.
- This relates to the fact that extension services only reach registered farmers, and most agricultural businesses are not registered.

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