

BEING A WOMAN IN THE LABOR MARKET



Kingdom of the Netherlands

This report is part of the project ‘Decent Jobs for Women’ implemented by Kosovar Stability Initiative- IKS and Center for Policies and Advocacy – CPA. The report has been prepared in cooperation with IKS staff and its contents reflect joint contributions of the contractor and IKS. The views expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Kosovo as the donor of the project.

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Kingdom of the Netherlands

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We believe that evidence-based public debate stands at the core of democratic decision-making and economic transformation in the country. IKS does not have party, political or any other organizational affiliation.

IKS's highly experienced and multidisciplinary team is committed to achieving its objective. An Advisory Board, including Kosovar and international analysts and practitioners, also supports its work.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents the final result of an in-depth analysis of the situation of women in the labor market and the implications that Covid-19 had in the employment of women. The report aims to be a fact-based contribution to the debate on women employment and obtain information about the quality of jobs for women in Kosovo as well as feed information on the working conditions of women at the country level. This will be used by IKS and QPA as the basis for a policy/work strategy and a wider program of support to women participation in the labor market in Kosovo.


The research subject to this report was carried out in the period November-December 2020. The backbone of the report is the survey with 500 employed women across Kosovo, which was contextualized through secondary literature review and accumulated expertise of the author related to the topics covered in the report.

The research reveals that there are several layers of obstacles pertaining to women employment in addition to a set of obstacles pertaining to them maintaining jobs. Social and cultural norms and practices, as well as infrastructural problems, challenge the greater involvement of women in the labor market. Contrastingly, cultural norms pertain mainly to suitability of professions for women, and the general perceptions of merit-based hiring by companies. Lack of necessary basic infrastructure, such as kindergartens in most of the Kosovo's 38 municipalities, is another reason preventing women from working. Lack of public, affordable child-care raises the financial threshold / readiness to work, as it automatically requires between 100 -150 Euro per month on average.

Sexual harassment (both experienced and expected) appears to be one of the major social/cultural challenges to women employment in the private sector. While around 30% of women in the sample confirm to have been subject to some form of sexual harassment at the workplace, the large percentage of women in the sample (40%) report they have obtained current job because family/friendship ties with owners/managers. These statistics indicate the size of this challenge to women employment. It could be argued that fear of sexual harassment is one of the primary reasons why women do not actively apply for positions in the private sector.

The Covid-19 situation has further worsened the situation of women in the labor market. Closing of schools, lockdown measures, and the increased workload around the household because of this situation have all adversely affected employed women. Domestic violence and overall deterioration of mental and emotional health, which has been recorded globally as well as in Kosovo, represents another aspect that has adversely affected women. In addition, a significant percentage of women in the survey report colleagues having lost their jobs due to Covid-19, while a significant percentage of them also report that their income levels have dropped due to the pandemics.

A comprehensive package for promoting women employment should be adopted to meaningfully change the scenery pertaining to women employment. First and foremost, women-only programs for employment/self-employment should be promoted as the only NET contributor to women employment. Other donor programs (open to men and women), usually set quotas for women inclusion, which during implementation become targets, and not



minimum requirements. Programs that promote inclusion of women in men-dominated sectors are particularly relevant for combating gender-related stereotypes.

In addition, the Law on Gender Equality should be implemented strictly and women should be present as close to full equality as possible at all levels. Currently, decision-making levels are predominantly occupied by men, leaving less-important position for women. While quotas of inclusion are temporary measures for achieving equality, they tend to effectively achieve the results in practice. The most prominent example is the Kosovo parliament, where in the most recent elections, women have managed for the first time to get around 40% of seats in the parliament.

Promotion of professionalism, ethics and moral behavior is one of the very important aspects of improving inclusion of women in the labor market. The institution of “competition” has been significantly diminished and the trust of people on public competitions is very low. Considerable efforts are needed to restore this mechanism of employment, since a significant number of the unemployed do not even apply for jobs.

Upgrading the capacities of labor inspectorate and the court system in addressing labor-related violations is another systemic aspect that requires significant attention. Institutional and legal mechanisms for protection from harassment at the workplace, in particular, should be developed and strengthened to facilitate greater inclusion of women in the labor market.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY


Project background

This research report reflects the results produced through activities of the ‘Decent Jobs for Women’ project, implemented by the Kosovo Stability Initiative and Center for Policy and Advocacy, and funded by the Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands in Kosovo.

Since Kosovo’s independence, the fight for gender equality has been among the priorities of the international community and more recently of the Kosovar Government. In particular, economic empowerment and employment of women is seen as one of the greatest challenges to be dealt with, as it involves commitment and hands-on measures of combating gender inequalities.

The international community, and the EU in particular, have been lenient in pressing Kosovo’s government to take more active measures against inequalities, particularly in high and decision-making positions. This has given few results, and consequently, even the protagonists in major processes facilitated by the EU, are all men-dominated.

With only around 18% of women employed in the formal economy (World Bank, 2019), employment of women in Kosovo is one of the lowest in the world and lower than that of other Western Balkan countries. The lack of appropriate investigative journalism on these matters, coupled with lack of political will of the state to protect the workers’ rights, have left women alone in their extremely difficult employment situation. It is assessed that women working in the retail and cleaning industry are the ones suffering most. Although Law 04/L011 on Organizing in Trade Unions in Kosovo exists, the workers in the private sector do not realize their right to organize, allegedly in fear of being persecuted or fired by the employer. While



the focus of CSO's and other actors has, rightly so, been on active labor market projects, decent work has been neglected to date. Women and employment, even without the discrimination at workplace, is still a challenging area. Existing studies show that women are in an underprivileged position compared to men not only when it comes to employment participation rate, but also regarding the types of occupation and income in both private and public sector.

This project is part of the Social Justice Program and contributes toward the achievement of its objectives: the improvement of working conditions for the most vulnerable groups and active participation of women and vulnerable groups in Social Dialogue through the direct engagement of Coalition for Social Justice, Trade Unions and employer's organizations. IKS is a leading organization in Kosovo on topics of social justice and is the first CSO that has made meaningful contribution to the social dialogue process. 'Decent jobs for women in Kosovo' would itself contribute to greater social justice by improving implementation of labour rights and gender-related legislation through enabling active engagement of civil society and social partners. This would directly enhance the condition in the labour market for all workers and especially the more vulnerable groups, such as women, formal and informal workers in the private sector, and the least protected categories in the labour market. The intended systemic and systematic change that IKS aims to achieve as a direct consequence of the proposed intervention provides for the most sustainable approach to facilitating change in society and ensuring results in the field of human rights well beyond the duration of the grant. Furthermore, through policy change, IKS will also strive to address the institutional framework shortcomings, hence, enabling relevant stakeholders to live up to their socially ascribed role and responsibility.

Research scope and objectives

Improving employment conditions is a key element in working towards better gender equality in Kosovo. Through this contract, the IKS project team aims to obtain information about the quality of jobs for women in Kosovo and feed information on the working conditions of women at the country level in the retail and cleaning industry. This will be used by IKS and QPA as the basis for a policy/work strategy and a wider program of support to women participation in the labor market in Kosovo.

The main questions/aspects that the research was gauged to answer are:

- How is the access in the labour market for women at the country level in the retail and cleaning industry?
- What are the struggles and challenges at the workplace for women, including maternity leave and sexual harassment?
- How has Covid-19 affected the employment for women, along with the balance between work, family and childcare?
- What are the factors determining the accepted wage and what is the necessary minimum needed for survival in Kosovo?
- How should discrimination be addressed more accurately, including the role of Unions as well?

Approach, methodology and sample

In answering these questions and achieving research objectives, the research team utilized a mixed qualitative and quantitative approach, comprised of secondary literature review, review of relevant sources of statistics and raw data (i.e., Kosovo Statistics Agency), as well as, a survey with employed women as the main element of the research. The survey was conducted through face-to-face structured interviews (structured questionnaire) carried out by trained researchers.

The sample is representative of geographic distribution of regions in Kosovo, and represents a faithful representation of women employment in sectors. The charts below represent the geographic and sectoral distribution of responses visually.

Sample distribution according to regions (%)



Sectoral representation (%)

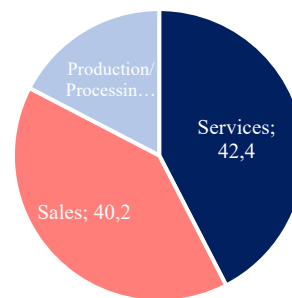
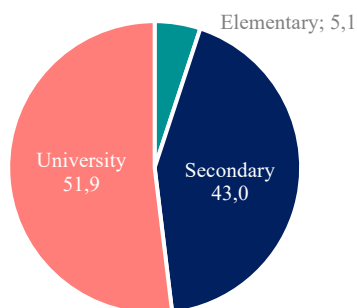


Figure 1. Geographic and sectoral sample distribution

Age group distribution of the sample is another element that is faithful to that in reality, as is the education level of respondents.

Education Level (%)



Age group representation (%)

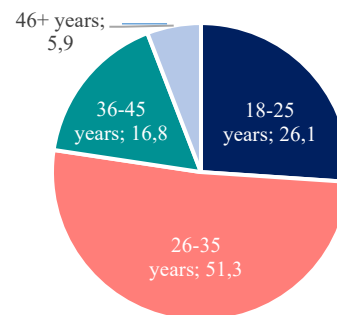


Figure 2. Education of respondents and age-group representation

Correlating to their age-groups and education levels, most of the women in the sample have between 2 to 5 years of work experience (65.1%), followed by those between 6 to 10 years of experience and those with one year or less. The smallest sub-group in the sample is that of women with over 11+ years of experience, which represents only 3.1% of the sample of respondents. Figure 3 below provides a visual overview of work experience of respondents.



Figure 3. Years of work experience

FINDINGS

Access of women in the labor market

The latest Labor Force Survey of the Kosovo Statistics Agency¹ covering the third quarter of 2020 indicates that women employment is at 14.4% as compared to that of men which is 46.2%. This fact alone indicates a huge disparity between women and men in terms of accessing labor market and jobs. While some of the more discussed topics behind such gender-based inequality in employment include cultural factors (i.e., gender-based assignment of professions and jobs). Other factors include more structural problems requiring significant public investments. Gender-based assignment of jobs and professions and social classification/prestige of those professions are typical examples of cultural obstacles to women employment. Under such a classification of jobs, women are generally ‘appropriate’ for low-income professions and positions, while jobs that are generally male-dominated are more prestigious and are attached to better pay. As such, child care, home care and cleaning, and care of the elderly, which are complete representatives of the informal sectors with difficult working conditions and low pay, are all carried out predominantly by women in Kosovo.

This is also confirmed by the general employment levels and sectors in which women are employed formally. As per the latest Labor Force Survey, women continue to be largely employed in education, healthcare, and retail/trade (49.7%) sectors, which are characterized by lower wages. Cultural and social norms and expectations regarding women’s role in the household, is another gender-based obstacle to women employment. With women being expected to both perform at work at par with their male colleagues, while also expected to do most of the household-related chores and duties after work.

An obstacle of a structural nature that should be noted is the absence of public kindergartens in most of Kosovo’s municipalities. Lack of affordable child-care prevents a significant number of young mothers from working, hence putting them in the group of long-term unemployed individuals every time they give birth. Once in the long-term unemployment cycle, women are less likely to take initiative and attempt re-entry in the labor market because the reasons for their unemployment rarely go away. On the contrary, the house responsibilities and care of children and elderly just keeps increasing for stay-at-home women.

¹ Kosovo Statistics Agency. Labour Force Survey Q.3.2020. <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/labour-force-survey-q3-2020>

One of the first aspects inquired about with the surveyed women was how they got the position they currently hold. To this end, 26.6% of women in the sample reported that they have family/friendship ties with owners/managers in the company where they work. Another 22.5% of women in the sample report being recruited for the positions they work in. 37.6% of respondents in the sample have applied for the positions they currently hold, of which 20.7% report this position being their first professional choice, while 16.9% report the current position not being their preferred career choice. A geographic distribution analysis of results reveals that in Prishtina the highest percentage of women reported being recruited (40%), while in other regions personal/family acquaintances with owners or managers in the business is generally the highest-ranking answer. Such composition of answers also illustrates the cultural aspect/influence noted above, where prior acquaintance with people they will work with/for, is a very influential factor hindering the employment of women. The geographic distribution of responses whereby this trend/factor is more relevant in other centers than in Prishtina, where it is becoming an increasingly less relevant factor. A complete overview of responses to this question is presented in the figure below.

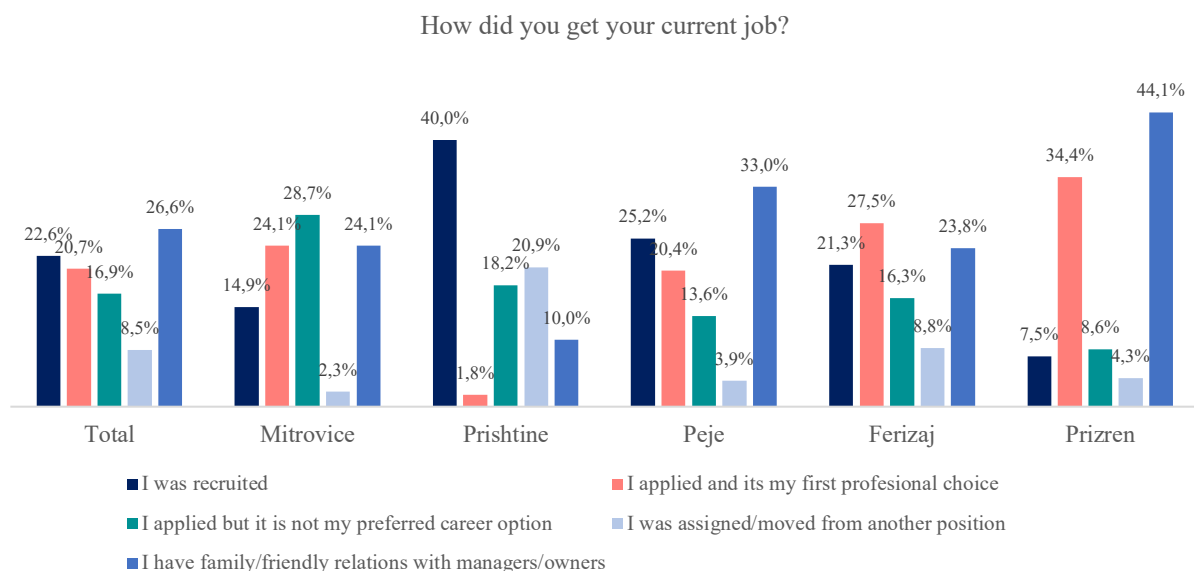


Figure 4. How did you get the current job?

The two most prominent choices selected/reported by women in the sample indicate the general mentality of passive employment, whereby women are expected to be offered positions, as opposed to actively searching for a job. Only 20 percent of the women in the sample report to have applied for the current position and want the job as a career choice. Real-time information on employment opportunities via online job portals represents the bulk of job openings where active application is required is an opportunity missed for most women. One of the reasons behind such a low interest in applying for jobs among the women in the sample is believed to be the overall perception that you need influential acquaintances to get a job. Public Pulse XVIII of UNDP, which was published in April 2020, shows that 19.5% of respondents consider employment in the public sector to be merit based and 80.7% do not consider employment in the public sector to be based on merit².

² UNDP Public Pulse 18.

https://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/democratic_governance/public-pulse-xviii.html

Struggles and challenges at the workplace for women

Aside from having greater difficulties of obtaining jobs, being less active than men in job searches, women face significant challenges even after they get employed. It is because of this reason that the respondents were asked to self-rate their performance at work as compared to their colleagues, and women in the sample tend to be quite sincere. Around 15% of women in the sample claim to be at the top 15% of performers in the company, providing an almost identical match between the two percentages. Between 40.3% of respondents' report being above average, while the largest percentage of women in the sample (45% of total) considers themselves to be average employees. There were even cases in Prishtina where women in the sample reported being below average, testifying to the level of sincerity by respondents.

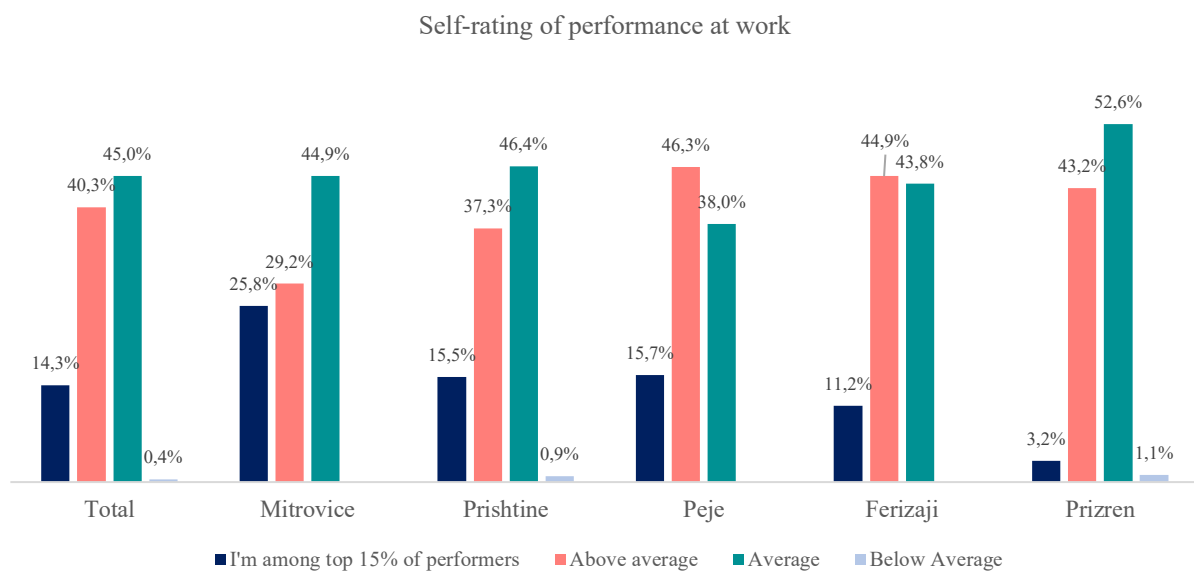


Figure 5. Self-rating of performance at work

Another aspect of the inquiry with regard to workplace culture and environment is the perceptions/opinions of colleagues and co-workers. Given that prior acquaintance with owners/managers is one of the key employment channels reported by women in the sample, the relevance of opinions of others is a very prominent element for women's choice of not engaging in the private sector. Slightly above 13% of women (2% less than self-rating) think that their colleagues would place them among the top 15% at the workplace. A considerably lower percentage of respondents (as compared to self-rating) consider that their colleagues would rate their performance as above average (almost 10% difference), while almost 52% of women think their colleagues would rate their performance as average. While personal bias may be partly responsible for the differences in self-rating and perceptions of others, the significantly higher percentages provided under self-rating show that women consider that they are treated/assessed unfairly and inaccurately by their colleagues.

How would your colleagues rate your performance?

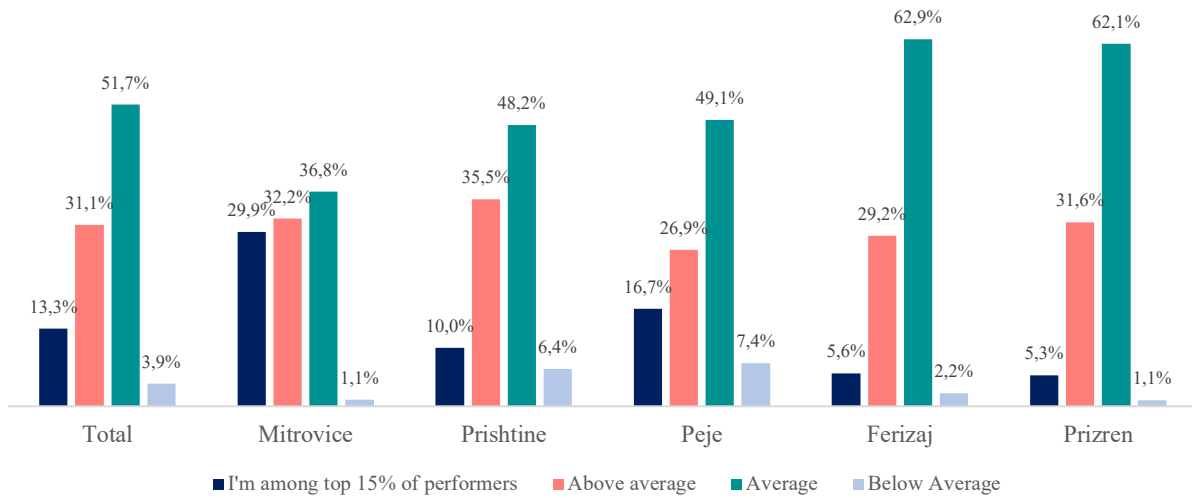


Figure 6. Appreciation of performance by colleagues

Despite these percentages, the majority of women in the sample prefer working in integrated spaces with male colleagues as opposed to gender-based separated spaces for either management or employees. Over 50% of respondents in the sample have selected this choice when asked this question. Another interesting aspect that should be noted with regards to workplace culture and preferences is that in companies and organizations dominated by male employees, women would prefer the integration of women in the workplace to be done parallel in all departments and processes, and not through establishing all-women units. 57% of women believe that integration should be done across the company/organization, with an additional 22.5% of respondents considering that gender should not be taken into account when hiring.

Partial explanation for the composition of answers given in the previous question is also provided in the responses to the question on whether they were ever treated differently by colleagues due to their gender. The vast majority of respondents negate different treatment by colleagues. 10% of women in the sample confirm having received different treatment and another 10% of them did not respond to this question.

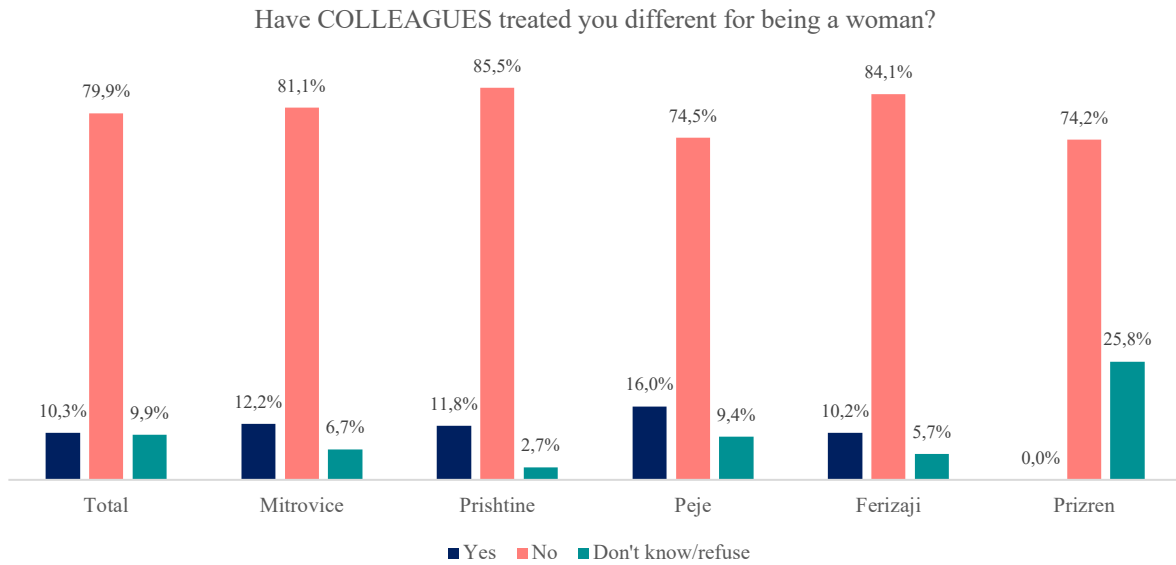


Figure 7. Different treatment from colleagues

Another important aspect to consider when assessing the situation of women at workplace is the treatment they receive from their supervisors. The responses obtained to this question are very similar to those related to treatment by colleagues, where the overwhelming majority of respondents report not to have been treated differently for being a woman. It is noteworthy that even the regional distribution of responses is almost an identical match with the responses obtained on the different treatment by colleagues.

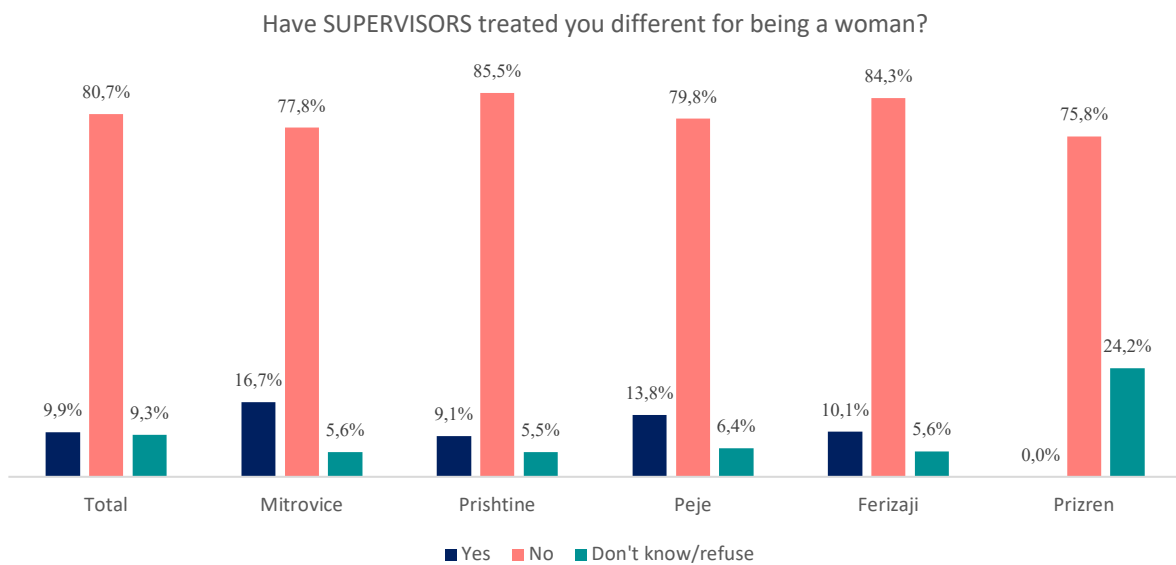


Figure 8. Different treatment from supervisors

The women that responded positively to this question were also asked to provide examples of how they were treated differently by their supervisors. Of the women confirming having had gender-based treatments, 34% state that they were given more instructions, advice and support, as compared to male colleagues. 25.5% of respondents' state that they were given more 'dirty work' as compared to their male colleagues, and the same percentage of women state they receive more attention overall.

Sexual harassment at the workplace also appears to be an issue for respondents in the sample and employed women in general. A total of around 30% of the respondents in the sample report different degrees/intensity of agreement with regards to being sexually harassed at workplace. 8.5% of respondents agree with this statement completely, while over 21% partially agree with it. 70% of women in the sample report that they have never been sexually harassed at workplace. Given the large percentage of women reporting that they have gotten the position through family and friends ties, such composition of answers is fully explicable. It, furthermore, confirms from a different perspective why women in Kosovo do not apply for positions in companies and organizations they do not know. It brings expected sexual harassment as one of the key obstacles/challenges to women employment and challenges at the workplace. The table below represents the total for the sample and their distribution in regions pertaining to sexual harassment experienced at work.

	Total	Mitrovica	Prishtine	Peje	Ferizaj	Sherbime
Completely agree	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	25.0%	0.0%
Partially agree	21.3%	26.7%	20.0%	14.3%	25.0%	19.0%
Completely disagree	70.2%	73.3%	80.0%	71.4%	50.0%	81.0%

Figure 9. Sexual harassment at work

Treatment from subordinates is another dimension that the survey inquired about with the women in the sample, and the responses obtained are similar to those of colleagues and supervisors. Again, around 30% of women in the sample report some degree of sexual harassment by subordinates at the workplace.

Women that have confirmed experiencing sexual harassment at the workplace were also asked whether they have reported it to the company superiors. Only 18% of women state to have reported the harassment, while the vast majority (over 80% of women) claim to have never reported such behavior. There are many reasons as to why they haven't reported the assault, but some of the most relevant ones pertain to the fact that they consider it would bring them no result and won't improve their situation. The most prominent responses were that the perpetrators would not be punished, and that harassment would continue. In most cases, women believe that the person in the higher position (regardless of gender) would be trusted, if it came to confronting the perspective of the perpetrator and to that of the victim in a sexual harassment case.

Covid-19 affected the employment for women

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the labor market in Kosovo, and in particular the position of women in the labor market. With most of the economy in the decline and the expected/forecasted shrinking of the economy by around 8%, the employment market in Kosovo faces one of the biggest periods of uncertainty in the aftermath of the war.

With many employers either partially or fully moving their operations online and applying working-from-home models, women's performance at work was also challenged. Faced with increased workload around the household and with children, women are much more challenged than men from the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, with some in-company processes re-shaped

and re-invented to accommodate social distancing measures and rules in place, the efforts in adjusting to the new practices further increase the burden for women during the pandemic.

When asked about the effects of the pandemic, 36.5% of women in the sample confirm to have lost colleagues, 42% of them report having their income decreased as a consequence of Covid-19. Only 14.3% of respondents in the sample claim their work has gotten easier as a result of measures in place to combat Covid-19. Almost half of the respondents in the sample report that their work has not been affected by Covid, outside the general movement restrictions experienced by employed and unemployed alike. An additional 34% of the women in the sample report that their workload around the household has increased because of the pandemic and given the relatively young age composition of the sample, the percentage obtained is likely to be all the mothers in the sample.

Factors determining the accepted wage

Aside from the general employment opportunities provided in the immediate vicinity of their settlement, which is one of the main factors in the environment, other factors are also influential in making employment of women possible. Prior interest in the sector where they currently work is another aspect that was explored to better grasp the access to jobs and employment. To this end, the overwhelming majority of women in the sample (71%) report that the sector where they engage has been of their prior interest. The outlier in responses obtained is Prishtina, whereby 33.6% of the respondent's report having no prior interest in engaging in the sector, as compared to other centers/regions, where this is the case for 15%-20% of the respondents.

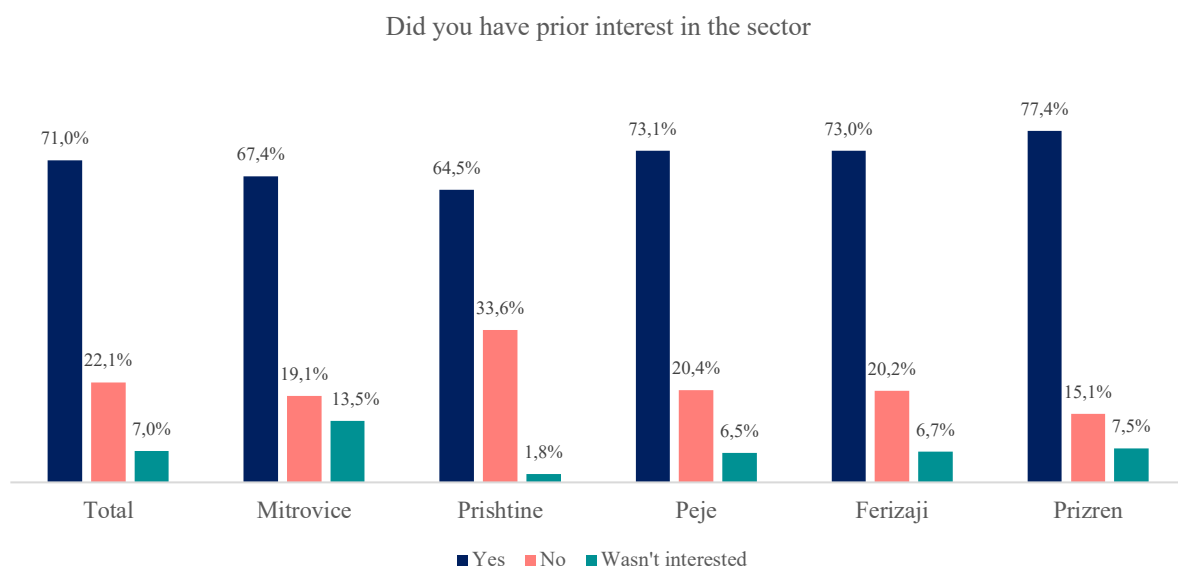


Figure 10. Prior interest in the sector

The main reasons behind prior interest in the sector where they currently engage, provided by the women in the sample, include learning new skills and good pay. A total of 24% of the respondents have listed skills as their main motivation for prior interest in the sector, while almost 24% of them provide good pay as their primary motivation. Career prospects in the given sector, followed by family tradition in a given profession, represent third and fourth choice for women in the sample with 17% and 14% of responses respectively.

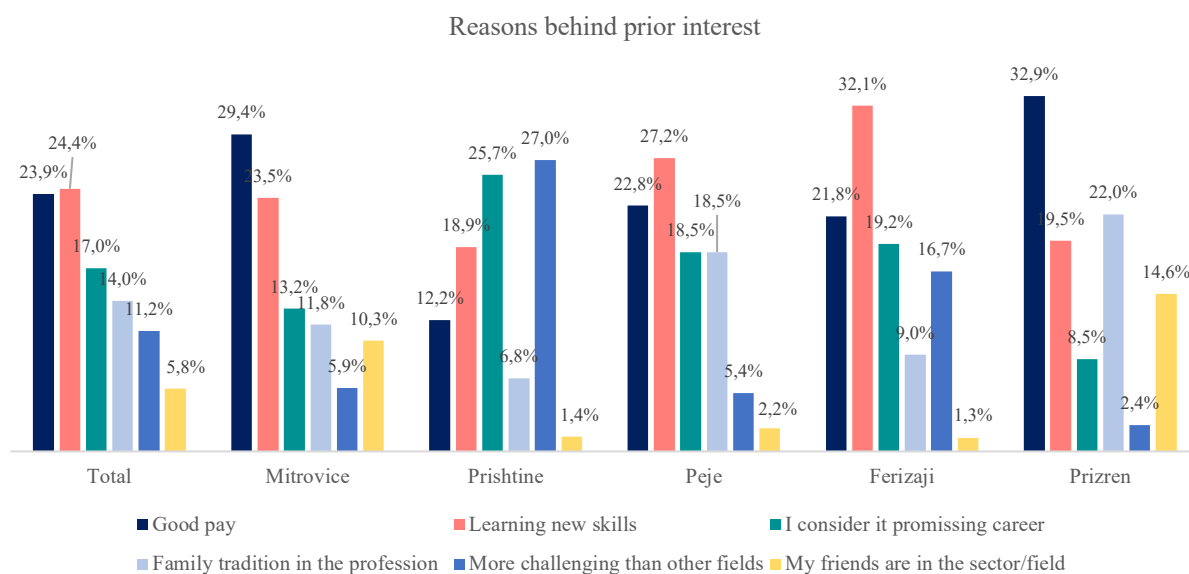


Figure 11. Reasons behind prior interest in the sector engaged

Other factors that the survey inquired about also include paid leave. Most of the respondents in the sample (almost 90%), report that their employer allows for paid annual leave. An equivalent percentage of women also confirm their employers allowing for personal (family) days of paid leave, and medical leave.

Annual Paid Leave						
	Total	Mitrovica	Prishtine	Peje	Ferizaji	Prizren
Yes	89.6%	69.7%	95.5%	87.0%	97.8%	96.8%
No	10.4%	30.3%	4.5%	13.0%	2.2%	3.2%

Figure 12. Paid annual leave

Maternity leave is another type of leave that affects only women, and the responses obtained are similar to those of the other types of leave inquired about. Around 90% of women in the sample report that their employer pays for maternity leave as envisaged by law.

Maternity Leave						
	Total	Mitrovica	Prishtine	Peje	Ferizaji	Prizren
Yes, I have used it	23.6%	11.1%	25.5%	22.4%	34.5%	24.5%
Yes, one or more colleagues have used it	66.2%	55.6%	69.1%	64.5%	65.5%	75.5%
No, the employer does not pay his obligations for maternity	10.2%	33.3%	5.5%	13.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Figure 13. Maternity Leave

Addressing discrimination in the labor market

Active labor market measures, upgrading the capacities of the Labor Inspectorate and the court system are some of the most prominent and necessary interventions in addressing the broad-based discrimination in Kosovo. Institutional and legal mechanisms for reporting and



combating harassment at the workplace, in particular sexual harassment, should be developed to eliminate such behavior by employers.

Careful review of legislation (including labor law), should also include meaningful changes in the maternity leave provisions. The reasons behind such claims are numerous, but most importantly, the current law does not take into account the structure of the Kosovo's economy, which is largely characterized by micro enterprises of 10 employees or less, that cannot bear the financial burden of maternity leave for their employees. Establishment of a maternity leave fund, which would cover for the maternity provisions, is the recommended path forwards.

In addition, the gender-based treatment has been confirmed by at least 10% of women, while the other 10% of women did not provide answers to this question. To this end, mistrust (more supervision and control by supervisors), is one of the aspects that is subtle, but prevalent across the economy and is an important aspect of women empowerment.

While there is no data on compensation discrimination, it is generally believed that this aspect is less important in Kosovo. Equal pay for women and men in the same positions is almost universal, but the most pressing concern is the division of positions and professions (and, consequently, pay), according to gender. This has caused women to choose jobs not heavily demanded by men, which are generally in education and healthcare.


CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the objectives of the research at focus, the following key conclusions and recommendations can be made to the relevant decision-makers and stakeholders:

The research reveals that there are several layers of obstacles pertaining to women employment and another set of obstacles pertaining to them maintaining jobs. On one side there are social and cultural factors and norms which adversely affect women employment. These are combined with infrastructure challenges, jointly contributing to the low participation of women in the labor market.

Sexual harassment (both experienced and expected) appears to be one of the major social challenges for women employment in the private sector. Around 30% of women in the sample confirm to have been subject to sexual harassment at the workplace, of which less than 20% state to have reported such behavior, with the remaining 80% of them not pursuing their rights through reporting. The lack of belief that action would be taken to correct such behavior, is one of the primary reasons provided by women for not reporting.

The Covid-19 situation has further worsened the situation of women in the labor market. From decreased income, to increased workload at home, and overall increased stress and uncertainty, women have been greatly affected by the pandemic, and the measures taken to curb its spread. The increase in domestic violence and the overall deterioration of mental and emotional health represents another aspect that has adversely affected women regardless of their employment status. In addition, a significant percentage of women in the survey report colleagues having lost their jobs due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Digital skills are some of the most in-demand and required skills in the labor market in the light of Covid-19 changes. With the significant portion of jobs being transferred completely online, digital skills represent a must-have prerequisite for ages 7 – 65. Even children are required to have some digital skills in order to access the online education provided by their schools. In terms of women inclusion in the labor market, digital skills for women would have two major impacts: giving them access to high-salary jobs and giving them the ability to work from home, which in light of Covid measures is a highly-needed competency/ability.

A comprehensive package for promoting women employment should be adopted to meaningfully change the scenery pertaining to women employment. First and foremost, women-only programs for employment/self-employment should be promoted as the only NET contributor to women employment. Development programs targeting employment of men and women alike, usually set quotas for women inclusion, which during their implementation, become targets and not the minimum required inclusion level. Programs that promote inclusion of women in men-dominated sectors are particularly relevant for combating gender-related stereotypes.

Regarding employment in the public sector, the Law on Gender Equality should be implemented strictly and women should be present at 50% at all levels possible. Currently, decision-making levels are predominantly occupied by men, leaving less-important positions for women. Quotas of inclusion as temporary measures for achieving equality, tend to effectively achieve the results in Kosovo. The most prominent example is the Kosovo parliament, where in the most recent elections, women have managed for the first time to get around 40% of seats in the Parliament, exceeding the 30% minimum representation guaranteed by gender quotas.

Perceptions of unfair treatment and preferential selection in both private and public sectors alike have brought the institution of competition very low in the eyes of job seekers. Promotion of professionalism, ethics and moral behavior is one of the very important aspects of improving inclusion of women in the labor market. Extensive efforts need to be made to change the existing perceptions and increase their trust in public and open processes.

Upgrading the capacities of the Labor Inspectorate and the court system in addressing labor-related violations, is another systemic aspect that requires significant attention. Institutional and legal mechanisms for protection from harassment at the workplace in particular should be developed and strengthened to facilitate greater inclusion of women in the labor market.

Another systemic intervention required to improve inclusion of women in the labor market is increasing public investment in kindergartens, ensuring that every municipality has at least one such public institution, where mothers can access affordable child-care services, and be able to work.

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