

BASELINE REPORT

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INDICATORS

LAÇ



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This Project is implemented by:



Gender Alliance for Development Centre



Counseling Line for
Women and Girls

This report was prepared by the Gender Alliance for Development Center, under the project **“Women empowerment: Building capacities to improve access economic opportunities with a special focus to victims of domestic Violence”**, based on the contract between GADC and EC, no. 2011/278-135.



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List of acronyms

MoLSAEO	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
NEA	National Employment Agency
GADC	Gender Alliance for Development Centre
CLWG	Counseling Line for Girls and Women
EC	European Commission
UN women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
DA	Different Ability
LG	Local Government
NEA	National Employment Agency
NPO	Non Profit Organization

1. INTRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was prepared by Gender Alliance for Development Center and Counseling Line for Girls and Women on the frame of the project “*Women empowerment: Building capacities to improve access economic opportunities with a special focus to victims of domestic Violence*”, financed by the European Commission.

The proposed action aims at promoting equal participation of women and men in the social and economic life, by enhancing the empowerment of women, gender equality and respect of their human rights. The specific objectives of the proposed project relate to two main areas:

- Improving women’s position in the labour market and
- Specifically targeting more vulnerable groups of women, especially those at risk of poverty and or victims of domestic violence; with counselling, training and awareness activities not only on labour market access, but also on issues of domestic violence and access to available social services as well.

Activities towards these two specific objectives will be complemented by awareness and advocacy activities, aiming at:

- Increasing general awareness within target groups – including but not limited to women, but also public sector and potential employers – on social benefits of active women participation in social life; employability of women; but also antidiscrimination policy. Awareness activities will be both national and local scale, through TV and radio events as well as other communication instruments; and
- Improving social attitude towards the role of women in society through information and communication actions; counseling and non-conventional means - Networking with grassroots NPOs; business associations; women and change agents in the community will also be used; including development of school curricula to target young people at an early age.

The following are some of the outputs of the proposed action:

- An analytical report, containing an updated analysis of the current situation of women in Albania, focusing on their integration in the labour market as a crucial mean for woman empowerment; as well as identify the current situation with of vulnerable women, in particular victims of domestic violence and the extent of spreading of the phenomenon. The report will also identify possible partners and explore networking opportunities in order to achieve results.

- Identification of a local network/working group of organizations involved in gender, woman empowerment and domestic violence issues, with the participation of experts, public institutions and business organizations.

Indicators related to economic development:

- Percentage of men and women who run businesses
- Percentage of women and men employed and paying social insurance
- The number of new businesses started by migration of men and women
- Payment of insurance as a farmer (women and men)
- Number of women and men who participated in vocational training and their employment after the course
- The level of recognition of rights in the labor market by women
- Number of initiatives by local structures for women's employment

Indicators relating to domestic violence:

- Quality and appropriateness of services provided to victims of domestic violence
- The number of battered women who have received services from local offices as per law
- Training on the law against domestic violence
- Addressing gender issues in local media
- The number of cases of domestic violence reported to the police and reported to the court

Indicators related to social services

- The number of women in need
- Socio-economic situation of Roma women and Egyptian
- Quality of social services in the area

Indicators related to women's participation in decision-making

- Respect for gender quotas by political parties
- Percentage of women and men participating in meetings to draft municipal budget

2. Methodology

2.1 Sampling

Regarding Lac Municipality, as part of this research (baseline), representatives of the various state and local organizations were interviewed. The interviewees were selected based on the information they possess and the role they play in relation to the four indicators (participation of women in decision-making, domestic violence, economic development and social services).

A focus group with 9 people from the community (4 female and 5 male) was also conducted. The participants discussed and made their evaluation on local governance (in terms of indicators: participation of women in decision-making, domestic violence, economic development and services social).

2.2 Instruments

During this research semi-structured interviews and community Score Cards were to evaluate local governance (related to indicators: participation of women in decision-making, domestic violence, economic development and social services).

2.3 Limitations

In terms of sampling, the data of this study are not very representative in quantitative terms. This is particularly valid for the section on Local Governance Evaluation (related indicators: participation of women in decision-making, domestic violence, economic development and social services).

However, the statistical and qualitative data gathered during semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders play a very important role in relation to the four indicators. (participation of women in decision-making, domestic violence, economic development and social services).

3. Actual situation

3.1 Summary of the main findings

Based on the situational analysis of women's rights in Lac, several problems were identified in regard to the four components analyzed, being women's participation in decision making, economic development, domestic violence and social services.

Some of the main findings worth mentioning are¹:

- The Office for Gender Equality and Child Protection in Lac Municipality is functional; however its budget is not sufficient to manage the reported cases of domestic violence or issues of gender inequalities in general. The support is provided mostly by World Vision Albania, an organization operating in Lac area, but its work focuses mostly on awareness raising and support toward initiatives at local level.
- Employees at the Office for Gender Equality and Child Protection are required to perform multi task jobs, which is overloading and inefficient.
- The Referral System is functional but more concrete steps must be undertaken to support the management of the reported cases of domestic violence.
- There are many difficulties in the reintegration of the victims of domestic violence after the Protection Order is issued by the court.
- There exists a lack of trust in the protection that the Protection Order offers to the victims of domestic violence.
- Women in Kurbin are very active in political and social life and they also hold many leading and decision making positions.
- The inclusion of female names in the lists of the local political candidates is fictitious.

3.2 Main findings regarding women's participation in decision making

According to the community members' perceptions, women are underrepresented at decision making levels. The majority of the participants in the focus groups, men in particular, think that it is the women who must be more active and break the taboos and change the prevailing patriarchal mentality, according to which women must stay at home and look after the children.

According to the participants, the women's political forums in Puka are active only during the political campaigns and sometimes they also organize parties during specific holidays. They have no impact on empowering the women's participation in decision making. Moreover, the participants in the focus groups state that the political parties' gender quota didn't have any considerable impact on the participation of women in politics. Most of the women's names in the lists were merely used to fill the lists with the required number of the political candidates.

Important facts regarding women's participation in decision making:

¹Below you will find a more detailed description of the findings, based on each respective indicator.

- The inclusion of female names in the lists of local political candidates is fictitious.
- According to Lac Municipality representatives, female members of the women’s political forums in Lac are active only during the political campaigns and on specific holidays and are not working on undertaking serious steps to empower women and increase their participation in decision making.
- The low rate of women’s participation in decision making can be observed in the Municipality Council, where only 7 out of 25 members are females (28%). Two vice heads of the Municipality Council are females, which can be considered a positive step towards representation of women in decision making positions.
- Only 1 out of 8 Municipality sectors is leaded by a female (13%).
- In Kurbin, the head of Social Party, one of the main political parties in Albania, is a female.
- According to the participants, the economic situation and the abilities to generate family income are the main factors of women’s low participation rate in decision making.

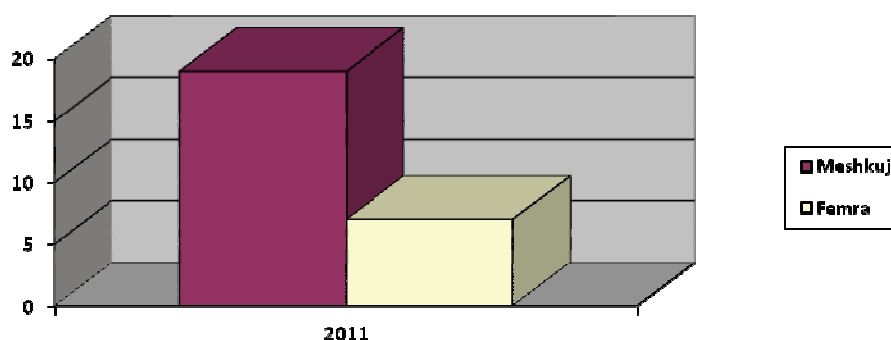


Figure 1. *Representation of women in Lac Municipality Council after the last local elections 2011*

As can be seen in the figure, women’s representation in the Commune Council is not high; however it is significant as an opportunity that women have to raise their voice about the role of women in decision making, political participation, gender sensitive budgeting and other issues related to women’s rights.

3.3 Main findings regarding domestic violence

According to the interviewees, community members in Lac are informed in regard to the Law against Domestic Violence. Several informative meetings and trainings have been organized with community members, targeting mostly marginalized women. Media has played a crucial

role in informing the community on cases of domestic violence. Nevertheless, community members and local government's representatives state that more informative meetings must be organized in order to fully inform all the community.

All the interviewees and representatives of local government institutions mentioned the same causes of domestic violence:

- Economic difficulties, particularly high unemployment rate among men who are considered as bread winners of the family
- Men's abuse with alcohol and other narcotics
- Men's abuse with gambling
- Men's jealousy

During 2012, 10 cases of domestic violence have been reported to the local Office of Gender Equality and Child Protection, in which all the victims were females. Protection Orders have been issued by the Court of Kurbin region to 7 of these cases. Not all the cases however are reported to the Police Office.

Some of the main reasons why women do not report the domestic violence to the Police Office are:

- Fear of social prejudices and discrimination
- Economic difficulties and unemployment
- Difficulties of reintegration after the reporting, especially in the case when the extended family does not support the decision of the woman to report the domestic violence

Important facts regarding domestic violence:

- Community members have the basic knowledge regarding Low on Domestic Violence.
- Effective interventions (training sessions, awareness raising campaigns etc.) have taken place to raise community members' awareness on domestic violence; however these interventions have been mostly sporadic and undertaken by civil society organizations (World Vision Albania).
- Multidisciplinary interventions and periodic meetings have been coordinated by the local Office of Gender Equality and Child Protection. The Partners' Group has been established as a result of common effort on behalf of several local structures, such as the District Court, Hospital, Prosecution, Labor Office, Public Health Directorate etc. However, there are difficulties in implementing this agreement according to the procedures and roles and responsibilities foreseen, such as identification of the case, management of the case, referring the case etc.

- There is a lack of budget of the local Office of Gender Equality and Child Protection, which undermines the work of this office in managing cases of domestic violence. The main financial support has been provided by civil society organizations, focusing on domestic violence. However, such support has been mostly spent on awareness raising campaigns rather than case management.
- There exists lack of trust in regard to the actual protection from the Protection Order and punishment of the perpetrator in case s/he violates the Order.
- Other than the free Police numbers (126/129), there is no free call line to report or ask for assistance in case of domestic violence.
- The establishment of an emergency center or shelter is necessary in order to provide the victims of domestic violence with the immediate support and assistance.

3.4 Main findings regarding economic development

According to the community members, in Kurbin district there are no local services assisting the professional formation and/or development of women. There is no professional formation center. The community members have no information regarding policies on fiscal facilities for women entrepreneurship.

Important facts regarding the economic development of women in Lac:

- There is a considerable number of women employed in the local public administration, mainly in positions of average status. There are several examples of women in leading positions as well, such as in the educational and cultural sectors.
- There are several entrepreneurial initiatives undertaken by women but there are no fiscal facilities supporting the establishment and development of such entrepreneurships.

According to the data from the Regional Labor Office, the total number of unemployed persons in Kurbin district is 8052 whereas the total number of registered employed persons is 4324. The data is not gender segregated, thus no information is available regarding the number of registered employed and unemployed males and females.

3.5 Main findings regarding social services

- **Social Centers at local level**
 - ***Economic assistance***

According to the data obtained by the Economic Assistance Office, there is a total of 1029 families living on economic assistance, in 8% of which the head of the family is female (widow, divorced etc.). According to the law on economic assistance, the later can be

received only by the head of the family. The high number of families under economic assistance is an indicator of the poverty prevailing in Lac Municipality.

Lac Municipality	Tot. number of beneficiaries	Female beneficiaries	% of female beneficiaries
Lac	1029	83	8%

- Persons with disabilities

According to the data obtained from Lac Municipality, there is a total of 575 persons with disabilities, 43 % of whom are females (248).

Kind of disability	No. of persons	No. of females	No. of males
Mental and physical	415	187	228
Blind	88	39	49
Tetra-paraplegic	72	22	50

At present, there is no daily center for persons with disabilities or other social centers.

- Daily Center for Elderly

At present, there is no daily center to host the elderly. There used to be a building for the elderly could, which was functional till the beginning of the 90’s, which is still called “the retired persons’ building”. However, it was closed and at present there is no center where the elderly can go. When the weather is warm, they spend the time in the Lac city’s main park.

➤ Infrastructure of crèches, kindergartens and schools

At present, in Lac there are 4 public and 3 private crèches, 5 public and 1 private basic education schools and 1 public and 1 private high school. The hygienic conditions in crèches are overall satisfactory whereas in the public crèches the high number of children and insufficient space are serious problems undermining the educational process.

Basic education schools are in satisfactory conditions, with the exception of public school no. 1 which must be fully reconstructed.

At the beginning of the academic year, Lac Municipality invested in improving the conditions of the crèches by eliminating the humidity, painting and disinfecting them. However, full reconstruction is necessary, including reconstruction of *the hydraulic network, parquet* and external premises.

➤ **Road and Electricity Infrastructure**

The road infrastructure has been significantly improved, especially the main roads. However, many other roads within the city and roads connecting Lac city to the surrounding villages are damaged and need to be reconstructed.

There is still need for lightening in many roads as only the main city roads are fully covered by road lights while the neighborhood streets are not completely lighted.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Women's participation in decision making

Based on the findings from this situational analysis focusing on the actual situation of women in decision making, we can conclude that it is necessary that women in Lac play a more active role in the social and political life, especially in decision making levels and in regard to decisions that directly affect the situation of women.

Some concrete steps that can be undertaken to empower the role of women in decision making are:

- Advocacy and lobby campaigns aiming at empowerment of the women's role in decision making and gender equality, especially before the electoral campaigns, in order to successfully implement the gender quota foreseen for political candidates, rather than fictitiously including female names to fulfill the electoral list.
- Supporting the local Office on Gender Equality and Child Protection in Lac Municipality to better protect women and contribute to achievement of gender equality by efficient management of cases of domestic violence.
- Immediate allocation of budget to the local Office on Gender Equality and Child Protection.
- Capacity building of the local Office on Gender Equality and Child Protection's staff to conduct gender sensitive budgeting and organize consultative meetings with Lac Municipality Council.
- Awareness raising among local structures' representatives and community members on issues regarding gender equality and domestic violence.

- Advocacy at local level with Lac Commune Council’s female members to promote women’s role and participation in public life.
- Forums and meetings with community members to discuss stories of successful as positive and reinforcing examples of the active role of women and their contribution in decision making.

4.2 Domestic violence

Domestic violence is one of the main issues regarding women and gender equality in Lac. Due to the above mentioned reasons (underlining economic difficulties, social under representativeness etc.), an all-inclusive approach must be undertaken to facilitate the improvement of women’s situation by reinforcing positive practices that eliminate domestic violence and empower women.

Recommendations on possible interventions to eliminate domestic violence:

- Awareness raising among community members and local structures’ employees on issues related to domestic violence and gender equality, including their addressing procedures.
- Open forums and trainings with community members, targeting men in particular, on the importance of eliminating domestic violence and empowering women to participate in the public life.
- Awareness raising among local stakeholders on the importance of the reporting of domestic violence cases and their referral by the respective structures.
- Capacity building and of the local Office on Gender Equality and Child Protection’s staff, responsible for managing the cases of domestic violence and gender equality.
- A free call line to facilitate the reporting of domestic violence cases must be established and promoted to the community.
- A 24 – 72 hours Emergency Center must be established, where victims of domestic violence can be temporarily sheltered in cases when the victim is displaced from the house and is waiting for long term sheltering arrangement.
- Empowerment of the local Protection Net (Multidisciplinary/Technical Group) to coordinate all the local structures through a collaboration agreement where the steps to be undertaken by each group member for management of a domestic violence case are described in details.
- Capacity building of local actors on management of issues regarding domestic violence, especially on how to address them as prescribed by the Referral System.

4.3 Economic development

Recommendations regarding the economic development:

- Awareness raising and lobbying with local government representatives to implement the fiscal facilities which support and promote women entrepreneurship.
- Evaluation of labor market's demands and professional capacities of men and women available in Lac.
- Capacity building of women in professions highly demanded by the labor market.
- Capacity building of local structures' representatives to facilitate the participation of women in labor market by evaluating the market demands and women's potential.

4.4 Social services

Other than the economic assistance, there are no other social services offered to the marginalized groups in Kurbin district.

Some suggestions and recommendations to improve the situation of social services are as follows:

- Increase of the monthly amount of economic assistance is essential in order for the beneficiaries to be able to fulfill the family's basic needs (food, clothing, education etc.).
- The law on economic assistance states that the latter is received by the head of the family. An amendment to this item is necessary in order for women to have the same right as men to receive the economic assistance provided for their families.
- A daily center for elderly and another one for children with disabilities must be established to assist the needs of these marginalized groups.
- A free call line to facilitate the reporting of domestic violence cases must be established and promoted to the community.
- A 24 – 72 hours Emergency Center must be established, where victims of domestic violence can be temporarily sheltered in cases when the victim is displaced from the house and is waiting for long term sheltering arrangement.
- More investments must focus on heating the school premises during winter and improving the quality of teaching and learning process by at least establishing the necessary laboratories in schools.

Annex 1

Evaluation of community on local governance through "Score Card Methodology"

Scores: 1 – 5

1 – Very bad 2 – Bad 3 – Neither good nor bad 4 – Good 5 – Very good

AREA	INDICATOR	SCORE	COMMENTS
Women's participation in local decision making	Implementation of gender quota by the political parties in the local elections	4	<p>According to the participants in the focus groups, the gender quota is respected by the political parties when the members of the Municipality Council are elected; however, it is not respected in the race for Mayor, where there have participated only male candidates.</p> <p>The lists of political parties' candidates of local elections 2011 prove that all the parties respected the gender quota in the case of Municipality Council.</p> <p>At present, 20% of the Municipality Council members are females.</p>
	Role of Women's Political Forums in increasing the representation of women in important public decision making	3	<p>The role of Women's Political Forums within the political party is insignificant. There are no data on political parties' budget and the percentage provided for the Women's Forums.</p>
	Community participation in general and women's participation in particular in local decision making	3	<p>Lac Municipality practices participative gender sensitive budgeting. It is necessary to increase the participation of citizens in the budgeting process. Community members rarely participate in the Municipality Council's meetings although the notices are delivered in public places at least 5 days before the meeting.</p>
	Women representation in important public decision making	2	<p>Only a few directorates of the Lac Municipality are headed by females, and in other local institutions women are underrepresented in leading and decision making positions.</p> <p>According to the participants in the focus groups, the main factors of women's under representativeness are the lack of information of women on political forums, lack of economic independence, and also because businesses in Lac are not collaborative and do not reinforce women's initiatives.</p>

AREA	INDICATOR	SCORE	COMMENTS
Addressing violence against women	Informing the community in general and women in particular on the law against domestic violence	2	<i>Very few participants in the focus groups were aware of the Law against Domestic Violence. They had not heard about any case of implementation of law in Lac Municipality.</i>
	Addressing of violence by the local structures	2	<i>The Referral System (the coordinated reaction of various state institutions at local level) against domestic violence is not institutionalized yet by means of a common agreement among the local state institutions involved. Lac Municipality has no specific budget to address cases of domestic violence. Office for Gender Equality and against Domestic Violence is not fully functional in terms of fulfilling all its prescribed roles and responsibilities.</i>
	Awareness raising campaigns organized by local structures to address issues regarding domestic violence	3	<i>Several awareness raising and informative campaigns with community members have been organized, mainly by civil society organizations. No initiatives have been undertaken by the local institutions as no funds are available for such activities.</i>
	Specific policies in place which guarantee reintegration of female victims of domestic violence	1	<i>The participants in the focus groups were not aware of any specific program designed by the Municipality of Lac to prevent domestic violence. The candidates for Mayor are not willing to fight domestic violence as they might be considered as protectors of women.</i>

AREA	INDICATOR	SCORE	COMMENTS
Economic situation	Initiatives undertaken by local structures which support and promote employment of women	2	<i>The participants in the focus groups were not aware of any initiative undertaken by the Lac Municipality to facilitate employment of women. In Lac, there is a high unemployment rate and the participants were unhappy about the work of the Labor Office. According to them, there are many unemployed persons registered in the Labor Office who have not received economic assistance yet.</i>
	Local policies in regard to fiscal facilities which support and promote women's businesses	2	<i>The participants in the focus groups were not aware of any professional formation course offered by the local state authorities in Lac. Moreover, they said that there in Lac there is no Professional Formation Center. According to Lac Municipality representatives, there are 1 hair dressing saloon and 1 tailoring saloon which offer professional formation courses in the respective area. All the individuals registered in these courses are females. Interested candidates must pay for the course, while there is no professional formation courses offered for free or at a minimal fee. Marginalized and vulnerable women are not able to afford these fees, thus it is not possible for them to profit from these courses and improve their chances to access the labor market.</i>
	Local policies in regard to fiscal facilities which support and promote women's businesses	2	<i>The participants in the focus groups were not aware of local policies to support fiscal facilities for women. The local authorities admitted the same. According to the data obtained from Lac Municipality, the number of entrepreneur women is half the number of entrepreneur men. For example, 2011 data show that only 30% of the new businesses created in 2011 were administered by women, while the number of new businesses in 2012 is almost half of the number of businesses registered one year ago.</i>
Social services and local infrastructure	Social centers at local level	1	<i>In Lac there is no shelter for accommodation of victims of domestic violence. Moreover, there is no daily center for elderly and for persons with disabilities.</i>

AREA	INDICATOR	SCORE	COMMENTS
	Economic assistance	2	<i>According to the participants in the focus groups, the economic assistance is insufficient and does not cover even the minimum needs of a family. The economic assistance is given to the head of the family, which is the man, so women do not enjoy the same right as men to receive it in person.</i>
	Infrastructure of crèches and kindergartens	3	<i>The hygienic conditions in crèches are overall satisfactory whereas in the public crèches the high number of children and insufficient space are serious problems undermining the educational process.</i>
			<i>At the beginning of the academic year, Lac Municipality invested in improving the conditions of the crèches by eliminating the humidity, painting and disinfecting them. However, full reconstruction is necessary, including reconstruction of the hydraulic network, parquet and external premises.</i>
	Infrastructure of schools	3	<i>The public basic education school no. 1's situation is very problematic as a full reconstruction of it is necessary. The terrace of the public high school must also be reconstructed, and also the external premises of the school. There is no sufficient space for the growing number of students who register to complete high school education.</i>
	Infrastructure of roads	2	<i>The participants said they were not satisfied with the infrastructure and lighting of the roads. They said no reconstruction has been conducted since many years now. The garbage is taken away regularly but the containers are not disinfected on regular basis.</i>



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