

BASELINE REPORT

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT INDICATORS

SHKODRA



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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; counselling 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 Shkodra 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 6 people from the Shkodra community (3 female and 3 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 situation in Shkodra, 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:

- A municipality structure responsible for issues related to domestic violence was established in June 2009, as a substructure of the Social Services in Shkodra Municipality. The Office for Gender Equality and against Domestic Violence has the necessary human capacities but no sufficient budget to support gender inequality in general and the reported cases of domestic violence in particular.
- The Referral System against Domestic Violence is composed of both state and non-state actors and it is working in its full capacity to manage cases of domestic violence.
- A lot of difficulties have been observed in regard to the reintegration of domestic violence victims after the Protection Order has been issued by the Court (the responsible authority to issue the protection Order).
- There is no gender sensitive budgeting in drafting the Municipality budget.
- Involvement of women in the lists of local elections' candidates is fictitious, while there are no women candidates for leading positions, including the position of Mayor.
- There is good coordination between the Professional Development Center and the Regional Labor Office for the identification of the persons in need of professional qualifications. However, there is no data on how the qualified persons perform in the labor market.

3.2 Main findings regarding women's participation in decision making

Based on community members' perceptions, women are well represented in decision making level. They believe that women in Shkodra have always been highly respected and they have always had their share in public life. This, they say, is a consequence of a long standing civic culture where women have played an active role in the cultural life of the city. However, this does not characterize the whole community. The recent demographic movements have resulted in many people from North Albania coming to live in Shkodra. Usually they have left their land properties in the country and are trying to have a better life in city, where they are faced with many difficulties. The patriarchal culture is more salient among the newcomers.

Most of the participants in the focus groups, including females, think that the main reason why women are not highly involved in decision making (including decision making within the family) is that they are not primarily responsible for providing 'bread' for their families.

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

There are several interesting opinions regarding the participation of women in politics. One of the participants said that ‘Women’s participation in politics is a fraud. The gender quota, if it was to help women to achieve gender equality, must be 50%’.

Important facts regarding women’s participation in decision making:

- Women’s low participation in decision making is particularly obvious in Shkodra Municipality Council, where there are only 6 females out of 45 members in total. Thus, only 13% of the councilors of Shkodra Municipality are females.
- At the directorate or sector management level within the Municipality, 4 out of 8 directorates are led by females. The drafting of the budget is proposed by the head/responsible person of each directorate/sector. The participation of women at this level can be considered as equal.
- The Municipality representatives say that it is difficult to identify whether gender sensitive budgeting or proposed interventions targeting gender inequalities have taken place.
- The majority of employees in a considerable number of important local government institutions are women, and many of them occupy leading positions.
- The lack of women’s involvement in the family economy by being financially responsible has a negative impact on women’s participation in public life; their role in society is considered to be passive.
- The actual situation of women’s participation in decision making is worse in poor areas. The prevailing patriarchal mentality considers woman as an object and the man as having full power on her. Such mentality has a significant impact on her participation in the social life of the community. Extreme cases of women’s lack of participation and representativeness are observed particularly in areas populated by marginalized groups, such as Roma and Egyptians.
- Civil society organizations in Shkodra are very active and efficient in raising awareness on women’s rights and gender equality.

3.3 Main findings regarding domestic violence

Many representatives of Shkodra community said that they are well aware of the law against Domestic Violence. Likewise, representatives of local government institutions and local non-governmental organizations working on gender equality and against domestic violence admit the same. However, specific items detailing the protective measures of this law are not that popular. Awareness raising through Media is worth mentioning as a positive example, in particular on referral and management of cases of domestic violence.

In regards to the causes of domestic violence, based on domestic violence cases displaced by Media or cases that community members have heard of in their community, they mention:

- Economic difficulties
- Patriarchal mentality
- Low educational level
- Impunity of domestic violence (which can on its turn generate more violence)

According to the data from Regional Police Office of Shkodra, specifically from the sector of Domestic Violence and Juvenile Protection, there is a significant number of cases reported. During 2012, 80 cases of domestic violence (in which all the victim is the woman) were reported in Shkodra district. The coordination of work between the Police Office and Court is efficient; the Court places the Protection Order and the Immediate Order within the foreseen legal time limits. However, according to the Shkodra Police Directorate, sector against Domestic Violence, there are many cases not reported due to different reasons. Some of these reasons are:

- Low educational level
- The patriarchal mentality and fear from prejudices
- Lack of economic opportunities (in case of divorce after the violence is reported)
- Integration difficulties after the reporting of violence
- Lack of trust that the perpetrator will actually stop the abuse after being reported

Important facts regarding domestic violence:

- There is insufficient knowledge on the law against Domestic Violence, especially among marginalized groups, such as those living in Liria, Guerrile and Marklulaj neighborhoods.
- Community members are not well acknowledged on the concrete assistance and security that the law against Domestic Violence offers.
- The local Referral System has the necessary capacity to manage the domestic violence cases and other gender inequality related cases. However, there is room for improvement in regard to immediate and efficient support toward the management of the cases reported. There are several cases in which police officers failed to manage the case as a result of lack of timely coordination among multidisciplinary group.
- There is a provisory Emergency Center for Victims of Domestic Violence, at the premises of “Hapat e lehtë” (Local NGO) for female victims of domestic violence. However this center has offered help only in few cases due to lack of space or other reasons. *There is immediate need for a Shelter/Center for DV victims in Shkodra.*

- Community members are confused and skeptical on the protection offered by the Protection Order.
- Impunity and economic difficulties are two key underlying factors of domestic violence.
- Other than Police numbers (126/129) offered for free, there are no specific free call lines to report cases of domestic violence. Victims of domestic violence can call the local Office for Gender Equality and against Domestic Violence but, given that these numbers are not free of charge, this might be an obstacle for the victims to call and report, especially marginalized women.
- The State Police has organized awareness raising meetings with high school students on issues of domestic violence and protection of minors.
- The local Office for Gender Equality and against Domestic Violence has also organized awareness raising meetings with community members, including preparation and distribution of informative leaflets. These meetings have been organized in collaboration with civil society organizations working in the field of gender equality and women rights, such as ‘Gruaja te gruaja’ (Woman to Woman) and ‘Hapat e lehtë’ (Light Steps).
- There is an inter institutional agreement among local stakeholders, otherwise called the Technical Group, whose members are relevant actors in issues of gender equality and domestic violence (representatives of State Police, Regional Education Directorate, Regional Labor Office, several local NGOs, legal medical doctor, Public Health Directorate etc.).

3.4 Main findings regarding economic development

Based on the perceptions of community members, there is a significant number of female employees in the public administration section, although not many of them hold leading positions. In regard to existing policies on fiscal facilities to promote and support female entrepreneurship, the respondents claim that they are not informed on the topic. Local government structures in Shkodra admit that fiscal facilities exist but only on paper; none of these policies have been implemented so far.

Important facts regarding the economic development of women:

- There is a significant number of female employees in public administration sector and most of them hold positions of an average status.

- There exist several businesses or other private initiatives led by women but there are no fiscal facilities to support and promote such initiatives.
- The Center for professional Formation in Shkodra facilitates and supports professional capacity building of men and women who do not have a profession. Beneficiaries can personally apply to the Center or be referred by the Regional Labor Office; if referred by the Regional Labor Office, the beneficiary pays a reduced training fee. For members of certain social categories, such as persons with disabilities, these courses are offered for free.
- One of the main challenges of professional formation remains its connection to the labor market. In order to face this challenge, the Regional Labor Directorate and the Center for Professional Formation have been collaborating, facilitated by an efficient coordination. As displayed in the below graphic, the number of females registered in the Center for Professional Formation during 2011 was very high, whereas by the end of September 2012 the number of females was very low, especially in comparison to 2011.

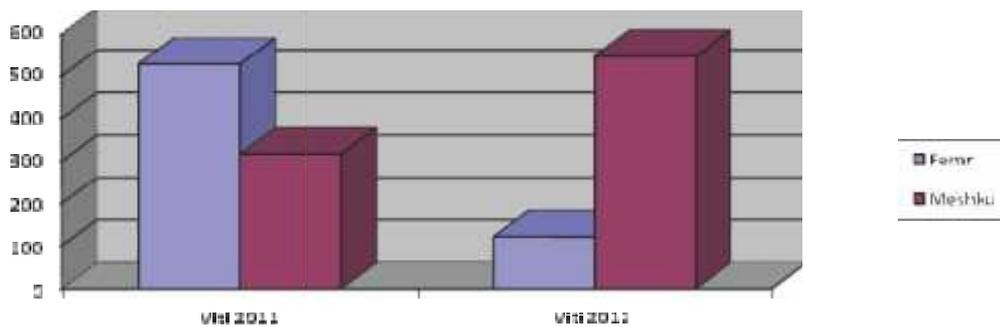


Figure 1. Number of males and females registered in the Center for Professional Formation during 2011 and 2012.

According to the data obtained by the Regional Labor Directorate at Shkodra Municipality, the unemployment rate at district level is 21%. According to data from the same source, a total of 9548 persons are at present registered as unemployed, and 9055 of them are females.

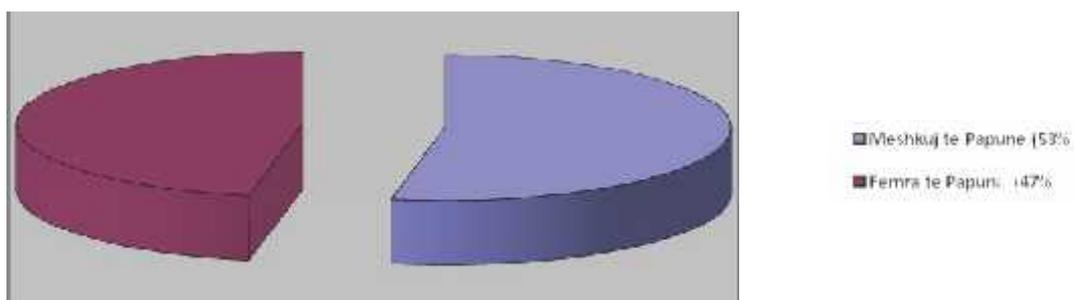


Figure 2. *Percentage of males and females registered as unemployed at present*

The total number of employed persons in Shkodra district is 20081. However, no analysis can be conducted on women/men ration in employment as there are no gender segregated data.

According to the data obtained from Regional Directorate of Social Security, the social security paid by women in Shkodra district is higher than that paid by men. In 2011, the total number of farmers who paid the social security in Shkodra district is 5618, 63% of which (3534) are women.



Figure 3. *Percentage of male and female farmers paying insurance in 2011*

For 2012, there is no gender segregated data available. Representatives of Shkodra Municipality say that gender segregation of data is conducted at the end of each financial year.

3.5 Main findings regarding social services

➤ Social Centers at local level

- *Economic assistance*

According to the data obtained by the Economic Assistance Office in Shkodra Municipality, there is a total number of 3245 families living on economic assistance in this district, in 40% 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. Thus, women compose 40% of the total number of persons who receive the economic assistance.

Neighborhood	Tot. number of beneficiaries	Female beneficiaries	% of female beneficiaries
Shkoder Municipality (5 regions)	3245	1300	40%

- *Persons with disabilities*

According to the data, in Shkodra district there is a total of 379 persons with disabilities, 42 % of whom are females.

Kind of disability	No. of persons	No. of females	No. of males
Mental and physical	1908	815	
Blind	No data available	No data available	No data available
Tetra-paraplegic	No data available	No data available	No data available

There are several daily centers for children with disabilities, such as ‘Papa Giovanni’, established by local organizations operating in Shkodra.

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 play a more active role in the social and political life, especially by participating in the decision making levels where decisions that have a direct impact on women in this district are taken.

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

- Improving the impact of Women’s Political Forums, especially on issues that threaten women rights, as foreseen by national and/or international laws. Women’s Political Forums need to focus more on the current, concrete everyday problems women nowadays are facing, rather than organization of political events or celebrations.
- Organization of advocacy and lobby campaigns at local and national level on empowerment of 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 the fictitious inclusion of female names to fulfill the electoral lists.
- Empowerment of existing local structures on gender equality and against domestic violence in the Municipality of Shkodra and the respective communes, in order to

focus on awareness raising and efficient management of gender equality issues in general and domestic violence in particular.

- Awareness raising among members of Shkodra Municipality Council on gender sensitive budgeting during the preparation of the overall budget.
- Awareness raising campaigns in local Media on the importance of women's participation in decision making.

4.2 Domestic violence

Recommendations on possible interventions to eliminate domestic violence:

- Awareness raising in community by working with small groups (families for example) on family values, reciprocal respect and roles and responsibilities of the family members. Such work, if continuous and consistent, would help in preventing occurrence of domestic violence.
- Continuous awareness raising among local actors (representatives of Labor Office, Police, Court, NGOs, Municipality, psychologists, lawyers etc.) to improve their knowledge and skills to identify, report and manage cases of gender equality and domestic violence.
- Empowerment of Local Protection Net (Multidisciplinary/Technical Group) to be more efficient in coordinating 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.
- Establishing a free call line to facilitate the reporting of domestic violence cases and once it is established, to promote it to the community.

4.3 Economic development

Recommendations regarding the economic development area:

- Gender segregation of data must be conducted in order to obtain the necessary information in regards to the number of employed women and men. Identification of the current employment situation helps in designing the appropriate interventions in order to improve gender inequalities in employment.
- Despite a considerable number of private initiatives in business undertaken by females, there are no fiscal facilities to support and promote women entrepreneurship.

- Capacity building of local structures' representatives (Municipality, Labor Office etc.) to facilitate participation of women in labor market by evaluating the market demands and women's potential, especially in marginalized areas (Guerrile, Liria, Marklulaj etc.).
- Designing potential programs and projects on behalf of local government and civil society aiming at economic empowerment of women based on market demands, as well as evaluating the needs of the marginalized women.
- Collaboration among local government institutions with civil society organizations in order to promote and support men and women following professional formation courses.

4.4 Social services

Some of the social services offered in Shkodra are a result of the initiatives undertaken by civil society organizations in collaboration with decision making structures of the local government, aiming at assisting the marginalized social groups based on the respective laws and strategies. Despite of these initiatives, there are several aspects where immediate intervention in the social services' area is necessary in order to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Some suggestions and recommendations 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 foresees that the economic assistance 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.
- Investing more on 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	1	<i>According to the respondents, there is a lack of balance between women and men in the lists. Participation of women in decision making must start in the family, the respondents say, while the patriarchal mentality prohibits it by considering the man as the head of the house. He is the bread winner, and as such his burden of responsibilities is higher. Respondents believe that women's participation in politics by gender quota is a fraud because in reality women's names are only used as figures to fulfill the list.</i>
	Role of Women's Political Forums in increasing the representation of women in important public decision making	2	<i>Women's Political Forums don't play the role that they are supposed to.</i>
	Community participation in general and women's participation in particular in local decision making	2.5	<i>Women in Shkodra have always been highly respected and they have always had their share in public life. This is a consequence of a long standing civic culture where women have played an active role in the cultural life of the city. However, they are not very active when it comes to decision making roles, such as being a member of the Municipality Council. According to the respondents, the number of</i>

AREA	INDICATOR	SCORE	COMMENTS
			<i>female members in the Municipality Council is very low.</i>
	Women representation in important public decision making	3	<i>The work conducted by local organizations is a concrete example of women actively fighting for their rights in decision making. Moreover, women are very active in other public institutions, such as universities for example. They have the necessary capacities to participate in the public life. However, their participation is not equal to men's.</i>
Addressing violence against women	Informing the community in general and women in particular on the law against domestic violence	4	<i>Media has played a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting the law against domestic violence. Most of the women say they have heard about the law and have good knowledge about it.</i>
	Addressing of violence by the local structures	3	<i>Police Office is one of the most involved institutions on cases of domestic violence. Local organizations, such 'Hapat e Lehte' (Light Steps), Trokitja (Knock) etc., have also been very active in addressing domestic violence.</i>
	Awareness raising campaigns organized by local structures to address issues regarding domestic violence	3	<i>Awareness raising campaigns are organized mainly by Media and local organizations. However, violence is a difficult issue to be addressed and reported because of the economic difficulties, low educational level, fear of prejudices and involvement of children.</i>
	Specific policies in place which guarantee reintegration of female victims of domestic violence	1	<i>No information available.</i>
Economic situation	Initiatives undertaken by local structures which support and promote employment of women	1	<i>No information available.</i>
	Existing local services which help and improve professional formation	3	<i>There is a center for professional formation but the courses there are not offered for free. Several</i>

AREA	INDICATOR	SCORE	COMMENTS
	of women		<i>organizations have supported persons who need a professional course by paying the individual fee required.</i>
	Local policies in regard to fiscal facilities which support and promote women's businesses	1	<i>No information available.</i>
4. Social services and local infrastructure	Social centers at local level	3	<i>There are several centers established for marginalized women by local organizations.</i>
	Economic assistance	1	<i>This amount is insignificant; it is insufficient to fulfill the needs of a family.</i>
	Infrastructure of crèches and kindergartens	3	<i>The infrastructure of crèches and kindergartens is satisfactory.</i>
	Infrastructure of schools	3	<i>The infrastructure of schools is satisfactory.</i>
	Infrastructure of roads	2.5	<i>The infrastructure of roads is good.</i>



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