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# THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE NORTHERN KOSOVO



Women from the  
North on their  
position in society  
and inclusion in  
public life



Advocacy Center  
for Democratic Culture

Women for women - united in power project, implemented by Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC), has been supported by Reactor - Research in Action and their partners through the Action "Furthering Gender Equality through the EU Accession Process". This Action is funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

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## About the project "Women for Women - United in Power"

The research was conducted within the project "Women for Women - United in Power", implemented by the Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture, and supported by Reactor - Research in Action and their partners through the Action "Furthering Gender Equality through the EU Accession Process". The overall aim of this research is to emphasize that no country has achieved full gender equality, despite significant progress in socio-economic development. Additionally, this research will provide insight into the perception of women from the North of Kosovo <sup>\*1</sup> on their position in society and their inclusion in public life in general.

## Research goals

The main goal of this research is to analyze the position of women in Kosovo, as well as to thoroughly present how much success we, as a society, have achieved in overcoming gender stereotypes and barriers. One of the indicators of gender stereotypes is evident gender inequality, which still leaves serious consequences not only on women who are directly exposed to it but also on the whole family as the base of each society, and finally on the society as a unity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation has deteriorated and undoubtedly increased gender inequality. Bearing in mind that the pandemic affected the economic sphere, increasing the percentage of women who lost their jobs or endured unpaid work at home, among other things, it led to an increased risk of violence against women in every aspect. Furthermore, the research will analyze and assess the impact of stereotypes and a patriarchal environment, which inevitably have an enormous influence on the position of women in our society. There is still a common opinion that, on average, women earn less than men in the same workplace, they also face

various prejudices that prevent them from pursuing professions that are traditionally attributed to men, and are represented in disproportionately smaller numbers in leadership positions in the public and private sectors. In addition, they undoubtedly devote more of their time to taking care of children, the elderly, and housework, when compared to men. This research will, among other things, emphasize that equal participation of women in all spheres of public and social life is essential for the development and prosperity of the entire society in Kosovo.

Additionally, the research will highlight the importance of providing the opportunity for women's voices to be heard and for their points of view and perspectives to be valued and taken into consideration when making decisions related to the improvement of women's positions. Besides, it is of paramount importance to adjust the law and the political environment to get closer to European standards and harmonize with the official positions of the European Union and its members.

Thematically, the research addresses three aspects of this issue. The first part of the research deals with the perceptions of women through focus groups including women in leadership positions. The focus groups presented in detail the perspective of women from the Kosovo political scene, women from the police, the judiciary, and young law students who represent the future of the Kosovo public scene. Another aspect of the research analyzes individual thoughts of prominent women from politics, judiciary, and police in the form of interviews providing us with the opportunity to gain insight into their impression of gender equality and all kinds of issues and discrimination against women, through their personal experiences.

In addition to this, the study also combines elements of quantitative (surveys and statistical processing) research.

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<sup>1</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

## Methodology and design of quantitative research

The online research was conducted from April to May 2022. A total of 422 citizens from different ethnic background residing in North Mitrovica, Leposavic, Zubin Potok, and Zvečan participated in the research. Out of a total number, 74% were female respondents, while 26% were male. The measuring instrument was designed in the form of a questionnaire that consisted of 32 questions.

Sample type: Stratified representative random sample, based on the municipality of residence.

Post-stratification: Age, level of education, and employment status.

It is necessary to point out that, given the fact that there are no official statistics on the demographic structure of the target population, i.e. the Serb population in Kosovo, the representativeness of the sample can be viewed tentatively.

## Methodology and design of qualitative research

Focus groups

Duration: The survey was conducted from February 2022 to March 2022. Research instrument: A guide for a discussion of 12 thematic units.

A number of focus groups: 4 groups (focus

groups with women from the judiciary, politics, police, and young law students).

The total number of participants: 37 (thirty-seven).

Criteria for selection of participants: variables, gender, age, place of residence, level of reeducation, occupation.

100% college or university education

100% female participants

Interviews

Duration: The research was conducted in March 2022. Research Instrument: A Guide to a 10-Area Discussion. Total number of interviewees: 6 interviewees.

Criteria for the selection of interlocutors: participation in the socio-political life of women in Kosovo.

Interlocutors:

Anica Jakovljevic - a police officer of the Kosovo Intervention Unit,

Maida Sijak - civilian policewoman in the Department for Juvenile Delinquency,

Fatima Ulakovic - translator at the Basic Court in Mitrovica,

Marija Miskovic - Master Lawyer, Independent Legal Associate at the Faculty of Medicine, and also a Legal Consultant in the Office for Free Legal Aid,

Ilda Krama - Public Relations Officer in the Deputy Mayor's Office

Milica Radovanovic - long-term activist of Kosovo civil society, long-term journalist, and fighter for the rights of non-majority communities in Kosovo

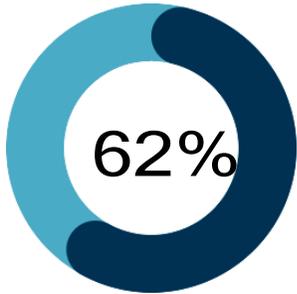
# RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Women from the North  
on their position in the society



## Key research results

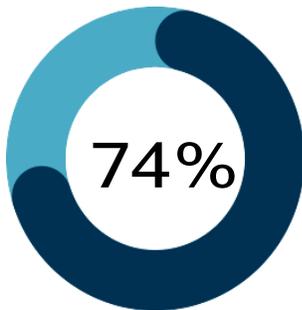
The most important results obtained during the quantitative research are the following:



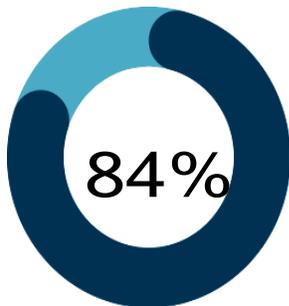
of respondents believe that women in Kosovo are discriminated against



responded that women are underrepresented in leadership positions in public administration in Kosovo



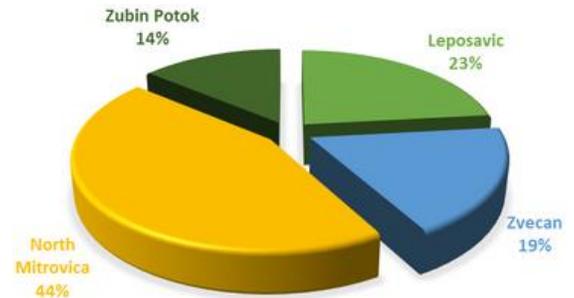
answered that society in Kosovo still considers politics to be a male occupation



respondents would support the initiative to have women in leadership positions in the police, judiciary and politics

## Demographics

To understand the actual situation in the field of gender equality with special reference to the position and representation of women in leadership positions and the general inclusion of women on the public scene of Kosovo, as well as the position of women in business, the following chart displays the results of a research that included 422 respondents. The structure of respondents is composed of citizens from all four municipalities in northern Kosovo with the following percentage: the highest number of respondents is from North Mitrovica (44%), followed by Leposavic (23%), Zvecan (19%), and Zubin Potok (14 %).

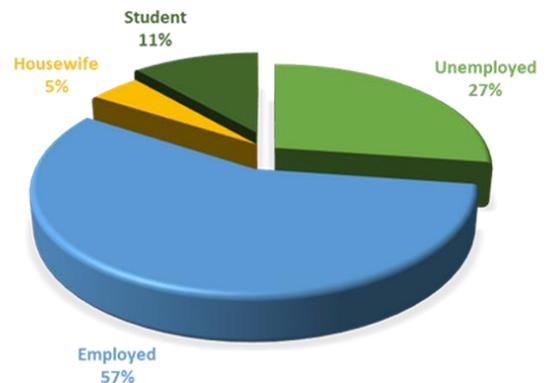


### Gender

Given that the focus of the online survey was aimed at examining the attitude of women from northern Kosovo on how discriminated or non-discriminated the women in public life are, the majority of respondents, 74%, were female, while 26% were male.

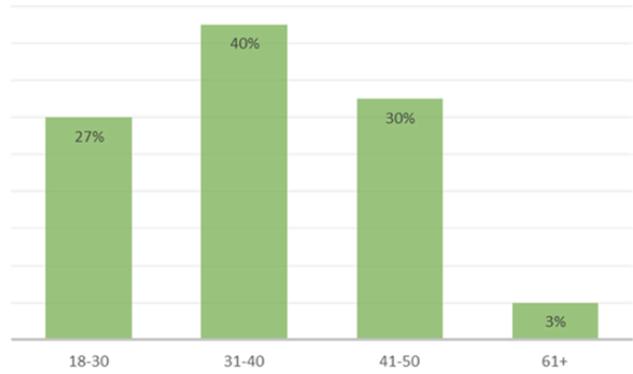
### Employment status

Concerning employment status, employees make up the highest number of respondents, 57%, followed by the unemployed 27%, while students and housewives make up a smaller percentage of the sample.



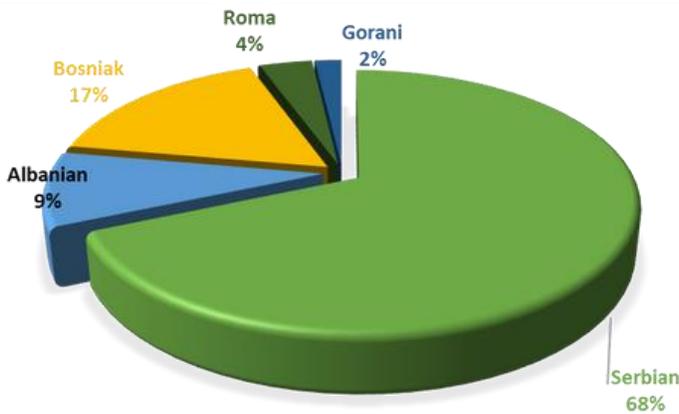
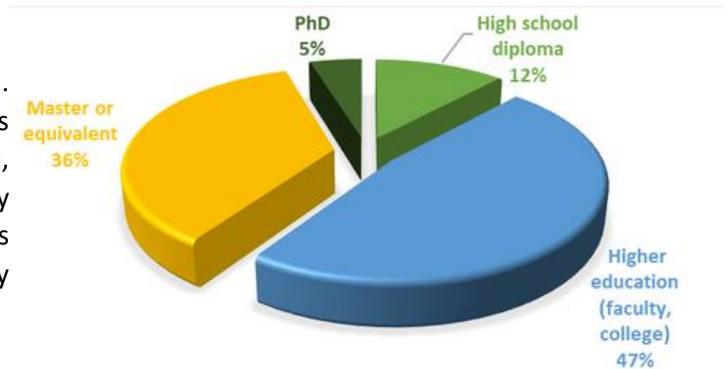
### Age groups

Of the total sample, the highest number of respondents were people ages 31-40 (40%), followed by 41-50 (30%), 18-30 (27%) and +61 (3%).



### Education

The education of the respondents is at a high level. As it can be seen in the chart, 47% of respondents answered that they have higher levels of education, 36% hold master's degrees, 12% have secondary education, and 5% hold Ph.D. This further implies that persons who have only completed primary school did not participate in the survey.



### Ethnicity

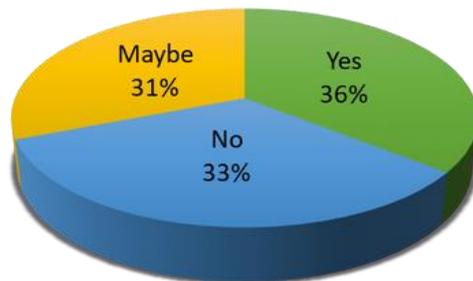
Furthermore, out of the total number of respondents, the highest number are Serbs with 68%, followed by Bosniaks with 17%, Albanians with 9%, Roma with 4%, and Gorani 2%.

## RESEARCH SUMMARY

### PERCEPTION OF KEY PROBLEMS

In the first stage of conducting qualitative and quantitative research, the focus was on the respect for fundamental human rights as well as life and the future in Kosovo.

#### Do you see yourself in Kosovo in the future?



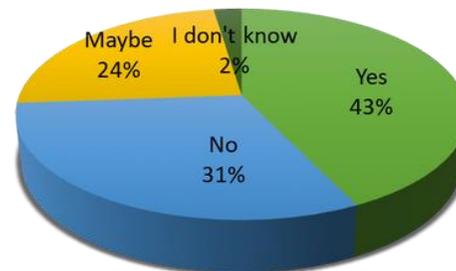
Overwhelmed by the unstable political and economic situation, disrespect for rights, and lack of security, the truth is that many young people, in search of a better life, are leaving Kosovo for places where they have better living conditions and thus a more promising future.

Therefore, the differing answers to the question of whether they see themselves in Kosovo in the future are not surprising. Namely, 36% of respondents answered that they see themselves here in the future, 33% of respondents do not see themselves in Kosovo, while 31% answered "maybe".

The conclusions obtained through qualitative research showed that the respondents generally agreed that even though women in the north of Kosovo are discriminated against in all segments (from job advertisements to inequality in wages and obstacles to career advancement), they do want to work in the judiciary or some other public institutions within the Kosovo system.

Furthermore, as can be seen in the graph, 43% of respondents answered that they have the aspiration to work in Kosovo institutions, 31% answered that they do not want to work in Kosovo institutions, while 24% responded "maybe". Only 2% of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

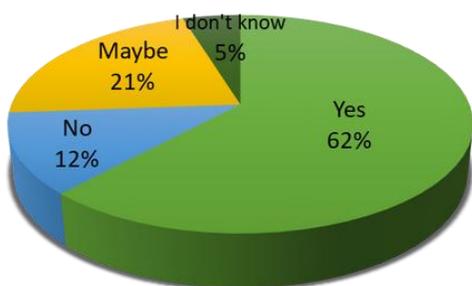
#### Do you have the aspiration to work in Kosovo institutions?



The results collected by this research created the impression that citizens from north Kosovo, with particular reference to women, have increased confidence in the existing legal framework in which north of Kosovo functions after the integration that took place in the most important institutions - police, judiciary, and politics. Surely, the integration issue is something that requires additional efforts that need to be made in order to change the consciousness of the citizens of Kosovo, especially in the northern part.

## Discrimination and Gender Equality

**In your opinion, are women discriminated against in Kosovo?**



Responding to the question on the situation of women in Kosovo and how they analyze gender equality, the answers revealed that 62% of respondents believe that women in Kosovo are discriminated against, 12% think they are not, while 21% answered "maybe". Furthermore, respondents agreed that efforts should be made regarding this issue, and there is plenty of space to improve the position of women and raise it to a higher level, thus establishing de facto gender equality.

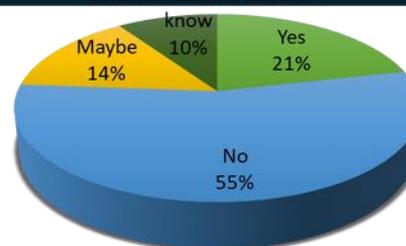
Survey findings confirm conclusions from the qualitative research as the data obtained by focus group participants are very similar. Focus group respondents agreed that women in Kosovo are still discriminated against, although, compared to 20 or 30 years ago, a great deal has been achieved, and this research would not be candid if it claimed that we (as a society) have not moved from the "blind spot". So far, enormous and tangible progress has been made since the period of our grandmothers and mothers. The progress is perceived and indicates awareness-raising among women and the community. Respondents agreed that women are seen differently today, but there is still room for improvement on this subject. This is corroborated by the fact that women today are represented in high positions to a considerable extent, but we still live in a society where prejudices and stereotypes dominate, hence it is not surprising that a pleasant appearance is the first thing that is noticed in women, while their business success and professional qualifications come in last.

Furthermore, the focus group participants mentioned that the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination forbids discrimination in the field of labour and defines that everyone has the right to equal compensation for the same job.<sup>2</sup> Respondents pointed out that it is not always the case, as it happens that men and women who perform substantially equal work do not receive the same pay for their work. Besides, women work unpaid housework for several weeks a year and take care of children and the elderly, which is a consequence of the regional "division of labour" in which duties and tasks are divided based on gender. Therefore, a particular emphasis should be placed on discrimination in labour and inheritance law because they are the most common and most evident examples of discrimination, with strong consequences for the entire society.

According to the data obtained, more than half of the respondents, 55%, answered that women are not sufficiently represented in leadership positions in public administration in Kosovo, 21% think they are, 14% answered "maybe" while 10% did not know the answer to this question.

Although gender equality is not fully achieved in our society, and women and men continue to fight for their rights and strengthen their positions and themselves as individuals,

**Do you think that women are sufficiently represented in leadership positions in the public administration in Kosovo?**

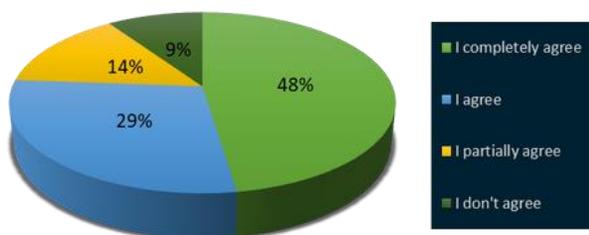


<sup>2</sup> LAW NO. 05/L-021 ON THE PROTECTION FROM DISCRIMINATION

according to the women from the judiciary in North Kosovo, the shift is evident if we take into account the fact that, starting from the highest instance where President of Kosovo is women, to the fact that the current President of the Basic Court in Mitrovica is also a woman, it is clear that much work has been undertaken on the issue of non-discrimination or gender discrimination. This is reflected in the fact that the percentages of women currently employed in the judiciary, as well as in politics, are satisfactory, but there is certainly room for improvement.

Qualitative research also supports quantitative one. The participants of the focus groups agreed that it is accurate that discrimination cannot be simply eradicated because of the prejudices and stereotypes persisting on and, in many cases, are conveyed through the generations, but the transition is evident. The participants agreed that the public administration in Kosovo has always been the most critical point of work and that discrimination has always been the most evident in the administration sector, but that we, as a society, have gone a few steps onward.

**To what extent do you agree that it is harder for women to advance in their careers?**



According to the data collected, the majority of respondents agreed, fully and/or partially, with the statement that it is more difficult for women to advance in their careers. Namely, up to 77% of respondents agreed with this statement (more precisely, 48% completely agree, while 29% of respondents responded "I agree", 14% partially agreed while only 9% of respondents disagreed).

Similarly, the respondents of the qualitative part of the research also agreed that it is harder for women to advance their careers. In their opinion, the media is to blame, as they believe they are sending the wrong image of successful women or they do not report about women's triumphs at all. Women in Kosovo, like women from other countries in transition, are losing their jobs for no reason and are exposed to various discriminatory practices. Those who are "lucky" to be employed often are double or triple overloaded with the work and obligations.

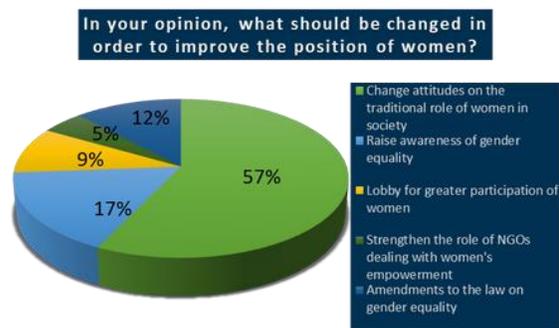
Undoubtedly, women face the greatest inequality in the labour market due to traditional gender roles in our society. The Labour Law narrowly defines the rights to paternity leave from work, which allows the father of the child to take only two days of paid leave after the birth or adoption of a child, and two weeks of unpaid leave after the birth or upon adoption of the child, at any time before the child reaches the age of three.<sup>3</sup> This legal framework certainly requires urgent revision as, in practice, a much bigger problem for mothers is that their rights guaranteed by this law are not respected to the large extent.

In addition to changes in the legislation, the change should also happen in culture, science, media, and education. These are primary areas for altering those gender patterns that are later reflected in discrimination in the labour market. Therefore, it is logical that it is harder for women to start a career

<sup>3</sup> LAW No.03/L –212 ON LABOUR

first, and then to advance and reach certain positions and at the same time start a family because they encounter discrimination everywhere.

When asked what should be changed to improve the position of women, 57% of respondents answered that attitudes on the traditional role of women in society should change, 17% responded that awareness of gender equality should be raised, 12% stated that the law on gender equality should be revised, while 9% believe that it should be lobbied for greater participation of women and 5% think that the role of women's NGOs should be strengthened.



In the qualitative part of the research, the respondents pointed out that prejudices and stereotypes are closely related to gender discrimination, which is immensely discussed and receiving more and more attention. We cannot ignore the fact that despite progress, we still live in a typically patriarchal society that defines women's position and business life. In the qualitative part of the research, the respondents agreed that the attitudes on the traditional role of women in society primarily affect the public life of women in Kosovo. The fact is that we have progressed as a society, but it should still be emphasized that women are not sufficiently empowered to express their views or be the bearers of positive changes in society because prejudices and stereotypes have a decisive influence on the position of women. The views on women's roles continue to be traditional and lead to the fact that, especially in Balkan society, it is still unacceptable for a woman to be successful on her own merit, and it goes without saying that if she has a successful career - then it is assumed that she is not "good enough" on a personal level.<sup>4</sup>



As seen in the chart, when asked what causes discrimination, the highest number, or 38%, answered underdeveloped awareness of gender equality, 31% believe that discrimination occurs due to prejudice, 17% responded that it is due to stereotypes, while 14% believe that the different abilities of women and men cause discrimination.

Such findings are interrelated with the qualitative conclusions of the research. The focus group respondents, but also the interviewed successful women of the public scene in northern Kosovo, pointed out that women are still underrepresented in leadership positions, primarily due to non-compliance with legal regulations that determine the exact percentage of women and men that should be represented in the institutions. Unfortunately, this legal framework is still not fully respected.<sup>5</sup>

The unfavorable position of women in our society is generally indicated by reports from numerous international organizations, and independent institutions, as well as numerous researches in the non-governmental sector (Kosovo Women's Network Annual report 2021, 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Kosovo, Annual report – UN women 2021, THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS

<sup>4</sup> Fahreta F. BRAŠNJIĆ Bojan N. ŠEVO „THE POSITION OF WOMAN IN SOCIETY THROUGH HISTORY,,

<sup>5</sup> LAW No. 05/L -020 ON GENDER EQUALITY, Article 6 Special measures

- Amnesty International's Annual Report 2021/22). Indirect discrimination is stated by data and indicators in all areas measured by the European Gender Equality Index: working hours, money disposal, knowledge, time consumption, power-sharing, and health status. Therefore, it is a fact that patriarchy, but also stereotypes and prejudices, clearly still strongly pervade and pressures our society - the habits and behavior of citizens and institutions.

In the qualitative part of the research, in one of the interviews, it was emphasized that the stereotype which assumes that the abilities of women and men are different is perhaps one of the biggest problems in our society. The issue of false gender roles and stereotypes is one of the most dangerous social diseases. Hence, it becomes clear that we cannot break down such foundations of the system as long as we collectively deny its impact on the daily life of our society.

During the focus groups, the participants noticed that sexism and gender stereotypes to the detriment of women are present in the media, educational materials, and public statements. It is difficult to fight against them because they are rooted in the patriarchal perception of women's and men's roles and because a significant number of women and men still accept such divisions as conventional. This, in return, creates discontent in women, because such a system can be viewed as an absolutely unnatural phenomenon.

*“95% of women in the Balkans have been taught and educated that their role in society is to serve, cook, wash, give birth, and take care of others. In contrast, boys have been taught and educated that their function is to be served, provide, be strong, think, make strategies, and plan. Such foundations of society require male domination using all necessary means, and hence we see that violence against women is largely supported, promoted, forgiven, or neglected”*

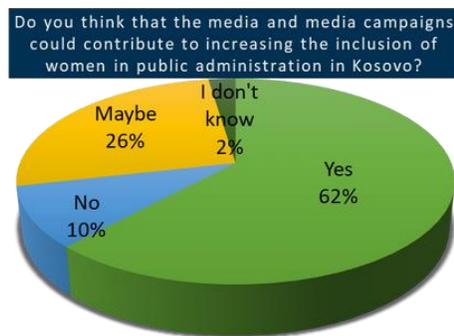
*A woman from the north of Kosovo*

## The role of media

More than half of the respondents, 62%, believe that the media and media campaigns could contribute to increasing the inclusion of women in public administration in Kosovo, while a significantly smaller percentage (10%) think that the media have no role in improving women's involvement in public life in Kosovo.

Media power is unprecedentedly immense and not very accountable. In other words, if profit and advertisements, as well as the tabloid press, are what bring the most views, comments and shares, positive examples come as a surprise or do not come to the fore from tabloids and tabloid news. If the awareness of citizens was brought to such a state that, apart from tabloids, they read a little more informational or alternative media or magazines, the image of women and our social reality would be different.

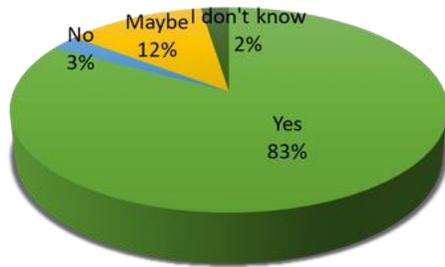
Similarly, the conclusions this research outreach is based on the analysis of qualitative research show that the respondents agree that the role of the media is crucial and that media campaigns do not promote women in leading positions in the true sense. When reporting on successful women, the fact is that the



media is more focused on women’s appearance, while the professional qualification remains secondary. Correspondingly, the participants agreed that the media could contribute to increasing the inclusion of women in the public system of Kosovo, but only if the reporting is accurate, gender-sensitive, and non-degrading for women. Again, participants emphasized that the media is the seventh force and can influence the position of citizens in Kosovo and public opinion in general.

## Men & Gender Equality

Do you think that men should be more involved in promoting gender equality?



82% of respondents answered that men should be more involved in promoting gender equality, which means that respondents believe that the role of men in addressing this issue is crucial. A step forward will be when men accept women as equal counterparts maybe, in all social and economic aspects. It is obvious that a lot has been done on this issue, but there are still stereotypes and prejudices that women and men have different abilities.

The survey findings are correlated with the quantitative research as the focus group participants and the interview respondents agreed that it is crucial to organize courses on this topic and include young people, especially men. Additionally, participants think that the stereotypical attitude towards women is still widespread, especially among the younger generations, which is particularly worrying. Furthermore, they believe that we, as a society, should organize more public discussions on this topic, elaborate on it and address it, and work with young people from the beginning as changes happen in every individual, they start from ourselves. We should focus particular attention on how boys are raised in order to eliminate power relations and violence.

Half of the respondents, 50%, think that men do not accept women as equal counterparts in the field of police, judiciary, and especially politics, while 19% answered that they do. In the qualitative part of the research, during the focus group with women who are permanently employed in the police, it was ascertained that in their immediate environment, discrimination during work and when assigned to certain jobs still exists and that it is very difficult to advance and exercise their workers’ rights.

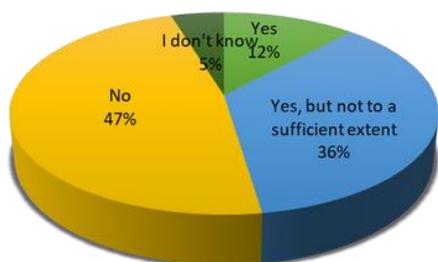
In your opinion, do men sincerely accept women as equal counter-parts in the field of police, justice, and politics in particular?



During the focus groups, the participants shared a concrete example from their practices and agreed that it was particularly difficult to apply for a specific position because their male colleagues thought they were not ready and skilled enough to perform certain duties. The participants also pointed out that such distrust of their colleagues encourages them even more and pushes them forward because they are confident that women are much better at performing police duties. Moreover, they stated they are very dissatisfied with the number of women in leading positions in the police because there are only two or three of them and that they do all their work in the best possible manner.

On the other hand, talking to women from other spheres of public life created the impression that they are satisfied with the attitude and treatment they get from their male colleagues. According to our

**Do you think gender equality, which means equal participation in all areas of life, has been achieved in our society?**



interlocutors, their male colleagues sincerely accept them, are ready to share an equal position, and welcome them with sincere enthusiasm and open support. This refers to women who work in judicial institutions and those involved in politics.

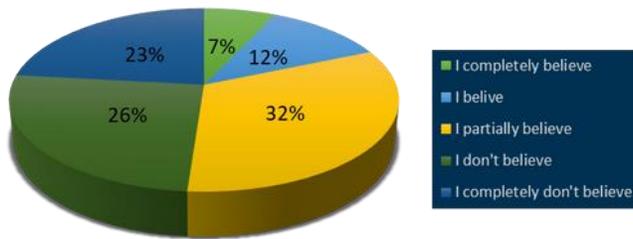
As evidenced in the graph, the results obtained through the survey reveal that almost half of respondents, or 47%, believe that gender equality, which implies equal participation in all areas of life, is not achieved in our society, while 36% think it is, but not to a sufficient extent. Only 12% of respondents

believe that gender equality has been achieved, while 5% of respondents did not know the answer to this question.

Such answers match the qualitative research and results obtained as the respondents pointed out that ratification of international compacts and conventions has happened but is insufficiently applied, and their execution is not satisfactory. Respondents added that they were mostly dissatisfied with the lack of proper implementation of The Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and the execution of the Convention ratified by Kosovo, especially related to all forms of gender-based violence, not only domestic violence. Therefore, the legal framework exists; however, the competent institutions do not adhere to it. Hence, it is necessary to expand efforts to raise awareness of gender stereotypes, and the effects and consequences of discrimination to which women are exposed. Ratification of international treaties, primarily the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, should not only ensure the rule of equality of men and women concerning legal or normative obligations but also guarantee the practical application of this principle. To achieve actual de facto gender equality, we must take appropriate measures to eliminate direct and indirect discrimination. We need to further discuss the law enforcement to prevent initial and secondary victimization of already discriminated women. Only in this way can we improve and ensure the rule of law in northern Kosovo.

The participants have also drawn to the fact that discrimination is present when talking about the gender pay gap for the same work performed. The fact is that the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination stipulates that everyone has the right to equal pay for work of equal value. Participants agreed that it sometimes happens that men and women receive different salaries for the same job. Or to do extra work without being paid. Accordingly, the participants believe that there are many problems in this respect and that their solution is necessary because only together, equal, competent, and fully capable can we contribute to general prosperity.

**Do you believe that work experience and professional qualifications play a crucial role in employment, or it is some other criteria?**



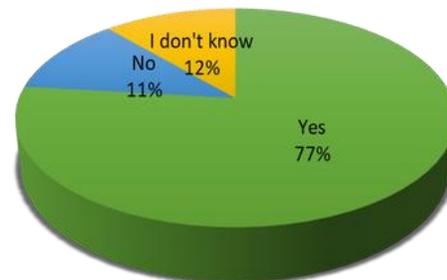
## Women and employment

The results shown in the graph indicate that 32% of respondents partially believe that work experience and professional qualification play a crucial role in employment. According to the data obtained, 26% do not believe and think that some other criteria are important when hiring, while 12% stated that they believe that experience and qualification are crucial.

Comparably, the respondents of the qualitative research consider that the diploma is still valued and crucial for employers when hiring. However, they also believe that a woman needs to look representative if she is in a high position. In particular, it is thought that it is essential that a woman, in addition to a degree, knows how to communicate with others, has a nice, friendly attitude, awakens a pleasant feeling in others, makes others feel respected and valued in communication with her. An intelligent and eloquent woman is representative of every employer. According to our interlocutors, physical appearance is in the background because every woman, if she has all these previous qualities, is beautiful without further discussion. A much bigger problem in this region is employment-based on political, social, or family connections, which is displeasing not only to women but also to men. However, this is another topic that we should deal with as a society.

As shown in the following chart, the data obtained show that 77% of respondents believe that parenting affects the employment of women, which is in line with the data and results we obtained in the qualitative part of the research. A small number of respondents (11%) answered that parenting does not influence the employment process, while 12% did not know the answer to this question.

**Does parenthood affect the employment of women?**



Namely, when discussing the impact of parenthood on women's employment, as well as the importance of family support and the immediate environment, the participants agreed that these are the main factors that have a major impact on women's willingness to engage in business, especially public life in Kosovo. One of the foremost examples of this type of obstacle is the fact that employers consider women with children inflexible because they often have to be on sick leave or regular leave. Additionally, during the job interviews, women are more frequently asked about marital and parental status, when compared to men. Participants also noted that the legislation is bad because women have maternity leave that is absolutely not respected, which makes it difficult to expand the family.

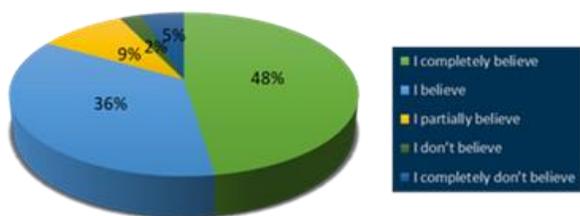
*"If a woman wants a big family, she will have to give up her business career. Therefore, either the family or the business career will suffer."*

*A woman from North Kosovo*

According to the Labour Law, the first 6 months of maternity leave are paid by the employer with the compensation of 70% of the basic salary, and the following 3 months are paid by the government of Kosovo with the compensation of 50% of the average salary. The woman has the right, upon this Law, to extend her maternity leave for other 3 months without payment<sup>6</sup>; however, in practice, it is quite different. According to our interlocutors, a small number of employers in the North of Kosovo are ready to wait for employees for more than three months after giving birth. After three months of maternity leave, the superiors either offer the mother a chance to return to her job or, very often, replace her with a new worker. In this sense, women do not have adequate protection and support to guarantee that their rights will be comprehensively protected even if they decide to start their own families or expand them. And that is an issue that should be worked on primarily to achieve the de facto protection of women and

the basic unit of every society - the family.

Do you believe that the support of the family and the immediate environment is one of the main factors that would influence the greater employment of women?



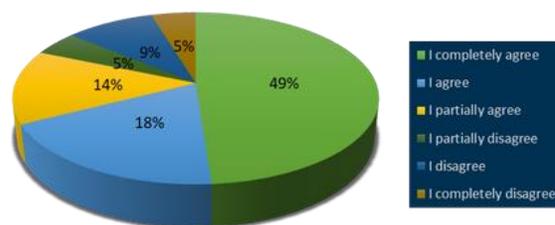
The majority of the respondents believe that the support of family and the immediate environment is one of the main factors that would influence the greater employment of women.

The results from the focus groups and interviews confirm this finding. The participants agreed that if a woman wants to be very successful, she must decide what is more important to her at that moment -

family or career. Thus, there is no balance - some "scale" will prevail a bit more. At one point, a woman must devote herself more to work because responsibilities require it, but then, throughout the time, she will dedicate herself more intensively to family and children. It is, therefore, a vicious circle in which the importance of family and work varies. Participants further agreed that both men and women need the help, understanding, support, and trust of their spouses and primary family. It is a little bit harder for women - they need entire machinery to succeed.

As can be concluded from the chart, most respondents feel that women have not been given enough opportunities to prove that they are capable of being in leadership positions. This is supported by the fact that 49% of respondents answered they completely agree with the statement, 18% responded with "I agree" while 14% partially agreed with it.

Do you think that women have not been given enough opportunities to prove that they are capable of being in leadership positions?



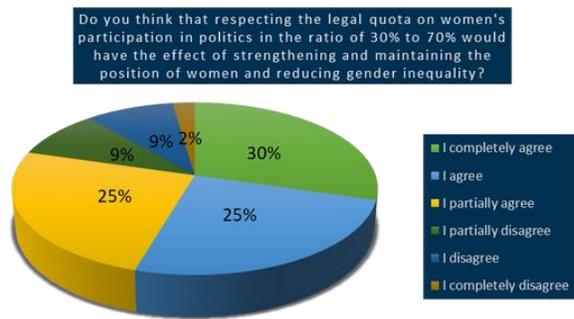
In this regard, both qualitative and quantitative research coincide as the respondents agreed that due to the discriminated position of women in our country, everyone is equally responsible, citizens, governmental and non-governmental sectors, and institutions and organizations. It is questionable to what extent women have power in the most important spheres of society - how involved they are in the decision-making process, and how much space they are de facto given to show that they are capable enough to participate in these processes. The participants agreed that, as a society, we should deal with this issue even further. We should present women as

<sup>6</sup> LAW No.03/L –212 ON LABOUR

decision-makers, and create adequate ground for influencing all economic and social spheres so that we can expect concrete results in advancing gender equality.

Qualitative research also showed that the respondents believe that women in the north of Kosovo have enough knowledge and experience and, at the same time, a lot of energy and enthusiasm, as well as enough time ahead to do something useful for the whole society. However, the respondents emphasized that we should not be satisfied with the way women are viewed in our community, as if women themselves should not be pleased with how much they can do because they can do a lot but are not aware of it.

When asked whether compliance with the legal quota on women's participation in politics in the ratio of 30% to 70% would affect the strengthening and preservation of women's positions and reducing gender inequality, most of the respondents agreed, partially or fully (80%).



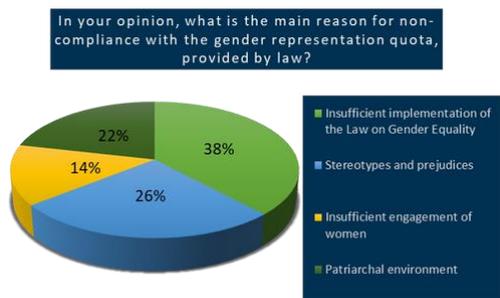
This is demonstrated by the fact that women have been engaged in the work of public organizations only because the law requires and obliges institutions to politically hire 30% of women. Accordingly, if there were no binding legislation, women would surely not be politically active.

Similarly, during the focus group and interviews, the respondents pointed out that prejudices are especially noticeable when discussing politically engaged women.

*“The gender prejudices are most dangerous in this aspect not only due to insufficient engagement of women but also because politics and public display of political position are mostly considered a man's duty, marking men as "born" for political functions, while women are not eligible to perform this function.”*

*A woman from North Kosovo*

In addition, the participants believe that these quotas have resulted in some women reaching the position only to meet the legal quota, regardless of their education or expertise, which is to the detriment of those women who would perform this job conscientiously and dedicatedly.



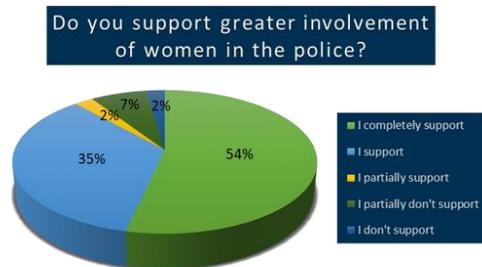
When it comes to reasons for non-compliance with the quota on gender representation, according to the data obtained, 38% of respondents think the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality is insufficient, 26% believe that disrespect is due to stereotypes and prejudices, 22% responded patriarchal teaching, while 14% of respondents believe that the reason is the inadequate engagement of women. The results obtained from focus groups and interviews indicate that the practice of policy

implementation, greater involvement of state institutions, respect for laws and legal frameworks, and

stronger and better implementation of the Law on Gender Equality are necessary to reduce gender discrimination, prohibited by law. The fact is that no segment of society can be viewed in isolation from others because there is a strong interdependence between them. The harmonized functioning of the social system is a guarantee that women will be empowered to participate in socio-political life - assuredly, according to their affinities.

## Women in Police

As can be seen in the graph, the data obtained show that the highest number of respondents support greater participation of women in the police, where as many as 54% of respondents said they fully support and 35% support this practice.



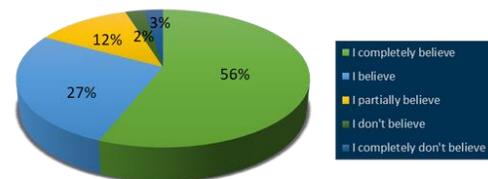
According to women police officers in Kosovo, this is the actual state of affairs in Kosovo's public life if we take into account the fact that women are more conscious than men and more attentive to self-protection and the protection of others, which impacts their behavior at work. This is related to the results obtained through qualitative research.

*“Nowadays, a significantly smaller number of citizens believe that law enforcement is a male profession, and in that sense, prejudices are broken. The persistence of women in this segment of public work has shown how capable they are of doing this job, which has surely become socially acceptable among citizens.”*

*A woman from North Kosovo*

The following chart shows that most respondents believe that women are qualified enough to be as good at performing police duties as men.

Do you believe that women are qualified enough to be just as good at performing police duties as men?



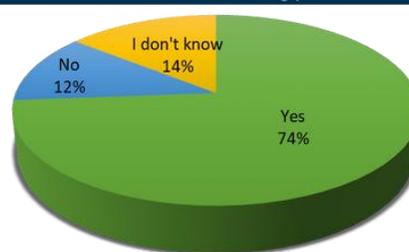
This is supported by the percentage of those who believe that women are good enough and professional in performing the function of a police officer (56% fully believe, 27% believe).

In the qualitative part of the research, the respondents agreed that the fact is that it is demanding for women to break through and reach leading positions in many other professions and spheres of work, not only when we talk about internal affairs. What is specific for the police is that prejudices and stereotypes about the police profession as exclusively male and perceiving females as the "weaker" gender are still deeply rooted in our society. Frequently, women are not sufficiently gender-conscious and aware of their possibilities, but neither are they encouraged to fight for higher positions. Nonetheless, according to the women from police, police work is an honorable and human occupation, which is not just a job or profession, but a permanent life commitment to do good, and women need to be at the forefront of this occupation, among others, as per the Law on Gender Equality.

## Women in Politics

According to the survey data, the vast majority of respondents, or 74%, think that society in Kosovo still believes that politics is a male profession and that this is one of the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes. A small percentage of respondents (12%) answered negatively to this question, while 14% did not know the answer.

In your opinion, does the society in Kosovo still consider politics to be, above all, a male profession and is that one of the reasons for the under-representation of women in decision-making processes?



These data are correlated with the qualitative part of the research, where the respondents acknowledged this as a fact.

*“Our social reality is such that leaders and representatives of political parties provide more support to male members of political parties and politicians than to women politicians. Additionally, more efforts are invested in the prosperity of male members of political parties, and politicians generally have more support during the election process.”*

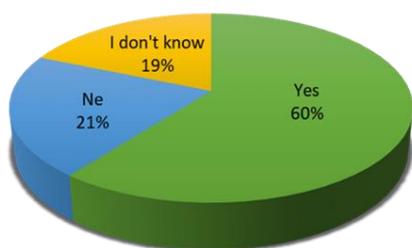
*A woman from North Kosovo*

Accordingly, this is the main reason why politicians come more ready to the political or public scene of Kosovo, thus are more likely to have longer, more appreciated, and prosperous political careers and are more politically active.

Generally, politics is considered to be a male-dominated field. Gender stereotypes, the mistaken belief that men are superior leaders, and the lack of political support are some of the reasons that prevent or actively hinder the placement of women in leadership positions, according to women who have active political careers.

Today, the field of politics is very narrowly defined, which is why people immediately think of an officially elected government. As noted by the participants in the qualitative part of the research, "politics" in general represents and includes all ways of taking part in decision-making in the community and society.

Do you think that the general opinion about politics being a male profession is the reason why women have shorter political careers?

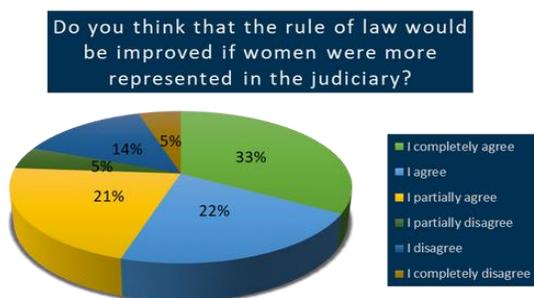


Furthermore, 60% of the respondents believe that the fact that society in Kosovo still considers politics to be a male profession is the reason why women have shorter political careers, and this is perhaps the most striking answer if we look at the whole research.

The obtained data of quantitative research fully coincide with those of the respondents of qualitative research, where the respondents pointed out that politics has always been the most critical area for work, employment, respect for careers, and their upgrading, and that discrimination has always been the most obvious in this sphere. They further noted that nothing was changed, as women in politics are still continuously forced to prove themselves to the society in which they live.

In addition, participants pointed out that the world needs an equal number of women leaders as well as men because women politicians are ready to participate in discussions and create cooperation with experts, to be responsible when talking about issues that are crucial for their lives in the north Kosovo. In the long run, this would contribute to economic progress, transparency, and flexibility, as well as for women politicians to work on clearer, more consistent communication and nurture values such as cooperation and empathy.

## Women in the Judiciary

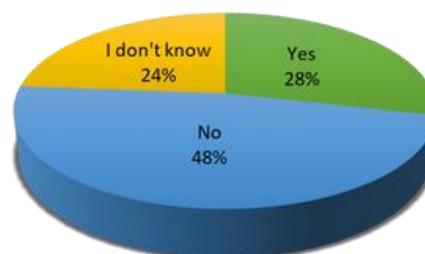


As can be seen in the chart, most respondents in northern Kosovo believe that the rule of law would be improved if women were more represented in the judiciary (33% of respondents fully agreed, while 22% of respondents answered with "I agree", and 21% of respondents responded, "I partially agree").

These answers are not surprising since the percentage of women in charge in the judiciary is rather satisfactory so to speak. Additionally, the commonly regional accepted narrative of society is that women should withdraw when they have the chance to express their views and opinions, which is the case when we take women judges or prosecutors as an example. The respondents of the qualitative part of the research have a similar attitude, unanimously pointing out that it is particularly difficult to be the bearer of positive changes in the judiciary because prejudices and stereotypes have a decisive influence on the position and behavior of women. Furthermore, respondents think that women from the judiciary should be given more space because they believe that women could present to the public different issues aimed at strengthening women's rights, but also strengthening the rule of law in general, from a gender perspective. After all, they believe that prominent women that are in some ways visible and active on the Kosovo public scene are role models to other "ordinary women".

Almost half of the respondents, 48%, think that women and men do not have the same conditions for advancing in the judiciary. 28% answered that they do, while 24% of citizens did not know the answer to this question. Based on the answers of the surveyed participants who are currently employed, it can be concluded that men have more benefits and privileges at work than women. Most employers, therefore, do not treat women and men employees equally, so it is more difficult for women to advance in any sphere of public life, including the judiciary, regardless of how educated, capable, and experienced they are.

In your opinion, do women and men have the same conditions for advancing in the judiciary?



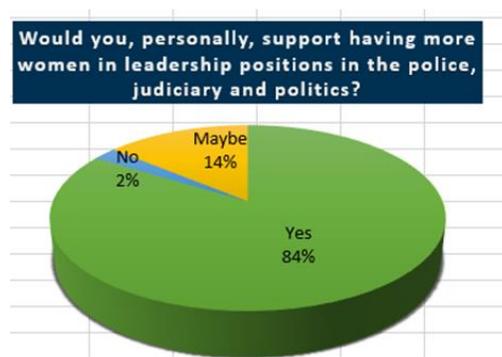
Accordingly, the respondents of the quantitative part of the research agreed with this redistribution of the total percentage of answers, emphasizing that, in the north of Kosovo, one gets the impression that

gender inequality in the judiciary concerns men. However, this is not the case. According to the official report of the Basic Court in Mitrovica, women are the majority in the judiciary in North Mitrovica. The structure of the number of personnel engaged in the work is as follows: 80 women and 64 men.

*“Many women in the judiciary postpone starting a family and motherhood because of their careers, and some even decide not to have children. On the other hand, there are many single mothers in the judiciary, women who take care of the family, the elderly.”*

*A woman from North Kosovo*

Therefore, women do not have the same conditions for promotion as male judges, who do not face many private challenges, because, in the judiciary, they are promoted based on the results of work and grades obtained based on the Rulebook for evaluating the work of judges.

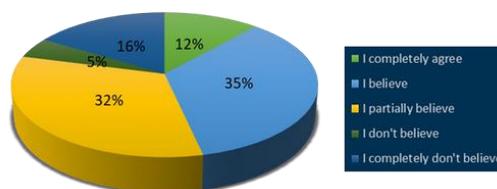


According to previous answers, the percentage of 84% of respondents who would support having more women in leadership positions in the police, judiciary and politics is a big step forward, a wind in the back and a vision of a brighter future.

In addition, according to conversations with women respondents of this analysis - girls and women are more committed and systematic in their work. When it comes down to the aspects researched through this analysis, women have shown that they want to deal with the rule of law, implementation of legislative frameworks, ensuring compliance with customary clauses by preventing disturbances of public order and peace, and establishing peace where it has been disturbed on a larger scale, by representing the common voice of all women in politics and by presenting their political position without fear of being condemned. That is why the respondents agree on one thing in both qualitative and quantitative research - women should be given more chances and more space because women can lead the change of our patriarchal society into a more inclusive one.

As can be seen in the chart, most respondents believe that some progress can be made on the position of women in the next 5 years.

Do you believe there will be any progress on the position of women in the next 5 years?



This further implies that the key to women's success is to be united and harmonious, move from words to deeds, support, help, complement each other, and advocate for better legislation. When something is provided by the Law - then it can be successful. It is also important to point out that every woman should strive to achieve her ambitions, believe in herself, and contribute to the community in different ways because there is no magic formula that will erase stereotypes from our heads.

Our interlocutors who participated in the qualitative part of the research have a similar opinion, emphasizing once again that women must raise their voices and pointing out that these are wrong and simplistic images and attitudes that we have been facing for centuries. Participants also agreed that there

is a lot of room for improvement in this field, especially for the improvement of legal regulations and that its consistent application is a requirement. Otherwise, everything is just paper. Also, work habits, attitudes towards work, and knowledge have nothing to do with gender, age, nationality, and everyone, especially men, must be aware of that. It was also noted that women are very often aware that their colleagues and superiors sometimes discriminate out of ignorance or fear, but that they must bear in mind that there is no excuse for discrimination in any situation.



## **Conclusions of women from the North of Kosovo on their position in society**

What can be concluded from this comprehensive analysis, both qualitative and quantitative, is that society in the north of Kosovo has progressed over the years. Throughout history, people were taught how to change their obsolete attitudes and behaviors by adopting new knowledge and applying it in practice. Significant progress has been made in the empowerment of women, but for modern women, there are still various obstacles to achieving full social affirmation. On the one hand, their role as a pillar of the family and social life is constantly being confirmed, but at the same time, there are numerous attempts to push women out of the mainstream of social life by challenging their importance, role, and influence in society in order to become equal with men in the labour market.

One of the ways to improve the position of women in society is certainly cooperation between individual and collective actions in which women will constantly point out their role, and demand implementation, and respect for human rights. Therefore, the fact is that we have achieved much, but we are far from achieving full social equality for women and men in this area. Basic knowledge of gender (non) equality is acquired within non-formal education. In primary and secondary education this topic is still not covered enough, while changes in the university curricula depend on the enthusiasm of certain professors dealing with feminism and gender theories, according to women respondents of this study.

It is especially important to emphasize that the key to success is working with young boys and girls since early childhood. Education is crucial. Parents, women, and men should be educated as well because they are the ones who influence the upbringing of children, which will later affect the next generation. Nevertheless, we should be satisfied with many initiatives and actions that are increasingly dealing with this topic such as very important research conducted by foreign international and domestic non-governmental organizations, as well as the implementation of numerous projects, media campaigns, and public lectures aimed at strengthening the position of women. If continues, in a few years there will be a huge shift, because women in the north of Kosovo have become more aware of discrimination, and they are increasingly supportive of each other. Once again, the education of women is essential for progress, as it is evident that the bigger the environment is, the smaller the gap becomes.

Women in the judiciary, politics, and police have an exclusive position that allows them to act in accordance with human rights, pursue honorable and humane professions that are not just an occupation but a lifelong commitment to doing good for the whole community, and see the problems in society through their own experience. Therefore, they should be encouraged to be positive role models for women in our society. As a community, let's not forget that in addition to the desire and ambition of a woman, the support of partners, family, friends, and the surroundings is necessary, because, without their encouragement, the likelihood of success is slim.

Based on all the above, it can be concluded that although there is an improvement, we, as well as societies around the world, still have a lot to do to achieve full gender equality. It is crucial that we all together, including the business sector, make efforts to improve in this area. Women who have proven themselves in their careers and are satisfied with the results achieved should never forget that such a path and the chance to be elected to leadership positions was paved by some other brave women from the past who showed that individual results will influence the future generations. All of us must make efforts that will lead us to better, more prosperous, and fairer times, through improving legal frameworks, adequate

implementation of laws in use, actively encouraging women's networking, advocating activism, and resolutely opposing and overcoming harmful prejudices. It is essential to show more solidarity, empathy, and support for other women and reduce the level of egocentrism, and above all, women mustn't be enemies, but everlasting support to each other, encouragement, and wind in the back.

That is why we hope and believe that changes are possible if we invest enough time, effort, and education in gender equality!



## Recommendations

### For the government:

- 🏛️ Continue practicing affirmation of women's rights in applicable law and practice.
- 🏛️ Provide greater support for women in public institutions at all levels, with particular support for employed mothers while their children need care.
- 🏛️ Establish specific measures, such as the possibility of working from home for young mothers or part-time work.
- 🏛️ The Kosovo government and other associations should work together to promote the role of women in society. It is essential to encourage women to get involved in the work of all institutions, and it is particularly necessary to support the participation of women in the decision-making process at both central and local levels. Gender equality laws also need to be ensured in practice. Society needs to understand that the role of a woman is not only related to the household but that women can do jobs just like men, as well as be good leaders in society.
- 🏛️ Increase the duration of maternity leave and provide full pay during it. Assign more management positions to women, to strengthen their leadership.
- 🏛️ Draft a more gender-sensitive legislation and amend the legal framework, to comply with the diverse needs of women and men.
- 🏛️ Design programs to support women workers in rural and urban family businesses, especially in the North of Kosovo.
- 🏛️ Enable the guarantee of an equal pay for women and men employers for the same work.
- 🏛️ Require the proper implementation of the law on inheritance, in order for women to have the right to equal parts of the property and the same position in inheriting.
- 🏛️ Strengthen the rights of women in terms of public positions and performing public functions.
- 🏛️ Require the de facto implementation of the Law on Service in the Security Forces of Kosovo, which, on paper, in principle protects the rights to fair and equal treatment regardless of gender or ethnicity and provides the opportunity to fully pursue a career and fully realize one's potential through merit-based on a joint appointment, promotion, and development system, but the practice is completely different, especially in the territory of North Kosovo.
- 🏛️ Require for de facto compliance with the Labour Law in practice in terms of the actual duration of maternity leave for women after giving birth, especially when we are talking about the North of Kosovo.
- 🏛️ Change and amend the Labour law in order to have paternity or parental leave, to enable equal distribution of responsibilities for child care so that women have an equal chance to continue their careers.
- 🏛️ Enable more women to participate equally with men in the work of international organizations and present their government at the international level.

### For Civil Society:

- ✚ Raise awareness and knowledge about the rights and position of women, as well as educating new generations on this topic.
- ✚ Provide greater attention to capacity building of women for greater participation in public life in society in the territory of North Kosovo and strengthen the mechanisms to support women in exercising their rights.
- ✚ Raise awareness on gender equality, especially on the legal framework on gender equality; Engage all factors in society, to raise awareness of the importance of equal treatment of women and their position in society.
- ✚ The North Kosovo NGOs and other associations should work together to promote the role of women in society. It is essential to encourage women to get involved in the work of all institutions, and it is particularly necessary to support the participation of women in the decision-making process at both central and local levels. Gender equality legislation also needs to be applied in practice.
- ✚ Increase the awareness of non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of the institutions themselves in the importance of women employment.
- ✚ Encourage, support, and participate in projects that provide technical advice from a gender perspective, including seminars and gender equality training.
- ✚ Strengthen the rights of women in terms of public position and performing public functions.
- ✚ Adopt effective education and public information programs to help eradicate prejudices and current practices that prevent the full implementation of the principle of social equality for women in the North of Kosovo.

### For the EU:

- ✚ Actively encourage the government to work towards the harmonization of Kosovar legislation with the EU Acquis in terms of gender equality and encourage more monitoring towards its implementation.
- ✚ Consult and engage civil society organizations, especially women's civil society organizations, in public consultations with a focus on decision making processes on the local level;
- ✚ Continue asking for local level mechanisms to implement more affirmative measures related to women's employment.

