

PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE POLOG REGION

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN FROM THE POLOG REGION

The Polog region has the lowest economic and social development index. About 70% of the population in the Polog region lives in rural areas, and most of the households, 73.7% live from agriculture. This region has the highest population percentage - recipients of social welfare (37% of the population in 2011).

The position of women in rural areas

On average, in less than 6% of the families in the country, women are owners of agricultural land or a house. Three out of four women in the rural areas are unemployed. The highest unemployment rates occur among young women from rural areas (59% for women between 20 and 24 years of age, and 43% of the age groups between 25 and 29 years of age)

20% of economically inactive women work in agriculture, but are not paid for that. Women who work in agriculture, can use their maternity benefits only if they are registered and actively engaged in agriculture and pay their social insurance

More equal, compared with the past

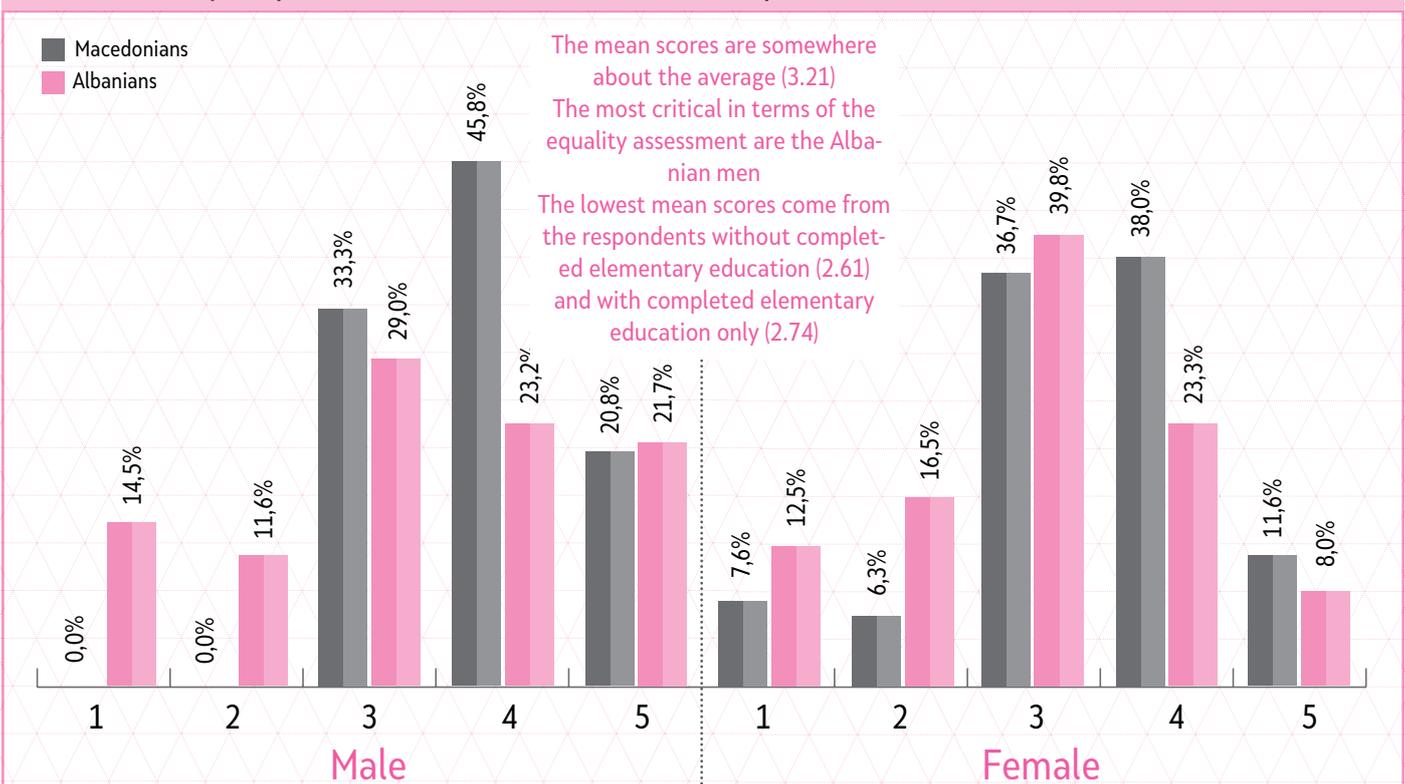
“It certainly isn't as it was before, but there is still room for improvement even now.”

“Lately things are changing, as we said, there are many young people who can at least make us partly equal to men...”

“The situation in Tetovo is the same - there are some that are more traditional, you go to a restaurant with a man, you cannot order “My wife will have this or that, for example.”(Laughing): “Why can't we tell the waiter I want this and that? Why do I need a man to order for me?”

Halfway through gender equality?

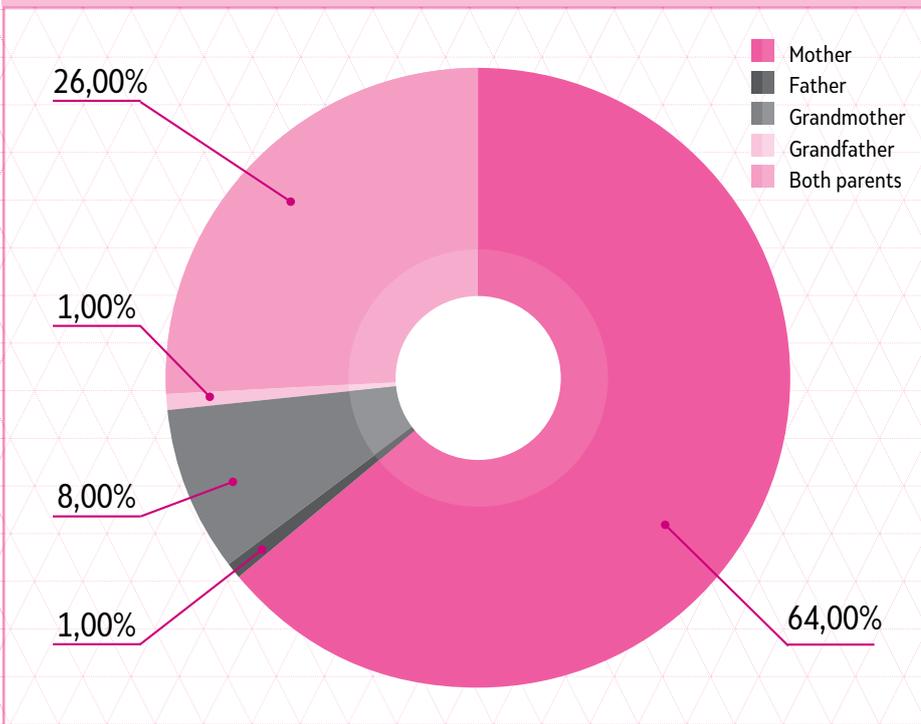
Grade of the equality of men and women in the community



DAY-TO-DAY STRUGGLES - LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

Women are mothers ...

Who takes care of the children in your family?

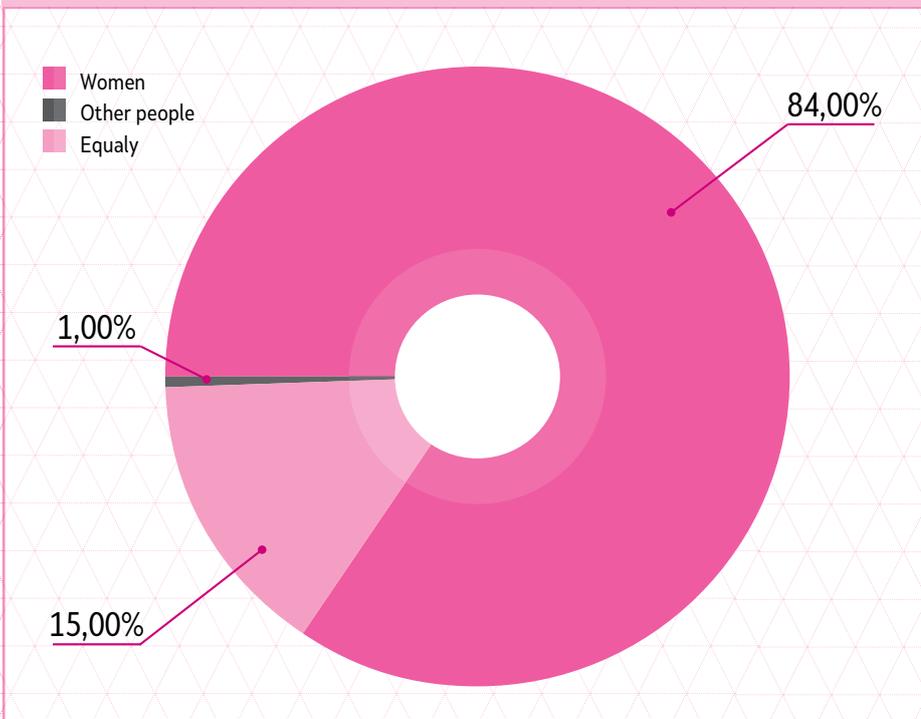


And Super Heroes!

“Well, the notion that a woman’s place is in the home, taking care of the house, being a mother, and a housewife is still present.”

And housewives...

Who is most often in charge of the day-to-day domestic chores?



“And bring money home (laughs).”

“We do everything now-a-days, those who go to work - works at home as well. They clean the house, and take care of the children.”

“Yes, but you can do everything.”

“Yeah, have to be Superman (laughs).”

“Now-a-days, Superwomen (laughing).”

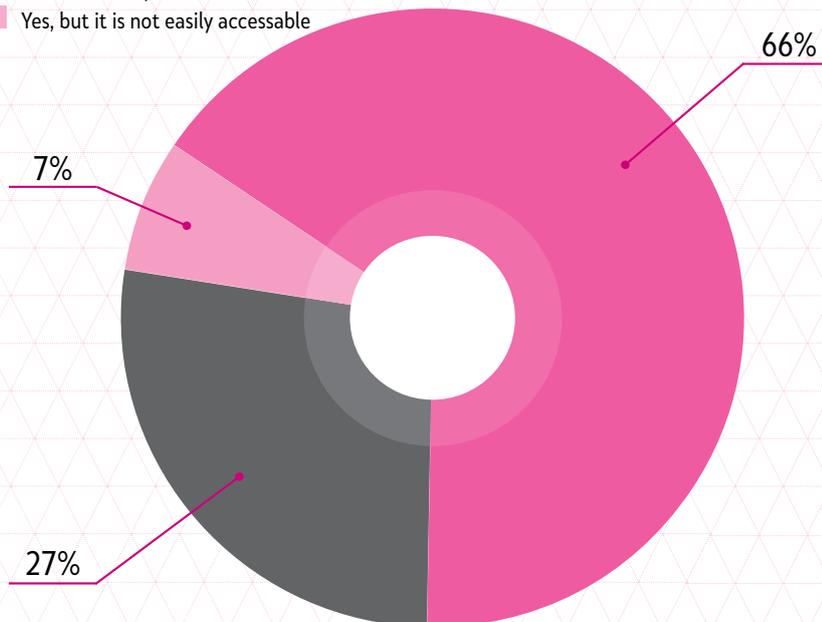
WHAT DO MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES PROVIDE?

Basic utilities

Utilities (water, electricity, sewage, lighting) are not easily available for 57.6% of the residents of Bogovinje, 50% of the residents of Brvenica, 43.8% of the residents of Tearce, 33.3% of the residents of Zhelino and 11% of the residents of Vrapchiste.

Do you have access to public transportation in your municipality?

- No, there is no such service
- Yes, I have easy access
- Yes, but it is not easily accessible



.... This is the root of the problem for rural women. There are no kindergartens. Public transport is not available in many villages, which means that if they do not have their own vehicle, it is a problem for them to travel to their workplace."

There is no public transport, only to Vrutok. If you want to get to Chegrane, you need to make your own private arrangements. Our villages around Gostivar are very large."

If I need to go to the University, I have to go with a private van. There is no regular public transportation, no timetable, nothing"

I have to drive 15km every day, 15 in one direction, 15 in the other direction, to take my child to the nursery, and go to work afterwards. That is why my child is growing up with his/her grandmother, father, grandfather, with whoever is able to watch over him/her. The entire day revolves around who can watch over the child, so that I could go to work."

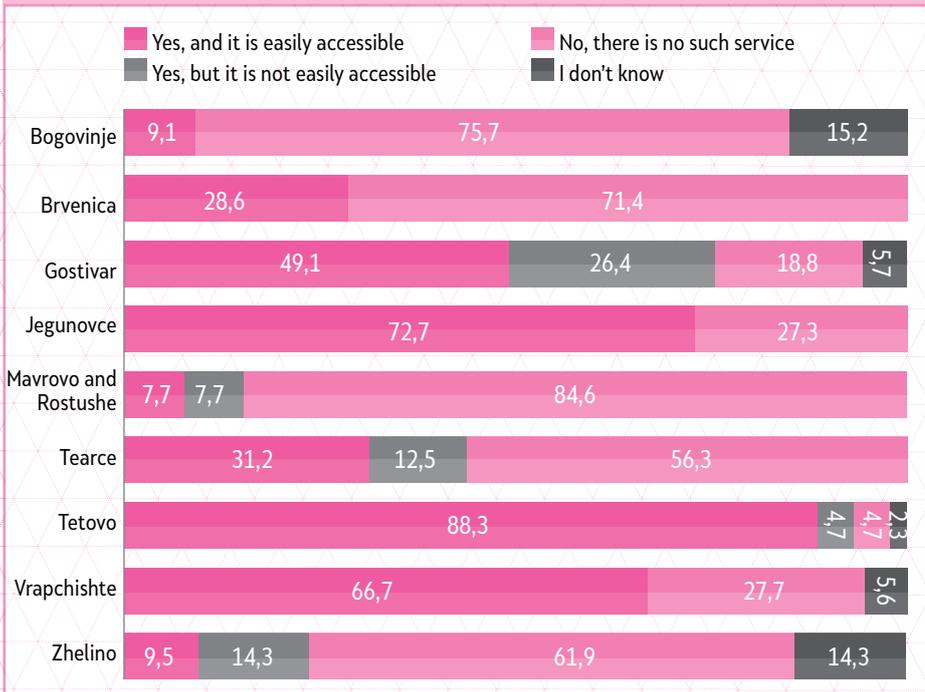
Yes, why wait for the man to go to the market or in the city?"

There is nothing in Zhelino. There is no kindergarten, there is no center for the disabled, there's no place for the elderly. There is only a primary school, and the municipality is big ..."

... In addition, we need more jobs so as to open kindergartens to take care of the children. Here in Gostivar, where I work in the Health Centre, I have the impression and I see mothers complain all the time that they don't know where to leave their children because the size of the classes in the kindergartens is limited (yes, yes, several other women confirm the statement), and they wait for a long time. That's one problem. The conditions need to be improved. There are some private kindergartens, but we do not have the capital and budget, let alone an unemployed mother, she has no personal income, and lives of the mercy of her husband. Sometimes even he does not work."

Social services, especially child-care services

Are the following services available in your municipality: Kindergarten



CONCLUSIONS

- Access to basic infrastructure facilities and social services in the region is limited for many citizens, especially for the women in rural areas. Many women have limited access to public transport, care facilities for children, the elderly, and people with special needs;
- Municipalities do not have the sufficient capacity to provide conditions and access for all citizens to basic infrastructure and social services. Municipal policy lacks recognition of the gender perspective in policy making and priorities related to infrastructure and social services;
- Limited access to social services further reflect on women and puts them in a less favorable position than men because, as confirmed by the data, they often assume the responsibility to take care of the home, children, elderly and disabled people in their families. Limited access to social services directly reflects the social and economic aspects of women's lives. Women who do not have access to social services face additional problems when applying for a job, training or further education, participation in public life and in the entire social life in the community;
- Data for assessing the situation of gender equality and the weak efforts to tackle gender stereotypes say that gender inequality is not recognized as an important social issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Education and capacity building of the municipal administration for the inclusion of the gender perspective in the processes of policy making and budget planning in the municipality;
- Programs to educate and raise the awareness on the recognition of gender inequality in society and the effects of inequality on the overall economic and social development in the region;
- NGO initiatives for advocating the specific needs of women in exercising their right to social services and access to basic infrastructure;
- Prioritization of projects for providing the basic services to the population in the rural areas and the marginalized groups;
- Introducing special measures so as to enable easier access to the basic social services for rural women and marginalized groups;
- Networking and cooperation of the civil society and local institutions on programs for promoting gender equality, ex. fatherhood and the equal distribution of housework.

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