



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

GENDER, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN **ALBANIA**

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT SERIES



COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

Gender, agriculture and rural development in Albania

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Budapest, 2016

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Acknowledgements and governmental validation

This product is the result of work by several contributors. An initial Country Gender Assessment was prepared by Etleva Dashi, with contributions from Edvin Zhllima, for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3302. Aroa Santiago Bautista revised, expanded and edited the document to produce this publication. During the process, Fiona Meehan reviewed the report and Ani Plaku provided substantive updates, and also contributed to the recommendations and to the validation process. Dono Abdurazakova provided overall guidance and support, as well as direct contributions to its substance.

This report was validated at a roundtable event organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration in February 2016, with the participation of Directors of the Ministry, key specialists and the Assistant FAO representative for Albania.

The final product has benefited from a peer review process organized by the UN Country Team Gender Theme Group (UNCT GTG) in which useful feedback and inputs were received from Estela Bulku, Natasha Mazari, Dolly Wittberger, Edlira Papavangjeli and other experts.

The authors would like to express special thanks to Arben Kipi, Assistant FAO Representative in Albania, and Nevena Alexandrova, Agricultural Innovation Systems and Knowledge Sharing Officer (FAO REU), for their overall support in the process of producing this report.

Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|-------------|---|
| ADHS | Albania Demographic and Health Survey |
| AIDA | Albanian Investment Development Agency |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CPF | Country Programming Framework |
| EMA | European Model of Agriculture |
| ETF | European Training Foundation |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| GII | Gender Inequality Index |
| GTG | Gender Theme Group |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technologies |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| INSTAT | Albanian National Institute of Statistics |
| ISARD | Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development |
| LSMS | Living Standards Measurement Survey |
| MEDE | Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship |
| MoARDWA | Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration |
| NSGE-GBV-DV | National Strategy on Gender Equality and Against Gender-based and Domestic Violence 2007-2010 |
| NSGE-RGV | National Strategy on Gender Equality and Reduction of Gender Violence 2011-2015 |
| PDNA | Post-Disaster Needs Assessment |
| REU | FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia |
| SILC | Survey of Income and Living Conditions |
| UN Women | United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNPC | United Nations Programme of Cooperation |
| WB | World Bank |

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Executive Summary

“Gender equality is central to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations’ (FAO’s) mandate to achieve food security for all by raising levels of nutrition, improving agricultural productivity and natural resource management, and improving the lives of rural populations. FAO can achieve its goals only if it simultaneously works towards gender equality and supports women’s diverse roles in agriculture and rural development. Gender equality is not only an essential means by which FAO can achieve its mandate, it is also a basic human right.”

FAO Policy on Gender Equality¹

Gender equality is key to eliminating poverty and hunger. This has been consistently demonstrated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its research across the world. FAO is committed to reducing gender inequalities through its interventions and this report has been produced as part of its efforts to generate evidence and knowledge in compliance with FAO’s Policy on Gender Equality.² It is only by closing the gender gap that strategies on sustainable agriculture and rural development can reach their full potential.

This Gender Assessment has already served as a resource for the Country Programming Framework, signed between FAO and the Government of Albania in 2015.³ It is also intended to inform FAO professionals, other UN agencies, staff from the government of Albania, NGOs and professionals who work in agriculture and rural development in Albania. Additionally, it is an awareness-raising tool for the wider public.

The report highlights the major gender inequalities found within the available data that need to be considered by policy-makers and project managers, and identifies the need for further research in a wide range of areas, including fisheries, forestry, local farmers’ cooperation and women’s real contribution to GDP, particularly considering their substantial role in unpaid and informal work. Based on the main challenges discussed below, a set of recommendations is presented at the end of this report.

Main gender inequalities in agriculture and rural development:

1. The gap between legislation and implementation:

- ▶ Despite efforts by the Albanian government to reduce gender inequalities in the last two decades, there is a gap between legislation and implementation, and the connection between gender and rural development strategies can still be improved.
- ▶ Gender inequalities remain socially accepted and tolerated, especially in rural areas, where gender inequalities are more entrenched.⁴ This poses a challenge for the implementation of laws and policies on gender equality.

2. Women’s unsatisfactory access to technical knowledge on agriculture, including barriers to accessing information and benefiting from extension services and training:

- ▶ Even though women’s participation in tertiary studies is higher than men’s, a gender-based segregation of studies persists, and men are overrepresented in agricultural studies.
- ▶ There is limited participation of women in both vocational training and knowledge and information sharing about agriculture and rural development: only ten percent of beneficiaries of extension services are women⁵, and in 2015 only 33 percent of extension services staff was female.⁶ Some of the reasons for the low participation of women in extension services training are:
 - ▷ Male-dominated communication channels that control the flow of information and fail to reach and mobilize women farmers;

1 FAO. 2013a. FAO Policy on Gender Equality: Attaining Food Security Goals in Agriculture and Rural Development. Rome. (available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf>).

2 Ibid.

3 The Country Programming Framework (CPF) is the main programmatic tool of the FAO at country level. It is an agreement signed between the Government and FAO on the priorities that need to be addressed by their mutual collaboration. As such, the CPF is the umbrella under which FAO’s interventions at country level are designed and implemented.

4 This was documented in the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402. FAO. 2015. Gender impact assessment of the project TCP/ALB/3402: Identification of de facto burdens for women’s enjoyment of FAO projects and extension services. (unpublished report).

5 UN Women. 2014. Gender analysis of agricultural extension services in Albania. Tirana. (unpublished report).

6 Information provided by MoARDWA in 2015.

- ▷ The identification of men as “heads of households and holdings”. As a result, land tends to be registered in men’s names, and women tend to be seen as “wives of farmers” instead of farmers in their own right;
- ▷ Stereotypical links between machinery, technology and men;
- ▷ Women’s reduced self-confidence in areas and roles outside socially stereotyped gender roles;
- ▷ The location of training and meetings:
 - ▷ *Women have limited access to means of transportation, often depending on male members of the family. Driving cars, trucks and tractors is commonly stereotyped as a “men’s thing”.*
 - ▷ *Some locations discourage women’s attendance (for example, bars and other venues that are socially-defined as “men’s spaces”).*
 - ▷ *Some women are expected to ask for permission from their husbands to attend training and meetings.*

3. Women are overrepresented in informal employment, unpaid work in family farming and in domestic and reproductive activities:

- ▶ The employment rate in 2014 was 37.6 and 51.4 percent for women and men respectively.
- ▶ The agricultural sector employs more than 54 percent of all economically active women, 87 percent of whom work as informal or family workers.⁷
- ▶ Due to high levels of informal employment, only 19 percent of women from rural areas received maternity leave, compared with 59 percent of their urban counterparts.⁸
- ▶ State services for children’s care are absent in rural areas. This increases women’s domestic workload and contributes to the reinforcement of the gender-based stereotype of reproductive activities as a “purely women’s role”.
- ▶ In family farming, there is a rigid gender-based distribution of tasks. Male gender roles are associated with tasks that involve control over agricultural assets, mobility and decision-making and female gender roles are associated with manual work in agriculture and livestock, including pre-harvest and post-harvest activities, food processing and household tasks. This distribution of labour has resulted in women’s limited access to, and control over, agricultural assets and decision-making.
- ▶ Female farm managers represent only 6.47 percent of the total number of farm managers.⁹ In many cases, women only become farm managers in the event of widowhood or the husband’s absence.

4. Infrastructure has a direct impact on time use:

- ▶ The inadequate levels of infrastructure and technology in rural households have a direct impact on women’s unpaid workload, because domestic and reproductive activities are linked with female gender roles.
- ▶ Rural women invest significantly more time in food preparation, cleaning, child care and other domestic and reproductive activities than women in urban areas, and rural women engage in six times more domestic and reproductive labour than rural men.¹⁰ This reduces women’s economic and educational opportunities.

5. Women’s de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land is hindered:

- ▶ Women’s limited ownership of land is explained by:
 - ▷ Registry practices: after the collapse of the communist regime, land was provided to citizens regardless of their sex. However, the actual distribution and registration of land was carried out by individuals identified as “heads of the households” and as representatives of the whole family, following article 224 of the Civil Code.
 - ▷ Patrilocal marriages: brides go to live with their husbands’ families and this practice is more common in rural areas. Within this traditional form of marriage, women often do not claim their ownership rights over land either within their own families or within their new step-families, to avoid any possible confrontation.
 - ▷ Inheritance practices: there is a preference for giving land to male descendants, especially in the context of patrilocal marriages, where sons typically remain in the household and are expected to manage the family holding.
 - ▷ Lack of knowledge of women’s rights over land: this is common within rural populations and among land professionals and civil servants.
- ▶ Women’s limited de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land has direct implications for

⁷ Information available from INSTAT at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/wages-and-labour-cost.aspx>.

⁸ INSTAT. 2015a. Women and Men in Albania. (available at http://www.instat.gov.al/media/295845/femra_dhe_meshkuj_n_shqip_ri__2015.pdf).

⁹ Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

¹⁰ Ibid. Women invest 5 hours and 55 minutes per day, while men invest 56 minutes.

women's decision-making on the use of that land and for their access to irrigation, extension services and collateral for credit and entrepreneurship.

- ▶ No official sex-disaggregated data on land registration are currently available; however, only 6.47 percent of farm managers are women.¹¹

6. Limited access to entrepreneurship, markets and decision-making:

- ▶ Access to the city and large markets is stereotyped as "men's territory".
- ▶ Women in family farms may have reduced access to family income due to their lack of participation in the markets, despite their work throughout the whole value chain.
- ▶ Women's lack of self-confidence in their capacity to bargain is well documented as a major reason for women not attending the markets, alongside the demands of housework, limited child care and a lack of access to transportation.

7. Social mobilization and associations as a form of empowerment:

- ▶ Mixed associations of women and men co-workers provide an excellent opportunity for men to redefine their preconceptions of women, in order to see them as colleagues and bearers of knowledge, as well as to strengthen cooperation and coordination between women and men.
- ▶ However, in the context of the lower socio-cultural status of women, mixed associations tend to reduce women's voice and participation because they are regarded as "wives of farmers".¹²
- ▶ The existence of successful women's associations in Albania is demonstrated in different studies.¹³ These show that women tend to be more active and obtain more skills (including, self-confidence, public speaking, dealing with providers and accountancy) in women-only associations.¹⁴

8. Low status of women in rural areas, gender stereotypes and perception of gender inequalities:

- ▶ The occurrence of sex-selective abortion¹⁵ is an indication of the status of women in society. Patrilocal marriages are one explanation for the preference of sons over daughters.
- ▶ The identification, and even registration, of men as "heads of households" and the identification of women as "contributing family workers", reinforces the uneven and hierarchical status of women and men in rural areas.
- ▶ The disadvantaged status of rural women and the prevalence of gender stereotypes limit women's access to power, decision-making, resources and fulfilment of rights. They can also impact negatively on women's self-esteem and confidence. These are critical personal assets that can discourage or facilitate a person towards action.
- ▶ There is a significant gap between the perception and reality of gender inequalities in rural communities and among policy and programme implementers, which poses a challenge to effectively addressing gender inequalities.

¹¹ Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

¹² The problem of women remaining silent and men making the decisions in mixed associations has been identified by representatives from MoARD-WA, university professors and project implementers. It is also evidenced in interviews with farmers during field research conducted in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

¹³ Including the good practices covered in the initial gender assessment prepared by Etleva Dashi, with contributions from Edvil Zhlima, under the project TCP/ALB/3302.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ As suggested by UNFPA & World Vision. 2012. Sex imbalances at birth in Albania. Tirana. (available at http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA_report_Albania2012.pdf) and Council of Europe. 2014. Sex-selective abortions are discriminatory and should be banned. Human Rights Comment, 15 January 2014. (available at <http://www.coe.int/es/web/commissioner/-/sex-selective-abortions-are-discriminatory-and-should-be-bann-1>)

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Gender Assessment

Gender equality is key to eliminating poverty and hunger. This has been consistently demonstrated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its research across the world. FAO is committed to reducing gender inequalities through its interventions and this report has been produced as part of its efforts to generate evidence and knowledge in compliance with FAO's Policy on Gender Equality.¹⁶ It is only by closing the gender gap that strategies on sustainable agriculture and rural development can reach their full potential.

This Gender Assessment has already served as a resource for the Country Programming Framework, signed between FAO and the Government of Albania in 2015.¹⁷ It is also intended to inform FAO professionals, other UN agencies, staff from the government of Albania, NGOs and professionals who work in agriculture and rural development in Albania. Additionally, it is an awareness-raising tool for the wider public.

This report is intentionally concise and directly addresses the main points that need to be considered by MoARDWA and FAO in their work on agriculture and rural development in Albania. A brief summary is also available in the form of a four-page leaflet.

1.2 Limitations of this report

This report highlights the major gender inequalities found within the available data that need to be considered by policy-makers and project managers working in agriculture and rural development. As such, it is not intended to be a comprehensive report on gender inequalities in Albania. Furthermore, additional field research is needed in a wide range of areas, including fisheries, forestry, local farmers' cooperation and women's real contribution to GDP, particularly considering their substantial role in unpaid and informal work. Other areas outside FAO's mandate are only briefly mentioned in this report and are not fully covered or analysed.

1.3 Methodology

This report is a working document that has been updated on several occasions and has been used internally for programmatic purposes. The report mainly provides an analysis of the current, existing data. It also draws upon data from field research conducted under two FAO projects. This field research is not statistically representative but provides useful complementary qualitative information when combined with the existing statistical data.

More specifically, the process has included the following activities: an initial Country Gender Assessment was prepared in 2012, under an FAO project on support to extension services¹⁸ which included field research (November-December 2012). In 2014, the report was significantly updated, expanded and reshaped following the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to adapt it to FAO standards under FAO's Policy on Gender Equality. In 2015, further work took place and field research was conducted under another FAO project in Korca, Shkodra and Berat (June 2015).¹⁹ Before its most recent publication, a peer review and a substantive update were undertaken.

¹⁶ FAO, 2013a.

¹⁷ The Country Programming Framework (CPF) is the main programmatic tool of FAO at country level. It is an agreement signed between the Government and FAO on the priorities that need to be addressed by their mutual collaboration. As such, the CPF is the umbrella under which FAO's interventions at country level are designed and implemented.

¹⁸ This initial report (named Country Gender Assessment) was conducted for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3302, Support to Ministry of the Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MoARDWA): rural development programme through capacity building of ATTCS. For this report, semi-structured interviews with 27 experts from MoARDWA and two focus groups with female and male farmers were conducted.

¹⁹ The field research was conducted under the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (the second phase of the abovementioned project TCP/ALB/3302), in which questionnaires were distributed, and semi-structured interviews and a focus group were held, for a total of 56 people (22 women and 34 men) in the regions of Berat, Korca and Shkodra, including key informants from MoARDWA, extension services, heads of farmer associations and farmers. The results were presented in the technical report Gender Assessment of the project TCP/ALB/3402 and identification of de facto women's barriers for their access to extension services and FAO activities (FAO, 2015).

1.4 FAO in Albania

Table 1: Priorities of the Government of Albania and FAO established in the 2015-2017 Country Programming Framework

| Priority areas | Related outcomes and outputs |
|--|---|
| A) Conservation and management of natural resources | Outcome 1 – Conservation of phytogetic resources: Output 1.1 – Conservation and management of endangered locally adapted crop varieties. |
| B) Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and climate change adaptation | Outcome 2 – Disaster Risk Management (DRM) on agriculture: Output 2.1 – Post-Flood Needs Assessment and promotion of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Outcome 3 – Climate change adaptation and mitigation: Output 3.1 – Wood energy. |
| C) Capacity development and policy support for gender equality and women's empowerment in Albanian agriculture | Outcome 4 – Empowerment of rural women in the agriculture and rural development sectors: Output 4.1 – Pilot projects to increment women's access to land, extension and credit in rural areas. |
| D) Alignment of agriculture and rural development policies with EU standards | Outcome 5 – Policy support: Output 5.1 – Harmonization with the EU Legislation of Technical Measures for the Albanian Marine Fishery and Aquaculture Development Potential. Output 5.2 – Support for the establishment of a Land Consolidation Unit within MoARDWA. Output 5.3 – Support to MoARDWA to strengthen capacities in policy design. Output 5.4 – Capacity building of MoARDWA on agricultural trade policies. Outcome 6 – Technical Support to extension services and producer's groups: Output 6.1 – Prevention of transboundary animal diseases. Output 6.2 – Technical support on the prevention of the spread of pest and diseases. Output 6.3 – Capacity Development of Agricultural Technology Transfer Centres and extension services for rural diversification projects. |

Source: FAO & Government of Albania, 2015.

FAO has been supporting Albania since 1973. Under the terms of a new Host Country Agreement between FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MoARDWA), signed in December 2014, FAO established a representative office in Albania in 2015, housed in the premises of the Ministry.

FAO's current work in the country is framed by the FAO – Government of Albania Country Programming Framework (CPF). The CPF is a signed agreement that establishes the common priorities of FAO and the Government of Albania for joint work in the country.²⁰

FAO is a key partner in the United Nations Programme of Cooperation (UNPC) 2012-2016, which expands and strengthens the UN Delivery as One approach, and the Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2015-2017²¹ is aligned with this. The CPF 2015-2017, which reflects the priorities for both the government and FAO for their joint work in the country, has identified the acceleration of women's economic empowerment in rural areas as one of the main priorities for both Albania and FAO. The CPF is consistent with Albania's objectives within its EU pre-accession process.

²⁰ More information is available at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-au045e.pdf>.

²¹ FAO & Government of Albania. 2015. Country Programming Framework in the Republic of Albania 2015-2017. (available at <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/23486e45-23ed-4c25-9b11-a41b5cd699a9/>).

2. Brief profile of Albania

2.1 Socio-economic profile

Albania has a total area of 28 750 square kilometres and is divided into three geographical regions according to land relief: coastal plains, including 44 percent of arable land; hilly or foothill regions, including 34 percent of arable land; and mountainous regions, including 22 percent of arable land. Agriculture contributes to 20 percent of its GDP, and there are around 350 000 farm operators or heads of holdings – out of which only 6.47 percent are women²² – with an average of 1.2 ha per parcel. Productivity in the agricultural sector has expanded rapidly over the last ten years, particularly in the production of oil crops, coarse grain, cereals and wheat. Citrus, fruit and vegetable outputs have also significantly increased.²³

The Inter-Sectoral Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development II 2014-2020 (ISARD II 2014-2020) is the current policy and strategy framework for agriculture and rural development in Albania. Since Albania was granted official candidate status in June 2014 by the European Union, ISARD II 2014-2020 has been aligned with the EU's 2014-2020 Common Agricultural Policy, and the European Commission is also supporting Albania in aligning with the European Model of Agriculture (EMA).

The population of Albania comprises approximately 2.8 million inhabitants, with a sex ratio of 102.1 men for every 100 women.²⁴ When disaggregated by rural / urban location, the picture is different: in rural areas there is a sex ratio of 113 men per 100 women, while the sex ratio in urban areas is 94.7 men per 100 women.²⁵ Lower employment opportunities for women in rural areas compared with men may be one of the reasons behind this sex imbalance.

Albania is ranked 85th in the 2015 Human Development Index²⁶ (0.733), having experienced a continuous annual improvement since 1995.²⁷ Albania ranked 45 out of 155 countries in the 2014 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index (GII), with a GI value of 0.217.²⁸

In 2012, 14.3 percent of the population fell below the national poverty line (15.5 percent for rural areas), in contrast with 25.4 percent registered in 2002.²⁹ Sex-disaggregated information on poverty is not yet available, since until 2015 information was collected at household, rather than individual level.³⁰ However, it is well documented that female-headed households³¹ have a lower probability of falling under the poverty line in comparison with male-headed households. This is explained by the fact that female-headed households are more likely to receive remittances from their migrant husbands. This pattern is observable in both urban and rural areas.

2.2 Political and institutional profile

In the 1990s, after the communist era, a transition began towards multiparty democracy and a market economy. Programmes of economic and democratic reform were put in place, but the lack of strong institutions and

22 Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

23 Information available at <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=alb>.

24 INSTAT. 2015b. Population of Albania 1 January 2015. Press release. (available at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/publications/press-releases/press-release-population-of-albania-1-january-2015.aspx>).

25 Data from 2014. INSTAT, 2015a.

26 The Human Development Index (HDI) assesses long-term progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.

27 UNDP. 2015. Human Development Report: Albania. (available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/ALB>).

28 The index illustrates gender-based inequalities based on three strategic dimensions: reproductive health, political participation and economic activity. The index specifically measures: maternal mortality ratio, adolescent birth rate, share of seats in parliament, percentage of women with at least some secondary education compared with men, and the labour force participation rate. World Economic Forum 2012. Gender Gap Country Profile. (available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR12/91_Albania_GGGR12.pdf).

29 World Bank. 2016. Country Data. (available at <http://data.worldbank.org/country/albania>).

30 Data is collected through the Living Standards Measurement Studies (LSMSs). During 2015, INSTAT piloted the Income and Living Conditions (SILC) methodology for poverty measurement, which provides data on poverty and exclusion at the individual level. Poverty data by sex-disaggregation were absent for a long time. The implementation of the new methodology under the EUROSTAT guideline will provide poverty data by sex-disaggregation and by urban / rural area for the first time.

31 Unlike male-headed households, female-headed households tend to be single-headed households. This is because households are usually identified as headed by women only in the absence of men.

inexperience derailed many of them. The collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997, and the ensuing social and political unrest, reversed the achievements of the fragile democracy.

The main driving force for the democratization of Albanian society has been the country's commitment to integration processes into Euro-Atlantic structures, including: achieving democratic governance; the adoption of a legislative framework in line with western standards; and the construction of functioning democratic institutions and a market economy, as well as a strong civil society. In particular, after 2000, Albania has made progress towards fulfilling the Copenhagen political criteria as a precondition for Albania's eligibility to join the EU. This has strengthened the rule of law, implemented legislative reforms of the judiciary, started the fight against corruption and developed a legal and institutional framework on human rights, all of which broadly correspond to European standards.

After the local elections in 2015, Albania approved a new territorial division at the level of local governance. The new administrative division splits the territory into 61 Municipalities in order to strengthen the local governance and decentralization processes. This aims to ensure greater efficiency in local government units and follows the standards defined in the European Charter of Local Self-Governance. The organic Law that decentralizes functions to regional bodies makes reference to Gender Equality Law in several articles, specifically in terms of representation, decision-making and participation processes.³²

Albania ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993 and its Optional Protocol in 2003. Within the "Concluding Observations for Albania", the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (forty-sixth session, 12th-30th July 2010) established a set of recommendations which have subsequently shaped policy on gender equality and related measures:

"The Committee further recommends that temporary special measures be applied in order to ensure the equality of women and men in accessing property, capital and credits, health-care services, housing and, more generally, all the components of an adequate standard of living, particularly in regard to women belonging to disadvantaged groups, including women and girls belonging to linguistic and ethnic minorities, older women, women with disabilities and women living in rural and remote areas, as authorized by the comprehensive article 8 of the Law on Gender Equality in Society of 2008."

Source: Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 12-30 July 2010.³³

The Committee raised concerns about the particular situation of women in rural and remote areas, especially in relation to stereotypes, access to education, unequal opportunities in employment and entrepreneurship, and access to health care and child care facilities. The General Recommendation No. 34 on the rights of rural women issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on 04 March 2016³⁴ establishes useful guidelines for the implementation of CEDAW.

Albania's commitments to the reduction of gender inequalities also include the EU strategy for equality between women and men, 2010-2015. As the EU's Albania Progress Report of 2014 indicates³⁵, measures to address the gender pay gap, higher unemployment rates among women and women's limited access to credit and entrepreneurship are key areas of concern for the EU and need to be addressed by the government of Albania.

Table 2: Albania's laws and commitments to reduce gender inequalities

| Year | International instruments, national laws and political actions |
|------|---|
| 1994 | Accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| 1996 | Accession to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms |
| 2000 | Albania's commitment to the Millennium Development Goals |
| 2002 | Accession to the protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children |

³² For example, the law indicates that the Mayor should appoint at least 30 percent women to the positions of administrators of administrative units, which are the former communes in rural areas. Decentralization was in progress at the time of the finalization of this report.

³³ CEDAW. 2010. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. 46th Session, 12-30 July 2010. (available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-ALB-CO-3.pdf>).

³⁴ CEDAW. 2016. General recommendation No. 34 on the rights of rural women. (available at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_7933_E.pdf).

³⁵ European Commission. 2014. Albania Progress Report. (available at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-albania-progress-report_en.pdf).

| | |
|------|---|
| 2003 | Accession to the CEDAW Optional Protocol |
| 2006 | Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006 "On measures against violence in family relations" |
| 2008 | Law No. 9970, dated 24.07.2008 "On gender equality in society" |
| 2010 | Law No. 10329, dated 30.09.2010 "On some addenda and amendments to Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006 "On measures against violence in family relations"" |
| 2010 | Law No. 10221, dated 04.02.2010 "On protection against discrimination" |
| 2010 | Minister Order on the Set of Harmonized Indicators on Monitoring Gender Equality. Ministry of Employment, Social Issues and Equal Opportunities. |
| 2013 | Law No. 143/2013 "On some amendments to Law No 10 039, dated 22.12.2008 "On legal aid"" |
| 2014 | National Action Plan for women entrepreneurship 2014-2020 |
| 2014 | National Action Plan for the involvement of men and boys as partners of women and girls in actions for gender equality and against gender-based and domestic violence |
| 2015 | Amendments introduced to the Electoral Code with the Law 74/2012 to ensure 50 percent women in local councils at the new LGU |
| 2015 | Albania's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals |

Article 18 of the 1998 Albanian Constitution guarantees women and men equal rights, and the 2008 'Law on Gender Equality in Society' makes gender mainstreaming mandatory across all legislation and policy-making. The 2010 'Law on Protection against Discrimination' prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation in the political, economic and social spheres. The National Strategy on Gender Equality, Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (2011-2015) identifies women living in rural areas as one of the main target groups, and focuses on the promotion of women's empowerment through increasing their access to credit, entrepreneurship, employment and associationism.

In 2015, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth conducted an assessment of the implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence 2011-2015 and its Action Plan, with the aim of identifying the results achieved. This assessment was the initial preparatory step for drafting the new National Strategy on Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender-based Violence and Domestic Violence 2016-2020 and Action Plan. One of the main findings of this assessment was that limited attention had been paid to the specific needs of women living in rural areas. Consequently, one of the principle recommendations for the new Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2016-2020 is to improve the lives of rural women. The Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020 also includes specific measures to close the gender gap in the labour market.

One of the goals of IPARD II 2014-2020 (Rural Development Programme under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance of the Republic of Albania 2014-2020)³⁶ is to increase the income that is generated by women and young entrepreneurs in rural areas.

Albania's commitments to the European Union's Gender Action Plan II (2016-2020) and to the new Sustainable Development Goals will form the umbrella under which new actions on gender equality need to take place.

Sex-disaggregated data on agriculture and rural development is collected by both the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MoARDWA) and INSTAT. Since 2010, a Harmonized Set of Indicators in Gender Equality has been put in place, although significantly, it does not include gender indicators for agriculture and rural development. Since 2013, sex-disaggregated data in the agricultural sector has been collected in two MoARDWA programmes: the subsidies scheme and extension services. Annual and quarterly surveys of the Labour Force, the Demographic Health Survey 2008-2009, the Time Use Survey 2010 and the Living Standards Measurements Studies (LSMSs) 2012 are resources that provide relevant information on gender inequalities in rural areas. The annual publication, Women and Men in Albania, is INSTAT's flagship publication on gender inequalities in Albania.

According to information received from national partners, since 2012, MoARDWA has been implementing gender quotas in two budgetary programmes: 1) Extension services and 2) Subsidies for farms.³⁷ The second programme aimed to allocate subsidy funds to 1 100 women's farms in 2015 and to increase it to 1 400 by 2018.

³⁶ GTAI. 2015. IPA II 2015. (available at <https://www.gtai.de/GTAI/Content/DE/Trade/Fachdaten/PRO/2015/09/Anlagen/PRO201509025004.pdf?v=1>).
³⁷ More information is available at the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship website, <http://www.ekonomia.gov.al/>.

Table 3: Number of expected beneficiaries of MoARDWA subsidies, by sex

| Beneficiaries | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
|-----------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Women | 1 100 | 1 200 | 1 300 | 1 400 |
| Men | 9 700 | 10 650 | 11 700 | 11 800 |
| Percentage of women beneficiaries | 10.2% | 10.2% | 10% | 10.6% |

Source: Information provided by MoARDWA in 2015.

2.3 Health and demographic profile

2.3.1 Sex ratios and life expectancy

As discussed earlier, the population of Albania comprises approximately 2.8 million inhabitants and the sex ratio is 102.1 men for every 100 women.³⁸ However, the sex ratio at birth is different: there are 109 male neonates for every 100 female neonates.³⁹ The abortion rate in the country is 186 abortions per 1 000 pregnancies, 32.8 percent of which are planned abortions. Based on this evidence, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Council of Europe have pointed out that sex-selective abortion may be widespread⁴⁰, despite being outlawed under the 2000 'Law on Reproductive Health'. Although further research is needed, it has been suggested that Albanian families have less interest in investing in girls because their status and potential economic returns are perceived to be significantly lower than those of boys. This is especially the case in rural areas where patrilocal marriages – those in which brides move from the house of their parents to their husband's family – are widely practised.

However, infant mortality rates are higher among male children and there is a greater prevalence of underweight male infants between 0-4 years of age.⁴¹ The male life expectancy rate at birth is also lower when compared with the female rate (76.4 percent and 80.3 percent respectively⁴²), partly due to infant mortality rates and partly due to gendered habits that negatively impact on men, including a higher prevalence of smoking and drinking practices among males.⁴³

In 2014, the mean age of marriage was 24 years for women and 29.5 years for men.⁴⁴ While 12 percent of women over 20 years of age are widowed, only three percent of men over 25 years of age are widowed.⁴⁵ This difference is due to the higher death rate among men and because widowers are more likely to remarry, while widowed women seldom remarry after losing their husbands.⁴⁶

2.3.2 Migration

Until the end of the 1980s, migration was virtually non-existent. Since then it has become a dominant socio-economic factor in the country. Migrants account for 27.5 percent of the total population and during the years 2003-2010, the proportion of rural inhabitants decreased by 13 percent. Controls placed over internal migration have succeeded in restricting the growth of the urban population and have contributed to the slowdown of rural population decline.⁴⁷

During the 1990s, out-migration was male-dominated, although today women comprise 41 percent of Albanians living in Italy and Greece. Female migration has occurred primarily in the context family reunification⁴⁸, and

38 INSTAT, 2015b.

39 INSTAT, 2015a.

40 As has been suggested in UNFPA & World Vision (2012) and Council of Europe (2014).

41 Seventeen percent in male infants versus ten percent in female infants (Institute of Statistics and Institute of Public Health, 2010).

42 INSTAT. 2014. Dwelling and Living Conditions in Albania. (available at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/population.aspx>).

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Stecklov, G., Carletto, C., Azzarri, C. & Davis, B. 2010. Gender and Migration. *Demography*, 47(4): 935-961. (available at <http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/papers/93268>)

48 European Commission. 2012. Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe. Country report. Albania. (avail-

daughter-only migration has been a secondary alternative when the household lacked sons.⁴⁹ However, after the economic crisis of 2008, men have found it more difficult to gain employment abroad, while women have found it easier to gain employment in the care industry. Consequently, families living abroad have become increasingly dependent on women's salaries. For example, one third of Albanian families living in Greece depend solely on the wife's salary.⁵⁰

Internal migration, from rural to urban locations, is female-dominated. This is evidenced when comparing the sex ratio of rural areas (113 men for every 100 women) with the sex ratio in urban areas (94.7 men for every 100 women).⁵¹

Women are overrepresented in the care industry, both when migrating from rural to urban areas and when migrating abroad. This work usually entails informality, instability and very low wages, placing women in a vulnerable position.

2.3.3 Health

While general mortality patterns are similar to those observed in developed European countries, morbidity patterns are similar to those found in developing countries.⁵² Self-perception of health status is better among men than women, especially within the poorer quintile and the quintile with lower education levels.⁵³ Women also experience more chronic illness than men.⁵⁴ Furthermore, women's limited access to transportation in rural areas (as discussed in section 4.3 of this report), may have a direct implication for rural women's access to health and social services, making them dependent on male counterparts.

Men have higher rates of hypertension and lung cancer due to gender-based social habits, including higher levels of tobacco and alcohol consumption. This has a direct relationship with the above-mentioned difference in life expectancy rates at birth, which is 80.3 years for women and 76.4 years for men.⁵⁵

In violent death figures, suicides are mostly committed by men, with 7.5 and 1.9 suicides per 100 000 men and women respectively, while human trafficking is mainly suffered by women.⁵⁶ Homicides, targeted towards both female and male victims, are mainly perpetrated by men.

able at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=1778&furtherNews=yes>).

49 Ibid.

50 European Commission, 2012.

51 INSTAT, 2015a.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

54 Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

55 INSTAT, 2014.

56 Institute for Statistics and Institute for Public Health, 2010.

3. Gender and the rural economy

3.1 Education

Adult literacy rates are close to 100 percent for both women and men, and there is no discernible difference in the primary education completion rates of girls and boys in either urban or rural areas.⁵⁷ The primary school attendance rate is lower in rural areas (51 percent) than in urban areas (69 percent); and the educational completion rate in rural areas is only 8.6 years, despite the fact that school attendance is mandatory for 9 years.⁵⁸

Girls and boys from rural areas also have lower enrolment rates in secondary and vocational schools. Vocational schools and adult training centres are mainly located in central Albania, while they are almost absent in rural parts of the country.⁵⁹ Although more women complete secondary education than men, with a ratio of 96 men for every 100 women, vocational education is clearly male dominated, with a ratio of 367 men for every 100 women.⁶⁰

Schooling rates are equivalent for girls and boys and access to tertiary education is directly linked to the economic status of the family: 28 percent of women and 31 percent of men from the highest wealth quintile have some university education, while only one percent of both sexes from the lowest quintile have access to tertiary education.

During the last decade, the feminization of universities has taken place: in 2012, female student graduates comprised 64 percent of the total number of students who graduated.⁶¹ However, this feminization is accompanied by a gender-based segregation of studies. Men form the majority of students in agricultural studies, services, engineering, construction and manufacturing studies, while women preponderate in social sciences, humanities, arts and science subjects.⁶² The gender-based segregation of educational paths has a direct impact on employment opportunities, the wage gap, and the perpetuation of gender roles and stereotypes. The gender segregation of studies makes women less employable in the labour market, especially in sectors where vocational or tertiary studies are needed, for example, in qualified agriculture, engineering or manufacturing.

3.2 Formal and informal labour markets in rural Albania

3.2.1 Labour market⁶³

Structural changes that took place after the collapse of the communist government destroyed Albanian state enterprises in which female workers formed the majority of the workforce. Consequently, more women than men lost their jobs.⁶⁴ Assets previously owned by the state were also generally given to men when they were privatized. As a result of these changes, women's economic situation and status deteriorated, and their dependence on men increased.⁶⁵

Women's employment rate declined between 2007 and 2014 from 43.4 percent to 37.6 percent⁶⁶, with young women being the most affected. After the global economic crisis, the employment rate in 2014 was 37.6 and 51.4⁶⁷ percent for women and men respectively.

57 INSTAT data, available at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/education.aspx>.

58 European Training Foundation. 2012. Country Information Note, Albania. (available at [http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/883BBB997B09D90E-C125783E0032AECE/\\$file/CIN_Albania_2010_EN.pdf](http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/883BBB997B09D90E-C125783E0032AECE/$file/CIN_Albania_2010_EN.pdf)).

59 Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth. 2014. Employment and Skills Strategy 2014-2020: Higher skills and better jobs for all women and men. (available at http://www.seecel.hr/UserDocsImages/Documents/EMP-SKILLS-STRATEGY_Albania.pdf).

60 Information available from INSTAT at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/education.aspx>.

61 INSTAT. 2013. Women and men in Albania, 2013. Tirana. (available at http://www.instat.gov.al/media/226355/femra_meshkuj_2013.pdf).

62 Ibid. The specific situation of Roma women and internal migrant women and men is still unclear because of the gaps in school registration (GADC et al., 2010).

63 As already mentioned, the analysis of the labour market presented here mostly comprises agriculture and livestock. Further research is needed to assess the situation of women and men in fisheries and forestry.

64 IFAD. 2009. Gender Profile of Albania. (available at <http://www.ifad.org/english/gender/cen/profiles/alb.htm>).

65 Ibid.

66 Information available from INSTAT at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/wages-and-labour-cost.aspx>.

67 Ibid.

The agricultural sector employs more than 54 percent of economically active women.⁶⁸ Women are overrepresented as contributing family workers in agricultural activities, with 87 percent of women working in agriculture in these roles.⁶⁹ Off-farm employment opportunities are scarce in rural Albania and women are less likely to obtain off-farm employment in comparison with men.⁷⁰ In the context of men being more likely to be recruited in off-farm jobs, women have taken over the responsibilities in agricultural production that used to be associated with male gender roles. However, they do not always have access to the necessary extension services, agricultural inputs, technology and land.⁷¹

Informality magnifies job insecurity, social exclusion and dependence.⁷² As contributing family workers, rural women have reduced access to social protection and insurance schemes. For instance, only 19 percent of women from rural areas who gave birth in 2014 received maternity allowance, compared with 59 percent of pregnant women from urban areas.⁷³ Legislation only granted paternity leave as a right in 2015, although the gender-based stereotype of reproductive activities as “solely women’s responsibility” is still prevalent. State services for children’s care are absent in many regions, especially in rural areas, which increases women’s workload in domestic activities.

Informal work increases women’s exposure to the risk of falling into poverty in older age because of their limited entitlement to pension schemes. The retirement age is 60 years for women and 65 years for men, although life expectancy was four years higher for women than for men in 2014 (80.3 and 76.4 years respectively).⁷⁴ Since 2015, pension reforms have increased the retirement age for women by 2 months per year until they reach the age of 65.

3.2.2 Family farming

There is a high level of economic inactivity in Albania. This can be explained by non-registered self-employment which accounts for between 30 and 45 percent of the country’s GDP.⁷⁵ A significant proportion of informal employment takes place in family farming. In family farming, men tend to be identified as both farm managers and the “heads of the households”, and women as “helpers” under the category of “contributing family workers”. Notably, female farm managers form only 6.47 percent of the total number of farm managers.⁷⁶ When disaggregated by age, there are no women managers under the age of 25. Between 25 and 55 years of age, the proportion of women is 4.12 percent of the total. Significantly, this figure (4.12 percent) almost doubles in the 55-65 and 65+ age groups. It is assumed here that within married couples, women typically only become farm managers in the event of widowhood or the husband’s absence.

In family farming, there is a rigid, gender-based distribution of tasks.⁷⁷ Activities that are stereotypically defined as “men’s responsibilities” include: dealing with providers, extension services and administration; managing machinery; working as shepherds; dealing with transportation; and going to the city and large markets⁷⁸.

Activities that are stereotypically defined as “women’s responsibilities” include: taking care of the household, children and dependents; manual work in agricultural production and processing; taking care of the animals; milking; and cheese production.

In summary, women form the majority in work-intensive activities, while men form the majority in capital-intensive activities⁷⁹; and only male gender roles are associated with tasks that involve control over agricultural assets, mobility and decision-making. This distribution of tasks results in women’s reduced access to, and control over, agricultural assets and decision-making.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 UNDP. 2013a. Draft Report: National Study on Rural Labor Market. (available at <http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/national-study-on-rural-labor-market.html>).; Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, 2014.

71 Ibid.

72 Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, 2014.

73 Ibid.

74 2015 population statistics are available from INSTAT at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/population.aspx?tab=tabs-5>.

75 INSTAT. 2011. National Census. (available at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/census/census-2011.aspx>).

76 Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

77 This was documented during the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402. When farmers were asked about the distribution of tasks between sexes, most of them disagreed with its existence. However, further analysis of the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires revealed a common pattern of extremely rigid areas of work based on gender (FAO, 2015).

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

3.3 Infrastructure and technology in rural areas and their relationship to time use

The average household size in rural areas is 5.3 members and the average number of men and women of working age is 1.54 and 1.3 per household respectively.⁸⁰

In the first decade of 2000, there was a substantial improvement in household infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, where three times more households now receive piped water.⁸¹ The number of households with no water supply was 21 times lower in 2011 than in 2001, and the number of households with a flush toilet inside the house has significantly increased.⁸²

However, new technologies are considerably more prevalent in urban settings than in rural ones. About 20 percent of households at national level have a computer. However, approximately 82.3 percent of these are located in urban areas and 17.7 percent in rural areas.⁸³ The number of households in urban areas owning a boiler is about twice that of rural areas, and the number of households with a dishwasher is 4.5 times higher in urban areas compared with rural areas.⁸⁴

The inferior levels of infrastructure and technology in rural households have a direct impact on women's unpaid workload, because domestic and reproductive work is socially linked with female gender roles. For example, rural women invest much more time in food preparation, cleaning, child care and other domestic and reproductive activities than women in urban areas (5 hours 55 minutes compared with 4 hours 35 minutes).⁸⁵ Women's time invested in domestic and reproductive activities is also six times higher than that of men in rural areas.⁸⁶ This substantially reduces women's economic and educational opportunities. For example, women in rural areas spend almost half the amount of time that women in urban areas do in time dedicated to study.⁸⁷

The inadequate levels of infrastructure and technology in rural households also affect girls and boys of schooling age in different ways. The employment of juveniles under the age of 16 is prohibited, according to paragraph 1 of the article 98 of the law no. 7961, dated 12.07.1995, "Code of Labour of the Republic of Albania."⁸⁸ However, as documented in the time use survey of 2010-2011, girls aged 10-14 years spend 30 minutes in paid work and two hours in unpaid work per day, compared with 12 minutes of paid work and 26 minutes of unpaid work in the case of boys from rural areas.⁸⁹ These figures decrease to half of this time for both girls and boys from urban areas in unpaid work and to almost zero for paid work. Moreover, both girls and boys from rural areas invest less time in study than their urban counterparts.⁹⁰

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women:

Article 14. 2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

Article 16.1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

⁸⁰ Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, 2014.

⁸¹ As shown in the 2011 census when compared with the 2001 Census (INSTAT, 2011).

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ INSTAT, UNFPA & UN Women. 2011. Albania Time Use Survey 2010-11. Tirana. (available at http://www.instat.gov.al/media/171100/albanian_time_use_survey_2010-2011.pdf).

⁸⁶ Ibid. Women invest 5 hours and 55 minutes daily while men invest 56 minutes.

⁸⁷ Ibid. One hour and 13 minutes per day in the case of women from urban areas and 37 minutes per day in the case of women from rural areas.

⁸⁸ A translated version of the law by the ILO is available at <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/41344/63433/>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid. Four hours and 25 minutes of daily study for girls from urban areas aged 10-14 years; 4 hours 29 minutes for boys from urban areas. Three hours 49 minutes for girls from rural areas; 3 hours 58 minutes for boys from rural areas.

3.4 Property rights and de facto enjoyment of rights over land

Albania's accession to the CEDAW convention in 1994 established equal rights in terms of land ownership. Consequently, women have the same rights as men to land ownership, according to the Constitution and the Civil Code. However, land tends to be registered in the name of men. Even though no sex-disaggregated information on the registration of land is officially available, women account for only 6.47 percent of total farm managers, which may be indicative of women's access to land.⁹¹

During the land distribution that took place between 1991 and 1994, land was distributed to citizens regardless of their sex: land was apportioned to families in accordance with the number of family members (including women and men, adults and children). However, land was provided to the person who was considered to be the "head of the household" (generally a man), and land was only registered in the name of this person who, since then, has de facto enjoyed all rights and management control over that land.

The land registration process that was initiated in 2000 to regularize land ownership also identified a "head of the household" as the manager of that land. The local cadastres in the rural areas (IPROs) provided certificates of ownership indicating that the land was registered in the name of the "head of the household" as its representative.⁹² These certificates were based on article 224 of the Civil Code, which establishes that the representative of the land and the holding is the "head of the household".⁹³

The need to identify one "head of the household" for land registration reinforces unequal gender power relations within the household and reduces women's de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land.⁹⁴

Another reason for women's limited de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land is the inadequate knowledge about women's rights over land within rural populations, and among professionals working with land (including notaries) and civil servants (including staff from registries and cadastral offices).

Customary inheritance practices also discriminate against women. In patrilocal marriages, which are very common in rural areas, women move to their husband's family once married. Within this practice, many of them lose their piece of land from their family due to ignorance of their rights, or to the resignation of their rights in favour of their brothers.⁹⁵

According to article 223 of the Civil Code, the person moving to a new household gains inheritance rights over the property of the new family. However, married women going to live with their husband's family rarely claim this right.

According to the Kanun code⁹⁶, in the event of the death of a spouse, widows may manage land until their sons are of adult age, after which their sons become the decision-makers. If the widow has no children, the property reverts to the deceased husband's relatives and the widow returns to her parents' house.

Not registering or co-registering land in the name of women has the following implications:

1. Violation of women's ownership rights over their land;
2. Land insecurity, and increased dependence on male counterparts to access land;
3. Limited voice in decision-making;
4. Reduced access to collateral;

91 Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

92 UN Women, 2014.

93 At the time of publication of this report, a legal analysis using FAO's Legal Assessment Tool was being finalized in a joint effort between FAO and GIZ in line with target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals and to monitor the indicator 5.a.2 proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.

94 Land fragmentation and the small average size of parcels are a challenge for both women and men in Albania. Land fragmentation has negative implications for: 1) accessing the market (for which standardization is needed); 2) reducing workload (since mechanization possibilities are limited); 3) decreasing transportation costs to storage rooms; and, as a result, 4) there are higher overall costs that make farmers less competitive in the market. Some land experts in Albania have expressed concerns that if land was effectively distributed among women and men (and among daughters and sons through inheritance), land fragmentation could worsen. However, equal rights over land are unnegotiable rights under the current national and international legal framework, so measures are needed to resolve the problem of land fragmentation without damaging the ownership rights of women and men. Promoting the association of farmers is currently seen by MoARDWA and regional extension services as a key solution in addressing land fragmentation. By uniting forces and coordinating production, farmers can have better bargaining power with providers and markets. However, difficulties persist in engaging farmers to work together in a post-communist context in which cooperativism still has negative political connotations.

95 Research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015). Confirmed at the GIZ/World Bank/FAO workshop Gender and Land in the Balkans which took place in Durres, Albania in September 2015.

96 The Kanun code is a set of oral traditional norms that were published in writing in the 20th century. Its practice was forbidden under the communist regime. After the fall of communism, some rural communities, especially in the North, began to rediscover old traditions and to recover some practices of the Kanun. Marriage and inheritance practices in rural areas are influenced by the Kanun tradition.

5. As a result of 4), reduced access to credit, machinery, subsidies and entrepreneurship;
6. As a consequence of the massive male emigration that is currently taking place in Albania, women may be left without the power to manage the farm.⁹⁷

Registration of all owners of a land parcel is critical for ensuring that the rights of all owners are protected. Co-registration of spouses as co-owners, is therefore, an essential starting point for increasing women's de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land.

3.5 Access to credit, entrepreneurship and markets

"The development of policies for women entrepreneurs remains a real challenge for the government. Today they represent 27% of the total number of active enterprises operating in Albania. But when considering the size and type of activity in which they operate, these businesses are limited and therefore require special attention by the government. Involvement in activities of the enterprise means more economic freedom, ownership, decision-making and thus further empowering of women in Albania."

*Former Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Entrepreneurship,
Ms. Brunilda Pascal, in June 2014.⁹⁸*

Although no rural-urban disaggregated data on entrepreneurship are available, only 27 percent of managers of enterprises in Albania are women.⁹⁹ In order to improve women's access to entrepreneurship, the Albanian Government (based on the Action Plan on Women's Entrepreneurship in Albania 2014-2020), is implementing the Fund for the Promotion of Women Entrepreneurs. This fund has a total value of 30 000 000 leks and is managed by AIDA (Albanian Investment Development Agency).¹⁰⁰ The fund aims to subsidize the interest rate of loans to micro, small and medium enterprises, which are headed by women as owners or administrators, and consists of the payment of interest on loans taken by women to be used for business investment. Financial aid will cover 50 percent of the interest rate for four consecutive years, and will provide up to 1 000 000 leke for a loan. However, this measure seems to be quite modest, since existing AIDA funds provided support to 20 women entrepreneurs in 2015.

Land is sometimes the only asset that a farmer can use as collateral when applying for credit. However, the use of land as collateral is not always straightforward, particularly for those whose rights over land are not registered. This affects women more severely because, as discussed earlier, they are less likely to be registered as land owners. Especially relevant is the case of grants that are available under the IPARD programme (European Union's Rural Development Programme under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) and grants available under SARED (Support to Agriculture and Rural Economic Development in Disadvantaged Areas of Albania). In both cases, women may not fulfil the requirements needed for SARED and IPARD grant applications because their ownership rights over land are not registered.

When the signatures of both spouses are needed for obtaining credit under the current legal system, women are sometimes asked by their husbands to sign documents that they are not fully aware of, even when this means ignoring their own responsibilities or the consequences that the signature can have.¹⁰¹

Access to markets is also a challenge for both women and men from remote areas. Land fragmentation and small farm parcel average are two of the main issues. Farmers need to work together in order to be able to fill a truck with standardized production, particularly if they want the truck to come to the village and take their products to the market.¹⁰² Common storage rooms and fridges are also still required in remote areas. Furthermore, land fragmentation limits the use of machinery, which means that production is much more labour intensive and costly.

97 UN Women, 2014.

98 Declaration made during the presentation of the Action Plan for Women's Entrepreneurship in Albania 2014-2020, 20 June 2014, available at <http://www.ekonomia.gov.al/al/newsroom/lajme/prezantohet-plan-veprimi-per-sipermarrjen-e-grave-ne-shqiperi>.

99 Ibid.

100 Speech by Ms. Milva Ekonomi, the Minister of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship, at the Annual Regional Conference of Women Parliamentarians, available at <http://www.ekonomia.gov.al/al/newsroom/fjalime/ekonomi-te-fuqizohet-gruaja-ne-ekonomi-prioriteti-yne>.

101 Information obtained from the testimonies of notaries from Albania and presented at the workshop on Gender and Land in the Western Balkans in Durres, Albania, in September 2015.

102 Information obtained from farmers in the region of Korca during field research conducted in June 2015. More information about this research is available in the methodology (section 1.3).

Additional challenges arise for women. Even though women may have access to small local markets, large markets that are outside their resident villages are dominated by men. Strict gender roles and the stereotypical preconception that markets are a “men’s field” prevail.¹⁰³ This negatively affects women’s self-confidence when entering an arena that is considered to be solely masculine. Mobility constraints also limit women’s access to markets.

Markets, gender relations and access to income: a testimony from the field

During field research conversations with women farmers in Shkodra, one of the women farmers affirmed, whilst others nodded, that: “Women do much of the work in the farm, but men then go to the market, sell the products and get the money”. When asked why they did not go to the market, the female farmer added that, “We cannot go to the market. To do that, it is necessary to leave the household and we need to do housework. It is also necessary to know how to drive. It is also necessary to discuss with other traders and we cannot do it.”¹⁰⁴

3.6 Mobility

“I can easily go to [training] and meetings of our farmer association because I live very close to the meeting point and then I do not depend on transportation to reach the place. Other women depend on their husbands or other male relatives to bring them by car. This is one reason why so many women do not attend meetings and training.”

(Female farmer from the region of Shkodra¹⁰⁵)

Even though women’s freedom of movement is legally granted, it is de facto restricted¹⁰⁶ due to predefined gender roles. A married woman is usually expected to move to her husband’s family location, and permission from her husband or family may be needed before travelling within Albania or abroad. In research conducted in 2010, approximately 15 percent of rural women confirmed that the final decision on whether or not they could visit their family members was made by their husbands.¹⁰⁷

The limited mobility of women compared with men is a factor that contributes to the lower levels of women’s participation in training activities organized by extension services and partner organizations.¹⁰⁸ This lower mobility can be explained by:

1. Gender stereotypes on mobility: Driving cars, trucks and tractors is usually stereotyped as a “men’s thing”, and women have limited access to cars or other means of transportation; paperwork in the city and attending markets and activities outside the village are also usually associated with male gender roles.¹⁰⁹
2. The need to request permission from men: Some women may have to ask for permission from spouses to leave the household.
3. A lack of child care: There is an absence or limited availability of kindergartens in rural areas¹¹⁰ and domestic and reproductive activities are often regarded as “women’s responsibilities”.¹¹¹

These mobility restrictions have a severe impact on rural women’s economic opportunities, organization with other women farmers and abilities to claim their rights. Furthermore, women from rural areas are more dependent on their male counterparts, in terms of transportation, than women from urban areas.

¹⁰³ As documented in the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ GADC et al., 2010.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

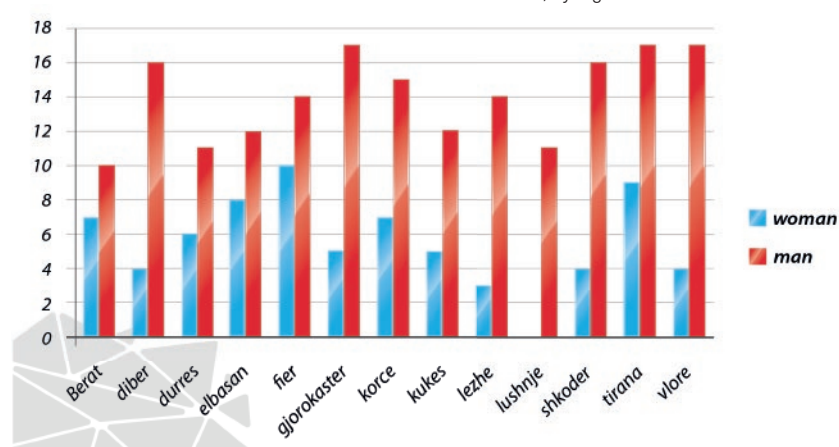
¹¹¹ Ibid.

3.7 Access to information and extension services

Agricultural extension services are mainly provided by governmental and developmental delivery organizations. At national level, the National Food Authority, currently under MoARDWA, is responsible for control, inspection and communication activities, including animal health and plant protection, while applied agricultural research is carried out by Agricultural Technology Transfer Centres.

Agricultural extension is the most important mechanism for farmers to access knowledge and technology for all steps of the agricultural value chain. Since 2005, agricultural extension services have been organized through Agriculture Information Centres in the twelve regions of Albania. The extension programme is delivered through training sessions, seminars, demonstrations during field-visits, publications and dissemination materials.

Table 4: Number of extension services workers, by region and sex



Source: Information provided by MoARDWA in 2015.

Land fragmentation and the small average parcel size per farmer make it difficult for extensionists to reach farmers. Extension services lack the resources to visit farmers on an individual basis, and few farmers meet with extension services officers to request their support.

The number of women beneficiaries of extension services has increased from five percent in 2011 to ten percent in 2015.¹¹² Extension services mainly address men's needs, since men are regarded firstly as the "heads of households", secondly, as those who control and manage machinery, and thirdly, as those who have access to markets and decision-making within and outside of the household.¹¹³ This male bias limits women's access to extension services and to training and economic opportunities.

Even though extension services provide direct support to some women farmer associations, in most cases the mobilization of farmers is carried out via male-dominated channels of communication. As illustrated in Figure 1, the mobilization process often follows a specific approach: an extension services provider contacts the heads of associations (men), who contact male members of the associations and, in some cases, these members of the associations are asked to bring their wives.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the position of women as farmers is regularly overlooked, and women are often viewed as "wives of farmers".

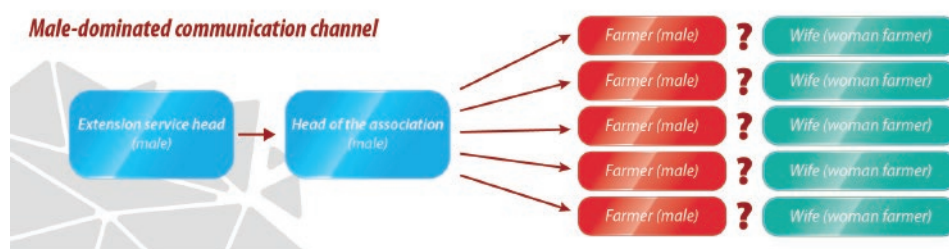


Figure 1: Example of a male-dominated communication channel

¹¹² UN Women, 2014; and information provided by MoARDWA in 2015.

¹¹³ As documented during the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

One research participant from extension services highlighted the example of the municipality of Maliq in Korca¹¹⁵ and said, “[...] there was a project on greenhouses. Even though women are the ones who mainly work with greenhouses, the gathering of women was done through men, who were asked to bring their wives and other female relatives. This is one of the reasons why it is important to have women’s associations. If not, women are not included in the mobilization process.” Contacting women leaders who can mobilize the women of the community is vital in ensuring that women are directly invited as farmers.

The low participation of women in extension services training and FAO projects can be linked to¹¹⁶:

1. The identification of men as “heads” of the households and holdings, including land property registered in the name of men;
2. Stereotypes associating machinery and technology with men;
3. The inaccessible location of training and meetings: women have limited access to means of transportation, in many cases depending on male members of the family. In addition, some locations may discourage women’s presence (for example, bars and other venues that are socially-defined as “men’s spaces”);
4. Information delivered through male-dominated communication channels;
5. The limited self-confidence of some women in areas outside those that are socially attributed to their gender roles.

3.8 Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in agriculture

Flooding and drought are recurrent events in Albania. In recent decades, flooding has worsened as a result of deforestation, overgrazing and erosion, combined with a lack of maintenance of drainage canals and pumping stations. During the big floods of December 2010, 14 000 ha in Shkodra were inundated, and this region was also part of the affected area in the floods of February 2015.

According to 64 percent of respondents in a survey conducted during a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), incidences of gender-based violence increased after the floods both within and outside the domestic environment.¹¹⁷ Moreover, women heads of single-headed households reported a higher incidence of violence (73.1 percent) than married women. Women also reported having been treated discriminatorily in the distribution of aid from commune officials, where men had greater access to commune staff and benefited more from state support.¹¹⁸

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

117 In February 2015, the Albanian Government was supported by the European Union, through ECHO and the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), as well as other bi- and multi-lateral partners, to provide assistance for immediate disaster relief. A Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was conducted, which included (i) the evaluation of physical damages and economic losses; and (ii) the identification of human recovery and reconstruction needs based on information obtained from the affected population with a focus on increasing resilience to future hazards. In close collaboration with a team of experts from the World Bank, UNDP, the EU Delegation and FAO, UN Women undertook a rapid gender assessment of post disaster effects (for further information see UN Women. 2015. Gender Inequality and Floods Impacts in Albania.)

118 Ibid.

4. Gender and social status in rural Albania

4.1 Status of women in rural areas, stereotypes and self-confidence

4.1.1 Social status and decision-making within the household

Gender inequalities within the household are directly related to power relations and access to family decision-making, so a basic indicator of these inequalities within a family structure is control over family earnings. For example, food insecurity is more common in rural areas than in urban areas, and women are less likely to be involved in managing the family food budget than in making decisions about daily household expenditure.¹¹⁹

Employed women are the most likely to participate in household decision-making, and the proportion of women who engage in decision-making processes also increases with educational level. Seventy-four percent of women with higher education take part in household decision-making, compared with 25 percent of women without an education.¹²⁰ As shown in Table 5 below, women without children, women in rural areas, those who are less educated and those who belong to the lowest wealth quintile are less likely to have control over their own earnings.

Table 5: Control over wife's earnings and wife's cash earnings compared with husband's

| | Person who decides over wife's cash earnings (%) | | | | Wife's cash earnings compared with husband's (%) | | | |
|------------------------|--|------------------|----------------|-------|--|------|-------|-------|
| | Mainly wife | Wife and husband | Mainly husband | Other | More | Less | Equal | Other |
| No. of children | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | 21.3 | 73.1 | 1 | 4.6 | 8.1 | 46 | 36.5 | 9.3 |
| 1-2 | 6.9 | 84.8 | 7.1 | 1.2 | 10.8 | 52.1 | 29.7 | 7.4 |
| 3-4 | 6.3 | 79.9 | 13.1 | 0.8 | 11.9 | 52.1 | 27.9 | 8.1 |
| +5 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Residence | | | | | | | | |
| Urban | 8.2 | 82.5 | 8.1 | 1.2 | 11.3 | 50.2 | 31.5 | 7 |
| Rural | 5.8 | 82.8 | 9.9 | 1.5 | 10.4 | 56.1 | 23.9 | 9.6 |
| Region | | | | | | | | |
| Coastal | 6.9 | 80 | 12.3 | 0.9 | 10.1 | 53.1 | 31.7 | 5.2 |
| Central | 8.3 | 85.4 | 5 | 1.4 | 14.6 | 57.9 | 19.8 | 7.7 |
| Mountainous | 5.6 | 83.4 | 8.8 | 2.2 | 15.3 | 46.9 | 27.4 | 10.3 |
| Urban Tirana | 7.8 | 81.5 | 9.1 | 1.6 | 6.9 | 42.8 | 40.4 | 9.9 |
| Wealth quintile | | | | | | | | |
| Lowest | 3.1 | 65.1 | 25.3 | 6.5 | 12.9 | 46.6 | 18 | 22.5 |
| Second | 2.3 | 90 | 6.4 | 1.3 | 11.2 | 58 | 25 | 5.8 |
| Middle | 8.8 | 79.8 | 9.4 | 2 | 9.8 | 55.2 | 25 | 10 |
| Fourth | 8.5 | 81.7 | 8.5 | 1.2 | 14.5 | 51.2 | 26.4 | 7.9 |
| Highest | 7.9 | 84.6 | 6.9 | 0.5 | 9.1 | 49.9 | 35.7 | 5.4 |

Source: Data from the 2009 Albania Demographic and Health Survey (Institute of Statistics and Institute of Public Health, 2010).

¹¹⁹ UN, MoARDWA & Ministry of Health. 2012. Baseline Nutrition and Food Security Survey 2012: Summary and Key Findings. (available at http://www.unicef.org/albania/Baseline_nutrition_survey_summary.pdf).

¹²⁰ Ibid.

4.1.2 Stereotypes and self-confidence

The strong gender-based distribution of roles and activities documented in rural Albania, and the prevalence of systemic gender stereotypes, have a direct impact on the confidence of many rural women, discouraging them from performing tasks that are not socially attributed to them.¹²¹ The reluctance of some women to participate in the training organized by extension services is explained in part by their lack of confidence in their abilities to understand the content of the training. Similarly, women feel unconfident about learning how to manage agricultural equipment and machinery, and dealing with the markets or with providers.¹²²

When the trainers are men, or if the training is mainly attended by men, women are more reluctant to join.¹²³ According to research, religion may also play a role in shaping women's participation in training.¹²⁴

Women would greatly benefit from the identification of powerful female role models in the country, especially in terms of supporting women to create and engage with agricultural associations by themselves. As one representative of extension services confirmed, "If women learned how to organize and did not depend and rely on their husbands for this organization, they could have [...] better access to extension services and training. It is also important to increase [the number of] women in extension services, because when women see female extensionists, they feel more confident to attend training and to approach them."¹²⁵

4.2 Perception of gender inequalities in rural Albania

Even though gender inequalities are identified as a priority issue by the Government of Albania and members of MoARDWA, as agreed in the FAO – Republic of Albania Country Programming Framework 2015-2017¹²⁶, gender inequalities are not considered important by many farmers or by many extension services professionals.¹²⁷ At first glance, and based on field research findings¹²⁸, farmers emphasize that all activities are carried out by women and men in close collaboration and with no significant gender-based distribution of tasks. However, on closer inspection, the gender-based distribution of tasks turns out to be very rigid, as described earlier in this report.¹²⁹

The same processes occur with membership of associations. On the surface, there is general agreement by farmers that the whole family belongs to the farmer association and, as such, the whole family has access to training, equipment and meetings.¹³⁰ However, it is mostly men who engage in the training and meetings and men who have access to technology, regarding themselves as "family representatives" and "family decision-makers".¹³¹

The same discrepancy is also evident in the perception of land

Tolerance of spousal abuse in rural Albania

Another important indicator for assessing the lower social status of women compared with men is the attitude towards spousal abuse. Almost 60 percent of women interviewed in a survey on domestic violence in 2013 reported having experienced domestic violence and 53 percent of them reported "currently" experiencing domestic violence (within the last twelve months), including psychological, physical and sexual violence.¹³²

Women from the lowest wealth quintile, with the lowest education levels and from rural areas are the most likely to be beaten and to accept this subordination in the form of domestic violence.

Women in rural areas are more permissive of spousal abuse: 38.9 percent of rural women and 41.9 percent of women from mountainous regions consider it justifiable in some cases, compared with 18.4 percent and 15.9 percent of women in urban areas and in Tirana respectively.¹³³

The highest proportion of men who agree with at least one reason for a husband to beat his wife is in the mountainous region (59 percent) and the lowest is in Tirana (12 percent).¹³⁴

121 Documented during the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

122 University professors, national consultants, members of extension services, project implementers and members of MoARDWA confirmed the insecurity that affects some women farmers. Women farmers themselves reported insecurity and fears during the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 FAO & Government of Albania, 2015.

127 Documented during the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

132 INSTAT undertook the first population-based survey on domestic violence in 2007, which was then repeated in 2013. Data found in UNDP, 2013b. Domestic Violence in Albania: National population-based Survey. (available at <http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Second%20Domestic%20Violence%20Survey%202013%20english.pdf>).

133 A Demographic and Health Survey questionnaire (2008) asked if it was considered justifiable for the husband to beat the wife in the following scenarios: 1) burned the food; 2) argued with the husband; 3) went out without telling him; 4) neglected the children; and 5) refused to have intercourse with him. A total of 55.8 percent of women with lower education levels and 57 percent of women with five children or more considered spousal abuse to be justified in at least one of these situations. Institute of Statistics and Institute of Public Health, 2010.

134 Ibid.

ownership versus actual land registration. Land is perceived as being owned by families, but it is registered in the name of only one person, usually a man, who is identified as the “head of the household” and who consequently enjoys de facto all rights and decision-making power over that land.

The significant gap between the perception and reality of gender inequalities poses a challenge to effectively targeting gender inequalities and supporting rural women’s empowerment, and requires more targeted implementation of the commitments made by the government to CEDAW and specifically Article 5, which establishes the fight against sex role stereotyping and prejudice.¹³⁵ Combatting gender stereotypes is a necessary step for achieving rural women’s economic empowerment and unlocking the full potential of rural development in Albania.

4.3 Farmers' cooperation and social mobilization¹³⁶

Due to the small average plot size and to land fragmentation, MoARDWA and public extension services place a strong emphasis on encouraging the creation of farmer associations. Mixed associations of women and men working together offer a good opportunity for men to redefine their preconceptions of women and to see them as colleagues and bearers of knowledge, as well as to strengthen cooperation and coordination between women and men. However, because of the lower status of women, mixed associations tend to reduce women’s voice and participation because they are seen as “wives of farmers.”¹³⁷

“It is much easier to meet women in their houses, and to gather women in home conditions, especially if the coordinator or trainer is a woman. When they are outside domestic environments, you can see how they feel more uncomfortable, more insecure. When they are in front of their husbands or other men, you can see how they are insecure and afraid of making mistakes.”¹³⁸

Petrit Dobi, trainer and extension services specialist

However, the creation of women-only associations can be difficult due to the barriers that women farmers may encounter, including a lack of financial or management skills, a lack of access to credit, transportation and agricultural inputs, and, especially, a lack of mobility and time to engage in activities outside the household. Some women may even need the permission of their husbands to engage in these activities.

During field research conversations, when a woman farmer and member of a mixed association in Berat was asked about the possibility of creating a women-only association, she replied that, “this would depend on how kind husbands are.”¹³⁹

The existence of successful women’s associations in Albania and the successful entrepreneurship of women when they have access to the necessary material assets are demonstrated in different studies.¹⁴⁰ It has also been documented that women tend to be more active and to obtain more skills (including self-confidence, public speaking, dealing with providers and accountancy) in women-only associations.¹⁴¹ In this context, supporting and promoting the creation of women-only farmer associations is an important temporary solution that can enhance women’s skills in relation to accessing markets, agricultural assets and decision-making. Training on association management, bargaining, accountancy and dealing with providers and markets, among others, may be a necessary initial step.

Additionally, further study is needed on farmer’s organization in fisheries and forestry, as well as gender-sensitive research on forest and pasture user associations.

135 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm#article5>.

136 The role of Local Action Groups in local mobilization and the role of women compared with men in these groups is not covered because further research and analysis is needed.

137 This challenge has been identified by staff from MoARDWA, university professors and project implementers. Evidence has also been collected in interviews with women farmers during field research conducted in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

138 Field research in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra conducted for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

139 Ibid.

140 Including the study of Zmijanej, A. 2015. Environment and Women Entrepreneurs in Albania. European Journal of Economic and Business Studies 3(1): 199-202. (available at http://ejes.euser.org/issues/sep_dec_2015/Azra.pdf); and in the initial gender assessment prepared by Eteva Dashi with contributions from Edvil Zhlima under the FAO project TCP/ALB/3302.

141 Ibid.

Beyond the support that public extension services, UN agencies and international donors provide to women's associations and women farmers, there are also a number of civil society organizations that support rural women's economic empowerment. These include:

1. NGOs promoting the involvement of women in business: for example, the Association of Women in the Professions and Business, Tirana; the Association of Intellectual, Professional and Businesswomen, Tirana; the Association for the Promotion of Businesswomen, Vlora; and the Businesswomen's Association, Korca.
2. NGOs that provide support to encourage women's access to the labour market: for example, the Association for the Advancement of Albanian Women, Tirana; the Albanian Women's Independent Forum, Tirana; and Reflections Association, Tirana.
3. Microfinance institutions that provide grants and soft credits for businesswomen: for example, the NGO Opportunity Albania, co-funded by the Red Cross and the OSCE; and the ABC Foundation.
4. Civil Society Organizations working to strengthen the position of women in agriculture: for example, DLDP¹⁴²; Partners Albania; the Albanian Livestock Association; and Connecting Natural Resources to People.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Summary of findings and conclusions

This gender assessment has identified the following major gender inequalities within the available data that need to be considered by policy-makers and project managers:

1. The gap between legislation and implementation:

- ▶ Despite efforts by the Albanian government to reduce gender inequalities in the last two decades, there is a gap between legislation and implementation, and the connection between gender and rural development strategies can still be improved.
- ▶ Gender inequalities remain socially accepted and tolerated, especially in rural areas, where gender inequalities are more entrenched.¹⁴³ This poses a challenge for the implementation of laws and policies on gender equality.

2. Women's unsatisfactory access to technical knowledge on agriculture, including barriers to accessing information and benefiting from extension services and training:

- ▶ Even though women's participation in tertiary studies is higher than men's, a gender-based segregation of studies persists, and men are overrepresented in agricultural studies.
- ▶ There is limited participation of women in both vocational training and knowledge and information sharing about agriculture and rural development: only ten percent of beneficiaries of extension services are women¹⁴⁴, and in 2015 only 33 percent of extension services staff was female.¹⁴⁵ Some of the reasons for the low participation of women in extension services training are:
 - ▷ Male-dominated communication channels that control the flow of information and fail to reach and mobilize women farmers;
 - ▷ The identification of men as "heads of households and holdings": As a result, land tends to be registered in men's names and women tend to be seen as the "wives of farmers" instead of farmers in their own right;
 - ▷ Stereotypical links between machinery, technology and men;
 - ▷ Women's reduced self-confidence in areas and roles outside socially stereotyped gender roles;
 - ▷ The location of training and meetings:
 - Women have limited access to means of transportation, often depending on male members of the family. Driving cars, trucks and tractors is commonly stereotyped as a "men's thing".
 - Some locations discourage women's attendance (for example, bars and other venues that are socially-defined as "men's spaces").
 - Some women are expected to ask for permission from their husbands to attend training and meetings.

3. Women are overrepresented in informal employment, unpaid work in family farming and in domestic and reproductive activities:

- ▶ The employment rate in 2014 was 37.6 and 51.4 percent for women and men respectively.
- ▶ The agricultural sector employs more than 54 percent of all economically active women, 87 percent of whom work as informal or family workers.¹⁴⁶
- ▶ Due to high levels of informal employment, only 19 percent of women from rural areas received maternity leave, compared with 59 percent of their urban counterparts.¹⁴⁷
- ▶ State services for children's care are absent in rural areas. This increases women's domestic workload and contributes to the reinforcement of the gender-based stereotype of reproductive activities as a "purely women's role".
- ▶ In family farming, there is a rigid gender-based distribution of tasks. Male gender roles are associated with tasks that involve control over agricultural assets, mobility and decision-making, and female

¹⁴³ This was documented in the field research conducted in June 2015 in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

¹⁴⁴ UN Women, 2014.

¹⁴⁵ Information provided by MoARDWA in 2015.

¹⁴⁶ Information available from INSTAT at <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/themes/wages-and-labour-cost.aspx>.

¹⁴⁷ INSTAT, 2015a.

gender roles are associated with manual work in agriculture and livestock, including pre-harvest and post-harvest activities, food processing and household tasks. This distribution of labour has resulted in women's limited access to, and control over, agricultural assets and decision-making.

- ▶ Female farm managers represent only 6.47 percent of the total number of farm managers.¹⁴⁸ In many cases, women only become farm managers in the event of widowhood or the husband's absence.

4. Infrastructure has a direct impact on time use:

- ▶ The inadequate levels of infrastructure and technology in rural households have a direct impact on women's unpaid workload, because domestic and reproductive activities are linked with female gender roles.
- ▶ Rural women invest significantly more time in food preparation, cleaning, child care and other domestic and reproductive activities than women in urban areas, and rural women engage in six times more domestic and reproductive labour than rural men.¹⁴⁹ This reduces women's economic and educational opportunities.

5. Women's de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land is hindered:

- ▶ Women's limited ownership of land is explained by:
 - ▷ Registry practices: after the collapse of the communist regime, land was provided to citizens regardless of their sex. However, the actual distribution and registration of land was carried out by individuals identified as "heads of the households" and as representatives of the whole family, following article 224 of the Civil Code.
 - ▷ Patrilocal marriages: brides go to live with their husbands' families and this practice is more common in rural areas. Within this traditional form of marriage, women often do not claim their ownership rights over land either within their own families or within their new step-families, to avoid any possible confrontation.
 - ▷ Inheritance practices: there is a preference for giving land to male descendants, especially in the context of patrilocal marriages, where sons typically remain in the household and are expected to manage the family holding.
 - ▷ Lack of knowledge of women's rights over land: this is common within rural populations and among land professionals and civil servants.
- ▶ Women's limited de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land has direct implications for women's decision-making on the use of that land and for their access to irrigation, extension services and collateral for credit and entrepreneurship.
- ▶ No official sex-disaggregated data on land registration are currently available; however, only 6.47 percent of farm managers are women.¹⁵⁰

6. Limited access to entrepreneurship, markets and decision-making:

- ▶ Access to the city and large markets is stereotyped as "men's territory".
- ▶ Women in family farms may have reduced access to family income due to their lack of participation in the markets, despite their work throughout the whole value chain.
- ▶ Women's lack of self-confidence in their capacity to bargain is well documented as a major reason for women not attending the markets, alongside the demands of housework, limited child care and a lack of access to transportation.

7. Social mobilization and associations as a form of empowerment:

- ▶ Mixed associations of women and men co-workers provide an excellent opportunity for men to redefine their preconceptions of women, in order to see them as colleagues and bearers of knowledge, as well as to strengthen cooperation and coordination between women and men.
- ▶ However, in the context of the lower socio-cultural status of women, mixed associations tend to reduce women's voice and participation because they are regarded as "wives of farmers."¹⁵¹
- ▶ The existence of successful women's associations in Albania is demonstrated in different studies.¹⁵² These show that women tend to be more active and obtain more skills (including, self-confidence, public speaking, dealing with providers and accountancy) in women-only associations.¹⁵³

8. Low status of women in rural areas, gender stereotypes and perception of gender inequalities:

148 Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

149 Ibid. Women invest 5 hours and 55 minutes per day, while men invest 56 minutes.

150 Information provided by INSTAT in 2015.

151 The problem of women remaining silent and men making the decisions in mixed associations has been identified by representatives from MoARD-WA, university professors and project implementers. It is also evidenced in interviews with farmers during field research conducted in Korca, Berat and Shkodra for the FAO project TCP/ALB/3402 (FAO, 2015).

152 Including the good practices covered in the initial gender assessment prepared by Etleva Dashi, with contributions from Edvil Zhilima, under the project TCP/ALB/3302.

153 Ibid.

- ▶ The occurrence of sex-selective abortion¹⁵⁴ is an indication of the status of women in society. Patrilocal marriages are one explanation for the preference of sons over daughters.
- ▶ The identification, and even registration of, men as “heads of households” and the identification of women as “contributing family workers”, reinforces the uneven and hierarchical status of women and men in rural areas.
- ▶ The disadvantaged status of rural women and the prevalence of gender stereotypes limit women’s access to power, decision-making, resources and fulfilment of rights. They can also impact negatively on women’s self-esteem and confidence. These are critical personal assets that can discourage or facilitate a person towards action.
- ▶ There is a significant gap between the perception and reality of gender inequalities in rural communities and among policy and programme implementers, which poses a challenge to effectively addressing gender inequalities.

5.2 Recommendations

These recommendations are useful to all policy-makers and programme and project formulators, as well as extension services providers and project implementers. They build upon the findings of this report on the main gender inequalities in agriculture and rural development and include the following:

5.2.1 What FAO can do:

1. On the gap between legislation and implementation:

- ▶ Support the production of knowledge generation, and specifically research on fisheries, forestry, local farmers’ cooperation and women’s real contribution to GDP, to ensure better targeted and more effective policies.
- ▶ Provide capacity development support to government and staff on gender sensitization and mainstreaming, both at national and regional levels (in the context of the current decentralization process), including gender training for staff within extension services and from Agricultural Technical Transfer Centres.
- ▶ Engage with INSTAT and MoARDWA to advance the production of rural-urban gender statistics.

2. On women’s unsatisfactory access to technical knowledge about agriculture, including the barriers to accessing information, extension services and training:

- ▶ Scrutinise the existing communication channels used by MoARDWA, extension services and FAO to communicate with farmers. Monitor and ensure that information about extension services and FAO project activities reach women. Take proactive measures to address barriers and use innovative methods to enable women’s access to information, including use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- ▶ Identify local women leaders that can mobilize and inform female members of the community when implementing projects.
- ▶ Support the capacity development of extension services to provide better support to rural women, especially in the context of innovation, e-agriculture and single-window services.
- ▶ Dedicate particular attention to the geographical and spatial location of training and meetings including:
 - ▷ Avoiding meeting places where the presence of women may be questioned.
 - ▷ Ensuring that women have access to transportation, using a location that is accessible for both women and men and providing transportation where necessary.
 - ▷ Providing kindergartens where needed and agreeing the location of training and meetings with women and men farmers.

3. On women’s overrepresentation in informal employment, unpaid work in family farming and in domestic and reproductive activities:

- ▶ Support MoARDWA and other relevant partners to address the levels of informal employment, particularly in family farming, to increase access to social protection schemes for rural women and men.

¹⁵⁴ As has been suggested in UNFPA & World Vision (2012) and Council of Europe (2014).

- ▶ Support income diversification and the creation of off-farm employment for women and men.
 - ▶ Explore ways of reducing vertical and horizontal labour segregation.
 - ▶ Develop and implement concrete measures to target women in rural areas, particularly girls and young women, to enhance their access to, and participation in, vocational education, with a focus on agricultural and technical studies.
- 4. On infrastructure and time use:**
- ▶ Include measures in projects for improving women's access to agricultural assets, including land, markets, pesticides, seeds, machinery and equipment through local information centres.
 - ▶ Support the generation of evidence and knowledge on how to reduce gender inequalities in unpaid reproductive activities and access to resources.
- 5. On the hindrance of women's de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land:**
- ▶ Support the implementation of FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure¹⁵⁵ along with FAO's Technical Guide Governing Land for Women and Men.¹⁵⁶
 - ▶ Take the necessary measures during the implementation of projects to ensure that women's access to land and land rights are improved and most importantly, not hindered.
 - ▶ Provide accessible information on land rights to women in rural areas through FAO projects and activities.
 - ▶ Provide support and guidance to MoARDWA, IPROs and related bodies to reduce women's burdens on registration and de facto enjoyment of their rights over land, including the promotion of the collection of sex-disaggregated data on access to land in compliance with the 14th article of CEDAW.
- 6. On women's limited access to entrepreneurship, markets and decision making:**
- ▶ Provide support to women's associations to enhance the market-orientation of their economic activities. Wherever possible, consider specific initiatives and activities that can facilitate women's access to markets and decision-making. This could include: training for women in rural communities to improve their skills to apply for credit; and awareness raising for policy-makers to introduce measures that take into account rural women's needs.
 - ▶ Use these training opportunities and activities to further develop women's skills, thereby enhancing their self-confidence and capabilities in marketing and business skills.
 - ▶ Provide specific support to rural women and extension services for developing applications for IPARD and similar instruments, including SARED.
 - ▶ Conduct capacity building activities for extensionists and other relevant partners, so that they are better equipped to address the challenges that women face in accessing markets, and can better support women in applying for grants (for example, IPARD and SARED), entrepreneurship and engaging in market activities.
 - ▶ Consider and address the limitations that women, who legally own land but do not have the land registered in their names, may experience in accessing these grants (including IPARD and SARED).
- 7. On social mobilization and associations as forms of empowerment:**
- ▶ Analyse the dynamics inhibiting women's equal participation and representation in farmers' associations, and devise measures to ensure that women benefit equally from membership, via the enhancement of women's participation, voice, leadership and agency within associations.
 - ▶ Conduct in-depth, gender-sensitive and evidence-based research on the reasons for low cooperation. Identify the ways in which successful associations can be promoted and sustained, based on the results of this research.
 - ▶ Consider the creation of farmer's community funds that continue after projects have ended. Explore regular farmers' contributions as a way of ensuring the sustainability of the associations. These community funds can be used, among others, to purchase collectively (obtaining better prices), and to fund training.
- 8. On the status of women in rural areas, gender stereotypes and perception of gender inequalities:**
- ▶ Engage women in capacity development activities that enhance social and personal skills (for example, public speaking or dealing with providers, among others).

155 FAO. 2012. Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security. Rome. (available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2801e/i2801e.pdf>).

156 FAO. 2013b. Governing land for women and men: A technical guide to support the achievement of responsible gender-equitable governance land tenure. Governance of Tenure: Technical guide no. 1. Rome. (available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3114e/i3114e.pdf>).

5.2.2 What MoARDWA and other government bodies can do:

1. On the gap between legislation and implementation:

- ▶ Support and enforce the mandatory collection and use of sex-disaggregated data in line with Gender Equality Law and Eurostat principles, including the development and implementation of gender indicators in all policies, programmes and policies for monitoring and evaluation.
- ▶ Ensure that all agricultural policies, programmes and projects are developed using gender analysis and comply with national obligations under CEDAW article 14, European Union standards and the Sustainable Development Goals on mainstreaming gender equality in agriculture. Use CEDAW's Guidance note 34 on compliance with article 14 on rural women for all policy, programmatic and project work.¹⁵⁷
- ▶ Include stakeholders representing the interests of women farmers and women living in rural areas in the formulation of policies, national action plans and national strategies.
- ▶ Strengthen the engagement of gender-responsive budgeting, following the 2012 Gender Budgeting Directive.

2. On women's unsatisfactory access to technical knowledge about agriculture, including the barriers to accessing information, extension services and training:

- ▶ Take proactive action at national, regional and local levels to enhance female students' interests in agricultural studies, making efforts to break the stereotypical divide of "women's and men's areas of expertise".
- ▶ Increase the offer of vocational education in rural areas and ensure that both women and men are equally encouraged and able to benefit.
- ▶ Increase the number of professional women employed in extension services to support women farmers' engagement in learning and agricultural innovation.
- ▶ Scrutinise the existing communication channels used by MoARDWA, extension services and FAO to communicate with farmers. Monitor and ensure that information about extension services and FAO project activities reach women. Take proactive measures to address barriers and use innovative methods to enable women's access to information, including use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- ▶ Identify local women leaders that can mobilize and inform female members of the community when implementing policies and services.
- ▶ Equip the agricultural extension system, structures and staff with the required resources (for example, time, equipment and transportation) to ensure effective outreach to women.
- ▶ Dedicate particular attention to the geographical and spatial location of training and meetings of extension services and local institutions, including:
 - ▷ Avoiding meeting places where the presence of women may be questioned.
 - ▷ Ensuring that women have access to transportation, using a location that is accessible for both women and men and providing transportation where necessary.
 - ▷ Providing kindergartens where needed and agreeing the location of training and meetings with women and men farmers.

3. On women's overrepresentation in informal employment, unpaid work in family farming and in domestic and reproductive activities:

- ▶ Ensure that the 2015 law that grants paternity leave for men is duly enforced and that responsible fatherhood is promoted.
- ▶ Address levels of informal employment, particularly in family farming, to increase access to social protection schemes for rural women and men.
- ▶ Support income diversification and the creation of off-farm employment for women and men.
- ▶ Develop measures for the reduction of vertical and horizontal labour segregation and encourage measures to enhance women's participation in vocational technical studies.
- ▶ Increase the number of kindergarten services in rural areas. This would simultaneously support women's empowerment and strengthen agricultural productivity and rural development.
- ▶ Develop and implement concrete measures to target women in rural areas, particularly girls and young women, to enhance their access to, and participation in, vocational education, with a focus on agricultural and technical studies.

¹⁵⁷ CEDAW, 2016.

4. On infrastructure and time use:

- ▶ Design and implement gender advocacy campaigns in rural areas and in the media, to eliminate existing gender stereotypes and social resistance to gender equality and to promote responsible fatherhood. The reduction of gender stereotyping will help to dilute the stereotypical and implicit association between “women’s activities” and domestic and reproductive activities.
- ▶ Facilitate the improvement of community and household infrastructure in rural areas to enhance rural development and women’s empowerment.
- ▶ Include measures in policies, programmes and projects for improving women’s access to agricultural assets, including land, markets, pesticides, seeds, machinery and equipment through local information centres. The creation of dedicated spaces within local information centres to provide specific support to women farmers should be considered.

5. On the hindrance of women’s de facto enjoyment of their ownership rights over land:

- ▶ Reform Article 224 of the Civil Code and the land registration system to avoid the identification of a single “head of the household”
- ▶ Enforce co-registration of ownership by all owners. Analyse and reduce double taxation, fees and other economic burdens that may limit co-registration.
- ▶ Distribute land on an individual basis and avoid distribution by households or families.
- ▶ Implement FAO’s Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure¹⁵⁸ along with FAO’s Technical Guide Governing Land for Women and Men.¹⁵⁹
- ▶ Consider patrilocal marriage practices, and take the necessary legal and administrative measures to ensure that women do not lose ownership of land in the event of marriage.
- ▶ Provide accessible information on land rights to women in rural areas through local information centres.
- ▶ Ensure that sex-disaggregated information on land registration is collected by IPROs.

6. On women’s limited access to entrepreneurship, markets and decision-making:

- ▶ Provide support to women’s associations to enhance the market-orientation of their economic activities. Wherever possible, consider specific initiatives and activities that can facilitate women’s access to markets and decision-making. This could include: training for women in rural communities to improve their skills to apply for credit; and awareness raising for policy-makers to introduce measures that take into account rural women’s needs.
- ▶ Use these training opportunities and activities to further develop women’s personal and social skills, thereby enhancing their self-confidence and capabilities in market bargaining and related skills.
- ▶ Conduct capacity building activities for extensionists so that they are better equipped to address the challenges that women face in accessing markets, and can better support women in engaging in market activities.
- ▶ Consider and address the limitations that women, who legally own land but do not have it registered in their names, may experience in accessing these grants (including IPARD and SARED).
- ▶ Support capacity development for rural women in relation to accessing grants, including IPARD and SARED.

7. On social mobilization and associations as forms of empowerment:

- ▶ Ensure extension services work through associations in order to be more cost-effective. Ensure that women-only associations are contacted, mobilized and actively involved; and ensure that in mixed associations, both women and men farmers are contacted and mobilized.
- ▶ Ensure that extension services work closely with local women leaders who can engage and mobilize rural women when necessary.
- ▶ Ensure that local NGOs, especially those working for rural women’s empowerment, are engaged in the formulation and implementation of policies and especially IPARD II.

8. On the status of women in rural areas, gender stereotypes and perception of gender inequalities:

- ▶ Engage women in capacity development activities that enhance social and personal skills (for example, public speaking or dealing with providers, amongst others) throughout all FAO, UN and MoARDWA interventions.
- ▶ Ensure that extension services and local information centres take a proactive approach to encourage women to benefit from their services and to inform them about their rights.
- ▶ Design and implement advocacy campaigns in rural areas¹⁶⁰ and in the national media to establish a

¹⁵⁸ FAO, 2012.
¹⁵⁹ FAO, 2013b.

¹⁶⁰ Increasing the coverage of the HeforShe campaign is advised.

more accurate and positive depiction of the role and profile of rural women; reduce social resistance; and establish consensus on the benefits of implementing gender-sensitive projects.

Resources

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