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# Beyond numerical parity

*Empowerment of women assembly members in local governance*



Prishtina, July 2020

# Beyond Numerical Parity

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Empowerment of women assembly members in local governance

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# Executive Summary

The aim of this report is to provide an analysis of the role and challenges of women members of local assemblies in five select municipalities in Kosovo. Using both desk research, specifically analysis of existing meeting records of municipal assemblies, as well as primary research conducted with women representatives of local assemblies in Prishtina, Kamenica, Istog, Mitrovica and Prizren, the report assesses the current situation of women's representation in these municipalities, beyond numbers. While women's representation in local assemblies is guaranteed by the 30 percent quota, their active participation and their contribution are not guaranteed and often fall short. This is mainly due to the challenges and barriers women members of local assemblies face. This report analyzes these challenges and barriers as identified by women assembly members themselves, while at the same time assessing the potential areas of intervention that can reduce these barriers.

The report serves as the basis for further development of the project, providing guidelines on development of training modules and capacity building, potential policy interventions, as well as areas of improvement to be considered in the future.

From the analysis of the existing documents on the work of local assemblies, especially focusing on the meeting minutes and records of meetings, women members of the assemblies are less engaged in discussions and especially less engaged in pushing policies and project ideas forward in the meetings of the local assemblies. This finding remains the same in all municipalities and political parties. Given this analysis is based on transcripts and documents it is comprehensive, representing all political parties. On the other hand the survey has a higher representation of larger parties, namely LDK, with 32 percent of respondents, PDK, with 27 percent of respondents, 14 percent from both AAK and Vetëvendosje respectively, and of the remaining 9 percent from PSD and 5 percent from NISMA.

This representation is in line with the political party composition of the local assemblies in these respective municipalities. However, given that the respondents from Prizren have had a higher responsiveness rate, compared to the lowest in Prishtina, the results in the report are presented in general, but also disaggregated by municipality, to provide specific insights. In general terms, although the majority of women agree that the level of women's representation in their municipality is satisfactory, still more than 30 percent of women believe that their representation at the local level is either at an unsatisfactory or undesired level. This finding shows that despite the implementation of the gender quota, women members of local assemblies consider that being part of the assemblies alone is not representative. Furthermore, this is evident when assessing the barriers women members of local assemblies face during their mandates. The issues range from lack of opportunities for advocacy and for changing policies, to issues related to the lack of budget lines for projects that aim to empower women members of the assembly, or empowering women in their respective municipalities.

The importance placed on substantive participation is further emphasized through the readiness of women assembly members to participate in capacity building and trainings, even though such opportunities are offered only to about 50 percent of respondents by their respective parties. The trainings for which women members of local assemblies have shown the highest level of interest are women's economic empowerment, gender equality, the role of local governance and the local assembly, and general trainings.

Moreover, two out of three women assembly members believe that the investments and projects that their municipality employs do not mainstream gender. Such examples include lack of investment in child care infrastructure, lack of women in decision making positions, as well as an overall gender-responsive lens in budgeting and planning for investments.

# Introduction

The political participation of women in Kosovo has been subject to discussions and analysis that have largely focused on central level representation. As a young Republic, Kosovo has adopted existing conventions and international regulations that commit Kosovo to ensuring active participation of women in public life, politics, and in central and local level institutions. Albeit not a member of the UN, Kosovo's Constitution includes the applicability of several international agreements and instruments ensuring respect for human rights and fighting against discrimination. In terms of gender equality, the Constitution foresees the direct applicability of the Convention to End Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which among others calls the signatory states to provide women and men with equal right to be eligible for and hold public office.<sup>1</sup> Kosovo, although not a signatory of this Convention (CEDAW) has included it in Article 22 of the Kosovo Constitution, where all other international human rights instruments are also included, thus being directly applicable under the Constitution. Apart from this, Kosovo has also adopted Action Plans set forth by international organizations that aim to increase the role of women in public office, such as the Action Plan Implementing UNSCR 1325 'Women, Peace and Security' resolution.<sup>2</sup> Kosovo, thus, recognizes the importance of women's inclusion and empowerment in public life, especially in public office. This commitment to women's active participation in public life and politics is also seen in the Law on Gender Equality and Law on General Elections and Law on Local Elections.

Generally, studies show that increase in women's political participation results in improved policy decisions, especially decisions in improving citizens' lives and addressing their needs.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979, accessible at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

2 National Action Plan on Peace and Women, accessed at: <https://www.peacewomen.org/nap-kosovo>

3 A. Cammisa, and B. Reingold, "Women in State Legislatures and State Legislative Research: Beyond Sameness and Difference," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* Vol. 4, No.2 (2004): 181-210, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40421515>.

One example is the UK where studies show that the impact of women MPs throughout the history is significant in addressing not only issues related to women directly, but also raising issues on family policy, education, and care.<sup>4</sup> Other examples show that increases in women's representation in parliaments in Greece, Portugal, and Switzerland, resulted in higher investment in education, whereas a drop in women members of the Parliament in Ireland, Italy, and Norway during the 1990s decreased national expenditure in education.<sup>5</sup> These numbers indicate that women's participation alone results in improved results in policies that impact the lives of citizens; however, women's active participation makes the difference in focusing on policies and actions that have such impact.

While in Kosovo, women make up 30% of the legislatures, both at the local and central level, their active participation, especially at the local level, remains an issue. This study looks into women's role in municipal assemblies of five selected municipalities in Kosovo: Prishtina Kamenica, Istog, Mitrovica and Prizren. The study is organized as follows: the first chapter looks at the methodological approach to the analysis, providing insight into the instruments used and their importance to the results shown. The second chapter provides a summary of legislation that regulates women's participation in public office and in legislature in Kosovo. The third chapter covers a document analysis of the publicly available records on the work of these five municipalities. The fourth chapter presents the findings from the survey with current women members of the local assemblies. The final, fifth, chapter offers a conclusion of the results and provides recommendations for further research and policy changes.

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4 Caroline Criado Perez, "Invisible Women," 2019.

5 Ibid.



# Methodology

This section provides a general description of the methodological approach used in this analysis. To provide an analysis of women's role in influencing policy making at the local level, with specific target at women assembly members in local governance this study uses mixed methods of data gathering and analysis.

First, through desk research, an analysis of the existing documents and records of local assembly meetings and decisions for the selected municipalities of Prishtina, Kamenica, Istog, Mitrovica and Prizren was conducted. Second, the study uses direct data gathered through a survey with women members of the local assemblies in the five municipalities. Moreover, the study also uses literature review and comparative analysis of qualitative data as a combination of research techniques to provide the most comprehensive research results.

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## Desk research

The document analysis conducted through desk research provides the basis for showing the participation of women in local assemblies in terms of not only numbers but also in terms of substance. Document analysis has been carried out for the publicly available documents existing for the selected municipalities. For most municipalities, publicly available documents go back to 2011 and 2012 for all municipalities, providing data for three subsequent local assemblies.



## Primary data analysis

For the purpose of this study, the main data were collected using a survey with women members of the local assemblies in the five selected municipalities. Following the targeted sampling, the next step was the questionnaire drafting based on the prior analysis of documents and literature.

The survey was distributed to women members of the assembly online, targeting them directly through their emails. The sample was constructed to include all women assembly members, so it was a targeted general population survey; however the final response rate was recorded at 35 percent from the online survey. From a total of 66 members in the five target municipalities, 23 provided feedback in the survey directly through the online survey. Another 6 provided feedback through phone interviews, reaching 45 percent of the targeted respondents.

The questionnaire, provided in Annex 1: Questionnaire contains general questions regarding the profile of the women members of local assemblies, more specifically questions on the municipality they serve in, the political party they belong to, education, and their mandate as a member of the local assembly. The main part of the questionnaire consists of questions aimed at obtaining information (both quantitative and qualitative) on women's role in local decision making, the perception of the women assembly members of their role and importance of engagement, as well as ways in which the respondents consider they could improve both in terms of engagement and substance.

The data collected were encoded and analyzed using statistical analysis software, STATA and Excel. Given that the survey was constructed to provide quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis of all results were cross-checked. The data analyses in this study are based on descriptive statistics and some cross-tabulation analysis. Relevant studies and reports from third parties were also consulted to validate the findings.

# Legislative analysis

## Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo is based on principles that guarantee human rights and freedoms, both within its own right, but also as foreseen and guaranteed by international agreements and instruments. Article 22 of the Constitutions, ensures Direct Applicability of International Agreements and Instruments guaranteeing respect for human rights, including the applicability of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Kosovo Constitution considers gender equality as “a fundamental value for the democratic development of the society, providing equal opportunities for both female and male participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and other areas of societal life.”<sup>7</sup> Stemming from this, the specific requirements from the Constitution are that the Kosovo Assembly, the Constitutional Court, the civil service, the prosecution, and the judiciary, all are composed based on respect for gender equality and international principles.

Furthermore, the Constitution decidedly prohibits any and all forms of discrimination, including here, gender discrimination.

6. Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 22, accessed at: <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Constitution1Kosovo.pdf>

7. Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, Article 7, paragraph 2, accessed at: <http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Constitution1Kosovo.pdf>



## Law on Gender Equality

The purpose of Kosovo Law on Gender Equality is to “guarantee, protect and promote equality between genders as a basic value of democratic development of society.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the law aims to provide equal opportunities for both women and men in participating and contributing to political, socio-economic, and cultural areas of life. The law also foresees affirmative measures and quotas that are to be implemented to ensure equal participation of women and men, should the participation be unequal. Unequal representation, as per the law, is considered any representation of women or men that does not mirror the general representation in the population. More specifically, the law stipulates that equal representation in all bodies is achieved when “ensured a minimum representation of fifty percent (50%) for each gender, including their governing and decision-making bodies.”<sup>9</sup> The law also foresees monitoring mechanisms, both at the central level, through the Agency for Gender Equality, and at the local level through designated offices and officials that ensure the implementation of the law and the principles of gender equality.

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## Law on the Protection from Discrimination

The Law on protection from discrimination prohibits all forms of discrimination<sup>10</sup> in society, including gender discrimination. The law details that both direct and indirect forms of discrimination are prohibited by the law and subject to legal action. Moreover, the law foresees affirmative measures for groups that are underrepresented or unfavoured in the existing institutions.

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8. Law on Gender Equality, 2015, accessed at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10923>

9. Ibid

10. Law on the Protection from Discrimination, 2015, accessed at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=10924>

11. Law on General Elections, 2008, accessed at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2544>

# Law on General Elections and Law on Local Elections

The Law on General Elections, based on the provisions of the Constitution of Kosovo, ensures representation of women in the Assembly of Kosovo. The law requires that all political entities' have at least 30 percent male and at least 30 percent female candidates in their lists, with one candidate of each gender to be included at least once in a group of three candidates. Moreover, the law requires "all political entities and elections bodies are obliged to respect the gender quota requirements as set forth by this law."<sup>11</sup> However, there have been discussions both for the Law on General Elections and the Law on Local Elections that a quota of 30 percent is not in line with the Law on Gender Equality, which stipulates a 50 percent representation of women and men alike. The Law on Local Elections, based on the constitutional provisions and the law on general elections retains a 30 percent gender quota for political representation in municipal assemblies.

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## Other laws and documents

Apart from these, Kosovo has a rich legal framework and a framework of adopting international agreements that aim to combat gender discrimination and ensure equality, including the Law on Civil Service, institutional mechanisms to promote and ensure gender equality, commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, both at the central and local level, etc. Moreover, in terms of public office and running for public office, Kosovo regulates political party financing through the Law on Political Party Financing<sup>12</sup>, which, among other things, foresees that 10 percent of the funding that each party receives from the Kosovo Assembly, is channeled towards supporting the work of each member of the Assembly. This provision aims to ensure equal investment in members of the parliament from each party; however, the law fails to ensure such division is required from the remaining 90 percent of financing.

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11. Law on General Elections, 2008, accessed at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2544>

12. Law on the Financing of Political Parties 2013, accessed at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=8866>

# Desk analysis

The analysis of the existing documents and records of local assembly meetings and decisions for the selected municipalities of Prishtina, Kamenica, Istog, Mitrovica and Prizren shows that women assembly members show a lower engagement in discussions during meetings. Their involvement both in terms of volume and in terms of substance lags behind their male counterparts.

Based on the analysis of the records of the work of local assemblies in these municipalities women assembly members in terms of participation in discussion during regular meetings of the local assemblies, are engaged less than their men counterparts. In the past two mandates of local assemblies, women assembly members represent at most 40 percent of the discussants in meetings of the local assembly, and this has been the case in the municipality of Prishtina, where six women assembly members engaged in discussions during a regular meeting in August, 2018<sup>13</sup>. This level of participation ranges from a low 8 percent of discussant in certain meetings in the municipality of Kamenica, where during a regular meeting, on April 10th, 2018, three women assembly members spoke only five times.

The analysis of speeches and debate during the meetings of the local assemblies, further shows that women's substantive participation is more directed in topics that include education, health, culture, and discussions of specific issues that citizens face in their everyday lives (such as sewage and water treatment in specific parts of the municipality). Women assembly members in municipalities that have been researched are twice as likely to engage in debate and propose changes when the topic of discussion relates more directly to citizens. Moreover, women members of municipalities are less likely to engage in debate when the discussion involves issues related to financing, especially when the issue being discussed is related to capital investments and projects of the municipality. However, even in cases when women assembly members have engaged in these debates, based on the meeting records, their positions and arguments have not been taken into consideration.

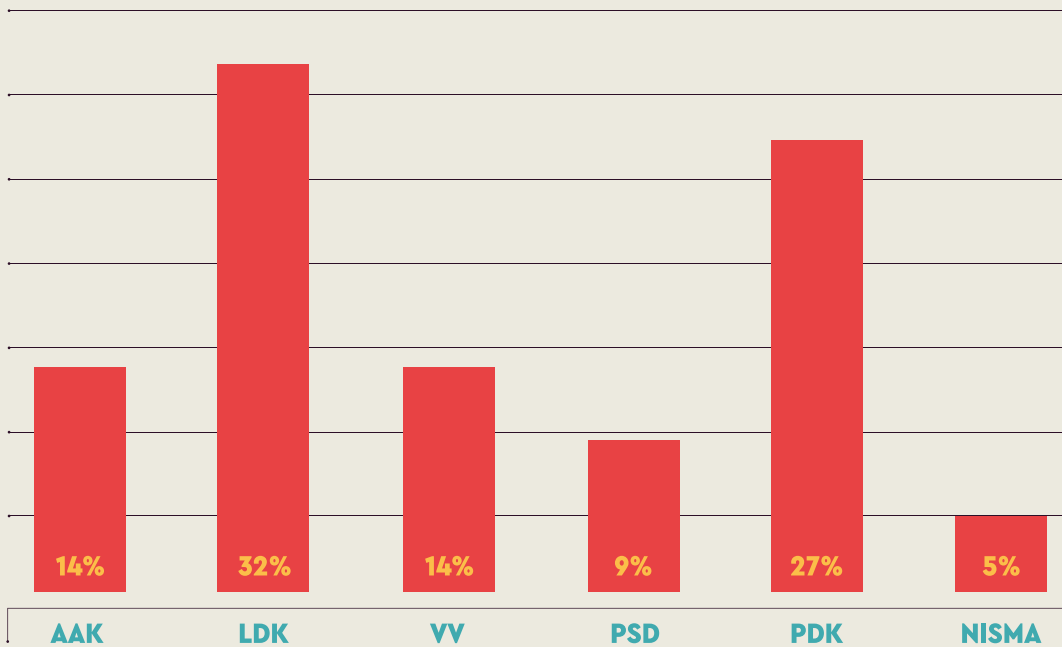


13. Regular meeting of the Local Assembly in Prishtina held on 06/08/2018 accessed at: <https://kk.rks-gov.net/prishtine/category/procesverbalet/>

# Survey results

This section provides a description and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative results of the survey conducted with women members of the local assemblies in the municipalities of Prishtina, Kamenica, Istog, Mitrovica and Prizren. Of the 66 women, representing all major parties in Kosovo (Vetëvendosje, LDK, PDK, AAK, NISMA, PSD, Srpska Lista, KDTP) who are members of local assemblies in these municipalities, 31 percent participated in the survey, with the participation ranging from 22 percent in Istog to around 40 percent in Prizren. The party breakdown of the respondents is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Party representation of respondents



One third of respondents asked to remain anonymous, whereas the rest provided their identification data. The representation of political parties remains mixed, all parties are represented in total, but not all parties are represented at the municipal level.

## General results

Geographically, the respondents are spread in five selected municipalities around Kosovo. The highest response rate has been in the municipality of Prizren, whereas the lowest in Prishtina. The response rate has been around 30 percent in general for all other municipalities.

In terms of education, around 64 percent of women that are serving in municipal assemblies have completed a Master's degree or more, with the remaining 36 percent that have completed their Bachelor's degree. There are no respondents who have less education completed. This representation is unlike the general population, thus showing a higher level of education of the elected officials.

Of the respondents, half are currently serving their first mandate, a third are serving their second mandate, and the remaining are in their third mandate. The responses of women who have been serving more than one mandate compared to those in their first mandate differ in terms of perception of opportunity and equality in the local level. Members of the assembly that have served prior to this mandate show a higher level of discontent with the opportunities given to women in the local assembly and in decision making.





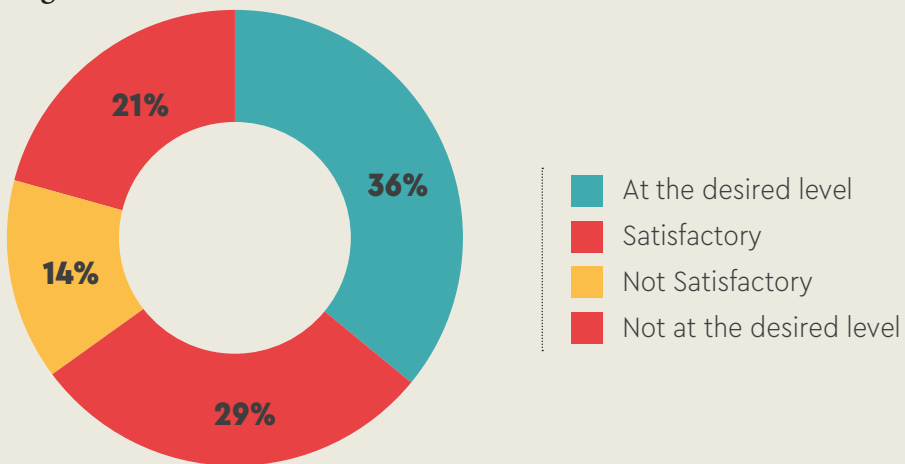
# Women’s representation at the local level

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**Figure 2: Do you believe that the representation of women in the local level is at the right level?**



What is notable, however, is that while the majority agrees with the level of representation, more than one in three women believe that their representation at the local level is either at an unsatisfactory or undesired level. Although local assemblies comply with the legislative requirements of having at least 30 percent of members from the underrepresented gender, this lack of satisfaction with the representation reflects the low number of women in decision making positions at the local level, especially as heads of directorates in municipalities.

## Women's active work at the local level

Assessing whether the role that women members of the local assemblies believe they have opportunities to play key roles in policies and decisions of the local assembly, two in three women believe they play a key role, of the remaining 14 percent believe they play a key role to a certain extent, whereas 21 percent believe that this is not entirely the case. However, whether they take advantage of these opportunities and whether these opportunities materialize in policies and changes at the local level is another issue. However, the stances are uniformly distributed among municipalities and do not show any specific patterns among parties.

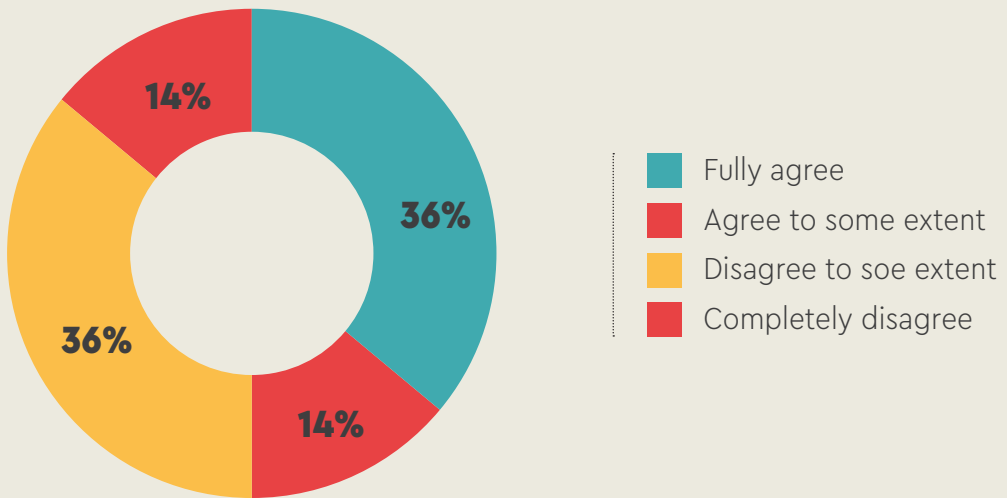
On the other hand it is important to assess the actual opportunities women are given in proposing policies and changes in the local assembly, beyond their own perception. Of the respondents 1 in 2 believe they are given the same opportunities as men members of the assembly, of the remaining 1 in 3 believe that this is true to some extent, and 1 in 6 believe this is not entirely correct. However, in more specific answers, there is still a strong belief that the lack of women in decision making positions in the municipality, combined with the lack of support from the executive, hinders women's opportunities to propose policies and changes.

While women who believe that they have opportunities consider that these are inherent to their elected position, others consider that socio-cultural hindrances, especially those related to gender roles, are the reason women do not have opportunities to change policies and make decisions in the local level.

Moreover, assessing women's involvement in contrast to the involvement of men, when asked whether they believe that women and men have similar decision making opportunities in the local assembly, only one in three women claimed they do. Of the remaining 14 percent claimed they do to some extent, whereas a further 36 percent claimed their opportunities are not as many as those for men, with 14 percent of women saying no decidedly. Of those that did not agree with this statement, the reasons provided show important insights into the work of local assemblies.

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**Figure 3: Do you believe that women and men have the same opportunities to propose and change policies?**

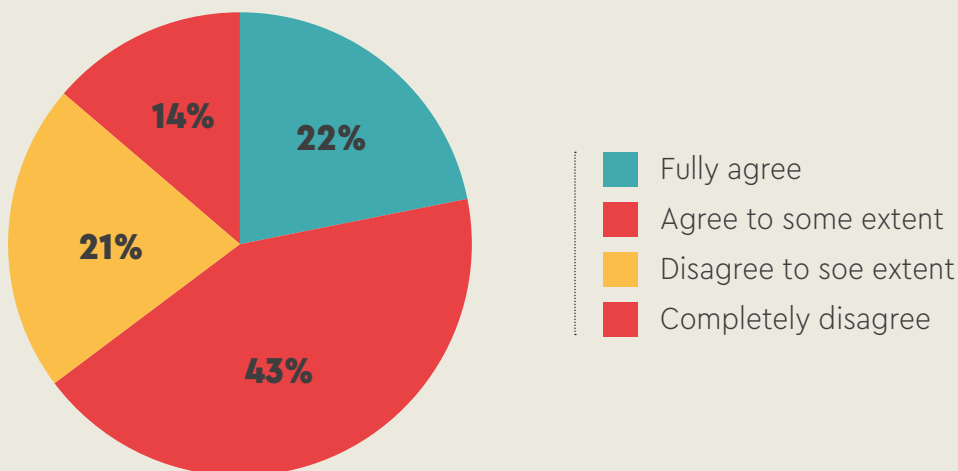


While women hold around 30 percent of seats in each local assembly, representatives do not believe that this quota provides them with equal opportunities, given that they make up 30 percent of the assembly, compared to 70 percent comprised of men. Moreover, another important issue women members of local assemblies face is the lack of women in decision making positions within the Municipality. From the selected municipalities; apart from Kamenica, which has ensured gender equality in the directorates of the municipalities; all others lag behind in women's representation in decision making positions. This lack of women in leadership positions leads to less consideration of women in the municipal assemblies. Other women members of the local assembly also claim that while they show readiness to participate, they are not given this chance by other members of the assembly. Sheer numbers alone, combined with the socio-cultural expectations of women's roles in the public life, especially in smaller and more traditional regions, provide a barrier to women members of local assemblies, both in being able to propose policies that receive support, and to take part in decision making.

## Lack of gender sensitive projects and investments

This lack of opportunity to impact the decisions is reflected in the perception of the projects and investments from the municipality. Asked whether they believe the investments and projects in their municipality mainstream gender, the majority of respondents do not agree. 43 percent and 22 percent, respectively, do not agree entirely or disagree completely with the statement; 21 percent consider this is somewhat true, whereas only 14 percent agree.

Figure 4: Do you think that investments and projects in your municipality are gender-appropriate?



The main reasons for this are given due to the lack of gender budgeting in their municipalities, lack of gender mainstreaming in planning, as well as lack of support for initiatives of women members of the local assembly. Kosovo municipalities have not committed to gender sensitive budgeting, which in turn has impacted the budget planning and implementation of projects from the municipality, without examination of the impact of these budgetary decisions on women.

Specifically, in Prizren, lack of a public kindergarten has been mentioned by all respondents as an example of the lack of gender mainstreaming in investments by the municipality. In other municipalities, the lack of gender budgeting is considered a hindrance to ensuring gender sensitive investments and projects. Even in municipalities such as Prishtina, where the municipality has taken steps to improving child care infrastructure, women members of the local assembly still consider there is work to be done in other areas. In Kamenica, while the fact that women make up 50 percent of the heads of directorates has been shared as a considerable step forward, women assembly members still consider that the current assembly and municipal government have not taken any steps towards including a gender perspective in the projects or the budgeting of the municipality.

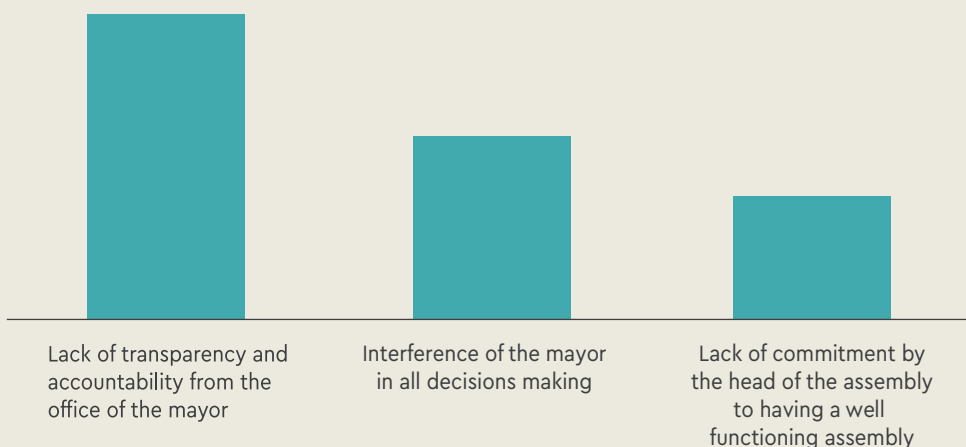
## **Barriers and challenges for women members of local assemblies**

These issues, while evident in the work of the women assembly members, are also not the only obstacles they face. To assess the main obstacles, respondents were asked to rank their biggest challenges during this mandate as members of the local assembly. While there are members who have stated that they have not faced any obstacles, most have stated one or more issues. The issues range from those related to the lack of opportunities to advocate and change policies, due to perceived the lack of respect towards them as women members of the assembly; to issues related to the lack of a dedicated budget line to empower women members of the assembly.

Specifically, in Kamenica, women members of the assembly consider that the lack of transparency and accountability from the office of the mayor; the interference of the mayor in all decisions making; and the lack of commitment by the head of the assembly to having a well functioning assembly.

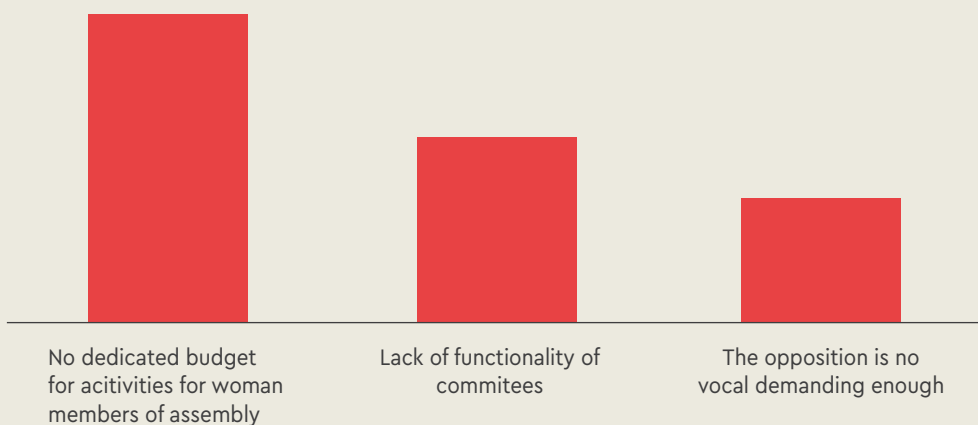


**Figure 5: Top three barriers identified in the municipality of Kamenica**



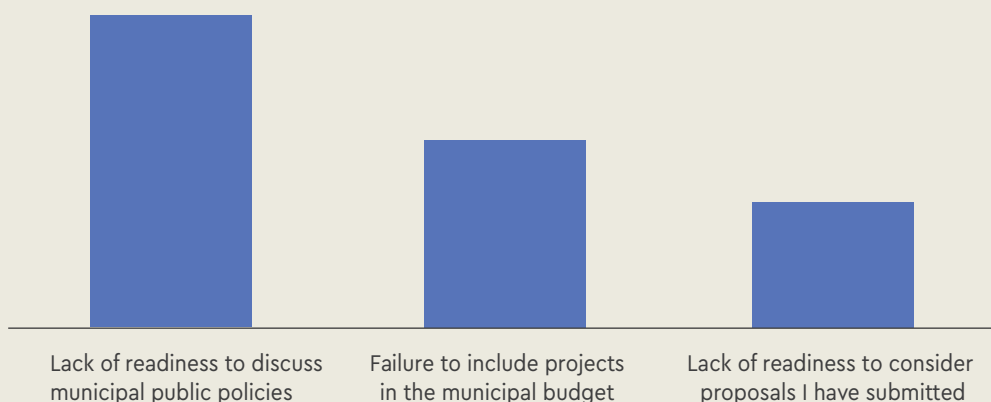
On the other hand, women members of the assembly in Mitrovica consider that the lack of a dedicated budget for activities for women assembly members; lack of functionality of committees; and the fact that the opposition is not engaged in demanding transparency and accountability from the municipal government as the main barriers.

**Figure 6: Top three barriers identified in the municipality of Mitrovica**



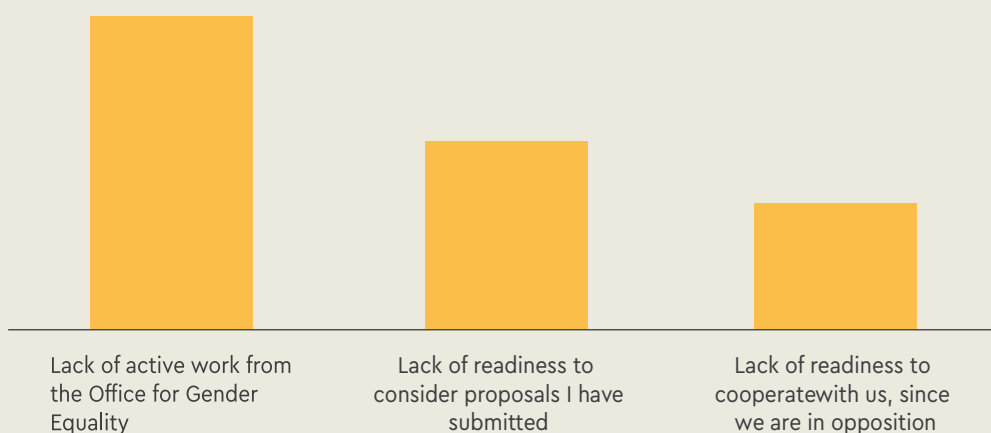
In Prishtina, women assembly members consider that the lack readiness to discuss municipal public policies at the assembly; municipality's failure to include proposed projects in the municipal budget; and the lack of readiness of the municipal assembly to take into consideration the proposals made by the respondents as the main barriers.

**Figure 7: Top three barriers identified in the municipality of Prishtina**



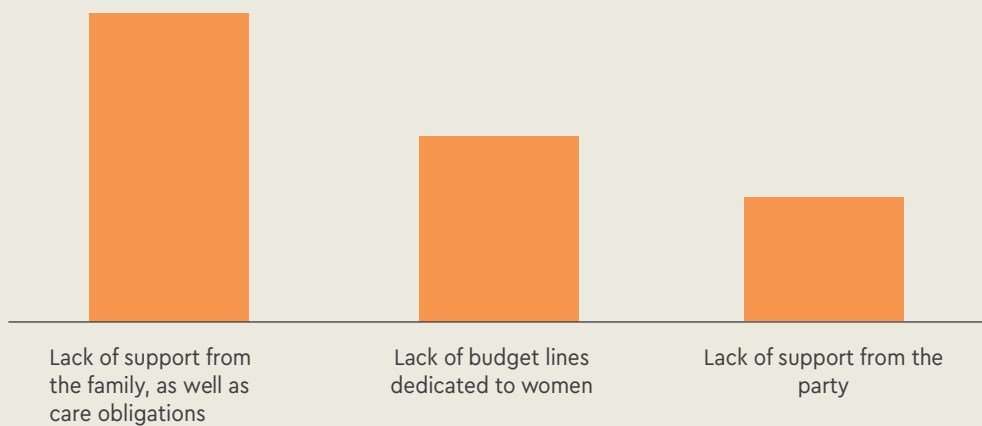
In Prizren, apart from the lack of activities and functionality of the Office for Gender Equality; the lack of readiness to consider the proposals set forth by the respondents and the lack of readiness of the mayor’s office to cooperate with the assembly members from opposition parties are the main barriers identified by women members of the local assembly.

**Figure 8: Top three barriers identified in the municipality of Prizren**



Finally, in Istog, women members of the local assembly see the main barrier they face as a personal one, that is the lack of support from their family combined with the care obligations they have at home; the second barrier is similar to other municipalities, and that is the lack of budget lines dedicated to the activities of women assembly members; the third most common barrier in the municipality of Istog is the lack of support from the party.

**Figure 9: Top three barriers identified in the municipality of Istog**



Moreover, the lack of transparency in decision making, especially from the Office of the Mayor, represents an issue set forth by numerous women members of the local assembly. These issues all represent potential for improvement through empowerment of women assembly members, especially in their capacities to propose and push forward policies and changes.

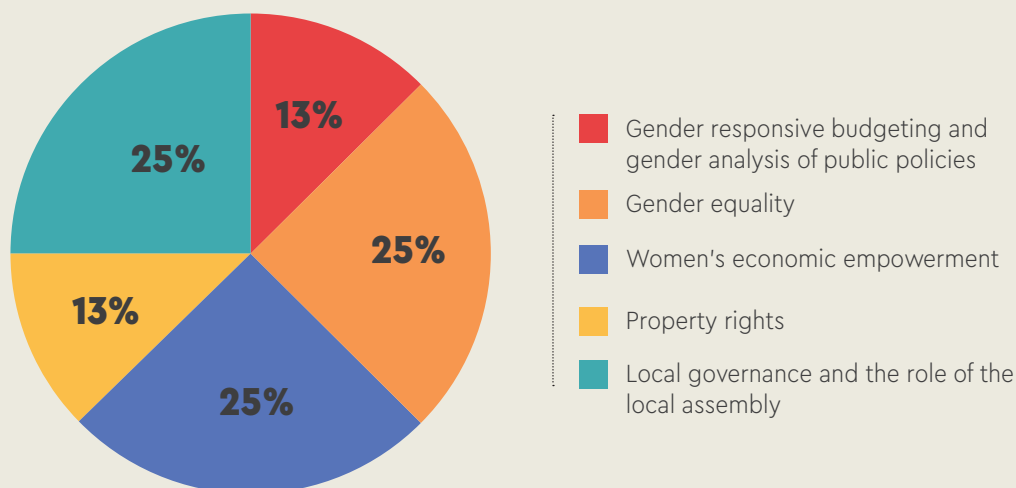


## Capacity building and areas for improvement

In assessing which areas women members of the local assembly consider they could benefit most from being trained on, they were first asked to see whether such any capacity building and support is offered to them through their party. All respondents claim that their parties support them, at least to some extent, with 57 percent stating their party offers them sufficient support, and the rest (that is 43 percent) stating that the support of their party is good enough. However, the support does not always translate into trainings and support for capacity building. While 55 percent of the respondents state their party offers some sort of training and capacity building for women members of the party, the remaining almost half of the respondents state the opposite. However even members of the same party have stated different answers in this question, giving the indication that maybe parties offer different capacity building schemes in different municipalities.

Beyond the trainings offered by their parties, women members of the assembly were asked to state which areas they would be most interested to receive training in. While training topics proposed are of a wide range, this report shows the answers based on thematic groups, which were developed based on the specific needs stated by the respondents. Within these thematic groups, there are specific trainings that have been proposed, however, those proposed topics contain only a fraction of the overall trainings from which women members of local assemblies can benefit.

**Figure 10: If you had the opportunity to train in certain areas, what training and which areas would you prefer?**



The most prevalent thematic topics that the respondents would prefer to be trained in are women’s economic empowerment, gender equality, the role of local governance and the local assembly, and general trainings. While the two last ones are areas where trainings is more useful if provided at the beginning of the mandate, the topics related to women’s economic empowerment and gender equality are deliverable at all times during the mandate and can be helpful beyond the immediate needs of the local assembly.

Within these thematic areas, specific training topics that have been suggested by the respondents are as follows:

**Table 1: If you had the opportunity to train in certain areas, what training and which areas would you prefer?**

Women's Economic Empowerment	Gender Equality	Local Governance	General Trainings
Gender sensitive budgeting	Inheritance and property rights	Analysis of public policies	Advocacy
Employment of women	Respect for gender equality	Roles and responsibilities of the members of the municipal assembly	Public speaking
Identifying women's role and potential in different economic sectors	Domestic violence	Identifying initiatives to meet the needs of the citizens	Media literacy
Development and ways of supporting women owned small business	Women's empowerment in politics	Social welfare issues and the role of local governance in social welfare	Social media
Economics and gender finance		Budget planning and management	Decision making
		Local government management	Leadership training
		Various fields directly related to the work of the directorates, especially in planning.	Youth literacy

Protocol

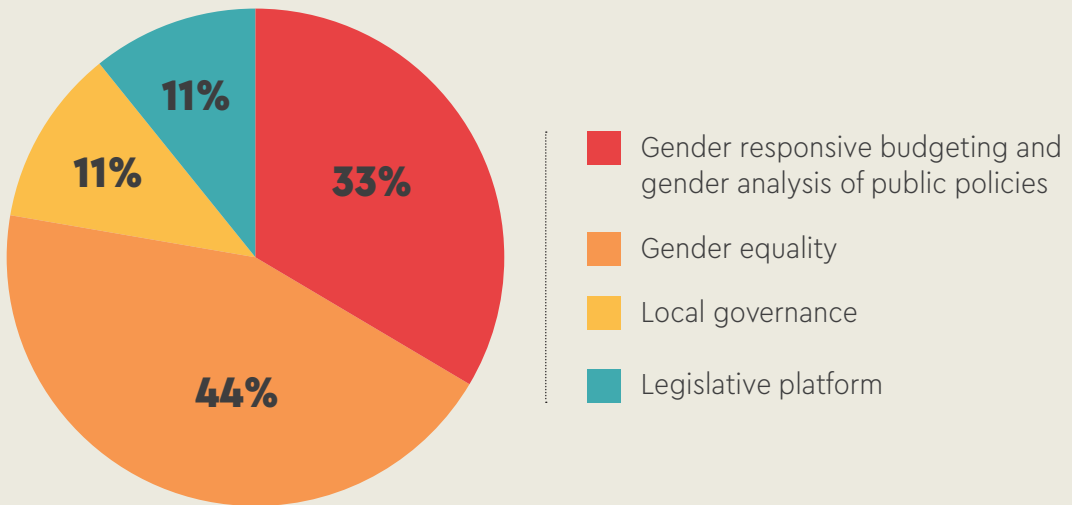
However, these thematic areas are not necessarily the exact areas in which the respondents consider that they benefit most from being trained in, not only themselves, but also in terms of the needs of overall women caucus within the local assembly. Although the thematic areas in which respondents have focused are similar across municipalities, to have a better overview of what every municipality needs, the table below provides a matrix which shows the specific trainings as identified by women assembly members of each municipality.

**Table 2: Matrix of specific training needs as assessed by women assembly members in all municipalities**

	Istog	Kamenica	Mitrovica	Prishtina	Prizren
<b>Women's Economic Empowerment</b>	Economics and gender finance <hr/> Employment of women	Identifying women's role and potential in different economic sector	Gender sensitive budgeting	Gender sensitive budgeting <hr/> Development and ways of supporting women owned small businesses <hr/> Gender analysis of public policies	Women's economic empowerment
<b>Gender Equality</b>	Inheritance and property rights <hr/> Respect for gender equality <hr/> Domestic violence		Respect for gender equality		Women's empowerment in politics
<b>Local Governance</b>	Budget planning and management		Various fields directly related to the work of the directorates, especially in planning	Social welfare issues and the role of local governance in social welfare	Roles and responsibilities of the members of the municipal assembly <hr/> The right initiatives to meet the demands of the citizens <hr/> Local government management
<b>General Trainings</b>	Leadership training	Public speaking <hr/> Protocol	Social Media		Advocacy <hr/> Media literacy <hr/> Leadership training <hr/> Youth literacy <hr/> Protocol

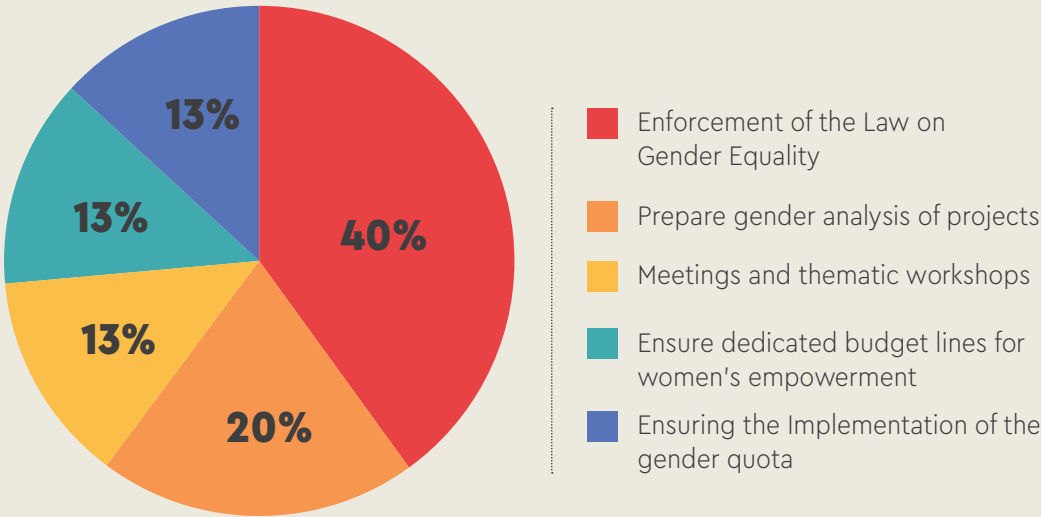
The highest number of respondents consider it most imperative for themselves and fellow assembly members to receive training and capacity building in gender equality. The subtopics related to this thematic area include decision making and advocating for issues that impact women more than any other group, as well as capacity building to improve regulation and the role of women in the local assembly. Gender responsive budgeting and gender analysis of public policies is considered a second most important topic to be trained on, and given the links of this topic with proposals of policies and legislation, not only women assembly members in these municipalities, but men in the assembly, as well as members of the Mayor's office would benefit from such training. On the other hand, trainings on local governance remain an important topic, showing that there is a need for better coordination between the municipality, the assembly, and the members of the assembly, on the roles and duties of the members, and their impact on local governance.

**Figure 11: In what respects do you and your assembly colleagues need the most training?**



Apart from direct trainings and capacity building opportunities, women members of the local assemblies have been asked to list the ways in which Kosovo institutions, both at the local and central level can help improve women's empowerment. The main aspect in which women members of the local assembly consider the institutions can help is through ensuring that the Law on Gender Equality is being enforced. Following this, an important aspect that has been a recurring theme among respondents is the importance of conducting gender analysis of projects, both proposed projects and those that have been approved to be implemented. Moreover, higher level of collaboration with the institutions, through thematic workshops and meetings, as well as better budget planning to foresee women's empowerment, are also ways in which institutions can improve women's empowerment at municipal level.

**Figure 12: What are the ways in which institutions (Municipal Assembly, Municipality, and Central Government) can improve women’s empowerment at the municipal level?**



Survey results show that women members of local assemblies, across the board, show a high level of understanding of the barriers they face and ways to overcome them. What is even more important is that through the survey, respondents have shown a clear readiness for trainings and capacity building and improvement of their role in decision making, advocacy, and proposing policies. This data serves as a basis for further development of training modules and potential for capacity building and engagement of women members of the local assemblies in these municipalities. Furthermore, it can also push for an expansion of the intervention, to ensure that more women that are elected for local assemblies undergo trainings and are prepared for their roles.

# Conclusion and recommendations

Women's active engagement in local governance remains a challenge. Women members of local assemblies face numerous challenges and barriers to fulfilling their duties, both stemming from the political climate, lack of party support, but also due to socio-cultural expectations for their family roles. Despite the barriers, more than a third of women respondents consider that women's representation at the local level is not at the satisfactory level. This is both linked to the belief that a 30 percent quota is low, but largely due to the lack of women in decision making positions within the municipalities. The main conclusions for the report are as follows:

- 1** While the majority of women agree that the level of women's representation in their municipality is satisfactory, still more than 30 percent of women believe that their representation at the local level is either at an unsatisfactory or undesired level.
- 2** When asked whether they believe that women and men have similar decision making opportunities in the local assembly, only one in three women claimed they do.
- 3** Around 66 percent of women they believe the investments and projects in their municipality do not mainstream gender, either entirely or not to a satisfactory level
- 4** Women assembly members in Prizren consider the lack of a public kindergarten as an example of the lack of gender mainstreaming in investments by the municipality.
- 5** When assessing barriers they face, women members of local assemblies have identified issues that range from those related to the lack of opportunities to advocate and change policies, due to perceived the lack of respect towards them as women members of the assembly; to issues related to the lack of a dedicated budget line to empower women members of the assembly, to issues related to lack of their own time due to family obligations.

6 However, most women show readiness for engaging in capacity building and trainings, although such opportunities are given only to about half by their own parties.

7 In assessing the main areas of interest for training, the most prevalent thematic topics that the respondents would prefer to be trained in are women's economic empowerment, gender equality, the role of local governance and the local assembly, and general trainings.

8 On the other hand the main aspect in which women members of the local assembly consider the institutions can help is through ensuring that the Law on Gender Equality is being enforced.

To overcome these barriers, women members of local assemblies have identified specific trainings and capacity building opportunities that can be followed.

**Municipalities, local assemblies, as well as both local and international organizations** should provide trainings in specific modules as identified by this report. The four main thematic areas, for training include: women's economic empowerment, gender equality, the role of local governance and the local assembly, and general trainings. Specific training requirements differ from one municipality to the other, and the specific proposed modules are provided in the training matrix in the report.

**All municipalities** should develop a training scheme to provide trainings for members of their local assemblies, especially trainings in local decision making and policies. These trainings, while crucial for new members of assemblies, should also be open to members who have served mandates prior, given that through this research it was identified that members of local assemblies need training in local policy making, management, as well as developing initiatives.

Moreover, women members of assemblies should be provided with opportunities to undergo trainings and other capacity building mechanisms, especially in improving the skills and know-how of women's economic and political empowerment and fighting gender inequality. Development of policy proposals and projects at the local level that mainstream gender has been identified as one of the main areas in which women members of local assemblies are interested to develop further skills. Moreover, gender sensitive budgeting and project drafting is of importance, not only to women members of assemblies, but can be of use to municipalities as a whole.

General training modules, especially those aimed at improved advocacy skills, better communication and media literacy, as well as using technology and contemporary tools for advocacy, can also yield direct results in helping women members of local assemblies improve their active participation and raise the potential for consideration of proposed policies from the municipalities.

**Government institutions, both local and central level,** should employ mechanisms that ensure the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality at the local level, especially in improving women's potential for holding decision making positions. The Law stipulates that all bodies should respect a gender equal division of roles, which would improve women's representation in decision making bodies.

**Municipalities** should develop and employ tools to analyze projects and investments from a gender perspective. This will ensure a higher level of gender mainstreaming within the municipalities.

**Local Assemblies and Municipal Directorates,** when preparing the municipal budget, should ensure that there are specific budget lines that are aimed at projects and investments that have a positive impact on women's economic empowerment.



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National Action Plan on Peace and Women, accessed at: <https://www.peacewomen.org/nap-kosovo>

# Annex 1: Questionnaire

## Beyond numerical equality: Empowering women members of Municipal Assemblies in local governance

Dear Women Members of the Local Assembly:

The Institute Democracy for Development (D4D) in Pristina is conducting a research project aimed at analyzing the role of women members of local assemblies in their respective Municipal Assemblies. We wish for your understanding and that you will find time to answer the questions posed in this questionnaire. The questionnaire will remain anonymous for the public, so your name and the data retrieved from the survey will in no case be shared or presented to the public. Your opinion will not be communicated to anyone, and will only be used for statistical purposes.

1.Name and Surname

2.Your party

3.Municipality

4.What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Primary education

Secondary education

Higher education

Completed a Bachelor's degree

Completed a Master's degree or more

5.Is this your first mandate in the local assembly?

Yes

No

6.If not, how many terms have you served so far, including the current one?

---

7.Do you think that representation of women at the municipal level is appropriate?

Yes

Yes to some extent

Not so

No

8.Do you think that you, as a woman assembly memembr, can play a key role in the policies and decisions of the Municipal Assembly?

Yes

Yes to some extent

Not so much

No

9.Do you think women and men have the same decision-making power in the Municipal Assembly?

Yes

Yes to some extent

Not so much

No

10.Why?

---

11.Do you think women and men have the same opportunities to propose policies and changes in the Municipal Assembly?

Yes

Yes to some extent

Not so much

No

12.Why?

---

13.Do you think that investments and projects in your municipality are gender-appropriate?

Yes

Yes to some extent

Not so much

No

14.Why?

---

15.What are the main challenges you have faced in this mandate?

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16.Do you think you have enough support from your party?

Yes

Somewhat

No

17.Does your party offer training for women members in the party?

Yes

No

18.What are the ways in which the local assembly can improve women's empowerment at the municipal level?

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19What are the ways in which the municipality can improve women's empowerment at the municipal level?

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20.What are the ways in which state laws and policies can improve women's empowerment at the municipal level?

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Thanks for your participation!

# Annex 2: List of documents consulted

- \* Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo
- \* Law on Gender Equality, 2015
- \* Law on the Protection from Discrimination, 2015
- \* Law on General Elections, 2008
- \* National Action Plan on Peace and Women
- \* Meeting records, Prishtina Municipality: 2011-2019
- \* Meeting records, Prizren Municipality: 2012-2019
- \* Meeting records, Mitrovica Municipality: 2012-2019
- \* Meeting records, Kamenica Municipality: 2014-2019
- \* Meeting records, Istog Municipality: 2014-2019

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The Democracy for Development (D4D) Institute was established in April 2010 by a group of analysts who were increasingly worried that the state-building exercise had neglected democracy. D4D's mission is to influence the development of public policy in order to accelerate socioeconomic development, improve governance, and strengthen democratic culture in Kosovo.

D4D's vision is to promote an active and educated citizenry that both fully participates in the public space and utilises the public arena of representation and decision-making to deliberate and build consensus over smart, efficient, and sustainable resource allocation as well as equitable development. For more information about D4D's activities please visit our website: [www.d4d-ks.org](http://www.d4d-ks.org).

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