



EmpowerMed

Gender Analysis of the Energy Sector in Albania

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The aim of this document is to collect and analyse information regarding gender equality in the energy poverty sector in Albania, at first sight it seems that despite Albanian innovative and ambitious work on gender equality, its interconnection with energy is totally lacking.

Keywords: energy poverty and gender, Albanian policy, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, vulnerable households

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Abbreviations

ALL	Albanian Lekë
AWP	Alliance of Women Parliamentarians
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
DSIGE	Directory of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality
EC	European Commission
EED	Energy Efficiency Directive
EU	European Union
ERE	Energy Regulatory Entity
GE	Gender Equality
GEE	Gender Equality Employees
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics
KESH	Albanian Power Corporation
MIE	Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MFE	Ministry of Finance and Economy
MTE	Ministry of Tourism and Environment
MTBP	Medium Term Budget Plan
NCGE	National Council for Gender Equality
NECP	National Energy and Climate Plan
NPSAA	National Plan for the Implementation of the SAA
NREAP	National Renewable Energy Action Plan
OSHEE	Electricity Power Distribution System Operator
OST	Transmission System Operator
PaM	Policy and Measure
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
STEM	Science, technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TUS	Time Use Survey
WECE	Women Engage for a Common Future

Introduction

The analysis was conducted in the frame of the EmpowerMed project. EmpowerMed aims to contribute to energy poverty alleviation and health improvement of people affected by energy poverty in the coastal areas of Mediterranean countries, with a particular focus on women and also on the health impact of energy poverty.

The gender analysis of Albania was aiming to advance the knowledge about energy poverty and the means for its alleviation, with focus on specific gender aspects. This report provides gender mainstreaming information of the energy sector in Albania, at its national level at first, in order to apply it to energy poverty in the pilot site then. It aims to highlight which gender dimensions are considered in the policies and energy companies, where gender is considered, where it is considered and applied and where it is still totally absent.

1. Gender analysis of Albania

1.1. Legal framework

Albania and its international commitment

Albania has ratified few international treaties such as: (**CEDAW**, **Beijing** Declaration and the Platform for Action, The **CoE 'Istanbul Convention'**, the European Convention on **Human Rights**, etc.,) providing the protection of human rights, guarantees for gender equality and the fight against gender-based violence.

Albania is committed to the implementation of the BPfA, including its twelve critical areas of concern. The Beijing Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women affirmed the international commitment to eliminate the burden of poverty for women by tackling causes of poverty and by providing equal access for women and girls to productive resources, opportunities and public services.

The last national review report for implementation of the Beijing platform for action¹ highlights Albania's most important achievements towards gender equality. However, eradication of poverty, basic services and infrastructure in the energy sector have not been priority areas of the government work to address inequality in the last five years. Some progress is reported in terms of promoting the education of women and girls in science, engineering, technology and other subjects related to environmental sustainability. Likewise, efforts to enhance women's access to clean water and energy and sustainable infrastructure and technology is simply mentioned in the report.

Albania is ranked 25th (out of 156 countries) in the **Global Gender Gap Index**² with a

¹ UNECE (2019). National Review for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Available at: https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/RCM_Website/Albania.pdf

² World Economic Forum (2021). Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/>

score (0-1) of 0.777 (ranked 61 in 2006, but ranked 20 in 2020). While Albania has progressed in areas of education attainment and health, yet the challenge is on achieving equality in economic participation and opportunity and foremost in political empowerment, scoring low on the latter.

Towards Albania's EU membership

Albania started negotiations on the **Stabilisation and Association Agreement**³ (SAA) back in 2003, and signed in 2006. Albania Articles 77 and 99 of the SAA with the European Union stipulate that Albania needs to comply in offering equal opportunities to all, with the intention of bringing Albanian legislation into line with the EU acquis. Following the SAA, Albania developed its National Plan for the Implementation of the SAA 2007-2012. The NPSAA laid out directives to advance national policies on both human rights, gender equality and energy efficiency. In 2014 EU agreed to grant Albania candidate status. Two years later, in 2016 the European Commission recommended the launch of negotiations with Albania. Over the last few years, Albania has delivered good results in reforms towards integration in the EU, as noted in the last European Commission (EC)'s annual report on Albania. Yet, Albania has met all conditions to start the EU accession process⁴.

National policy and legal framework

Gender equality is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Albania. Article 18 states that all nationals are equal before the law, and no one may be discriminated against for reasons such as gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, political or philosophical beliefs, language, economic, education or social status.

The recently approved **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030** is comprised of four strategic goals: 1) the fulfilment of the economic and social rights; 2) ensuring equal participation, representation, and leadership rights; 3) reducing gender-based violence and domestic violence; and 4) application of gender mainstreaming for achieving gender equality between women and men. It is to note, these strategic goals have been the basis of the last three strategies, since 2010. Yet the new strategy remains unfortunately conservative lacking novelty and intertwined gender considerations with emerging issues e.g., climate change, energy and environment, safety and security, education (in particular STEM), poverty, health, etc.

The strategy document acknowledges considerations related to emerging environmental and climate change, digitalization, and green economy issues, and the need to address such issues and their impact to gender equality, however, there are no concrete measures to address them. Women and girls are differently impacted by climate crises, including food insecurity, water scarcity, and extreme weather, natural disasters, use of natural resources and energy affordability and supply. Women and men's health status is impacted by extreme heat or cold, energy supply and other natural resources. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by energy poverty, the occurrence and intensity of which are

³ Republic of Albania Ministry of Integration (2007). The National Plan for the Implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement 2007 - 2012. Available at: <https://www.esiweb.org/pdf/albania%20-%20National%20Plan%20for%20the%20Implementation%20of%20the%20SAA%202007%202012.pdf>

⁴ European Commission (2020). Commission Staff Working Document. Albania 2020 Report. Available at: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-10/albania_report_2020.pdf

provoked by the above.

Under Annex 4, the Intervention Logic, there are four specific measures: 1) Adoption of measures/policies that improve the situation of women entrepreneurs, and help them recover losses from Covid-19 or other civil emergency and natural disasters; 2) Subsidies for women's enterprises and innovative ideas focusing on environmental economy and digitalization, aiming provision of grants and loans for about 100 women on yearly basis; 3) Exemption from local tariffs for the first two years of activity for enterprises of women in rural areas, ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, LGBTI+, elderly women, single mothers, survivors of violence/trafficking, girls who are mothers, migrants, and asylum seekers, in the field of digitalization and environmental economy; 4) Periodic data collection on the number of subsidised women's enterprises focusing on environmental economy and digitalization.

Yet, the strategy lacks an indicative measure to support women's health rights, i.e., measures aimed at inclusive clean energy economy and addressing public health effects related to climate change, energy, green economy and energy poverty. The only measure, under objective I.3, aims to promote participation of women and girls in non-traditional sectors of the economy, including mining, energy, and water supply. A progressive two percent⁵ target is set in the action plan, each year, starting in 2023 to: a) increase access of women and girls in engineering and science studies including electricity and energy, and b) increase employment of women and girls in manufacturing, construction, mining, energy sector and water supply. In addition, the EC calls on Albania to make efforts and ensure sufficient state funding to implement the new strategy and its action plan. Moreover, Albania should ensure gender mainstreaming in all national strategies and the application of gender responsive budgeting⁶.

The **National Social Protection Strategy** 2020-2023 is a sectoral strategy, part of the National Strategy for Development and Integration. The strategy aims to reduce poverty, especially extreme poverty, and to guarantee adequate living for families / individuals and children. The strategy guides the implementation of social assistance programs at national and local levels. Yet, there are no concrete measures to counter fight energy poverty within the social assistance program in the strategy action plan.

National legislation reflects Albania's international commitments toward gender equality. The **Law on Gender Equality in Society**⁷ ensures equal opportunities between men and women. It regulates the fundamental issues of gender equality in public life, equal opportunities for the enjoyment of rights of women and men. This law provided for the first-time affirmative measures that guarantee at least 30% participation of the under-represented gender in political and public decision-making, as well as protection from discrimination in the education, employment, media sectors and others. It also envisages the mandatory collection of gender statistics by all state bodies, as well as the establishment of institutional structures and mechanisms for advancing gender equality.

⁵ The actual employment rate in mining, energy, gas and water supply is 3.3% for men and 1.1% for women.

⁶ European Commission (2021). Commission Staff Working Document. Albania 2021 Report. Available at: <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-10/Albania-Report-2021.pdf>

⁷ Republic of Albania Assembly (2008). Law No.9970, date 24.07.2008 Gender Equality in Society. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/85325/97665/F1693144153/ALB85325.pdf>

The Law on Protection from Discrimination⁸ assures effective protection of citizens from discrimination and from every form of conduct that encourages discrimination. Other laws introduce to some extent elements that guarantee equal opportunities for women and men, including social protection of vulnerable categories such as the Law on Social Insurance in the Republic of Albania; Law on Measures against Violence in Family Relations; Law on Social Assistance in the Republic of Albania, and Law on Social Housing. With the approval of the **Law on Social Housing** there's an increased access to adequate housing, clean water and energy for vulnerable groups, including survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence, single mothers, mother daughters and families in need. Access and supply of drinking water and energy are considered amongst principles of adequate housing, according to the law.

Amendments to Law on the **Budget System Management in the Republic of Albania**⁹, included for the first time the concept of gender-responsive budgeting in the management of the budget system.

Since 2008, the **Electoral Code of the Republic of Albania** provided for the first time the obligation of electoral subjects to respect gender equality. Amendments to the Code in 2015 and 2020 resulted in a more balanced representation of women and men in the parliament and local municipal councils. Since, the Code has significantly improved the gender representation in decision-making, leading to the empowerment of women in the public and political life. About 29.5% of the members of the parliament are women, and 56.3% women hold ministerial positions, in 2021. E.g., since 2019, the MIE is led by a woman minister. Two out of four deputy ministers are women, whereas the secretary general is a man. The Minister's Cabinet is chaired by a woman and composed of 3 women and 4 men counsellors. In general, there is quite a balanced representation between women and men making decisions on energy related policies and action in the country. Yet, it is to be observed whether such a balanced share will yield to equitable and gender responsive policies and actions within the energy and infrastructure sector.

In **March 2021 an amendment to the Energy Efficiency law** set up new mandatory targets for public, **private** and large consumers. From September 1st, the public sector must renovate at least of the total stock of public buildings annually to meet the minimum requirements for energy performance. The law obliges municipalities to prepare **local action plans**¹⁰ **for energy efficiency**. Not long ago, EU funding channelled through a GIZ regional program is expected to support few municipalities in developing and instigating sustainable energy and climate-action plans at local level.

The **Law for the Electricity Sector**¹¹ amended in 2018 guarantees a stable and secure

⁸ Republic of Albania Assembly (2020). Law No. 10 221 dated 4.2.2010 On Protection From Discrimination. Available at: <https://equineteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Law-on-Protection-from-Discrimination-Albania-amended-1.pdf>

⁹ Republic of Albania Assembly (2016). Law No. 9936 Date 26.06.2008 12 On Management of Budgetary System in the Republic of Albania (Amended). Available at: <https://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/media/manager/website/media/Law-9936%2026%206%202008.pdf>

¹⁰ Spasić, V. (2021). Albania introduces obligations for public, private sector to increase energy efficiency. Available at: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/albania-introduces-obligations-for-public-private-sector-to-increase-energy-efficiency/>

¹¹ Republic of Albania Assembly (2015). Law No. 43/2015 On Power Sector. Available at: https://ere.gov.al/doc/Law_no.43-2015_On_Power_Sector.pdf

supply of power (electricity) for customers. The law takes into consideration the interests of customers, the safety and quality of power supply service and environmental protection requirements. The law acknowledges the concept of "customer in need" – a customer and/or a household entitled to power supply rights due to social status. The term includes different categories in need such as: families receiving economic assistance, heads of households with a disability, retirees, people with disability, and those with a salary below 35,000 ALL per month, all benefit energy compensation. According to the law, the ministry in charge of social protection matters in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy define criteria and procedures for customers in need. The state budget provides financial support for customers in need in order to cope with energy related expenditures. A household receives on average 1,288 ALL¹² (Euro 10.56) per month budget subsidy for energy bill. Less than 37% or 24,445 families in need benefit the energy subsidy per year out of 66,269 families receiving economic aid¹³. Yet, civil society activists and advocates of vulnerable categories urge the government and responsible institutions (ministries) to regulate the existing instruction¹⁴, so more families and individuals benefit from energy subsidies.

Upon approval of the Law on Climate Change in 2020, Albania has (initiated¹⁵) drafted the **National Energy and Climate Plan**. The draft plan is currently available for consultation in the public consultation portal of the Government¹⁶. Line ministries have been consulted beforehand. The draft integrated "energy poverty"¹⁷ as a new policy and measure (PaM). Here, the objective is to define the concept of energy poverty, set up a national mechanism for systematic monitoring, and recommend measures for the elimination of energy poverty, including a study on the population challenged by energy poverty and its causes. Unfortunately, the plan does not anticipate any state budget to support this PaM. Implementation responsibility is vested to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy and local government units. (Note: There aren't any inputs through a public consultation platform, yet this approach may not be the most efficient one. The platform was open till December 6th but no feedback was received. Neither has the Plan been consulted from a gender perspective, nor on the integration of energy and gender related issues.

On the compliance with the EU acquis, Albania has recently adopted the Law on Energy Efficiency¹⁸. The law is partially aligned with: Directive 2012/27 / EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, dated 25 October 2012 on the Energy Efficiency. The law lacks (doesn't consider) the concept of energy poverty – which is to be aligned with the EED. Yet, it is unlikely for the law to be amended anytime soon, given its approval in 2021.

¹² 1 Euro = 122 ALL

¹³ Emiri, G. (2021). Gjysma e familjeve me ndihmë ekonomike nuk përfitojnë kompensimin e energjisë. Available at: <https://exit.al/qjysma-e-familjeve-me-ndihme-ekonomike-nuk-perfitojne-kompensimin-e-energjiise/>

¹⁴ Guideline no. 15, joint MSPJ, MF and MEI, date 08.04.2015.

¹⁵ Energy Community (n.d.) Available at: <https://www.energy-community.org/regionalinitiatives/NECP.html>

¹⁶ Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania (2021). Planit Kombëtar të Energjisë dhe Klimës 2021-2030. Available at: <https://konsultimipublik.gov.al/Konsultime/Detaje/422>

¹⁷ European Parliament (2019). EU Directive 2019/944 related to energy poverty imposes obligation to states to define the "vulnerable consumer" term. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/ECON-AM-749873_EN.pdf

¹⁸ Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy of Albania (2021). Law no. 28/2021 For some amendments and additions to law no. 124/2015 "On Energy Efficiency", amended. Available at: https://www.energy-community.org/dam/jcr:a0c2b8a8-96c8-4423-993a-537cf51daa65/Draft_NECP_AL_%202021.pdf

As well as the Energy community acquis, Albania has been identified as in breach of its obligation by a decision of Energy Community's Ministerial Council¹⁹.

1.2. Gender mainstreaming

Gender mechanism

A number of structures with the mandate to advance gender equality form the gender equality mechanism in Albania. The Minister of health and social protection is at the top of the mechanism. Also, the minister chairs the **National Council for Gender Equality (NCGE)**, established by order of the Prime Minister in 2009²⁰. The NCGE acts as the highest advisory body to mainstreaming gender in national policies and legislation, in particular in areas of political participation, social, economic and cultural development. The NCGE has the obligation to ensure gender mainstreaming in all fields, especially political, social, cultural and economic ones²¹. The NCGE, led by the minister responsible for gender equality issues, is composed of ten governments and three civil society representatives, each with a 4-year term mandate. There's no representation of the MIE in the council.

A number of **Gender Equality Employees (GEE)** are appointed in each ministry dealing with gender equality issues. Likewise, each municipality shall appoint at least one local GEE in its structure. Currently GEEs have been assigned in 11 ministries, including MIE, MTE, and 60 GEEs are appointed at municipal level (out of 61 municipalities).

Since 2018, the Deputy Prime Minister has been appointed the **National Coordinator for Gender Equality** to strengthen gender equality mechanisms at the central level. In addition, the Alliance of Women Parliamentarians (AWP) was established in 2013 with the aim of promoting gender equality in Parliament and advocating for gender mainstreaming in laws and parliamentary procedures.

In the policies

Law on Legalisation of Informal Settlements, adopted in 2006, intends to legalise all informal settlements. As observed, the provision fails to ensure women's property rights, because the property registration (legalisation) is based on the primary applicant – mostly men applicants – as head of households according to the civil register. Yet, the legalisation process has yielded properties with exclusive ownership in favour of men, due to this fundamental flaw in the civil register.

EU Albania 2021 Report²²

¹⁹ European Commission (2020). Commission Staff Working Document. Albania 2020 Report. Available at: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-10/albania_report_2020.pdf

²⁰ Order of the Prime Minister No. 3, date 8 January 2009 for the Establishment of the National Council for Gender Equality. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/de/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13101:0::NO::P13101_COMMENT_ID:4120472

²¹ Republic of Albania Assembly (2008). Law No.9970, date 24.07.2008 Gender Equality in Society. Available at: <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/85325/97665/F1693144153/ALB85325.pdf>

²² European Commission (2021). Commission Staff Working Document. Albania 2021 Report. Available at:

Reporting on energy:

European Commission Albania 2021 Report notes that Albania made some progress on the legal framework for Energy Efficiency (EE) while the implementation of the Energy Efficiency plan remained slow. The report also notes that 2020 recommendations have not been sufficiently addressed and remain valid.

Under the Chapter on Energy, the Report recommends the complete unbundling of energy companies, as well as the abolishing of all legal obstacles on the right of customers to change their electricity supplier and ensure full access to the liberalised market for all customers connected to 20kV. Also, one key recommendation is for Albania to adopt the integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) 2020-2030.

Reporting on social statistics:

INSTAT published in 2020 the first gender equality index for Albania²³. The index measures gender equality in six core domains: work, money, knowledge, time, power, health, and two additional domains: intersecting inequalities and violence.

Data released by INSTAT²⁴ show that employment rates differ for women and men aged 15-64. Less women, 61.2% are employed compared to 77.1% for men. Women are less likely to work fulltime, more likely to be employed in lower-paid occupations and less likely to progress in their careers. About 43.3% of women in the labour force are employed in paid positions while 22.8 % of them engage in unpaid work in the family business. On another note, the unemployment rate for men aged 15-64 is 12.0 % compared to 12.4 % for women.

Of all the labour force, only 2.3% of women and men are employed in the group sector of mining and quarrying, electricity, gas and water supply. Employment structure for this group sector shows a discrepancy in employment rate between women and men. Within the group sector, the employment rate is 20.2% for women compared to 79.7% of men employed. The rate substantiates the men's dominance in the group sector. Also, the gender pay gap within the group sector is at 8.2%. The gross average monthly income also differs for women and men, under such economic activities²⁵, with women receiving 36,596 ALL versus 53,713 ALL men receive.

According to INSTAT, housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels make up to 10% (or 8,357 ALL) of the monthly consumption expenditures of the households²⁶. This is actually the second largest group²⁷ of household expenditure after food. In 2020, the mean household size in Albania is 3.6 of the range between 2.9 to 4.2. In addition, the share of housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels is higher at 17% for households composed

<https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-10/Albania-Report-2021.pdf>

²³ Babović, M. & Miluka, J. (2020). Gender Equality Index for the Republic of Albania 2020. Available at: https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/system/files/events-files/gender_equality_index_albania.pdf

²⁴ INSTAT (2021). Women and Men in Albania. Available at: <https://www.instat.gov.al/media/8713/burra-dhe-gra.pdf>

²⁵ Mining and quarrying; manufacturing; electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities.

²⁶ INSTAT (2020). Household Budget Survey. Available at: https://www.instat.gov.al/media/9071/hbs_2020.pdf

²⁷ This group includes expenditures for electricity, water, fuel, rent and small repairs.

of a single adult with children. In contrast, such costs are lower for households composed of more adults with more children.

In 2020 life expectancy at birth was estimated at 75.2 years for men and 79.6 for women. On average women live about four years longer than men, therefore they are more prone to extended health and social protection policies and services. Also, women are more heat and cold sensitive than men due to their physiology (chronic temperature-related discomfort, heat and associated diseases). Recent studies have noted that women are more sensitive to extreme temperatures, which may place women suffering energy poverty at a greater risk²⁸. Energy poverty risk is in particular higher for elderly women, seniors, pensioners and social assistance beneficiaries.

The Gender Pay Gap and Gender Pension Gap have a strong correlation with economic welfare as well as energy poverty²⁹. According to INSTAT, the gender pay gap in 2020 is 6.6%. On average, men have higher monthly gross income than women. In 2020 women compose 47.4% of urban pensions beneficiaries. Whereas women are the majority of rural pension beneficiaries at 66.5%. The average retirement age is 65.1 for men and 61.1 for women, while for a mother with many children the average retirement age is 55.8. Also, women compose the majority of volunteer pension contributions, at a rate of 63%. Contributing to volunteer pension schemes, women find a way to cope with lack of formal employment, and/or unpaid care work.

In early October 2021, for six weeks, INSTAT carried out the pilot population and housing census in 9 (out of 61) municipalities. The pilot module under "Section 2 Information on Household" includes questions about: electricity supply; heating system; type of energy used for heating. Yet, the draft module doesn't provide sufficient information and/or disaggregation to be able to assess the use and access to energy by gender. The **law on population and housing census has been adopted**³⁰. Yet, the challenge is to ensure funding for the full implementation of the census in 2022. As observed, the current sample may not be able to provide information and data on energy poverty. Obviously, some arguments to mention for considerations are about: - the affordability of energy by household, single mother families, divorced, widowed, etc., - use of energy within the household? Who manages energy sources? Who pays bills? - categorise traditional roles in energy use between women and men within households, etc.

Within the administration

Albanian Energy Regulator Authority (ERE) is a public legal entity, independent from the energy industry interest and from government institutions. ERE is the highest regulatory independent body, established in 1995, with the mandate to ensure a sustainable and secure power supply to the customers, taking into account the customers' interest. The Board of Commissioners is composed of 5 members (3 men, 2 women) appointed by the Albanian Parliament.

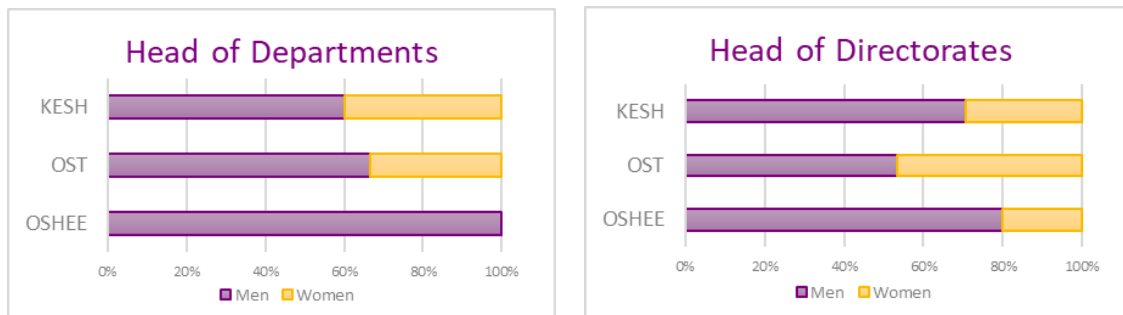
²⁸ WECF (2021). Gender and energy poverty Facts and arguments. Available at: https://www.wecf.org/de/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/EmpowerMed_Gender-and-energy-poverty-Factsheet-2021.pdf

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ European Commission (2021). Commission Staff Working Document. Albania 2021 Report. Available at: <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-10/Albania-Report-2021.pdf>

Within the energy management companies

In Albania there are three major energy management companies: Electricity Power Distribution System Operator (OSHEE), Albanian Power Corporation (KESH), and Transmission System Operator (OST). All three are chaired by men. Nevertheless, women are well represented in the Supervisory Boards of OSHEE at 66% and OST at 33%, while representation in the KESH Board remains at 20%. Women's share in high management positions is almost fair in KESH and OST, while representation is falling behind at OSHEE. (see the graph below)



Although the increased representation of women in high management and decision-making levels in recent years, gender equality agenda of these companies remains a challenge – little efforts are shown to adopt gender mainstreaming in internal rules and procedures. Likewise, the input from these companies in drafting the national policies remain vague since essential studies on interrelation between gender equality and energy poverty are largely lacking.

1.3. Gender responsive budgeting

The introduction of gender responsive budgeting back in 2012 was a very important step towards gender mainstreaming in Albania. For the time, it was considered essential to the efforts to achieve gender equality in Albania not only in policy drafting and implementation, but also budgeting. Since institutionalisation of GRB was a purpose in the Government agenda, Albania adopted a number of policy and legal measures to advance gender equality. The introduction of gender equality as one of the core principles with amendments of the 'organic budget law'³¹ in 2016 was a milestone for Albania – the only non-EU country to institutionalise gender budgeting. Since 2014, the annual "Instruction on the preparation of the MTBP", includes mandatory measures for application of GRB in the MTBP for all the central and local government institutions, by defining concrete gender specific objective, product, indicator, target, and earmarked budget allocation. Later, the new law on local finances³² included elements of gender responsive budgeting in local government budget

³¹ Republic of Albania Assembly (2016). Law No. 9936 Date 26.06.2008 12 On Management of Budgetary System in the Republic of Albania (Amended). Available at: <https://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/media/manager/website/media/Law-9936%2026%206%202008.pdf>

³² Republic of Albania Assembly (2017). Law No. 68/ 2017 On Local Self-Government Finance. Available at: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00N6CS.pdf

planning, implementation and monitoring. Progress is attained, from year to year, dedicated also to technical assistance provided to public administration at central and local levels.

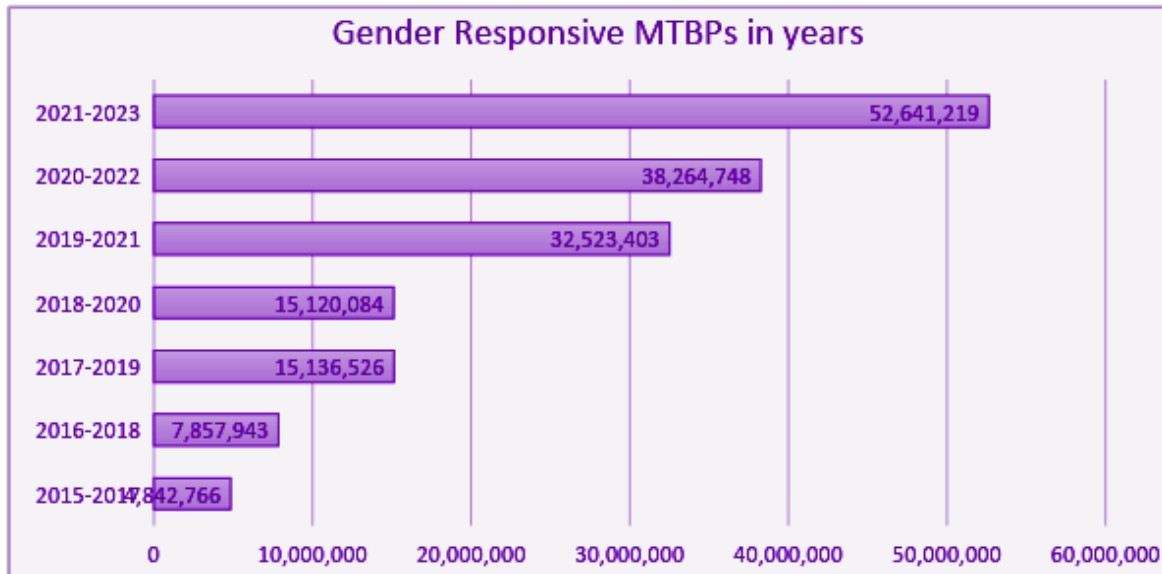
However, progress has not been even across sectors and across budget programs. While some sectors have embedded GRB to a great extent, other no-traditional ones such as energy, environment, transport, infrastructure still remain provisional in the application of GRB. E.g., in the MTBP 2022-2024 the MIE has budgeted in 12 budget programs, including support to energy, support to natural resources, transport and industry. Under the "Support to energy" program there is a specific budget to support the program's objectives on energy efficiency, renewable energy, including direct energy efficiency investment and amendment of energy efficiency legislation. Yet, as described the budget program lacks any gender specific objective, target or any performance indicator. The only budget program with a gender specific performance indicator is the one on "Water supply and sewerage", aiming to increase women's representation in management levels of "Water Utility Company". Another example is the "Social Care" budget program at the MHSP. Key performance indicators are set to measure the performance of this program – increase of women-headed household beneficiaries of economic aid/assistance over total female-headed household applicants in particular.

Yet, the extent of detailed information provided in budget programs doesn't allow for a good analysis. More detailed information on the budget program implementation is needed for this purpose.

Financial: (Action Plan Vlora) Energy poverty is not addressed in Albanian financial schemes as a separate topic but is integrated in the energy efficiency measures and RES.

The table below displays a synopsis of the GRB application in the MTBPs in the last few years. The progress is on the right track, reaching out to more and more budget programs and budget institutions. Likewise, the budget amount allocated to promote gender equality shows an increasing trend from year to year.

Year	Total no. of MTBPs	No. of Gender Responsive MTBPs	No. of Objectives	No. of Outputs (by type)	GRB related budget (in mln USD)	% versus Total Budget Expenditures
2015-2017	84	9	11	14	38.4	1.0%
2016-2018	84	20	27	23	63.4	1.7%
2017-2019	84	24	32	33	90	2.3%
2018-2020	84	28	41	41	120	2.4%
2019-2021	75	33	52	52	298	6.3%
2020-2022	75	38	57	57	348	7.2%
2021-2023	75	43	38	62	506	9.0%
2022-2024	75	47	43	65		



1.4. Findings and recommendations

Overall, this brief analysis reveals that very little reference exists when it comes to gender mainstreaming in energy related policies and legislation. In Albania, it seems to be the case that the integration of gender equality considerations within the framework of energy, energy efficiency, and **energy poverty is still in early stages**. Also, **addressing energy poverty in health, economic and social welfare** policies and legislation and its relation with gender equality is lacking behind. Yet, modest efforts are made to introduce energy poverty as a new policy and measure in the National Energy and Climate Plan, but the plan lacks concrete measures to address it.

The lack of focus on gender and energy poverty, including and correlation between them, within the national policies and actions dealing with gender equality, climate change, energy, health and social welfare seem to be a consequence to both the **lack of knowledge** and possibly the **understanding of gender equality and energy poverty interrelation**. Women and men have different needs, concerns and priorities, assume different threats, and bring different perspectives, experiences and ultimately solutions to the issues of gender equality and energy poverty. Understanding the interrelationship between gender and energy poverty is fundamental to the overall development and implementation of any policy measure and action response. Therefore, further research is required on the matter.

To ensure **mainstreaming of gender within the energy sector** more emphasis should be put on enhancing gender relevant **data collection** (administrative data and specific surveys by INSTAT, e.g., household survey, balance of electricity power, income and living conditions, household budget survey). The purpose here is to improve the collection, availability, and analysis of sex- and gender disaggregated data and the formulation of gender-related indicators, to help future decision-making processes. In order to feed analysis, data and statistics should also include factors other than gender, such as age, education, disability, urban or rural, etc. **Census 2022** is yet an opportunity to explore further data and information on households, including access and use of energy and

dimensions of gender and energy poverty. Gender may be a **determinant** of energy access and use given household consumption patterns. Thus, the household survey can be customised to offer information and data of household energy access and use by gender. E.g., a set of questions may be added to probing use of energy for cooking, heating, and lighting. A set of questions can help disaggregation of results such as:

- time spent using household devices by gender;
- time spent collecting fuel, by gender;
- household members responsible for cooking and collecting fuel, by gender;
- injuries and accidents related to household energy use, by gender;
- alternative energy sources, access, availability and use by gender;
- energy/electricity affordability by gender – who pays for what? (perhaps from Living Standard Measurement Survey).

Time Use Survey provides information and data about the amount of time household individuals spend on different daily activities. Also, TUS may be customised to measure the access to and use of energy while measuring the gendered nature of unpaid care work (domestic work).

In addition, such data are essential for monitoring progress toward SDG indicators 7.1.1 (proportion of the population with access to electricity) and 7.1.2 (proportion of the population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technologies).

Any present and **future programming needs to be informed by gender analysis** and technical assistance should focus on supporting institutions in collecting, administering and reporting data on a regular basis. At the moment, focus needs to be on efforts to mainstream gender in the implementation of present action plans and to that end the action plans should encourage actions to produce brief analysis, assessments, disaggregated data, reach out to both women and men, equitable distribution of services and resources, etc.

Gender-based analysis should be encouraged and supported across the policy and actions within the energy sector, including in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. It helps at assessing how various gender identity factors impact or can be impacted by government initiatives. The analysis should involve examining sex-and gender disaggregated data, and taking into consideration social, economic, and cultural situations and norms.

The ongoing energy reform has embarked on a number of amendments to national policy and legislation in accordance with the EU acquis, in particular with regards to the energy efficiency, action plan on energy and climate, strategy on energy, etc. Yet the implementation practice requires **gender sensitive monitoring**, supported by solid data and evidence, to be able to measure different impacts on women and men, if relevant.

Any future **bylaws, policy and legal amendments** shall be scrutinised from a gender perspective – a practice that is currently underestimated, assuming gender neutrality of policy and legislation. Including a gender perspective in policy and law-making is strongly recommended.

Gender specific policies and plans must be revolutionised (modernised). Likewise social

inclusion ones. Government must take concrete steps to expand the scope and coverage of existing gender policies, pursuing issues in non-traditional sectors such as climate change, energy and transportations. National policies on gender and social inclusion must drive future developments and actions in exploring and understanding the interrelation between gender and energy poverty. Likewise, the existing gender machinery has to be enforced, supporting the expansion of the gender agenda and pertinent actions in non-traditional sectors.

There is a broad public perception of more **women in decision-making positions**, as a result the more likely national policies and legislation are expected to be improved. Simply, policies and legislation do not improve unless **information and data** are provided, **training and capacity of institutions** is expanded and gender and energy poverty issues are **advocated**. Technical preparation and ongoing training and guidance to build further capacities of responsible institutions is required. Likewise, the ability to adopt new and innovative measures to track down impact factors of gender and energy poverty.

Ongoing consultations, effective participation and involvement of key stakeholders and partners is fundamental, and easing access to information as well, – at both national or local levels. In the course of policy and national action plans implementation is imperative to acknowledge the different needs and concerns of both women and men. Partnership, in particular with gender advocates, leads to improved knowledge and technical expertise to mainstream gender within the energy sector. One essential exercise to partnership is mapping of stakeholders willing to be engaged and to fill in any gap in gender related knowledge, skills and experience required.

Last, but not least, financial resource commitment is crucial to eradicate the negative impact of various factors of energy poverty. Whereas, **gender responsive budgeting** is crucial within the energy sector, so that action plans (NREAP, NECP) can be budgeted and executed taking into consideration the different needs and priorities of energy users. Hence, gender responsive budgeting is encouraged to be applied across sectors across budget institutions, including line ministries, municipalities and independent institutions.

It's not what you plan, it's what you give! The Ministry of Finance and Economy shall demand increased gender responsive budgeting accountability. Budget allocations have to be linked clearly with national priorities, in terms of policies and with national action plans in particular. Budget institutions should arrange consultative meetings with all possible stakeholders during the preparation phase of MTBP, including gender advocates.

2. Energy policy and climate impact

EU Albania 2022 Report³³

Reporting on energy:

³³ European Commission (2022). Commission Staff Working Document. Albania 2022 Report. Available at: <https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-10/Albania%20Report%202022.pdf>

“There was limited progress on the reform of the electricity market and connectivity measures in renewables. In the context of the global energy crisis, such efforts, as well as energy efficiency measures, should be accelerated taking into account Albania’s commitments under the Paris Agreement and the need to engage in the clean energy transition, in line with the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. Albania made some progress on the legal framework for energy efficiency (EE) but still needs to adopt all missing bylaws. No new energy efficiency funding mechanisms have been put in place. The energy efficiency agency’s role, capacities, and operations need further improvement. Albania has adopted its National Energy and Climate Plan 2030, to be implemented in 2022. This Plan complements the Energy Strategy 2018-2030 and is to replace the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) and Regional Energy Efficiency Action Plan (REEAP), setting new short and medium-term EE and RE targets and measures.”

2.1. Energy situation overall: share fossils, renewables, how is the energy market organised

About 98% of the energy produced in Albania is from hydropower, however it is not enough to meet its needs. 500+ projects of new hydropower plants, 20% of them are on protected areas. If the decision is taken to go ahead, they need to comply with environmental law, and **include all legal procedures like public consultations** (Aarhus convention).

2.2. Renewable energy in Albania

In different studies and reports prepared by CSOs and International Organisation it has been emphasised that there is lack of information and public consultation. Even the report prepared by Milieukontakt “On Water related conflicts due to HPP development”, recognized lack of information and public consultation as a common cause in 21% of the conflict cases, followed by loss of landscape and sense of place. 52% of the respondents have stated that local communities/farmers and villagers are the most affected stakeholder group due to conflictual hydro-power projects. The respondents generally replied in 67% of the cases that the mobilisation started as a reaction to project start when they saw the machinery digging the place. This strongly correlates with lack of information and public consultation in most hydro-power projects.

2.3. Energy poverty in Albania with gender-disaggregated data

A recent study³⁴ prepared by the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination elaborates on the current situation of customers in need regarding electricity supply, and the social and economic effects of electricity scarcity or restrictions. The study targeted 1005 individuals (51.7% women and 48.3% men). According to the study, low income, low level of education, disability, ethnicity, pensioners, economic assistance are among the

³⁴ UNDP (2021). Mbrojtja e përmirësuar ndaj diskriminimit e konsumatorëve në nevojë përmes zbatimit të kuadrit ligjor dhe rregullator. Available at: <https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Raporti-klienteve-ne-nevoje.pdf>

factors that add to poverty and mostly reported issues in access to energy/electricity. The study is comprehensive, but somehow lacks interpretation of data, in particular disaggregated by gender.

Other paths to explore:

- Was specific attention given to the voice of women in public consultations on energy poverty policies and all measures planned?

Consultations are limited to major actors only, mostly public institutions and few non-government bodies, including few civil society organisations with mandate in the environmental field. There is no specific consultation process with women, or either with women CSOs.

- Have the authorities assigned the role of co-ordinating body to one or more fully institutionalised entities for gender mainstreaming at the local level?

Local government units are responsible, and there is a Gender Equality Employee in each municipality. However, the position rank is weak and doesn't have a strong voice in local decision-making. GEE mostly deals with gender, domestic violence and other social issues at the local level.

- Is the National Council on Gender Equality working with the Ministry of Infrastructure and energy? Do they have an action plan/data collection/studies together?

There's no representation from MIE in the NCGE. As noted above, the Council has a consultative mandate, but no implementation plans.

3. Stakeholder gender analysis

3.1. National level (incl. governmental level, parliament): expert

Electricity stakeholders are numerous: decision-makers, producers, network operators, suppliers, consumers, associations, academics, think tanks, and local communities.

The main Stakeholders identified in the Albanian Energy Sector can be structured as follows:

a. Key Stakeholders:

- The Albanian public authorities (Council of Ministers, Ministry of Infrastructure & Energy (MIE), Ministry of Finance and Economy (MFE), Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP), Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE), Energy Regulatory Entity (ERE)).

- Public institutions at central levels (Agency of Energy Efficiency (AEE), National Agency of Natural Resources (NANR), National Environment Agency (NEA), National Territorial Planning Agency (NTPA), Territorial Development Agency (TDA).
- Public institutions at regional/local level (municipalities – energy efficiency departments, where present).
- The national companies for energy production, transmission, and network (Albanian Power Corporation (KESH), Transmission System Operator (OST), Electric Energy Distribution Operator (FSHU).
- International Financial Institutions (i.e.: WB, IMF, EBRD, EIB, etc.).

Hereafter is a short role overview of the main active stakeholders:

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MIE), responsible for the energy sector, oversees the National Energy Strategy, the development of energy policies and market reforms in the sector, the promotion of energy efficiency, renewable energy resources and investments in the sector.

The Minister of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) has the mandate to advance gender equality from the gender equality mechanism in Albania. The ministry exercises its mandate through the Sector of Gender Equality. The sector is part of the Directory of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality (DSIGE), which falls under the General Directorate of Social Policies in the MoHSP. The mission of this sector is to formulate and develop policies for promoting GE and reducing Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence, to aim for better alignment of social inclusion programs, and to support and engage in gender mainstreaming. The MoHSP also has the responsibility of drafting and monitoring the implementation of the government's GE policy. The Minister of Health chairs the National Council for Gender Equality (NCGE), established by order of the Prime Minister in 2009³⁵. The NCGE acts as the highest advisory body to mainstreaming gender in national policies and legislation, in particular in areas of political participation, social, economic and cultural development. The NCGE has the obligation to ensure gender mainstreaming in all fields, especially political, social, cultural and economic ones. The NCGE, led by the minister responsible for gender equality issues, is composed of ten government and three civil society representatives, each with a 4-year term mandate.

The Commissioner for Protection Against Discrimination is an independent body established in 2010 that protects individuals from discrimination including gender-based discrimination. The Commissioner is appointed by Parliament and examines complaints against discrimination of individuals or groups, and it acts on their behalf or to protect their interests. In its jurisdiction, it may launch administrative investigations, issue decisions, make recommendations, impose sanctions, and represent plaintiffs in court under their consent.

The Albanian Energy Regulator Authority (ERE) is an independent public legal entity whose responsibilities include regulating activities in the electricity and natural gas sectors (tariffs' adoption, licences' issuance, etc.), developing and adopting electricity market rules while also monitoring all electricity market operations in Albania. ERE ensures a sustainable and

³⁵ Order of the Prime Minister No. 3, date 8 January 2009 for the Establishment of the National Council for Gender Equality. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/de/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:13101:0::NO::P13101_COMMENT_ID:4120472

secure electricity supply for customers by establishing an operational and competitive electricity market.

The Transmission System Operator (OST), a state-owned company, performs the roles of the transmission network operator, power system operator and market operator. OST's responsibility is to provide the necessary transmission capacities for an uninterrupted supply of electricity to end-users, for the transmission of electricity generated from domestic sources, as well as for the transit and exchanges with other countries in the region.

The Albanian power exchange company (ALPEX), a subsidiary of OST and KOSTT (Kosovo Transmission and System Operator), is responsible for setting up the day-ahead and intraday market both in Albania and Kosovo.

The Electricity Distribution System Operator (OSHEE Group, OSHEE) is the largest state-owned enterprise in Albania both in terms of revenues and workforce in the country. It is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the distribution system below 35 kV. It supplies electricity to all consumers connected to its network. The operator is obliged to connect all consumers and/or producers to the distribution system in a transparent and non-discriminatory way.

Energy of Albania – KESH (KESH), a state-owned generation company, is the largest producer of electricity in Albania operating 79% of the generation capacity in the country.

The Albanian Renewable Energy Association (AREA) represents the interest of the renewable energy sector, with a special focus on independent hydropower producers. Its members are hydropower plant companies with a production ranging from 0,1 to some 30 MW. International players such as Ayen Enerji, Kurum International, Statkraft, and Voltalia are present in Albania, with assets in operations and/or development.

Few organisations with their experts are focused on Energy poverty trying to provide data on the typology of the buildings, energy efficiency and overall costs for energy and heating demands compared to revenues of the households³⁶.

A study³⁷ conducted by the non-profit organisations T`REJA Center, Egyptian and Roma Youth Movement, Center for Social Advocacy, Community Action Center, the Center "Albanian Consumer" and the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination aimed to measure both the solvency of the customer in need and the social and economic impact caused by the lack of electricity or the impracticability to benefit from this service. The data and analysis generated by this study were shared with public institutions as well as non-profit organisations involved in this initiative for a better recognition of the problem and finding appropriate solutions.

Through the EmpowerMed project Milieukontakt Albania has been working in the Vlora pilot site to tackle energy poverty and to help improve the health of people in the coastal areas of Mediterranean countries, with a particular focus on women.

³⁶ Hakani, H. (2018). Evaluation of energy performance of buildings in Albania from the perspective of energy poverty. Available at: <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/evaluation-of-energy-performance-of-buildings-in-albania-from-the-perspective-of-energy-poverty/>

³⁷ UNDP (2021). Improved protection against discrimination of customers in need through the implementation of the legal and regulatory framework. *For more accessible justice for women and men in Albania*. Available at: <https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Customers-in-need.-CPD-Albania.pdf>

Elements of the project focus on (i) raising public awareness on energy poverty and the means for its alleviation, focusing on the specifics of coastal areas, gender and health aspects; (ii) implementing practical solutions tailored to empower households affected by energy poverty and (iii) formulating local, national and EU policy recommendations and promote solutions to tackle energy poverty.

4. Gender analysis of pilot site

4.1. Description of pilot site in Vlora

Vlora is the third largest city and a municipality in Albania. It is also the second largest port city of Albania, after Durrës. Geographically, it has a coastline on the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, the Adriatic and Ionian Sea, which forms the Bay of Vlora. It is where the Albanian Declaration of Independence was proclaimed on November 28th 1912. It is also one of the most cultural and economically significant cities of southwestern Albania. Vlora is home to Albania's second largest port, the Port of Vlora.

There are more than 4,500 businesses operating in the municipality, and revenues from these businesses constitute the main part of the Municipality budget. They provide services for more than 150,000 residents in winter and more than 300,000 in summer. Vlora is an important trade and maritime centre in Albania, where the fishing industry is particularly developed. Vlora produces oil, natural gas, bitumen, and salt. Likewise, the textile manufacturing industry and construction are also developed.

Demography - The Municipality of Vlora consists of 5 administrative units (Vlora, Oriku, Qendër, Novoselë and Shushicë) with a total population of 202,751 inhabitants³⁸ (women 101,332 and men 101,419) including Greek, Roma and Egyptian minorities. The municipality covers an area of 616.85 km square. About 71% of the population reside in urban areas, whereas 29% in rural and semi-urban (Orikumi) areas. The average lifespan is 71.4 years, 68.5 years for men and 74.3 years for women.

Employment: - According to INSTAT, unemployment rate in the Municipality of Vlora is at 21.9%, unfortunately higher than the national average of 12.3%. The unemployment rate for women is at 26,2% versus 18.7% for men. Thus, women compose 50.8% of unemployed and men 49.2%. 78,814 employed in 2018, increased from 2017. Employed women are 31,579 and 47,235 men. Employment rates are the lowest in the Administrative Unit of Novosela at 26.2%, and Shushica at 30.9%. According to INSTAT, the average (gross) employment income in Albania for the last quarter of 2018 is 52,312 ALL (430 EUR).

Of the total number of families (726) receiving economic assistance, about 208 of them are female heads of households. Whereas, 689 women and 1584 men with challenged abilities benefit from the economic assistance scheme.

Water and energy: - Local data indicate that only 64% of the households of the area pay their energy bills regularly and that the average monthly energy consumed per household (168 kWh) in Vlora is 23% lower than the minimum in national level. However, at the

³⁸ Civil registry (2020)

district level (according to INSTAT 2011) there are about 980 households that lack access to water supply, or 3,358 inhabitants, most of them in rural areas (71.4%).

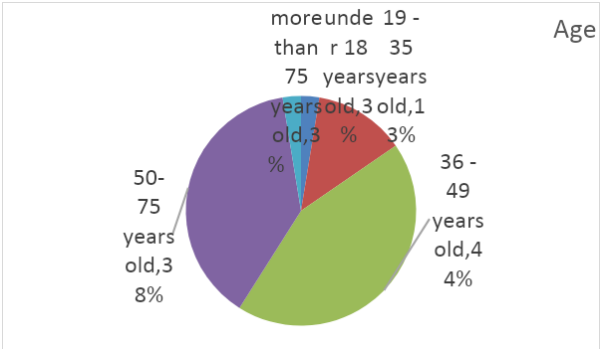
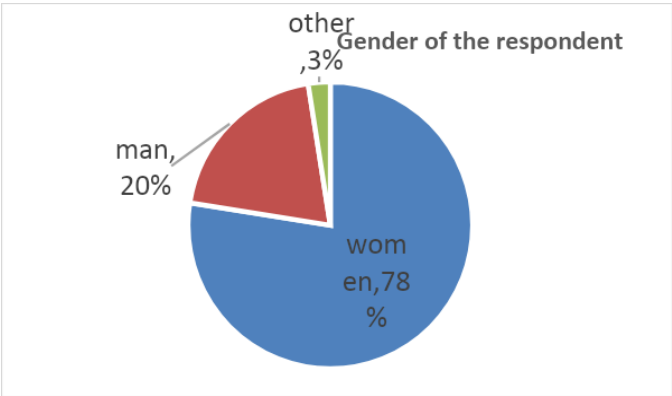
In recent months, this family had reconnected the electricity, as they were nonpayers over a few years. They were paying off the debt including interest as well as the monthly consumption, at the same time. The last invoice was 2,300 ALL, while the delayed debt 1,800 ALL, with a total of 4,100 ALL. As such, about 50% of the economic aid that the woman, member of the family receives, goes towards the electricity bill!

This is most likely the scenario for vulnerable families, in particular Roma and Egyptian ones, living in remote administrative units.

4.2 Gender Analysis - Survey in pilot site

The brief survey conducted lead to the follow findings and recommendations:

Most of the respondents, about 77%, reached home premises were women. Yet, most of the men from the same families were in labour activities at the time of interview, supposedly. The respondents age ranges, about 44% of the respondents were between 36 and 49 years old and 38% between 50 and 75 years old. About 23% of respondents were from Egyptian communities living in the area.

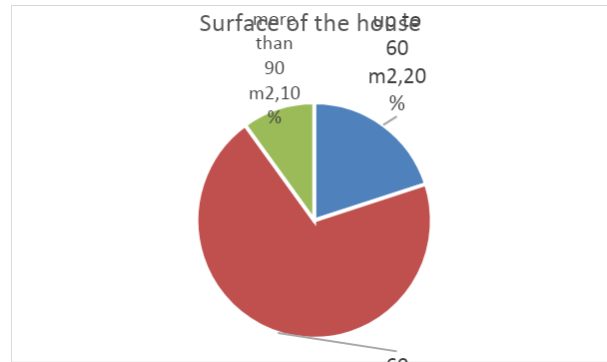
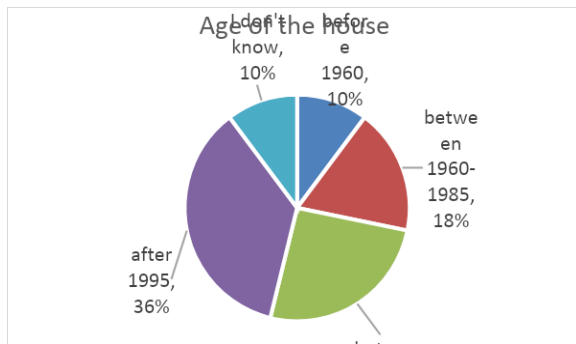


Most of the household composition followed a structure of two adults (parents) and a number of children. Only one household resulted in single-parent, and two others had up to two other adults other than the parents. The size of the family ranges from zero to five children. Most families (38%) had no children, quite an unusual trend in the society, however, about 30% of families had two children.

0 Child	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	4 Children	5 Children
15	5	12	4	2	1

About 28% of families live in private houses, whereas 72% in apartments. On average the need for energy and other resources such as water is higher for households in private houses compared to apartments. About 64% were built at least more than 25 years ago,

with 10% living in buildings built up to 60 years ago.



About 92% of families live in buildings constructed with bricks and 60% of them are not insulated. Only three persons admit to live in houses constructed with concrete blocks, yet even more vulnerable to weather conditions either cold or hot. It is to note such buildings are not at all energy efficient and amortised. Respondents acknowledged that heating the flat during the winter is a challenge, due to poor insulation, presence of high levels of humidity, amortised doors and windows, use of old electrical devices – not at all energy efficient, etc. As such, it imposes a high demand for use of energy and other financial and non-financial resources to maintain the house, and secure an adequate and affordable living conditions.

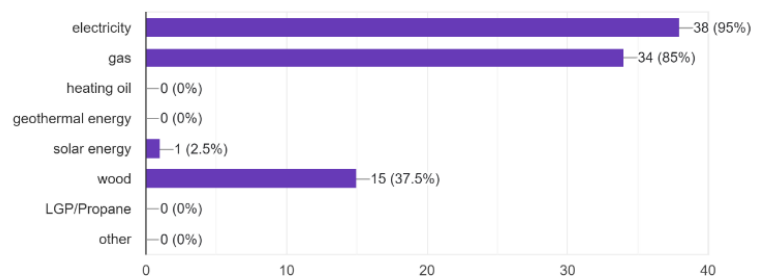
It was quite a balanced share between women and men in more than half of families (56%) interviewed who bring the money in, i.e. have access to paid job. Whereas in other 25% of families, men were the primary workers “bread winners” for their families. Women were the primary earners only in 10% of families interviewed.

Women seem more responsive to secure and manage energy, in particular the one supplied by the electricity grid, including their accountability to pay off the bills.

Household energy consumption

Most of the households (95%) use electricity as the main source of energy. In addition, 87% use natural gas to cope with the need for energy, the other 38% use wood for the same purpose. It is to note the one household that utilises solar energy!

What kind of energy do you consume?
40 responses



About 25% of households spend about 32 eur/month, while 40% spend up to 45 eur/month, and only 10% spend more than 45 eur/month. In all cases this is a very low consumption and it is referred to as energy produced from electricity.

The use of energy mainly follows the below path: energy used for electric devices by most of the families (97%); for washing, by 84% of families; for cleaning, by 74% of families; and only 45% of families use it for heating. Yet, heating is not a priority in the use of

energy by households. Use of electric, washing, and cleaning devices takes priority in the use of energy, perhaps due to low energy consumption rates, for a shorter period of time and to cover all priority needs. Energy used for heating is used to the limits, to cope with the cold season mostly, due to the high level of energy consumption of heating appliances – thus the high cost of energy bills, refrain families from minimising its use. According to previous studies carried out through this project in more than 60% of the families visited, some of them gave up other vital elements to save for energy related costs. The social groups most affected by energy poverty are Roma and Egyptians families; families in rural areas, recipients of social assistance, pensioners, families with more than 4-5 members, and families headed by women.

Renewable energy concepts

When it comes to the information and awareness about the use of renewable energy sources, about 47% of respondents had gained information in school and through the EmpowerMed project. In contrast, about 40% of respondents did not have any information about RES. Lack of information is a bigger issue especially in remote areas, and within low-income families. In addition, families contacted and reached out lack understanding of health and hygiene related consequences due to energy unaffordability.

Use of energy by gender

In general, women tend to consume more energy than men in daily activities, due to household burden vested mainly on women. Also, about 54% of respondents think that women consume more, and almost half (46%) acknowledges that women's needs are higher than those of men.

4.3 Recommendations at local level

Findings from the analysis of gender aspect at local level showed that project partners and local stakeholders engaged in EmpowerMed should work further on:

- Addressing energy poverty has to be central in local governance, including planning and implementation of local policies, programs and services offered in particular to vulnerable categories. It requires combined efforts in both levels of government, central and local. Local government in particular has the responsibility to provide quality and inclusive services, including water, sanitation, energy, etc³⁹. Therefore affirmative measures to address/anticipate the impact of energy poverty shall be considered in planning and service delivery.
- Local administration shall encourage and commit to gender mainstreaming in local planning and service delivery. This has an important value even in the non-traditional sectors or services, financial, economic and social incentives local governments provide for vulnerable categories of citizens.
- Awareness and know-how within local administration need a shift – the way gender

³⁹ Principle 20 ● EU Pillar of Social Rights: Everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services and digital communications. Support for access to such services shall be available for those in need

and energy poverty correlate and impact the lives of people. Therefore, awareness and capacity building training programs must be planned and delivered.

- Community education, awareness and information sharing are much needed and shall be planned on a regular basis by the local authorities and non-government partners, civil society organisations. Community demands information about the best energy saving alternatives to avoid reaching energy poverty.
- Improve data collection and evidence to better inform upcoming planning and implementation of local interventions. There is a need to expand the collection of a range of sex-disaggregated data, other intersectionality and related indicators, to help future decision-making processes. Improved data collection brings better understanding, visibility and more sensitivity towards a local issue. Increased sensitivity brings interest to the issue. Increased interest brings well-considered and well-informed actions. Actions bring accountability and responsiveness.
- Local decision-making is a process to be encouraged and informed by enabling the place for debate and participation of citizens. Yet such practice is limited to major local policies, development plans and to some extent budgeting. Local decision-making shall be brought at a lower lever to enable access to decision even by the less represented groups e.g., Roma and Egyptian minorities, women's groups and women's rights associations, social and economic vulnerable groups, etc.
- Involvement of external expertise, with know-how to: a) technically assist local authorities to become considerable towards gender mainstreaming in local services, and define concrete measures to tackle energy poverty, b) collaborate with local community, propose efficient participatory processes, and bottom-up approaches, advocate and building awareness around energy poverty.
- Encourage and offer incentives for the technology or measures that women and families at risk of energy poverty may benefit, e.g., use of solar panels (possibility of using solar energy, insulation of houses, and use of energy-saving electric bulbs, the use of solar energy accumulators in rural areas that use pumps to supply water to the household and agriculture activity).

5. Literature

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