



Peaceful
Change
initiative



Women in Media

Kosovo Survey

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INTRODUCTION

Between November 2020 and December 2022, Peaceful Change initiative (PCI) convened a series of Media Consultation Dialogues between media professionals from Kosovo and Serbia. In December 2021, we organized a Media Consultation Dialogue on “Women in the Newsroom”. We gathered online a group of Kosovar and Serbian journalists, in order to hear their reflections on the position of women in the media, their status, advancement opportunities, specific gender related issues such as sexual violence in the workplace, and how do they perceive gender representation in the media.

The meeting took place when the COVID-19 pandemic was still an entangled part of our life, job, daily activities and discussions. We had already witnessed how the virus further exacerbated inequalities, as many of the hidden experiences of the crisis were gendered: from the increased burden of unpaid labour to increased number of gender-based violence cases. It was also a time when we witnessed how women are on the frontline of the pandemic, as cashiers at grocery stores and as nurses. Among those on the frontline was also one particular group: female journalists, reporting about the virus since its outbreak.

The screen presence of female reporters confirmed again something that media workers already have been saying inside their circles: that women make the majority of field reporters in Kosovo. However, newsrooms in Kosovo not only failed to use their power and influence to challenge traditional social and cultural norms that perpetuate the oppression of women, but often end up reinforcing and maintaining harmful gender perceptions and stereotypes.

This was also suggested by journalists during the discussion which highlighted how newsrooms fail to include perspectives, experiences and voices of women in their media productions. But they also highlighted that newsrooms are failing them too, as gender inequality and sexism are not just part of the headlines, but also of their workplace.

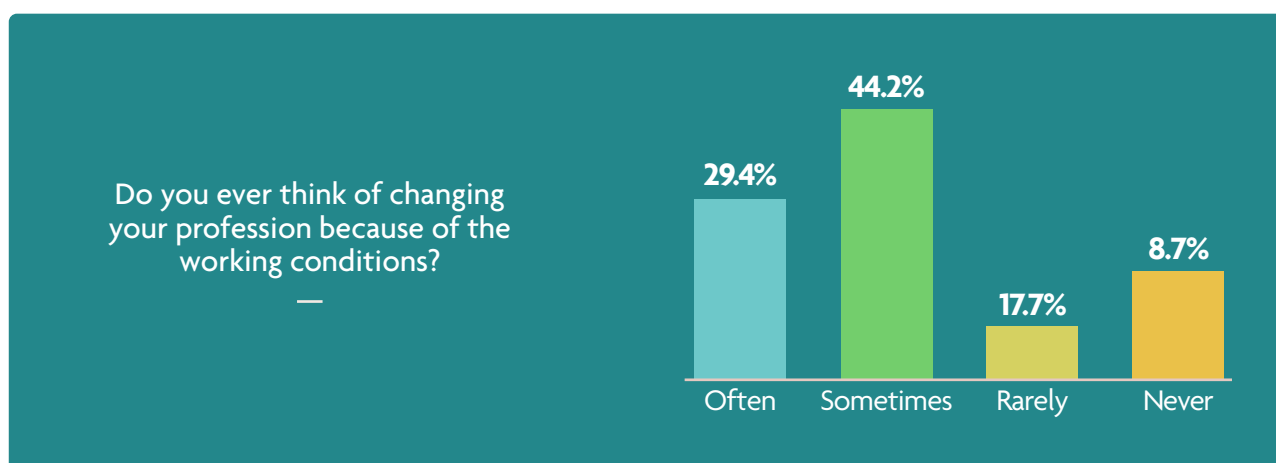
This report derives from participants themselves who expressed the need for a survey looking into the position of women in the media, and provide a better picture of gender (in) equality in the newsroom.

We hope that survey findings will pave a way to this conversation.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Around **50 percent** of women respondents (hereinafter: respondents) earn less than the national average;
- **39.2 percent** of them work more than 40 hours per week;
- More than **40 percent** of women journalists surveyed cover politics, contrary to the assertions that it is a male dominated field, which is particularly enforced during popular evening TV panels (we call them “man-nels”) which remain sexist and exclusive to men;
- **21.5 percent** believe that they earn less than their male colleagues for the same work;
- **26.4 percent** or one in four women was victim of sexual harassment. Some respondents stated cases of sexual assaults;
- **20 percent** were discriminated against due to their appearance, and **28.3 percent** due to their age;
- **49.1 percent** feel that their private life suffered because of work, and **29.1 percent** feel that their private life affects their job to a great extent;
- **70 percent** believe that women are less present than men in the media content;

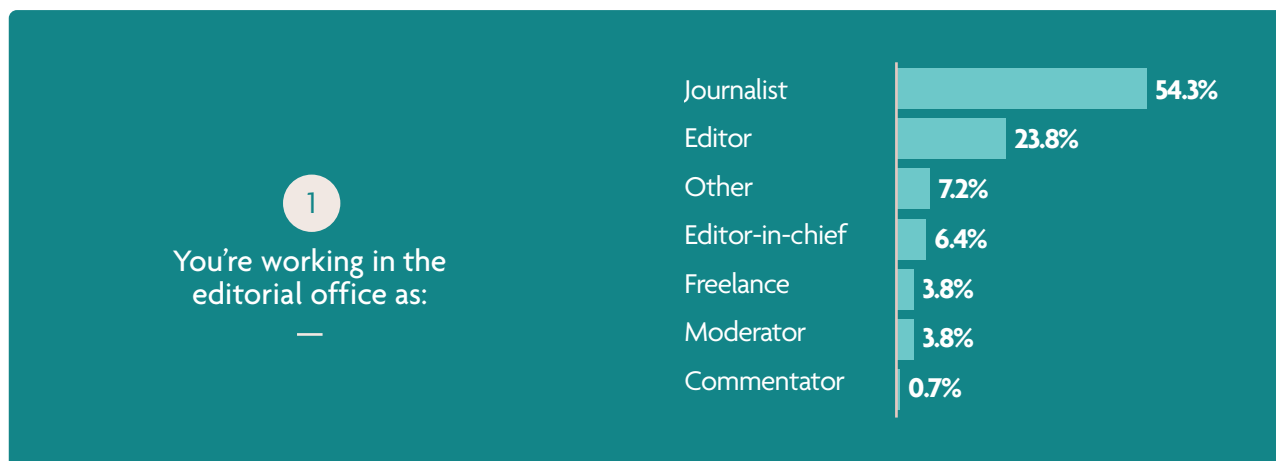
Perhaps the best illustration is a finding that 44.2 percent of respondents sometimes and 29.4 percent often **think about changing their job** – this actually implies that for one reason or another, more than 70 percent of women employed in newsrooms are dissatisfied with their profession or the job they do.



All these findings are generally in line with periodic global researches on the status of women in the media, pointing to their unequal representation in leadership positions and in media content, failure to harmonize their private life and career, discrimination. However, what gives a special “colour” to this research escapes the statistics - shocking testimonies about sexual abuse, dissatisfaction, feeling of not being fulfilled in one area or another, which we partially keen to share and convey here.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents included women journalists, photo reporters, proof-readers, editors, editors in chief, directors, and managers employed in all types of media outlets.



According to a survey there are twice as many women journalists than editors, while the position of editors-in-chief represents a very low percentage. Still it is hard to conclude if women still face enormous odds like the glass ceiling in media jobs, without having statistical data on leading editorial positions in the newsroom and see if there is any disparity in leading positions.

A report from Kosovo Journalists Association (AJK) confirms that there is no statistical data on leading editorial positions in the newsrooms, but that women journalists are more likely to hold editorial positions in the newsroom, especially in the mainstream media, whereas the men journalists are more in charge of the managerial sector. None of the respondents holds a managerial position.

Poor representation of women in debates on TV news channels has been an important issue that has been frequently raised and highlighted by the community of journalists in Kosovo. But the absence of women from the screen is in total contrast with the visual presence during TV news, with women representing the majority of field reporters.

Out of 265 respondents almost half work at TV stations.

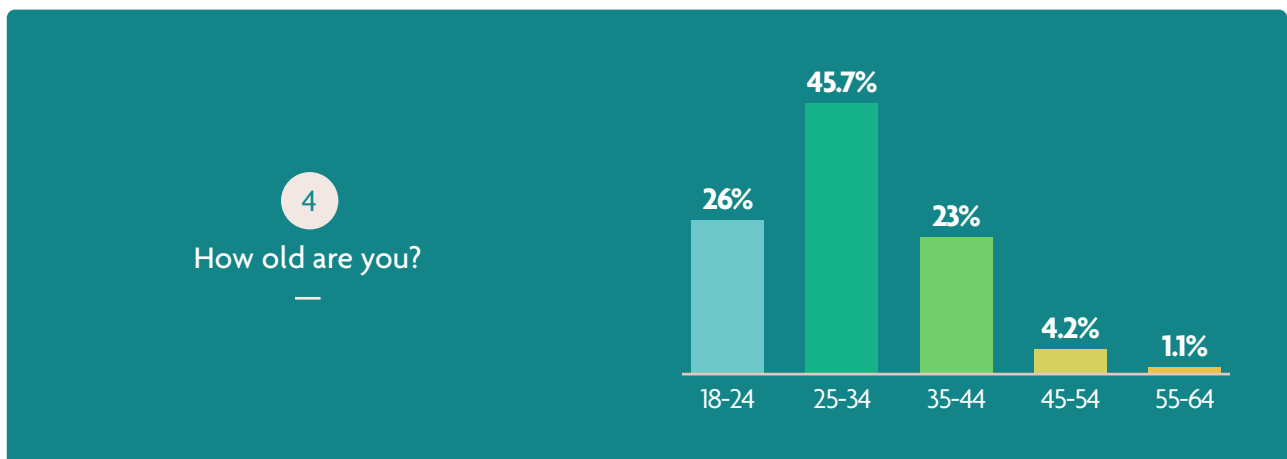


The high number of women working at a TV station coincides with the emergence of new media outlets over the last years in Kosovo. This data coincides also with a high percentage of women covering politics, as it is usually the women who report outside on the daily political developments. In fact, one of the most interesting survey findings is the high number of journalists covering politics, followed by culture and entertainment/fashion, social issues, economy and others.



AGE OF RESPONDENTS

Women who completed the survey were from the whole age range of 18 years to 65 years (the retirement age in Kosovo).

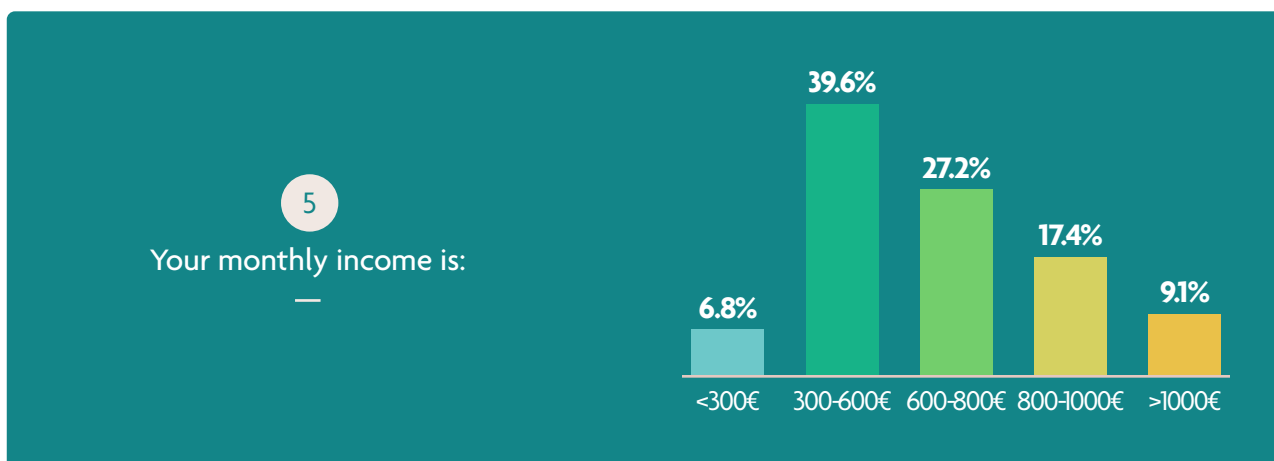


Demographics of respondents show that a large percentage of journalists are under 40. This may be ascribed to the fact that media expansion in Kosovo happened particularly in the last decade, but also to working conditions such as low salaries, the hardships of women journalists to continue their careers and huge demands within their family life, the burden of unpaid labour, and lack of any social security. Many of these factors are suggested also through survey findings and found in the next chapters of the report.

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES

In about 50 percent of cases, the salary of respondents is lower or around the average for the Republic of Kosovo. According to the latest data from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the average public sector monthly income in Kosovo is 542 euros, while the average private sector salary is 376 euros, making it one of the lowest average wages in Europe.

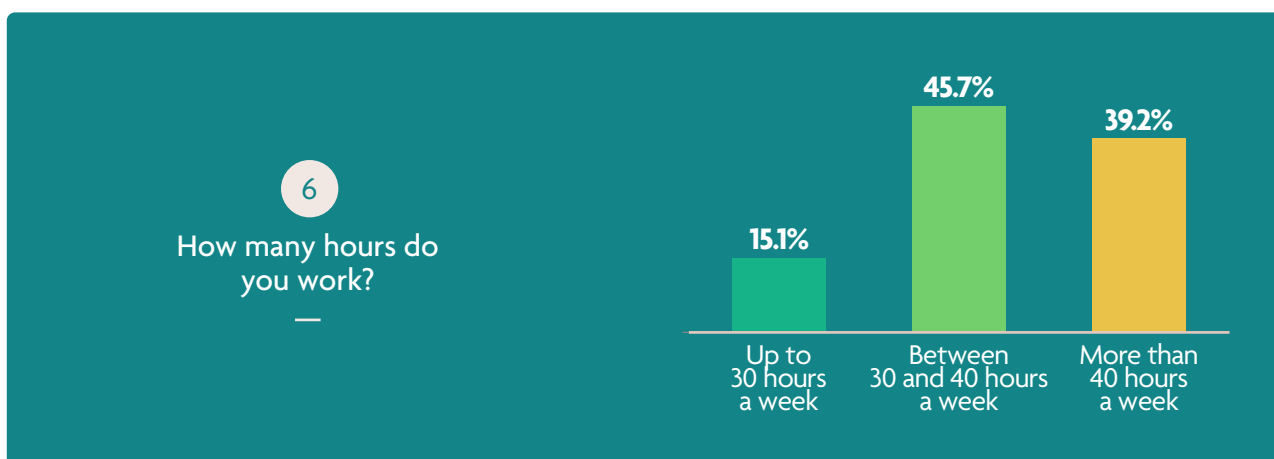
Nearly 40 percent of respondents said that their salaries are under 600 euro, 27.2 percent have a salary from 600-800, 17.4 percent have a salary between 800-1000, and only 9.1 percent of all respondents above 1,000.



When the data is further aggregated, the survey confirms a worse economic environment for media employees working with a news online portal. For instance, while 19 percent working at a TV station have a salary between 800-1000 euro, it is only 5.5 percent of those working at a news portal that have the same salary.

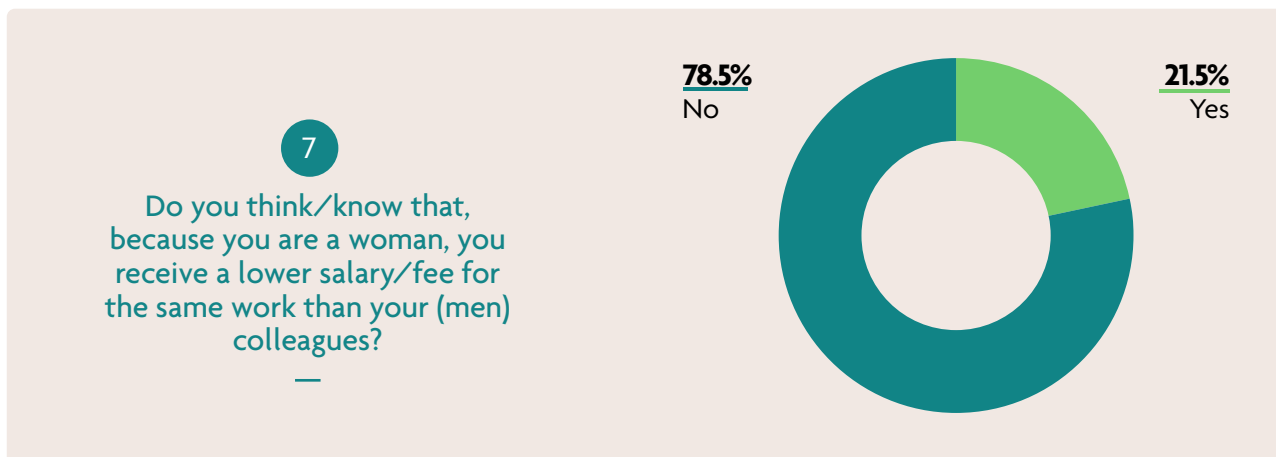
The difference is noticeable also when comparing the lowest and highest salaries: 5.6 percent of respondents that work at a TV station have a salary under 300 euro, and another 5.6 percent have a salary above 1000 euro. Meanwhile, 9 percent working at a news portal have a salary under 300 euro, and only 3.6 percent above 1000 euro.

Answers of respondents also confirm the large perception of some other difficulties faced by journalists in the workplace, such as long working hours, with slightly under 40 percent who work over 40 hours per week.



WAGE INEQUALITY

Respondents were asked if they had lower incomes compared to their male colleagues, 21.5 percent answered positively.

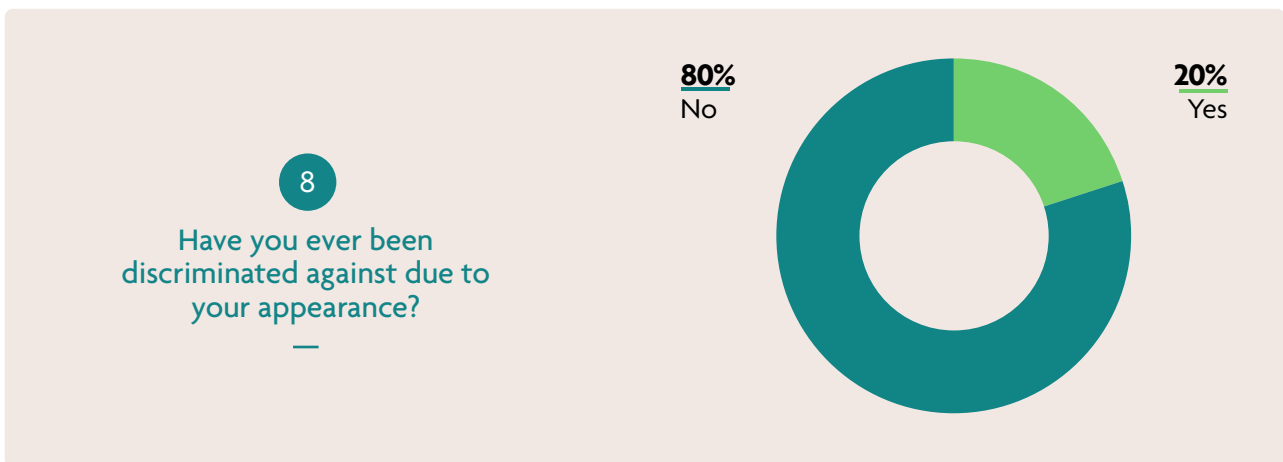


When the data is further aggregated in order to understand the profile of respondents that make up the 21.5 percent, it turns out that 51.8 percent are journalists and 19.6 percent editors. They work predominantly either at TV stations or news portals. Another aggregated data finds that 30 percent of those that think are gender discriminated in their incomes cover politics, followed by 23.4 percent that cover culture, and 16.1 percent social issues.

In absence of information on the economic position of male media workers it is hard to conclude if wages claimed by respondents are gender discriminative. According to AJK reports, salaries of women journalists don't differ from their male colleagues. But the percentage of 21.5 is not insignificant showing the need of another analysis which would look into a gender pay gap within the media sector.

APPEARANCE-BASED DISCRIMINATION

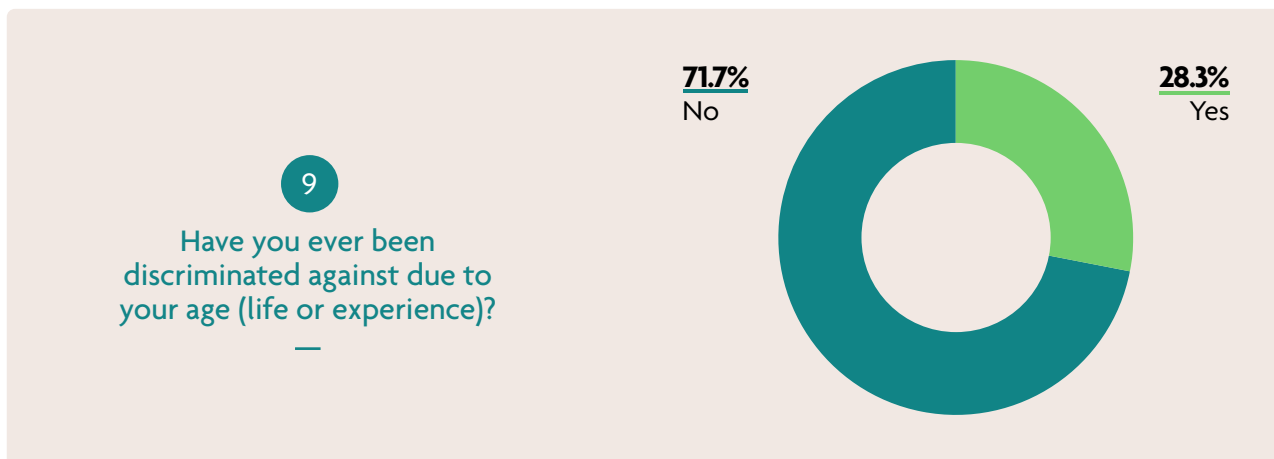
20 percent of respondents said that they were discriminated against based on their appearance. An overview of profiles that responded with 'Yes' show that younger and older ages are more likely to feel discriminated against based on appearance. 24.6 percent of respondents aged 18-24 and 28.6 percent of respondents aged 45-54 answered 'Yes,' compared to 20.5 percent of respondents aged 25-34 and 14.5 percent of respondents aged 45-54.



The aggregated data shows that respondents from younger age (18-24) and older age (45-54) are likely to feel more discrimination based on appearance compared to others. 24.6 percent of respondents aged 18-24, and 28.6 percent of respondents aged 45-54 said they were discriminated against based on appearance, compared to 20.5 percent of respondents aged 25-34 and 14.5 percent of respondents aged 35-44.

AGEISM - DISCRIMINATION BASED ON AGE

28.3 percent of respondents stated that they were discriminated against based on their age.



A much lower proportion of older women are in the labour force as compared to older men in Kosovo's labour market, but the lack of screen visibility of older women journalists suggests that newsrooms are also failing to accommodate older and experienced journalists.

The aggregated data shows a similar trend to the responses on the question about appearance-based discrimination. Similar to that, younger and older respondents are more likely to feel discriminated against based on age. 36.2 percent of respondents aged 18-24 and 42.9 percent of respondents aged 45-54 percent said they were discriminated against based on age, compared to 30 percent of respondents aged 25-34 and 14.5 percent of respondents aged 14.5 percent.

A thorough analysis is needed to understand to what extent are women exposed to age discrimination in news organizations. But, some respondents gave clear evidence on how younger reporters experienced age-based discrimination.

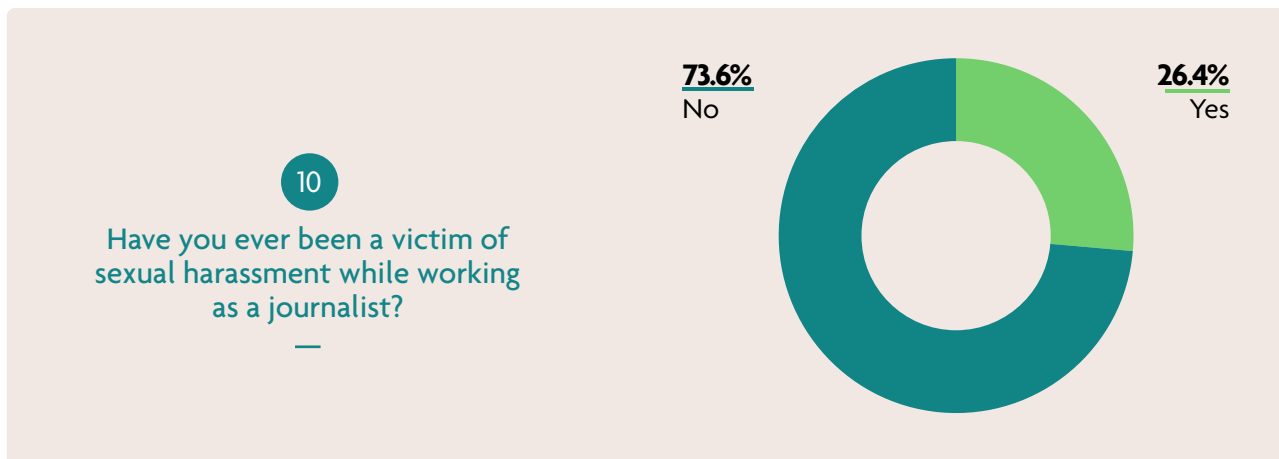
Testimonies

"I was too young (according to them) to write and report about politics."

"My appearance and young age in some cases led me to the experience of not being taken seriously enough by some institutional officials, who thought that because of my age I am not an adequate person to deal with particular topics. But they were proved wrong"

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: I QUIT MY JOB

The study found that 1 in 4 Kosovar female media workers are victims of sexual harassment in their workplace. Of 265 respondents, 70 or 26.4 percent of the respondents answered YES on the question if they ever were a victim of sexual harassment in relation to their work.



Despite anecdotal evidence of its ongoing prevalence, female journalists' experiences of sexual harassment weren't documented before. For the first time, survey findings confirm that women who work across different news organizations in Kosovo are subjected to sexual harassment and victimization.

Of the 70 respondents that stated they are victims of sexual harassment, 64.7 percent work at a TV station, 17.6 percent work with an online news outlet, 4.4 percent in a daily newspaper, 3 percent at a radio station, and the rest work in other media platforms.

The data shows that women of all ages and all sectors are victims of sexual harassment: 47.1 percent of respondents are aged 25-34, 32.4 percent are aged 18-24, 17.6 percent are aged 35-41, and 2.9 percent are aged 45-54.

More than the half of respondents - 57.4 percent - who have suffered sexual harassment in the workplace are journalists. Editors make up 25 percent of respondents, while presenters, producers and others types of the positions make up the rest of women who are victims of sexual harassment. The aggregated data shows that 27.9 percent of respondents cover politics, 20.6 percent cover culture, 17.6 cover social issues, while other respondents cover other topics in journalism.

Despite the fact that the questionnaire didn't contain more specific questions on perpetrators, respondents who answered with YES to the question if they ever were a victim of sexual harassment had the space and opportunity to give further elaborated information about their experience.

More than 50 gave thorough accounts of their harassment experiences helping to create a better understanding how this gender based discrimination is a serious concern in many media and news organizations in Kosovo. Female journalists who were sexually harassed at work described various cases of sexual harassment that range from conversations with sexual overtones to asking for sexual favours. They reported that perpetrators include both male colleagues and news sources.

A significant number stated that their male co-workers, such as fellow journalists, editor-in-chiefs, directors, cameramen and editors harassed them sexually. Examples of sexual harassment or even within the newsroom vary from inappropriate or unwanted sexual gestures, invading personal space in a sexual way, making of sexual comments or jokes or asking sexual questions through to harassment through text messages and groping. Some journalists reported even forms of sexual assault, such as fondling or unwanted sexual touching.

The majority of perpetrators outside of the newsroom include men holding public positions in institutions and political parties such as politicians and officials, but also businessmen and male interviewees who were important sources in the stories the female journalists were working on.

Some respondents reported that they were victims of different forms of sexual harassment, while some stated they had experienced violence and harassment at work multiple times.

The survey didn't ask respondents if they reported sexual harassment to their supervisors or persons with decision-making authority. Still, a few respondents stated that they were met with discouragement and indifference when they reported their sexual violence to their supervisors.

One woman was sexually assaulted by her source, and the editor failed to provide any psychological support.

The daunting and traumatizing experience caused by sexual harassment in the workplace is particularly illustrated in two answers:

"I left my job."

"I just gave up from the job I applied for."

Testimonies:

"I was harassed several times while interviewing different people."

"It mainly had to do with editors objectifying me as a woman, while I worked for a well-known newspaper. I didn't treat them properly at that time, but we are talking about verbal sexual harassment."

"It didn't happen within the media environment where I worked, but there are different cases in the field from people that I interviewed for stories, from political representatives and other ranks. There were times when they would comment my appearance what is also sexual harassment indeed, or often they would write to me later in the evening, hours after the interview was finished and would create "private chats" in the applications which they used to write me. The worst is that you can't avoid contact with these persons because of the institutional position they have."

“During my fieldwork, for several months, I encountered sexual harassment on two occasions. The first case was with an expert in economics, who while presenting the topic that we were supposed to talk about said: “Let’s go near the river,” as he was pretending to be funny. Two cameramen were present. We just overcame the situation in silence.”

The second case was with a farmer, who after we finished our filming, told the cameraman to go and then turned towards me and said: “You stay, jump in the tractor or anywhere you want and we’ll have fun.” We also overcame this in silence together with my colleague. I reported both cases as soon as I went back to the newsroom.”

“Sexual harassment happened in the workplace, either through improper messages or frequent calls from my colleagues.”

“One case was with one of the people I interviewed. In the beginning, the interview was stopped many times due to his remarks as he commented on my hands, my smile and so on. The situation escalated when I wanted to stop the conversation and leave in protest. The person came and sat near me, and tried to put his hands between my legs. I immediately reacted and went away and came back to the newsroom still in shock about what happened. My editor reacted like this: “I am very sorry that this happened to you, but if you don’t feel like writing don’t write”. So, I went through all that experience, and [for him] it was just as any other working day. I just got the “right” to decide if I wanted to finish the story or not.”

“In the first media where I worked as a journalist, a colleague, older than 50 years, harassed me time after time. “I would eat your silence,” was the message he used to send me through social media, when I was working and didn’t talk to him.”

“I was often a victim of sexual harassment in the workplace and outside of the workplace. Editors and colleagues were among harassers inside the newsroom, and outside of the workplace politicians too.”

“A colleague tried to kiss me. He offered to take me to the bus station because it was raining a lot. It was 5 o’clock in the afternoon - the end of the usual working hours. It was when I was about to get out of the car that he tried to kiss me. We knew each other well, as he was among the closest people at the office.”

“Supervisor used inappropriate language towards me.”

“Directors have taken advantage of their position and in a superior way have given sexist, harassing comments about me.”

“While working in the editorial office - I received unwanted and unsolicited advances from male contributing authors, through messages that they sent me. They misused my number to write me messages of a sexual nature, when the nature of our work was strictly professional.”

“It happened once and over three years ago, when I was collaborating on a topic with a source for a story. The harassment happened in the car, when he touched my arm, and he was laughing and joking, a gesture that exceeded the limits of our relationship of professional cooperation. At first glance, it may sound exaggerated, but the situation created by his laughter, talking and finally touching, is associated with harassment. This belief has been strengthened even more by his attempts to talk to me again after that time, even after my decision to not reply to him.”

“In the field we often experience sexual harassment and offensive words. For instance the last case was during interviews in the field and some boys shouted loudly: You journalist, I can eat your p..., I can eat your boobs.”

“At the beginning of my work as a journalist, there was harassment from my colleagues, but I overcame them by ignoring them.”

“During meetings with the interviewees, I have received sexist comments and harassment from them.”

“I don’t think that during my work as a journalist I was sexually harassed, but during my work experience and during my studies in Kosovo, I was always insecure, especially during field work. Even if I knew my co-workers well, I was always surrounded by men in the field, which consequently pushed me to be cautious and (unfortunately) scared at the same time.”

“[It happened] in non-direct forms, within the media and outside, unwanted invitations for lunch and dinner, unnecessary compliments!”

“The event happened in the field. I was at the beginning of my work as a journalist, on the way to the field when the cameraman made sexual comments about my physical appearance.”

“While we were working together on a story, one video editor started to comment on my physical appearance like “You have beautiful eyes. These jeans fit you so well. Since when did you get engaged?” I asked him to not ask any question of a personal nature and he answered: “Don’t tell me what to do, because I can do anything with you”. At that moment I just left my job, and no action was taken against him. He got fired only later after other female colleagues reported sexual harassment against him.”

“In one case from a colleague of mine, and in another case from a public person (business)”

“During the time in the field, while I was getting comments from citizens on a particular topic, some people harassed me with sexual words. In addition to this, it happened to me three times that a person with whom I had an interview harassed me through calls, giving me sexy comments; for instance he said “Change the Viber photo because I can’t take it anymore, you with that face can attract also the prince himself...”

“I was doing an interview with a person and after the interview he put his hand on my leg and started talking with soothing words.”

“Not-so-nice comments during fieldwork from people. Especially when they see that you are a girl and hold a microphone, they immediately mark you as ‘a slut.’”

“There are cases when after the interviews, as a result of your courtesy as a journalist/presenter, the guests feel more comfortable to give “compliments” for my appearance, which in some cases continues through social networks, in a “social” manner.”

“Harassment by certain colleagues, who without hesitation give compliments (based on flirting) in relation to my appearance without having any need for such comments. This is because they disturb me and make me feel uncomfortable in my workplace.”

“Provocative looks, they touched my waist.”

“Provocations from the interviewer.”

“I have been sexually harassed while working in the field, either directly or through different messages!”

“In all four media that I have worked in, almost in each one, I have received sexist comments and have been sexually harassed through the language they used or even looks. Mainly, this has happened from male colleagues, but there have also been cases from the media director or the editor-in-chief. For example, I had a case with the editor-in-chief of a media outlet who constantly complimented me on my appearance, in the presence of other colleagues, and in one case during a communication on Facebook, he told me that “you look very sexy.”

“There is sexual harassment, but now I try to avoid it. There was a case that ended with intercession of other people.”

“If harassment is also counted as open favouritism towards me, even because I was on duty at the time, then yes.”

“Harassment with words, invitations for meetings.”

“It hasn’t happened to me yet, because I just started to work as a journalist, but I have heard it from many colleagues about being harassed.”

“Every female journalist with any contact and source who contacts her and then has to hold a meeting with them, is harassed in some way, either by looking at her body or verbally, then also through social networks.”

“Some of the interviewees whom I have interviewed during different periods of time, have also invited me for coffee. I know that it’s nothing to drink coffee with those you interview, but their goal clearly seemed to be more than coffee. For instance: I interviewed an official in one of the ministries. After the interview he said: Come sometimes for a coffee in the Ministry, not only for work. The answer from my side was: “You are an official and I am a journalist, precisely for this issue you are obliged to respond professionally, for coffee I have company outside this institution.”

“There was sexual harassment at work, from the officials I met with. There was a case with a lawyer that I feel more ashamed about than him. When he wanted to hug me, and I reacted he said: Don’t misunderstand me because I see you as my daughter. But, it was not like that. A maniac.”

“After an interview I conducted with a person who once held a state position, he continued to comment in detail about my appearance, something that made me very uncomfortable. He also continued to show me the place where he lives and told me that I can contact him anytime I need him, not just for an interview.”

“There is someone in every workplace.”

“It’s not just once, almost every day, women are harassed, either with words or with looks (facial expressions/handshakes/ eye contact. This happens even when there are more people, even when we are, for example, two journalists, or together with the cameraman.”

“I have not been a victim of sexual harassment by colleagues (men) who are on the television where I work, while during my work as a journalist in the field by different people yes!”

“Frequent invitations for coffee, persistence to go out with them, accompanied by inappropriate comments and unethical reactions to the rejection of these invitations. In one case, even below the belt insults. The same situation was repeated a few months later with another colleague...”

“I reported the case to the competent people. That person’s position was changed.”

OBJECTIFICATION IN THE NEWSROOM: “IT WAS REQUESTED FROM ME TO LOOK MORE SENSUAL”

Apart from this enormous evidence of how female journalists are objectified and sexually harassed in their workplace, there are also testimonies that apart from unwanted sexual advances, journalists are also objectified by their own supervisors for the purpose of news production. This objectification of women journalists inside of the newsroom is particularly illustrated in the answers that respondents gave when asked if they ever used their “feminine attribute” to get information and interviews.

Although women predominantly answered NO - 92.1 percent said they never used their “feminine attributes” to get information or interviews - still some explanations provided help to understand the nature of objectification that women experience inside the newsroom.

One respondent said: “The media owner asked me to put on more make-up in order to look better in front of the camera.”



Testimonies:

“Yes, it was requested from me to look more sensual and attractive when I have interviews with any artist.”

“To mitigate tense situations.”

“Yes. Editors or other supervisors often requested from me to use any trick to convince the interviewee.”

“When they understood I am a female reporter they had more willingness to answer me.”

Some respondents also noted the worrying normalisation of objectification within the newsroom and the difficulty to combat its culture in the workplace: “[Yes, I used my “feminine charm”] because we live in a state where there is no meritocracy.”

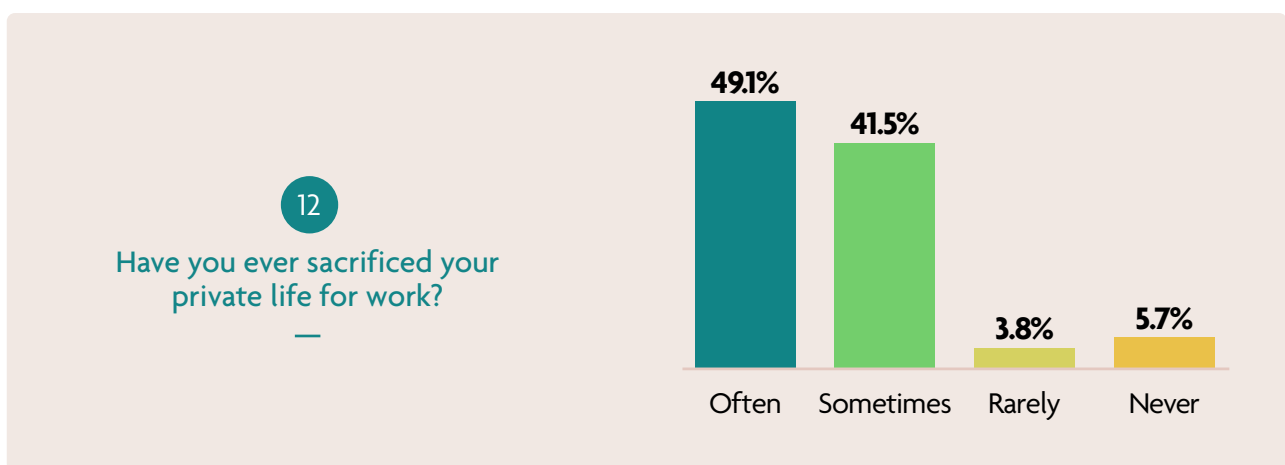
“I didn’t reply with YES, but in general I noticed that it was easier for me to get access to some information compared to my male colleagues.”

“When they understood I am a female reporter they had more willingness to answer me.”

PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS: JOURNALISM TAKING A TOLL ON PERSONAL LIVES

Since journalists work under a lot of stress and pressure, and put in long and unpredictable hours, respondents were asked if they ever sacrificed their personal life due to their job. Unsurprisingly, answers of respondents suggest that for the majority of women journalists the job is demanding, exhausting and it gets in their way to have a separate life out of their office.

Almost all respondents said that in some way they sacrificed their personal lives because of journalism. Almost 50 percent said that they often had to sacrifice their personal life, and more than another 40 percent said that it happened sometimes.



It is accepted worldwide that journalism is one of the most mentally exhausting and stressful jobs, whether practiced by women or men. In light of this and in lack of male respondents it is hard to conclude if some burdensome experiences are gendered or not. But respondents, through their reflections, showed in detail how specifically their profession is affecting their lives. They also suggest that the media environment in Kosovo is hostile towards workers, whose rights are systematically violated.

Testimonies

“Work in journalism sometimes requires commitment beyond a certain schedule, due to events that may occur, so there are times when the work is placed before other people.”

“Most of the time I’m at work, and I don’t have as much time as I want for my family or friends.”

“I have a lot of stress because of work, so I can’t enjoy my free time as I want.”

“Yes, there have been cases when I had to work until late at night due to some political situation and I neglected my family and friends.”

“You sacrifice especially yourself and your personal life. This is due to the extended working hours, the lack of compensation for this based on the prejudice that journalism requires commitment 24/7. Knowing the nature of the work, the newsrooms where I worked did not take into account the commitment outside of regular hours at all. On the other hand, professional responsibility limits you a lot in a personal aspect.”

“I did not take part in the children’s special days, such as the first day of school.”

“Journalism requires you to be constantly active and in a state of readiness, so often due to developments, especially during the work of the Assembly of Kosovo, I have missed the birthdays of my loved ones, or many other important dates. Unforeseen events, which characterize our daily work, often make us sacrifice our personal life.”

“For years, I haven’t been able to go out after 5 o’clock with friends, I haven’t been able to visit my parents as often as I wanted to. I have not been able to be present at important events in my family or relatives, or even attend the funerals of people I loved and respected.”

“In special broadcasts for special events such as the elections, there have been cases when I didn’t see my children for two days.”

“Due to the nature of the work, especially as a journalist who covers culture, where most events are held in the evenings, it is almost impossible to plan anything outside working hours. Also, because of working overtime, always more than eight hours a day, it makes it more difficult to commit to someone else and very often to yourself.”

“I was the editor-in-chief of a television for 8 years. The long working hours, the great commitment and the fatigue, have kept me away from my children during the whole day (until 19:30 after the main evening news) and therefore away from meetings with family and friends during the evenings.”

“I often cancelled plans because I couldn’t get the job done. I often did not go on personal trips because of overtime (unpaid) work.”

“Working in the media is work with pressure and work that does not end at a certain hour. Tasks and responsibilities follow you at home and when you are with friends, so I may have been physically present but not mentally, so in some cases I think it was a sacrifice.”

“During the time I worked as a journalist, I often worked on weekends after working hours. I didn’t spend as much time as I wanted with my family and friends, and work was a priority if I wanted to be in a more suitable position.”

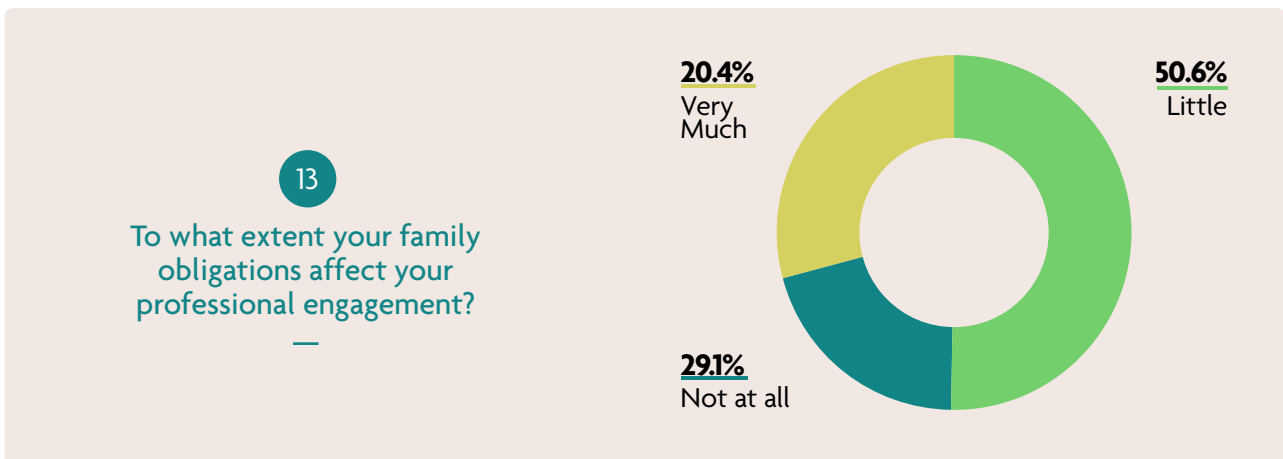
“It happened when I had medical appointments, and I had to postpone them because my work schedule changed.”

“It mostly happened on holidays when we had to go on live broadcast and although the labour law requires it, we were never compensated in any way. But also ordinary family plans which I had to cancel due to the changes of the moment, and the extension of working hours.”

WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS

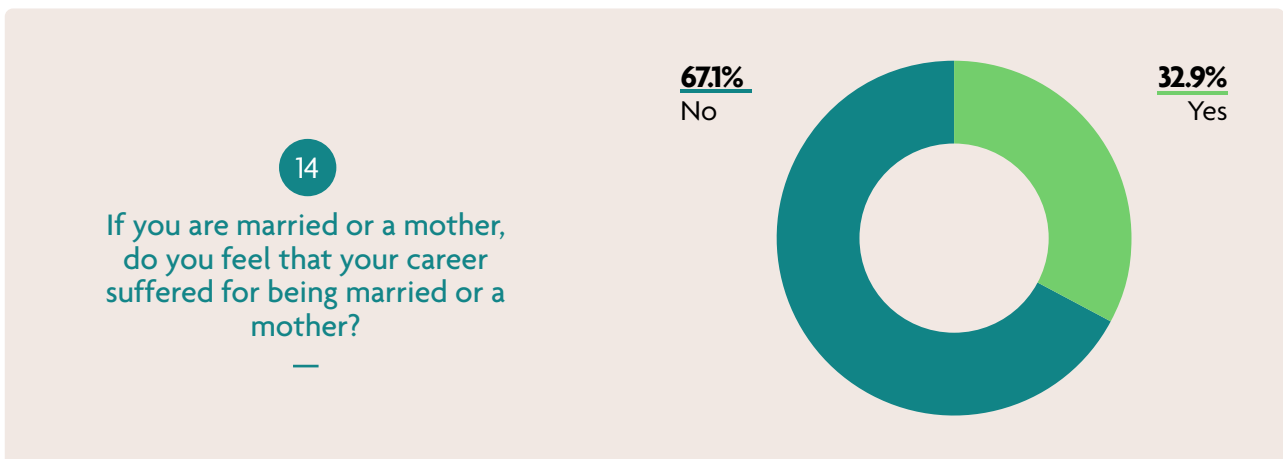
Whereas a significant group of respondents said that they often had to sacrifice their relations with others due to work commitment, another group of respondents said that they are facing so much difficulty in achieving progress in their career due to family life.

Almost 30 percent said that their family responsibilities have a big impact on their professional engagement as media workers, and 50 percent recognized some kind of impact.



Taking into consideration how the burden of unpaid labour and parenting falls disproportionately on shoulders of Kosovar women compared to their male partners - for single mothers is even worse - it is no wonder that the aggregated data shows that 97 percent of those who answered that family responsibilities influence 'very much' their career, are predominantly married and have children.

This is reinforced also through answers to the question if they feel that their career has suffered because they are married and mothers, to which slightly under 70 percent replied with a 'Yes.'



In Kosovo women still do a majority of household and childcare tasks, even when both parents work full time, which according to respondents has been hindering their journalistic journey and any significant progress.

Testimonies

“Being a woman and a mother, I have always been subject not only to double standards, but also to the burden of holding two or more jobs, including the obligations to take care of the child and the home. This has limited my time for professional advancement in my career and I walk at a slower pace. I am not including here the direct impact of threats and pressure in my work as a journalist, which has affected not only my limitations but also my family relationships.”

“The responsibility of caring for the child falls entirely on the mother. Take into account the fact that you are stuck in your career because you cannot be present when you have countless family obligations.”

“Journalism is a field that gives you many opportunities for professional advancement. Very often these opportunities involve traveling abroad. Being the mother of two children, I have given up on them dozens of times due to family commitments. Now the children have grown up, it’s different, but when I look back, I realize how many opportunities I missed.”

“Due to the fact that I need to get home at the time when the child returns from school or when the kindergarten/school schedule ends, I sometimes put aside many plans that I have to carry out in my profession. I get involved as little as possible in training and discussion tables in order not to “waste” time, because I have a family at home who expect care from me.”

“Attention and time have been divided between work and my responsibility as a mother. If I were not the mother of 3 children, I would ask more of myself, but since I have other obligations, I always calculate what I can do so that my absence at home does not harm the children. Directly or indirectly this has influenced my career.”

“From the moment I was pregnant, I found it very difficult to find a job that would suit both my professional and private life, in most workplaces it is required to do one or the other!”

“Many times I have been forced to withdraw from covering an event or professional training because I had nowhere to leave the child.”

“At the moment you get married, you are considered that you will now have greater family obligations, that you must dedicate yourself to children that you might have, therefore in some way they [employer] will consider you that you cannot have the same commitment to work a From the moment you get married, you are discriminated against.”

“There are several reasons that can be explained from a sociological perspective. The first is because family obligations limit career development, especially in the journalism profession, which is dynamic and constantly changes both in situations and in terms of working hours. The second is because the media are also commercial businesses which, when it comes to financial gain, ignore professional principles and look for mediocre elements within the profession.”

“It definitely affects me. Despite the efforts to do both in the best possible way, when it comes to children it is different, especially when they are still small. The time when you would have the opportunity to attend different seminars, different courses and other levels of education (PhD), I dedicated this part to the children. So everything has to be planned. First, I am waiting for the children to grow up, and then I will return to personal and professional advancement. Not that a person cannot do both at the same time, the promotion and permanent professional advancement and being a mother, but personally I don’t want to miss the children, until a time when I think they have grown enough.”

“In the minds of employers, a married woman is necessarily limited in all aspects.”

“I have a child who has issues with delayed speech, and I have to work a lot with the child. That’s why my career is stuck.”

“Time for myself is limited, I try to finish the housework and arrive at work on time.”

“Being a mother, I needed to keep only the morning shift. I lost many job opportunities since the interview due to the fact that the employer did not enable me to do only the morning shift, or to do the afternoon shift two days a month. I know that this may be unfair to other colleagues who do not have children, but I have tried to change my morning shift with other colleagues in compensation of a sum of money, just so that I could have a career, even though it costs quite a lot.”

“A person has their priorities in life, of course the career is very important, but when you are a mother, your priority is your children, before your career and everything else.”

STIGMATIZATION AND PREJUDICES: “I SPEND TOO MUCH TIME WITH MEN”

Although there were no concrete questions if as female journalists they feel stigmatized or prejudiced, some journalists said that their career was put in halt due to gender stereotypes and expected traditional roles, which doesn't permit a job that requests a lot of field work and meetings with diverse groups of people.

Testimonies

“I think my career, the nature of my work, and the fact that I do work with more commitment has many prejudices. There are prejudices against women in the media in general. A man I dated once told me that “I spend too much time with men.” So in this regard, I think that the way I was treated by society as a result of existing prejudices has influenced my personal life.”

“[My career suffered] because my husband's family never understood my job.”

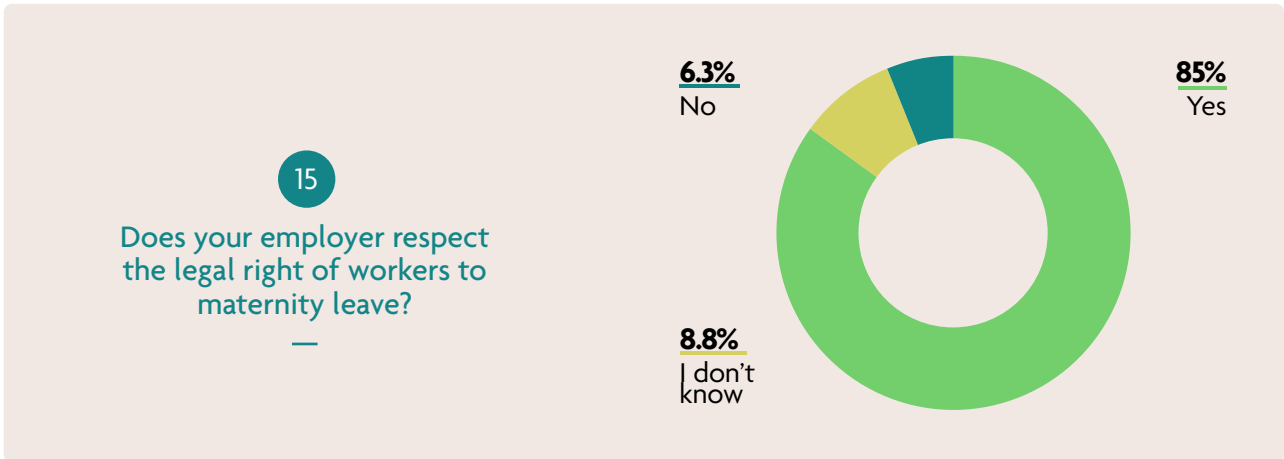
MATERNITY LEAVE: I WAS LEFT BEHIND

The current Law on Labour in Kosovo stipulates that women are entitled to 12 months of maternity leave. Employers are obliged to pay 70 percent of the salary during the first six months of leave; the government pays for the following three months at a rate of 50 percent of the average Kosovar income; the last three months can be taken unpaid.

Meanwhile, fathers are only entitled to take up to three days of paid paternity leave, and up to two weeks of unpaid leave. Women rights activists have been pointing out for years that these provisions reinforce traditional gender roles, where housework and caring for children are mainly seen as women's work. They also advocate for the state to take the burden of maternity leave payment, as the current provisions are keeping women out of the labour market. And for those who have a job, the discrimination is widely spread in implementation of the law.

This context is crucial to understand to what extent the media sector, which also for years has been raising this topic as a public interest issue, is respecting the rights of its employees.

Majority of respondents said that their employer in the media sector respects the legal right of its employees to Maternity Leave.



But a more detailed overview of respondents suggest that the situation of how employers handle maternity leave might be more complicated and gloomy. Women that are mothers might be more likely to answer with 'Yes' compared to those that don't have children. Respondents that don't have the personal experience of maternity law, might feel more uncertain and unsure to conclude on how their employers treat workers who had become mothers.

53.8 percent of those that answered 'Yes', that their employer does not respect the legal right to maternity leave, are mothers. On the other hand, 75 percent of those that answered 'I don't know', and 66 percent of those that answered 'No', don't have children.

Although respondents didn't give any direct quote on how employers don't respect the right to maternity leave, some evidence illustrates how maternity leave hurts women's career. The Further away they are from paid work, the less likely they are to be promoted or make any progress.

Testimonies

"During my maternity leave, I fell behind in my progress."

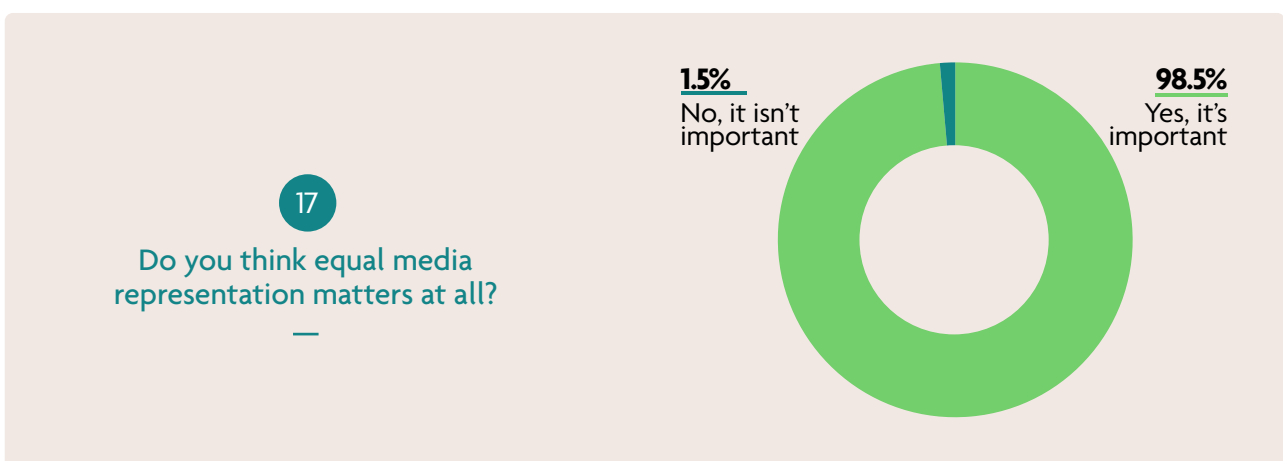
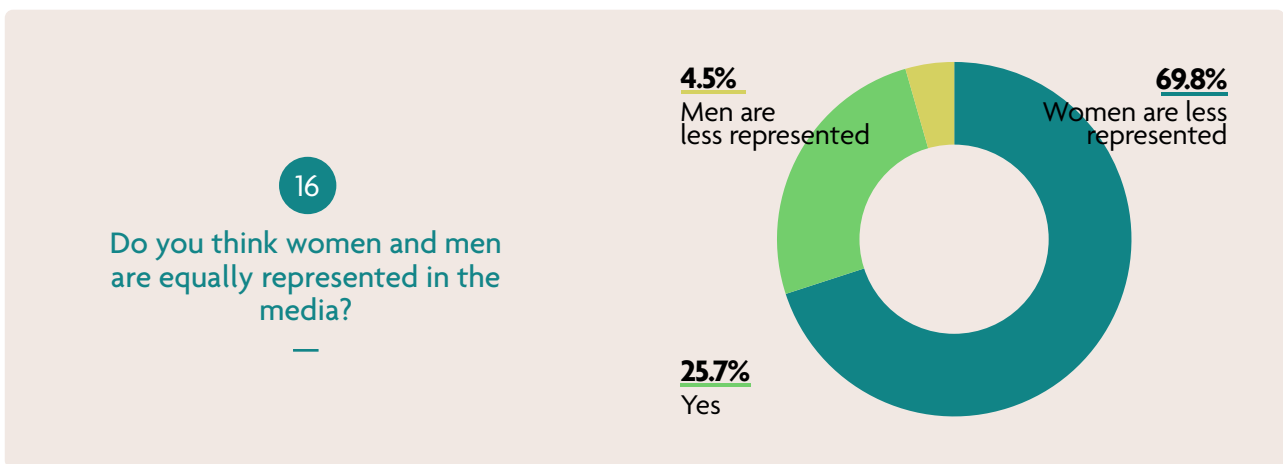
"Because of the long break, I have the impression that people forget the work done over the years."

"My career has suffered a lot, because I became pregnant at the moment when my annual contract ended, and they didn't renew my work contract."

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA

When it comes to representation of women in the media, statistics completely correspond to the global findings: the majority of women respondents showed high responsiveness towards equal gender representation and inclusive media production.

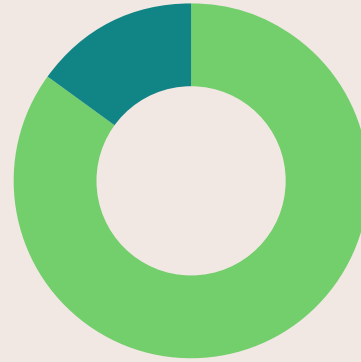
69.8 percent think that women are less represented, 98.5 percent believe in the importance of equal media representation, and 84.9 percent take into consideration equal representation in their work (for instance when choosing their interlocutors). 70 percent of respondents see a correlation between the status of women in the newsroom and media portrayal.



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Do you ensure equal representation in your work (for instance when choosing your interlocutors)?

15.1%
No

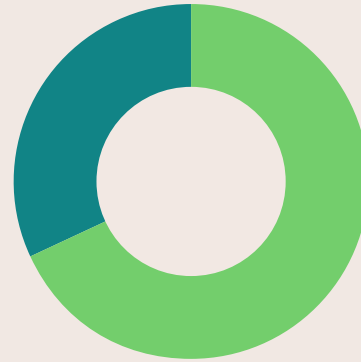


84.9%
Yes

19

Does the status of women in newsrooms affect the way and how much they are present in the media?

31.7%
No



68.3%
Yes

Testimonies

“There can be no real coverage of events without taking the perspective of half the population, so it is crucial that women are heard. In addition, the way women are affected by various policies and laws is often completely different from that of men, precisely because of the entrenched patriarchy in the way institutions operate and think - therefore women’s views are essential to inform the public about what happens around us.”

“If we try to be inclusive of the opinions and perceptions we seek, we cannot achieve it without the inclusion of all gender and social categories.”

“The lack of a woman’s figure, especially on TV screens (debates) is clearly seen and this kind of thing happens precisely because of the stigmatization/offensiveness of women who dare to go out in debates with men! This happens due to not giving space to all spheres, which then prevents them from appearing on the screens. I myself have been in such situations several times, when I invited female politicians to the show, they often hesitated to come, except in the cases when they were alone in the interview, that is, without the presence of male politicians, who often seriously insult them.”

“Women are represented in the media in the sense that there are more female journalists than male journalists, but men dominate in leadership positions. If I’m not mistaken, only 2 media have women editor-in-chiefs.”

“Unfortunately, during my television experience, the interlocutors are mostly men. It’s hard to find women who come out and talk about certain issues.”

“Equal representation is very important, due to the respect of the rights of women and men.”

“Based on the fact that the media has an enormous influence on the public’s perception of reality. What the media presents is accepted as good and fair by the public. This is also related to media literacy, which greatly influences young people and their thoughts on how to act and behave with the opposite sex in the future.”

“As in any sector, it is necessary for women to be represented equally. I believe that the media is the sector that, as a work, develops, empowers and promotes women and their rights.”

“Equal representation in the media contributes above all to the fight for gender equality.”

“Gender equality is important in the workplace, not only because it is the ‘right thing to do’, but because it also relates to overall development. Equal access affects the improvement of productivity, the advancement of women’s rights and the reduction of the inequality gap between the sexes.”

“Because the more different points of view from different people contribute to better journalism.”

“Because for every topic, two sides, two opinions of both genders, in any situation, must be taken into account. In this way, a clear overview of the problems faced by both women and men is created.”

“The equal representation of women and men in the media is important since the media shape society in some way, through the content they offer, then it is very important that this content also represents gender equality, diversity and the range of opinions and their audiences.”

“Equal representation is necessary because it educates the society that women have the right to participate as well as men, it offers different perspectives on which the public creates its opinion based on an equal distribution. That is why it is important since the main point is that it teaches/educates the society by seeing as many women as men in the media and this indirectly creates in them the opinion that women can be involved and are part of different topics, the same goes for men.”

“I cannot speak for sure about the reasons why women are not equally represented in the media, but I believe that it is mainly related to the prejudice they have against women, in the knowledge they have about certain issues. As for my work, I try my best, but it is often difficult to do because of their hesitation to speak about the topics I mainly deal with. And obviously equal representation is important, not only in the media but in every sphere.”

“As in every field, it is important to have equality and to hear the voice of both genders, especially in our society where we are aware that the position of women is not at the desired level. Equal representation is closely related to the emancipation and advancement of women’s position in society.”

“If you compare the representation in the media, women are much less represented, especially on TV. Most show panels are filled with men. In some cases, they are not given the opportunity, but there are also cases when they are reluctant to come out and declare about such issues, since they are then almost lynched for their statements. We had the last case of the activist Zana Avdiu, who received thousands of threats and was virtually lynched for a statement she gave.”

“I cannot have gender equality of interlocutors because in most cases the representatives I need in interviews happen to be male. Even citizens on the street, usually women, are reluctant to speak.”

“Men are much more present in the media in interviews and debates. This causes a bias for information, but reinforces sexism in our society even more.”

“Equal representation of men and women is very important because it provides equal space to show the skills of both sides.”

“Mostly in the media we hear about women when they are killed or abused. Women need to be included as much as men, even in the public sphere.”

“I don’t think that the gender representation in the media is at a satisfactory level, since in specific cases, we have many shows and certain television debates, where the number of female representatives is much lower compared to men, especially in the field of politics, judiciary and economics. There are also very successful women, politicians, economists, lawyers, etc., but I think that they are not given enough space in the media to argue the political or development processes in the country, which is something to worry about.”

“The level of women’s participation and influence in the media has implications for media content: female media professionals are more likely to reflect the needs and perspectives of other women than their male colleagues.”

“In the newsroom where I work, they are represented equally. As for equal representation in the stories you develop, it is impossible to choose gender due to the dynamics of the work, as the priority is acceptance to be part of the story and their skills. We do not have the luxury of taking care of equal representation, due to the dynamics of the work and the deadline to finish a story. Regarding the equal representation of women and men in the media, especially in the leadership hierarchy, I think it is important.”

“I think it is very important since I believe that we should be a good example for society, since we are an important ‘tool’ of public life.”

“Because this would also reflect the demographic aspect. Then it would encourage the increase in the number of women in decision-making positions. Of course, in addition to this, greater social emancipation would also occur.”

“Women are less represented because even when we invite them for interviews, they often refuse, and this often happens due to the fact that they also have family obligations. We always try to balance the gender of the people we interview, for example, for a “vox pops”, if two men answered, we will now interview two women.”

“The equal representation of women and men is necessary because in this way there is a balance between the thoughts and experiences of the two different sexes.”

“Political shows in Kosovo are led more by male moderators and producers, which is a mistake, just as it is a mistake that showbiz shows are led by girls/women.”

“The media have the responsibility to reflect gender equality.”

“Women tend to work harder but when it comes to important jobs the employers trust men.”

“Kosovo, as a patriarchal society, still finds it difficult to accept that women today have extraordinary intellectual advantages and developments. Unfortunately, in the media, the woman are only used as an accessory in the studio. We have the example of the world championship when in the studio the women were there only because of their beauty and a small number compared to men. On the other hand, in informative/political shows, very few women are hosts of the show. Even less when it comes to having women as a guest (analyst).”

“In the media, more space is given to women in lower positions, while the higher ones are led by men. We have seen that most of the main shows in the media that have to do with politics are led by men. Also, in the media that I have worked so far, I can say that 99.9% of editors and editor-in-chiefs have been men. Therefore, seeing that women have been successful many times in this profession, as the awards they have won speak for themselves, it would be very important to have equal representation even in the highest positions.”

“Unfortunately, the judgment towards the work of women and men in journalism is not equal. If a woman puts together a story that represents a problem, she is judged not worthy of it, it is not her “job” to deal with state affairs, while everything is fine when men do it. In debates, if a woman journalist gives a criticism, she is then criticized and bullied just because of her gender. Unfortunately, women’s opinions are always prejudiced, they are not directly related to the topic being treated, but to how that woman is treating it, especially in journalism because it is a public profession. Now when our work is presented on social networks, such comments are clearly seen publicly. On the other hand, men generally are commented only on what they say!”

“I don’t always pay attention to the equal representation of the interlocutors, this is because of the topics I deal with. I choose the interlocutors only from a professional point of view, but I try to have women interlocutors, but not always, because of their reluctance to speak in front of the camera. It is important for women to have more confidence in their profession and to have the courage to speak about issues they have knowledge about.”

“The participation of women in the media is a motivation for young girls to follow their dreams - in some way it gives the message that nothing is impossible.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish or improve help lines and legal assistance systems at journalists' associations (in order to encourage women engaged in the media to report cases of violence).
2. Improve cooperation with the British Council mentoring network (so that young women have the opportunity to seek advice, consult related to working conditions and working environment).
3. Invite faculties, political parties, institutions and non-governmental organizations to forward contacts of women to the media who could be their interlocutors in various media stories.
4. Invite women engaged in media to join one of the media associations or groups like "Female journalists against violence": on one hand, this would empower them, and on the other, it would inspire them to undertake measures to improve their status.
5. Start a Women in the Media group on social networks - where female journalists, camerawomen, female editors, female photojournalists could express their grievances, inform and network.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The survey on the Position of Women engaged In Kosovar media was accomplished with the willingness, dedication and time of 265 female journalists, editors, producers, photographers and presenters, who work across different media platforms in Kosovo.

They anonymously shared their experiences and insight, giving us the opportunity to develop for the first time, a more accurate picture of their struggles, efforts and challenges within the newsroom and beyond.

Their profound and sincere contribution will serve as an important evidence from which all of us can start the discussion “What is it like to be a woman in Kosovar Media?”

METHODOLOGY

We used an online survey tool for our research to gauge the representativeness of individual views, attitudes and experiences, and analyse if or how this data intersects to establish and confirm realities surrounding women journalists and implications they have in their workplace. The survey tried to examine their work circumstances from a gender perspective.

Consisting of 40 questions, the survey tried to determine these following aspects:

- Build a profile of an average Kosovar female journalist
- Areas and topics of their coverage
- The financial standing
- Conditions at the workplace
- Gender discrimination at the workplace
- Sexual violence at the workplace
- The application of Law on Labour, particularly of the Maternity Leave Article
- Struggles of journalists who are family caregivers
- Personal reflections on gender equality and discrimination at the workplace
- Reflections on media portrayal of gender

This research was conducted between August and December 2022 and the survey was sent to 265 female media workers across Kosovo. There are 250 Kosovar Albanian and 15 Kosovar Serbs respondents that participated in the survey. Since results and views were similar or same between both ethnic groups of journalists, our final analysis is inclusive and not divided based on ethnicity, as the survey tried mainly to establish how the gender, and not the ethnic aspect, impacts their working conditions and their right to do their job in full dignity.

We covered a wide range of media workers of all ages who work at all media platforms: from Public Broadcast, to National TVs, online news organizations, radio stations, to local and community media organizations. The surveyed journalists are part of various media organizations, towns and cities.

The study was conducted by Dafina Halili with the assistance of Dion Krasniqi and Gentiana Sylejmani.

ABOUT ALVED

Amplifying local voices for equitable development (ALVED) is a 30-month project funded by the UK government's Conflict, Security and Stability Fund and implemented by a consortium of organisations comprised of Peaceful Change initiative, People in Need, Gradjanske Inicijative/Civic Initiatives (Serbia), Peer Educators Network, and Aktiv (both Kosovo). The project aims to promote, explore, develop and implement innovative practices that enable participative decision making that is successful in transcending barriers between different groups in Serbia and Kosovo and to engage the project's stakeholders in analysing the context in which this work takes place with a view to taking collaborative and strategic action in order to contribute to a more conducive environment for inclusive democracy to flourish and to have a positive impact on the lives of ordinary people.



This study has been funded by UK aid from the UK government; however, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

ABOUT PCI

Peaceful Change initiative (PCI) works with societies to prevent or reduce violence that is triggered by radical and divisive change. We aim to mitigate the effects of violence on people's lives, while laying the foundations for long-term peace and stability.

We run programmes in the Middle East (Syria), North Africa (Libya), and Europe (Ukraine, Western Balkans, South Caucasus). Our work focuses on:

- Strengthening the skills of local and national leaders who are able to build relationships across conflict divides;
- Supporting local leaders and civil society activists in practical actions to reduce violence and improve the sense of security of communities;
- Fostering working partnerships between communities and local authorities, as well as between different local and national groups across conflict divides, to build confidence in a shared future;
- Supporting civil society organisations to connect, share experiences, and be part of decision-making;
- Developing and sharing practical tools and methodologies for peacebuilding;
- Advising international agencies, NGOs, governments, and companies on how to achieve greater impact.



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