

POWER OF THE WOMEN IN ALBANIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper shows the progress that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is inextricably linked to all aspects and challenges of global society in which they live, as economic growth and social protection of the natural and cultural environment of the country. In these global challenges, women have been shown to be more active in promoting an environmental ethic, minimizing the use of primary sources of life, and recycling in order to reduce pollution. Everywhere in the world today, women are at the top of organizations essentially environmental issue. They have been and always will be the determining factor for quality of life and well-being of communities.

As conclusion, the new century began with hope for a better future for Albanian economy. From region to region society faces with issues ranging from armed conflicts to lack of proper education, plaguing our communities today, especially the position of women. Created laws aimed at protecting them, but only some of them can be protected effectively.

Keywords: Economic, Development, Women, Albania,

1. INTRODUCTION

Opening the Albanian society and democratization, its created the conditions for greater freedom and equality for women. But despite the rapid development of economic and social progress of the country as well as gender issues, women continue to be a vulnerable group in society. This paper studies the situation facing women as enterpreneurs in Albania and describes the various forms of support that are available to assist women to participate in economic and social activities. Because of discriminatory mindsets, progress of their career is more difficult. They rarely have leading positions and their participation in politics and decision-making is still quite low. The aggressiveness of the policy in Albania, especially during election periods, forcing women to stay involved in this process. During the transition they were often subject to and victims of human trafficking. Their rehabilitation is an area where the sector currently contributes only non-governmental and governmental support structures remains very small.

Its aims are:

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- 1- Identification of women's situation during the economic transition in Albania, from communist past into an open-market economy.
- 2- Trends in female labour force participation and also closing the gender entrepreneurship gap
- 3- Provide an overview of the role of women's NGOs as the source of opportunities for their employment

2- LITERATURE REVIEW

After the major transformation that Albania undergone, women found themselves in a more critical position due to their dual burden inside and outside of the household. Also, existed many factors responsible for the unequal rewards between males and females, it is of interest to analyse the position of women in the labour market as measured by the gender wage gap and wage decomposition. The discrimination existed in the labour market affected by the influences that it may have on income inequality, education of future generations (stemming from the expectations formed by the parents), occupational distribution, women's position and opportunities, intergenerational inequality, and ultimately poverty. The transitional period in Albania was characterized by a large vacuum, which brought back traditional law, increased vulnerability of women in the labor market, and deteriorated economic status (Lawson and Saltmarshe, 2000). In this new environment, women faced a critical situation since state enterprises, which employed the majority of women, collapsed and so did social protection associated with these jobs. In addition, market reforms increased earning inequalities through wage and price liberalizations, and changed the characteristics of employment (The World Bank, 2002). The unavailability of social protection and economic rights reinforced women's homemaking roles (Tarifa, 1994).

In the case of Albania, as in many other transitional economies, the policies of the communist regime provided free education for all, full labor force participation, and a fairly small gender pay gap (Mango and Silova, 2004). As a result of the high education levels inherited by women educated in the communist period, we would expect human capital to play no role or favor women in the wage gap. Indeed, in Albania women are mostly concentrated in the service industry, and largely employed by the public administration (Albanian Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 2005). So it expected a larger gender wage gap as a result of occupational segregation in Albania. As a result, gender pay gaps might arise. Albania is no exception, thus we would expect the gender pay gap to increase as a result of having children for women

3- THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE ALBANIAN ECONOMY

During the Communist regime women achieved many advances in economic sector but since the country collapse in 1991, they have lost their significance. Before 1990, the labour market in Albania was characterized by state controlled individual decision-making and a high degree of centralization. In the early's 1990s, the labour market was liberalized; this period was followed

by a high degree of unemployment due to the shutting down of major industries and overcrowding in administrative jobs. From the mid 1990s on, there has been a considerable increase in private businesses mainly due to the remittances by the emigrants; however, the rate of long term unemployment still remains high especially among women (Cuka et al., 2003).

Until the end of 1989, employment rates were high for both sexes (94 per cent for men and 85 per cent for women), whereas during the initial years of the transition period these figures plunged to 50 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. But in recent years, there has been a steady fall in the level of female employment. This can be the effect of the major changes that have taken place in Albania during its transition from a centrally planned to a free-market economy. It is also evident that apart from the absolute percentages there are no substantial gender-related differences in the unemployment rates.

During the transition time, many women were not looking for profitable work in waged employment outside the home because of the increase in unemployment that has accompanied the transition period. All women previously employed in agricultural cooperatives, after the transition they worked on family farms, nor those engaged in a family business. Another barrier to the involvement of women in workplace was male emigration. Many men have gone abroad leaving their womenfolk to look after their families. In that position, Women had little or no time for running business, and some might not need another source of income due to the income received from “emigrant’s remittances”. Consequently, women faced more work within the family, but less mobility and chances to find jobs. With the state stopping child care provision or long paid maternity leaves, women’s schedules required more accommodation giving rise to long-term structural discrimination in the labor market (Kligman, 1996).

Their fluctuations in the period 2000 - 2011 are illustrated in the following table.

Years	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Unemployment rate	16.8	16.4	15.8	15.0	14.4	14.1	13.8	13.2	12.5	13.6	13.6	13.3
– <i>Male</i>	14.9	14.2	13.6	12.9	12.4	12.1	11.8	11.2	10.4	11.5	11.4	12.4
– <i>Female</i>	19.3	19.9	19.1	18.2	17.5	17.2	16.8	16.3	15.9	16.7	16.7	14.3
Employment rate	55.1	51.9	51.1	50.7	50.3	49.7	46.2	44.7	45.8	41.9	42.3	...
<i>Male</i>	66.0	63.8	62.8	61.4	61.2	60.0	58.8	55.2	57.4	50.4	51.0	...
<i>Female</i>	44.1	39.4	38.9	38.2	38.9	38.8	38.1	34.2	34.3	33.4	33.5	...

Table 1. Male and Female Employment and Unemployment Figures

Sources: INSTAT

Statistics from the Albanian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2005) show that in 2004, the employment levels were 38.2 percent for women and 61.2 percent for men; whereas unemployment was 17.2 percent for women and 12.4 percent for men. In terms of participation in the labour force, in 2003, 70.5 percent of men in the working age participated in the labour force compared to 46.7 percent for women (Albanian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2005). In 2004, men were at 68.6 percent, while women were at 46.4 percent. Women still overwhelmingly remain in the social-state-service sector, where they comprise 80 percent of employees (Albanian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2005). Men are 2 times more in lawmaking, senior officials, leading executives, while women are mostly found as specialists and regular employees

In the table 2, it can be seen that agriculture private sector has the highest employment levels followed by the public sector and the rest of the private sector. Employment in the public sector has continued to decline since 2000, with slight increases in the private sector (farming and other activities) categories. Since the public sector accounts for a considerable percentage of the workforce, a few words must be said about the role of the woman manager. The relatively high level of education of Albanian women is certainly not reflected in the level of their professional standing in the public sector, nor in management and decision-making.

Years	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Employment (I+II+III)	1,068,190	920,569	920,144	926,225	931,217	932,102	935,058	939,000	974,067
I. State sector	191,166	188,965	186,065	181,417	176,065	175,015	169,000	167,100	166,543
<i>Budgetary</i>	122,298	120,114	118,162	117,220	118,000	119,993	122,000	125,200	125,500
<i>Non-budgetary</i>	68,868	68,851	67,903	64,197	58,065	55,022	47,000	41,900	41,043
II. Non-agricult private sector	116,024	205,267	207,742	211,169	213,000	214,935	224,058	229,900	238,975
III. Agricult. private sector	761,000	526,337	526,337	533,639	542,152	542,152	542,000	542,000	568,549

Table 2. Sectoral Employment Figures

During 1997, women constituted 58.8 per cent of all those employed in education, 70.7 per cent of those in the health service, 29 per cent in the courts, 43.8 per cent in the Ministry of Justice, 21.8 per cent in the Ministry for Energy Resources, etc. In addition, 60 per cent of civil servants are men and 40 per cent women.

According to the country's Civil Code, Women in Albania have the same rights of ownership as men. But this code change after marriage because land belonging to a couple can only be registered in the name of the household head or husband and the women have not access to it. Rural women attest to the fact that men rule the majority of households and are typically the official owners of the household land, often disposing of or renting out such land without their wives' consent. Even when women do legally own land, it is often considered to belong to the whole family, and they are not considered to have the right to administer it. Many women have difficulty exercising their right to access to property other than land, even though the right to private property is guaranteed by both the Constitution and the Civil Code.

The gender entrepreneurship gap

Women face discrimination in almost every aspect of the labor exchange.

This ranges from whether women have paid work at all; the type of work they obtain or are excluded from; the availability of supports such as their pay, benefits, and conditions of work; their access to higher paying "male" work; the insecurity of their jobs or enterprises; their lack of any or equitable pension entitlements; and not having the time, resources, or information to enforce their rights. Women's entrepreneurship development consider as important channel to women's economic empowerment and a pillar on the road to sustainable development. Across setting up their own business, women can transform their opportunity to gain economic independence, overcome poverty, and improve their well-being. So women can also become drivers of change and take a long-term perspective accounting for the consequences of our actions for our children, and their children and grand children in order to secure better future.

It a good opportunity for women entrepreneurs to have training workshops in order to exchange knowledge and views on how their businesses are functioning and to initiate the development of new networks across the countries in this region. An example to this end is the first forum for women entrepreneurs in South-East Europe organized in September 2010 in Istanbul under the auspice of the Turkish Chairman in Office of the South-East European Cooperation Process by the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Development Administration of Turkey (KOSGEB), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), and UNECE. 59 women entrepreneurs, policy makers, representatives from Chambers of Commerce and regional organizations discussed what support is needed for women entrepreneurs in South-East Europe, including improved access to training, finance, role models, and networking opportunities.

4- THE ROLE OF NGO'S IN SUPPORTING WOMEN'S ENTERPRENUERSHIP

In these circumstances the "Open Society Foundation for Albania" unrolled the design and implementation of a flexible strategy to support gender issues, updating its priorities in line with the evolution of gender issues in Albania. The women's program, "Open Society Foundation for Albania" was introduced in 1994. During the first three years of funding focused on the direct targets for the development and strengthening of institutional capacity of international "Youth Group of the Center for Population and Development," in the field of gender, encouraging the participation of women in politics, the addition of women's health care and increase public awareness of the elimination of domestic violence, support for women in need, fight against trafficking in women and girls and rehabilitation of trafficked women and girls and increase the level of education women.

In this period, attention was paid also, a wider geographical distribution of activities financed by "Open Society Foundation for Albania." Starting in 2005, the strategic goal of the women's program to strengthen the competence of women in the social life of the country. The program focused on four main themes; 1- domestic violence, 2- women in leadership, 3- economic empowerment and 4- gender mainstreaming. One of the best indicators of "Open society foundation for Albania" support the establishment and operation of a number of centers dedicated to gender equality issues. These centers have gained independence and sufficient human capacity to successfully carry out their mission. Among the most successful are; Women's Center; Reflections, Shelter for victims of Violence, Independent Forum of Albanian Women, The "Useful to Albanian Women", Union "Gender and Development", Counseling Center for Women. Women's Center was established in 1995 as a contribution of the association "Reflections" and operates in Albania and Kosovo. In 2004 it was officially registered as "Gender Alliance for Development Center". It has a staff specially trained to gender issues and significant capacity in the area of training on gender and thanks to its effectiveness providing on going funding to increase its activities in civic engagement. Women's Center aims to create equal opportunities between the sexes through information, research, advocacy, lobbying and training. It has contributed to strengthening the capacity of women's Youth Group of the Center for Population and Development to address various aspects related to gender equality and empower women, raised and successfully put into use "Documentation and Information Centre" for gender issues, which, until now, offers 1.100 monitored media articles, a collection of books, journals collection in Albanian and foreign languages, informations on associations in the area of gender. Center promotes and organizes coordination of all women's associations, creating and supporting their network. Has published a series of manuals, studies, books translated, focusing on gender issues. The "Reflections" was established in 1992 and operates in Tirana and across the country, depending on the project. Its activity is to protect the rights of women against all forms of violence and discrimination, promotes their integration into social and political life and participation of women in decision-making, supports women in the legal, health, and so many other. Thanks to the work of the association "Reflections" is added to

information and opportunities for women to vocational training, employment and self-employment, especially in Tirana, Shkodra and Pogradec, where were built the center of Women's Employment. These are sustainable social services for women in difficult economic conditions. It implemented a very successful strategy spin-off projects to transform the center of sustainable independent. Such are the Women's Centre, Counselling Centre for women and Girls and shelter. "Reflections" is confirmed as a national facility dedicated to long term for the integration of women into the labor market, the economic and social empowerment of women. The shelter was established in the year 1998. It has a staff specially trained to gender issues and significant capacity in the area of training on gender. It develops in terms unknown to the general public and well equipped facilities I have not owned but I put at the service of women in need. It helps and supports women victims of gender violence (physical, emotional, sexual, economic) within and outside the family, and the children of abused mothers, who in most cases are traumatized by the violence experienced in the direct or indirect. Women, girls and children were raped shelter, emotional support and counseling, referrals to specialized services and other special treatments. It worked for their awareness, to understand the rights, values and skills, return to active life, vocational training, creating job opportunities. It also created a network to identify and address cases of violence. Provided professional support and training to the center and to the other institutions that want to offer the same services in Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. Through "Shelter" is to contribute to improving the economic, Social and legal situation of women through lobbying campaigns in print and electronic media and the national regional and international.

Independent Forum of Albanian Women was established in 1991 and stretches across the country. It supports economic and social development of Albanian women, provides protection for the rights of women, encourages the participation of women at all levels of policy making institutions and fights for social inclusion of women fall victim to trafficking and poverty. With the support of numerous lobbying activities are carried out improvements to legislation related to gender issues and is reconsidering the gender dimension of national policies and strategies. The establishment service center for women and girls in Berat, Saranda, Tirane, Elbasan, Shkodra and Peshkopia, where provided advice, advocating, provided support to legal problems, health etc... The establishment three social enterprise, In Vlora, Durres, and Tirana, Where 70 women work, and three greenhouses in rural areas of Tirana and Fier. Is setup and Operates a center publications, Which facilitates the publication of books, studies and other materials related to gender issues. There have been a very active participation in the network of women's organizations and regional networks that operate in the field of gender equality.

The "Useful to Albanian Women" was established in 1993 and operates throughout the country. It is active in protecting the rights of women and children, promotes public policies supportive of women, provides social services and support for women and children. With the help of this association were encouraged women and girls to protect their rights and is lobbying to increase the role of women in society and in decision-making. Social services are offered counseling and

various raining unemployed women and girls were raped in the family, to integrate their psychosocial and economic. The Women's Club is set and center for computer training for unemployed women and girls, are very successful awareness campaigns and education in area where trafficking. Association has given its contribution to capacity building lobby to those civil society organizations aimed at influencing public policy towards gender issues.

Union "Gender and development "aims to promote gender equality at all levels. During its activity is creating an experience quite consolidated capacity development of civil society and public institutions for gender equality and enhancing the role of women in political and social development of the country. It is also contributing to electoral campaigns, especially after the year 2000, to increase the representation of women in elected structures of central and local government. Through training of the leadership, strengthen women are involved in political forums of political participation of women in them. It has an active participation in the network of women's organizations and regional networks that operate in the field of gender equality.

The center founded in 2001 and operates in Tirana, Pogradec, Berat and Shkodra. She is actively involved in combating against women and girls, in providing assistance to violence and abuse victims in negotiating solutions to conflicts. Offered five days a week telephone counseling and face-to-face for a large number of women and girls raped. Awareness campaigns were organized to fight violence through tv spots, posters, thematic round tables.

Today women have taken more of the 40 percent of the board room positions in the companies covered by the regulation. In June 2009 the Municipalities or counties own at least two-thirds of the shares. These companies are now also required to have 40 per cent gender balance on their boards.

CONCLUSION

Like all states, Albania wishing to join the EU and seems more motivated than most. But the chance of obtaining candidate status at the moment is pretty slim, because there is so much progress yet to be made. One of the most important factors to lead it on the road to the EU is to monitor equal opportunities for women and men. Women in rural and informal areas of Albania are aware of their rights for freedom, justice and to speak their truth, and have protected their dignity, and are empowered in society.

Help is being given to develop the skills of Albanian women both individually and in groups, focusing on problem solving and capacity building, and developing training programmes regarding women's rights, social issues, and health education for women. The women are being introduced to the facilities provided by the statutory systems and how to access these in their locality.

The level of women's participation in decision-making processes and bodies must be increased to pave the way to women's greater contribution to gender sensitive policy and strategy design. Women's empowerment means a lot, but it is necessary to materialize the goal of

equalization of man and women which will happen only when her complementary role is recognized by the society.

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