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SHOQATA PËR TEKNOLOGJI TË INFORMACIONIT
DHE TË KOMUNIKIMIT TË KOSOVËS

KOSOVO ASSOCIATION OF INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

Challenges of women in the field of Information Technology and Communication

POSITION PAPER
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INTRODUCTION

"Women shouldn't be afraid to put themselves forward."
Sarah Wood, Co-founder of Unruly Media

Women as an equal part of the society should be able to use information technology and communication (ICT)to find a job. Therefore appropriate strategies must be created in order to encourage the participation of Kosovo's girls and women in ICT. Usually, successful strategies are based on recommendations resulting from the research conducted on this issue. Given the fact, STIKK has contracted external consultants to draw up policies for women's engagement in information and communication technology. The aim of this paper is to research:

- the position of educated women in the field of information technology and communication;
- the incentives and barriers to female education in this field;
- the incentives and barriers to the employment of women in this field;
- government policies on the engagement of women in information and communication technology;
- the role of businesses in the process of women's employment in the field of information and communication technology.

Additionally, this project aims to raise the awareness of the society, Kosovo businesses and government to encourage education and employment of females in Kosovo in the field of information and communication technology.

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FACTS OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN KOSOVO IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The percentage of female students has increased over the years, while the percentage of male students in upper secondary education has declined in the period of 2009 – 2011. However, MEST does not provide with data for recent years and with report for female students who have registered/completed upper secondary education for specific professions. There is a slight increase in the number of female students within this period in the professional schools.

While in the Public Universities for Bachelor studies almost half of the students are female, the percentage of enrolled female students in Master studies is lower, however, a slight increase has been noticed for the period of 2009-2011.

Fig. 3 illustrates the percentage of female students enrolled in Private Universities for Bachelor and Master studies, and unlike public universities, here an increase in Master studies and the constant of 40% for Bachelor studies can be noticed.

An important fact of this research is the percentage of female students who have left upper secondary school. Based on the MEST statistics (Table 1) it is interesting that this number is significantly lower compared to male students that left school.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare provides the data on unemployment rates and according to this report the number of unemployed women has increased and the number of unemployment men has decreased for the period of 2005-2012.
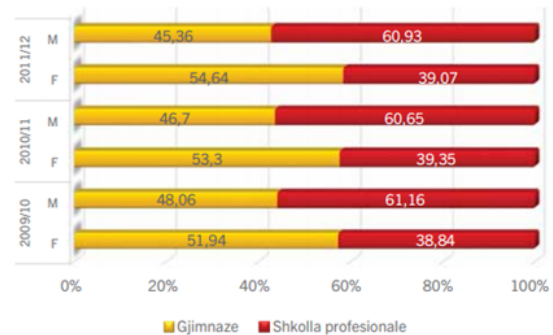

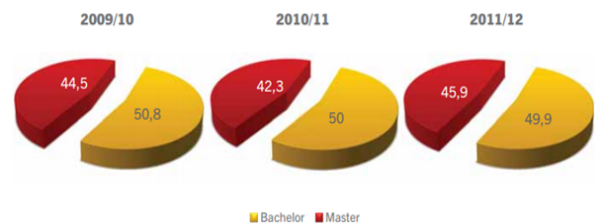**Figure 1** – Percentage of students enrolled on high school based on gender

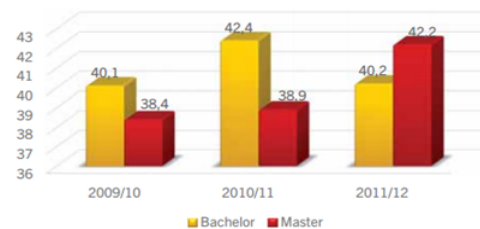**Figure 2** – Percentage of female students enrolled in public universities

Figure 3 – Percentage of female students in private universities

Academic year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Left school	3.1%	2.9%	2.5%
Males	69%	72%	71%
Females	31%	28%	29%

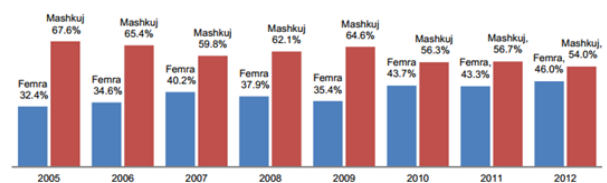**Table 1** – Number of students that left high school

Figure 4 – Percentage of unemployment based on gender

RESEARCH RESULTS – FEMALES IN ICT

Research conducted with girls from Kosovo high schools have shown that 68% of girls have a personal computer, while 84% of them have email addresses.
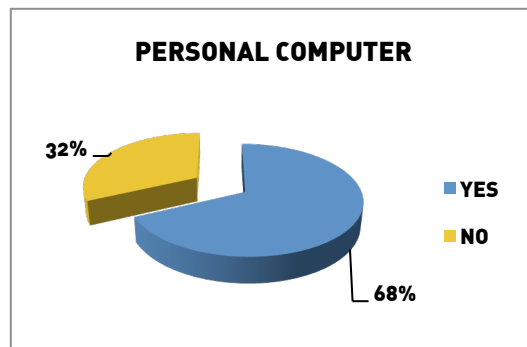
PERSONAL COMPUTER

32%

68%

YES

NO

Figure 5 – Personal Computer

Usually, misinformation for the professions and especially for ICT can be a barrier for girls to choose ICT as their profession. The research results as presented in Fig.6 show that girls usually get informed for the professional career from different sources: families, school and the internet.
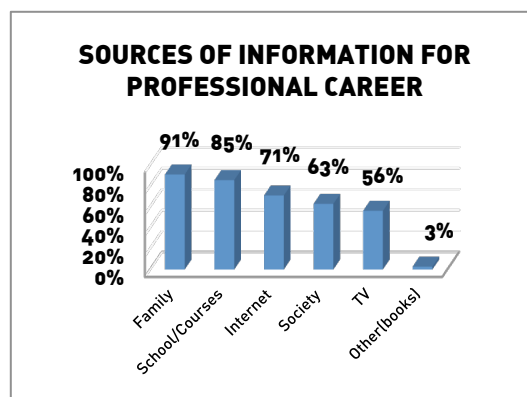
SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONAL CAREER

91% 85% 71% 63% 56% 3%

Family | School/Courses | Internet | Society | TV | Other(books)

Figure 6 – Sources of information for professional career

Young girls choose ICT as their professional career, because it brings them good income and because they like working with computers. However, they do not choose ICT because there are female role models in their community. More than 90% of interviewed girls do not choose ICT as a profession because they have no support for studies in this field, also because they consider ICT to be a profession for men and because they don't like working with computers.

CAREER DECISION FOR ICT

I did not decide for ICT because I have no support for studies — 44%
I did not decide for ICT because I don't like computers — 24%
I did not decide for ICT because It is men profession — 24%
Decided for ICT because it is paid well — 4%
Decided for ICT because I like to work with computers — 4%
Decided for ICT because I have models in my family — 0%

Figure 7 – Career decision for ICT

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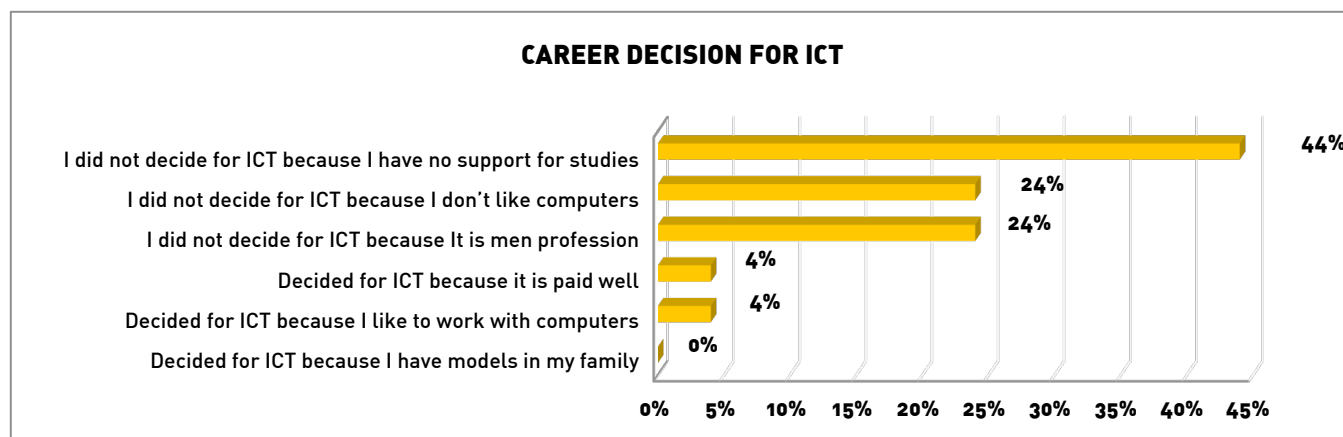
RESEARCH RESULTS – WOMEN IN ICT

Results of the experience of women in ICT have shown that 48% of interviewed women have more than ten years of experience in the field of ICT, 32% have 5-10 years experience and only 20% of them became part of the ICT world in the last five years. (Fig 8)
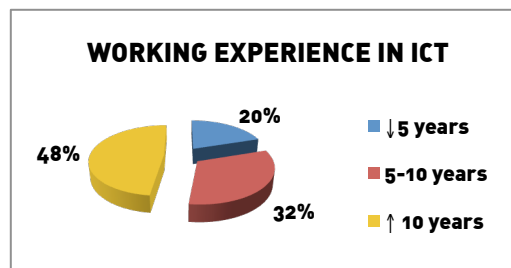
WORKING EXPERIENCE IN ICT

48% 20% 32%

- ↓5 years
- 5-10 years
- ↑ 10 years

Figure 8 – Working experience in ICT

The profession of ICT is still considered to be a major challenge for Kosovar women. Barriers that Kosovar women face in the ICT profession vary, and they may appear at any given period: during studies, at work and after maternity leave.
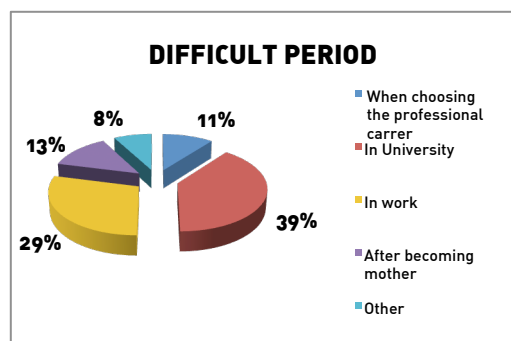
DIFFICULT PERIOD

8% 11% 13% 29% 39%

- When choosing the professional carrer
- In University
- In work
- After becoming mother
- Other

Figure 9 – The most difficult time in ICT career

The main challenge for Kosovar women in ICT is considered to be an approval of new law for maternity leave, followed by the lack of support from employer, society and family. Prejudice that ICT is a male's profession can be a very big barrier in their work.
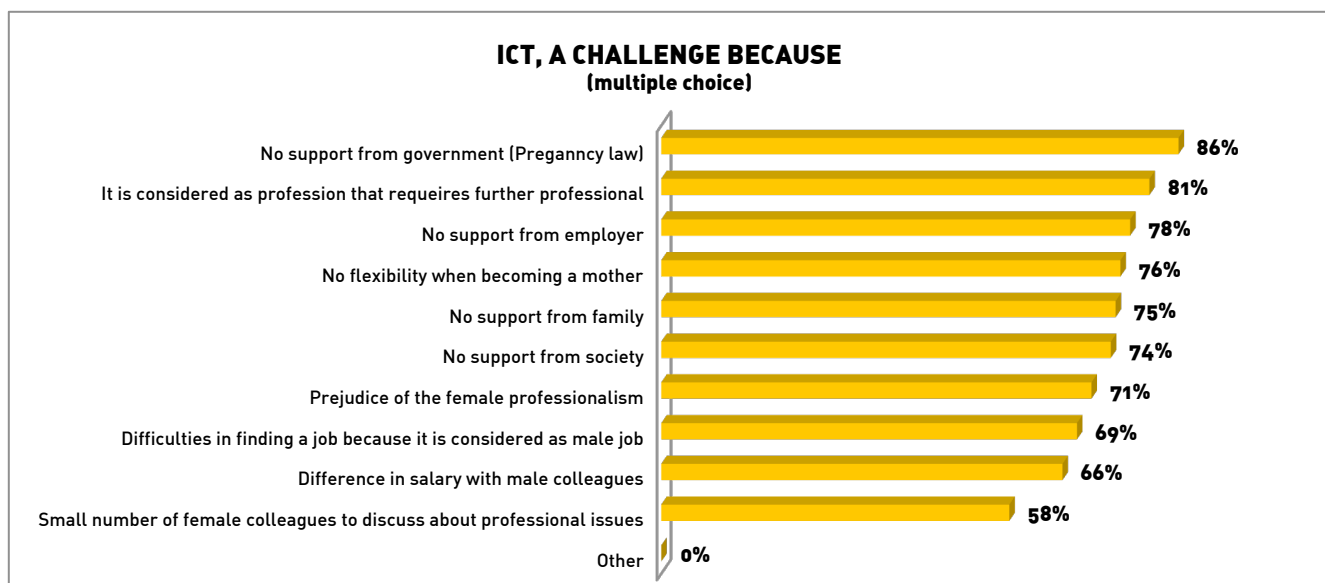
ICT, A CHALLENGE BECAUSE
(multiple choice)

No support from government (Preganncy law)	86%
It is considered as profession that requeires further professional	81%
No support from employer	78%
No flexibility when becoming a mother	76%
No support from family	75%
No support from society	74%
Prejudice of the female professionalism	71%
Difficulties in finding a job because it is considered as male job	69%
Difference in salary with male colleagues	66%
Small number of female colleagues to discuss about professional issues	58%
Other	0%

Figure 10 – Reasons why ICT is considered as a challenge to women

Support from the government is considered to be the main factor in inspiring women to choose ICT as their career profesion. But, also family, friends and businesses can play a very positive role in this issue.
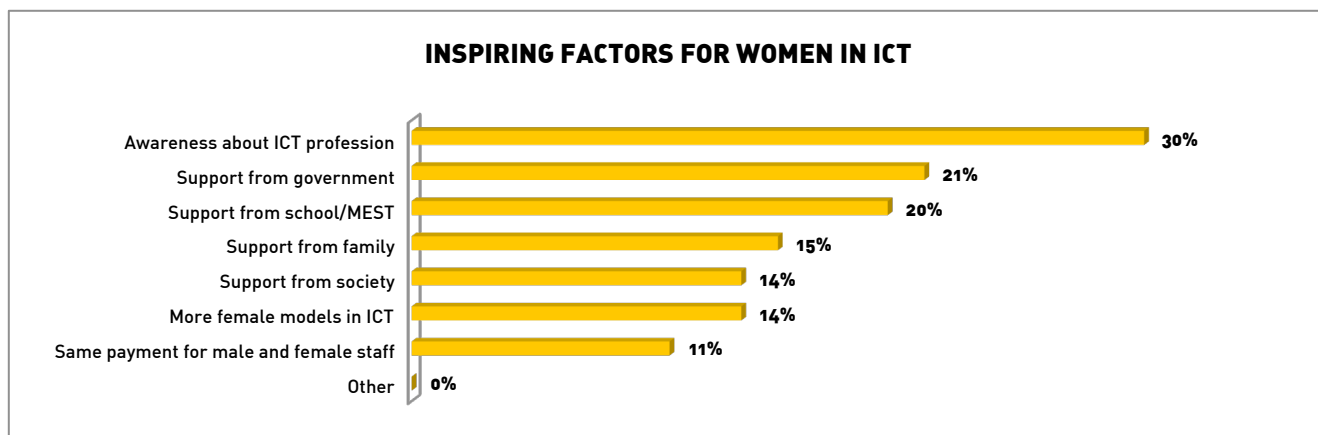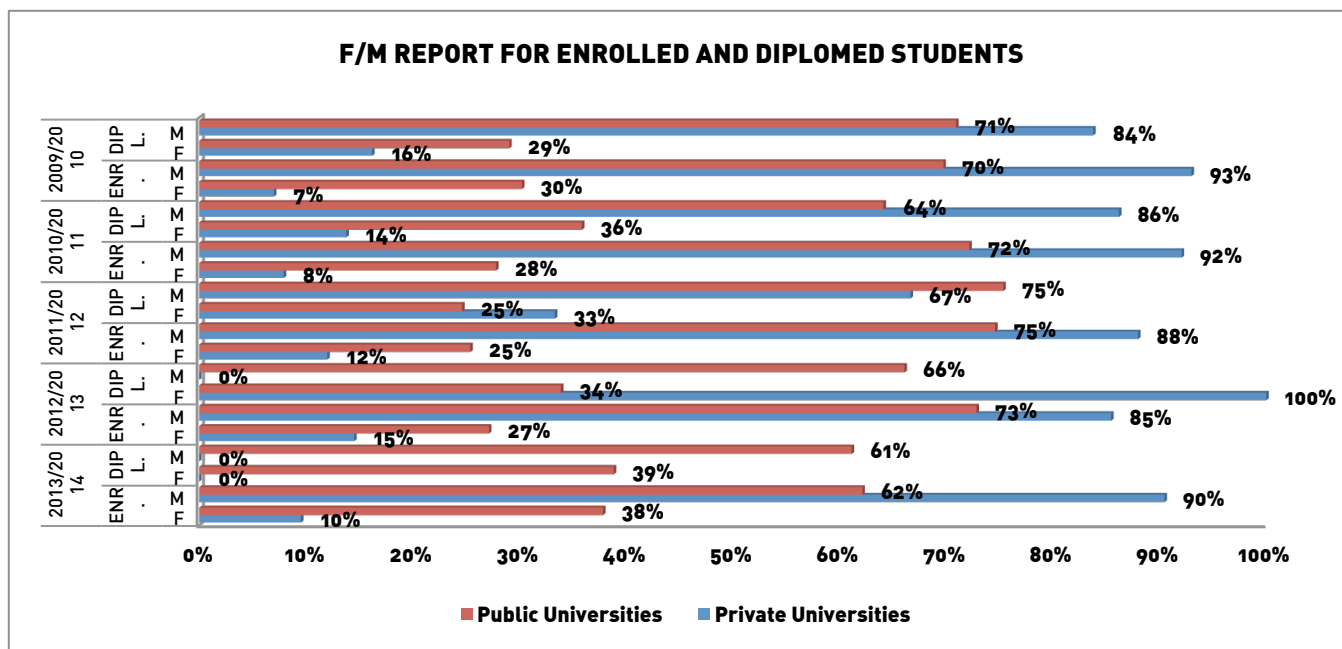
INSPIRING FACTORS FOR WOMEN IN ICT

Factor	Percentage
Awareness about ICT profession	30%
Support from government	21%
Support from school/MEST	20%
Support from family	15%
Support from society	14%
More female models in ICT	14%
Same payment for male and female staff	11%
Other	0%

Figure 11 – Inspiring factors for women in ICT

NUMBER OF KOSOVAR WOMEN IN ICT UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS

Research findings have shown that the number of women enrolled and graduated in recent years has increased significantly in comparison with the number of men however there is still the ratio 10:90 is in favor of male students enrolled in Private Universities, whereas the ration for Public Universities stands at 60: 40 in favour of male student. History reports for male/female students enrolled within the last five years seem to be inconsistent, and according to this, relevant organizations in Kosovo should take this issue seriously in order to

Figure 12 – Female/Male report for students enrolled/graduated in Kosovar public and private universities

F/M REPORT FOR ENROLLED AND DIPLOMED STUDENTS

Year	Type	Gender	Public Universities	Private Universities
2009/2010	DIPL.	M	71%	84%
		F	29%	16%
	ENR.	M	70%	93%
		F	30%	7%
2010/2011	DIPL.	M	64%	86%
		F	36%	14%
	ENR.	M	72%	92%
		F	28%	8%
2011/2012	DIPL.	M	67%	75%
		F	33%	25%
	ENR.	M	75%	88%
		F	25%	12%
2012/2013	DIPL.	M	66%	0%
		F	34%	100%
	ENR.	M	73%	85%
		F	27%	15%
2013/2014	DIPL.	M	61%	0%
		F	39%	0%
	ENR.	M	62%	90%
		F	38%	10%

■ Public Universities ■ Private Universities

In Kosovo ICT institutions about 22% of employees are women, and this percentage is 0-20% for employed women exclusively in ICT positions. There are several managers of ICT companies who have emphatically stated that they do not employ women in their institution following the approval of the maternity law (Employment Law, Article 49).
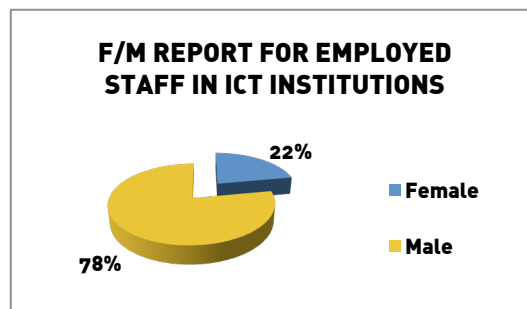
F/M REPORT FOR EMPLOYED STAFF IN ICT INSTITUTIONS

22%
78%

■ Female
■ Male

Figure 13 – Female/Male report for employed staff in ICT Kosovar companies

Approximately 5% of the interviewed women changed their ICT profession because of the barriers and lack of support. Nearly 30% of employed women in the ICT sector sometimes think about changing their profession, while about 70% of them don't think about changing their profession.
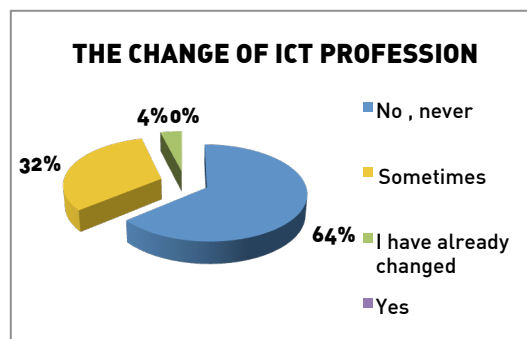
THE CHANGE OF ICT PROFESSION

4% 0%
32%
64%

■ No , never
■ Sometimes
■ I have already changed
■ Yes

Figure 14 – The change of ICT profession

FEMRAT E TIK NË VENDET E RAJONIT

I. Albania

According to the Albanian Institute of Statistics, the phenomena of male domination within the profession is apparent, since the overall number of females registered in the academic year 2011/2012 in the Public Universities is higher than the number of registered males. Nevertheless, if we take into account the facts provided by this report in the field of ICT only, we can observe that 23% of females are registered within ICT disciplines in the Universities.
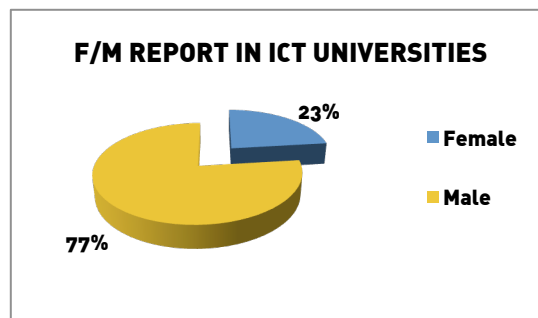
F/M REPORT IN ICT UNIVERSITIES

23%
77%

■ Female
■ Male

Figure 15 – Female/Male report for higher education in ICT - ALBANIA

II. Macedonia

In Macedonia the percentage of enrolled female students in higher education for the academic year 2012/2013 is 26%, while 36% of them managed to graduate in ICT. The history of this ratio shows that the number of female students is decreasing in the last years. This fact shows that ICT profession in Macedonia is considered to be a men's job.
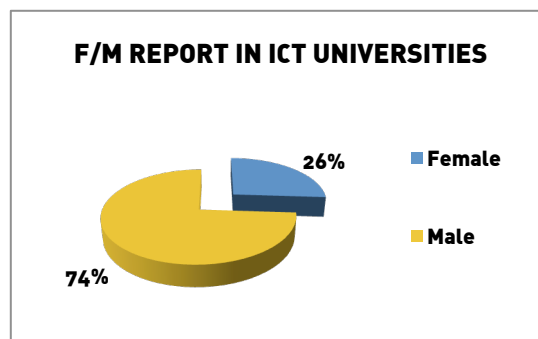
F/M REPORT IN ICT UNIVERSITIES

26%
74%

■ Female
■ Male

Figure 16 – Female/Male report for higher education in ICT - MACEDONIA

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III. Serbia

According to the statistics in Serbia 15% of the female students have graduated in ICT disciplines, while male students dominate with 85%. The data of enrolled students in high education based on gender is missing, but it is believed that the percentage of female students enrolled in ICT sector is about 30%.
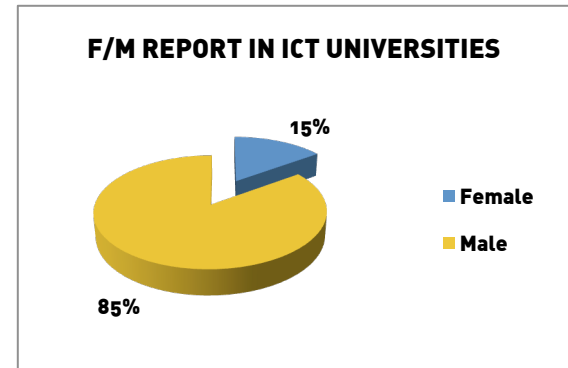

Figure 17 –Female/Male report for higher education in ICT - SERBIA

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT

1. The amendment of the labor law, Article 49 to reduce the maternity leave from 6 to 3 or 4 months. This is recommended due to the fact that the number of employed women in Kosovo has decreased since the approval of this law, and most of the women employed in ICT sector return to work without even completing their maternity leave.

2. The statistics in higher education in Kosovar universities should be updated based on gender for the recent years. In addition,, facts for enrolled and graduated female/male students based on academic year should be provided. This can be very useful to the government during the creation of political strategies with the purpose of catching up with the employment trend for the region and worldwide.

3. The Kosovar statistics for unemployed persons based on gender and profession should be updated. Unemployment data based on profession can help in getting a clearer picture of the between profession and work, and ICT businesses can be more focused in new recruitments.

4. The Agency for Gender Equality within the Prime Minister's Office, should through various projects continue to help raise awareness of women and the wider population for the development of ICT skills.

5. The Government of Kosovo and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should support the creation of student technical clubs in lower secondary education. Membership in the club should be based on gender balance, and it is recommended to grant certificates for members in order to inspire young men and women to continue education in the field of ICT. Project Girls in Technology should become traditional all over Kosovo.

6. Information regarding the labour market in Kosovo should be provided especially among young men and women,in order to assist them in choochoosing their professional career.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STIKK

1. A special department within STIKK should be formed in order to organize and promote projects for women in ICT. Competing projects and workshops for women in ICT can inspire women to choose ICT as their professional career. Also, this department can help in creating the connection between Kosovar women in ICT and ICT women of Albania, region or worldwide. This department can also become an independent government organization.

2. The strategic plan for the year 2014 should be created in order to raise awareness of the women with regards to for the ICT profession. A project of significant importance may be 'women help women where the ICT female professionals serve as a role-model and discuss the profession and work closely with young girls to increase

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESSES

1. Kosovar Businesses specializing in the field of ICT should promote work culture based on skills.

2. Kosovar Businesses should not prejudice the work of women in the ICT field, and they should support ICT women/mothers.

3. Kosovar Businesses should support internship projects for ICT, and during selection process they should consider gender balance.

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