



WOMEN IN ICT

AN ANALYSIS OF THE STATE
OF KOSOVAN WOMEN IN THE
ICT SECTOR

PREPARED BY
STIKK - KOSOVO ICT ASSOCIATION

WITH THE SUPPORT OF
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KOSOVO COUNTRY OVERVIEW



**"KOSOVO DECLARED ITS INDEPENDENCE
ON FEBRUARY 17TH, 2008."**

Kosovo, with its capital Prishtina, located in the south-eastern part of Europe or more precisely in the Balkans regions, is a country with a population of around 1.8 million ⁽¹⁾ and a GDP of around \$7.5 billion. Kosovo declared Independence of February 17, 2008 and since then has been recognized as an Independent country by more than 100 United Nations members, Including 23 out of 28 members of the European Union (EU). Kosovo Is a parliamentary republic and a potential candidate for EU membership.

According to the World Bank, Kosovo's economic growth in the last decade has outperformed its neighbors and has largely been Inclusive but it has not been sufficient to provide enough formal jobs to significantly reduce the high rates of unemployment, especially for Women and youth. Kosovo's growth model over the years was heavily reliant on remittances from Its large diaspora which fueled domestic consumption but has in the recent years shifted to more Investment and export-driven growth, where the local ICT sector has played a significant role.

Suggestions from the World Bank for Kosovo in order to continue its growth include the creation of more quality jobs, addressing infrastructure bottlenecks by prioritizing human capital Investment, and creating an environment more conducive to private sector development. Kosovo has one of the youngest populations In Europe, with the average age of 30.5 ⁽²⁾ years old, thus its youth needs to be equipped with the skills demanded by a modern economy.

KOSOVO'S ICT SECTOR



Source: Innovation Centre Kosovo (ICK)

Kosovo's ICT sector is one of the country's most vibrant and dynamic sectors. The ICT sector in Kosovo is relatively new, with the majority of companies being founded in the 2000s, compared to the other traditional sectors like agriculture, food-processing and wood-processing. However, the ICT sector in Kosovo is one of the fastest growing sectors in our economy and currently the only sector with a positive import/export index. Based on the latest edition of the IT Barometer published by STIKK on a yearly bases, around 61% of local ICT companies primarily work with clients and partners abroad, while 39% primarily offer their services to the local market (3).

Over the years, the ICT sector In Kosovo has played a major role in the economic growth of the country, by becoming a destination for International companies and clients seeking to outsource or nearshore their services to trustworthy and highly professional partners in Kosovo. Looking at the country's digital Infrastructure, 85% of the country Is covered through landline broadband, while 94% of the territory Is covered through 3G & 4G networks making Kosovo one of the countries with the highest Internet penetration in Europe.

Kosovo's digital portfolio of services offered by local ICT companies Includes: Software Development, Web Development & Design, Mobile App Development, Social Media Apps & Solutions, Software & Mobile Apps Testing, System Integration & Migration, Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), Digital Media & Content Creation, IT & Digital Transformation Consulting, AR/VR Animations, etc. While the subsector focus Is on Health, Energy, Financial Services, Telecommunication and Blockchain.

Currently the biggest International markets for the local ICT companies are considered to be the DACH region (Germany, Austria and Switzerland), the USA and the UK.

ABOUT STIKK

KOSOVO ICT ASSOCIATION



AS A CATALYST TO THE DYNAMIC TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY, **STIKK - KOSOVO ICT ASSOCIATION** ACCELERATES GROWTH AND PROGRESS FOR THE FAST-PACED ECONOMY. IT SHAPES THE INDUSTRY AT LARGE. STIKK PROVIDES A PLATFORM THAT UNITES TECHNOLOGY LEADERS TO CONNECT AND COLLABORATE, AND IT AVIDLY SUPPORTS MEMBERS WHO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES TO PROPEL TECHNOLOGY FORWARD.

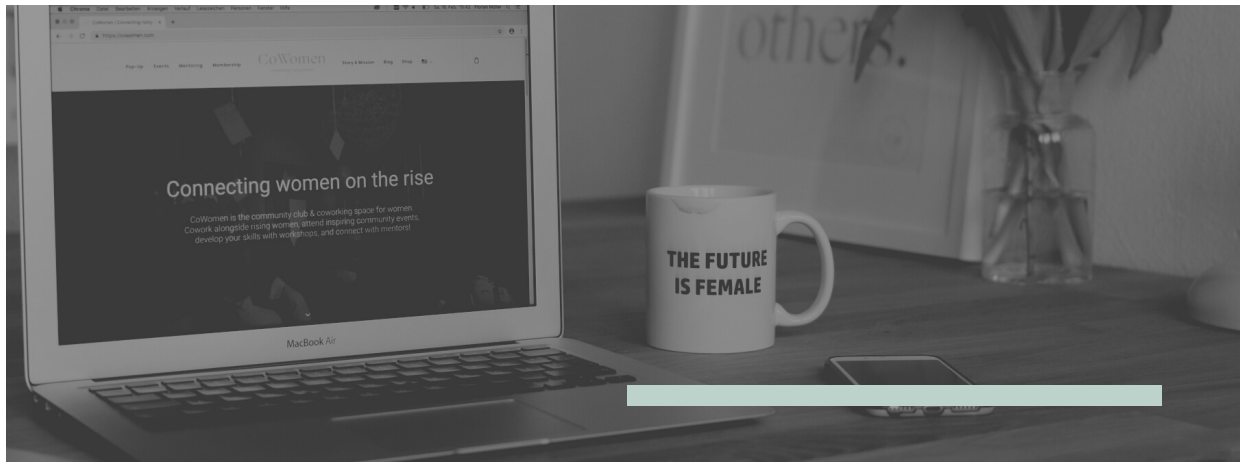
Since its establishment in **2008**, STIKK was able to achieve numerous successes and become one of the leading drivers of the ICT industry and ICT community in Kosovo. Striving towards the development of the ICT industry, STIKK implemented numerous projects aimed to promote the ICT sector of Kosovo, improve its regulatory framework, implement research and industry specific analysis, and facilitate professional development of sector's constituents. STIKK currently accounts for around 80% of the whole ICT sector in Kosovo through its membership. STIKK is dedicated to help out the long-term-growth of the Information and Communications Technology industry in Kosovo; is committed to improving the business environment for the ICT, as well as promoting the contribution of the Information and Communications Technology to economic growth and social progress in Kosovo.

STIKK seeks to participate in the development and implementation of policies by helping the Government and Institutions of Kosovo to understand current and future technology trends, and how technology can contribute to the economic growth of the country.

STIKK's mission is to help create a better ICT business environment by improving standards and educational opportunities, and advocating with the government on behalf of its members to ensure that the sector will attract new business and investment.

ABOUT THE POWER INITIATIVE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE BUREAU OF ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS



Source: CoWomen (Unsplash)

This analysis was conducted by STIKK in partnership with U.S. Embassy Pristina as part of the **Femme-preneurs in ICT** project, supported by funding from the **Department of State's POWER initiative**. In 2019, the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs launched a new State Department initiative to promote women's economic empowerment called "*Providing Opportunities for Women's Economic Rise*," or POWER. The multi-tiered initiative leverages diplomatic resources and works with the private sector to establish professional networks and business environments focused on promoting women's economic empowerment in a global context and in advancement of U.S. economic policies. Within its first tier, POWER promotes women's economic empowerment through Embassy-led projects, and within the second tier supports the Department's economic policy dialogues on issues and topics pertaining to gender-related economic issues. POWER's tiered approach enables programming to better align and support U.S. economic and foreign policy goals, while also highlighting key gender-related economic empowerment issues to help develop professional business networks for women. POWER's ability to convene women business leaders and entrepreneurs in the U.S. and abroad helps women develop key networks and partnerships in emerging markets. POWER helps women identify opportunities and develop competitive strategies in emerging sectors traditionally dominated by men in the U.S. and abroad. Through programs like **Femme-preneurs in ICT**, we're working directly with women business owners and leaders to promote women's full participation in the global economy and workforce.



NOTES ON THE REPORT & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report is a follow-up to a roundtable titled "**Femme-preneurs in ICT**" organized by STIKK - Kosovo ICT Association in partnership with the U.S. Embassy Pristina, which brought together female founders and leaders of ICT companies from Kosovo and their counterparts in the USA during which they shared their experiences, challenges and successes achieved.

In order to compile this report on Women In ICT, the research approach that was used focused on quantitative surveys, Interviews with female founders and leaders of local ICT companies, data collection from various academic and educational Institutions, as well as, business Incubators.

The data collection for this report was completed between **February** and **April** of 2021.

KOSOVO ICT COMPANIES OVERVIEW

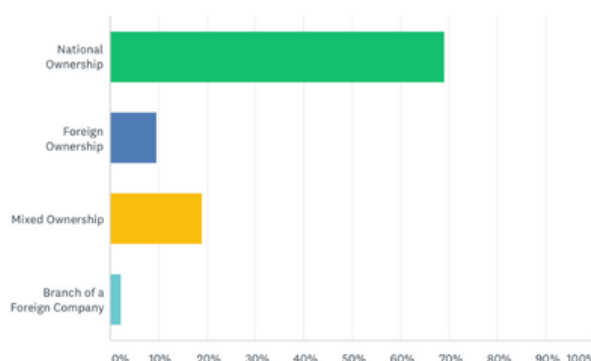
AN OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ICT SECTOR IN KOSOVO

In order to better understand the organizational structures, capacities, employee structures, foreign market presence and services/products offered of Kosovan ICT companies, we asked companies to provide us with Information and data on these questions.

The survey was completed by a total of **45 different ICT companies**, with some of them skipping a few questions, and some of the key findings of this enquiry as follows:

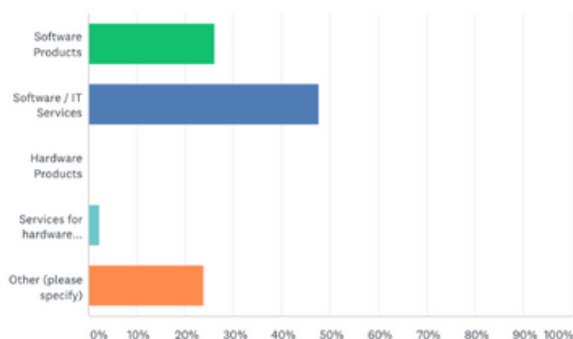
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE

When exploring the ownership structure of ICT companies operating in Kosovo, a great majority of the companies or **88.1% of the responders** have reported that they either have full national ownership (**69.05%**) or a mixed ownership structure (**19.05%**), while (**9.5%**) have reported to have foreign ownership and only (**2.38%**) of them are a local branch of a foreign company.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ National Ownership	69.05%	29
▼ Foreign Ownership	9.52%	4
▼ Mixed Ownership	19.05%	8
▼ Branch of a Foreign Company	2.38%	1
TOTAL		42

PRODUCTS/SERVICES PROVIDED



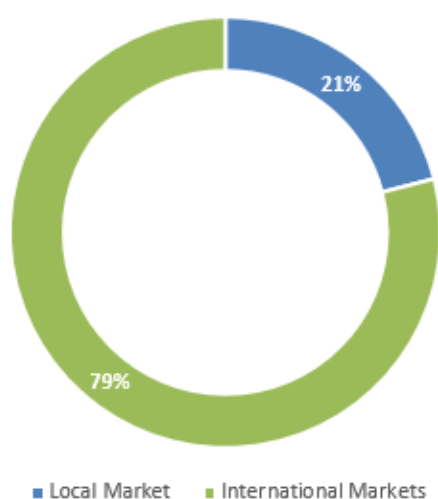
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Software Products	26.19%	11
▼ Software / IT Services	47.62%	20
▼ Hardware Products	0.00%	0
▼ Services for hardware products	2.38%	1
▼ Other (please specify)	23.81%	10

As we look into the services and products offered by ICT companies operating in Kosovo, **47.62% of the responders** have answered that their company mainly provides Software as a Service (SaaS), while **26.19%** of them offer Software Products. The remaining **26.19%** of companies have stated that they provide other ICT services including specialized software for hardware products, network architecture and maintenance, data analysis and visualization, digital marketing, etc.

HORIZONTAL MARKETS

As ICT services and products can be classified in different ways according to their purpose and usability, we asked local ICT companies to highlight some of the horizontal markets they deliver their services to. **The most popular horizontal markets according to the responses** are Custom Development/Outsourcing (**63.16%**), Web Design and Development (**60.53%**), IT Consulting (**60.53%**), Mobile Solutions (**52.63%**) and Software Quality Assurance (**44.74%**).

LOCAL/INTERNATIONAL MARKET PERCENTAGE



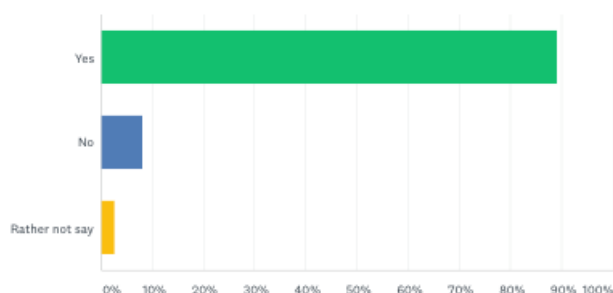
As Kosovo has developed into a desirable destination for ICT services, we asked the companies participating in the survey to share the percentages of their work in the local and International markets. On average around **21%** is mainly work for the local market, while **79% of the work is exported** to International markets.

LOCAL SECTORS

The table presents the various sectors in which the local ICT companies engage in, regarding the local market. As depicted in the table, **the most popular sectors** are the financial sector (**42.42%**), education or e-learning (**36.36%**) and the banking sector (**30.30%**).

FINANCIAL SERVICES	42.42%
EDUCATION (E-LEARNING)	36.36%
BANKING	30.30%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	21.21%
PUBLIC SECTOR (E-GOVERNMENT)	18.18%
HEALTHCARE	15.15%
INDUSTRY APPLICATION & AUTOMATION	15.15%
ENERGY	15.15%
SERVICES (HR, LEGAL & ACCOUNTING)	12.12%
OTHER	21.21%

EXPORTING SERVICES



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	89.19%
No	8.11%
Rather not say	2.70%
TOTAL	37

Exploring the export capacities of ICT companies operating in Kosovo, we asked the survey responders whether their company is currently exporting services/products and **89.19% of them responded positively** while only **8.11%** only offer their services to the local market.

INTERNATIONAL SECTORS

The table below presents the various sectors in which local ICT companies engage in, regarding international markets. **The most popular sectors for local ICT companies** in the International markets they offer their services in are IT services and outsourcing (**59.46%**) followed by financial services (**27.03%**), education or e-learning (**27.03%**) and manufacturing, distribution & retail (**24.32%**).

IT SERVICES & OUTSOURCING	59.46%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	27.03%
EDUCATION (E-LEARNING)	27.03%
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & RETAIL	24.32%
ENERGY	21.62%
BANKING	21.62%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	18.92%
AUTOMOTIVE	13.51%
INDUSTRY APPLICATION & AUTOMATION	13.51%
OTHER	21.62%

MAIN OBSTACLES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

VISA REQUIREMENTS	59.46%
FINDING THE RIGHT BUSINESS PARTNER	59.46%
LACK OF SUPPORT BY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS	35.14%
LACK OF QUALIFIED STAFF	35.14%
LACK OF MARKET INFORMATION	29.73%
LACK OF BRANDING OF THE LOCAL ICT INDUSTRY	29.73%
LACK OF BUSINESS CONTACTS IN TARGET MARKETS	27.03%
LACK OF EXPORT ORIENTED TRAININGS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	24.32%
LACK OF INTEREST & AWARENESS AMONG INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES	21.62%
OTHER	8.11%

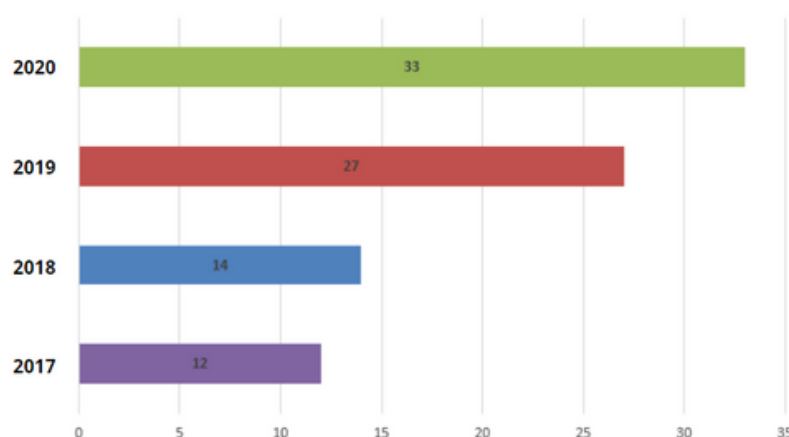
As local ICT companies keep growing and expanding to new markets, a few of the most common obstacles they face include: **visa requirements for travel** (**59.46%**), finding the right business partner (**59.64%**), lack of support by government Institutions through export financing schemes (**35.14%**), lack of qualified staff (**35.14%**) and lack of market information (**29.73%**).

CORE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

When asked what do they believe are the core competitive advantages local ICT Companies have when operating In International markets, compared to their counterparts, **91.89% of the responders believe that quality is the core competitive advantage**, **86.49%** believe it is technical know-how, **54.05%** believe it is the sector specific know-how and **51.35%** believe cultural knowledge play an Important role as well.

QUALITY	91.89%
TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW	86.49%
SECTOR SPECIFIC KNOW-HOW	54.05%
CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE	51.35%
HORIZONTAL KNOW-HOW	51.35%
PRICE	43.24%
LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE	32.43%

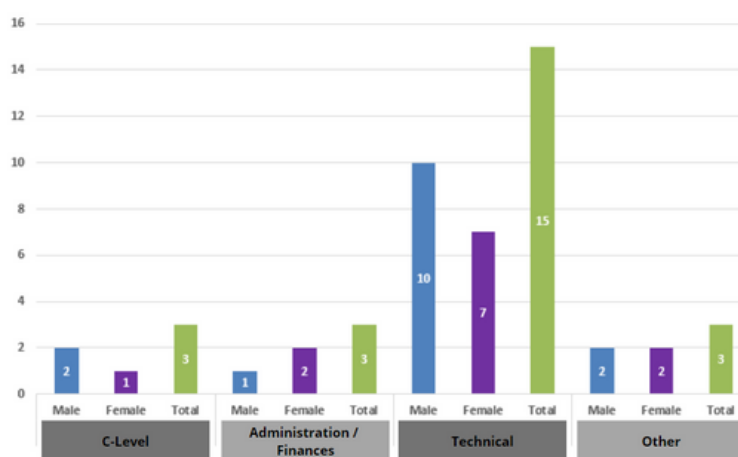
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES & ASSOCIATES



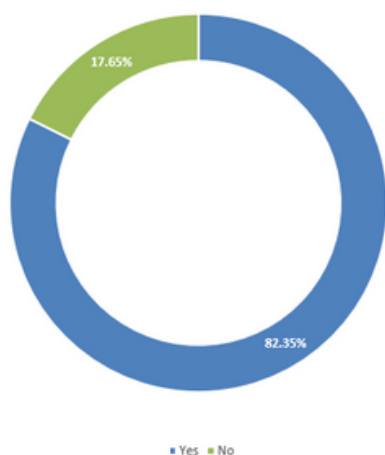
Looking at the growth of local ICT companies based on the number of employees and associates, it is clear that the industry has been steadily growing and it experienced its largest growth in recent years during 2019. Even though during 2020 we were hit with the COVID-19 pandemic, **The number of employees in local companies grew from an average of 27 employees in 2019 to an average of 33 employees in 2020.** The largest company participating in the survey has reported that It currently employs **175** employees, while the smallest one **8** employees.

EMPLOYEE STRUCTURE (DUTIES & GENDER)

By exploring the employee structure of local ICT companies in two aspects, Duties of the employees and a gender breakdown, We can see that most of the staff is responsible for **technical duties with an average of 15 employees**, followed evenly by employees responsible for administration/finance, C-level executives and other duties with an average of **3** employees. In gender terms, the largest difference in female to male ratios is in technical duties where on average **30%** more male employees are hired.



IS THE COMPANY FACING A DEFICIT OF SKILLED/QUALIFIED WORKFORCE?



When asked whether the company is facing a deficit of skilled/qualified workforce that affects the company's daily operations and growth, **82.35% of responders answered yes**, while **17.65%** answered no. The percentages are nearly identical to a year before, leaving to understand that not much has been done in regards to skilled workforce development on a national level.

HOW DOES THE COMPANY COPE WITH THE DEFICIT OF SKILLED/QUALIFIED WORKFORCE?

Looking at the different ways local ICT companies cope with the deficit of skilled/qualified workforce, the most widely used options include the company investing in trainings and certifications for their staff and interns. **The most popular investment related to workforce development in the local ICT companies is in-house training with an average of 5.500 EUR annually.** Specific certification programs are the second most popular investment with an average annual value of **2.800 EUR**, followed by hiring external consultant-based training with an average annual value of **2.500 EUR**. The least popular option is job-shadowing with an average annual value of around **700 EUR**.



OPERATING CAPACITIES RELATIVE TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR (EMPLOYEES & PRODUCTIVITY)

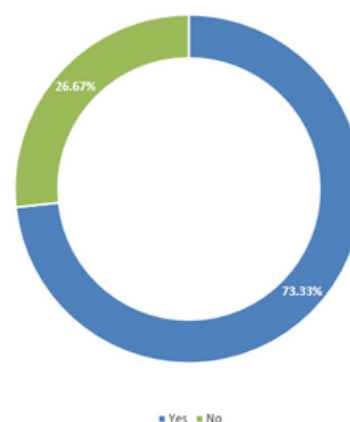
NO CHANGE IN OPERATING CAPACITY	38.24%
OPERATING CAPACITY HAS INCREASED LESS THAN 50%	23.53%
OPERATING CAPACITY HAS INCREASED 50% OR MORE	17.65%
OPERATING CAPACITY HAS DECREASED LESS THAN 50%	17.65%
OPERATING CAPACITY HAS DECREASED 50% OR MORE	2.94%

While exploring the operating capacities of the local ICT companies compared to a year before, **41.18% of the total responders reported that their companies have increased their operating capacities relative to the previous year**, with **23.53%** of them stating that the operating capacities have increased by less than 50% and **17.65%** stating that the operating capacities have increased by 50% or more. **38.24%** of responders reported that the company's operating capacities have remained the same, while **20.59%** have reported that the operating capacities in their companies has decreased, out of which **17.65%** have experienced a decrease of less than 50% and only **2.94%** a decrease of more than 50% relative to the previous year.

ANY NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED PROCESSES OR WAYS OF ORGANIZING WORK DURING LAST YEAR?

Lastly, we asked the responding companies if there were any significantly changed processes or ways of organizing work during the last year and **the answer for the majority (73.33%) was yes**. Going further into what these changes were, we learned that **33.33%** of the responders introduced new or significantly changed processes of organizing work, **31.11%** of them started offering new or significantly changed services to their clients, **22.22%** diversified their product lines with new or significantly changed products and **13.33%** of them adopted new or significantly changed ways of communicating with external partners.

NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED PRODUCTS	22.22%
NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED SERVICES	31.11%
NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED PROCESSES OR ORGANIZING WORK	33.33%
NEW OR SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED WAYS OF COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS	13.33%





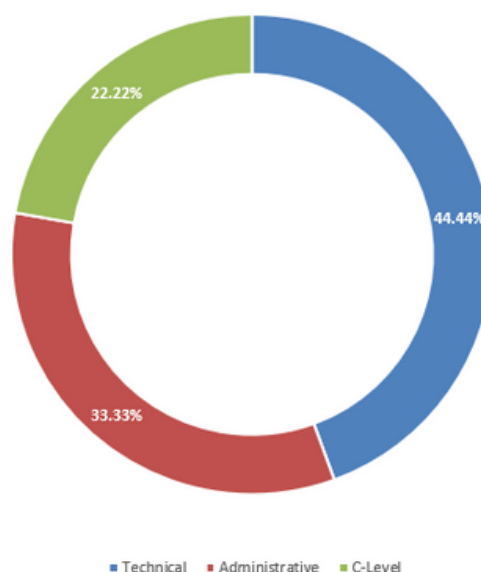
Source: CoWomen (Unsplash)

EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES & FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL ICT SECTOR

Women play a very important role in the ICT sector in Kosovo and its development. They are an integral part of the workforce, from junior level positions all the way to key leadership positions. In order to highlight some of the experiences, challenges, drives and thoughts on female participation and leadership in the local ICT Industry, **we surveyed a group of 27 women ICT professionals in different levels of their career** through an open-ended questionnaire and the findings of this survey are represented below.

POSITION IN COMPANY

Initially, we asked the survey responders to tell us about their current position in the company they work in. From the responses, **22.22%** were C-level executives, **33.33%** are responsible for administrative/financial duties, while **44.44%** are part of the technical team.

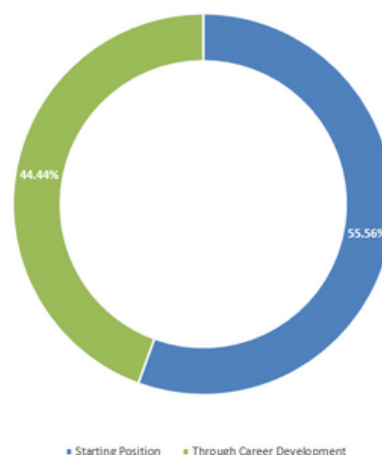


LENGTH OF CAREER IN THE ICT SECTOR

Looking at how long have the survey responders been part of the ICT Industry, we found at that nearly all the responders who are **C-Level executives have been part of the ICT industry for more than 15 years**, while the technical and administrative/finance team members have on average been part of the ICT industry for **12.5 months**.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

After exploring the length of the careers of our responders, we wanted to know if their current position in the companies they work for is their starting position or did they reach it through career development and promotion. For **more than half of the responders (55.56%)** the current position is their **starting position** in the industry while the rest (**44.44%**) have reached the position through career development.



CHALLENGES FACED AS A PROFESSIONAL IN THE INDUSTRY

TRUST ISSUES	40.74%
LEARNING NEW SKILLS	22.22%
ACCEPTANCE OF AUTHORITY	18.52%
NON-EQUAL PAY	18.52%

There are numerous challenges women professionals face throughout their career in this mostly male dominated industry. When asked about the challenges our responders faced along their career development in this sector, **the primary challenge seems to be trust issues from other team members and clients (40.74%)** followed by the challenge of learning new skills in order to adapt with the work required (**22.22%**), acceptance of authority/female leadership from both employees and clients (**18.52%**) and non-equal pay relative to male counterparts (**18.52%**).

MENTORSHIPS

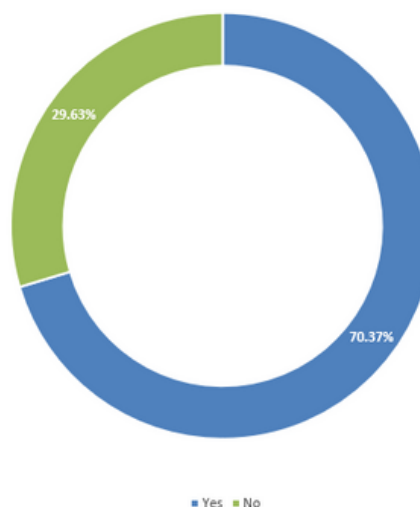
Exploring mentorship experiences, we asked the survey responders if they have **ever received or given professional mentorships related to the work that they do and the answer was an outstanding yes (100%)**. All the C-level executives surveyed have given mentorships to their staff and other young women entrepreneurs looking to break through in the industry, while all the other responders have received mentorships in different forms, either at their workplace or private mentorships with successful female leaders. This clearly highlights the support women professionals extend to each other for career development and encouraging young women to pursue a career in the industry.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

We wanted to know more about professional networks for women entrepreneurs or women in ICT and if the responders are members of any networks. What we found out from the responses is that currently there are no formal professional networks for women entrepreneurs of women in ICT in Kosovo, while the C-level executive responders stated that they participate in informal networks where they exchange experiences, ideas and keep up with what is happening in the industry on a larger scale. When asked if they would join a formal professional network for women, all the responders said yes (100%).

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

The survey also included a question related to discussions of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, through which we wanted to see how open are local ICT companies to having these discussions with their teams. From the responses, 70.37% reported that they do discuss about diversity and inclusion with their teams, while 29.63% reported that they have never discussed these topics in their workplace.



INTEREST IN TECH

While exploring the interests and drives of the responders that got them working in the ICT industry, we found out for a large number of responders (82%) the main drive and interest to join the industry has been with them since early adulthood. They were interested in science, engineering and technology, with a special focus on the problem-solving aspects of these fields and that pushed them to pursue academic and professional knowledge, thus becoming part of the ICT industry.

PERCEPTION OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN KOSOVO

We wanted to know how do the participants feel about the perception of female leadership in Kosovo compared to male leadership, especially in the ICT sector. While 18.52% feel that female leadership is perceived differently from male leadership and that can be challenging at times, the majority of the responders (81.48%) stated that they don't believe that female leadership is perceived differently from male leadership and that the voice of female leaders is just as strong as their male counterparts in the ICT industry.

WOMEN IN ICT AS A CAREER PATH

Finally, we asked the survey responders whether they would encourage other women to join the ICT sector as a career path and the answer was an overwhelming yes (100%). While most cited inclusion, professional development opportunities and dynamic workplaces as some of the main reasons to join the industry, one comment stood out "The future is tech and female".



Source: CoWomen (Unsplash)

FEMME-PRENEURSHIP IN THE LOCAL ICT SECTOR

The following section explores the state of female entrepreneurship and leadership in the local ICT sector. **We reached to 8 female owners, founders, partners and C-Level executives of local ICT companies** with questions regarding their professional journey, challenges faced as a female leader in a male dominated Industry, company hiring policies and gender balance, encouraging women to join the sector and suggestions on what the community can do to encourage women participation in the sector.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNEYS

Starting it off we explored the professional journeys of the **femme-preneurs** reached in order to understand how they got to where they currently are, as leaders of some of the most successful and innovative ICT companies in Kosovo. For most of the participants (**76.46%**) their professional journeys started in early adulthood, through various seasonal jobs, internships or volunteering. This set a base for continuous development and ambition to overcome various challenges in order to reach their goals. For nearly all the responders, the path to their professional journeys can be traced to entry level jobs, followed up by promotions and finally breaking out to create their own companies or entering in partnerships which revitalized existing companies.

CHALLENGES OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN A MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRY

Looking at the various challenges female leaders have faced and still do in their professional careers, from the responders we understood that one of the biggest challenges faced is the distrust they sometimes face from both clients and teammates regarding their capabilities. For quite some time, female leadership and successes achieved where not given the right amount of attention in comparison to their male counterparts but this has slowly but surely been changing over the past few years. In resolving these issues, one of the most common paths (**68%**) used was through mentorships with other successful female leaders. It is worth noting that nearly all responders agree that the ICT ecosystem in Kosovo is supportive of women in the sector and encourages young female professionals to pursue careers in the sector.

"Being only one woman in a room full of man makes it difficult for your voice to be heard and taken seriously." Hana Qerimi - StarLabs & Digital School

COMPANY HIRING POLICIES & GENDER BALANCE

When looking at the hiring policies of the companies lead by female professionals who responded to our enquiry, all of the responders reported that gender does not play a role in their hiring decisions. When recruiting for open positions, what they look for in a potential new teammate are: character, skills and work attitude. Just as well, the current gender balance in these companies on average is **37% female employees** compared to **63%** male employees.

PROMOTION & ENCOURAGEMENT OF WOMEN TO JOIN THE ICT SECTOR

Promotion of the benefits of joining the ICT community, as well as, the encouragement of young women to join the sector **are two actions** that all of the responders **take very seriously**. They actively participate in workshops, events and conferences, speaking and motivating future professionals with their success stories, challenges faced and entrepreneurial mindset, setting a perfect example of what a true leader should look like. Nearly all of the participants are also currently involved with mentorship positions.

"The glass ceiling is only in the mind, and if the mission is important enough for you, then nothing should stop you." Arta Shehu Zajmi - jCoders

SUGGESTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

AS mentioned previously, the ICT community has shown to be supportive of women in the sector but there is always room for improvement. Per the responses, there are a few different things the community can do to further promote inclusion in the sector, as well as, motivate **women to achieve greatness** in the sector such as: create more opportunity for open conversations within the teams and wider community, try to build a culture of giving first by supporting women in their professional journeys, promote and highlight role models not only from a leadership stand but also technical staff, create a network (cluster) of Women in ICT, devise a scheme supporting mentorships for young femme-preneurs, etc.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN ICT RELATED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

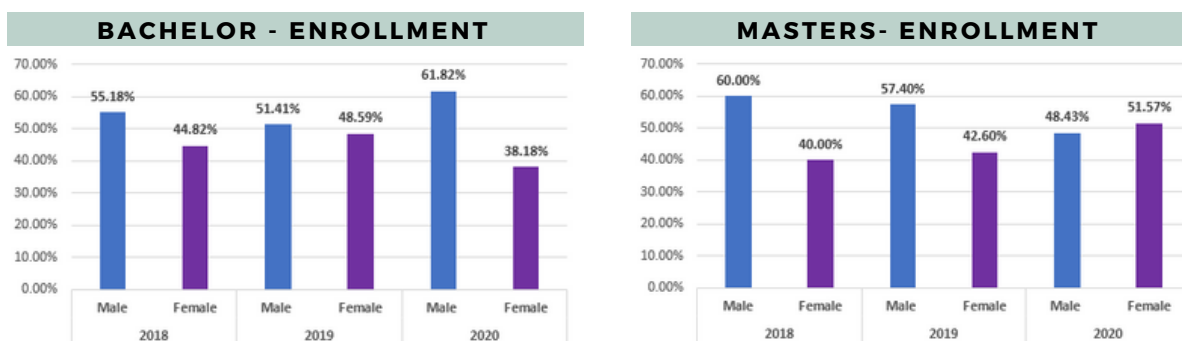
A LOOK INTO FEMALE ENROLLMENT IN VARIOUS ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

When it comes to professional development and the creation of a skilled workforce, Kosovo offers a few options from public universities with majors in various ICT fields, private universities, professional training schools and certified training module providers. Entrepreneurship is also supported through various business incubators. In order to see the Impact and participation in various academic programs related to ICT, we reached out to the **academic and professional training institutions** with an enquiry regarding the enrolment of women in their respected programs. The section below depicts the findings.

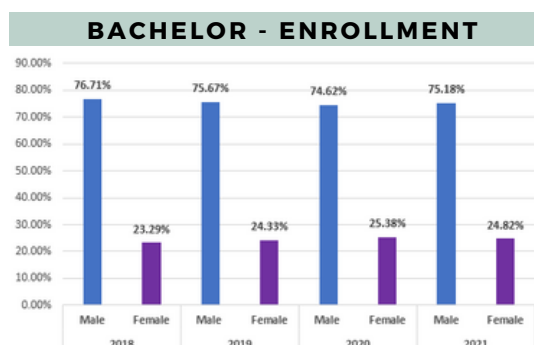
PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

UNIVERSITY OF PRISHTINA & UNIVERSITY OF NORTH MITROVICA

University of Prishtina, is one of the oldest universities in the country and within its faculties are two that offer majors related various ICT fields which are the faculty of electrical and computer engineering and the faculty of natural mathematical sciences. The university offers both Bachelors, as well as, Masters degrees. Looking at the enrolment rates based on gender, for bachelor degrees the number of female students enrolled compared to male students is rather steady over the past few years, with a small dip last year when **38.18%** of students enrolled in ICT related majors were women, while **61.82%** were men. On the other hand, in the Masters programs, women enrolment has been steadily growing over the past few year, culminating last year when **51.57% of students enrolled in masters programs were women.**



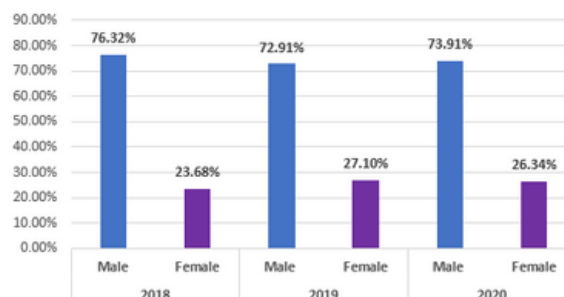
In the northern part of Mitrovica, populated by a Serbian majority, the public university also includes two faculties offering majors related to ICT fields. Once again these two faculties are the faculty of electrical and computer engineering and the faculty of natural mathematical sciences and the classes are taught in Serbian. Looking at the enrolment rates at these two faculties, the gender balance is rather different in Northern Mitrovica. Over the past four years, the average **enrolment rate of female students has been around 25%** while **75%** of the students enrolled have been male.



PRIVATE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES UBT, UNIVERSUM, RIINVEST & TDI (RIT KOSOVO)

In Kosovo there are numerous private colleges and universities serving as additional alternatives for students looking to enroll in higher education and are not keen on joining a public university. A few of these colleges and universities who offer majors in various ICT related fields were contacted with enquiries about enrollment data and UBT, Universum, Riinvest and TDI (RIT Kosovo) have send out the data included in this report. According to the data, **the enrolment rate of female students in these institutions has last year been an average of 26.34%** while **73.91%** have been male students. While this average is a real representation of the enrolment rate for the first three colleges/universities, TDI (RIT Kosovo) has last year had an enrolment rate of **44%** female students compared to **56%** male students.

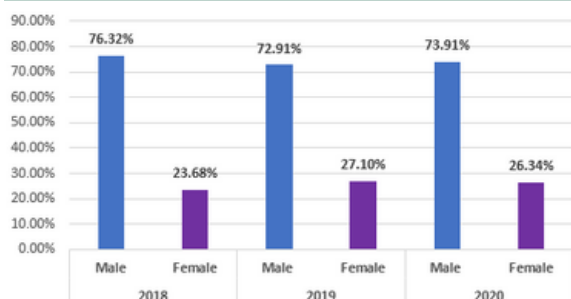
AVERAGE - ENROLLMENT



TRAINING PROVIDERS

CACTUS EDUCATION, BEETROOT ACADEMY, INNOVATION CENTRE KOSOVO (ICK) VENTUREUP & LINK MITROVICA (INNOVATION CENTRE MITROVICA)

AVERAGE - ENROLLMENT

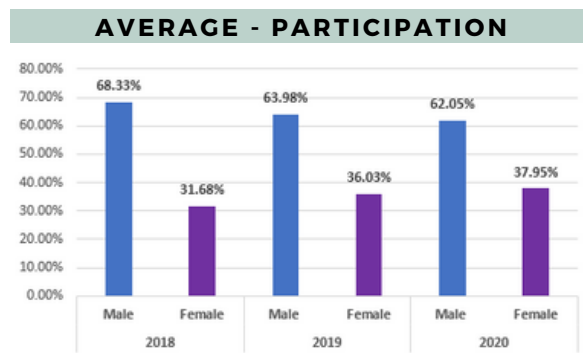


Various training providers, both private, as well as, donor backed Institutions offer numerous training programs aimed at equipping youngsters with various skills to prosper in the ICT sector and special advanced trainings for young professionals to develop their knowledge. These training providers offer everything from certified project management in ICT, various programming languages certifications, social media management, social media analysis, graphic design, UI/UX design, etc. The data represented in this study were collected from CACTUS Education, BEETROOT Academy, Innovation Centre Kosovo (ICK) and Link Mitrovica (Innovation Centre in North Mitrovica) offering classing in English to both Serbian and Albanian students. Looking at the average student enrolments in the various training programs offered by the above-mentioned providers, we can see that the average number of female students enrolled is slowly increasing, from an average of **23.68%** in 2018 to **26.34% last year**. It is worth mentioning that the average number of female students enrolled at various trainings provided by VentureUP, the Incubator of the public university of Prishtina, has for the past three years been **51.02%**.

START-UP INCUBATORS

INNOVATION CENTRE KOSOVO (ICK) & VENTUREUP

Finally, we wanted to explore female participation in the Start-Up ecosystem. Innovation Centre Kosovo is the biggest business incubator in Kosovo who have supported over **432 Start-Up's since 2012**, while VentureUP is the business incubator of the public university of Prishtina, supporting Start-Up's founded by the students of this Institution. Looking at the participation of females in the business/incubation calls launched by these two incubators, **the participation of women is steadily growing**, from an average of **31.68%** in 2018 to **37.95%** in 2020.



Source: Andrew Neel (Unsplash)

PROGRAMS DEDICATED TO WOMEN & GIRLS IN STEM/ICT



The participation of women and girls in STEM and ICT has been **steadily growing over the years**. Various activities and programs have been implemented by numerous organizations partnering with donors in order to encourage women to pursue careers in **ICT** and equipping them with the adequate skills to succeed in this sector. Just as well, a number of different projects aiming to promote and encourage **STEM** education for young girls have been active for the past few years.

Some of these programs, that are still active today, are listed in the following page.

AGENCY FOR GENDER EQUALITY

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO

The Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) is a governmental agency operating under the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo. AGE is mandated to design, Implement, propose, coordinate and monitor public sales policy and Its use for gender equality. The agency Is responsible for promoting, protecting and advancing the protection of women and men in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life in Kosovo.



WWW.ABGJ.RKS-GOV.NET

JUNIOR GEEKS

EDITA TARANI, ZANA TABAKU, SHPEND LILA, ICK, KOSOVO US ALUMNI (KUSA) & SUPPORTED BY US EMBASSY IN PRISTINA

Junior Geeks is an educational and engaging flagship program dedicated to inspire and guide bright young Kosovars hone their skills in **STEAM** (Science, Technology, Entrepreneurship, Art & Mathematics) and channel their capacities for innovation. The mission of this program Is to give teenagers the opportunity to discuss, research and learn first hand about STEAM topics in a simulating and creative environment while inspiring love for science.



WWW.JUNIORGEEKS.NET

ERASMUS FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

KOSOVO ICT ASSOCIATION, INNOVATION CENTRE KOSOVO (ICK), HEIMERER COLLEGE & KOSOVA WOMEN4WOMEN

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which gives new or aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced entrepreneurs running small businesses in other Participating Countries. The exchange of experience takes place during a stay with the experienced entrepreneur, which helps the new entrepreneur acquire the skills needed to run a small firm. The host benefits from fresh perspectives on his/her business and gets the opportunities to cooperate with foreign partners or learn about new markets.

Currently, there are four implementing organizations of the EYE programme in Kosovo assisting young entrepreneurs.



WWW.ERASMUS-ENTREPRENEURS.EU

PPSE PROGRAM

SWISSCONTACT

The overall goal of the **Promoting Private Sector Employment (PPSE)** in Kosovo is to provide increased sustainable gainful employment for young women and men in Kosovo through small and medium enterprises that operate in well-organized and inclusive economic sectors. Building upon the results and project insights in Phase I (2014 – 2017), Phase II tackles private sector development and job creation with more emphasis on youth, women and minorities.



WWW.PPSE-KOSOVO.ORG

CONCLUSION

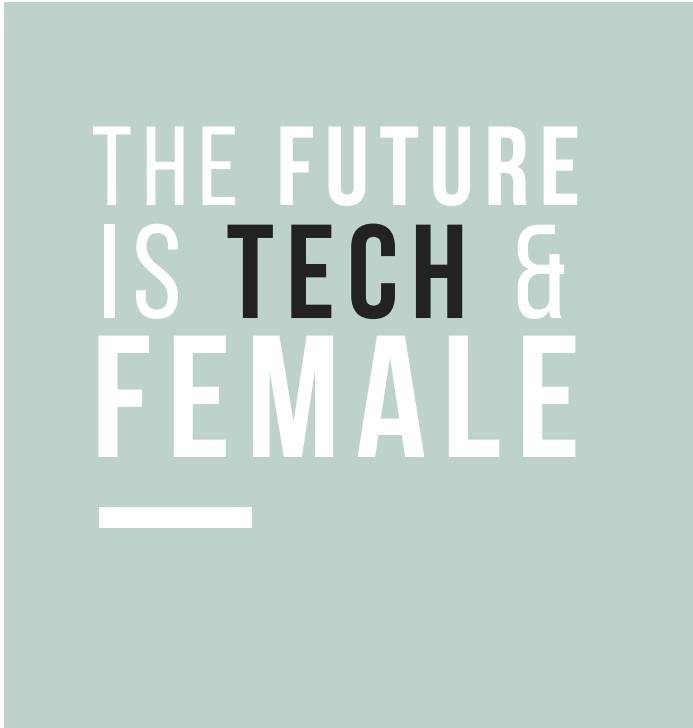
This report aims to highlight the current state of female participation, motivation and success in the local ICT sector as seen by female leaders and workforce themselves. Throughout the report, it is evident that women do have a place in the ICT industry and can achieve great things with a little support from the community.

Starting with the general analysis of the ICT companies in Kosovo, the report shows that greater numbers of women are joining the industry each year and that the gender balance is becoming more equal as the industry evolves. **More and more females are rising up in the leadership hierarchy**, managing large teams and leading companies that have earned their respect in both local and international markets.

Looking at the experiences women have been through in the sector, it is clear that there is room for improvement especially when it comes to earning the trust of male clients and teammates, but there are clear signs that this is changing and will continue to do so as long as there are **fierce, unapologetic and highly skillful women who tackle the norm and continuously strive for more.**

Regarding the academic and professional development of women in ICT related fields, it is encouraging to see that women are drawn to this career path and there are a large number of providers offering various programs aiming to equip their students with the right tools for success in the industry. It is especially encouraging to see that the number of female students pursuing Masters degrees in ICT related majors has surpassed the number of male candidates, highlighting the passion, willingness and drive that these women have.

Finally, the report highlights the need for a formal **Women in ICT network**, as an important tool for sharing experiences, learning from each other, serving as role model for young professionals encouraging them to join and exploring new ways of developing the industry. Working together and supporting each other is what got us to where we currently are and with a little push great things can be achieved.



THE FUTURE
IS **TECH** &
FEMALE

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<https://stikk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IT-Barometer-2019.pdf>

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WOMEN IN ICT / REPORT

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