



# RESEARCH ON MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO EFFORTS TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE IN ALBANIA

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# Abstract

Albania has been globally recognized for its commitment to reducing emissions and addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

Despite its vulnerability to climate impacts, the country has made significant strides in climate policy and adaptation programs. However, this research reveals that climate change research in Albania remains in its early stages, particularly in areas like climate science, energy efficiency, and environmental management. Furthermore, funding for environmental and climate initiatives falls short of EU standards. While Albania has made progress, alignment with EU standards is ongoing.

This report, produced by Observatori Albania in cooperation with FER and with the support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia\*, underscores the urgent need to integrate gender considerations into climate policies and strategies. The study finds that gender mainstreaming in Albania's climate policies has yet to be fully realized, emphasizing the importance of gender-sensitive programs, especially in the agriculture sector.

The research, part of the "Youth Build Sustainable Environmental Solutions" project, seeks to understand climate policies in Albania through a gender lens and assess their impact on gender equality.

The study highlights Albania's vulnerability to natural disasters, ranking high for landslide, earthquake, and drought risks. Vulnerable groups, including the elderly, disabled, children, and women, bear the brunt of these disasters. Rising temperatures and heatwaves disproportionately affect the elderly and children. Women, often primary caregivers, face additional challenges during climate-related disasters.

Albania's progress toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) shows moderate advancement in gender equality (SDG 5) and challenges in clean water and sanitation (SDG 6).

Climate change impacts are not uniform; they vary based on gender, economic status, and social circumstances. Women's vulnerabilities are rooted in historical gender inequalities, limiting their access to resources and opportunities.

The study urges concrete measures to address gender and social inequalities linked to climate change. Expanding environmental education, enhancing healthcare services, and promoting gender equality in political representation are vital steps.

The desk review also delves into climate change's impact on Albanian territory, highlighting shorter winters, prolonged droughts, increased fires, and coastal erosion.

Albania's strategies aim to adapt to climate change's effects, but the country's economic reliance on agriculture, primarily led by women, makes food security a concern.

In conclusion, Albania faces significant climate challenges, with gender disparities in climate impacts and adaptation. The study calls for urgent action to address these inequalities, align policies with EU standards, and strengthen environmental and climate initiatives.

In pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of climate change and its gender dimensions in Albania, this research presents a meticulously crafted approach. By conducting diverse focus groups and administering questionnaires, we delved into the perceptions, reflections, and experiences of participants before and after their discussions. This endeavor aims to shed light on the nuanced impact of climate change on various demographic groups and foster critical dialogue on this pressing issue.

\*The information and views set out in this report are those of the authors and do not reflect the official opinion of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia

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# 1. Introduction

On a global scale, Albania has earned recognition for its unwavering commitment to reducing emissions and adapting to the challenges of climate change. Albania's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is indisputable. Over time, public awareness of the profound risks has steadily increased, underpinned by a range of initiatives, including the landmark approval of the Climate Change Law in 2020, the diligent implementation of adaptation programs, and the proactive involvement of communities in capacity-building and awareness-raising endeavors.

While various monitoring reports on Albania's progress in implementing international instruments exist, it remains evident that climate change research in Albania is still in its nascent stages. Although climate change has made inroads into the lexicon of the research community, especially within the education system, the outputs in the realm of climate science, energy efficiency, and environmental management remain notably scarce.

Furthermore, the state budget allocated for environmental and climate change initiatives remains modest in 2022, falling short of the requirements for full compliance with the EU acquis. While Albania has made some strides in preparing to combat climate change, alignment with EU standards remains a work in progress, as indicated by the communication on EU Enlargement policy for Albania in 2022.

It is crucial to emphasize that climate change is an all-encompassing concern that transcends sectors and regions throughout Albania. Many policies and strategies have either been developed or are currently under development to address climate change in various sectors and regions. However, there remains a noticeable gap in addressing environmental and climate change concerns at the local and municipal levels.

Despite the progress made by Albania in mobilizing national mechanisms to tackle climate change, the intersection of gender and climate change continues to be underexplored. National policies have not yet comprehensively integrated gender mainstreaming into climate change strategies, as highlighted in The Fourth National Communication of Albania on Climate Change in September 2022. Consequently, it is imperative that gender considerations are given due attention when designing programs and projects at the community level, particularly within the agriculture sector.

This research initiative on mainstreaming gender into efforts to combat climate change in Albania is undertaken as part of the broader project, "Youth Build Sustainable Environmental Solutions." This project receives funding support from the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, International Development Cooperation (MFEA), and is executed in partnership with the "Forum for Equitable Development – FER" in Ljubljana, Slovenia, which hosted a delegation from the Observatory for Children and Youth Rights in Slovenia for five days of meetings, conferences, and exchange on topics related to environmental, social, and economic sustainability [1].

The primary objective of this research is to cultivate a deeper understanding of climate policies in Albania, with a gender-sensitive lens, and to assess their impact on gender equality. This inquiry relies on a comprehensive review of existing literature, policies, activities, projects, and programs in Albania, coupled with insights derived from various focus groups and community perspectives.

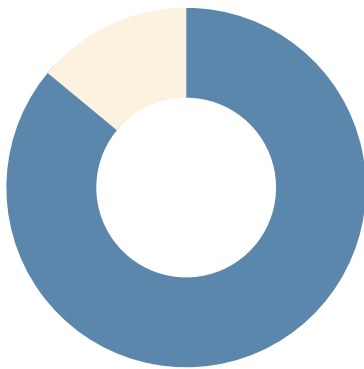
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[1] Annex 2, pag. 40

## 2. How climate change affects the Albanian population: a focus on women's condition

Albania stands among the nations of the world most profoundly affected by the economic ramifications of environmental catastrophes triggered by the dual forces of climate change and human activities interlinked with it.

The probability of the territory in being affected by a natural disaster is relatively high: on a global scale, Albania is ranked 41st for the risk of landslides, 43rd for earthquakes, and 58th for droughts.



86% of the Albanian territories (where over 88.5% of its GDP is generated) are exposed to two or more natural disasters

The economic losses caused by these disasters between 1974 and 2006 were estimated at an average of 68.7 million USD per year, or about 2.5% of GDP.



Between 1989 and 2006 floods alone had been accounted for the 31% of the disasters that occurred in Albania [2]

[2] (ESMF\_CRAD-19-12-2022 pag 112); <https://www.bujqesia.gov.al/kerkese-per-pjesemarrje-ne-konsultimin-publik-ne-kuader-te-projektit-qendrushmeria-ndaj-klimes-dhe-zhvillimit-te-bujqesise-crad/>

The groups most vulnerable to these disasters are the elderly, the disabled, children, and women.

Over the past two decades, the relentless ascent in temperatures and the recurring scourge of heatwaves have wrought a toll of fatalities and illnesses, exacting a particularly heavy toll on the elderly population, whose numbers have swelled to more than triple their count in the 1990s.

Children are also suffering the effects of the climate crisis, as they are more vulnerable to water or food poisoning that occurs more frequently due to high temperatures [3].

In the context of catastrophic natural events, a discernible pattern emerges, highlighting that women bear a disproportionately greater burden compared to men, underscoring the unique vulnerabilities they face during such crises. For example, following a flood (which as mentioned before is one of the most frequent climate change-related events in Albania):



Climate change is significantly amplifying the occurrence and severity of natural disasters across the globe. The rise in global temperatures, driven by the escalation of greenhouse gas emissions, is fueling a cascade of interconnected impacts. Increasing temperatures contribute to the intensification of heatwaves, fostering conditions conducive to wildfires and droughts.

[3] [<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/15812-Albania%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf> pag 24.]

[4] [Fourth National Communication of Albania to the UNFCCC\_EN\_Sep2022, pag 230, <https://www.undp.org/albania/publications/fourth-national-communication-albania-climate-change>]



Altered precipitation patterns result in more extreme rainfall events, leading to heightened risks of floods and landslides in some regions, while others face prolonged droughts and water scarcity.

Rising sea levels, a consequence of melting ice caps and glaciers, amplify the destructive potential of storm surges during tropical cyclones and hurricanes, especially in coastal areas. The warming of oceans energizes these storms, enhancing their intensity and causing more widespread damage.

Beyond these direct effects, climate change disrupts ecosystems, triggers secondary consequences such as permafrost thaw, which further destabilizes landscapes, and, most of all, exacerbates socio-economic vulnerabilities. Climate change, in fact, can affect women more than men on average due to a combination of social, economic, and biological factors. These gendered impacts of climate change are often referred to as "climate gender disparities" or "climate gender inequalities."

Some key reasons are:

- **Socioeconomic Vulnerability:** In many parts of the world - especially in developing countries such as Albania - women are more likely to be economically disadvantaged and have fewer resources to cope with the impacts of climate change. They may have limited access to education, employment opportunities, and financial resources, making it harder for them to adapt to changing environmental conditions.
- **Unequal Access to Resources:** Women often have less access to land, credit, and technology, which are essential for adaptation and resilience in the face of climate-related challenges. This limited access can hinder their ability to farm, generate income, or engage in sustainable livelihoods.
- **Gender Roles and Responsibilities:** Traditional gender roles often place a heavier burden on women for household and caregiving responsibilities. In the wake of extreme weather events or environmental changes, women may be responsible for caring for children, the elderly, and the sick, which can limit their capacity to respond to crises.
- **Healthcare and Reproductive Impact:** Climate change can exacerbate health risks, particularly for pregnant women and women on their periods. The changing climate can lead to increased incidences of vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, and reduced access to healthcare, disproportionately affecting women and children.

- **Forced Displacement:** Climate change-related disasters, such as floods, droughts, and sea-level rise, can lead to displacement. Women often face unique challenges in migration, including safety concerns and the risk of exploitation and violence. It is not uncommon for women to find themselves in the small, decaying spaces of the home during extreme weather events, preventing them from escaping. In some developing countries, women are also not taught how to swim, and this is a major constraint when they have to save themselves from floods
- **Gender-Based Violence:** The stress of climate change and displacement can increase the risk of gender-based violence against women. Women may be more vulnerable to various forms of violence during and after climate-related disasters.
- **Participation and Decision-Making:** Women are frequently underrepresented in decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, limiting their ability to influence policies and actions that affect them.

As climate change continues unabated, the frequency and severity of natural disasters are likely to escalate, underscoring the urgent need for global efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate.

Efforts are being made to address these gender disparities in climate change impacts. This includes incorporating a gender perspective into climate policies, supporting women's empowerment and education, promoting women's participation in climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives, and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities.

It's essential to recognize that the specific impacts of climate change on women can vary significantly depending on geographic location, culture, and socioeconomic factors. Nevertheless, addressing gender disparities is a critical aspect of building resilience and achieving sustainable climate solutions.

## 2.1 SDG 5 and SDG 6, UN data on Albania's progress on the 2030 agenda

The United Nations established the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, coinciding with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The 2030 Agenda, as it's commonly referred to, aims to offer meaningful benchmarks for all nations to foster a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable world. Presently, among the 166 nations committed to the 2030 Agenda, Albania ranks 54th, showcasing significant progress in SDGs 1 (no poverty) and 13 (climate action) [5].

Regarding SDG 5, which seeks gender equality by 2030, Albania is making moderate strides. This progress can be attributed to an increase in women holding parliamentary positions and a rise in the number of girls earning high school diplomas, university degrees, and entering the workforce. Nevertheless, women in Albania still face complex challenges, mainly due to their predominant role in domestic and family care responsibilities.

Concerning SDG 6, focusing on "clean water and sanitation," considerable challenges persist. The percentage of treated wastewater remains significantly low, albeit there have been improvements in basic sanitation access.



[5] <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/albania>

These indicators serve as valuable tools to scrutinize various aspects of sustainability within the population's living conditions. Climate change undoubtedly affects a nation's water and food supply, physical and mental health, and economy. However, these impacts vary significantly depending on an individual's gender and their economic and social circumstances.

According to "The Gendered Dimension of Climate Justice" report by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, the effects of climate change differ for women and men [6].

The root cause of these disparities can be traced back to centuries of social inequality, which has limited women's access to resources, education, and job opportunities compared to men.

The 2022 UN Women report [7] and recent statements by President Sima Bahous [8] confirm that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, recent armed conflicts, and climate change, the global gender gap is widening rather than narrowing.

This underscores the urgency of taking concrete measures to address gender and social inequalities linked to climate change. These inequalities result from differences in how men and women allocate their time, access assets and credit, interact with formal institutions, participate in policy discussions, and access sex-disaggregated data for policy formulation [9].

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[6] [ A. Bonewit, & R. Shreeves, The gender dimension of climate justice, Technical Report from the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2015, da <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1334640/the-gender-dimension-of-climate-justice/1940363/> ]

[7] [ UN Women report, 2022: A. Bonewit, & R. Shreeves, The gender dimension of climate justice, Technical Report from the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2015, da <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1334640/the-gender-dimension-of-climate-justice/1940363/> ]

[8] S. Bahous, UN Women, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/statement-rising-challenges-2023-women-and-girls>

[9] [World Bank Group (2016). Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction, and Inclusive Growth. URL: S. Bahous, UN Women, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/statement-rising-challenges-2023-women-and-girls>].

One effective initiative to consider is the expansion of environmental education. In Albania, this subject is relatively new and not widely recognized. According to the Fourth National Communication of Albania to the UNFCCC, environmental education is included in biology, social studies, and geography courses at the pre-university level. Universities have recently begun to offer related programs, and extracurricular activities are increasingly providing opportunities for young people to learn about these issues [10].

## 2.2 National policies on climate change, as well as gender policies

The effects of climate change on the Albanian territory are becoming increasingly evident. These include:

- **Shorter and warmer winters, longer and hotter summers:** winters are becoming shorter and milder, while summers are growing longer and hotter. Shorter and warmer winters have profound impacts on water and snow dynamics, reshaping ecosystems and water availability. The reduction in snowpack, attributed to rising temperatures and abbreviated winter seasons, diminishes the natural storage of water in mountainous regions. This decline in snow accumulation affects downstream water sources, leading to water scarcity, altered runoff patterns, and potential disruptions in agricultural and municipal water supplies. The earlier onset of snowmelt, a consequence of warmer temperatures, can disrupt the synchronized release of water, affecting aquatic habitats and exacerbating flood risks. Additionally, the shift from snow to rain during winter precipitation events can increase the likelihood of flooding and landslides, posing challenges for both natural landscapes and human infrastructure. Beyond hydrological impacts, shorter and warmer winters also influence ecosystems adapted to seasonal snow cover, potentially leading to shifts in plant and animal distributions.
- **Long periods of summer drought:** extended periods of drought during the summer months have become a common occurrence. The soils struggle to absorb water due to extended dry spells, leading to difficulties in retaining moisture

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[10] [Fourth National Communication of Albania to the UNFCCC\_EN\_Sep2022, pag 206]; <https://www.undp.org/albania/publications/fourth-national-communication-albania-climate-change>

- **Increased incidence of fires:** the heightened temperatures and prolonged dry periods have contributed to a rise in forest fires
- **Coastal erosion:** rising sea levels are causing coastal erosion, posing a significant threat to Albania's coastal areas [11]

Furthermore, Albania's First and Second National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) project alarming temperature increases: approximately 1 degree Celsius by 2025, 1.8 degrees Celsius by 2050, and a staggering 3.6 degrees Celsius by 2100 [12].

In recent years, the number of organizations dedicated to sustainability in Albania has grown. However, these entities often grapple with protracted and bureaucratic processes, frequently confined to Tirana. These challenges disproportionately affect rural associations, making it difficult for them to attain official recognition. Unfortunately, this hurdle often hampers representation for the marginalized minorities (especially women and children with disabilities) who need it most [13].

To address these challenges, the Albanian government established the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change (IMWGCC) in 2014. This body is tasked with developing new proposals, revising existing policies with adaptation strategies, and coordinating all stakeholders involved in addressing climate issues.

Moreover, in 2019, Albania approved the National Strategy on Climate Change, which seeks to enhance public awareness of climate change impacts through education and training.

The Framework of Priority Actions on Climate Change, which is an integral component of the National Strategy for Climate Change, is predominantly based on a document known as the National Adaptation Plan for Albania, or NAP. The development of this plan spanned a two-year period, from 2016 to 2018. The formulation of the National Adaptation Plan for Albania was a collaborative effort, with key support provided by PlanAdapt. Working in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MoTE), the Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy (MoIE), and the Inter-ministerial Working Group for Climate Change (IWGCC), along with cooperation from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), PlanAdapt guided the entire process.

[11] [ (ESMF\_CRAD-19-12-2022 pag. 80)]; <https://www.bujqesia.gov.al/kerkese-per-pjesemarrje-ne-konsultimin-publik-ne-kuader-te-projektit-qendrushmeria-ndaj-klimes-dhe-zhvillimit-te-bujqesise-crad/>

[12] [<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/albnc2.pdf>]

[13] [UN-HR-SpecialProcedure-preliminary\_Observation\_recomandationalbania-en-24Nov2022, pag 6]; <https://www.unhcr.org/events/unhcr-ngo-2022-quarterly-consultations>

PlanAdapt comprises an interdisciplinary team of experts specializing in climate risk and resilience issues, with members from various parts of the world. Their initial support included the development of a financing strategy for the National Adaptation Plan, aimed at providing guidelines for funding future climate change adaptation activities.

The establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Climate Change (IMWGCC) was seen as a clear and public commitment by governmental authorities to enhance understanding of climate-related risks and the urgent need for action. This new institutional framework, along with identified shortcomings, was shaped through the utilization of the Stocktaking National Adaptation Planning (SNAP) process.

The outcomes of this effort highlighted several key points: inadequate coordination among various sectors, a lack of consolidated structures within institutions dealing with climate issues, but also opportunities for integrating climate adaptation into policies and harnessing available climate-related funding within the NAP framework. The plan was officially unveiled in June 2016 during the NAP assembly, which was organized in collaboration with the NAP Global Network.

However, it is worth noting that the Inter-Ministerial Group for Climate Change, which was established as a coordinating intergovernmental body, has not been functioning effectively.

The absence of such a coordinating structure has resulted in the fragmentation of interventions. Furthermore, inadequate information exchange regarding the progress of strategy implementation across various institutions has led to disjointed and inefficient climate adaptation efforts. While the Ministry of Tourism and Environment is recognized as the primary institution responsible for overseeing legal and strategic processes related to climate, the level of inter-institutional communication required for harmonized and efficient processes at the technical level has been lacking.

In Albania, the integration of gender considerations into the climate and transparency framework has been evaluated by UNDP through a comprehensive analysis of policy and legislative documents. This examination [14] reveals significant findings:

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[14]

<https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/ALBANIA%20Eneida%20Rabdishta.pdf>

### **a) Climate Change related**

- A striking absence of direct references to gender equality is observed in policy documents, with the language used being notably gender-blind.
- The Cross-Sector Strategy on Environment (2013-2020) lacks a specific section dedicated to gender equality.
- Gender is indirectly mentioned in the Strategy on Climate Change and Action Plans, particularly in the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Medium-Term Budget Plan, but it does not take center stage.
- Notably, the Draft Law on Climate Change demonstrates a more explicit commitment to gender considerations. Act 27 calls for the development of a gender mainstreaming guide for climate change mitigation and adaptation programs, and Act 29 encourages various entities to adapt to technological progress and innovation in accordance with the law.

### **b) Gender related**

- The Third National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) and its Action Plan for 2016-2020 do not address climate change or environmental aspects and thus miss the intersection of gender with these vital concerns.
- The National Review for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action-Beijing+25, reports a gap in the integration of gender perspectives into policies and programs related to disaster risk reduction, climate resilience, and mitigation.

The review highlights a multifaceted approach to incorporating gender considerations within Albania's climate and transparency framework. While the Draft Law on Climate Change signifies significant progress, other policy documents lack comprehensive gender integration. Addressing this gap is vital for promoting gender equality within the context of climate and environmental policies and strategies. The need for a more integrated approach is underscored by the dearth of gender references in key documents.

Furthermore, Albania's engagement with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) demonstrates a commitment to gender inclusion.



The inclusion of a chapter on Gender Integration in Policies and Programs addressing Climate Change in the Fourth National Communication is a positive step: the comprehensive survey conducted sheds light on the gender disparities in perceiving and addressing climate change. The survey revealed that 39% of respondents believe in differences between men and women's abilities to react to climate change, with 53% of them asserting that men are more capable of addressing climate challenges.

The analysis further indicates that women, heavily engaged in farming, especially in livestock activities, bear a disproportionate burden of climate risks. The representation of men in administrative roles on farms, coupled with their predominant role in making investment and financial decisions within households, reinforces gender imbalances. The respondents also indicate that the freedom to move outside the village is predominantly enjoyed by men.

The drafting of a gender equality Action Plan, coupled with a pilot study focusing on agriculture and renewable energy sources, underscores the nation's commitment to this cause.

The revision of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in line with the Climate Promise Package offers an opportunity to interlink climate change and gender equality, promoting inclusive development and strengthening national capacities.

The Action Plan developed by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment outlines key priorities, focusing on gender differences in adaptation needs, promoting equitable participation, and ensuring equal access to financial resources resulting from adaptation investments.

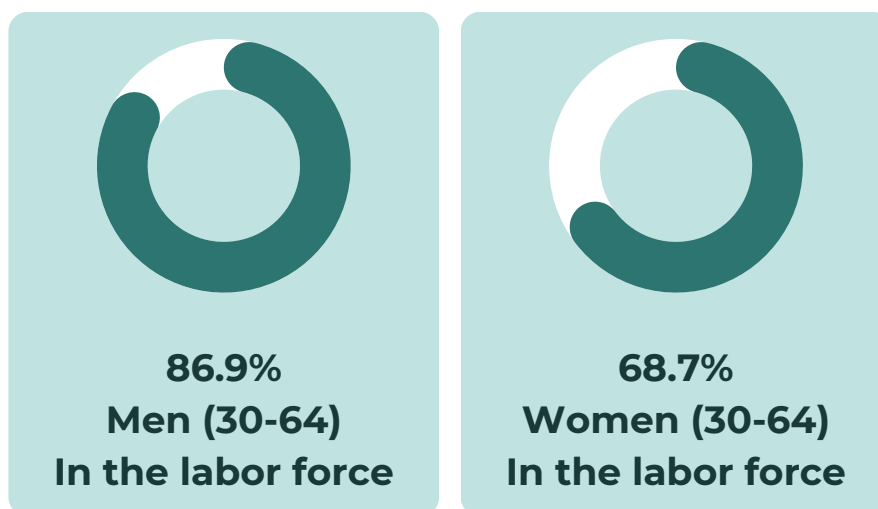
A structured approach has been implemented, involving assessment, stakeholder engagement, selection of action categories, and peer review. This includes promoting gender equality in policymaking, updating strategic documents, developing gender-based climate change projects, and engaging stakeholders in the monitoring of Action Plans.

Crucially, there is a need to plan and budget for gender-sensitive activities, provide training, and ensure alignment with regional Action Plan frameworks. This multifaceted approach reflects Albania's commitment to mainstreaming gender considerations in the climate and transparency framework, fostering inclusivity, and addressing gender disparities in climate action.

## 2.3 Gender dynamics in Albania

In recent years, urban migration in Albania has facilitated the inclusion of women in society, enabling them to work, socialize, and enjoy greater comfort. This has marked a departure from traditional gender roles that once confined women to domestic duties [15]. However, some gender norms and patriarchal legacies persist, with women still bearing the bulk of household responsibilities.

While access to education is equitable for men and women, significant employment disparities persist. In the 30 to 64 age group, 86.9% of men participate in the labor force compared to 68.7% of women, a gap that widens further in rural areas. Rural women often spend long hours managing childcare, preparing meals, and maintaining their homes. Many employed women hold lower-paying jobs, and they frequently relinquish these positions after childbirth. Notably, 18% of unemployed women cite overwhelming unpaid housework as their reason for staying at home [16].



[15] [Negotiating between patriarchy and emancipation rural to urban migrant women in Albania, pag 12]; <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0966369X.2011.610096>

[16] [UN-HR-SpecialProcedure-preliminary\_Observation\_recomandationalbania-en-24Nov2022, pag 4]; <https://www.unhcr.org/events/unhcr-ngo-2022-quarterly-consultations>

In this regard, it is estimated that men enjoy 137.2% more leisure time than women, particularly in rural areas [17].

These numbers may finally drop, as there has been a 50 % increase of women in parliament in recent years (2009-2016). The parliament currently consists of 92 men (65.7 %) and 48 women (34.3 %); the speaker of the parliament is a woman and over 70 % of the ministers in the central government are women. This representation can make the achievement of SDG5 less distant and more obtainable. However, there remains the problem of women living in rural areas, where women's political representation is still very low [18].



**50%**

**Increase of women  
in Parliament  
(2009-2016)**



**137%**

**Average leisure  
time that Albanian  
men enjoy more  
than women**



**96%**

**Domestic chores  
carried out by  
women**

[17] (report Albania, wecf, pag 2); <https://www.women2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Albania-Final.pdf>

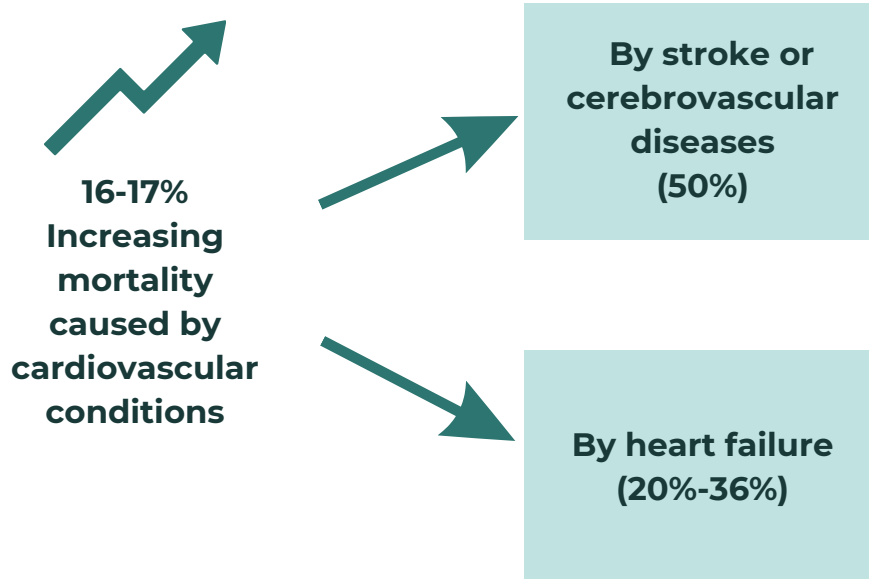
[18] [UN-HR-SpecialProcedure-preliminary\_Observation\_recomandationalbania-en-24Nov2022, pag 3, par. 2]; <https://www.unhcr.org/events/unhcr-ngo-2022-quarterly-consultations>

## 2.4 Health and hygiene

Healthcare services in Albania often lack efficiency and sufficiency, with uneven distribution across the country. Inequalities in health treatments and health insurance are not uncommon [19].

Due to rising temperatures, deteriorating air quality and increasing environmental disasters, Albania must expect an increase in the number of people in need of medical care. The increasingly hot summers with their heat waves have led to an increase in illnesses (such as gastroenteritis and heart problems) and heat-related deaths in recent years, especially among the elderly [20].

### During two heat waves in Albania in 2017



[19] [\*Kalaja, R. and Xhafa, H. (2016). Patient satisfaction with health care services in Albania. Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. 5(1). DOI: 10.5901/ajis.2016.v5n1p295]

[20] [Fourth National Communication of Albania to the UNFCCC\_EN\_Sep2022, pag 175]; <https://www.undp.org/albania/publications/fourth-national-communication-albania-climate-change>

Urban centers in Albania face worsening air quality, primarily due to older diesel-powered vehicles and industrial emissions, notably from agriculture.

Key problems include:

- nitrogen fertilizer pollution in water and air
- the slash-and-burn technique, which releases fine dust particles and ash into the air [21].

In terms of water, tap water is often undrinkable in Albania, with intermittent availability in rural areas. This poses challenges, particularly for girls who must miss school during their menstrual cycles. Approximately 63% of Albanian women living in peri-urban areas describe their sanitary conditions as poor [22].

The spread of diseases related to climate change and inadequate sanitation disproportionately affects women who are often the primary caregivers and more susceptible to infections during menstruation and pregnancy.

Additionally, climate change may increase the risk of pandemics [23], placing a heavier care burden on women, who traditionally handle about 75% of unpaid household and family care work. This percentage has risen to 79% during the first months of COVID-19 pandemic [24].

As a consequence, we can expect an increasing drop-out of women and girls from studies and work.

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[21] (ESMF\_CRAD-19-12-2022 pag. 81); <https://www.bujqesia.gov.al/kerkese-per-pjesemarrje-ne-konsultimin-publik-ne-kuader-te-projektit-qendrushmeria-ndaj-klimes-dhe-zhvillimit-te-bujqesise-crad/>

[22] (report Albania, wecf, pag 2) <https://www.women2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Albania-Final.pdf>

[23] ( C.J. Carlson, G.F. Albery, C. Mero.,C.H. Trisos., C.M. Zipfel, E.A. Eskew, ... & S. Bansal, Climate change increases cross-species viral transmission risk, Nature, 1-1, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04788-w>)

[24] (K. Power, The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the care burden of women and families, Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy, 16(1), pp. 67-73, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2020.1776561> )

Another aspect as interesting to consider as it is challenging to address, given recent studies, is that of mental health. Recent scientific papers [25] highlight a direct correlation between climate change and the increase in psychiatric disorders.

Many disorders are associated with the presence of extreme weather events, sometimes manifesting even before the event itself.

The most common ones include anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, post-traumatic stress disorders, and suicidal thoughts [26].

Having to grapple with the reality of climate change gives rise to what is called "eco-anxiety," the profound sense of discomfort and fear experienced at the recurring thought of possible disasters linked to global warming and its environmental effects.

On a large scale can divide the effects of climate change on mental health into:

- Acute, often related to extreme events such as hurricanes, floods, and fires
- Subacute, linked to the uncertainty of the future, with a strong sense of anxiety due to the perception of powerlessness
- Long-term outcomes, the consequences that result in climate migrations, forms of violence, adaptation [27], and chronic stress.

On a small scale, heatwaves alone have a devastating effect on the human mind, primarily creating mood disorders and anxiety [28].

Indeed, the correlation between climate and mental health does not occur in a single direction: It has been reported [29] that individuals already suffering from mental illnesses are at triple the risk of mortality during a heatwave compared to those without such conditions.

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[25] <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2020.00074/full?ref=lawyersfornature.com#B54>

[26] [Ursano RJ, Morganstein JC, Cooper R. Resource Document on Mental Health and Climate Change. APA Document (2017)]

[27] [Hsiang SM, Burke M, Miguel E. Quantifying the influence of climate on human conflict. Science (2013) 341:1212–26. doi: 10.1126/science.1235367]

[28] [Padhy SK, Sarkar S, Panigrahi M, Paul S. Mental health effects of climate change. Indian J Occup Environ Med (2015) 19:3–7. doi: 10.4103/0019-5278.156997]

[29] [APA. Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance. Washington, DC (2017)]

Once again, climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable and/or socially marginalized individuals. Exposure to heatwaves has a negative impact on the growth and development of children, both physically and mentally. Moreover, recent heatwaves in Europe have resulted in higher mortality rates among women than among men. Women, young people, and people with low socioeconomic status have been shown to be more vulnerable to anxiety and mood disorders related to disasters [30].

At the time of writing this report, it has not been possible to identify a study specifically targeting the investigation of mental health in Albania. Presumably, this country is still in the early stages of addressing this issue. However, studies conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) [31] indicate that globally, women are more susceptible to mental illnesses compared to men, particularly experiencing conditions such as anxiety, depression, and age-related diseases like dementia and psychosis. In this context, it can be anticipated that in Albania as well, women (especially older women) may be more prone to mental illnesses than men. As mentioned earlier, mental illnesses pose a risk factor during extreme weather events.

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[30] [WHO. Gender, Climate change and Health. Switzerland: World Health Organization (2014), ISBN: 9789241508186.]

[31] [ <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/43084/9241592532.pdf> ISBN: 9789241508186.]

## 2.5 Water and agriculture



The Albanian territory covers about 57% of a total watershed (basin) area of 44,000 km<sup>2</sup>, making it one of the countries on the European continent richest in terms of this precious resource.

While Albania is renowned for its extensive coastline along the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, which stretches for over 400 km, it is also home to numerous freshwater basins. The country boasts more than 200 natural lakes, primarily of karstic or glacial origin, and a dense network of over 150 rivers and streams. Water plays a vital role in the lives of the Albanian population, impacting the environment, economy, and society.

Figure 1: Hydrographic map of Albania [32]

Over the past decade, Albania has experienced an increase in environmental disasters, largely attributed to hail, pre-seasonal rainfalls, floods, severe droughts, high temperatures, and prolonged periods without rainfall [33].

[32] [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Hydrographic-map-of-Albania-modified-after-UNEP-2000-miho-et-al-2013\\_fig1\\_329558586](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Hydrographic-map-of-Albania-modified-after-UNEP-2000-miho-et-al-2013_fig1_329558586)

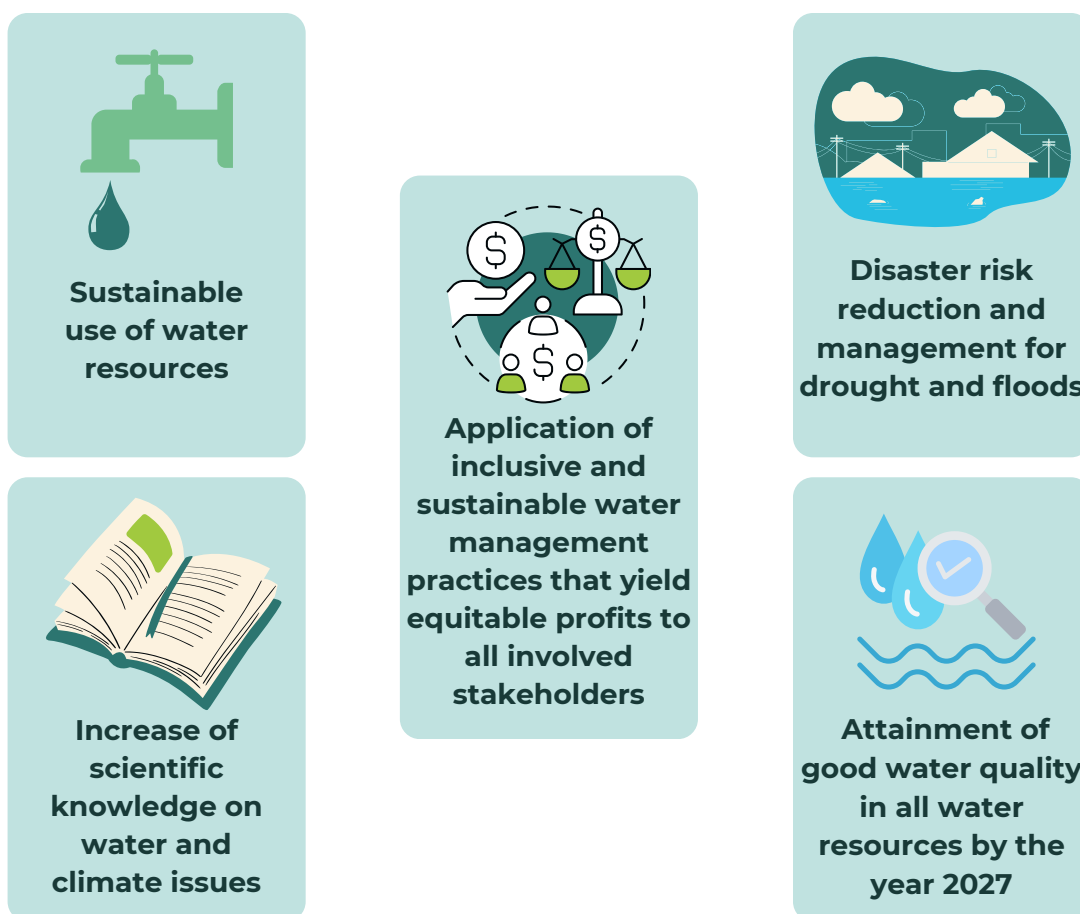
[33] Awareness of Climate Change Impact and Adaptation in Agriculture – The Case of Albania  
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/766cbc1b6d02b70418184b88e0ff9f5e/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026489>, pag 13



These events can be linked not only to climate change but also to human activities, such as unchecked urbanization and unrestricted land use which are making it increasingly difficult for the country to recover from extreme natural events [34]

Prolonged water scarcity poses a serious challenge for Albanian households, particularly for women and girls who face difficulties accessing water during menstruation or pregnancy. Additionally, schools struggle to maintain adequate hygiene standards in their facilities, leading to occasional closures due to the inability to clean them [35].

In response to these challenges, the Albanian Government approved a National Strategy on Water Resources in Integrated Management (2018-2027) in 2018. This strategy focuses on five key objectives [36]:



[34] (ESMF\_CRAD-19-12-2022 p. 88); <https://www.bujqesia.gov.al/kerkese-per-pjesemarrje-ne-konsultimin-publik-ne-kuader-te-projektit-qendrushmeria-ndaj-klimes-dhe-zhvillimit-te-bujqesise-crad/>

[35] (Albania report, WECF, <https://www.women2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Albania-Final.pdf>)

[36] [National Strategy of Water Resources Integrated Management 2018-2027. <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/alb181221.pdf>]

Another sector deeply affected by water scarcity is agriculture. In recent years, the demand for continuous soil irrigation has risen, as prolonged water deprivation diminishes the soil's ability to absorb water [37].

This phenomenon, known as water stress, is exacerbated by climate change. To address this issue, Albania has approved its National Strategy on Irrigation, Drainage, and Action Plan 2019-2031, which identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to irrigation, drainage, dams, reservoirs, and flood protection throughout the country. The objective of this Action Plan is to protect land from flooding and improve drainage and irrigation systems [38].

These strategies represent Albania's gradual adaptation to the effects of climate change, as the country is identified as the second most vulnerable in its geographical area [39].

The vulnerability stems from the fact that the Albanian economy, like that of many developing nations, heavily relies on agriculture, which serves as the primary livelihood for numerous farming families. The impacts of climate change threaten food security, thereby increasing poverty and inequality [40].

According to FAO [41], the agricultural sector is dominated by women, who are often the first to suffer the direct consequences of the impoverishment of land and the economic income derived from it. Albania is no exception, in fact, as reported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation [42], 54% of employed Albanian women work in this sector.

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[37] (Nelson et al., 2009); Awareness of Climate Change Impact and Adaptation in Agriculture – The Case of Albania  
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/766cbc1b6d02b70418184b88e0ff9f5e/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=2026489>, pag 13

[38] [<https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/15812-Albania%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf> p. 20, last par.]

[39] (Baettig et al., 2007); Awareness of Climate Change Impact and Adaptation in Agriculture – The Case of Albania, introduction]

[40] (Ahmed et al., 2009; FAO et al., 2018; Hertel and Rosch, 2010; Müller et al., 2011). [Awareness of Climate Change Impact and Adaptation in Agriculture – The Case of Albania-introduction].

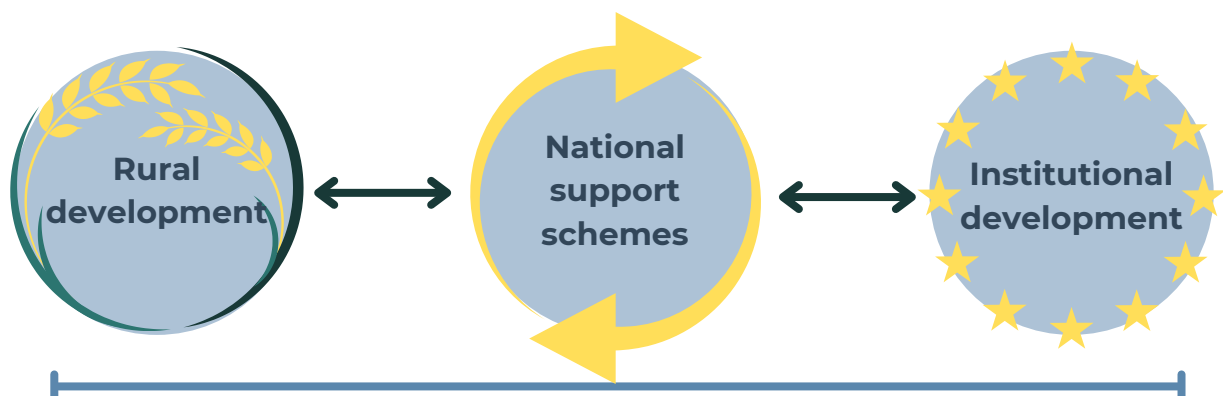
[41] <https://www.fao.org/reduce-rural-poverty/our-work/women-in-agriculture/en/>

[42]  
[https://ambtirana.esteri.it/ambasciata\\_tirana/it/ambasciata/news/dall\\_ambasciata/2021/02/comunicato-stampa-unwomen-fao-e.html](https://ambtirana.esteri.it/ambasciata_tirana/it/ambasciata/news/dall_ambasciata/2021/02/comunicato-stampa-unwomen-fao-e.html)

A study published in Nature [43] predicts that climate change will lead to irreversible biodiversity losses, potentially resulting in the extinction of numerous animal and plant species by 2100. This grim outlook has direct implications for women involved in agriculture, as it could lead to significant job and livelihood losses.

To address the multifaceted challenges in agriculture, Albania has devised the Inter Sectoral Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy (ISARDS; 2014-2020) as part of its efforts to promote rural development, reduce poverty, and address environmental and social concerns. It has three main objectives [44]:

1. Rural development policy: Elevating the sustainability and vitality of farms, bolstering the competitiveness of agricultural and primary food processing sectors, all while proactively harmonizing with the stringent standards of the European Union; fostering the revival, safeguarding, and enrichment of ecosystems intricately intertwined with agriculture and forestry; striving for equitable territorial progress in rural landscapes, championing social inclusion, precipitating the alleviation of poverty, and catalyzing robust economic advancement in rural domains; and facilitating the seamless transmission of wisdom and cutting-edge innovations across the realms of agriculture, forestry, and rural communities.
2. National support schemes: delivering direct assistance to farmers and implementing a spectrum of auxiliary support programs; spearheading the comprehensive advancement of rural infrastructure, fortifying the foundations of equitable opportunities through horizontal interventions; and championing the establishment of a robust insurance framework within the sphere of agriculture.
3. Institutional development, implementation and enforcement of EU regulatory requirements: Enhancing the overarching framework conducive to the holistic advancement of rural regions and the agricultural sector, strategically progressing towards seamless alignment with the rigorous requirements and standards set forth by the European Union.



[43] ( C.H. Trisos, C. Merow & A.L. Pigot, The projected timing of abrupt ecological disruption from climate change, Nature, 580(7804), pp. 496-501, 202, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2189-9> )

[44] <https://www.fao.org/3/ca8216en/CA8216EN.pdf>

## 2.6 Epilogue

The analysis conducted in this chapter aims to highlight the challenges that still affect Albania today, with a focus on the status of women in relation to climate change. Furthermore, it seeks to underscore the policies being adopted at the local and national levels, which currently serve as a crucial starting point in the country's adaptation strategy. In conclusion, according to the Climate Change Strategy in Albania (2020-2030); 2019-2021 Action Plan Monitoring [45], Albania is currently in the process of implementing these priority actions, which are grouped below in order of urgency.



- Overarching mainstreaming initiative. Establishing a package of mainstream instruments to climate change adaptation
- Implementation of a Monitoring System for the NAP (National Adaptation Plan for Albania)
- Initiative for capacity development on climate change adaptation
- Integrated Cross-Sectorial Plan for the Coast (ICPC)
- Initiative for Municipal Climate Change Adaptation Plans
- Adaptation in Tourism



- Steering of the adaptation process in Albania
- Climate Finance Readiness
- Climate Resilient Irrigation, Drainage and Flood Protection
- Integrated Water Resources Management
- Adaptation in the agricultural sector
- Promote implementation of Adaptation Strategy for Health Sector
- Upgrading civil defence preparedness and disaster risk reduction



[45] EN\_Report\_Monitoring of National Action Plan\_Jan2022-WMF-Alb.pdf



- Communication and outreach Initiatives
- Building the Resilience of KVLS (Kune Vain Lagoon System) through EbA (Ecosystem-based Adaptation)

## 3. The research on the Albanian territory

To comprehensively assess the ramifications of climate change on the Albanian population, a strategic approach was devised, involving the establishment of focus groups. These focus groups were thoughtfully diversified across dimensions such as gender, age, and background. This approach was chosen to enable a nuanced examination of people's perceptions both before and after engaging in group discussions. By doing so, we aimed to gain insight into how the insights and perspectives shared by others could serve as catalysts for critical thinking on the pressing and sensitive issue of climate change.

### 3.1 Focus groups analysis

A total of three distinct focus groups, comprising approximately 30 individuals, were meticulously assembled for this endeavor. Subsequently, a well-structured questionnaire was formulated, featuring direct inquiries regarding the recognition of climate change, its ensuing impacts, and the potential disparities in its effects based on factors such as gender and age.

Each discussion was meticulously conducted with the utmost commitment to preserving the autonomy of the participants' ideas. It was of paramount importance that we refrained from any undue influence, allowing the participants to organically inspire one another in deep contemplation. They did so by sharing personal anecdotes, engaging in thoughtful reflections, and drawing insightful comparisons to corroborate their individual theories.

The analysis of focus group discussions reveals a unanimous consensus among participants with respect to the acknowledgment of climate change. All participants unequivocally assert the occurrence of climate change.

The participants within the focus groups consistently assert that climate change is adversely affecting Albania. Particularly, the senior demographic underscores the negative impact of climate change on the nation. The repercussions of climate change, exacerbated by elevated temperatures, manifest prominently in various aspects. Participants highlight the severity of sudden weather changes and attribute these to the elevated temperatures, resulting in extreme weather events. Furthermore, concerns are expressed regarding water quality, with a consensus that water sources are becoming progressively contaminated. Notably, heightened temperatures are identified as a contributing factor to disrupted ecosystems, exemplified by increased instances of wildfires.

The participants emphasize the substantial implications of climate change on food safety and public health. Acknowledging the intrinsic connection between climate and agriculture, they express apprehension about the alteration of food production patterns, thereby impacting food security. This recognition underscores the significance of climate change as a multifaceted challenge with far-reaching consequences for environmental stability, weather patterns, and the overall well-being of the populace in Albania.

The impact of climate change on the lives of participants in focus groups is notably profound, as articulated through their firsthand experiences. Participants highlight adverse effects on their physical health, attributing these issues to elevated temperatures and the presence of heavy air.

Health concerns encompass problems with blood pressure, respiratory difficulties, and cardiovascular issues, indicating a direct correlation between climate-induced conditions and physical well-being.

Furthermore, the psycho-emotional toll of climate change is underscored, particularly among the elderly demographic. Participants express heightened levels of anxiety, stress, and depression attributed to the alterations in climate patterns. Instances of fainting are reported intermittently, reflecting the compounded stress resulting from temperature extremes and the associated emotional strain.

A significant concern raised by participants, revolves around the quality of daily water consumption. The non-portability of available water sources necessitates additional efforts and costs for procuring safe drinking water. Moreover, reliance on non-potable water for domestic purposes, such as cooking and washing produce, introduces uncertainties and anxieties among the elderly regarding potential health risks and diseases associated with water contamination.

This multifaceted impact on health, both physical and psychological, underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to mitigate and adapt to the challenges posed by climate change in the context of daily life.

Individuals with mental health conditions emerge as a particularly vulnerable demographic susceptible to the pronounced effects of climate change, as articulated by participants in focus groups. One respondent underscored the heightened vulnerability of individuals grappling with mental health challenges, emphasizing that the impact is perceived to surpass the tangible manifestations of rising temperatures. Specifically, a participant remarked, “My daughter, who copes with mental health issues, has experienced a discernible exacerbation of her condition, which she attributes to the prevailing climatic conditions”.

Furthermore, participants in the focus groups contextualized the current year, 2023, as a period marked by an intensified manifestation of climate change-related phenomena. Describing it as a “hot year” characterized by elevated temperatures, respondents conveyed a collective sentiment that the climatic events in this temporal frame have been particularly noteworthy. This characterization not only serves as an observation of the prevailing meteorological conditions but also reflects a perception of heightened environmental challenges and their associated impacts on various facets of daily life.

Following in-depth discussions within the focus group, participants have successfully cultivated a more comprehensive and precise comprehension of the concept of biodiversity.

The participants assert that Tirana is progressively evolving into a substantial industrial hub, and, in their perspective, areas such as Tirana Lake and the zoo constitute pivotal locations hot-spotting the biodiversity.

Participants have expressed that the current state of environmental education on television, particularly concerning climate change, is perceived as insufficient. Enhancing the quality and depth of educational content on these matters is deemed crucial and is anticipated to yield positive impacts.

The implementation of surveillance measures, such as the strategic placement of cameras in areas encompassing Tirana Lake and the zoo, is seen as a potentially influential factor in shaping citizen behavior. Participants believe that heightened awareness, fostered by the presence of cameras, could discourage detrimental actions, such as littering, thereby contributing to the preservation of the surrounding environment.

Participants suggest that the government should adopt more stringent punitive measures for individuals found violating laws related to public property, improper disposal of waste, tree damage, or water pollution. The reinforcement of penalties is seen as a necessary step in deterring such actions and promoting a greater sense of responsibility among citizens.

Recommending the inclusion of television programming dedicated to environmental issues and the impacts of climate change, participants anticipate a positive transformation in the condition of Tirana Lake and the Zoo. This addition is viewed as a means to augment public awareness and contribute to an overall improvement in the quality of life for residents and visitors in the vicinity.



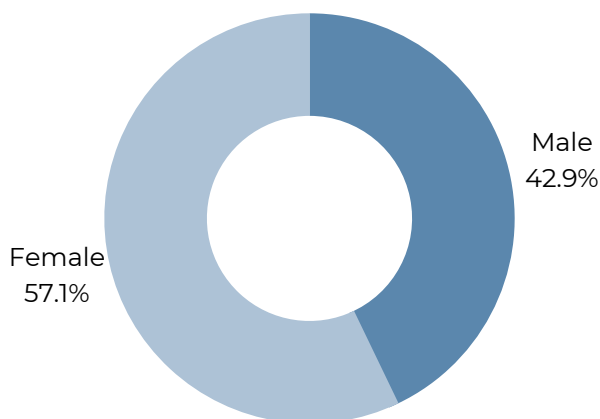
## 3.2 Questionnaire's outputs

Upon the conclusion of each invigorating focus group session, every participant was invited to complete a comprehensive questionnaire, designed to elicit a wealth of valuable insights.

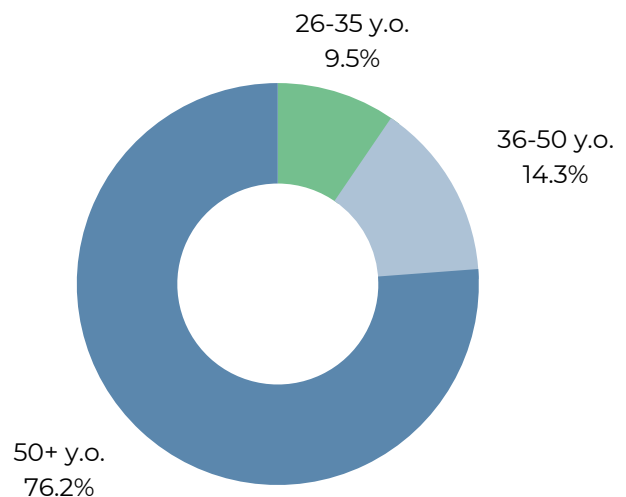
The first questions we included in the questionnaire pertain to the gender and age of the participants in the focus groups, in order to target the collected responses. Subsequently, we formulated the questions, providing the option to select a single response in some cases, and to express thoughts, suggestions, and reflections in others:

These questionnaires were filled by 21 focus groups' participants, 12 women and 9 men.

Gender of respondents

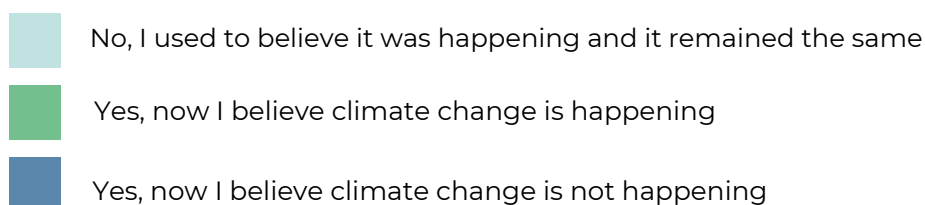
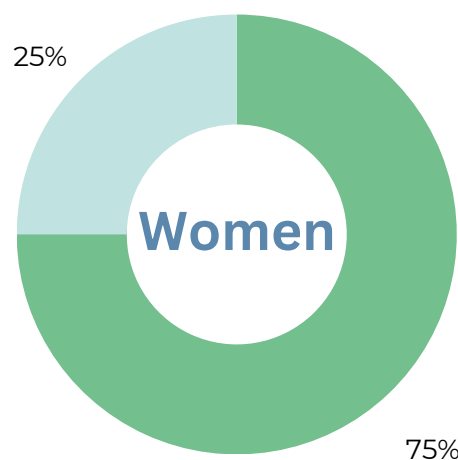
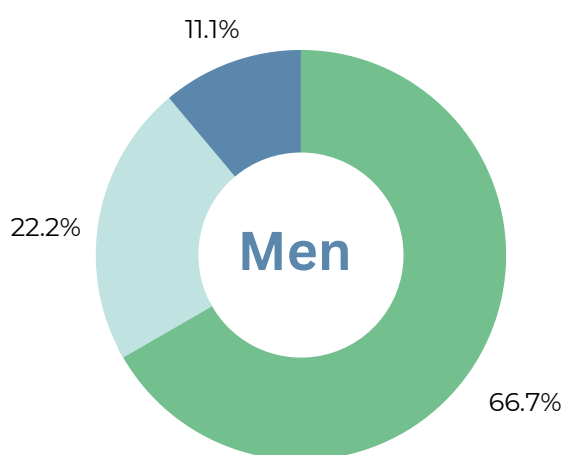


Age-group of respondents



### Question 1:

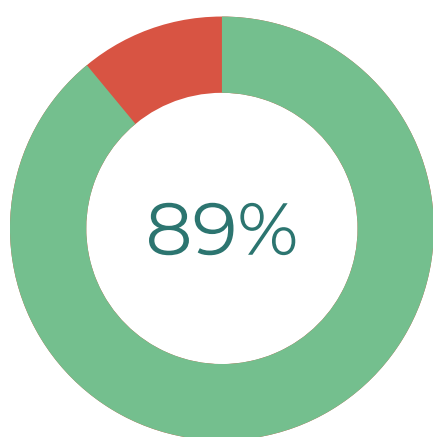
Did your perception of climate change changed after the focus group?



Both men and women report to have changed their perception on climate change after the focus groups and they now most of them believe that climate change is happening.

### Question 2:

Do you believe that climate change is affecting Albania?



Men

NO  
YES

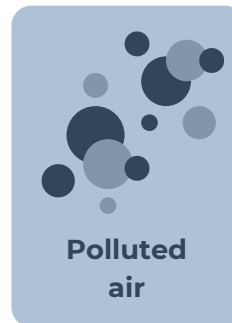
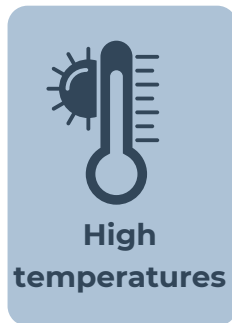


Women

Both, men and women, generally believe that climate change is affecting Albania. Although, women appear more persistent in this belief.

**If your answer is "Yes,"** how do you think climate change is affecting Albania? Justify your answer.

Both, men and women, stated that they see the impacts of climate change in :



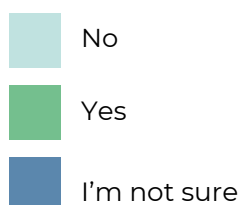
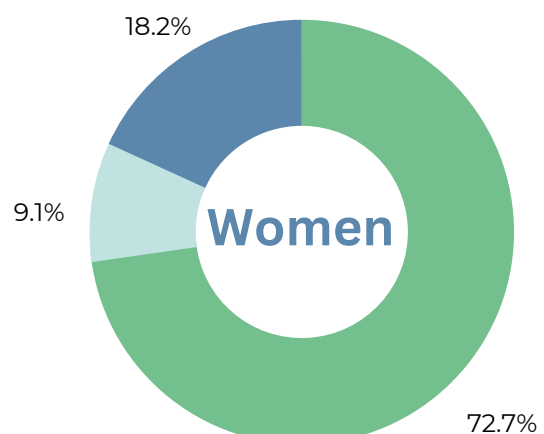
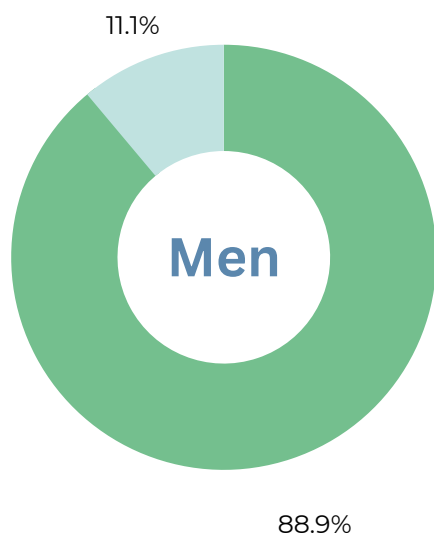
While women also see the impact of climate change in Albania in:



Extreme weather conditions

### Question 3:

Would you say that climate change is affecting your life?

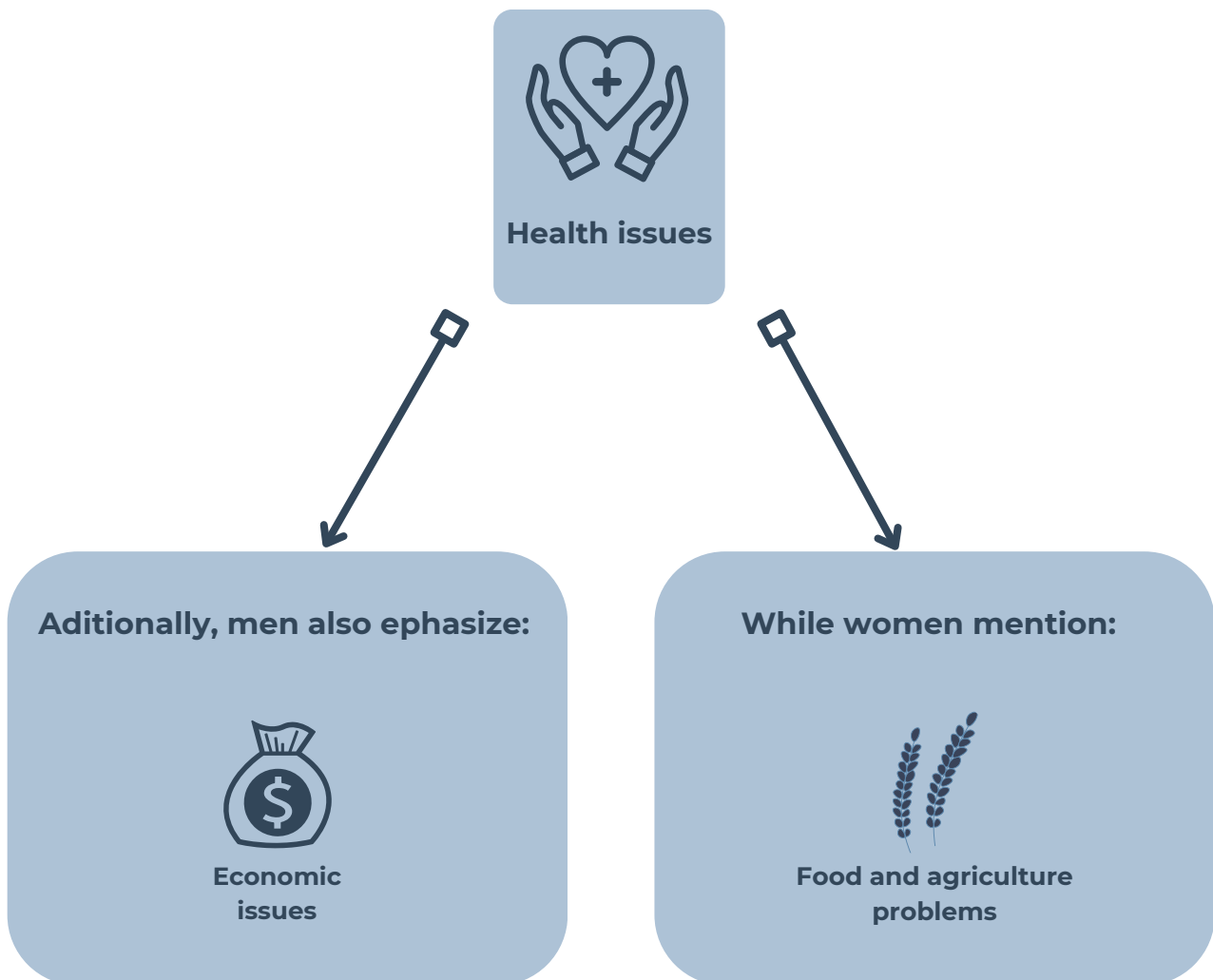


The majority of both, men and women, believe that climate change is effecting their life. On the meantime, 1 in 5 women are not sure whether it does.

If your answer is "yes," how do you think climate change is affecting your life?

50% of those who responded "yes" stated that climate change impacts their lives primarily in the realm of **health** [difficulty breathing, heart problems, vision issues, mental health, etc.].

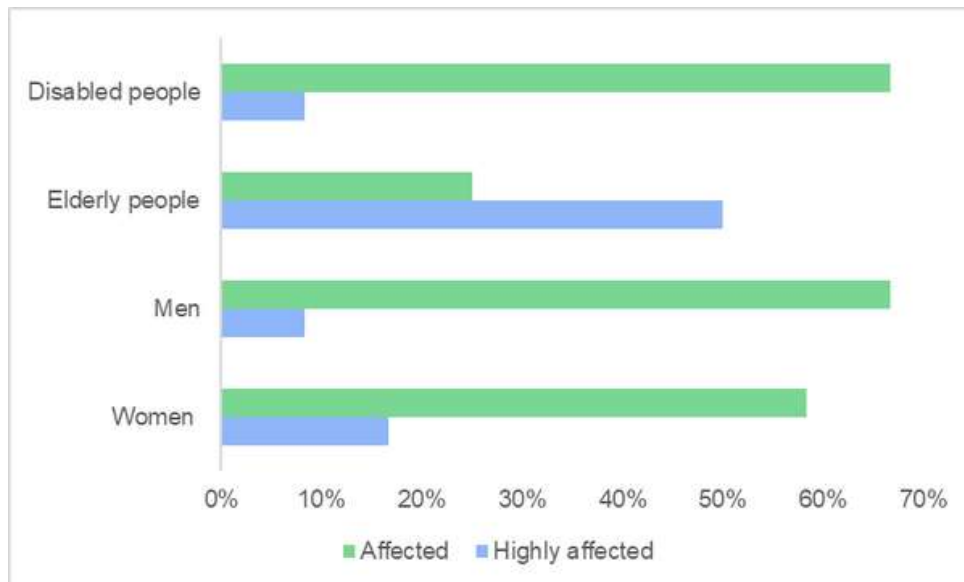
Both, men and women, see as the main impact of climate change in their life is related to:



#### Question 4:

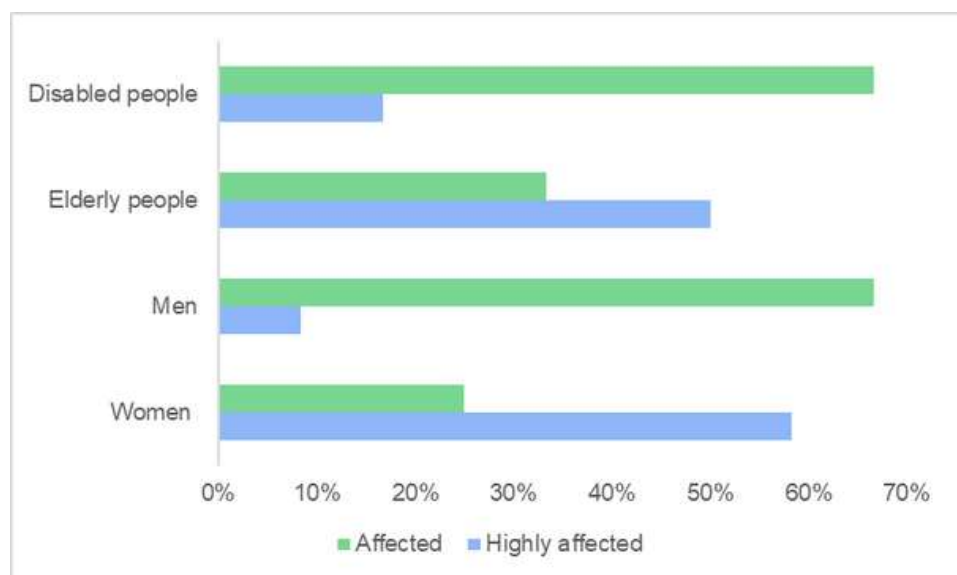
In your opinion, who is most vulnerable to the effects of climate conditions?  
Express your opinion selecting an answer of this scale:

They are not affected, they are slightly affected, they are affected, they are highly affected.



Men

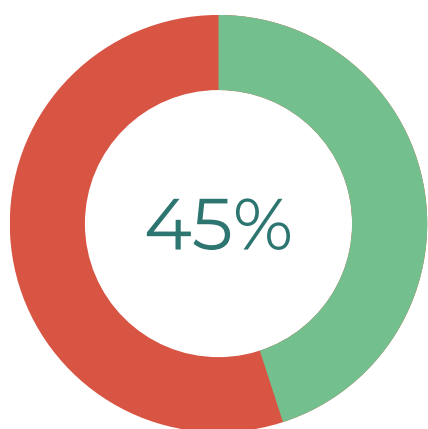
Women



While, both men and women state that all categories are generally affected by climate conditions, **men list as the most affected category elderly people**, while **women consider as mostly affected women**.

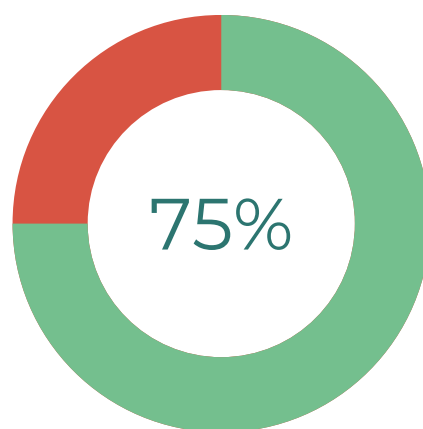
### Question 5:

After the focus group, do you have a clearer idea of what biodiversity is?



**Men**

**NO**  
**YES**

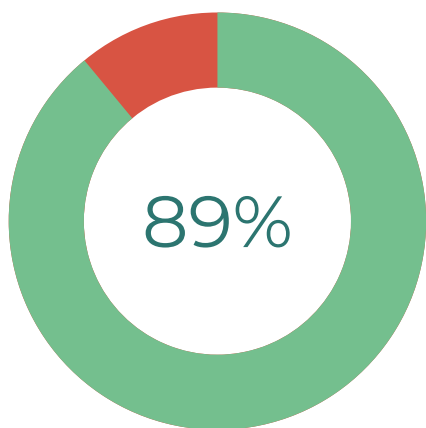


**Women**

Women appear to have a better understanding of biodiversity after the focus groups compared to men.

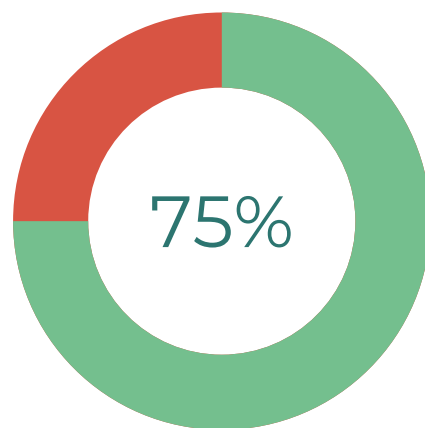
### Question 6:

Do you know that Tirana's Lake is a hotspot for the city's biodiversity?



**Men**

**NO**  
**YES**



**Women**

The majority of focus group participants (both men and women) perceive Lake Tirana as a biodiversity hotspot for the city.

### Question 7:

In your opinion, what can Tirana's Lake do to contribute to the quality of life in the city? (more events, activities, increasing the number of plants, etc.)

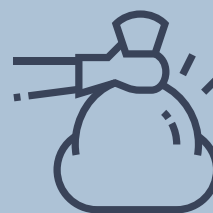
Both men and women, consider as the main priority **planting more trees and plants**. Other measures listed by both men and women include; organizing more events, and also providing better cleaning to the lake and better maintenance.



**Planting more  
trees and  
plants**



**Organising  
more events**



**Better cleaning  
and  
maintenance**

### 3.3 Conclusion and analysis of the outputs

The perception of urgency and awareness regarding climate change reported by the women who participated in the focus groups, which appears to be higher than that of men, is consistent with studies conducted by the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society [46]. These studies suggest that women, feeling more engaged in climate issues, respond with more concrete actions in their daily lives to reduce their environmental impact.

The fact that women also feel more vulnerable to extreme climate events aligns with the findings presented on page 8, which indicate that socially marginalized or vulnerable individuals are more affected by natural occurrences.

Analyzing the responses provided to question three, the fact that men perceive the effects of climate change more on the loss of assets and money, while women in the agricultural sector, is entirely consistent with the research mentioned in this report. Indeed, Albanian men tend to possess more assets and are more active in the workforce, which leads them to experience economic repercussions from the damages suffered. On the other hand, as reported on page 24, women are primarily employed in the agricultural sector, which is inevitably seen as a source of challenges during extreme climate events.

A lower percentage of women, compared to men, reported not perceiving the effects of climate change on their lives. However, at the same time, a higher number of women couldn't identify whether certain issues they were facing were attributable to climate change. This data may align with the intersectional analysis conducted in this report, which suggests that the impacts of climate change on women's lives are more pronounced due to the intersection with their social and economic status. For this reason, some of the effects perceived by Albanian women may be attributable not only to climate issues or natural disasters but also to the family or economic context in which they live.

In conclusion, the results of the focus groups appear to be consistent with the research conducted, as they have generated outputs that corroborate the studies presented.

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[46] <https://events.womens-forum.com/womens-forum/content/reports>



# Annex 1: Questionnaire with Focus Groups participants and analysis

***What was your perception of climate change before the focus group?***

- Climate change is happening
- Climate change is not happening
- I didn't have an opinion on this topic.

***Has your perception of the existence of climate change changed after the focus group?***

- Yes, now I believe that climate change is happening.
- Yes, now I believe that climate change is not happening.
- No, it remained the same
- I'm not sure

***Do you believe that climate change is affecting Albania?***

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

***If your answer is "Yes," how do you think climate change is affecting Albania? Justify your answer.***

***Would you say that climate change is affecting your life?***

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

***If your answer is "yes," how do you think climate change is affecting your life? Justify your answer by providing practical examples from your daily life.***

***In your opinion, who is most vulnerable to the effects of climate conditions? Express your opinion selecting an answer of this scale: They are not affected, they are slightly affected, they are affected, they are highly affected.***

- Women
- Men
- Elderly people
- Disabled people

***Before the focus group, were you familiar with the concept of biodiversity?***

- Yes
- No
- I had never heard of it before.

***After the focus group, do you have a clearer idea of what biodiversity is?***

- Yes, absolutely
- No
- Yes, but It's still a difficult topic

***Do you know that Tirana's Lake is a hot spot of the city's biodiversity?***

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

***In your opinion, what can Tirana's Lake do to contribute to the quality of life in the city? (more events, activities, increasing the number of plants, etc.)***

***In your opinion, can the Tirana's Zoo be considered a biodiversity area in the city?***

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

***In your opinion, what measures can institutions take to improve the protection and maintenance of green areas in Tirana, such as the zoological garden and the lake?***

## Annex 2: Study visit in Slovenia

With the aim of educating 15 women of different ages, actively involved in various sustainability-related fields in Albania, Observatori Albania and FER Slovenia organized a week of meetings, conferences, and activities to provide an in-depth understanding of some exemplary projects active in the Slovenian territory.

The topics covered were diverse:

- "The climate connects us all" (presented by Umanotera): An interactive lecture on climate change with a discussion that encouraged participants to think and act in a more environmentally and socially responsible way. The visually rich presentation enlightened participants about global warming and its impact on the natural and social environment. The focus then shifted to solutions and good practices.
- "How and why to eat in a climate-friendly way" (presented by Umanotera): A collaborative game with a presentation on adopting a more climate-friendly diet. The emphasis was on finding solutions at both the individual and community levels. Participants learned about the impact of food production and consumption on the climate and discussed guidelines for a climate-friendly diet.
- Visit to the ZOO: Inspection of the water bodies in the ZOO and discussions regarding their effects on surface water bodies. This was relevant to the management of water at Tirana ZOO, especially if it flows into Tirana Lake.
- "How much water needs to flow before we realize its importance" (presented by Ecologists without borders): Water consumption has increased sixfold in the last 100 years. During the lecture, participants learned which daily activities consume the most water, what pollutes water, and how climate change affects it. They also learned how individuals can effectively reduce water consumption and their water footprint.
- "Zero waste hunt in Ljubljana" (presented by Ecologists without borders): This activity guided participants through interesting tourist spots while focusing on sustainable solutions offered by Ljubljana. Participants solved riddles, searched for zero waste locations, and got to know the city.

- Field visit to Tivoli Park: Presentation of water bodies in the urban landscape park, relevant to the Tirana Park area. This included an inspection of Tivoli Lake and discussions on the management of stagnant urban water bodies, along with raising awareness among visitors.
- Field visits to Livada Lab: Livada Lab is a pilot project in Ljubljana, aiming to create a green space for creative youth engagement in greening the city, enhancing biodiversity, planting high-quality and eco-friendly food, and contributing to the city's development and the role of youth in this process.
- "Workshop on Global Supply Chains" (presented by Focus): This workshop focused on the global supply chains of everyday items, such as cocoa. It explored the impact of current power dynamics in the cocoa industry and its consequences on society and the environment. Interactive and participatory methods were employed to understand the global interdependencies, local and global impacts, and actions individuals and communities can take.
- "Sustainable Mobility" (presented by Focus): Participants learned the fundamentals of sustainable mobility, calculated the true cost of car ownership, developed personal mobility plans, and identified possible actions for the future. Through this workshop, participants explored the social and environmental impacts of transportation and formulated solutions.
- Field visit to a rooftop garden in a school: Participants had the opportunity to visit an example of building-integrated agriculture and discover its benefits for the community.
- Visit to Lake Bled: Lake Bled is a representative Alpine lake in Slovenia. During the tour, participants learned more about lake management and the challenges associated with its use. Excessive nutrients, tourism, and the absence of holistic lake management affect water quality and habitat, contributing to yearly algae blooms. A nature-based solution involving macrophyte revegetation in the littoral zone was organized at multiple locations around the lake.

## Annex 3: Visual map

