



Gender Based Analysis of the Project “Supporting Women-Led Startups Financing Through the Development of a National Crowdfunding Platform”

Although the position of women in Kosovo has changed for the better during the last two decades, there is a great need for improvement in almost all areas of life. Women are particularly underrepresented in the political and economic life. In accordance with the nature of the project, there is a need to analyze further the economic role of women in Kosovo. While consisting more than half of the general population, according to Kosovo Agency of Statistics, women remain inferior to their male counterparts in regard to their participation in the workforce. Furthermore, women in Kosovo tend to operate in a patriarchal environment that has a tendency to further diminish their economic initiative and create further challenges that tend to hamper women entrepreneurial activity. It must be noted that women entrepreneurial activity is yet considered to be in its infancy (Dushi et al., 2020). While the position of women in the area of entrepreneurship is quite difficult, particular groups of women are in an even more complicated position. Women coming from low socio-economic classes, minorities and those coming from rural backgrounds face even greater obstacles in regards to their entrepreneurial activity.

Even those women who are involved in entrepreneurship in the context of Kosovo tend to face a variety of problems. A particularly significant issue is securing financing for their businesses. Financing problems tend to be very impactful to the success of startups or even functioning businesses as they directly impact the growth of these businesses. This problem is not limited only to those women who lead such businesses. Economic problems of these businesses, especially within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, tend to impact other members of the society too. Startups and businesses which face economic trouble due to insufficient or lack of financing tend to cause job losses for all those people involved in businesses run by women and these problems tend to also prevent new employment opportunities.

The reality is that ecosystem factors, such as regional culture, or economic context, such as country income level, may differentially affect women's perceptions, intentions and motivations, industry choice, and growth aspirations. Considering the difficult situation of those women who need to secure financing for their businesses and in particular for their startups,

Jakova Innovation Center (JIC) has thought to work on women's empowerment through entrepreneurship. For us, entrepreneurship is not necessarily about starting or running a business. It's a state of mind, a principle of life and an approach to dealing with problems. There is need for sustainable growth of women entrepreneurs, to promote a balanced growth in the country.

When women can achieve success, everyone benefits. As a result, jobs are created, and the economy is stimulated through both increased revenue and reinvested dollars. In addition, women are much more likely to reinvest the money they earn, which helps the local economy. Women are an instrumental part of entrepreneurship and will continue to lead change for years to come. Through their ingenuity, they bring with them economic growth, innovation, creativity, and productivity. They also inspire other women and individuals to become business owners.

Women are in the minority in the field of technology, which makes the work for improving the skills of women in this field more and more impressive. It is essential to encourage more women to participate in the digital economy to tackle this challenge. There are gender bias and stereotypes both in real life and in the media. Specialists working with tech and digital are often pictured as men. There is also a lack of role models to inspire girls and women to study STEM and work as digital specialists.

The main instrument that has informed the development of the project design as to fit to the demands of women and girls of Kosovo in regards to their needs for economic progress and business financing has been the questionnaire. The questionnaire has measured the perception of women and girls throughout Kosovo regarding their opportunities in entrepreneurship. The questionnaire has led to some relevant findings for the project. For example, 95% of women agree that it would be necessary to develop a platform that would help regarding the process of finding financing for their startups. Furthermore, 87% of the same group think that such a platform would be helpful or even extremely helpful. Such findings tend to further confirm the importance of developing an online financing platform in the context of Kosovo.

This analysis has greatly contributed to the development of this project as it has been clearly shaped by the views of several parties and women in particular in order to create better conditions that would level the playing field in entrepreneurship for women by securing them better access to investment opportunities. Jakova Innovation projects aim to find a creative and innovative solution to the problem in order to improve the economic contribution of women in the context of Kosovo.