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**Female co-operative as a tool of rural development;
the case of Krusha e Madhe**

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1. Introduction

Before Yugoslavia's separation in the early 1990s, the agriculture industry in Kosovo has undergone tremendous development during the past 30 years. Yet, when Kosovo proclaimed its independence in 2008 following the war, the agriculture sector lacked a commercial business plan and centralized aggregation mechanisms to efficiently connect consumers with farmers. With its exceptional soil, water quality, and agro-climatic conditions, the new nation has shown significant promise by encouraging the growth of valuable fruits and vegetables. The Kosovo economy's primary industry is agriculture, which raises the standard of living and promotes the long-term growth of rural areas.

In rural areas, cooperatives aid in establishing sustainable communities. Cooperatives play a wide range of roles in the development of agriculture. When it comes to bringing people together to work toward a common objective and addressing their shared needs through cooperation, trust, and communication cooperatives represent a strong, lively, and realistic economic option. In order to sell their products and purchase input supplies at reduced prices, cooperative growers access a larger market. Better economic development and the well-being of the rural population result from more opportunities.

Over the world, rural women play a vital role in agricultural output, rural community development, and stability, all of which support food security. Some of the key obstacles keeping women out of Kosovo's labor market are family duties, traditional social expectations and inequality, lower levels of women's education and job experience, and legal restrictions on women working.

Finding strategies to increase cooperatives' influence on fostering economic growth and social development in rural areas, as well as identifying their strengths and flaws, are some of the key reasons this issue was chosen for analysis. Female cooperatives can offer women chances to generate money, develop new skills, and expand their participation in local decision-making processes. Additionally, gaining an understanding of the function of female cooperatives can aid development professionals and policymakers in creating more efficient programs and policies to assist women's economic empowerment and advance sustainable rural development.

Using a variety of datasets, instruments, methods, and indicators, the study aims to address a number of research objectives and questions about the role and contribution of agriculture

cooperatives to community support, collaboration, and integration in order to provide analytical information about the trends and difficulties in the development of the chosen sector. The study also seeks to determine the extent to which cooperative contribute to happiness, communication, connection, and poverty alleviation. Therefore, these analyses primarily rely on data gathered from institutions, other pertinent papers, public national and international statistics, and questionnaire. The examination of the current circumstances is concentrated on community flow, decision-making, and sector contribution.

2. Role of female employment and agriculture cooperatives

2.1 Women's role in rural development, and rural economy

The majority of agricultural producers worldwide are women, who also play significant roles in fisheries, livestock management, and other areas related to agriculture. Rural women play a significant role in agricultural production, the development, and the stability of rural communities around the world, which contributes to food security. However, women face a number of barriers when trying to access agricultural extension services, particularly in developing nations. Rural men and women both contribute significantly to the agriculture business, including cottage industries, animal production, and crop production. Yet, women do not have full access to resources such as the most recent sources of technical expertise and information and agricultural extension education programs (M., Z.Y. Hassan, et al, 2010). Rural women work diligently in the production of crops, from soil preparation to post-harvest and food security activities, playing a crucial role in the agricultural sector (ESCAP, 1996). By today, it is generally acknowledged that women play a special and vital position in the growth process. Several studies have shown that women, particularly those in rural areas, fill a wide range of social and economic functions both inside and outside the house (Sharma, 1980). The study of (Kaur, 1987) found that real agricultural and rural development projects need to be reoriented in order to account for women's participation and decision-making power. It is stated that including women exclusively in family planning, nutrition, child care, and household management programs won't result in an all-around improvement.

While, regarding the situation in Kosovo, significant research has recently focused on identifying the obstacles that prevent women in Kosovo from participating in the labor market, and the main causes are family obligations combined with insufficient access to high-quality and affordable care for children and the elderly, conservative social expectations and inequality, lower levels of women's education and work experience, and legal barriers to women's employment (such as high maternity leave costs for employers) as well as insufficient access to education and training opportunities. Women's participation in the labor force, rural development, and rural economy is crucial to understanding the nature and trajectory of a nation' growth. Women are thus an untapped

resource in Kosovo, and the reasons for their stagnation can be traced to a wide range of characteristics and their various political, economic, and social facets (KAS, 2021).

2.2 Women's status in Kosovo

The Kosovo Constitution clearly entrenched fundamental human rights. The Kosovo Constitution and other relevant laws regulate the idea of gender equality. Both genders have equal rights to engage in political, social, economic, and other spheres, as stated in the Constitution (ERAC, 2017). The Law on Gender Equality is a unique law designed to ensure gender equality. Kosovo has very emerging and advanced laws, including laws that promote equal opportunities and increase the status of women in politics and public life. The government has continued to develop policies that are intended to fairly balance equal gender opportunities in work, legislation, and education with the goal of advancing women's status in society and expanding their role in leadership roles (Linda Ukimeraj Harris, Anita Trnavčević, 2020). But, even women are still underrepresented in positions of authority, also at the local level. All of the documents on women's involvement in decision-making in Kosovo that have been studied provide proof of the women's unfavorable status, which calls for additional attention and reform (ERAC, 2017).

In Kosovo, women are heavily involved in informal economic activities like gathering berries, fruits, and herbs from nearby forests to sell in the market. They also frequently sell other homemade goods like jams, sweets, juices, salads, herbal teas, cheese, cow's milk, berries, etc. in addition to fruit and vegetables that have been grown. Many women have service agreements, some of which are for ten to twelve years without regard to holidays. When they become pregnant, they frequently do not get work extensions and end up losing them. It is challenging for families and women to choose between job and family under these working conditions.

According to findings from (K, 2015) patriarchal family structures, traditional social standards, and conservative cultural attitudes are prevalent in Kosovo. Domestic abuse is a significant factor in the violence against women in general and young girls in particular. Women in Kosovo endured several sorts of violence: emotional, physical, sexual, and social, as through forced isolation. The study of (K, 2015) also found that rural women in Kosovo are more involved in unpaid housework and family care than men are.

Unfortunately, because their presence and role aren't reflected in statistics, women in rural areas are also an invisible force. Participation of women in employment and economic growth is crucial for reaching the EU 2020 strategy goals. In 2014, in the EU-28, agriculture was the seventh-largest employer of women (3.3%). Agriculture is slightly more important in terms of providing employment for men (5.2%) (Gender in agriculture and rural development, 2016). In the legal and political framework of the European Union (EU), gender equality is a cornerstone of European values. In addition to development cooperation, the EU and its Member States actively promote the protection, fulfillment, and enjoyment of women's and girls' human rights in all of their interactions with other countries (Council, 2015).

2.2.1 Women in Kosovo’s labor market

Kosovo has one of the lowest percentages of female labor force participation in the world, at roughly 18%, far lower than other Western Balkan nations. In Kosovo, women have much lower employment prospects than in other Western Balkan nations. Additionally, for women participating in the labor market, unemployment rates are higher than those of men. These issues are widely acknowledged, and Kosovo is trying to make women's involvement in the workforce a top priority in terms of state policy (Bank, 2018). Further studies have found that only 13.9% of women are employed, while the employment rate for men in 2019 was 46.2%. To a greater extent, in 2019 the unemployment rate for women was 34.4%, but 60.3% for young women including the ages 15-24. While, in comparison, 22.6% of men and 44.1% of young men are unemployed (Gueye, 2021).

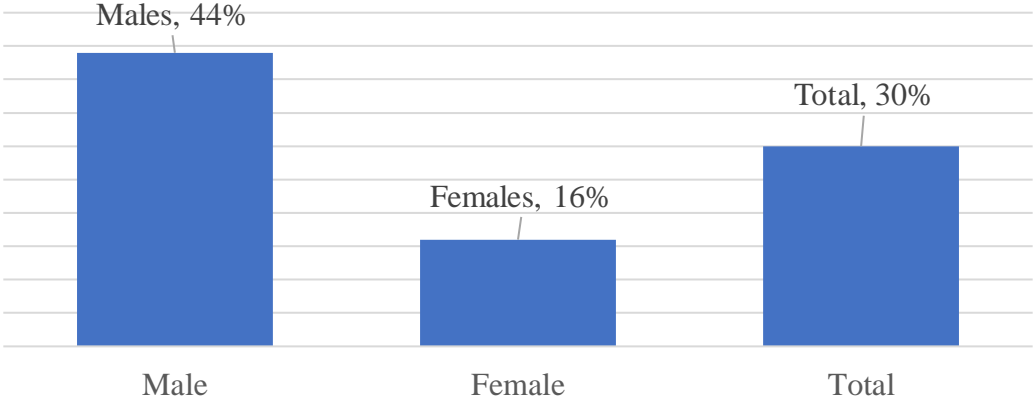


Figure 1: Distribution of employment by gender (%) Source: KAS, 2021

The highest employment rate in 2021 was among males with 44.0%, while employment among females was 16.0%, based on a study from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics. According to the results of the KAS, in 2021, the inactive workforce is quite high at 62.3%, with a special focus on females with 79.4%, compared to males with 45.1% (KAS, 2021).

Significant research has recently focused on identifying the obstacles that prevent women in Kosovo from participating in the labor market, and the main causes are family obligations combined with insufficient access to high-quality and affordable care for children and the elderly, conservative social expectations and inequality, lower levels of women's education and work experience, and legal barriers to women's employment (such as high maternity leave costs for employers) as well as insufficient access to education and training opportunities.

Women's participation in the labor force is crucial to understanding the nature and trajectory of a nation's growth. Women are therefore a resource that is underutilized in Kosovo; their underutilization can be linked to a broad range of characteristics and their various political, economic, and social aspects (Morina, 2017).

2.2.2 Gender distribution by profession in Kosovo

Based on the report (KAS, 2021) the highest employment rate was among males with 44.0%, while employment among females was 16.0%. Females are mainly employed in the education, trade, and health care sectors, with 53.7% of them, while males are mainly employed in the trade, construction, and manufacturing sectors with 43.6%. Economic sectors that lead with employment continue to be: trade with 18.1%; construction with 11.4%; education with 11.3%; and manufacturing with 9.6%. While other sectors participate with a smaller percentage in employment.

2.2.3 Primary obstacles to women in agriculture in Kosovo

Agriculture is crucial to Kosovo's national economy and plays a big part in the integration process. The industry is supplying employment possibilities and energizing economic expansion. It contributes 11.9% to the gross value added and accounts for 26% of the employment and 16.2%

of the export value (statistics, 2017). Despite being one of the most promising industries, agriculture in Kosovo confronts many obstacles.

The main obstacle in Kosovo for the low women's poor labor is considered to be care, primarily related to childcare 32% of women claim as much (Nicole Farnsworth et al, 2018).

Table 1: Reasons for working part time by gender (%)

Kosovo	Male	Female	Total
Could not find a full-time job	65.6	48.2	61.5
Other reasons	21.7	20.3	21.3
Other personal or family reasons	4.4	20.6	8.2
Undergoing school education or training	3.6	9.7	5.0
Does not want a full-time job	3.4	1.2	2.9
Own illness or disability	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: KAS, 2022

The study of (Statistics K. A., 2022) found out that there are gender inequalities in the percentage of women who work part-time (6.9% compared to 6.3% for men). The reasons for part-time employment varied by gender, with women being more involved in family responsibilities and having fewer hours available for work. Lack of full-time employment was the main factor keeping men from working full-time.

While there are numerous human activities indicate that agricultural land is in need of improvement. Over the past 20 years, rapid urbanization and astronomical economic expansion have made agricultural land even more scarce. Kosovo, a nation with a little amount of land suited for agriculture, has challenges as a result of unauthorized settlement growth, coal surface mining, land parceling, etc (Ramadani, I. and Bytyqi V., 2018). Formally, the agriculture industry has a low percentage of women (5% of licensed farmers are female). To this, we can add also the fact that women in Kosovo hold less property than men, approximately 17% fewer than males (Gueye, 2021). The study also found that it is impossible for a female farmer to establish contract farming arrangements that could bring higher profits and consistent streams of revenue when she is not given the authority to make decisions regarding the land she cultivates. Some of the primary

obstacles to women in agriculture in Kosovo besides the lack of access to land are considered to be: lack of higher education, lack of training, lack of finances, tax financial incentives, and social work restrictions.

According to (Jeta Sahatqija et al, 2020) the main problems and challenges in Kosovo's agriculture sector that are faced by women farmers are:

- **Lack of Technology:** impacts directly the productivity and the quality of production. Most of the farmers in Kosovo have limited financial resources, effecting directly the lack of basic equipment let alone a more sophisticated one.
- **Lack of Information and Knowledge:** most farmers are considered to have inherited knowledge from their family members, meaning that most of them are not educated in agriculture. Referring to (Jeta Sahatqija et al, 2020) due to the war, many people were left without financial support and the possible way that they found to survive was by starting agriculture.
- **Lack of adequate irrigation systems:** due to the financial lack of a sophisticated irrigation system, most farmers use the sprinkler system because it has a lower cost. Only a few farmers can afford the sophisticated system at their expense. War caused the destruction of the drip irrigation infrastructure, while today few managed to repair it and are being able to use it (Jeta Sahatqija et al, 2020).

2.3 Overview of agriculture cooperatives

Both developed and developing nations have a significant impact on the agricultural industry through cooperatives. Cooperatives have historically been the primary institutional and organizational tool used by independent farmers to counter the market dominance of local and international retailers. They also shorten the supply chain by enabling producers to combine most or all of the marketing and processing procedures into a single or small number of steps, resulting in significant cost savings on the transaction and other intermediary costs. The organizational economics justification for family farms is logically carried over to explain the economic nature of agricultural cooperatives (Copa-Cogeca, 2010).

There are different definitions of agriculture cooperatives. The importance of defining it, it's because can help the public determine if an organization is a true cooperative established to benefit its members and society. One of the definitions dates back to 1965 developed by Farmer Cooperative Service, which says: "A cooperative is a voluntary contractual organization of persons having a mutual ownership interest in providing themselves needed services on a nonprofit basis. It is usually organized as a legal entity to accomplish an economic objective through the joint participation of its members. In a cooperative, the investment and occupational risks, benefits gained, or losses incurred are shared equitably by its members in proportion to their use of the cooperative's services. A cooperative is democratically controlled by its members on the basis of their status as member-users and not as investors in the capital structure of the cooperative" (Rasmussen, 1991).

Another definition that it's considered to be complex and was mentioned in the book of (Rasmussen, 1991), agriculture cooperatives must meet the following requirements:

1. Membership is limited to persons engaged in the production of agricultural products and associations of such producers,
2. No member of the cooperatives is allowed more than one vote despite the amount of stock or membership capital in excess of 8% a year, or the legal rate in the State, whichever is higher,
3. The cooperatives do not deal in farm products, farm supplies, and farm business services with or for nonmembers in an amount greater in value than it handles for its members, and
4. The cooperatives operated for the mutual interest of members by providing benefits on the basis of patronage".

To have rural development it's considered necessary to have agriculture cooperatives and as well to have and maintain the cooperation. According to (Pinto, 2019), cooperatives give low-income people the chance to increase their income, furthermore, they are democracies that enable people to own their own solutions, and they boost member security. It's worth mentioning that agriculture cooperatives, directly and indirectly, support children's elementary education, and gender equality, as well as lowering infant mortality. Another study (Mendoza, 2016), has found that three key elements that are essential for poverty reduction strategy in many parts of the world are: creating opportunities, extending the protection, and facilitating empowerment. According to this study,

which results in reality cooperative business can reduce poverty in situations where government, private enterprises, and individuals fail to enable it.

More industrialized agriculture, globalization, and freer trade are posing significant structural problems for agricultural cooperatives around the world. While based on (Fulton, 1999) member commitment is one of the most crucial problems cooperatives encounter during this change. Member loyalty is important because it indicates how well a cooperative can set itself apart from an investor-owned business or else known as IOF. The more the cooperative can set itself apart from an IOF, the simpler it will be for the cooperative to hold onto its market share when borders dissolve and multinationals enter markets they have previously avoided.

The formation of agriculture cooperatives first appeared in the outlying regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with the primary goal of giving its farmer members access to credit (Stephanie A. Mercier, 2020). Actually, Benjamin Franklin founded a mutual fire insurance company in 1752 that is still in business as the first cooperative in the United States. There were 134 farmer cooperatives in the US that had been operating for at least 100 years as of 2014; the oldest of these was Sunkist Growers (in California), which was founded in 1893. The states of California, Florida, and Iowa are home to the majority of the longest-running farmer cooperatives in the United States. According to revenue, CHS, Dairy Farmers of America, Land O'Lakes, GROWMARK, and Agri Processing Inc. are the top five farmer cooperatives. Other American farmer cooperatives with well-known consumer brands include Tillamook which is known for cheese production, American Crystal Sugar, Blue Diamond for the almonds production, Ocean Spray for the cranberries production, and SunMaid for raisins. The National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC), which was founded in 1929, is the umbrella organization that most of these cooperatives are a part of. In Washington, DC, NCFC represents the commercial and policy interests of its member cooperatives (Mercier, 2017). 2012 was mentioned by the UN to be the International Year of Cooperatives and that's why Food and Agricultural Development increased their efforts in this sector.

2.3.1 The role of Social Cooperatives

The Social Cooperatives have a huge impact in the community and are recognized for their bottom-up approach, which has enabled them to detect growing needs and create suitable solutions,

frequently without the assistance of the public sector. Furthermore, farming cooperatives are notable for their role in expanding and diversifying the range of services available to households and individuals, empowering people and creating other poverty alleviation strategies.

While, the study of (Commission, n.d.) has found that many of the causes of poverty, include unemployment, climatic changes, discrimination, inequalities, and others. Co-operatives have a proven track record of success in all of these areas by offering reliable and decent work, preserving the environment, supporting the communities in which they operate, and acting as hubs of democracy and equal opportunity for all people, without discrimination (UNSDN, 2018). While, the success of the cooperatives is mostly based on the seven principles of cooperatives because it expresses concern for the community, including:

- open and voluntary membership,
- democrats are in charge,
- economic participation of members,
- independence and self-reliance,
- information, coaching, and training,
- collaboration between cooperatives,
- concern for the community (United Nations, n.d.)

The biggest distinguishing feature of social cooperatives is that they clearly state a general interest mission as their main goal and directly fulfill this mission through the creation of commodities and services of general interest. Regardless of the kinds of commodities or services they create, work integration, which is a major goal of many social cooperatives, should be viewed as a service of general interest (Cooperatives, 2004). Over and above that, mostly appear to accomplish this by embracing the human resource strategies that are being supported by many large corporations. Cooperatives and social businesses significantly support the EU's Europe 2020 policy goals for fair labor and sustainable, inclusive growth, both of which are outlined in the European Pillar of Social Rights (Eurofound, 2019).

Some of the main roles of social cooperatives that describe the function are:

- they are characterized by a strong collective and participatory component, as well as close ties to organizations and activities of the civil society,

- the participatory approach is largely responsible for the capacity to detect developing needs and provide appropriate solutions.
- retain the social economy's efficiency high.
- contribute to social innovation as well by consistently creating new goods and services that address societal demands.
- ideals and values that are shared with the entrepreneurs and colleagues (Borzaga C., et al, 2014)

Considering those roles and characters, which frequently involves stakeholders in their governance making sure that the newly planned and provided services are delivered by staff, clients, and volunteers are more in tune with neighborhood needs. A significant chunk of social enterprises aims to bring about systemic change by implementing new business models, altering value chains, utilizing underutilized resources, and activating underutilized skills. Social cooperatives are a vehicle for socioeconomic development.

In order to achieve this development, the EU supports and advertises cooperatives in a variety of ways, including:

- the European Commission and the European Parliament's consistent overall support for the policy,
- improved targeting of specific support: support should be better targeted,
- improving the sector's statistical data: so that it can be compared across different analyses,
- in an effort to comprehend why cooperatives do not receive greater assistance, particularly help directed at the sector: using additional research,
- supporting the growth of management abilities through various trainings offered by businesses and organizations (Eurofound, 2019).

2.3.2 Review of Agriculture Cooperatives in Europe

As was mentioned upper, a cooperative is an independent group of people working together to achieve common economic, social, and cultural objectives. Through a jointly owned and democratically run business, they succeed in their goals. One of the main reasons why agriculture cooperatives are very important in Europe was mentioned by (Commission, n.d.). With a production value of 675 billion Euros, the agricultural industry contributes 14.2% of the entire

manufacturing output of the European Union. The cooperative sector accounts for 38.5% of overall output, or around €260 billion. Almost 40,000 cooperative businesses with over 600,000 employees and 9 million members operate in the EU. There are about 260 billion euros in sales. Around 50% of the shares in the provision of agricultural inputs and over 60% of the stakes in the gathering, processing, and marketing of agricultural products are held by these cooperatives (Copa-Cogeca, 2010).

Importance to the Agriculture Cooperatives is given by different institutions in Europe, through the creation of different policies and legislation. Three primary topics that are the focus of the Communication on the Promotion of Cooperative Societies in Europe which was formed in 2004 are:

- the improvement of the sector's visibility, characteristics, and comprehension in order to encourage broader usage of cooperatives across Europe,
- the continued development of cooperative law in Europe,
- maintaining and enhancing cooperatives' role in society and their contribution to its goals.

Except for the Communication on the Promotion of Cooperative Societies, the European Commission in order to evaluate the unique requirements of cooperative enterprises with regard to a wide range of issues, including the appropriate EU regulatory framework, the identification of barriers at the national level, and the internationalization of cooperatives, has created the Working Group on Cooperatives which was established in 2013. This Working Group, suggested two pilot projects and those are “Business transfers to employees building a cooperative” and “Reducing young unemployment and the creation of cooperatives”.

- Business transfers to employees building a cooperative - the goal of this project is to make it simpler to transfer firms to cooperative members or employees. Additionally, it will increase understanding of the advantages of a cooperative paradigm. The project will be implemented by 2 consortia. The implementation began in April of 2016.
- Reducing young unemployment and the creation of cooperatives - this project will help in the advancement of cooperatives and will be focused on entrepreneurship education. It will motivate cooperatives to support start-ups and hire young people. This will support the employment of young people and guarantee the cooperative’s generational renewal. The

project will be implemented by 2 consortia. The undertaking began in April 2017 (Commission, n.d.)

Europe is known for its agriculture cooperatives. French Agricultural Cooperatives are the most numerous and dynamic, but they are not the most important ones in the European Top 100. French agricultural cooperation is highly represented and outranks Germany, which has 15 representatives, while France has 31 cooperatives in the top 100 in Europe in 2020. However, French cooperatives are not the biggest, just one French cooperative is in the top 10 in Europe, and only two French cooperatives will have a turnover of more than 5 billion euros in 2020. The greatest European cooperative generates 17.2 billion euros in revenue, which is nearly three times the revenue of the first cooperative in France. There are a few cooperatives from southern nations like Italy and Spain in the top 100, but there isn't a Spanish cooperative there (Council, 2015).

In comparison to cooperatives in Northern Europe, French and German agricultural cooperatives have not yet fully internationalized. Due to a crowded local market, cooperatives in Northern European nations (Denmark, Ireland, and the Netherlands) are the most globally integrated. These organizations moved quickly to concentrate on exporting and establishing themselves abroad. In 2020, the Irish cooperative Glanbia achieved nearly all of its foreign sales. Arla Foods and Friesland Campina made between 75 and 80 % of their revenue (from exports plus establishments) abroad, while Danish Crown made close to 90%. German and French cooperatives, on the other hand, are inherently less focused on exports because their home markets are larger. Therefore, only a small number of French and German cooperatives generate more than 50% of their revenue abroad. The average market share of all agricultural cooperatives in the EU is 40%. So from this, we can conclude that the market shares in the Scandinavian nations (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden), Ireland, the Netherlands, France, and Austria all have substantial market shares for cooperatives (all have market shares of greater than 50%). Cooperatives hold between 40% to 50% of the market share in Germany, Belgium, and Spain. While there were no good statistics available for Romania, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, or Cyprus, it is significantly lower in other nations (Jos BIJMAN et al, 2014). This we will illustrate with the figure the Share (%) of agricultural products marketed through cooperatives, 2010.

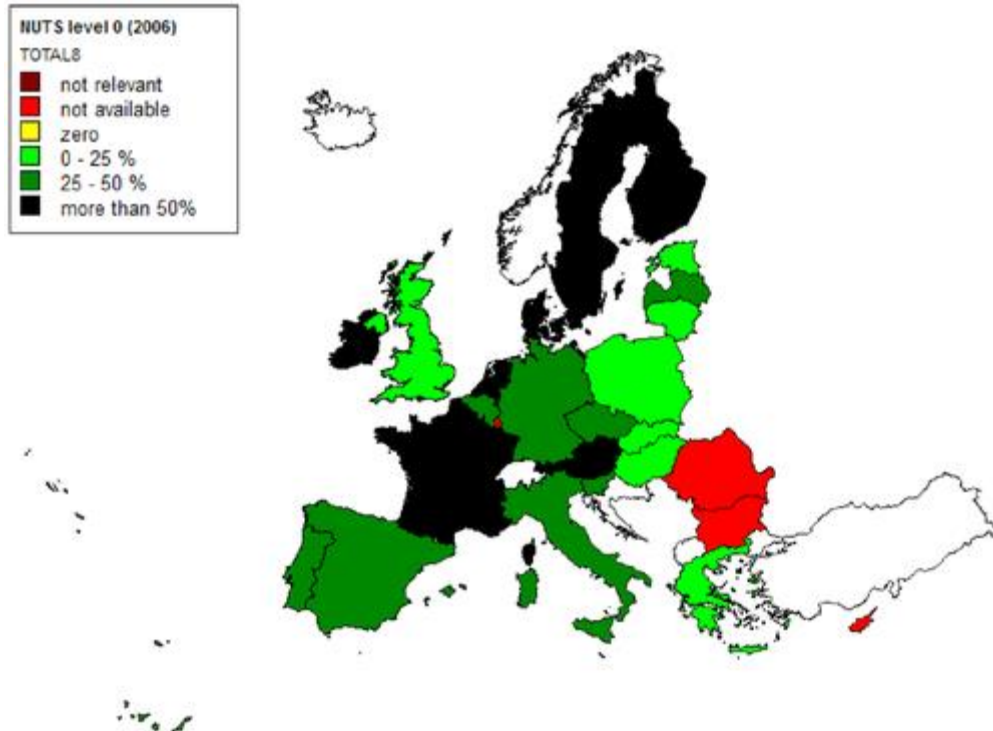


Figure 2. Share (%) of agricultural products marketed through cooperatives

Source: Bijman et al., 2012.

European Agricultural Cooperatives are continuously increasing their efforts to achieve sustainable development. An important element to be mentioned, from the European Agriculture Cooperative, is that European agricultural cooperatives are becoming more open about their environmental impact at a time when the fight against climate change has become a priority for many European residents and agriculture is frequently questioned. Some of them have quite lofty objectives. For instance, the dairy cooperative Arla Foods aspires to reduce CO₂ emissions by 30% per kilo of milk by 2030 and cut its overall net zero carbon emissions by 2050 (Frey, 2022).

In Bosnia and Hercegovina, more precisely in Konjic, there is an agriculture cooperative that is known for the wild and cultivated berries. This cooperative is known for the fact that some of the workers of this cooperative are widows, due to the war. The Konjic Cooperative was established in Konjic in 2010. The cooperative's primary business is acquiring goods from other cooperative members and selling them, such as fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs. Additionally, they arrange free educational sessions for cooperators and purchase seed, planting supplies, fertilizer, and packaging to provide to the cooperates. They also offer expert advising services (Azzi, 2018).

Wild and cultivated berries have a higher value-added per unit area than other agricultural goods, and they are the main sources of revenue for farmers who are members of Konjic's agricultural cooperative in BH. Berry farming is known as the most dynamic agriculture sector and it is a significant national agriculture activity, with the main focus on rural development initiatives (Oriana Gava et al, 2021). The important fact is that women play a significant part in agriculture's production and commercialization in BH. The majority of women who work unpaid jobs in agriculture do so in the fruit and vegetable or dairy industries (FAO, 2012).

2.3.3 The structure of Law in Agriculture Cooperatives

In the area of corporate law, the law governing agricultural cooperatives is a progression. Its development has coincided with farmers using cooperative business structures at an increasing rate. Today, it is almost at the point where it may be considered a separate specialist field (Mischler, 1958).

It is considered that the state's function as a regulator and ally of cooperatives has an impact. Although laws about agriculture cooperatives changed over time to reflect new advancements, their fundamental ideas have remained constant. Cooperatives are still member-based, volunteer organizations with democratic decision-making processes that are ingrained in their local communities (Jos BIJMAN et al, 2014). Kosovo's Law about agriculture cooperatives it's close to the EU law on agriculture cooperatives.

In Kosovo, farmer's cooperatives law No. 2003/9 was amended and supplemented by Law No. 03/L-004. The Kosovo Republic Assembly, in accordance with Republic of Kosovo's Constitution, Article 65, paragraph 1, based on the need to revise and supplement Law No. 2003/9 on Farmer's Cooperatives, which was published with UNMIK Regulation No. 2003/21 on June 23, 2003, for the purpose of setting up the conditions for its enforcement, Approves: Law on Amendment and Supplementation of Law No. 2003/9 on Farmer's Cooperatives. The law had 8 main articles regarding the implementation of law. The main changes were on article 1 and 4. The definition of "Federation" in Article 1 is being amended to read, "Federation is a volunteer union of some agriculture cooperatives." While, points a) and b) of Article 4 are amended to read as follows: "Status of the new member of the cooperative is achieved after the approval of the request by

competent body of the cooperative, with the rights and obligations as the member of the cooperative” (Sejdiu, 2008).

Later on, the law for agriculture cooperatives got updated. This Law is intended to revise and complete Law No. 2003/9 on Farmer’s Cooperatives and to bring it into compliance with Law on Minor Offenses. Also, this law has 23 articles with specific issues being addressed such as registration, founding assembly, conditions for establishment, federation, rights, and obligations of co-operative members, share capital, capital contributions, external auditor, about the president, the director, net income and losses, liquidation and so on.

The updated law, defined as well the term of what is a cooperative, stating it as: “Farmer’s Cooperative” or “Cooperative” shall mean a legal entity created by natural or legal persons who must all be farmers who contribute their private property to the share capital. A Cooperative is a service provider for its members and shall not be based on making a profit for itself. A minimum of 75% of the cooperative’s gross turnover shall be from activities with Members” (Kosovo, 2020).

2.3.4 Elaboration of Agriculture Cooperatives in Kosovo

Kosovo has an area of 10,908 km². Kosovo's continental climate is characterized by temperatures between -20 ° C during winter and + 35 ° C during summer. The average rainfall is up to 700 mm. The two main agroecological areas are defined by climate, soil, and vegetation: the southwestern plain of Dukagjini with a more Mediterranean climate and the eastern part with a more continental climate. Due to the diverse landscape structure, the geographical basis, flora, climate, and hydrographic soils in Kosovo differ in relation to agriculture. It is estimated that 15% of Kosovo’s land is of high quality, 29% is medium and 56% is of poor quality. High and medium quality soils consist of humus soil (11%), found mainly in the Kosovo plain, carbonate gray soils (8.4%), alluvial soils (7.8%), and other dark and serpentine soils (Daci, 2014). Kosovo is gifted with a sizable area of rich, cultivable terrain and a moderate environment that are ideal for the commercial production of basic grains and more valuable goods including fruits, nuts, vegetables, and cattle (USAID, Kosovo Agricultural Sector Assessment and USAID Strategy Development, 2003).

Kosovo's agricultural sector has transformed dramatically over the last 30 years. Prior to the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, the government purchased all agricultural products from

Kosovo farmers, regardless of quality. When this system collapsed, state-owned cooperatives were abandoned and government agricultural systems were privatized. Small farmers reverted to traditional livelihood practices, selling any surplus in a highly fragmented local market at low prices, even if they could sell it (Supporting Kosovo's Agricultural Transformation, 2020). The Kosovo economy was destroyed by the 1999 war. The agricultural industry experienced significant damage as a result of the forceful eviction of the rural inhabitants, leaving behind animals and equipment (MAFRD, Green Report, 2014).

The structure of relatively small farms and the high level of land fragmentation, the restricted use of modern production techniques, irrigation, and storage capacity all have an impact on the general state and performance of the agricultural production sectors in Kosovo (Zuzaku, 2014). In Kosovo's agriculture, there is also a lack of competitiveness in farms and the main reasons are considered to be the lack of investment in modern machinery and technology, which will help in achieving much better standards (Ministry of Agriculture, 2010). But even though there are lots of issues in agriculture, the IFC considered that for those who live in rural areas, agriculture currently provides the majority of their income and employment opportunities. It accounts for more than 29.8% of all employment and 11% of the nation's GDP (IFC, 2018). While before, Kosovo's agriculture economy was considered to be to some parts artificial and unsustainable since it is heavily reliant on outside assistance from donors and the international community as well as cash from the Diaspora (USAID, USAID Mission in Kosovo, 2003).

Agriculture is a key sector of the Kosovo economy and improves both the standard of living and the long-term development of rural areas. Regarding GDP contribution, agriculture continues to be one of Kosovo's major economic sectors and has historically been one of the country's fastest-growing industries. Additionally, there are 130,775 agricultural holdings that use 419 thousand hectares (ha) of land for agriculture (MAFRD, Green Report, 2019). While, the study by (Ekrem Gjokaj et al, 2017) has found that the agriculture holdings have an average size of 3.2 ha, and that employ 362,700 people or around 25% of the total population. Another important element that was found by the study of (Statistics K. A., 2014) is that the average age of agricultural householders and individual businesses is 52 years, corresponding with a low level of education, inadequate training, high interest in the loan, land fragmentation, low technical efficiency, and lack of cooperation. The majority of the farmers, representing 28% have finished only primary school.

There aren't many studies on Kosovo's agriculture that look at agricultural cooperatives' economic impact, potential to improve the welfare of rural areas, ability to reduce poverty, and ability to increase food security, despite the fact that they play a vital role in enhancing farm efficiency. According to studies, implementing any new technology or operating procedures necessitates proper awareness of the socioeconomic situation and the environment (Shyhrete Muriqi et al, 2021). Due to a lack of faith in the institutions that support cooperatives, the fundamental problem is the low level of collaboration among farmers. However, there is a higher level of confidence and a greater readiness among farmers to work informally, especially when purchasing or lending agricultural machinery for example with their friends, neighbors, and family members (Muriqi, S., et al, 2019).

The number of cooperative members in Kosovo is quite small. Vegetable production is done by cooperative farmers. In comparison to farmers who are not cooperative, they have greater access to seasonal workers, machinery through sharing, are more willing to invest in equipment with other farmers, and have higher levels of trust among themselves. Furthermore, compared to non-cooperative farmers, cooperative farmers seem to earn more money overall. In contrast, non-cooperative farmers are more involved in the production of cereals, fruits, and livestock (Shyhrete Muriqi et al, 2021).

Farmers are encouraged to join cooperatives by a variety of factors, including the absence of the need to locate buyers, improved information sources, better prices, and better services. According to the different findings, cooperative farmers sell the majority of their products through whole traders, while non-cooperative farmers sell through direct sales, collection sites, and a sizable portion is consumed by their own families.

Some of the main advantages of agricultural cooperatives from which Kosovo's farmers would benefit even more if they would cooperate include support for:

- increased and more secure and rewarding forms of rural employment dignity, fairness, empowerment, participation in rural employment poverty reduction, and social inclusion through higher returns and higher reinvestment of surpluses,
- sector upgrading (for example, agriculture, small-scale industry, community services), and the establishment of new sectors (for example, environmentally friendly industries).
- positive rural economy networking, clustering, demonstration, and externality impact

- equality and fairness in the rural community as a whole greater self-sufficiency and endogenous local growth processes, such as local savings and investment cycles and environmentally friendly local production, processing, packaging, and consumption cycles healthy, stable, and self-sufficient rural economies and communities, which are better able to defend themselves.

Kosovo is not foreign to the idea of cooperation in the rural and agricultural communities. Contrarily, agricultural cooperatives were originally created in the late 1800s. Kosovo's agriculture industry underwent forced collectivization during the post-war period from 1945-1948. The main initial cooperative idea based on democratic ideals was replaced by the Soviet Union in 1946 when a new Federal Cooperative Law was passed. After considerable peasant agitation, this policy was swiftly abandoned. The agricultural cooperative sector in Kosovo regained some, but not all, of its pre-1945 independence after the disastrous collectivization push failed. Land that had been allotted for the cooperatives was given back to the developer.

The agricultural co-operatives primarily consented to state interference in the management of the co-operative in exchange for different forms of state support (assured state purchasing, reduced cost inputs, technical guidance, etc.). The state specifically wanted to make sure that managers were appointed who were agreeable from an ideological standpoint. The majority of the 152 agricultural cooperatives that were in operation at the time lacked land. However, things again altered in 1976 once the cooperative sector was incorporated into the system of worker self-management. It was now necessary to grant agricultural cooperative employees membership privileges comparable to those enjoyed by private farmers. The cooperative policy was as a result developed moving forward with the interests of the employee-members in mind (e.g., paying high wages, giving regular bonuses). The cooperatives' historical ties to the farming communities started to erode as a result of this evolution. The co-operatives' integrity and effectiveness were both compromised by the successful dissociation from the individual farmer-members (Bateman, 2005).

As we can understand, farmer's cooperatives have a long history, dating back to the days of the previous SFRY. One of the institutional farmer's cooperatives served as the official form for carrying out legal requirements at the time. But following the All Socially Owned Enterprises, Public Enterprises, and Farmer's Cooperatives are under UNMIK as of the end of the previous war

in 1999. administration. Prior to the implementation of Law No. 2003/9 on Farmer's Cooperatives in 2003, there were no farmer's registration requirements applied to cooperatives. based on an analysis of applications submitted to the agency's research, 83 farmer's cooperatives have registered for business registration (Pllashniku, 2015).

2.3.5 Agriculture Cooperative of “Women of Krusha e Madhe”

Numerous men and boys, more specifically 69 are still missing and 226 were killed (Hoti F. , 2022), from the southern Kosovo town of Krusha e Madhe were killed during the Kosovo war in 1999 (Prof. Dr. Murat Meha, et al, 2016). The Serbian forces began to arrive on March 24 around 19:40 p.m. and they were positioned from Krusha e Vogel to Xërxë. Mrs. Fahrija was there with her 2-year-old daughter and 3-month-old baby. The Serbian police began their aerial bombardment on March 25th at 5 a.m. After that, her sister-in-law rushed to Fahrija's room and took her kids while Fahrija stayed behind to fetch groceries. Fahrija notices her husband (Bashkim) putting on his shoes and tells him he must leave because the major goal of Serbs is to kill males, repeating these words even later when this would be their last meeting and chat. In the morning they were sent to the mosque, while later they have been told that they must go to Gjakove to the mass cemetery where their execution will take place. Together with other women, they approach a sign indicating that Rugova is a free zone on their route to Gjakove. Fahrija wanted to go to Rugova to meet her relatives, but Serbian authorities stopped her and demanded payment in exchange for her son. Fahrija, who could not speak the language and did not comprehend what they were asking for, was assisted by the village elders when they handed the money to the Serbian army. Her daughter, about whom she had no prior knowledge of her whereabouts, was waiting for her when she arrives in Rugove. The women left for Albania and returned after the war ended more precisely returning on June 22, 1999, to discover everything ruined. All their houses and schools had been burned to the ground. They decided to change their fate and become the income generators for their family. They begin planning protests to find the missing people months later. There was no desire to assist these women at the time. They were obliged to form the organization "Grate e Veja" in 2003 as a result of the institutions' refusal to acknowledge them as the representatives of the missing, while in continuity they have been seeking justice (Hoti F. , 2022). A regional initiative called RECOM promotes the creation of a formal truth commission. Finding the truth regarding war crimes and other major human rights violations that occurred on the territory of the former

Yugoslavia is its stated objective. The Women of Krusha e Madhe joined this initiative with the hope to find their dead husbands (Anna Di Lellio, Caitlin McCum, 2012). Later on, they started receiving aid from various donors. providing a range of trainings in bees, driving, tailoring, and organization creation. This continued until 2005, as these courses did not generate any income as a result of the absence of demand. For this reason, Mrs. Fahrije had decided to make pickles with peppers and sell them in the Gjakova market, more specifically from her father-in-law, which has been the main supporter to work but not establishing the cooperative. Pepper production has long been a renowned sector in Krusha e Madhe.

The Women of Krusha have created their agricultural cooperative and have been gradually rebuilding their town. However, the ownership of their homes and land is still unregistered or registered in the names of the males who passed away, exacerbating tenure instability and making it impossible to use the land as a productive economic asset. One of the most significant obstacles facing women is the length of time, expense, and complexity of traditional cadastral surveying and registration (Prof. Dr. Murat Meha, et al, 2016). From 2005 to 2010, the demand had expanded, but the manufactured goods still lacked analyses, labeling, and barcodes. They were contacted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, USAID, and GTZ as a result of the demand and activity. The cooperative was established with assistance from GTZ, and USAID provided equipment. The red color is intentionally included in the cooperative's emblem to represent the blood loss for the freedom of Krusha e Madhe and Kosovo.

The cooperative initially had 12 employees; this number rose to 25 employees, then 50 employees in 2020. From June to December, there are 70 employees, with six groups of five women each working for the cooperative in the villages. The primary requirement for employment in this cooperative is that applicants must be motivated and eager to work. Mrs. Hoti managed to secure the employment of women from rural villages and to become the esteemed head of her agricultural cooperative which is completely run and staffed by women. Through this, they managed to develop Krusha and its economy. Also, they collaborate together with roughly 80 farmers who were hired primarily from Krusha e Madhe and Rahovec and manage the output, to take the first raw material. The cooperative began with just three items: ajvar, peppers with yogurt, and peppers with pickles in both sweet and chili variations. Today, it offers 43 different products. Additionally, two to three new products are generated each year. The major product is ajvar, and it is solely sold in canned

form (Recura, 2020). According to Mrs. Fahrige, the community used to buy the cooperative's goods as alms because the ladies were working so hard to raise and educate their kids. The characteristics of the products are their history, status, and quality. Ajvar's quality is very important because it requires eight hours to boil (Hoti F. , 2022).

Since the cooperative thinks that consumers purchase goods based on their value and quality, there is no marketing expenditure. They primarily use traditional technologies since, in their opinion, this gives the products a more traditional flavor. Many clients go to buy the product and it is sold through markets and export. The best sales, meanwhile, occur from August to March. While exporting 70% of its products to nations like Switzerland, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, America, and Luxembourg, the cooperative is able to capture 30% of the local market (Hoti F. , 2022).

The Women of Krusha e Madhe are known as the driving force for the maintenance, conservation, and development of rural areas. They constitute a considerable proportion of the workforce in agriculture and contribute to the development of the rural sector in the face of ongoing depopulation. Aside from that, they contribute to the preservation and transmission of traditions.

The social cooperative "Women of Krusha e Madhe" is unified by its value-based operations, which allow it to provide essential services to its community and maintain business administration by the people at the center of each organization. The workers and the village are helped by the Krusha e Madhe social cooperative, which benefits the community in numerous ways. Benefits to the community include serving as role models for young girls and other women, assimilating into society, fostering talent development, creating new career opportunities, and other advantages (K, 2015).

Another important element for the agriculture cooperative of "The Women of Krusha e Madhe" is continual communication with members, creating a mindset that encourages business practices, and maintain a formal board/management relationship (Recura, 2020).

2.4 Impact on Community

There isn't a single definition that everyone agrees on, but generally speaking, community means that there are connections among a group of people in a certain geographical area or online that go

beyond passing acknowledgment. Since of the group's shared ideals, aspirations, and maybe a way of life, these relationships are closer than casual ones because they strengthen one another, foster good feelings, and lead to a certain level of commitment and accountability.

The definition of the community according to Scott Peck is as follows: If we are going to use the word "community" meaningfully, we must limit it to a group of people who have figured out how to communicate honestly with one another, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed enough commitment to rejoice together, mourn together, and take pleasure in one another, making others' conditions our own. The idea of community as presented by Peck is expanded upon by Loewy in 1993. In authentic communities, he argued, the community itself serves as a unifying principle for its members (Bruhn, 2011).

Given their ability to tackle local issues by bringing together a critical mass of local resources and the fact that they are locally owned and governed, cooperatives are seen as potentially significant vehicles for community development. In addition, cooperative organizations have the ability to generate more social and economic advantages for a community than non-cooperative businesses. Cooperatives are said to be more community-focused by virtue of their structure or very nature since they are able to pursue a wider range of goals than strictly profit-driven businesses (Fairbairn, B., et al, 1995). The relationship between cooperatives and communities is a neglected research topic, despite the fact that cooperatives are seen as a key tool for community development. Therefore, there is not a lot of framework for analyzing the link between cooperatives and communities as a result of this neglect.

Selami Hoti - the village mayor (Hoti S. , 2022) stated that they count themselves fortunate for the women of Krusha e Madhe because of their fortitude and dedication to integrating the community. By integrating the populace and consistently demonstrating to us that women are capable of anything, they give back to the community. As a result, he viewed women as the village's most crucial pillar, demonstrating their care, resurgence, and progression. Due to the work of those ladies to involve people, the community has become more collaborative, the level of poverty has decreased, and the village is well-known in Kosovo for this. Meetings of the community are considered as a key factor in the community and studies have found that agriculture cooperatives have a chance to interact. This form of agriculture cooperative is known as a form of

community-supported agriculture, in which most of cases women are the innovators of the initiative, and their role is considered to be vital.

Some cooperatives are designed with the primary goal of serving the community in focus. These community cooperatives deliver certain commodities or services that are primarily determined by the neighborhood's general social and economic development needs. The cooperative organizational form and the main activity were both selected primarily for their capacity to support community development. Those cooperatives are known as community business corporations, where the main goal it is to strength the local community. Most of the time they are created by community members who want to address a problem with community development. Those cooperatives mostly are known for the top-down organization (G., 1997)

Rural development from agriculture cooperatives is primarily concerned with enhancing the vitality of the countryside and the well-being of rural communities. The development of rural areas provides food, raw materials, jobs, biodiversity, cultural landscapes, and so on (Paola et al., 2017).

3. Methodology

This study investigates the role of women in the development of rural areas in Kosovo, focusing on the village Krusha e Madhe. The investigation is aimed to be analyzed through agriculture, the participation of women in society and community integration. The first part of the study is based on secondary data, and the second part is based on primary data.

3.1 Aims of the research, presentation of the hypotheses of the study

The purpose of this research is to define the development, community integration, and support roles played by the women of the agricultural cooperative "The Women of Krusha e Madhe".

In this study it will be found:

Research Objectives:

A set of research objectives have been defined in accordance with the research problem in order to solve the specific problem highlighted in the research. The research objectives are as follows:

- To find the role of community support in agriculture,
- To discover new forms of collaboration,
- To analyze the level of integration of people into the community,
- To determine the attitudes toward the agriculture cooperative,
- To evaluate the preferences and the opinions of the community,
- To recommend other possible ways of integrating the population.

Research Questions:

There have been identified research questions in accordance with its objectives to achieve the desired objectives of the research. One of the primary research questions for this study is whether the agricultural cooperative in question is helping to reduce poverty in the community. The research also tries to look into the cooperative's products or services as well as how locals view and justify their affiliation with it. Examining the effect of the community on the contentment of

its residents and the frequency of contact among community members is another goal. The research will also look into how the local school participates in events and festivals in the community. The study will further investigate if the social cooperative's creation has improved communication, collaboration, trust, and other aspects of communal life. The answers to these questions will give important information about how well the cooperative performs in fulfilling its goals and enhancing the lives of its members.

3.2 Hypothesis

H1: The creation of strong collective and participatory components, as well as close linkages to organizations and activities of the civil society, are all benefits of agriculture cooperatives that contribute to the eradication of poverty, and community development.

H2: Agriculture cooperative "The Women of Krusha e Madhe" plays a key role in improving community relationships by fostering trust, cooperation, communication, and providing additional benefits to the community, such as creating suitable solutions, and social innovations.

H3: The community of Krusha e Madhe village seek more for social connections and interactions, and this demonstrates a higher level of well-being, trust and collective problem solving capacity, compared to communities where individuals are less likely to seek support from their peers.

3.3 Introduction to the study's circumstances and placing

A questionnaire served as the foundation for the study's quantitative and qualitative methods. Based on a survey of the research and personal interest, a structured questionnaire was created. The investigation's primary goals are to look into how the community supports the cooperative, how they interact with one another, and what issues they face together.

The questionnaire had 31 questions. The questionnaire employed a variety of questions and statements to assess community viewpoints, the position of the females in the development, their involvement in the community, and their thoughts on issues that affect women farmers. One of the key goals when developing the questionnaire was to address questions that are brief and straightforward.

The questionnaire was first given to the interviewee so they could read about the researcher, the purpose of the study, and how the data would be processed. 300 residents of the village of Krusha e Madhe were all questioned.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts in the following order:

- a) Demographic analysis: gender, age, number of family members, education level, marital status, wealth position.
- b) Questions regarding community integration: employment, civic organization, festivals, school participation in the community and festivals, poverty reduction, networking,
- c) Questions regarding the effect of cooperative in the community: communication, trust, cooperation, quality of life, community life, the benefits from the cooperative,

One matrix question was structured at end of the questionnaire, so the respondents were able to express their opinions about how the school, cooperative, community, religion, civic organizations, local entrepreneurs, local government maintain or improve their standard of living.

To have a better analysis of this community, a questionnaire was conducted. The questionnaire contained 31 questions, with the main aim to investigate, manage and analyze the data collected.

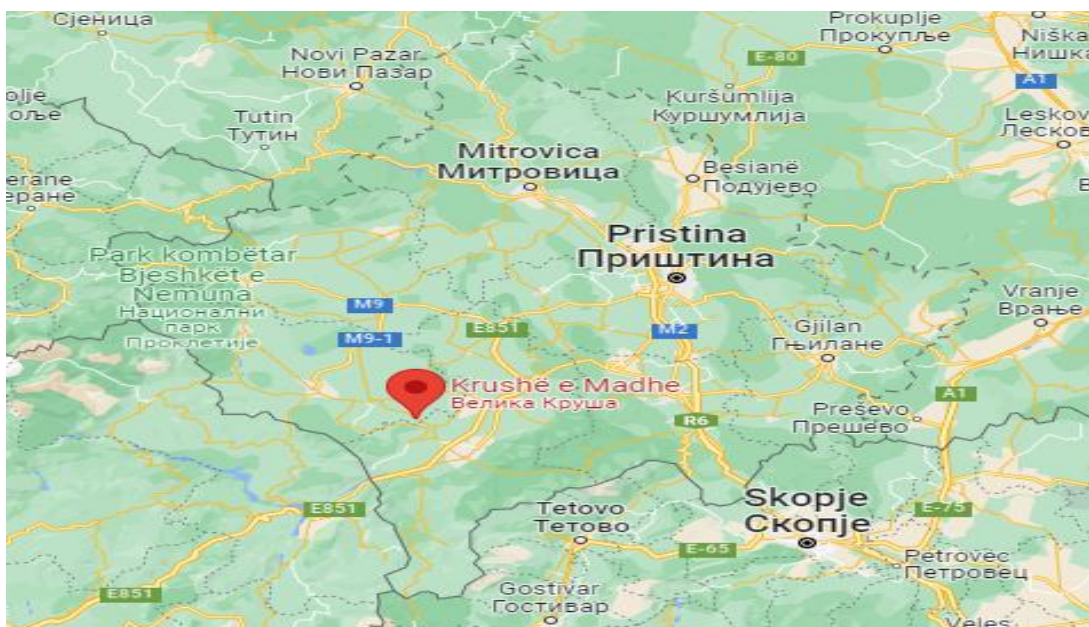


Figure 3: Map of Krusha e Madhe village in Kosovo

Source: Google Maps

Data collection was done by face-to-face interviews with people in the village of Krusha e Madhe. A sample of 300 respondents were collected in July 2022. The village of Krusha e Madhe is located in the Rahovec municipality of western Kosovo.

Information was gathered through interviews in order to compile even more data. The interview covered a range of subjects, including the village's history, production, community, development, etc. Fahrije Hoti, the founder of the agricultural cooperative "Krusha e Madhe," Arton Zeneli, the manager of the cooperative, and Selami Hoti, the head of the village, all took part in the interview.

3.4 Presentation of research sample

My research was conducted with 300 respondents, 155 of them were females and 145 were males. The main target to be part of the research was the population of Krusha e Madhe.

3.5 Presentation of research methods

All of the participant responses were managed by organizing in Microsoft Excel files after the survey was done to collect data and carry out the research's following steps. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences or else known as SPSS was then used to import the data. Through this program, we managed to create much more analysis. In order to describe characteristics in terms of sociodemographic analysis, a basic descriptive technique was applied. Examining the association link between two categorical variables (nominal and ordinal variables) is done using cross-tabulation. It is based on a cross-tabulation table in which each variable's qualitative categories for each case are identified. Also, one way Anova test has been applied, in order to test the correlation.

4. Results

The table below provides a summary of descriptive statistics for the sample's sociodemographic characteristics. As was already mentioned, the data was gathered from the questionnaires. As a result, the study was done mainly with people living in the region of Krusha e Madhe, in order to provide the needed results about the impact that the agricultural cooperative “The Women of Krusha e Madhe” is having in the community integration, development, and collaboration.

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics

Gender	N=300	%
Female	145	51.7
Male	155	48.3
Highest education level	N=300	%
No education	0	0
Primary school	76	25.3
High school	165	55
University	59	19.7
Marital status	N=300	%
Single	59	19.7
Married	209	69.7
Divorced	9	3
Widow	23	7.7
Settlement	N=300	%
Hoce e Vogel	1	.3
Krushe e Vogel	107	35.7
Krushe e Madhe	192	64
Financial position	N=300	%
Rich	19	6.3
Above average	54	18
Average	155	51.7
Below average	53	17.7
Poor	19	6.3

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

A total of 300 respondents that participated in the study included 145 women and 155 men. Most of the age groups that participated in the survey and the community were between the ages of 62-41 and 42-51. Due to the majority being between the ages of 52 and 61, the age group of 1961 to 1970 dominates. The findings indicate that there is a higher propensity for older persons to reside in this location. This is mainly related to the fact that many young people are moving to different

locations in order to gain better education and a better living. The elder people claimed that the company they receive from one another is what they value most about this location and community.

The age range of 62-72 years old was represented from 20 respondents. While, other range ages such as 32-41 years old was represented by 63 of respondents with a fair amount of frequency. Age range 22-31 is represented by 33 of respondents, while we have a lower participation from the age group 18-21 years old with a total of 25 respondents. When compared to the age groups mentioned above, these age groups have a lower percentage in the study.

On the highest level of education, we see that we have a significant number (high school) with about 55% although all respondents were originally from rural areas we can understand there is a good level of people attending schools, following the fact that none of the respondents interviewed have no level of education. Reinforcing the fact that a rural education system has the potential to increase the capacity and knowledge of the rural population, empowering them, creating innovation, and moreover, education exposes the public to information and aids in preventing information misunderstandings. 25.3% of the respondents had finished primary school, while 19.7% were graduated from a university.

According to respondents' family status, 70% were married, 19.7% were single, 7.7% were widows, and 3% were divorced. The level of people that are married represents how the community is being influenced to create stronger links, social alliances, and financial support for the community. While the widows corroborate to us what is known, some of the women of this town have lost their husbands as a result of the war Serbian forces were waging in Kosovo.

The accuracy of the sample used for this study can be shown in the fact that the majority of respondents (64%), when it came to the settlement, were from Krusha e Madhe. While 35.7% of responders were from Krushe e Vogel and 0.3% were from Hoce e Vogel, respectively.

Study participants were initially asked about their financial position, and the results show that the majority of people (51.7%) in this area, consider themselves average when it comes to financial position. Continuing with below average with 17.7%, followed up by above average with 18%, then 6.3% evaluated themselves as rich. While, 6% considered themselves poor. Better economic

conditions and other public benefits resulted from the cooperative's ability to draw investments to the region and aid in its development.

4.1 The impact of agriculture cooperative “The Women of Krusha e Madhe” in community

Getting solid, well-paying jobs is the main goal of those people living in rural areas. They believe that finding employment prospects would help them maintain their living standards in a suitable way. And this is one of the main reason why majority of people of this village are employed, representing 49% of the sample. There are a lot of people who are known as housekeepers, and women make up the majority of this group, represented 20% of the sample. This proves to us again that the main reasons why women in Kosovo are unable to participate in the labor market are family obligations coupled with a lack of access to high-quality and affordable care for children and the elderly, traditional social norms and inequality, lower levels of women's education and work experience, and legal barriers to women's employment (such as high maternity leave costs for employees). The role of pensioner people is seen as crucial element in this community, relating it with the maintenance in social harmony of the community, being represented by 12.7% of the sample. The amount of students in this area is lower (10.3%), and they identify the absence of transportation as their main obstacle. However, the lowest percentage regarding the employment status is represented by receiving maternity benefit with a 7.3%.

Table 3: Employment Status and Workforce Participation

What is your primary (employment) status?	Frequency	Percent
Active employee	148	49.3
Housekeeper	61	20.3
Pensioner	38	12.7
Student	31	10.3
Receiving maternity benefit	22	7.3
Total	300	100

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

Krusha e Madhe was one of the communities in Kosovo that suffered the most when the conflict was over. After the war ended, they found that a large-scale massacre had taken place and that the

entire village had been set on fire. The table above it shows a correlation between a) do you think this cooperative contributes towards poverty reduction within the community and b) settlement. According to 135 of the respondents, who provided average responses, the Krusha e Madhe settlement is where the cooperatives have the most impact. In contrast, respondents in Krusha e Vogel (73) believed that this cooperative had a moderate impact on their community. According to a respondent in Hoce e Vogel, this cooperative had an extremely positive effect on their settlement. Through Chi-Square Tests, we can understand that the connection between the variable a) do you think this cooperative contributes towards poverty reduction within the community and b) settlement is statistically significant, with a value of $p=0.03$. We can conclude and notify from this table that this cooperative helped those settlements to become more cooperative, and community meetings are regarded as a crucial component, and research has shown that agriculture cooperatives have an opportunity to engage. A good element to improve the community has been shown from the civic organizations, and all of the respondents stated that there are civic organization in this area. There is a stronger feeling of community, less crime, and healthier and happier residents in communities with higher civic involvement rates.

Table 4: Correlation between the reduction of poverty and settlement

Settlement	Very	On average	A little	Total
Krushe e Madhe	29	135	28	192
Krushe e Vogel	8	73	26	107
Hoce e Vogel	1	0	0	1
Total	38	208	54	300

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

Cooperatives can serve as local and regional economic pillars by creating stable employment opportunities, upholding high industry standards, providing consistent services, and creating a multiplier effect on the local economy through increased community investment, local hiring, and local purchasing. Also, cooperatives impact the connection in the community, and the next part of the results will analyze the impact of the cooperative in the community, specifically the community life, cooperation, trust, communication, and quality of life. The data has been tested with one-way Anova.

The respondents defined community life in this region as a long-term relationship with a stable group of people who are brought together by a shared vision or objective and fostering a

welcoming environment. The table below, shows us that there is a highly statistically significance 0.000 between the correlation of the community life and cooperative.

Table 5: Assessing the Impact of Cooperatives on Community Life

The community life improved in the Community since establishing the social cooperative	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35.009	2	17.504	43.882	.000
Within Groups	118.471	297	.399		
Total	153.480	299			

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

Cooperating through local, national, regional, and worldwide frameworks, cooperatives best serve their members and advance the cooperative movement. Cooperation is one of the cooperative’s guiding principles, and it also had a positive effect on the neighborhood. Assuming shared responsibility for collaborative work and respecting the opinions and contributions of each team member from a position of strong self-identity, cooperation demonstrates the capacity to work effectively and respectfully with diverse individuals or teams, make concessions, reach consensus during decision-making, and build consensus. The cooperation is helping this community to empower their local communities, encouraging self-reliance, and is attracting more investors in this area. The table below, proves that there is a statistically significance 0.004 between the correlation of the cooperation and cooperative.

Table 6: Analyzing the increase of collaborative efforts since cooperative establishment

The cooperation increased in the community since establishing the social cooperative	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.260	2	.130	.348	.004
Within Groups	110.737	297	.373		
Total	110.997	299			

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

Trust is frequently regarded as a good thing that can benefit organizations in general, communities in particular, and cooperatives. In this area trust is considered to be crucial and the cornerstone of

more than just material prosperity. Political stability, reduced violence, lower level of crime rates and improved health outcomes are all associated with high levels of trust. Furthermore, during the collection of data, the respondents stated that keeping the word (which in Albanian is known as besa), helped to create bonds between friends and neighbors that they turn to when they need help. The table below, shows us that there is a highly statistically significance 0.001 between the correlation of the trust and cooperative.

Table 7: Analysis of the improvement of trust since cooperative establishment

The trust increased in the community since establishing the social cooperative	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.404	2	2.702	7.575	.001
Within Groups	105.943	297	.357		
Total	111.347	299			

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

Good communication that could be seen in this community, is providing the information, knowledge, and supportive atmosphere they need to feel comfortable handling conflict and resolving difficulties successfully. A good element of the community is clear communication and expectations in both ways (community and cooperative), delivering how their performance will impact them and what they need to do to achieve the development. An illustration of it is the quantity of vegetables (such as paprika) that is produced by the local farmers, and the cooperative first obtain the raw materials from the local community and then proceeds with it in other places. The table below, shows us that there is a statistically significance 0.003 between the correlation of the communication and cooperative.

Table 8: Analysis of the increase of communication since cooperative establishment

The communication increased in the community since establishing the social cooperative	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.174	2	.087	.247	.003
Within Groups	104.573	297	.352		
Total	104.747	299			

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

One of the key points, that is contributing to the quality of life in this area, is the common goals that the community and the cooperative have. Their goal is to develop the place as much as possible, in order to have beneficial outcomes such as creating more job opportunities. The table below, shows us that there is a statistically significance 0.005 between the correlation of the quality of life and cooperative.

Table 9: Analysis of the impact of cooperative on quality of life since cooperative establishment

The quality of life got improved in the community since establishing the social cooperative	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.226	2	.613	1.399	.005
Within Groups	130.121	297	.438		
Total	131.347	299			

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

We can see from the table that communication in this area is crucial and plays a significant part in their actions, which is the main reason it was developed. Yet, effective community engagement in communication is another factor that supports communication. The table below illustrates this significance, and it is clear from the 300 people who were interviewed that 31 of them engaged in daily communication with between 1 and 30 other people. A total of 139 respondents engaged daily to between 31 and 60 people, 71 spoke with between 61 and 91, and 59 interacted with between 90 and 120.

Table 10: The quantity of interpersonal communication

How many people do you talk daily in your community?	Frequency	Percent
1-30 people	31	10.3
31-60 people	139	46.3
61-91 people	71	23.7
90-120 people	59	19.7

Total	300	100
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Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

In addition to cooperative having an effect on the community, other elements were discovered to have an effect in maintaining or improving their standard of living. Some of them are having a greater influence than others. These elements include the local school, the local government, the local business community (local entrepreneurs), civic organizations, and religion. According to the findings, local school have the greatest influence on the community after cooperatives, with 45.7% of respondents saying that they significantly maintain or raise their level of living. The school has a variety of effects on the community, but some of the most prevalent ones that were noted include boosting self-assurance, emphasizing community needs, and building a friendlier atmosphere. The second factor was the local entrepreneurs, which was noted favorably by 35% of the respondents in relation to raising their level of living. The impact comes from adding more jobs in the area, which enables residents to work closer to home, raises city revenue, enhances community quality of life, makes the community more self-sufficient, and strengthens community ties. Religion was mentioned by 54% of respondents on average as having an impact on the community, assisting in the reduction of crime, drug misuse, and domestic violence. While, civic organizations and local government were mentioned as having the least impact on sustaining or raising the level of life, with 64.7 and 52% of respondents. Poor project execution, a lack of necessary funding, corruption, low efficiency, and a lack of investments are some of the factors that contribute to civic organization and local government’s lower impact.

Table 11: Analysis of factors influencing quality of life and living standards

Factors	A lot	On average	A little	Total
Local entrepreneurs	34.7	29	33.3	3
Local school	45.7	40	13	1.3
Religion	6.7	54	35.3	4
Civic organization	7.7	25	64.7	2.7
Local government	6.7	27	52.2	14

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

Besides understanding that local school is one of the key elements in improving their standard of living, another important factor was to comprehend the school's involvement in local festivals,

activities, or organizations and how that school is helping to support them. Therefore, the respondents were questioned about if there are any festivals where people gather and socialize. If there are festivals, what are they? If the school takes part in the events, activities, or groups, as well as how the community is affected by the school.

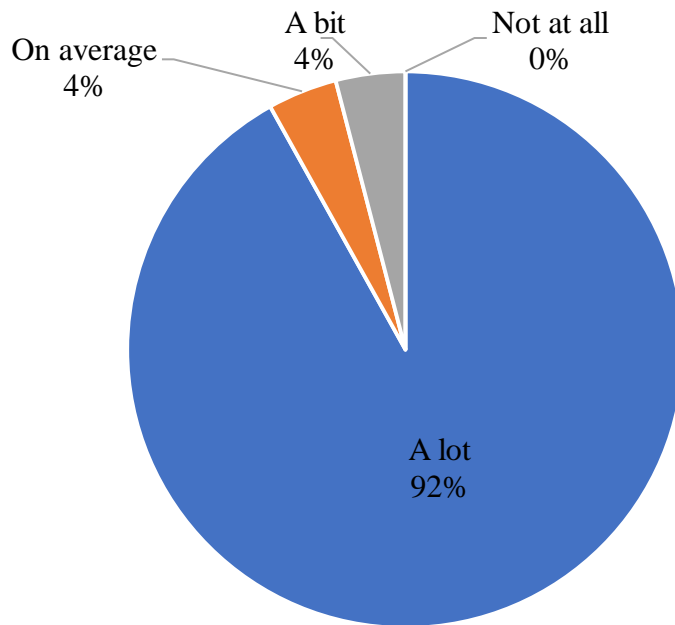


Figure 4: Comprehensive analysis of school influence on community (%)

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

The figure above shows that, according to the majority of respondents (91%), schools have a significant influence on the community through fostering a welcoming environment and taking the initiative to plan events and activities. “Agrofestas” and “Ardhja e Mergatës” are the festivals that are planned. The primary objectives of Agrofestas are the preservation of agricultural, food, and promotional traditions. In collaboration with the community, mayor, school, municipality, and other organizations that support this festival, the Agrofestas festival is organized during the month of August. Eating chilli paprika, diving, concerts, fairs, planning various games, making traditional meals, and performing traditional dances are just a few of the key events that are planned.

Although "Ardhja e Mergates" is a celebration that takes place in July (when most of the exiles come back to their village from abroad). The organization of the festival is done in collaboration with the school, and community. By highlighting qualities that make a community unique and inspire positive emotions, this festival promotes community pride and integration. Traditional dance performances, traditional food preparation, and entertaining games are some of the arranged activities. 4% of the respondents considered that school affect the community on average, and thesame amount of (4%) of the responders concluded that school has a low impact. While, none of the respondents thought that school it doesn't affect the community.

4.2 The social connections of this community

Another element that we wanted to understand about this community, is regarding to whom they seek advice when they need it, in order to analyze with which people they consider themselves close to. Again communication is a very important part, and represents the ability to pay attention to what others are thinking and feeling is necessary for effective communication. Every area of a person's life needs effective communication. Relationships in families, the community, among friends, and at work are affected by communication abilities. In good times and bad, effective communication strengthens and repairs relationships. 48% of the respondents, who made up the majority, said they frequently ask family members for guidance or assistance. Regarding who they seek assistance from or advise from, some of the responses were specific. 16.7 percent of those surveyed selected the wife as the most important individual. 15% of women said that their spouses are the first to offer advice when they need it. 11% of the respondents cited their parents. But a smaller percentage, or 4.7%, of respondents said they would go to their mothers or children first for advice.

Table 12: Analysis of behavior for seeking advice and help

The most important person whom you ask for advice/help	Frequency	Percent
Family	144	48
Wife	50	16.7
Husband	45	15
Parents	33	11

Mother	14	4.7
Children	14	4.7
Total	300	100

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

The analysis goes on to include more prospective community members who could be consulted for assistance or guidance. Neighbor, friend, and mayor are among the people who were listed as potential contacts. We can conclude from the analysis that the neighbor was not considered to be a very likely person for contact. The majority of respondents (51.3%) said they rarely ask a neighbor for guidance or assistance. The number of people who said they occasionally ask their neighbors for advice was 31.7%. 14% indicated that often they seek advice, a lower percentage was for always seeking for advice, represented with 2.8%, and 0.3% as never.

Friends were considered more likely to be contacted for advice/help and were seen as helpful in order to see things from a different point of view and provide us with solutions. The vast majority of the participants (36%) indicated they frequently seek advice or assistance from their friends. 36% of respondents admitted to sometimes asking their friends for advice. 20% of respondents said they just rarely seek guidance, 5.7% said they do so constantly, and none said they never do so. The mayor of this village is another option that this community turns to for assistance and counsel. The large majority of responders (42%) said they occasionally ask the mayor for guidance or support. 29% of respondents claimed to frequently seek the mayor's opinion or assistance. 20.3% of those surveyed indicated they only occasionally seek advice, 4% claimed they always do so, and none said they never do.

Table 13: Analysis of the contribution of locals to advice and assistance

Factors	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Neighbor	.3	51.3	31.7	14	2.8
Friend	.0	20.3	36	38	5.7
Mayor	.0	25	42	29	4

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

People in this community frequently lend a hand to one another without receiving payment for their services, goods, or handmade goods since being nice and helpful to others increases their

happiness. Some of the ways that they help with include performing chores, spending time with elderlies, volunteering, and so on.

The responses to this question are seen in the graph below, with the vast majority of respondents concluding that they frequently experience it and 47% saying they sometimes help one another without receiving payment. 1.7% of respondents said this always happens to them, while 0.7% said it just rarely does.

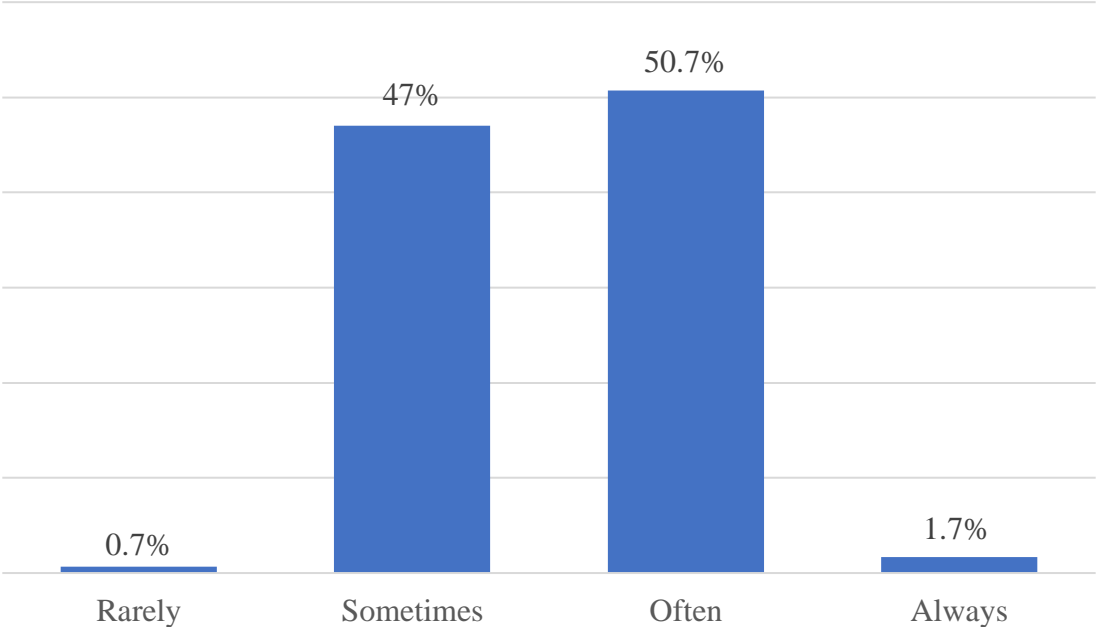


Figure 5: Analysis of the network of mutual aid and community support

Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

In addition to the quantitative part, my study also contains the qualitative method which consists of some open-ended questions focusing on the benefits that this agriculture provide for the community, and about how the community affect them in happiness element.

Excel was used to analyze the data for those open-ended questions, which will aid in a clearer understanding and allow me to observe what the respondents believe about this element, and I will describe in general opinion based on the answers that they respond.

During the interview done with the respondents the majority of them, noted the greatest good or service that cooperative provides for them, is economic development and this was mentioned from

25% of the respondents. Mainly they mentioned the creation of new jobs, and wealth after the war ended. Another component that appears to be important is integration being mentioned from 22% of the respondents. People gained knowledge, employment opportunities, and social opportunities by being integrated into the community. They believe that each person has unique potential as a result, including the ability to create, grow, learn, and adapt. The cooperation was mentioned by 18.3% of respondents as being a very significant component. Breaking taboos was cited by 14% of respondents as the third point that is very important. A lot of damage remained in Kosovo after the war ended, and the cooperative, in addition to fostering economic growth, helped to break down social taboos because women were not permitted to work or drive cars when they participated in this initiative. 10.6% mentioned that promotion of agricultural values, is the main service that cooperative provides for them. While, 10% mentioned tourism because it strengthens the local economy, promotes the preservation of their history, and helps to enrich the geographic identity.

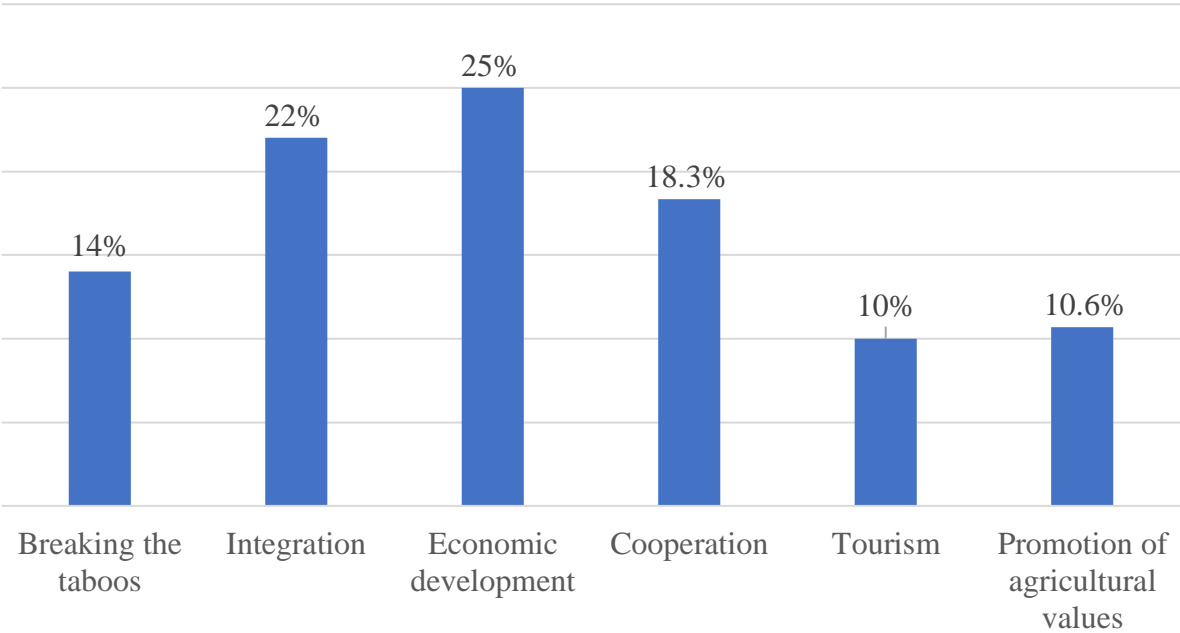


Figure 6: Assessment of the benefits and contributions of cooperative on local community
 (%) Source: Own editing based on own research, 2022

Regarding the second open-ended question which is: a) How does this community affect your happiness? Most of the respondents (27%) named the reason of helping each other when needed

as the key source of the happiness in this community. Due to this, they improve their self-confidence, social interactions, and their competence. Being followed by emotional support (16%), which has a positive effect on their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Access to job opportunities and feelings of safety were mentioned by 15.7% of the respondents, and this improves their happiness by increasing their incomes, and their financial position in order to provide much more for themselves. The feeling of safety affects their happiness in the positive state of well-being among social and physical environment, reducing poverty and crime rate. While, having places to meet with people and socialize, and creating a friendly environment were also in the same position (13%). Those specially were mentioned by pensioners, and it affects their happiness by removing the feeling of loneliness, and enjoying each other companies.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This research aims to identify the attitudes and preferences surrounding various community integration, development, and support models and unearths alternative forms of cooperation in Kosovo, more specifically in Krusha e Madhe, and about the impact that the agricultural cooperative “The Women of Krusha e Madhe” has in the community. The primary objective for the study was the population of Krusha e Madhe. In Kosovo, this cooperative is well-known almost everywhere. The history of these women is viewed as proof of their ability to resist, stand together, and rebuild their lives. Considering that the Women of Krusha e Madhe brought life after horror, this cooperative is also known as the cooperative of hope. Community-supported agriculture contributed to greater community participation, cooperation, and value addition. Also, it creates a direct relationship and a stronger connection between farmers and local community.

The results of the survey conclude that from 300 respondents that were part of the research, 145 were women, and 155 were men. Due to the fact that the majority of young people are relocating to new regions in search of higher education, better chances, and a better standard of life, the respondents were mostly between the ages of 52 and 61. Given that 55% of the respondents had high school as their greatest level of education, education in such regions is highly significant. Regarding marital status, the vast majority (70%) were married, and widowhood, a substantial status (7.7%), confirmed what was already clear to us: that the majority of women in this town are widowed as a consequence of the war that Serbian forces were waging in Kosovo. One of the primary requirements for drawing meaningful conclusions was to include as many respondents from Krusha e Madhe as feasible, and 64% of the respondents overall came from this region. While, the financial position of the population of this area is known to be average, represented by 51.7% of the respondents. Followed up by the fact that 49% of the sample, were employed, strengthening the fact regarding the financial position.

There is a connection between the settlement and the reduction of poverty impacted by the cooperative, and this is proved by the correlation between those variables and the Chi-Square Test resulting with a statistically significant value of $p=0.03$. From this, we can conclude that this cooperative assisted those settlements in becoming more cooperative. Research has revealed that

agriculture cooperatives have the opportunity of joining in community meetings, which are seen as a significant component.

Moving to the part of the trust, cooperation, communication, quality of life, and community life, the results show the cooperative's profound influence on the community. According to the respondents, community life in this area is described as a long-term partnership with a dependable group of people who are brought together by a common goal or vision and who actively promote a friendly environment. This community's cooperation is fostering self-reliance, empowering local communities, and luring additional investors to the region. Trust is regarded as being essential and the foundation of more than simply material wealth in this sector. In this community, effective communication can be understood as giving people the information, expertise, and encouraging environment they need to feel at ease confronting conflict and solving problems successfully. All of the mentioned variables, resulted with statistically significant results.

Additional factors that could affect maintaining or increasing their standard of living have been found. Local school, the local government, local entrepreneurs, civic organizations, and religion were among the components that were included. The results show that after cooperatives, local schools have the biggest impact on the neighborhood, with 45.7% of respondents reporting that they considerably maintain or enhance the standard of living. The school's influence on the neighborhood results from enhancing self-assurance, highlighting community needs, and creating a nicer environment. Besides that, school has a significant impact on the community, the other key point is regarding the involvement of the school in local festivals, or activities. The findings show that schools engage in events and festivals like the "Agroffesta" festival and "Ardhja e Mergatës", and contribute by creating a friendly atmosphere and taking the initiative to organize activities.

Another element that was analyzed, was to identify who they turn to for guidance when they need it, in order to examine which individuals in this community they believe to be close friends. In general, the majority of the respondents considered their family members to consult for assistance or guidance. Followed by friends, and continuing to the mayor, while neighbor was not considered to be a very likely person for contact. A further intriguing result was that members of this community frequently provided one another with services, goods, or handicrafts without expecting money. The vast majority came to the conclusion that they do this frequently, representing 50.7% of the sample.

Although this cooperative offers a variety of services to the community, economic development which helps to provide job opportunities is the most crucial. Integration came next (22%) because people benefit socially from it. Continuing to cooperation, being a close factor of integration The cooperation was mentioned by 18.3% of respondents as being a very significant component. The third factor that is highly significant was mentioned by 14% of respondents as breaking taboos. By shattering a number of social taboos, including those that forbade widowed women from working, obtaining a driver's license, and operating a motor vehicle, this cooperative was able to achieve instant notoriety, in the community and beyond. The circle had not expected widows to prioritize their careers, achieve success both alone and with others, and reject societally prescribed weddings. The following factors on the list include tourism and the promotion of agricultural values. These elements contribute to the development of a connection that fosters a sense of community when interacting with both locals and visitors. Also, it promotes a deeper understanding of seasonality and regional agriculture, the preservation of their heritage, and so on.

So, the hypotheses of this study are:

- H1: The cooperative helps establish relationships with organizations and initiatives that promote community growth and poverty alleviation, this hypothesis is approved.
- H2: The agricultural cooperative "The Women of Krusha e Madhe" is crucial in developing trust, cooperation, and communication within the community while also bringing about social improvements and other benefits for the area, this hypothesis is accepted.
- H3: The community of this village wants to create more social contacts and connections in order to have a higher level of well-being, trust, and capacity for group problem-solving in the community, this hypothesis is acknowledged.

The study's findings offer a preliminary understanding of the community impact and cooperation brought about by the female cooperative "The Women of Krusha e Madhe" as a tool for this region's agricultural and economic development. The three hypotheses are accepted based on the anticipated results because of their value, and on this basis, it is possible to determine the role of community support in agriculture, analyze the level of population integration, ascertain attitudes toward the agriculture cooperative, assess the preferences and opinions of the community, and suggest alternative methods of population integration.

The following are my recommendations:

- Strengthening and expanding the agriculture cooperative sector in Kosovo will bring more democracy, and develop their business potential, including entrepreneurial and managerial capacities.
- Further investments are anticipated to be needed in this sector to promote and boost its competitiveness as well as provide access to markets and institutional financing.
- To promote their events more widely in order to attract more attendees, provide sustainable, quality employment opportunities, and encourage other individuals to participate.
- To prevent young people from having to move away, it is important to invest in infrastructure, support education, and the development of technical and managerial skills as well as general knowledge of economic and social policy. It is also important to increase access to information and communication technologies.
- More assistance from the government, local government, and other pertinent institutions, as well as a greater level of civic organizations' involvement, are anticipated in light of the existing circumstances and anticipated future developments.

6. Summary

This study investigates the attitudes and preferences regarding the forms of community integration, development, and support that the agriculture cooperative “The Women of Krusha e Madhe” impacts, and discovers those new forms of collaboration, in Krusha e Madhe village. This research aims to ascertain the attitudes toward the agriculture cooperative, to assess the preferences and opinions of the community, to define the primary obstacles they encounter, the support they receive, the connection they have, and the ways that this agriculture cooperative benefits the community. During the investigation, general conclusions about the sector were assessed, if there are civic organizations? Are there events where people come together and socialize? What are such festivals, if any? How does the school impact the community? Does the school take part in the events, activities, or groups? Do they believe this cooperative helps the local community combat poverty? Since the social cooperative was established, how has the community’s quality of life, collaboration, trust, and communication improved?

The intention is also to comprehend how this community is connected, including who is the most crucial individual they consult for guidance or assistance? How frequently do they seek guidance from their family members? Expanding it with a further widening in the community to the neighbors, friends, and mayor for advice. Continuing with how often do they experience, that people assist one another without money with services, goods, art crafts, etc.? What are the goods or services this agriculture cooperative provides for them? How is their level of living maintained or raised by the cooperative, community, religion, civic organizations, local business owners, local government, and local school? What impact does this community have on their happiness? Three hypotheses were developed in my study and tested during the research with the intent of analyzing the level of poverty reduction and community development, the level of community trust, cooperation, and communication, as well as the level of social connections and interactions that this cooperative has in this community, and those hypotheses were approved.

With the help of the SPSS program, various analyses were performed on the acquired data, including descriptive, cross-tabulation, and one-way ANOVA.

Among the main conclusions is that there is a link between the agricultural cooperative and community life, trust, cooperation, and communication. In addition to the agricultural cooperative,

the local school has a significant influence on the community and helps in taking the initiative to arrange events. Additionally, this community interacts with one another and has social connections, which increases participation in community activities, fosters a sense of pride in the community, encourages cooperation to overcome common problems, and fosters economic growth by facilitating the sharing of resources and information among community members.

While some of the specific findings include the high participation of the respondents from this area and a significant marital status (7.7%), which confirms what was already obvious to us that the majority of women in this town are widowed as a result of the war that Serbian forces were waging in Kosovo. Due to the cooperative's beneficial effects on fostering economic growth, creating social capital, and assisting in the establishment of more sustainable and resilient rural communities, there is a statistically significant relationship between poverty reduction and settlement. This is proved by the research of (G., 1997), which mentions that certain cooperatives are referred to as community business enterprises, with the primary objective of enhancing community life. The majority of the time, they are developed by locals who wish to solve a development-related issue. These cooperatives are mostly renowned for their top-down structure.

Future research could examine the role of female cooperatives in promoting sustainable agriculture and rural livelihoods, including their contributions to food security, resource management, and environmental conservation, and examine the social and cultural factors that influence the formation and operation of female cooperatives, including the role of gender. These are just a few ideas for future studies that could expand the use of female cooperatives as a tool for rural development. These studies contribute to a better understanding of the function of female cooperatives in fostering rural development and provide fresh avenues for assisting women's economic empowerment and enduring rural livelihoods.

Several stakeholders, including policymakers, development practitioners, researchers, and rural people, could gain from this investigation. The results of this analysis can be used by policymakers and development professionals to create and carry out more efficient programs and policies that assist women's economic empowerment and foster sustainable rural development. Researchers can increase knowledge and understanding of the aspects that contribute to the success or failure of such cooperatives by using the insights gained from researching the function of female cooperatives. Finally, by better understanding the potential advantages and difficulties of such

cooperatives and using this understanding to make wise decisions about their participation in or support for such initiatives, rural communities themselves can profit from the analysis of the role of female cooperatives.

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Annex 1: Research Questionnaire Used

Questionnaire

Topic: **“Female co-operative as a tool of rural development; the case of Krusha e Madhe”**

Information for research participants:

1) Notice paragraph:

Dear participant,

I am Ledianë Durmishi, a Master’s student in "Rural Development Engineering" at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Hungary. The questionnaire is being implemented in the framework of data collection for the development of my master thesis.

The questionnaire aims to explore your attitudes and preferences regarding the forms of community support in agriculture and to discover those new forms of collaboration.

Your participation, which is highly valued, is voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. The data will be analyzed in groups and not individually, with the main purpose to be used for the reason mentioned above.

2) What do I need to do to participate in the research?

If you decide to participate in the questionnaire, you must complete the questions which will then be analyzed and the results will only be used for academic data. The questionnaire will be completed only once and this data will be used only once.

3) Who can I contact for more details?

Researcher: ledianedurmishi@gmail.com

Research Mentor: farkas.tibor@uni-mate.hu

Thank you for your commitment and time!

Participant Consent Form

I have read and understood the information on the realization of the questionnaire, which has been fully explained to me.

- I agree to participate in the research.
- I understand that participating in the research will involve completing a questionnaire.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and the data will remain confidential.
- I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in a research study.

- By circling "Agree", you are accepting the statements you have in the "Participant Consent Form": *
- Agree

1 .Gender:	1. Male 2. Female
2. Year of birth:
3. In which settlement do you live:
4. Level of education:	1. No education 2. Primary school 3. High school 4. College/university
5. Number of family members:	
6. Marital status?	1. Single 2. Married 3. Divorced 4. Widow
7. How would you evaluate your financial/wealth position?	1. Super rich 2. Rich 3. Middle class 4. Poor

<p>8. What is your primary (employment) status?</p>	<p>1. Active employee</p> <p>2. Pensioner</p> <p>3. Soldier</p> <p>4. Receiving maternity benefit</p> <p>5. Housekeeper</p> <p>6. Student</p> <p>7. Others: specify</p>
<p>9. Is there any civic organization?</p>	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. No</p>
<p>10. Are there festivals where people gather and enjoy each other's company?</p> <p>If yes, what are those festivals?</p>	<p>1. Yes</p> <p>2. No</p>
<p>11. How many people do you talk to daily in your community?</p>	<p>Number of people</p>
<p>12. How does the school affect the community?</p>	<p>Writing space</p>
<p>13. Does the school participate in festivals, activities, or organizations?</p>	<p>Writing space</p>
<p>14. Do you think this cooperative contributes toward poverty reduction within the community?</p>	<p>1. Very</p> <p>2. On average</p> <p>3. A little</p>

	4. Not at all
15. Which one do you consider the most important when you think of cooperative?	1. Business 2. Lifestyle 3. Income source 4. Agriculture cooperation
16. What do you think are the prospects for this agriculture cooperative to continue after next year?	1. Very good 2. Good 3. Poor
17. The community life improved in the community since establishing the social cooperative.	1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree
18. The cooperation increased in the community since establishing social cooperative.	1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree
19. The trust got increased in the community since establishing the social cooperative.	1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree
20. The quality of life got improved in the community since establishing the social cooperative.	1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree
21. The communication got increased in the community since establishing social cooperative.	1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree
22. What this cooperative can do better so it can improve the motivement and productivity?	1. Quality of products 2. Investment in promotion 3. Packaging

	4. Higher security 5. Digitalization 6. Other (space)
23. How often do you turn to your neighbor for advice?	1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always
24. How often do you turn to your friend for advice?	1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always
25. How often do you turn to the mayor for advice?	1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always
26. How frequently do you experience, that people help each other without money with services, goods, artifacts, etc.?	1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always
27. Who is the most important person who you ask for advice or help?	Writing space, specific answers.
28. Can you tell us what good or service this agriculture cooperative provides for you?	Writing space, specific answers.

29. How do the following options maintain or improve your standard of living?

	Very	On average	A little	Not at all
Cooperative				

Community				
Religion				
Civic organizations				
Local entrepreneurs				
Local government				
Local school				
30. How does this community affect your happiness?		Writing space, specific answers.		

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Annex 4: List of abbreviations

EU – European Union,

KAS – Kosovo Agency of Statistics

IOF – Investor Owned Business,

NCFC – National Council of Farmer Cooperatives,

FAO -Food and Agriculture Organization

MAFRD – Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development

IFC – International Finance Corporation

SFRY – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

UNMIK - United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Appendices

Appendix 2

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Thesis title: Female co-operative as a tool of rural development; the case of Krusha e Madhe

Author name: Ledianë Durmishi

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Department of Rural and Regional Development/ Institute of Sustainable Development and
Economics**

Abstract

The agriculture cooperatives have a significant impact on the community and are renowned for their bottom-up methodology, which has allowed them to identify expanding needs and provide appropriate solutions, frequently without the support of the governmental sector. Additionally, agricultural cooperatives are famous for their part in empowering people, developing additional techniques to combat poverty, and enlarging and diversifying the range of services offered to households and individuals.

The first section of the study is based on a literature review, and the second section is based on primary data. The secondary data are collected from published materials like books, journals, and

articles. The study investigates the attitudes and preferences regarding the forms of community integration, development and support in the agriculture cooperative “The Women of Krusha e Madhe”, and discovers those new forms of collaboration, in Kosovo, specifically in Krusha e Madhe. The study was developed on a quantitative and qualitative method based on a structured questionnaire, and interviews, where the main target to be part of the research was the population of Krusha e Madhe, conducted with 300 respondents.

The results indicate a correlation between the settlement and the cooperative’s impact on poverty alleviation. The results also demonstrate the cooperative’s significant impact on the community when looking at the areas of trust, cooperation, communication, quality of life, and communal life. As a result of the research, some recommendations include strengthening and growing the agriculture cooperative because doing so will increase their business potential, advertising their events more widely to draw more attendees, create long-term, high-quality employment opportunities, and inspire other people to get involved, as well as stepping up government and other institutions' level of support for future developments.

Keywords: agriculture cooperative, community, integration, cooperation