



# Empowering Pastoralist Women in Mountain Areas: Navigating Environmental and Gender Challenges

Enhancing women's engagement in the mountainous areas of Albania and North Macedonia

March 12, 2024



# Shar Mountain public campaign - Photo testimonials

**“Being an active member of the oldest mountaineering club in North Macedonia, Ljuboten, I am constantly engaged in the organization of mountain climbing tours, activities for the development of mountain and alpine tourism and the environmental protection. Hiking in a national park means regulated and safe mobility in the mountains, marked trails, as well as a clean and protected environment that each mountaineer can enjoy”**

**Gariela Ciric, mountaineer with Ljuboten Mountaineering Club**



**“I am familiar with more than 60 types of medicinal plants in Sar Mountain, helping me to make medicine for treating different conditions and diseases. Many people use store bought medicine for these diseases not knowing that each medicine can be found in nature. In the (future) national park, I expect more care for medicinal plants, education on how to collect them and their curing properties.”**

**Fatima Ademi, collector of medicinal plants F.sh., Kallishte**

## Study visit for enhancing rural women involvement in sustainable tourism activities - Carev Dvor, Prespa (July 2022)

**Strengthening the capacities of rural women for engaging in sustainable tourism activities, demonstrating local practices such as processing and marketing of local products, promotion of traditional food and best agrotourism practices.**

**Spirit of Prespa Family Farm**

## Desertification and Drought Day - Skopje City Park (June 2023)



**Under the moto #HerLand, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia, joined their forces together with the support of the National Federation of Farmers and the Center for Climate Change, on celebrating the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought and promote women's land rights by sharing successful stories of about 40 women farmers.**

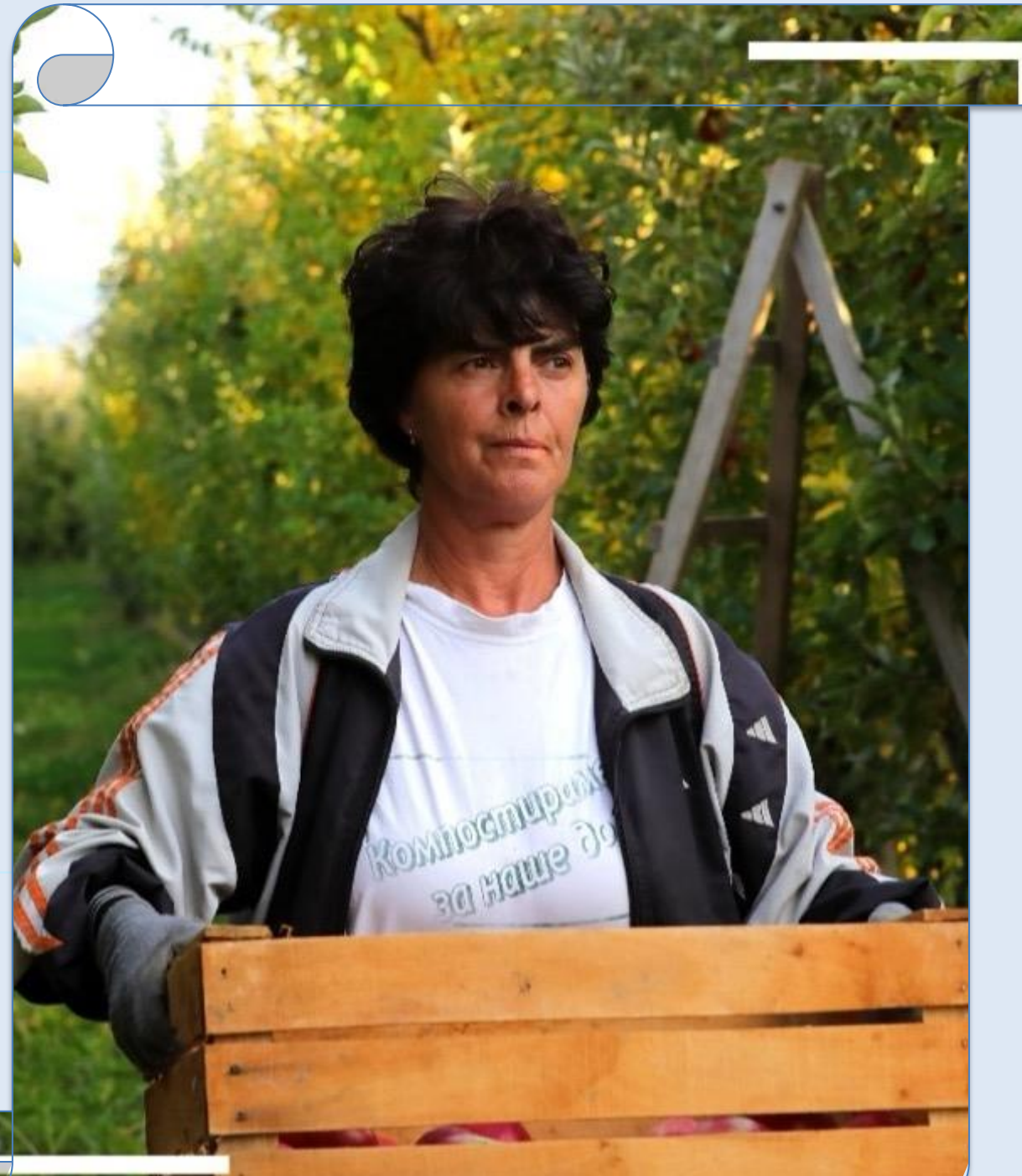
**Frosina Gjorgievska**  
**Coordinator of the Women Farmers Network at the**  
**National Federation of Farmers**

**A woman from a rural environment should appreciate herself and not be ashamed of the fact that she is engaged in agriculture, regardless of whether she is highly educated, whether she has completed high school or only primary education. He should be proud to be a food producer. And, she must be constantly informed, interested in the news, in the opportunities that are offered to her.**

**Indeed, a big problem is the traditional barriers in terms of realizing the right of ownership for property and land for women in rural areas.**

**Very often, in the property acquired in marriage, the husband, not the wife, is the holder of the ownership rights, which makes it impossible for the economic empowerment of women, especially in rural areas. It is one of the key challenges we are working on to realize the rights of rural women.**

**#Her land**  
**#Her rights**



**Irena Baliska**  
**Female farmer from Budinarci, Berovsko**

**It is very important to develop women's entrepreneurial skills. In that direction, she should have finances, but also have land in her name. In this way, its role in the agricultural economy increases.**

**I am one of the few examples and here I would say that we, women should be more in solidarity with each other and support each other in the direction of our economic strengthening and in realizing our rights, including the right to our own land.**

**#Her land**  
**#Her rights**



**Vaska Mojsovska**  
**The first woman president of the**  
**National Federation of Farmers**

**Only five percent of women appear as holders of property and agricultural land (usually after becoming widows). The majority do not perceive these practices and traditions as discriminatory. On the contrary, they accept them as normal and respect them without objection.**

**As a farmer, I am one of the women who enter that 5% because it is one of the few examples of a family where traditional barriers have been overcome and where the woman is seen as an equal member both at home and in decision-making during the allocation of income and investment.**

**#Her land**  
**#Her rights**



**Tanja Oreshkova**  
**Small family winery Oreshkovi**

**The ORESHKOVI family winery is located in the village of Timjanik, just two kilometres from Negotino, and has been producing wine exclusively from its own vineyards since 2021. The Oreshkovi family has been engaged in agriculture all their lives, and since 2020 Tanja Orashkova is a registered farmer, who in this way ensures her insurance, and thus the security of the whole family.**

**Tanja is the holder of the family agricultural land of five hectares, and her husband is a member. Her son and daughter are also fully involved in the family agricultural business, and in this regard, Tanja notes that both children will equally inherit the right to agricultural land, i.e. they will be holders of land in order to independently create their professional and life path.**

**#Her land**  
**#Her rights**



GEF Project “Achieving biodiversity conservation through effective management and enhanced resilience to climate change in the existing protected area of the North Albanian Mountainous Region”





# Engagement of rural women

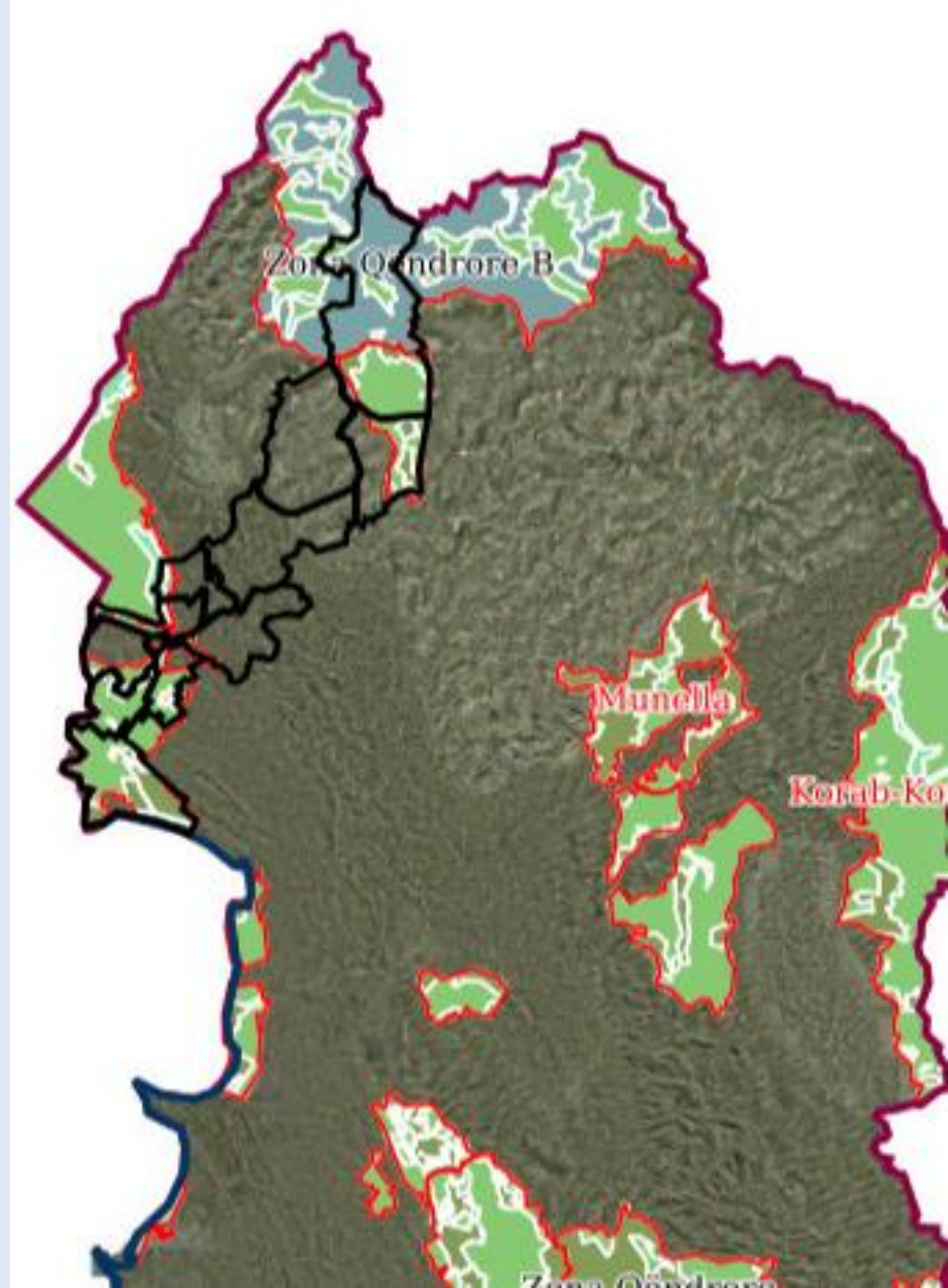
## - The challenges

- Stakeholders, especially women, were not involved or informed about protected areas management decisions that could affect their livelihood or use of natural resources.
- Poor community support and limited local buy-in for environment- based initiatives.
- The draft AANP zonation and management plan for example, was developed with little stakeholder consultation and knowledge of the biological, socio-economic and cultural context of the area.
- Agriculture is a very important livelihood in the AA, especially for women. Family-owned farms produce quantities that are too small and of insufficient quality to compete on the market.
- Country-wide experience of weather-related disasters, floods, the recent earthquake, and the COVID-19 pandemic show that Albania is ill-prepared to adequately respond and support the most vulnerable citizens, including rural women who lost their subsistence agriculture production, single mothers who went homeless, and women who face domestic violence.



## Specific challenges in the Albanian Alps

- Geography, accessibility and mobility,
- Land property rights, registered documentation,
- Cultural challenges and occupational stereotypes
- Women are under-represented in public life & environmental decision making,
- Women from disadvantaged groups are largely unrepresented,
- Gender disparity in unpaid work: Women devote 21.74% of their daily time to unpaid tasks like cooking, cleaning, and childcare, while men contribute just 3.47%.



# Project activities – engaging rural women

- **MC meetings** - Ensure an active participation of local communities, women, and women NGOs,
- **Zonation Plan** - Wide and inclusive stakeholder consultation process - implications of zonation to local livelihoods, traditional land use patterns, women and other marginalized groups are carefully considered,
- **Climate change assessment** – gender specific data on impacts, as well as recommendations to target resilience building measures,
- **Management Plan** - voices of women and other marginalized groups are heard and considered,
- **Institutional development plan** - consider the gender assessment of women employment in the sector, with concrete activities presented in the plan for balancing the number of male and female staff and taking into consideration their respective competencies,
- **Capacity building** - local communities, especially women, involved in the design & implementation, recognize role of women and youth in maintaining and transferring traditional knowledge and practices.



# Principles and tools to ensure proper engagement of rural women

- Integrate gender from the inception of the project and develop a gender pro-active approach at the earliest stages of the project implementation.
- Hire staff with expertise in gender issues at the start of the project to ensure and oversee the integration of gender across the project.
- Gender considerations included into the Results Framework with specific targets.
- At least two women organizations have been identified in the project area to help facilitate the project to be more proactive in its gender considerations and actions. – stakeholder mapping
- Gender evenly and consistently integrated across all project objectives to achieve the intended impact of promoting gender equality.
- Develop and implement a gender responsive, stakeholder consultation plan.



# Possible Pilots – Agrotourism and Pastoralism/Shtepia e Bariut Kelmend - Malesi e Madhe Municipality

## Lepushe - Guesthouse:

Composition of the village comprised of 8-10 families, main income coming from tourism and remittances, rapid aging of the village population due to migration,

- Technology for heating, cooking and cleaning
- Steady and continuous supply of food products (dairy, meat)
- Improved accessibility to healthcare and educational services/facilities

## Kelmend and Shkrel – Shepherding:

- Improving conditions of shepherds in the mountain
- Building of check dams,
- Building of a dairy to collect all the products of the shepherds of the area,
- Standardization, modernization and improvement of food processing practices





**Thank you for the  
attention!**

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