



Co-funded by
the European Union



german
cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Report on “Women accessibility to E-Kosova”.

Compiled by:
Blerta Thaçi

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union and German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation co-funded action on “Administrative Burden Reduction” implemented by “Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH” technical module “Support to EU Integration Reform Process.

The views expressed herein are those of the consultant/s and therefore do not in any way reflect the official opinion of the European Union, Germany or GIZ.

Reference to the project to be used in cases where the contractors refer to the support in Introduction or Executive summary, etc, in many cases they only say “supported by GIZ”. This is not correct; it has to be written as below.

The Multi-Donor Action on “**Administrative Burden Reduction in Kosovo**”, co-funded by the European Union (EU) and the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH as part of the BMZ Technical Cooperation Module “**Support of EU-Integration Reform Processes in Kosovo**”.

Table of Contents

Contents

0. Executive Summary.....	6
1. Introduction	7
2. Objective.....	7
3. Methodology	8
3.1. Quantitative Component: Online Survey.....	8
3.2. Qualitative Component: Key Interviews.....	8
3.3. Secondary Research & Literature Review	8
4. Quantitative Component: Help Improve eKosova for All Women	10
Section 1: Demographic data	10
Section 2: The usage of eKosova	12
Section 3: Challenges and accessibility.....	14
Section 4: Inclusion and gender needs	15
5. Qualitative Component: Interviews	18
5.1. Interview with Mr. Burim Balaj, Director of DRPA, Agency of Societal Information, Kosovo	18
5.2. Expert Interview: Ms. Luljeta Demolli, Executive Director, Kosovo Center for Gender Studies .	21
6. Secondary Research & Literature Review: Women’s Usability, Access, and Representation in eKosova	23
6.1 Digital Literacy and Skills Gap	23
6.2 Awareness and Usage of eKosova.....	24
6.3 Usability and Platform Design	24
6.4 Availability of Gender-Specific Services.....	25
6.5 Women’s Representation in Platform Design	26
6.6 Bureaucratic and Administrative Burdens.....	27
7. Recommendations for a Gender-Inclusive Digital Platform	28
7.1. Build Digital Confidence and Literacy for Women	28
7.2 Improve Platform Design and Service Discoverability	28
7.3 Address Intersectional Digital Barriers	28
7.4 Simplify and Streamline Administrative Processes	29
7.5 Mainstream Gender into Platform Governance and Oversight.....	29
7.6 Build Trust and Promote Inclusive Engagement.....	29
8. Sample Survey Questions.....	30
9. References.....	31
Conclusion.....	32

0. Executive Summary

This report investigates the accessibility of the eKosova digital services platform from the perspective of women in Kosovo. As digitalization accelerates across the country, platforms like eKosova are central to government efforts to increase transparency, efficiency, and citizen participation. However, access does not guarantee inclusion, and digital services must be designed with equity in mind to avoid deepening existing gender and social disparities.

The research explores how women interact with the eKosova platform, what challenges they face, and what systemic improvements are needed to ensure the platform serves all citizens, not just the digitally literate or socioeconomically advantaged. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach, the findings reflect the experiences of 73 women from diverse age groups and educational backgrounds who responded to an online survey, as well as insights from institutional interviews and comparative studies.

Key findings reveal significant gaps in digital literacy, poor usability, and a lack of visibility for services relevant to women, such as disability pensions for children, childcare subsidies, and protections against domestic violence. Women from marginalized communities, including Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian populations, as well as those with lower education levels, face compounded barriers due to language gaps, device limitations, lack of digital skills, and documentation challenges. These groups are frequently forced to complete services in person despite the platform's intended digital convenience.

Usability issues were a recurring theme across survey responses and interviews. The platform's interface lacks intuitive design, mobile optimization, and visual guidance, especially for services that require document uploads or navigating multiple pages. Multilingual support remains limited, and the absence of a "Women & Family" section or life-event-based service organization makes it difficult for users to locate critical services. Meanwhile, administrative burdens such as repeated documentation submission and re-evaluation for permanent disabilities have been digitally replicated rather than resolved.

A major structural gap lies in the lack of women's representation in platform design and feedback loops. While women are some of the most active users of public services, they are largely absent from consultations, co-design processes, and usability testing. This stands in contrast to EU best practices, where gender audits, user testing, and feedback dashboards are standard practice in service design.

Despite these challenges, the report emphasizes that Kosovo has the tools, policies, and institutional frameworks in place to lead a more inclusive digital transformation. Through recommendations centered on human-centered design, gender mainstreaming, administrative simplification, and participatory governance, eKosova can evolve into a platform that reflects the realities, needs, and strengths of all women in Kosovo.

The report concludes that inclusion must be intentional, and that Kosovo has a unique opportunity to set a regional precedent in feminist digital governance. With strategic reforms and a commitment to equity, eKosova can move from being a digitized public tool to a truly inclusive platform, one that transforms not just how services are delivered, but who they empower.

1. Introduction

Kosovo has taken significant strides in digital governance over the past five years, positioning the eKosova platform, launched in 2020, as the central gateway for citizens to access essential public services. Developed under the leadership of the Agency for Information Society (ASHI), eKosova was rapidly expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide services such as vaccination appointments, civil status registration, and welfare access, marking a shift toward digitized, citizen-centric governance.

However, as Kosovo advances its Digital Agenda 2030, which emphasizes inclusive digital transformation (SO1), service digitalization (SO3), and building public trust (SO6), it becomes increasingly critical to examine whether platforms like eKosova are equally accessible to all, particularly to women.

Digital platforms must be designed to reflect the diversity of users' realities, not just their digital needs. User involvement, especially from marginalized groups, is essential to ensure that services are not only technically accessible, but socially and culturally inclusive. This is particularly vital for women, who often engage with public services in roles as caregivers, parents, and heads of households.

Multiple studies, including those by the Kosovo Women's Network (KWN) and UN Women, have demonstrated that gender-neutral design approaches often fail to address the specific barriers women face, such as digital literacy gaps, limited access to smartphones or the internet, and lack of visibility for services like childcare support, domestic violence aid, and disability allowances.

According to the European Union External Action (2022), sociocultural norms, caregiving responsibilities, financial dependence, and systemic underrepresentation continue to limit women's active participation in both public life and digital spaces. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2023) notes that globally, women are 19% less likely than men to use mobile internet, a gap that is even wider in rural areas, where access and affordability challenges are compounded by restrictive gender roles.

Recent focus group discussions conducted by EPIK & UBO Consulting (2025) in Kosovo have shown that critical public services, such as death registration, disability pensions, and child support, are often designed without meaningful user input. Women, who frequently manage these services on behalf of their families, reported excessive bureaucracy, documentation burdens, inconsistent instructions from municipalities, and limited guidance through the eKosova portal. These design flaws and service gaps disproportionately affect those who already face systemic barriers to participation.

2. Objective

This report explores the extent to which the eKosova platform responds to the specific needs of women. It applies a gender lens to assess usability, accessibility, and the presence (or absence) of supportive structures for digital inclusion. The research prioritizes women's voices and experiences as essential evidence for improving the quality and fairness of digital public service delivery in Kosovo.

The platform is evaluated not only as a technical tool but as a public policy interface, where decisions about inclusion, visibility, language, and accountability have real-life consequences, particularly for those navigating emotionally and administratively complex services.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of how women in Kosovo access and experience the eKosova platform. The methodology was designed to reflect both statistical trends and the nuanced realities faced by women with different socio-economic, geographic, and ethnic backgrounds.

3.1. Quantitative Component: Online Survey

An online survey was conducted with a total of 76 women respondents from diverse regions of Kosovo. The survey was distributed digitally through social media platforms, civil society networks, and women-focused community organizations to ensure wide reach.

The survey instrument was designed to capture data on:

- Awareness of the eKosova platform
- Frequency and purpose of use
- Ease of navigation and user satisfaction
- Access to devices and internet
- Barriers encountered in accessing services
- Preferences for assistance and offline support

Respondents were asked both closed-ended questions (Likert scale, multiple choice) and open-ended questions to allow for narrative input. Participants included women from both urban and rural areas, across a range of age groups and education levels.

3.2. Qualitative Component: Key Interviews

To deepen the insights generated by the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from key institutions and organizations involved in digital governance, gender equality, and civic tech. These included:

- Agency for Information and Society (ASHI) – the governmental body responsible for managing eKosova
- Kosovo Center for Gender Studies – a research-oriented organization providing gender policy expertise

The interviews focused on the current digital inclusion landscape, institutional efforts to gender-mainstream public platforms, and perspectives on co-creation, feedback loops, and policy readiness. Informants also shared insights on user challenges observed in their respective work with women and service users.

3.3. Secondary Research & Literature Review

A comprehensive desk review was conducted to situate primary findings within the broader context of digital transformation, gender equality, and public service delivery. The literature review included national strategies, donor-funded research, academic publications, and international comparative reports. These sources provided key insights into both the systemic challenges women face when engaging with digital platforms and the policy frameworks guiding Kosovo's digital governance.

Key documents reviewed include:

- EPIK & UBO Consulting (2025) – *Focus Group Report on Public Service Experience in Kosovo*
A qualitative study exploring barriers in civil registration, disability pensions, and family assistance services, with an emphasis on user burden and emotional complexity.
- KWN (2024) – *Gender and Digitalisation in Kosovo*
A pioneering national report analyzing how gender-neutral digital systems may reinforce structural inequalities and exclude women from fully benefiting from digital services.
- UN Women & EU Office (2022) – *Kosovo Gender Country Profile*
Offers a baseline analysis of gender gaps in public life, access to justice, health, economic participation, and digital inclusion in Kosovo.
- World Bank (2022) – *Kosovo Country Gender Assessment*
Highlights persistent gender disparities in digital access, economic empowerment, and service provision, with policy recommendations.
- EU External Action (2022) – Reports on digital public infrastructure and the need for inclusive digital service models in the Western Balkans.
- UNDP Kosovo (2024) – *Digital Readiness Assessment (DRA)* and *Digital Transformation Portfolio*
Evaluates Kosovo's digital infrastructure and citizen readiness, noting that although Kosovo has nearly full internet coverage, digital proficiency and equitable use remain low among women, especially in rural and low-income communities.
- ITU (2023) – *Mobile Internet Gender Gap Report*
Indicates that women are globally 19% less likely to use mobile internet, reinforcing the need for gendered digital literacy efforts.
- European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2023) – *Gender Mainstreaming in Digital Public Services*
Provides frameworks for assessing and improving gender inclusion in e-governance initiatives, with case studies from Sweden and Estonia.
- Digital Agenda 2030 – Republic of Kosovo
Sets out national objectives for digital transformation, emphasizing inclusivity, trust, and accessibility of digital public services.
- GAP Institute (2025) – *Empowering Women in Business and Technology*
Includes findings on women's underrepresentation in digital entrepreneurship and digital public infrastructure usage in Kosovo.
- Zejnullahu et al. (2024) – *Technology Acceptance and Public Service Digitalization in Kosovo*
Academic analysis based on user acceptance models (TAM) highlighting gaps in trust, accessibility, and usability among different demographic groups, including women.
- Kosovo Programme for Gender Equality (2020–2024)
Emphasizes digital inclusion and gender-sensitive service delivery as part of Kosovo's national gender policy framework.

4. Quantitative Component: Help Improve eKosova for All Women

“Help Improve eKosova for All Women” survey was designed to better understand women’s experiences using the eKosova platform. Through a series of 17 questions, we aimed to explore how easy the platform is to navigate, how accessible and inclusive its services are, and to what extent it meets the everyday needs of women across different backgrounds. By sharing their insights and personal experiences, participants contribute to amplifying women's voices in the design and delivery of digital public services. Their feedback helps ensure that platforms like eKosova become more responsive to the technological, social, and economic realities that women face in their daily lives.

Section 1: Demographic data

This section provides an overview of the demographic profile of the survey respondents, including their age groups and educational background. These insights help contextualize the findings by highlighting the characteristics of the women who participated. Understanding who the users are is essential for designing inclusive digital services that reflect the needs and realities of different segments of the population.

A total of 76 women participated, representing a variety of age groups and educational backgrounds. The majority of respondents fall within the 25–34 years age group (42.1%), followed by 35–44 years (34.2%). These two groups account for over three-quarters of all participants. Meanwhile, only 13.2% of responses came from the 18–24 years group, and just 10.5% from those aged 45–54. There were no respondents under 18 or over 55, which highlights a potential underrepresentation of older women and teenage users in digital public service assessments.

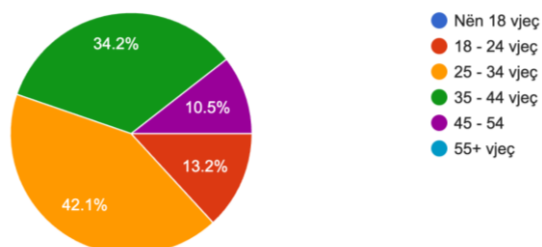


Figure 1. Age distribution

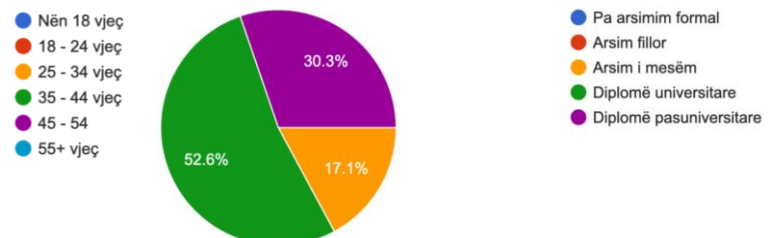


Figure 2. Education level

The respondents are generally highly educated, with 52.6% holding a university degree and 30.3% a postgraduate degree. An additional 17.1% have completed secondary education. There were no participants with only primary education or without formal education, suggesting that women with lower educational backgrounds may be less likely to engage with or be reached by this type of survey, and possibly less engaged with digital platforms like eKosova overall.

As seen in Figure 3., the overwhelming majority of respondents (86.8%) report having excellent access to digital devices and stable internet, while the remaining 13.2% indicate having access with some limitations. Notably, none of the respondents reported limited or no access at all.



Figure 3. Access to digital devices

These results suggest that digital access is not a primary barrier for the surveyed group of women. However, this also reflects a digital privilege that may not represent the broader population of women in Kosovo, especially those in rural areas or from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Future outreach and research could aim to include voices from women with limited or no access, whose challenges may differ significantly.

Figure 4. illustrates that a strong majority of respondents (71.1%) consider themselves to have advanced digital skills, while 28.9% rate their skills as intermediate. No respondents identified their skills as basic. These results reflect a digitally confident user base, capable of navigating and using a wide range of online tools and platforms. This level of competency can positively influence their ability to interact with eKosova. However, the lack of representation from women with basic digital literacy points to a significant gap in the sample, potentially excluding the perspectives of those who might struggle most with accessing online public services.

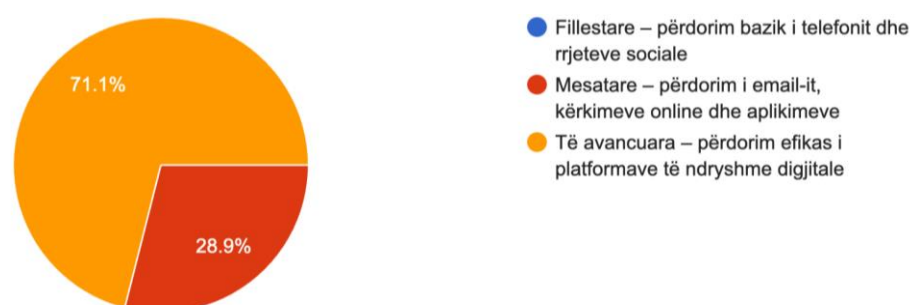


Figure 4. Digital Skills

Additionally, as shown in Figure 5, a majority of respondents (56.6%) have not received any formal training on using digital platforms such as eKosova. Encouragingly, one in four (25%) expressed an interest in such training, indicating potential demand for structured learning opportunities. Only 18.4% of participants reported having already received training.

Despite most respondents possessing intermediate to advanced digital skills, the low level of formal training highlights a gap in targeted digital literacy programs. This underscores the importance of offering accessible, user-centered training, particularly for those who may be confident with digital tools but unfamiliar with navigating public service platforms. Engaging the interested but untrained group presents an important opportunity to expand the platform's usability and reach.

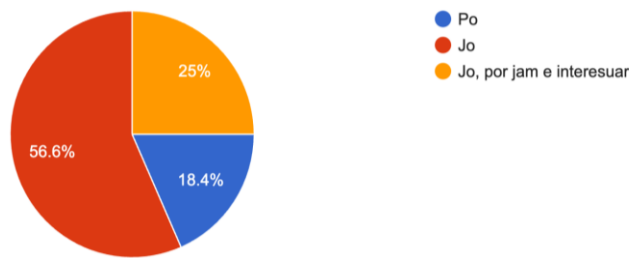


Figure 5. Formal training on using digital platforms such as eKosova

Section 2: The usage of eKosova

This section explores how frequently women engage with the eKosova platform and what factors may influence their usage patterns. Understanding the frequency of access provides valuable insight into user behavior, platform relevance, and the potential barriers that affect consistent engagement. The data also serves as a foundation for identifying areas where the platform can be improved to better meet the needs of women across different levels of digital literacy and access.

Based on responses in Figure 6, the largest portion of respondents (35.5%) reported using the eKosova platform on a monthly basis, while another 32.9% use it rarely. A smaller segment engages more frequently, with 18.4% accessing the platform weekly and only 11.8% on a daily basis. Just 1.3% stated they had never used it. These results suggest that while the platform sees regular monthly engagement, more intensive or frequent use remains limited. The high percentage of infrequent users indicates potential challenges in usability, relevance of services, or digital habits. Understanding why some women use the platform rarely could help identify areas for service improvement or awareness-raising efforts.

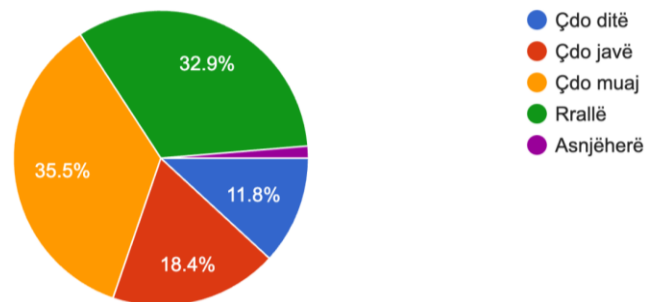


Figure 6. How often do you use the eKosova platform?

Figure 7. illustrates A large majority of respondents (65.8%) found the platform very easy to navigate, with an additional 17.1% describing it as somewhat easy. Only one participant rated the navigation as somewhat difficult, and none found it very difficult. Around 15.8% remained neutral, suggesting either mixed experiences or limited interaction. These results suggest that most users experience eKosova as user-friendly, at least in terms of basic navigation. However, the small percentage who found it difficult, along with the neutral responses, may point to areas where platform structure or terminology could be improved , especially for users with different levels of digital confidence or familiarity with public service systems.

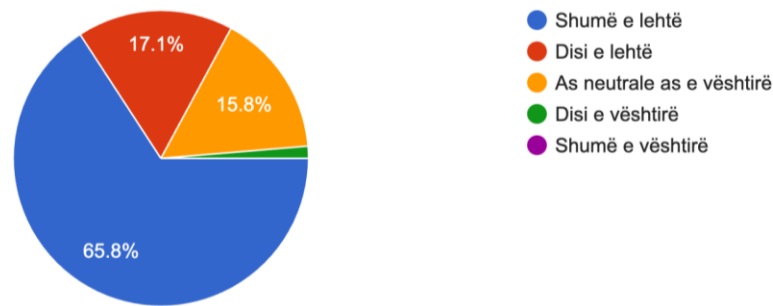


Figure 7. How often do you use the eKosova platform?

Most respondents (65.8%) in Figure 8. rated the platform's instructions and information as very clear, and an additional 22.4% found them mostly clear. A small portion of users were either neutral (6.6%) or found the information lacking in clarity (5.2% combined). These results indicate a generally positive perception of the platform's communication and guidance materials. However, even the small percentage of users who found the information unclear signals a need to continuously review and simplify content, especially for individuals who may be new to the platform or less confident in their digital literacy. Clarity of language, use of visuals, and multilingual support could further enhance user understanding.

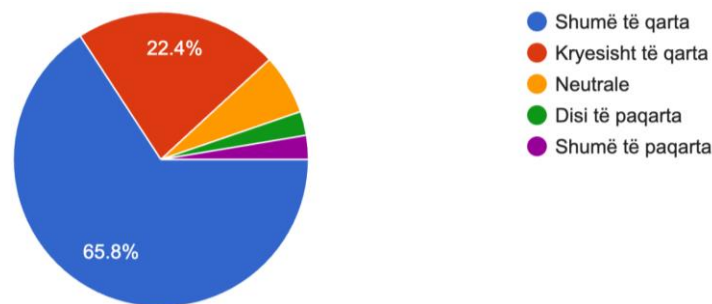


Figure 8. How clear are the instructions and information provided on the platform?

A majority of respondents (53.9%) in Figure 9. feel very secure sharing their personal data on eKosova, while another 26.3% feel somewhat secure. However, 14.5% remain neutral, and a combined 5.2% expressed insecurity to some extent. These responses indicate a generally positive perception of data security on the platform. Still, the existence of hesitant or concerned users highlights the importance of continued transparency and communication regarding data protection measures. Increasing user trust could involve reinforcing privacy policies, improving consent processes, and providing clear guidance on how personal data is handled.

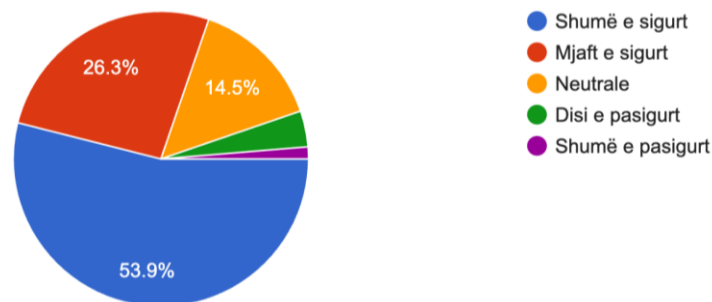


Figure 9. How secure do you feel when sharing your personal data on the platform?

Section 3: Challenges and accessibility

This section explores the specific barriers women face when using the eKosova platform, including usability issues, clarity of information, and concerns related to data security. Understanding these challenges is essential for identifying gaps in service delivery and improving accessibility for all users, especially those who may be digitally excluded or underserved. The findings provide valuable direction for making the platform more inclusive, intuitive, and secure for diverse groups of women across Kosovo.

According to the data presented in Figure 10, the most frequently cited challenge was technical difficulties such as slow platform performance or system errors (34.2%). This was followed by the lack of gender-responsive services (21.1%) and unclear instructions (13.2%). A smaller share reported navigation issues (10.5%) and language barriers (1.3%). At the same time, around 30% of respondents expressed in different ways that they did not encounter any difficulties.

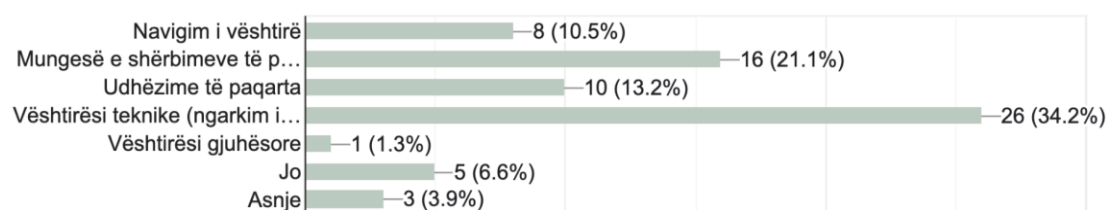


Figure 10. Have you faced any challenges while using the platform?

While a considerable number of users reported a smooth experience, the data reveals persistent technical and structural challenges that affect user experience. The absence of services tailored to women's needs and unclear guidance suggest a need for better content design and service diversification. Additionally, tackling recurring technical bugs and improving system performance would significantly enhance platform usability and trust.

Moreover, the most commonly used service on the eKosova platform is Civil Status (77.6%), followed by family-related services (65.8%) and education (53.9%). A significant number of users have also accessed services related to taxes, health, police/judiciary, and employment. Usage drops notably for services such as property (22.4%) and business (11.8%), and very few have engaged with childcare or vehicle services. (See Figure 11.)

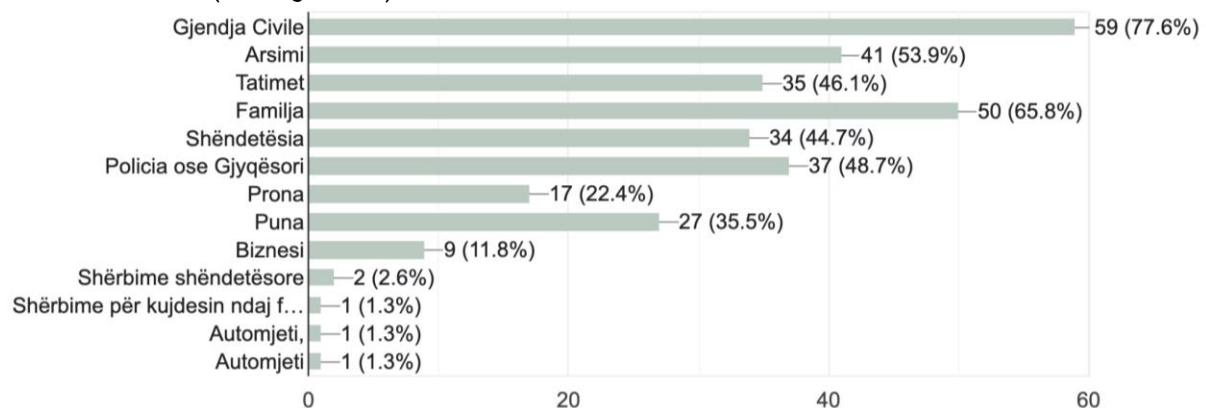


Figure 11. Which of the following services have you used on the eKosova platform?

While many respondents reported no major difficulties, several shared specific concerns. A recurring theme was technical instability and poor user experience. One participant described their frustration clearly:

"There aren't many problems, but overall the user experience is very weak. You often have to return to the same page; when the page refreshes, it resets everything and you have to search for things again. In general, there are technical issues."

This comment highlights a common usability issue in digital platforms: session timeouts and refresh behaviors that interrupt user flows. Even if the content and services are available, the technical design and interaction quality significantly affect satisfaction and continued use. Feedback like this suggests a need for UX optimization, better session management, and error resilience.

Section 4: Inclusion and gender needs

This section focuses on how well the eKosova platform meets the specific needs of women, particularly in terms of inclusive design, socio-economic diversity, and gender-responsive services. It explores whether users feel represented in the platform's structure and whether services are accessible across different backgrounds and levels of digital literacy. These insights help assess the extent to which eKosova supports equitable access to public services and highlights opportunities for making the platform more inclusive for all women.

More than half of the respondents (56.6%) believe that eKosova addresses women's needs well, while 34.2% feel this is true only to some extent. A small share of users (9.2% total) either think the services are insufficient or completely lacking, or are unsure. (See Figure 12.)

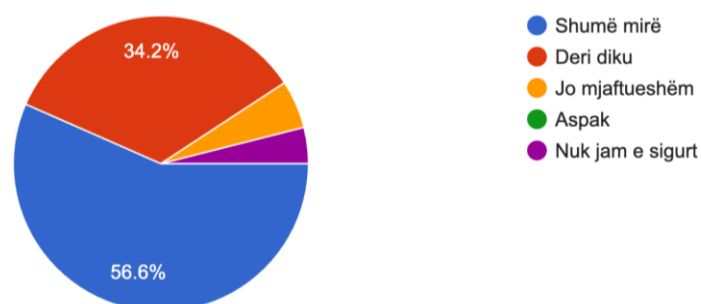


Figure 12. Which of the following services have you used on the eKosova platform?

While the majority of women view the platform as responsive to their needs, the notable percentage who are either uncertain or critical suggests that gender-specific services could be more visible, better tailored, or more clearly communicated. Strengthening outreach, co-designing services with women users, and conducting further gender impact assessments could enhance inclusivity and user satisfaction.

Based on responses in Figure 13, More than half of the respondents (56.6%) believe that the platform is very suitable for women across different backgrounds, while another 26.3% consider it partially suitable. However, a combined 14.5% (those who said it is slightly or not at all suitable) signal concerns regarding

inclusivity, and a small portion remains uncertain. While the general perception of inclusivity is positive, the data reveals that one in seven women question the platform's accessibility across age, socio-economic, or digital literacy divides. This points to a need for more inclusive design strategies, including language options, simplified layouts, mobile-friendly interfaces, and targeted outreach to women who may be less digitally fluent or economically disadvantaged.

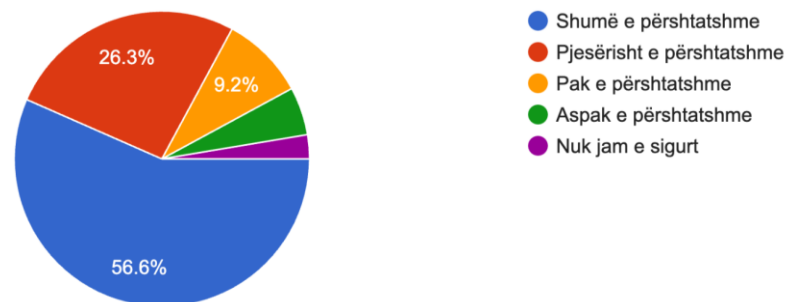


Figure 13. Which of the following services have you used on the eKosova platform?

Figure 14. illustrates that the most common recommendation was to expand services tailored to women's needs (56%), followed by the need for better guidance materials and a more intuitive platform design. Participants also highlighted the importance of broader device compatibility and physical support centers for those who may need in-person assistance. These suggestions reflect a strong desire for the platform to become more responsive, user-friendly, and inclusive.

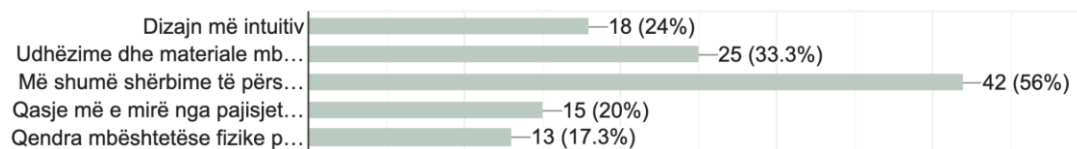


Figure 14. What improvements would make the platform more accessible for women?

According to Figure 15. a significant portion of respondents (42.7%) expressed clear interest in being involved in future consultations for improving eKosova. An additional 30.7% remain open to the idea, while just over a quarter (26.7%) are not interested.

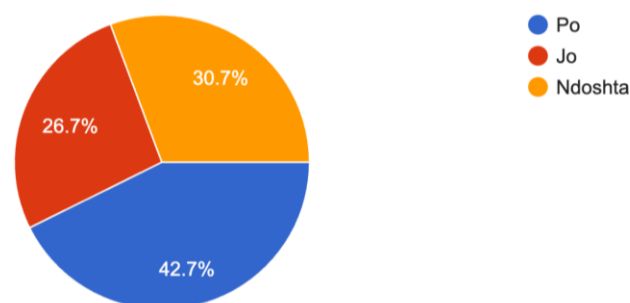


Figure 15. What improvements would make the platform more accessible for women?

These findings highlight a strong potential for participatory co-creation, with over 70% of respondents either interested or possibly willing to contribute to platform improvements. This openness presents a powerful opportunity for institutions to build trust, gather user-driven insights, and ensure that the development of digital public services reflects the real needs of women across different contexts. Establishing inclusive, ongoing consultation mechanisms would not only improve usability but also

reinforce democratic values in digital governance.

On the final question “Any additional comment”, one respondent offered a particularly thoughtful reflection, emphasizing the importance of digital training for women who have access to the internet but lack the knowledge to navigate platforms like eKosova:

"From experience, I know there are women who, even though they have internet access, do not know how to use the eKosova platform or similar ones needed for childcare support (e.g., child allowances, book reimbursements) , often due to their level of education. I believe these women need to be trained in this area. I also think integrating eKosova with an employment platform exclusively for unemployed women could support their economic independence, which is essential in the system we live in."

This quote brings together two critical themes:

1. The digital divide is not only about access but also about skills.
2. Public digital services, when linked to economic empowerment tools, can create broader social impact , particularly for women facing structural barriers to independence.

It offers a visionary perspective that aligns with inclusive design principles and calls for systemic integration between services, enabling both practical access and long-term empowerment.

Conclusion: The findings of this assessment shed light on both the strengths and the gaps in how the eKosova platform serves women across Kosovo. While the majority of respondents are digitally literate, actively use the platform, and report positive experiences in terms of navigation and service clarity, the data also reveals important areas for improvement. These include persistent technical challenges, limited gender-specific services, and the need for greater inclusivity for women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and levels of digital ability.

A particularly noteworthy insight is the willingness of over 70% of participants to engage in future consultations to improve the platform , a powerful signal of trust, ownership, and a desire for co-creation. Moreover, user reflections emphasize that digital access alone is not enough; targeted support, training, and service integration , especially for unemployed women and caregivers , are critical to achieving true digital inclusion and economic empowerment.

To move forward, decision-makers should prioritize:

- User-centered platform improvements,
- Accessible and inclusive digital literacy programs, and
- Systemic integration of digital public services with tools that support women's rights, welfare, and independence.

By doing so, eKosova has the potential not only to modernize governance but also to become a catalyst for gender equity and social transformation in Kosovo.

5. Qualitative Component: Interviews

To complement the survey findings and gain deeper institutional and policy-level insights, a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders involved in digital governance and gender equality in Kosovo. These conversations aimed to explore the institutional vision, challenges, and opportunities related to women's access to eKosova, and to understand how digital public services can become more inclusive and gender-responsive.

The interviews were held with representatives from:

- The Agency for Information and Society (ASHI) – the central government institution overseeing the development and management of eKosova;
- Kosovo Center for Gender Studies – a research-focused organization contributing critical gender expertise to public policy and reform.

Their insights provide valuable context for understanding the current landscape and future direction of inclusive digital transformation in Kosovo.

5.1. Interview with Mr. Burim Balaj, Director of DRPA, Agency of Societal Information, Kosovo

To gain institutional insights on the gendered usage of the eKosova platform, a structured interview was conducted with Mr. Burim Balaj, Director of DRPA at the Agency of Societal Information in Kosovo. The discussion focused on patterns of service usage by women, challenges in accessibility, and the presence of tailored services for women's needs. Notably, Mr. Balaj emphasized that the average age of women users on the platform ranges between 25 and 40 years, aligning with key life stages such as higher education, entry into the workforce, parenting, and healthcare needs.

Additionally, according to Mr. Burim Balaj, Director of DRPA at the Agency of Societal Information in Kosovo, some of the key challenges observed in women's access to eKosova services stem primarily from demographic and geographic factors. These include:

- Age: Older women are less likely to engage with the platform due to limited familiarity with digital tools.
- Education Level: Women with lower levels of formal education, especially those without digital literacy training, often face difficulties navigating online public services.
- Rural Residency: Women living in remote or rural areas encounter compounded barriers due to weaker digital infrastructure and limited access to devices or support services.

In contrast, Mr. Balaj emphasized that the lack of clear service guidance is *not* among the most pressing concerns. As he noted, *"All services on eKosova include clear and accessible usage instructions, provided in both official languages."* This reflects the institution's commitment to language inclusivity and service clarity, even though broader digital inclusion efforts may still be needed to support specific user groups, especially rural women and elderly users.

Additionally, Mr. Burim Balaj provided gender-disaggregated usage statistics from the eKosova platform for several key services. The data highlights notable trends in service engagement, particularly by women, across four major categories:

Service 1: Transportation (Driver's License Services)

As illustrated in Figure 16, women are using vehicle-related services more frequently than men, including scheduling theory exam appointments and paying related fees. This challenges traditional stereotypes regarding male dominance in vehicle-related tasks and reflects increasing autonomy among women in managing mobility-related services.

- 2024: 11,752 women vs. 8,823 men
- 2025: 10,261 women vs. 9,248 men

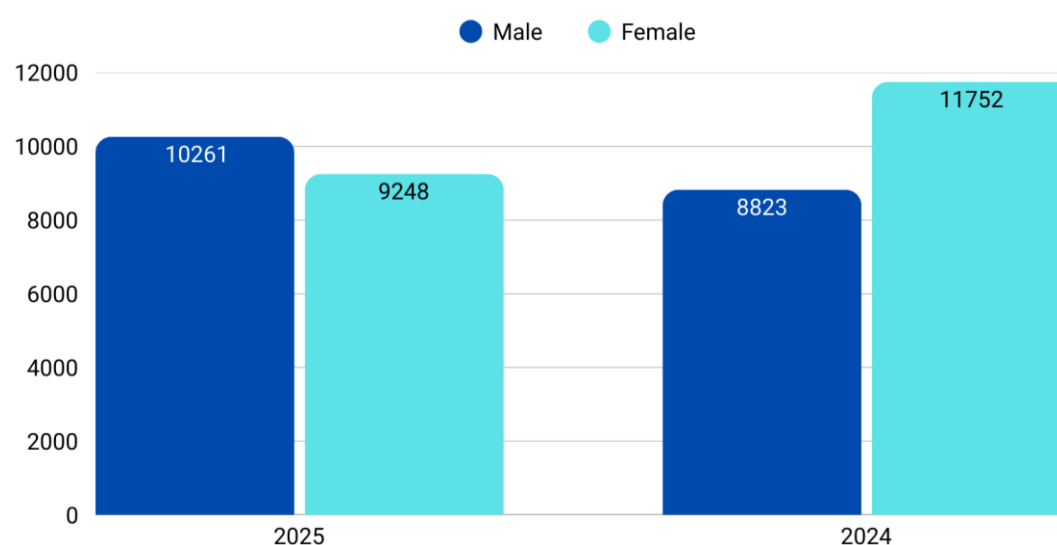


Figure 16. What improvements would make the platform more accessible for women?

Service 2: Education (Textbooks and Scholarships)

Women significantly outnumber men in accessing schoolbook support and financial aid in higher education. The overwhelming participation of women in STEM and elite scholarship programs signals strong demand and opportunity for continued digital support in education services.

- Primary & Lower Secondary (Grades 1–5 & 6–9):
 - 2024: ~198,964 applications from women vs. ~41,381 from men
 - 2023: ~186,423 applications from women vs. ~51,556 from men
- STEM Scholarships (Public Higher Education):
 - 2024: 2,691 women vs. 32 men
 - 2022: 2,764 women vs. 854 men
- Bachelor & Master Level Scholarships (Elite Students):
 - 2024: 1,874 women vs. 552 men
 - 2023: 1,895 women vs. 622 men
 - 2022: 1,881 women vs. 559 men

Service 3: Family (Child Support Supplements)

This is the most gender-disproportionate service. The child allowance application is overwhelmingly dominated by women, reflecting both caregiving roles and engagement with social support services.

This reinforces the importance of designing such services to be especially responsive to women's needs.

- 2021–2024 Aggregate Totals:
 - ~578,227 applications by women vs. ~16,452 by men

Service 4: Employment (Union Affiliation Declaration)

Even in a traditionally male-dominated sector like employment, more women are digitally engaging in union-related declarations. This might indicate increased awareness of labor rights or organizational participation among women. Totals: 1,405 women vs. 985 men

When asked whether eKosova offers services tailored to the specific needs of women, such as healthcare, childcare, employment opportunities, and legal aid, Mr. Burim Balaj emphasized that the platform is designed to ensure equal access for all genders. He noted that, *"Services on eKosova are offered equally to both genders. In some cases, there is even positive discrimination in favor of women, such as in the case of Child allowance for educational support"*. This suggests that the platform does not implement gender-specific differentiation in its core design but rather operates on the principle of universal service availability. However, it also highlights instances where policy measures, such as child-related financial support, have led to a disproportionately higher usage by women, reflecting societal caregiving roles. While this approach aligns with formal equality, the response also implies that there is limited consideration of differentiated user needs in service design, particularly in domains where women may face unique challenges, such as legal aid, re-entry into the workforce, or maternal healthcare. Therefore, while access is formally equal, further work may be needed to ensure substantive gender responsiveness in how these services are designed and delivered.

When asked about local organizations that assist women in accessing and using digital public services such as those offered through eKosova, Mr. Burim Balaj from the Agency of Societal Information highlighted several key actors at the municipal level. These organizations play an important role in improving digital inclusion, particularly among women in underserved or marginalized communities:

- Red Cross – Ferizaj and Fushë Kosovë: Provides general community support, including digital literacy activities and assistance in navigating online services.
- Bashkëveprimi Organization – Fushë Kosovë: Focuses on community empowerment and outreach, particularly among women from minority groups.
- Roma Versitas Kosovo – Fushë Kosovë: Offers targeted support for Roma communities, including digital education and access facilitation.
- Yllka Neziri – Ferizaj: A local volunteer and municipal assembly member actively involved in community outreach and supporting women's access to services.

These actors represent critical local infrastructure for improving access, especially in areas with limited institutional digital outreach. Further collaboration between public institutions and these organizations can help address existing gender gaps in digital service delivery.

The insights shared by Mr. Burim Balaj highlight that women make up the majority of users for key eKosova services, particularly in areas such as education, child benefits, and driving license appointments. This demonstrates a strong demand and reliance on digital services among women, especially in roles tied to caregiving and family support.

However, challenges persist, particularly related to age, education level, and rural access. While instructional materials exist in official languages, these structural barriers still hinder equal usage. Mr. Balaj also noted that while services are formally gender-neutral, certain programs incorporate positive discrimination in favor of women, such as child allowance schemes.

Overall, while women are highly engaged users of eKosova, the system still requires tailored support mechanisms and further outreach, particularly to underserved demographics such as older women and those in rural areas.

5.2. Expert Interview: Ms. Luljeta Demolli, Executive Director, Kosovo Center for Gender Studies

As part of the report's quantitative component, an in-depth conversation was held with Ms. Luljeta Demolli, Executive Director of the Kosovo Center for Gender Studies. Her insights shed light on the real-life implications of digital public services for women, especially those living in rural areas or from vulnerable communities.

"The energy subsidy scheme by the Ministry of Economy was poorly tailored to women's realities. In some cases, women received household appliances, such as dishwashers, in villages where there is still no access to running water."

She highlighted that support for energy efficiency should be better targeted geographically:

"Energy-saving support should prioritize rural areas, not urban centers. That's where agricultural spaces are, and they consume the most energy."

On broader digital inclusion, Ms. Demolli emphasized structural accessibility gaps: Many women in rural areas remain excluded due to a lack of digital kiosks and basic infrastructure. For example, digital services like scheduling medical checkups for breast or cervical cancer are overly complex or non-functional, posing a serious barrier to women's health access.

She also emphasized:

- The lack of clear user instructions and digital literacy support.
- Weak privacy protections and low awareness on both sides, citizens and institutions.
- Application processes for benefits, such as schoolbook subsidies, lacking transparency, timelines, or feedback channels.

"Women felt uncertain when applying for the schoolbook subsidy. There was no clear information about payment timelines or whom to contact for clarification. In some cases, people outside Kosovo, like the diaspora, could apply without proper validation."

Regarding healthcare awareness, she noted:

"The HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer is still met with hesitation. The state should raise awareness through video campaigns and preventive education."

On data governance, she added:

“Every citizen should be able to see who has accessed their personal data, when, and why.”

And finally, on employment rights and enforcement:

“There should be a system in place where attendance records directly calculate and enforce paid leave rights.”

These insights underscore the urgent need to design gender-sensitive, transparent, and inclusive digital services. They will be integrated throughout the barriers section and reflected in targeted recommendations.

6. Secondary Research & Literature Review: Women's Usability, Access, and Representation in eKosova

6.1 Digital Literacy and Skills Gap

Digital literacy emerged as one of the most consistent and cross-cutting barriers to women's meaningful use of the eKosova platform. Among the 74 women surveyed, only 21 (28%) reported being able to access and use eKosova independently, while 34 women (46%) stated they needed help from a family member, friend, or municipal officer. The remaining 19 women (26%) had never attempted to use the platform at all, most citing unfamiliarity with digital interfaces or fear of making mistakes.

Women over the age of 45, those with primary-level education, and respondents from rural municipalities like Skënderaj, Kamenica, and Dragash showed the lowest levels of digital confidence. Many had never used a government website before and were unaware of services available through eKosova. Even among younger respondents (ages 20–35), several expressed challenges with understanding how to upload documents, use dropdown menus, or navigate back if they selected the wrong service.

These findings are consistent with regional and international data. According to KWN (2024), women in Kosovo face a gendered digital divide due to socio-cultural norms, limited access to technology in the household, and insufficient outreach or public education efforts by government institutions. The ITU (2023) echoes this globally, noting that women are 19% less likely to use mobile internet than men, a figure that climbs in rural areas or conflict-affected regions.

Qualitative responses further reinforce this picture. Many women described their first encounters with eKosova as confusing and intimidating. One respondent from a rural area shared:

"My son helps me because I don't know where to click or what to write. It's in Albanian, yes, but I don't understand government language, and I'm scared to make a mistake that will delay the process."

In addition, digital literacy is often intertwined with digital trust. Several respondents expressed skepticism toward uploading personal information online, particularly when it came to documentation related to health, pensions, or family status. This suggests that even when technical skills are present, lack of confidence in institutional protection of data and procedures can deter usage.

Overall, the data highlights the urgent need for localized, gender-sensitive digital skills programs, delivered in community centers, schools, and CSOs, to ensure women are not excluded from accessing essential public services. These programs should go beyond basic digital literacy and include:

- How to navigate eKosova
- How to upload documents securely
- Understanding digital rights and data protection
- Knowing where to get help when problems arise

Furthermore, these efforts must be targeted, not generic, and co-created with women to ensure they reflect the real barriers and fears experienced by female users across Kosovo.

6.2 Awareness and Usage of eKosova

While the eKosova platform is widely promoted as Kosovo's central access point for public services, awareness and usage among women, especially those in rural and marginalized communities, remain inconsistent and limited.

From the survey of 74 women, responses revealed that 76% had heard of eKosova. However, only 42% had used it at least once, while a significant 24% had never heard of it at all. These findings align with the UN Women & EU Gender Profile (2022), which reported that 14% of Kosovars overall had never heard of eKosova, with women, particularly older women and those from rural or non-majority communities, disproportionately represented in this group.

Qualitative interviews further highlighted a noticeable urban–rural divide. In urban municipalities such as Prishtina and Gjakova, awareness was generally high, but usage was often limited to a narrow set of services like birth certificates or COVID-19 records. In rural areas such as Skënderaj, Rahovec, and Malishevë, women often learned about eKosova informally, through friends, relatives, or social media. Many had never interacted directly with the platform themselves, often citing fear of doing something wrong or simply not knowing how to begin. One respondent from a village in Rahovec explained that she thought eKosova was only for COVID vaccines and didn't realize it could be used for her child's documents.

Even among those who had used eKosova, most described limited engagement. Only 18% of users had accessed the platform more than twice, and the most commonly used services were birth certificates, school records, and health referrals. Very few had explored or were even aware of the availability of services related to welfare programs, legal aid, or childcare support.

Women who had not used the platform gave several reasons: they lacked digital skills or support at home; they perceived the platform to be complicated; they had no clear source of assistance; or they lacked trust in uploading personal data online. Many shared that they found out about eKosova through social networks or while visiting municipal offices, which reveals gaps in official outreach strategies.

Internationally, examples from Estonia and Portugal show how sustained, gender-sensitive digital campaigns and community-level support systems can significantly increase uptake. In Estonia, simplified guides and public kiosks were deployed, while Portugal trained digital “mediators” who assist underserved citizens in using e-government tools. In contrast, eKosova's promotional and support efforts have yet to reach many women at the community level.

The gap between awareness and informed usage demonstrates that visibility alone is not enough. Effective engagement with digital services requires not just knowledge of the platform's existence, but confidence, trust, and clarity about what the platform offers and how to use it. For women who manage caregiving, documentation, and health tasks in their households, these digital services can be transformative, if they are accessible, understandable, and trustworthy.

6.3 Usability and Platform Design

The eKosova platform, while comprehensive in terms of service offerings, presents significant usability challenges, particularly for users with low levels of digital literacy. Survey respondents and focus group participants consistently described the platform's design as overwhelming, unintuitive, and not user-friendly. These difficulties were especially evident when attempting to upload documents, complete forms, or navigate between multiple sub-pages.

A major issue is the absence of step-by-step instructions and visual guides. For new users, especially those unfamiliar with digital public portals, the platform offers little scaffolding to help them understand

what actions are needed and in what order. In many cases, there are no progress indicators, pop-up hints, or contextual explanations, features commonly used in accessible digital design to guide users through bureaucratic processes. This creates a sense of uncertainty and discourages users from completing tasks independently.

The platform also lacks alternative content formats such as video tutorials, voice instructions, or simplified versions of bureaucratic terminology, which could be especially helpful for users with limited formal education or unfamiliarity with administrative procedures. Women from rural municipalities and older age groups frequently noted that they had to rely on younger relatives to “translate” or interpret the steps required on the platform.

A particularly critical barrier is the limited multilingual support. Currently, most content is only available in Albanian and Serbian, and even in these languages, the vocabulary often reflects formal or technical jargon rather than plain, user-centered language. This has direct implications for Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, many of whom speak other native languages or dialects and have lower average educational attainment. For these users, not only is the interface unfamiliar, it may be linguistically inaccessible.

Mobile usability is another key limitation. Despite the fact that the majority of women, especially those from lower-income households, access the internet primarily through smartphones, the mobile version of eKosova is not fully functional. Many services do not render properly on smaller screens, buttons overlap or disappear, and document upload functions are difficult to use on touch-based devices. These issues disproportionately affect women who rely on older, low-memory smartphones or shared family devices.

In contrast, digital platforms in countries like Portugal and Estonia offer clear models for mobile-first, user-centered design. Services are categorized not by administrative department but by life events, such as “Having a Child” or “Losing a Family Member”, which simplifies navigation and helps users connect their personal needs to the services provided. These platforms also provide multilingual support, visual instructions, and chatbots or helplines to assist with common issues.

In Kosovo, the lack of these features means that even when a service is technically available, it is not functionally accessible for many women. The result is a digital platform that works well for experienced, tech-savvy users but excludes those with less exposure to online systems, thereby reinforcing existing social and digital inequalities.

Without a deliberate shift toward inclusive, accessible design principles, eKosova risks becoming a digital reproduction of bureaucratic barriers rather than a solution to them. Future updates must be guided by usability testing that includes women of all backgrounds, particularly those with limited education, digital access, and linguistic fluency. Only through a co-design process that centers the lived experiences of its users can eKosova fulfill its promise of equitable, citizen-centered public service delivery.

6.4 Availability of Gender-Specific Services

While eKosova offers access to a broad array of administrative services, the platform’s categorization and discoverability of services specifically relevant to women remain notably weak. Services such as childcare subsidies, disability support for children, legal aid related to family law, maternal health, and protections against domestic violence are available but not clearly grouped under any intuitive or visible category. Instead, users must often browse multiple dropdown menus, type keywords, or navigate through general administrative hierarchies to locate what they need.

Findings from the survey of 73 women reinforce this structural design issue. A significant portion of respondents who had used the platform reported accessing only basic services such as birth certificates or health referrals. When asked about which services they had sought or used through eKosova, very few

respondents mentioned women-centered services such as parental leave documentation, child allowance, or reporting of domestic violence, suggesting either lack of awareness, discoverability issues, or both.

Furthermore, when asked about potential improvements to the platform, many respondents selected or commented on the need for a dedicated “Women & Family” section or clearer visibility of services that reflect women’s roles as caregivers, mothers, and primary coordinators of household administrative tasks. This perception aligns with insights from previous focus group discussions (EPIK & UBO, 2025), where participants noted that they had to “search randomly” or “ask others for links” to find essential services, which indicates a poor user experience for discovering high-impact resources.

The lack of a gender-sensitive architecture, one that accounts for the different ways women interact with public services, represents a missed opportunity. It directly contradicts the principles outlined in Kosovo’s Digital Agenda 2030, which explicitly calls for equitable access, life-event-based service design, and human-centered digital transformation.

In contrast, countries such as Sweden, Belgium, and Estonia categorize digital services by key life events, such as “Becoming a Parent”, “Experiencing Violence”, or “Caring for a Family Member with a Disability”, which helps users navigate based on their lived experiences rather than their knowledge of bureaucratic structures. These models ensure that services most frequently accessed by women are grouped logically, clearly named, and supported by contextual information that makes eligibility and steps easier to understand.

Without similar improvements in the Kosovo context, women, particularly those with lower digital literacy, may continue to underuse services that are crucial to their health, safety, and well-being. It is therefore essential for eKosova to incorporate user-informed content architecture, co-design its layout with women from diverse backgrounds, and make services not only available but visible, accessible, and meaningful.

6.5 Women’s Representation in Platform Design

Although women are among the most frequent users of public services, particularly in areas like health, education, social protection, and family documentation, their perspectives are largely absent from the design and development processes of the eKosova platform. According to interviews with institutional stakeholders, there is currently no formal structure within the Agency for Information and Society (ASHI) to gather input specifically from women or to assess the gendered impact of platform design decisions.

This lack of gender-informed engagement contributes to the persistent usability issues reported in surveys and focus groups. Many women indicate that services are difficult to navigate, unclear in their instructions, and not adapted to their day-to-day needs. At the same time, a majority of survey respondents expressed interest in contributing to future platform consultations, suggesting that the absence of feedback mechanisms is not due to lack of willingness, but a lack of invitation.

This stands in contrast to established practices in several EU countries. For example, Belgium and the Netherlands have adopted co-creation workshops, inviting women and other underrepresented groups to help design and test digital services. Sweden conducts gender impact assessments on digital platforms to identify biases and usability gaps.

In Kosovo, introducing similar participatory and gender-sensitive methods would significantly improve both the functionality and fairness of eKosova. Representation is not just about inclusion, it is about ensuring that digital public services respond to the diverse lived realities of their users. In the case of women, this means designing with, not just for, them.

6.6 Bureaucratic and Administrative Burdens

Despite its promise of efficiency, the eKosova platform continues to mirror many of the same bureaucratic challenges present in traditional, in-person service delivery. For many women, particularly those navigating emotionally sensitive services such as death registration, disability benefits, family care support, and funeral reimbursements, the digital interface has not simplified the administrative burden, but rather shifted it into a different format.

Survey and focus group feedback reveals that users are often required to upload multiple versions of the same documents, repeatedly enter personal information for every service, and sometimes even complete online forms that must still be printed and physically submitted at municipal offices. The need for manual document verification, inconsistent service requirements across municipalities, and the inability to save progress or access service history are key limitations that discourage independent use, especially among women with caregiving responsibilities who often juggle multiple administrative roles in their households.

In addition, the lack of service integration and automation leads to frustrating user experiences. For instance, once a death certificate is uploaded to one service, it is not automatically accessible by related services such as inheritance registration, property transfer, or pension termination. This leads to duplicated effort, emotional strain, and in some cases, dropped applications altogether due to fatigue or misunderstanding. These burdens are disproportionately borne by women, who are statistically more likely to assume responsibilities for managing family records, children's welfare applications, and elder care-related documentation.

In the case of disability pensions, multiple women shared (in prior consultations and through the 2025 focus group series) that they had to undergo reassessments for permanent conditions every few years, a process that is physically taxing, emotionally discouraging, and deeply unnecessary. While the services are technically available online, the logic behind their delivery has not changed, thus reducing the value of digitization to a superficial transfer of paperwork rather than a transformation of process.

This reflects a broader failure to apply human-centered design principles, which would prioritize ease of use, predictability, transparency, and emotional well-being, particularly for services that intersect with grief, caregiving, and vulnerability. Digitization alone does not equate to simplification; without redesigning how services work behind the interface, platforms like eKosova risk digitizing inefficiency rather than eliminating it.

A number of European countries offer models Kosovo can look to. Austria's "Once Only Principle", enshrined under its digital governance framework, ensures that citizens only need to provide information once across the public sector. That data is then securely and automatically shared with relevant institutions when accessing new services. Estonia's X-Road system similarly enables automatic validation and authentication of user-submitted data across ministries. These systems are supported by robust privacy laws and transparency mechanisms that build trust in data sharing, while also reducing friction for end users.

Kosovo's legal and technical landscape is increasingly prepared for such reform. The Law on Electronic Identification and Trust Services and the Law on Personal Data Protection provide the foundation for secure interoperability and data governance. What is needed now is a coordinated institutional effort, driven by user research and service mapping, to eliminate redundant steps, reduce document overload, and ensure that public services, once digitized, are actually simpler, faster, and more humane.

Until such systemic redesign is prioritized, women, especially those managing complex life events, will continue to bear the hidden costs of bureaucratic inefficiency. eKosova must move beyond digitizing services to reimagining them from the perspective of the people who rely on them most.

7. Recommendations for a Gender-Inclusive Digital Platform

To transform eKosova into a platform that equitably serves all citizens, particularly women, including those from marginalized communities, the following recommendations are organized by thematic area and mapped to responsible actors. Each recommendation builds on the key findings of this report and aligns with Kosovo's existing legal and policy frameworks.

7.1. Build Digital Confidence and Literacy for Women

Lead Actors: ASHI, Ministry of Education, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

- Launch a national digital skills initiative targeting women in underserved urban and rural areas, delivered through municipal centers, public libraries, and CSOs.
- Integrate visual and audio “how-to” materials in plain language directly into the platform (e.g., short videos, voice instructions, infographics).
- Embed interactive tutorials within high-use services (e.g., birth certificate, child allowance) to walk users through the process step by step.
- Establish a “Digital Sisters” program where trained volunteers provide peer support for navigating eKosova and other digital services.

5.2 Improve Platform Design and Service Discoverability

Lead Actors: ASHI, UX/UI Design Experts, Gender Advisory Task Force

- Redesign the platform based on life events, not administrative categories (e.g., “Becoming a Parent”, “Experiencing Violence”, “Accessing Disability Benefits”).
- Create a visible “Women & Family Services” section that consolidates caregiving, health, legal aid, parental leave, and support for single mothers.
- Enable users to save progress, track application status, and receive SMS/email reminders about pending steps or missing documents.
- Conduct usability testing with women from diverse socio-economic, age, and linguistic backgrounds before deploying updates.

5.3 Address Intersectional Digital Barriers

Lead Actors: ASHI, Municipalities, Telecom Providers, CSOs

- Translate eKosova content into minority languages such as Romani, Turkish, and Bosnian, and ensure the use of plain, culturally familiar terminology.
- Deploy mobile support units in rural areas and set up physical kiosks or digital help desks at municipal service centers.
- Ensure full mobile optimization of all services and prioritize compatibility with low-end devices.
- Negotiate free zero-rated access to the eKosova platform with telecom providers to remove cost barriers for mobile users.

5.4 Simplify and Streamline Administrative Processes

Lead Actors: ASHI, Public Service Agencies, Ministry of Internal Affairs

- Apply the “Once Only Principle”: any document or information submitted once (e.g., death certificate, proof of disability) should be reused across all relevant services.
- Eliminate unnecessary re-certification for permanent conditions, such as lifelong disabilities.
- Integrate services across ministries, allowing users to access multiple related services (e.g., death registration and inheritance processing) from a single entry point.
- Pre-populate forms using known user data and provide smart suggestions to reduce data entry burden.

5.5 Mainstream Gender into Platform Governance and Oversight

Lead Actors: Prime Minister’s Office, ASHI, Ministry of Justice, Civil Society

- Establish a Gender and Digital Inclusion Task Force to oversee eKosova development, reporting directly to the Office of the Prime Minister.
- Mandate Gender Impact Assessments for all new platform features and updates, ensuring they reflect the needs of women users.
- Collect and publish gender-disaggregated usage and satisfaction data to monitor uptake, access, and exclusion trends.
- Institutionalize co-design processes where women, particularly from rural, ethnic minority, and low-income groups, are invited to shape the platform through workshops and consultations.

5.6 Build Trust and Promote Inclusive Engagement

Lead Actors: ASHI, Ministry of Economy, Media Outlets, CSOs

- Run a national awareness campaign showcasing real stories of women successfully using eKosova, with focus on trust-building, empowerment, and inclusivity.
- Increase transparency on data privacy by allowing users to see when and by whom their data was accessed, and for what purpose.
- Develop discreet access pathways for sensitive services, such as domestic violence reporting, with clear links to referral services and emergency support.
- Set clear timelines and communication channels for all applications, especially those related to child support and financial aid, to reduce confusion and uncertainty.

8. Sample Survey Questions

Section 1: Demographic Data

1. What is your age group?
2. What is your highest level of education?
3. How would you rate your access to digital devices and the internet?
4. How would you rate your digital skills?
5. Have you received any training on how to use digital platforms such as eKosova?

Section 2: The Usage of eKosova

1. How often do you use the eKosova platform?
2. How would you rate the ease of navigating the eKosova platform?
3. How clear are the instructions and information provided on the platform?
4. How secure do you feel when sharing your personal data on the platform?

Section 3: Challenges and Accessibility

1. Have you faced any challenges while using the platform? (Select all that apply)
2. Which of the following services have you used on the eKosova platform? (Select all that apply)
3. Have you faced any specific challenges when accessing these services? If yes, which ones?

Section 4: Inclusion and Gender Needs

1. To what extent do you think the platform offers services that address the specific needs of women?
2. How suitable do you think the platform is for women from different socio-economic groups, age groups, and levels of digital ability?
3. What improvements would make the platform more accessible for women? (Select all that apply)
4. Would you be interested in participating in future consultations to improve the platform?
5. What new features would you like to see on the eKosova platform to improve the experience for women?

9. References

Kosovo Women's Network (KWN). (2024). *Gender and Digitalisation in Kosovo*. Prishtina, Kosovo.
<https://womensnetwork.org>

World Bank. (2022). *Kosovo Country Gender Assessment*.
<https://documents.worldbank.org>

UN Women & European Union Office in Kosovo. (2022). *Kosovo Gender Profile: 2022 Update*.
<https://eca.unwomen.org>

ITU (International Telecommunication Union). (2023). *The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2023*.
<https://www.itu.int>

EPIK Institute & UBO Consulting. (2025). *Focus Group Report: Access to Social Services via eKosova (Draft)*. Commissioned by GIZ Kosovo and OPM.

European Union External Action. (2022). *Gender Equality and Digital Inclusion in the Western Balkans*.
<https://www.eeas.europa.eu>

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). (2023). *Gender Mainstreaming in Digital Public Services: Toolkit and Case Studies*.
<https://eige.europa.eu>

UNDP Kosovo. (2024). *Digital Portfolio – Inclusive Digital Transformation in Kosovo*.
<https://www.undp.org/kosovo/digital>

Republic of Kosovo, Prime Minister's Office. (2023). *Digital Agenda 2030*. Official Strategy Document.
<https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net>

Agency for Information and Society (ASHI). (2024). *Annual Report on eKosova Platform Services and Usage Statistics*. Internal Document.

Austrian Federal Chancellery. (2021). *Once Only Principle Implementation in Austria: Digital Governance Case Study*.

European Commission. (2021). *eGovernment Benchmark 2021: Entering a new digital government era*.
<https://ec.europa.eu>

Republic of Kosovo Assembly. (2021). *Law No. 06/L-082 on Personal Data Protection*.
<https://gzk.rks-gov.net>

Republic of Kosovo Assembly. (2022). *Law No. 08/L-096 on Electronic Identification and Trust Services*.
<https://gzk.rks-gov.net>

Primary Survey Dataset. (2025). *Survey on Women's Accessibility to the eKosova Platform (n=73)*. Conducted via Google Forms, analyzed by the report author.

Conclusion

Kosovo stands at a pivotal crossroads in its digital transformation journey. The development and scaling of the eKosova platform mark a significant step toward modern governance and service delivery. However, as this report has shown, digitization without inclusion is not progress, it is reproduction of existing inequalities in a new form.

For women across Kosovo, particularly those in caregiving roles, with limited digital literacy, or from marginalized ethnic and rural communities, the eKosova platform often falls short of its promise. While the platform aims to simplify access to public services, many women experience it as confusing, inconsistent, and misaligned with their lived realities. From administrative redundancies and mobile accessibility issues, to the invisibility of key services and the absence of support channels, the barriers are both functional and systemic.

These are not isolated user complaints, they are symptomatic of a deeper issue: public digital infrastructure in Kosovo is still largely designed through a top-down, institution-centered lens. The absence of participatory mechanisms, gender-focused usability testing, and disaggregated data collection means that women's experiences remain peripheral in the design, development, and evaluation of digital services. Without inclusive governance and intentional design practices, eKosova risks becoming a platform that serves the digitally literate majority while excluding those with the greatest need for accessible and humane services.

This report has outlined not only these gaps, but also a series of targeted, actionable solutions, from human-centered design and multilingual support to co-design frameworks and data interoperability. These recommendations are not theoretical. They are grounded in both international best practices and Kosovo's own policy commitments, including the Digital Agenda 2030, the Gender Equality Strategy, and the broader aspirations for EU integration.

Furthermore, Kosovo is not starting from scratch. The legal frameworks are in place. The institutional expertise exists. Civil society is engaged and ready to support. What is needed now is political will, cross-sector coordination, and a cultural shift toward designing services around real people, not abstract users.

In doing so, Kosovo has the opportunity to lead by example in the Western Balkans and beyond. It can demonstrate that digital government is not just about efficiency or cost-saving, it is about equity, dignity, and trust. A feminist digital transformation is not just a moral imperative, it is a practical one, ensuring that technology serves as a bridge, not a barrier, to civic participation and social justice.

The women of Kosovo, whether caring for families, navigating complex services, or shaping the future of their communities, deserve a platform that recognizes their roles, understands their challenges, and supports their full participation in public life. eKosova can be that platform, but only if its design is fundamentally reimagined through the lens of inclusion.

