



Government
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CEC Project Evaluation

- Two FYs and one quarter (January 2021 - March 2023)
- Objective: Understand **barriers** and **opportunities** for marginalised groups engaging with voting process - young people, Roma and rural women
- Created sustainable **outreach strategy** for engaging hard-to-reach groups
- Voter workshops with **young people** and the **Roma community** were fun, interactive, friendly and gave participants agency. Co-led by NGOs and CEC
- Evergreen **advertising campaign** used real people from Roma and rural areas and older people to inform and inspire people to vote



VOTONE KAJ TE SËNIOJ
KO 14 MAJI



- ✓ Som barikano kaj isinom Rom
- ✓ Som barikano kaj alosar
- ✓ Som barikano kaj votonav

VOTO TË DËGJOHESH
MË 14 MAJ



- ✓ Unë punoj
- ✓ Unë zgjedh
- ✓ Unë votoj

VOTO TË DËGJOHESH
MË 14 MAJ



- ✓ Unë punoj
- ✓ Unë zgjedh
- ✓ Unë votoj

- Insight gathered through **participatory research methods** with young people, Roma and rural women
- Researchers went to **marginalised communities**, written by behaviour scientist
- **My Vote Counts** report presented in the Albanian parliament in October 2022
- **Actionable recommendations** for CEC, media and political parties



UK Government

UK Cabinet Office, Government
Communication Service International

Raport Kërkimor – Tetor 2022

Vota ime vlen

Sfidat dhe rekomandimet për rritjen e pjesëmarrjes në zgjedhje për gratë, pakicat etnike dhe të rinjtë në Shqipëri



Quantitative and qualitative data was collected April 2021

Quantitative

1000 online interviews across mix urban and rural areas.
Telephone interviews conducted for harder to reach rural areas
330 interviews for minority groups (Roma, Macedonians and Greeks)

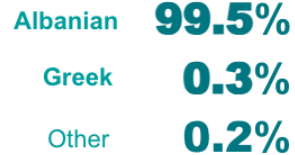
Qualitative

60 citizens across eight focus groups across a mix of urban and rural areas.
Women only, youth only and mixed gender groups

GENDER



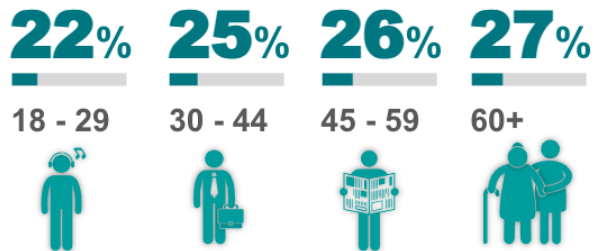
NATIONALITY



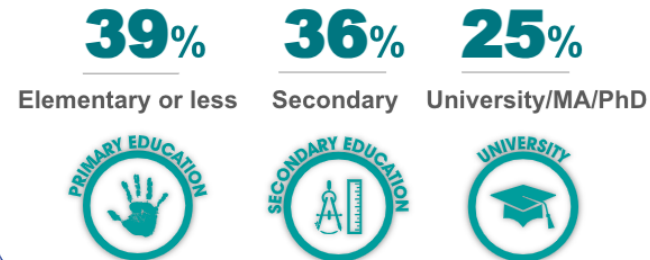
TYPE OF SETTLEMENT



AGE



EDUCATION



2021

Population average: 53%

Women: 48%

Men: 59%

Age 18-24: 43%

25-34: 45%

35-44: 55%

55-64: 64%

45-54: 56%

65+: 58%

Roma: 25%

2024

Population average: 72%

Women: 72%

Men: 72%

Age 18-29: 72%

30-44: 70%

45-59: 62%

60+: 81%

Source: GCSI commissioned insight carried out in March 2021 and GCSI commissioned quantitative and qualitative surveys carried out in January 2024

- 77% trust the CEC to conduct free and fair elections in Albania.
- 54% believe that the CEC would take action in case of any wrongdoing during elections.
- 49% think that the CEC is a trustworthy organisation.

Source: GCSI commissioned quantitative and qualitative surveys carried out in January 2024

2021

Population average: 68%

Women: 63%

Men: 72%

Age 18-24: 46%

25-34: 65%

35-44: 72%

44-54: 74%

55-64: 72%

65+: 80%

Roma: 58%

2024

Population average: 75%

Women: 75%

Men: 75%

Age 18-29: 69%

30-44: 73%

45-59: 79%

60+: 77%

Source: GCSI commissioned insight carried out in March 2021 and GCSI commissioned quantitative and qualitative surveys carried out in January 2024

- The CEC hired **70 Roma people** at the last municipality elections
- The CEC are working with OSCE to give **rural women the opportunity to work** at the parliamentary elections next year
- The CEC continued the **school outreach programme**
- The CEC did outreach work with **rural women** independently
- The CEC needs **donor funding** to continue Roma work



35 likes

kqzshqiperi Young voters for the first time at the "Havzi Nela" gymnasium in Kukes were part of the educational campaign by the CEC Albania, in the framework of the September 24, 2023 by-elections to be held to elect the Mayor of Kukes.

- **3 focus groups with Roma community**; different ages; 50-50 gender split, living in Tirana (Allias & Shkoza) and Elbasan; all participants attended voter workshops
- **3 online focus groups with young people** (18-20), 50-50 gender split; living in central, south and north; only 4 of the participants attended school workshops
- **2 focus groups with rural women**; different ages; living in Elbasan and Shkodra, no project voter workshops with this group



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Roma community

All workshop participants interviewed in the focus groups voted in the 2023 municipal elections, many for the first time as a result of the training.

“I had never voted before, after the training I decided to vote.”

- member of the Roma community from Shkoza

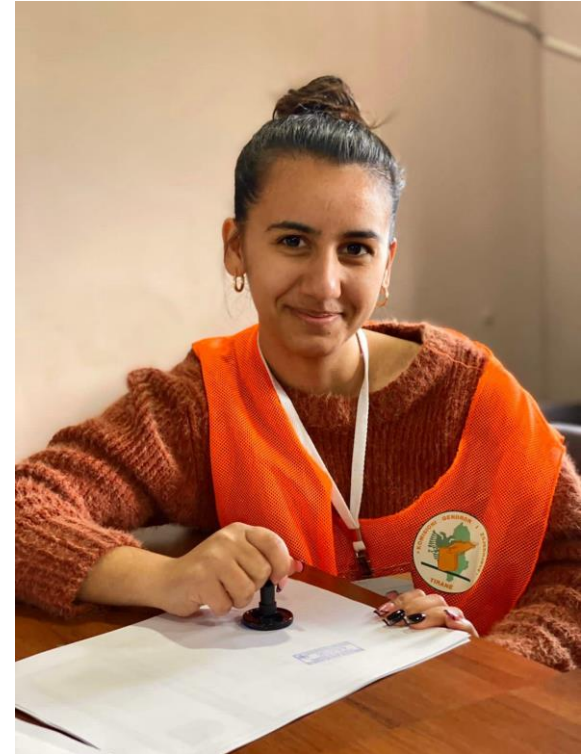
“At first, I was not going to vote, but after I had the training here, I said why not? My vote is important. I’m part of the community and it is very important to vote.”

- member of the Roma community from Allias

“I didn't know how to vote either. I turned 45 years old and I voted only once in my life (last year).”

- member of the Roma community from Shkoza

- Workshop participants said they had not had the opportunity to share their opinions with a **state institution** before
- Workshops were rated very highly by all participants, who said that it brought value to the community by **empowering them to vote in an informed way**
- People discussed what they learnt with their **families** and some were able to **help others at the polling station**



“You feel equal to the white community. You feel the same like the others, not separated, underrated. You are like the others, like all the people.” - member of the Roma community from Allias

Participants praised how simple, inclusive and interactive workshops were and how the activities brought the community together.

“...it was done in a very practical and understandable manner, [...] there were the elders, the middle aged, and younger ones, which participated in this, and everyone was active.” - member of the Roma community from Elbasan

Participants appreciated the workshop being translated and they felt that it was more inclusive and easier to understand compared to other workshops.

“They demonstrated it, and we understood it. And, if we would have not done it, we wouldn't have understood it. Hence this helped us a lot.” - member of the Roma community from Elbasan

“We liked the training a lot... we understood everything.”
- member of the Roma community from Elbasan

“It was organized as a game, very clear for everyone.”

- member of the Roma community from Allias

“We felt like home”

- member of the Roma community from Allias

They appreciated the CEC working in their communities.

“We have noticed that KQZ is really getting involved with the community.” - member of the Roma community from Allias



- The **CEC hired 70 election representatives from the Roma community** during the municipal elections.
- Focus group participants **appreciated the presence of Roma representatives** during the 2023 municipal elections.

“I enjoyed the fact that a lot of young people participated as operator or observer. We have a representative this year, yes, we had them [a representative involved in the electoral process].” - member of the

Roma community from Allias

“It would be best if all the trainings could be repeated, so the others can learn too.” - member of the Roma community from Allias

“We still want continuous trainings; because ... our community in most cases, don't have an education.” - member of the Roma community from Elbasan

“We need to be informed, why not come and give us richer and more regular information about the voting process.” - member of the Roma community from Shkoza

“I would like for the ads to pick people who contribute in their communities, not just for their image, but people who speak for actual problems of the community to make it stronger.”

- member of the Roma community from Elbasan

“The Roma community have not had a representative person. Someone let’s say a competitor in the campaign, the local or parliamentary. The Roma community have not been motivated to vote, because of this...”

- member of the Roma community from Allias

Although the training inspired participants to vote, the lack of policies for the Roma community is still a significant voting barrier.

“I was convinced to vote because after the training I said I'll try it once, I'll give you one more chance, but it's still the same because nobody changed. The voting ended, no one remembered us.” - member of the Roma community from Shkoza

“I had never voted before, after the training I decided to vote. The reason why I did not vote was because for me it was the same regardless of which candidate won, because no one would think about us.” - member of the Roma community from Shkoza

- Focus group participants felt **pride** when seeing people from the Roma community on posters in town centres
- Having the poster translated into **Romani** strongly resonated with the community
- This was the **first time** Roma voters saw a governmental body communicate with them in Romani



“We have had not seen such advertisements before. This was the first time walking by the street and seeing a big poster in Romani language. It makes us proud.”

- member of the Roma community from Allias

“It absolutely influences the community to engage more in voting. It involves a community member, the writings are in Romani language which adds the sensation to vote.”

- member of the Roma community from Allias

- Some words on the poster were in a **dialect** not everyone understands
- **Low literacy rates** could mean some of the target audience not being able to engage with written messages
- Most participants saw and shared social media ads, some due to recognising **community activists** they knew



“I have seen this commercial on social media and at that time I remember sharing this to my schoolmates to see our friend there.”

- member of the Roma community from Allias



Young people

- CEC and youth NGO - 15 high schools, 375 students across the country
- 73% said it improved their understanding of their rights and electoral process
- 70% strongly agreed that they found workshop interesting
- 68% said it improved understanding of CEC
- CEC began independent school visits in Q2 2021/22



- Young people the **most apathetic**, with lowest intention to vote
- Those young people who took part in the **workshops were more likely to vote** and displayed a **better understanding** of the process
- A barrier to voting for many young people was their geographical **location**. Many moved away from home to study and weren't able to return to vote
- Some young people said that the **workshops motivated** them to do further research around candidates and the voting process

Many young people are disillusioned with politics.

“I don’t think the future is affected from our votes, we have heard many scandals of bought votes/bribery with votes, and there are many reasons that inspire not to vote.” - young person, 18-20

Despite this lack of trust with politics, most young people agreed that it’s important to vote if they want to see a change and that their vote matters.

“I think that the right of voting, to be honest, it is the only thing that it’s in our hands, to change even a tiny bit, something in our country.”

- young girl, 18-20

All young people who participated in the workshops were satisfied with the agenda, especially the interactive elements and giving their opinions.

“To be honest I liked it a lot, because everyone was active, we did meetings all together, we had debates, gave our opinions, it was pretty nice, I liked it.”

- young girl, 18-20

“For me too was pretty affective, it was the cooperation that the students had back then at the time, the fact that we got to know KQZ, because I had no information when it came down to such knowledge.” - young girl, 18-20

“I had a lot of fun” - young girl, 18-20

The workshops gave young people the opportunity and confidence to talk to their peers about voting, which was the first time for many of them.

Debating and interacting with others rather than being given a presentation worked well.

“There were a lot of elements in those debates that made me change my mind, I cannot remember them all but they were all positives.”

- young girl, 18-20

“It does give you the chance to say your thoughts, they make you feel heard.” - young girl, 18-20

Some young people reported that the workshop led to discussions not only with their peers, but also with their parents.

Participants also reported an increased sense of responsibility around voting.

“More so about the importance of the vote, because even one small vote might make the change, for example your vote might not give the win to a party but at the end of it all those deputies, who are in the parliament, they do have some power to make our voices heard.” - young girl, 18-20

“...we did get a sense of responsibility...” - young girl, 18-20

- Most young people were able to **relate** to at least one of the campaign images.
- Young people pointed out the novelty of **seeing someone like themselves represented**.

“...the fact that it included youth and not the leaders makes it a bit more different.”

- young girl, 18-20



“I think that someone from our age group with a simple job profile, that our age group gets to do, is a very all-inclusive way to make us all feel represented and feel closer to the poster and the situation too.”

- young girl, 18-20

“I think that everyone has the right to give a private vote, a personal choice and not as a collective, in groups.”

- young boy, 18-20

“In my opinion, the poster is pretty sensitizing and it has the purpose to make us active citizens when it comes to our communities, to not shy away from the jobs that we might have to do.” - young boy, 18-20



“I think it is more than clear due to it beginning with phrase vote to be heard, and it is repeated by saying it is my time to do something and it shows that it is my time and my decision and my time and no one can interfere with the decisions that I should take.” - young girl, 18-20

“They need to show the youth, how much power they have in their hands, it is a very important thing that should have been listed in the poster”

- young boy, 18-20

“We are the future and if we want to be the future we need to decide in regards with our government in the future, and if there will happen to be a specific party it should be us who choose it.” - young girl, 18-20

“For more meetings to be done, meaning more young people to be invited, to see how everything works, and not simply focus only on one party and not notice that they aren’t doing anything for our country.” - young girl 18-20

“To be honest, that day I wasn’t chosen to be part of that training, but I was chosen last minute switching up with a friend of mine so I was lucky and I had a lot of fun.” - young girl, 18-20

- Some participants mentioned that the **images weren't bright and eye-catching enough**, especially for a crowded social media landscape
- Young people felt that having one person on the poster is not inclusive enough and that a **diverse group would resonate more with them**
- Tended to **prefer video** as it has a variety of young people, not one

“The posters needed to have diversity, to be all inclusive. The video is way better than the poster.”

- young boy, 18-12



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Rural women

Some feel strongly that voting is still an individual process.

"I didn't want to vote for the same candidate, but I didn't tell to my family that I was going to vote differently. The votes are hidden and I am alone at the moment that I vote." - woman living in a rural area in Shkodra

"I vote and I am free to vote, without being influenced from the others. Voting is confidential and you cannot be influenced from others." - woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

"Everyone is free to decide whatever he wants. This must not be indicated. In my opinion, human beings express their ideas through voting." - woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

Some participants weren't able to vote due to:

- Living in a different location to where they were registered to vote
- Having to provide childcare while their husbands went to vote

“This happens a lot, there are married couples who are not registered in the village where they live because for example they are renting a house and to vote they need to travel to the place where they are registered as citizen. In this cases the husband says I will go, you stay here and take care of stuff, better because it is more important...” - woman living in a rural area in Shkodra

- Having a **job** can give rural women more independence, autonomy and agency
- **Younger generation** of rural women have increased autonomy and agency

“...for us, the younger ones, we are slightly more capable of anything, because we make the choice on our own to work, we choose to vote, we choose everything, and it’s our generation.” - woman living in a rural area in Shkodra

- For the younger generation **independence isn’t contradictory with family values** and is seen as a strength

Focus group participants recognised the importance of autonomy and their own agency as well as acknowledging the lack of it.

“I find it a good idea because the women in rural areas are not so independent. They are being influenced from their husband or family. I like for them to have the right to choose their own ideas.”

- woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

They also felt like the campaign actively promoted individual agency.

“This advert tends to push more the people of rural zones to become more independent in their decision to vote.” - woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

The poster resonated due to **modest household** surroundings, **natural look of the women** and **not using women in office setting**.

"It shows the women of nowadays, from home to work, cooking in her kitchen for the family. She has a simple kitchen with all the basic kitchen utensils, not a luxury house."

- woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

"I like the fact that the included women are simple. Not from the office, but from the farm, no makeup, simple women."

- woman living in a rural area in Elbasan



" It seemed closer to me, familiar. It felt warm."

- woman living in a rural area in
Elbasan

- The reaction to this poster was **very favourable** because they could see their older relatives in it
- **Older women rarely represented** in advertisements in Albania

“Not only the young generations, the retired must also go to vote. Our grandmothers have very small pensions, we can see their difficulties.”

- woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

“I had never seen a poster with a grandma before, regarding voting. This is what impressed me most.” - woman living in a rural area in Elbasan



Seeing a poster featuring older generation also brought out a **sense of duty** for many participants.

“It makes you responsible because nowadays the youth generation is emigrating. Now in Albania it is left only the third generation; who are living alone, especially in the rural zones.” - woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

“It makes you responsible to stay in your country, with your family and parents, when you see the grandma’s face full of hope, of course!”
- woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

"A grandma is the most important figure to everyone." - woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

- This group were very **family-oriented** and **empathetic**
- They would like to see **families represented**, as well as men, possibly as that is what they are used to seeing in adverts

“In my opinion it would be better to include all genders on it, not only women.”

- woman living in a rural area in Elbasan

- Similarly to young people, they were keen to see **multiple people** on posters to better represent the whole of society, such as a whole family or **generations side by side**



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Learnings

- **In-person engagement** more effective for behaviour change than advertising
- **Direct engagement from state institutions** is new, effective and has lasting **long-term impact**
- Simple steps towards inclusivity (**translation, facilitators from community, interactive activities**) result in stronger engagement and long-term impact
- **Representation** - older people, lower socio-economic backgrounds, non office settings - make advertising more impactful
- Young people want **colour and movement** in imagery

- **Polling stations too far in rural locations** - rural women
- **Students unable to vote in place of study** - students
- Women not registering to vote at new location after **marriage**
- **Use of new, electronic polling stations not covered in CEC training** - Roma community
- **Accessibility issues and physical barriers getting to and at voting stations** - those with limited mobility



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Thank you

Please email marina.soteriou@cabinetoffice.gov.uk or gioia.casale@cabinetoffice.gov.uk if you have any questions.