

DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

The case of Albania

Roma children and the blood feud isolated children

PhD Ekaterina Strati

University of Durrës, Faculty of Education, Albania



WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO STUDY?

- ▶ **Education systems should be inclusive and impartial, which means that all the children and the young people need to have access to a supportive education which fits to their own needs and characteristics (UNESCO, 2016).**
- ▶ **The largest ethnic minority group in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEEICIS)**
- ▶ **Every person has the right to education based on the international human rights doctrines:**
 - *Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Convention on the Rights of the Child*
 - *Education for All*
 - *Millennium Development Goals*
 - *Etc.*
- ▶ **The right to education is a constitutional right of Albania**

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- ▶ Historically, in Albania, as in other European countries, the Roma have had a very low educational level.
- ▶ The Roma educational level improved significantly during the socialist period as a result of the measures taken to integrate them into society.
- ▶ During the post-socialist transition, the educational level of Roma, as in other Eastern European countries, deteriorated.
- ▶ Albania has made considerable progress towards promoting new legislation, protection of children's rights the education system in Albania.
- ▶ The level of illiteracy for the Roma children aged 7 to 18 seems to have decreased compared to the early 2000.
- ▶ Although there is an improvement in the educational level of Roma community over 2000-2016, compared to the first decade of transition, illiteracy continues to remain very high.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ▶ *What is the Albanian situation regarding discrimination in education like?*
- ▶ *Which are the main categories of people suffering from discrimination in education in Albania?*
- ▶ *What is typical to this country? The case of blood feud isolated children.*
- ▶ *What are the main trends regarding drop-out rates?*
- ▶ *Does the government provide assistance and support for these categories?*
- ▶ *Is there an elaborate legal framework to cover issues concerning unequal opportunities in education?*
- ▶ *Is Albania working in line with European Union directives on this issue?*
- ▶ *What could be improved?*
- ▶ *Etc.*

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

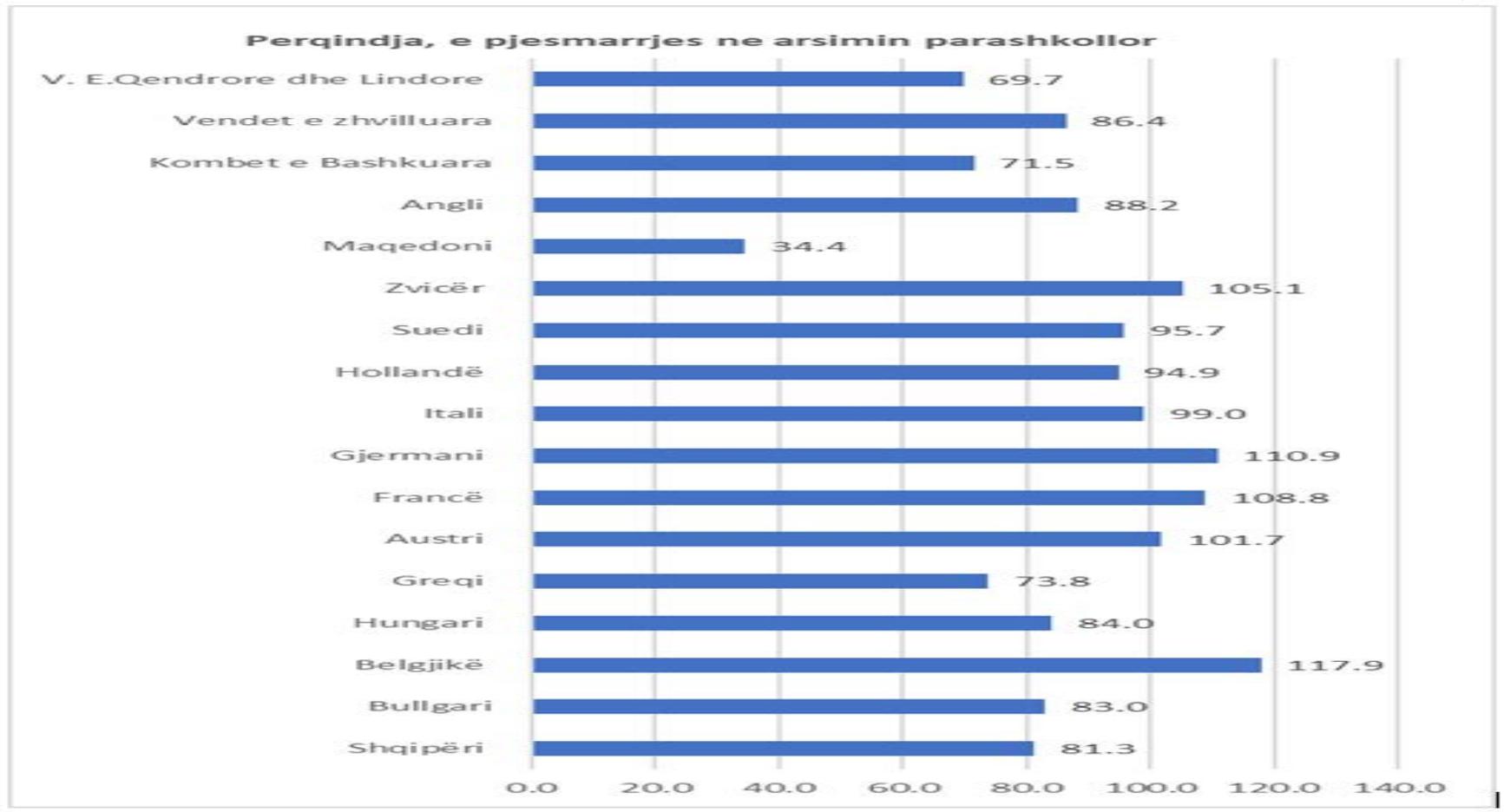
- ▶ The qualitative method of data collection from various reliable sources
- ▶ Analyzing findings from the previous studies (in the last ten years)
- ▶ The results are the collection of various **findings** and the **recommendations** provided to offer solution to the problems which are noticed today in education.

STATISTICS, ANALYSIS AND MONITORING OF DROPOUT RATES

- ▶ In Albania only about 20% of Roma children ever complete primary school, compared with more than 90 percent of their non-Roma peers.
- ▶ Preschool coverage for Roma children in Albania is on average a quarter of the corresponding rate for non-Roma children.
- ▶ Those that do enroll are likely to drop out before the end of basic schooling
- ▶ Only 18% of Roma children ever enroll in secondary school and less than one per cent attend university.
- ▶ Gaps in enrolment of Roma children in Albania range from 45 to 50 per cent.
- ▶ Most of the students who drop out annually are of Roma ethnicity.
- ▶ As a result of the high drop-out rate among Roma children, their participation beyond primary school is dramatically lower than that of the majority population.
- ▶ Only 18 per cent of Roma attend secondary school, compared with 75 per cent of the majority community, and lower than 1 per cent of Roma attend university.
- ▶ The average years of schooling are 5.6 years for men and 5.3 for women. (World Bank report, 2005
- ▶ Most of the Roma who remain in education beyond primary level attend vocational establishments, a sector badly hit by industrial decline, which has lowered the value of practical qualifications as a means to employment.

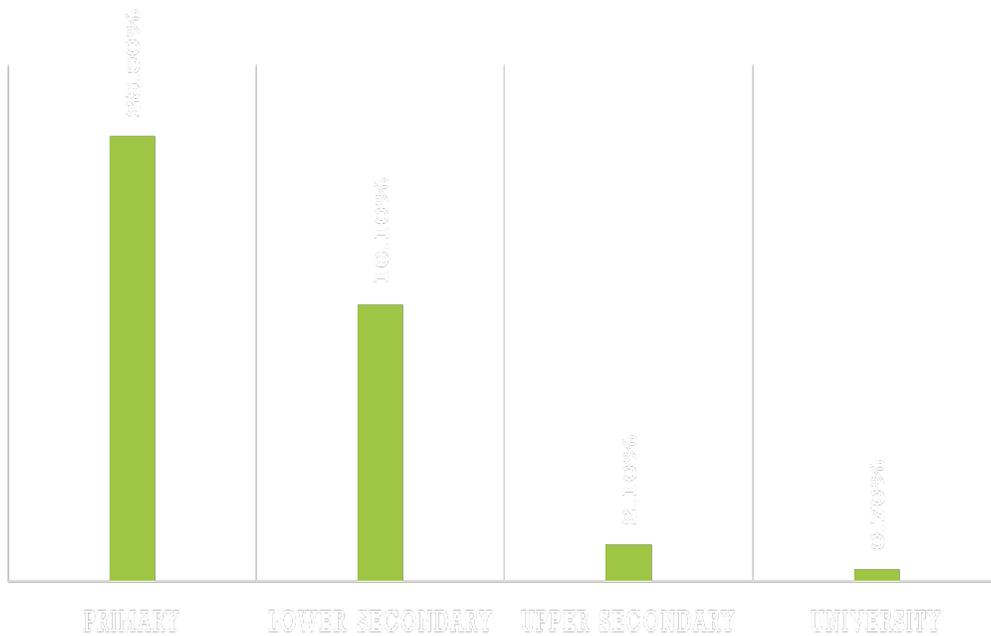
School year	Total Drop out in numbers	Drop out in percentage versus enrolled students	Based on gender				Based on location			
			Drop out students		Drop out in percentage		Drop out students		Drop out in percentage	
			Male	Female	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
2004-2005	4239	0.89	2166	2073	0.88	0.90	676	3563	0.35	1.27
2005-2006	4234	0.94	1884	2350	0.81	1.08	894	3340	0.46	1.30
2006-2007	3826	0.89	1857	1969	0.83	0.95	1001	2825	0.50	1.20
2007-2008	3698	0.86	1741	1957	0.78	0.95	1280	2418	0.60	1.10
2008-2009	3711	0.81	1740	1971	0.73	0.90	1283	2428	0.61	1.06
2009-2010	2028	0.46	927	1101	0.40	0.52	613	1415	0.27	0.65
2010-2011	1795	0.43	883	912	0.40	0.45	824	971	0.38	0.47
2011-2012	1474	0.37	705	769	0.33	0.40	749	725	0.36	0.37
2012-2013	1533	0.39	806	727	0.39	0.39	874	659	0.43	0.35
2013-2014	2199	0.58	1249	950	0.63	0.53	1133	1066	0.52	0.48
2014-2015	3021	0.57	2071	950	0.61%	0.53	1112	959	0.57	0.57
2015-2016	3256	0.59	2155	1101	0.64%	0.51	1189	978	0.59	0.57
2016-2017	3145	0.59	2155	1101	0.64%	0.51	1189	978	0.59	0.57

% of attendance in pre-primary education

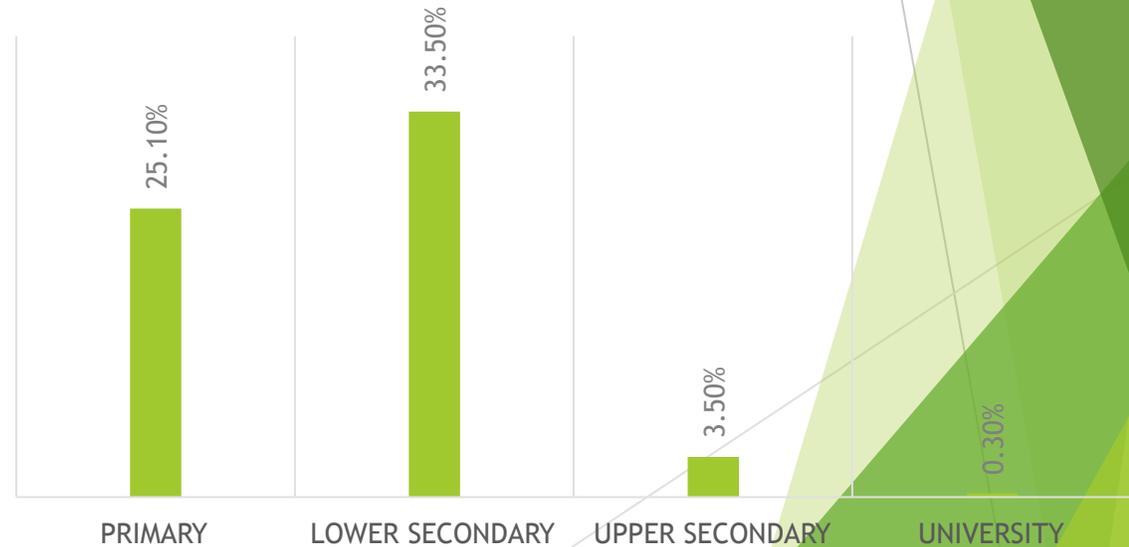


Statistics TODAY vs. the communist ERA

% OF EDUCATION COMPLETION



% OF ROMA CHILDREN IN EDUCATION



THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLANS

- ▶ Albania has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- ▶ Obligation of the Albanian government to assure the realization of all rights to every child without discrimination on any ground, including education.
- ▶ Albania has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- ▶ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the international body responsible for overseeing governments' compliance with the Convention
- ▶ The European Social Charter (ratified by Albania in 2002)
- ▶ The Decade of Roma Inclusion is an initiative of 12 Central and South-Eastern European countries to improve the social economic status and social inclusion of the Roma minority in the region. (2005-2015)
Albania joined in 2008

ACTION PLANS IN THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- ▶ “The National Strategy for Improving the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority” 2003, covering 2003-2015.
- ▶ This strategy is based on the critical analysis and assessment of the problems of the Roma community.
- ▶ A detailed plan is included and the responsible institutions and the budget envisaged for the achievement of these objectives each year, starting from 2003 onwards.
- ▶ However, due to such factors as lack of human and financial resources, these objectives have been partially realized.
- ▶ In fact there is a gap between the ambitious objectives of the national strategy and the very limited resources
- ▶ Education departments do not have a plan they follow each year.
- ▶ Regarding the policies that REDs have undertaken in the districts to identify Roma children and to raise the awareness of the community to attend pre-school education, it is noticed that there is no accurate and unified strategy regarding this phenomenon.
- ▶ This is because in different districts it is carried out in different ways and mainly done with the help of foreign organizations such as: UNICEF, UNDP, Save the Children, NFP, as well as by the Roma community itself.

UNICEF's Regional Education Strategy

► GOALS:

1. Disparities and exclusion will be reduced and the last 10 to 15 per cent of children out of school will receive quality education.
 2. The quality and relevance of basic education will be improved to reduce dropouts, and completion and retention will be increased
 3. All children ages 3 to 6 will have access to at least one year of free pre-primary school and will begin school by the age of 6 to 7.
 4. Education will be the strategy for disaster risk reduction to promote social cohesion and tolerance.
- **Main contributions in studies and support by UNDP, UNSCR, WORLD BANK, etc.**

MAIN FINDINGS

Factors that contribute to low level of education of Roma children in Albania:

- ▶ *The educational level of Roma children is differentiated from area to area.*
- ▶ *Parents of Roma children are less interested in their child education.*
- ▶ *The low economic level of Roma community is one of the main factors for failure to pursue education by Roma children, or school drop-outs.*
- ▶ *Lack of financial support for families with school-aged children and lack of support on school materials*
- ▶ *Early Roma marriage*
- ▶ *Distance from schools*
- ▶ *The large numbers of children in classes*
- ▶ *The fact that children are not registered in the civil registry*
- ▶ *Discrimination in schools by teachers, students and parents*
- ▶ *Lack of a clear strategy for Roma inclusion after university studies.*
- ▶ *The practice of carrying out dangerous work involving Roma children, mainly begging in the streets in urban areas.*

- ▶ *The migration of Roma families across the country at different times of the year makes the children detach themselves from school.*
- ▶ *Emigration of Roma families, another phenomenon that characterizes this community*
- ▶ *Parents' awareness of educational institutions is too low or inexistent.*
- ▶ *The very low level of parents' education constitutes a major obstacle.*
- ▶ *Lack of successful Roma models is missing.*
- ▶ *The attendance of secondary education by Roma children is at very low levels.*
- ▶ *Lack of vocational education that can equip Roma children and young people with a profession is lacking.*
- ▶ *Lack of extracurricular activities about the Roma community.*
- ▶ *The lack of social worker image and support.*
- ▶ *The failure of the pre-university education law is another problem.*
- ▶ *It is noticed the failure of policies undertaken by the state and various international organizations to eradicate illiteracy. Thus, "Second Chance", an opportunity that needs to be provided to Roma throughout the country.*
- ▶ *The high school continues to be far from the reality of the Roma.*
- ▶ *There is no special quota for Roma in any university.*

CHALLENGES

- ▶ **Improving the situation of Roma in terms of education will contribute to the achievement of the European 2020 Strategy objectives in the field of employment, social integration;**
- ▶ **Implementing a human rights-based approach to the inclusion of Roma children in education.;
Achieving comparable outcomes;**
- ▶ **Ensure access to quality education;**
- ▶ **Effective government action;**
- ▶ **European Membership challenge since the integration of the Roma community has been and is one of the most subtle points of Albania's membership in the EU.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ *Review the strategy for improving the living conditions of the Roma community.*
- ▶ *Carefully implement the new European Union Strategy on Roma Education (2015-2020).*
- ▶ *The implementation of the recommendations of the European Union should be at the core of the work of these institutions.*
- ▶ *To realize the identification of Roma throughout Albania*
- ▶ *To facilitate the registration procedures for Roma children.*
- ▶ *To economically support Roma families.*
- ▶ *The financial support of Roma children who go to school can not remain only in books, but also provide other basic tools.*
- ▶ *Add assistant teachers to high class Roma or model moderators.*
- ▶ *Insert the existing infrastructure by improving it.*
- ▶ *Construction of kindergartens in areas where the Roma population is high.*
- ▶ *Roma students should be provided at least one meal free of charge from the state.*
- ▶ *For children who live in significant distance from school, daily transportation must be ensured.*
- ▶ *Raise awareness of Roma parents on the importance of child education of them.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ *To identify children who are not attending school or are disconnected from it.*
- ▶ *Increasing the human capacities of Roma.*
- ▶ *Teachers in high-population areas should be trained and rely on their work from local institutions.*
- ▶ *Facilitation of the registration of Roma children in schools.*
- ▶ *Inclusion of Roma teachers in the education process.*
- ▶ *Use successful Roma education methods, which have resulted in Europe such as: Mosaic or KIT.*
- ▶ *Evidence of discrimination cases in schools and measures to prevent them.*
- ▶ *Provide to Roma children not only a non-discriminatory environment, but also niche in the classroom by involving them in the educational process and approaching the non-Roma children.*
- ▶ *The concentration of Roma children in certain classes should disappear as a phenomenon*
- ▶ *Immediate measures should be taken to provide pre-school education to the Roma community.*
- ▶ *Financially support Roma parents.*
- ▶ *Employment of Roma parents who have children in schools.*
- ▶ *Providing study scholarships provided by local government.*
- ▶ *Promote successful Roma models from local government in the areas where they live.*

ISOLATED CHILDREN, BLOOD FEUD REALITY

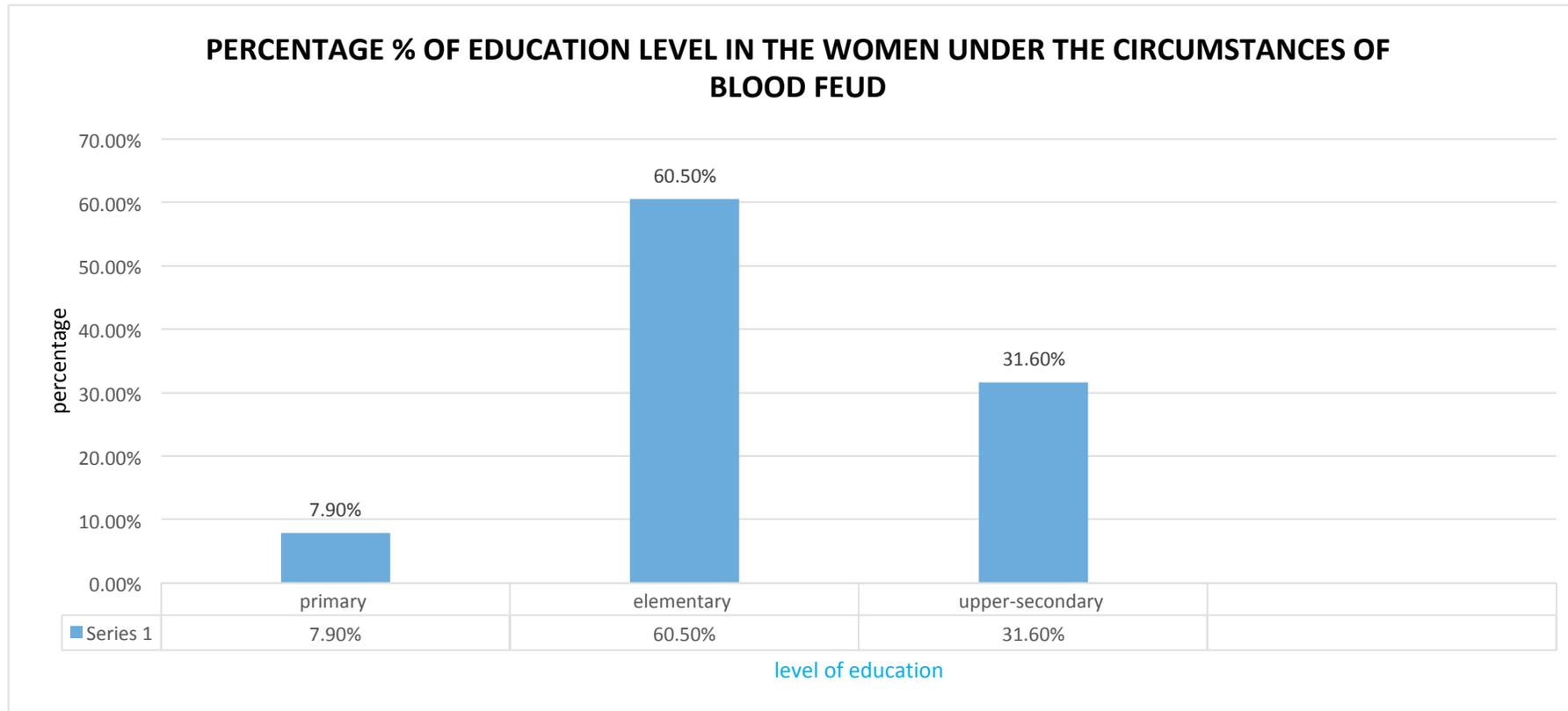
CONTEXT AND DATA

- ▶ Kanun of Leke Dukagjini in the communist period
- ▶ Based on the data presented in 2012 by the Ministry of Interior Affairs there are 225 killings for blood feuds in 12 years (from 1998-2012).
- ▶ According to the State Police, the distribution of 67 families is: 48 families in Kukës, 13 families in Lezha, 4 families in Tirana, and 1 family in Durrës. (2010)
- ▶ The Statistics Office of RED Shkodra show that the number of isolated children had dropped from 46 in 2011 to 5 in 2016.
- ▶ By 2017, according to the Education Directorate, the number of isolated children is zero. (reported)
- ▶ The Directory of Social Services in the Municipality of Shkodra, which supplies data to the Education Director, report that there is information on 20 families isolated with a total of 20 children.
- ▶ Teachers say there are still at least 30 isolated children that they visit and teach. The teacher says that these children are not involved in the government project, which for a decade helped dozens of students mainly in the villages around Shkodra, but did not touch the remote areas and villages outside the region.
- ▶ This increases the need for more accurate statistics of this phenomenon.
- ▶ In the latest Progress Report (2015) of the EC for Albania, it is stated that: “Regarding the right to life, blood feud remains a problem, although on a limited scale.

Statistics regarding the number of isolated children 2008-2009

N o	Regional Education Directorate (DAR/ZA)	October 2008	October 2009
1	Shkodër	62 children	52 children (9 children of Poliçan)
2	Malësi e Madhe	12 children	7 children
3	Tropojë	7 children	5 children (regularly attended school)
4	Lezhë	2 children	1 transferred to Shkodra (regularly attended the lessons)
5	Kuçovë	2 children	1 child (pursued the second chance)
6	Durrës	1 child	1 child (pursued the second chance)
7	Kurbin	-	1 child (pursued the second chance)
	Total:	86 children	62 children

GENDER-BASED STATISTICS



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- ▶ There is a legal framework regarding the education and treatment of isolated families and the education of their children. For instance, Article 102 of the Albanian Constitution and Article 17 of Law no. 69/2012, dated 21.6.2012 "On the pre-university education system in the Republic of Albania". In addition, the Ministry of Education and Sports issued Directive no. 36, dated 13.8.2013 "On the procedures for the education of isolated children".
- ▶ The Parliament has adopted a resolution and recommendations for blood feud, based on the findings of the Special Report of the People's Advocate (Ombudsman). The resolution calls for the coordinating council for prevention, set up since 2005, for educational and social programs to be conducted in rural areas.

POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS

- ▶ The main principles of this legal framework in Albania include: the right of school-age children to be educated in their particular conditions, REDs and school directories cooperate with local government bodies to identify isolated children, the teaching process of isolated children takes place three times a week, with 10 hours per week, the curriculum and subject curricula are compiled by the Institute of Education Development, directives and guidelines for teachers, provision with a certificate of the respective class, offering psychological assistance to these children, the monitoring process of the teaching and learning by the respective REOs, etc.
- ▶ The first independent report on the blood feud problem, which was prepared during 2012, was submitted to the Albanian Parliament in April 2013. This report was reviewed by the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the Assembly on 17.11.2014 and the Assembly dated 05.03.2015 has adopted a Resolution on the Prevention of the Phenomenon in Albania, which is published in the Official Journal of 2015, No.38.
- ▶ A method of assistance is to send teachers to the homes of self-isolated families, a practice that was institutionalized through a program of the Ministry of Education and Science called "Second Chance". This program is expected to provide home schooling for children who are unable to go to school. In the Shkodra region, the service is also offered to self-isolated children
- ▶ In terms of social initiatives and policies, the "Home School Education Program" has been also developed.
- ▶ A wider group of teachers in the villages of Shkodra and the surrounding mountain range, who since 2006 urged the government to start the "Arsimi ne vatra" (education at home) project for children, isolated in blood feud.
- ▶ Closure of the program with the argument that no more children of compulsory education age was opposed by volunteer teachers. Teachers say there are still isolated children in remote areas that are not included in the program, but the main problem according to them remains children at the age of compulsory education.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS about THE ISOLATED CHILDREN

- ▶ *The recommendation made to the Ministry of Education and Sports required and advised the MES to play a major positive and preventive role in upgrading the education program to ensure the proper quality education of the young generation incorporating the principles of nonviolence, respect for diversity, etc.*
- ▶ *In order to fight this phenomenon, an important element is also the process of the training of teachers in areas where blood feud is spreading.*
- ▶ *The extension in time of the "Second Chance Project" through which are to benefit all the children isolated in all districts of the country*
- ▶ *The Ministry of Education and Sports should provide financial support for the facilities for teachers included in the program of education for the isolated children.*
- ▶ *The Ministry of Education and Sports should play a major positive and preventive role in improving curricula to ensure quality education of the younger generation with the spirit of tolerance and nonviolence.*
- ▶ *The state should provide more employment and education opportunities for the children of these families as well as education opportunities for children of these families because economic empowerment and social integration will turn them into first-hand actor to fight blood feud reality.*
- ▶ *Awareness campaigns need to be conducted by public institutions and the media simultaneously to help inform and educate the wider public.*
- ▶ *More needs to be done in terms of human right education, which can be addressed in schools' syllabus and community training meetings.*

Thank you!!!

ekaterina_gjergo@yahoo.co.uk

The cost of child education today will be significantly lower than the cost of "economic aid" tomorrow.