



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
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REGIONAL WEBINAR

Women's role in agrifood value chains in the Western Balkans

9 June 2022

10:30–12:30 Central European Time

Via Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84244993794?pwd=QkMvdXorY25mTi9DU21ReEFkSFY5dz09>

The webinar's language is English
(translation from English to Albanian and Serbian languages will be provided)



Despite the essential role played by women and girls in sustainable food production in the Western Balkans, women's social and economic status remains weak and recent trends show only a minimal improvement in their situation. Gender inequality and the insufficient realization of women's rights constitute a serious obstacle to the acceleration of poverty reduction. Although women bear most of the burden relating to household welfare, they have fewer possibilities than men to control the resources and means necessary to fulfil their needs and perform responsibilities. Women own and manage a smaller number of farms and lack the necessary capacities and skills for growing their own businesses and becoming self-sufficient.



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Nevertheless, rural women play an active role in producing food for local markets, sustaining local biodiversity and traditional foods. Across the Western Balkans, women are key promoters of agroecology and evidence from across the region demonstrates that women and girls are vital for agricultural and rural development. However, their contribution remains largely invisible and not fully recognized. The adoption of gender responsive approaches in agri-food value chains is at the core of sustainable and inclusive food systems. These approaches can strengthen the supplier base, reduce post-harvest losses, improve trust along the chain, develop linkages and stimulate new opportunities, contribute to resilience, and enable biodiversity based production and the consumption of nutritious, safe and secure food. Sustainable agri-food value chain development initiatives that recognize rural women's role and address their potential contribution also enhance women's agency in economic activities, and thus are essential for women's economic empowerment.

Within this context, the regional webinar will focus on promising practices of women's economic empowerment in the Western Balkans through gender-sensitive value chain development for sustainable agri-food systems. It will also serve to foster discussion about the role of regional and national networks in promoting gender equality and agroecology for sustainable and inclusive food systems.

The presentations will focus on:

- ◆ the implementation of agroecological practices in family farms;
- ◆ the empowerment of women through social entrepreneurship;
- ◆ the role of rural women as resilient and biodiversity-based producers of secure, nutritious, healthy and safe food; and
- ◆ positive shifts in the productivity status of the women-led agribusiness sector through the contribution of grassroots civil society organizations.

Target audience: Agri-food producers' groups and associations, civil society organizations engaged in sustainable agriculture, agroecology, rural development and women's empowerment, farmers' associations from the Balkans and Central Asia, international partners, representatives from academia and other interested organizations and stakeholders.

About the initiative: FAO and Schola Campesina Aps are hosting four subregional webinars to discuss promising gender-responsive practices for sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Turkey, and the Western Balkans in 2022. This webinar is the second one of this series.

National Rural Development Networks (NRDNs): The family of NRDNs in the six Western Balkan countries represents genuine civil society initiatives created from the 'bottom-up' over the last decade in the domain of agriculture and rural development, with a total membership of 200 grassroots CSOs across the region. The Balkan Rural Development Network was established to address the NRDNs' need for a joint regional platform to regularly exchange information, experience and knowledge, network and cooperate together in order to increase effectiveness in working with constituents at the national level.



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AGENDA

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10:20	Open link for registration on Zoom
10:30–10:40	Welcome and opening remarks Representative of Albanian Network for Rural Network Representative of Schola Campesina
10:40–11:00	Evidence on gender based inequalities and their importance for sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems Anna Jenderedjian, Gender and Social Protection Specialist, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
	SDG indicators: tracking information on the situation of women's rights on land ownership and control Giorgi Kvinikadze, Statistician, FAO Statistician, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia
Presentations of experiences on women's economic empowerment through gender-sensitive agri-food value chains development in the Western Balkans	
11:00–11:50 Each presentation will be 8 minutes in length	Implementation of agro-ecological practices in family farms in Zadrimea, Albania Rozeta Gradeci, COSPE organization, Albania
	Enabling rural women's economic empowerment in North Macedonia: the first government measure for direct support of women in rural areas and the first women rural e-market Liljana Jonoski, organization The Rural Coalition, North Macedonia



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	<p>The cooperative – a model of social entrepreneurship for economic empowerment of vulnerable groups Željana Pjevalica, ŽENA cooperative, Bosnia and Herzegovina</p>
	<p>“It suits you a lot”: Ganimete’s farming story – from survive to thrive Edisona Franca, Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo, Kosovo¹</p>
11:50–12:20	<p>Open floor for questions, comments and discussion</p>
12:20–12:30	<p>Summary and closing remarks Representative of Albanian Network for Rural Network Representative of Schola Campesina</p>

¹ All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)