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ON
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50
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Prepared by UNDP Kosovo
Support to Anti – Corruption Efforts in Kosovo (SAEK) Project

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The views expressed in this document are those of the opinion poll respondents and Focus Groups participants and do not necessarily represent the views of UNDP.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This special edition of the Public Pulse on Corruption, is prepared by the Support to Anti – Corruption Efforts in Kosovo (SAEK) project, in line with research approach and methodology of the UNDP's periodic Public Pulses¹ which analyses citizens' perceptions of Kosovo's Institutions, with a focus on political, economic, security, and development. The present Public Pulse on Corruption, focuses its analysis on perceptions of citizens of Kosovo² on the prevalence of corruption, with particular emphasis on Kosovo public institutions on both central and local level.

The report analyses data collected through a general population survey with 1300 respondents and 500 targeted interviews with representatives of Kosovo public institutions from all management levels. In addition, this research also includes validation data from four thematic focus groups, namely focus groups with representatives of central level institutions, local level institutions, civil society and a focus group with gender activists dedicated to comparison of data with the UNDP survey on Gender and Corruption carried out in 2014.

Results of the opinion poll with citizens, show that corruption continues to be ranked as one of the most significant problems facing Kosovo, where 18 % of interviewed citizens are of the opinion that corruption is the most significant problem in Kosovo³, trailing only unemployment as the most pressing issue by 39 % of respondents. According to the majority of respondents (58%), the level of corruption in Kosovo has not changed over the last 12 months. On the other hand, 31 % of them believe that corruption has increased, compared to 12 % that think that corruption levels have decreased.

In terms of perceptions of corruption amongst public sector employees, the majority of officials in both levels of governance are of the opinion that Kosovo's civil service is riddled with "nepotism, favouritism and patronage", "trading in influence" and "embezzlement (including time theft – not working required hours), theft and fraud." Public servants working at municipal level institutions were more likely to believe that "bribery" exists across civil service in Kosovo (80.8%), when compared with officials of central level institutions (66.3%). On the issue of overall prevalence of corruption in the civil service in Kosovo, the average rating for municipal level officials was 3.11 and the average rating for central level officials was 3.08, ranked on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was "not prevalent" and 5 was "very prevalent". Despite the high level of perception of corruption, still only 28.2 % of officials from central level institutions and 18.3 % of officials from municipal level institutions said that they have reported the corruption they have witnessed.

A comparison of data with the UNDP's 2014 Gender and Corruption Survey show that there is an increase in the average score for municipal sector officials (3.11) in 2016 compared to an average of 2.72 in 2014. On the other hand, this score has not changed at the central level. Findings from the focus group with gender activists indicate that the general opinion is that the actual level of corruption is similar in both local and central level institutions; however, participants stated that the perceived level of corruption is higher now than in 2014 because of a better job done by media and organizations that work on increasing awareness of corruption and its forms and those that have programs that support Kosovo institutions in addressing corruption.

Participants agreed that one of the main factors contributing to negative perception about corruption is the inefficiency of the judicial system. According to them, considering the fact that courts are corrupted, opens up opportunities for others to engage in corruption and for people not to report it as they don't have any institution they can trust to deal with corruption. The majority of the participants agreed that raising the awareness on corruption is important.

¹ Public Pulse is a periodic report of UNDP which analyses citizens' perceptions of Kosovo's Institutions, with a focus on political, economic, security, and development issues. For more details see for example: UNDP Public Pulse 11, http://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/Library/democratic_governance/public-pulse-11.html.

² For UNDP, references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

³ This represents an increase compared to data from the latest Public Pulse 11 and before (see for instance Figure 6: Perception of the most paramount problems facing Kosovo on page 10 of Public Pulse 11).

Methodology

The findings presented in this report are based on a public opinion poll, in depth interviews with public officials and four focus groups for validation of data.

Data collection for the public opinion poll was based on a survey of households: interviewing 1300 citizens in their households through face-to-face computer assisted interviewing technique (CAPI). The overall sample consisted of three ethnically-exclusive subsamples:

- i. 839 interviews with K-Albanians
- ii. 233 interviews with K-Serbs
- iii. 228 interviews with K-Other minorities

The total sample for interviews with public officials consisted of 500 interviews, of which 276 were conducted with civil servants working in central-level institutions and 224 were conducted with civil servants working in municipalities across Kosovo.

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

Central Level

276

Municipal Level

224

Four focus group discussions were conducted with the representatives of local - level institutions, central - level institutions, the civil society, and gender activists had the following distribution:

Focus group discussions

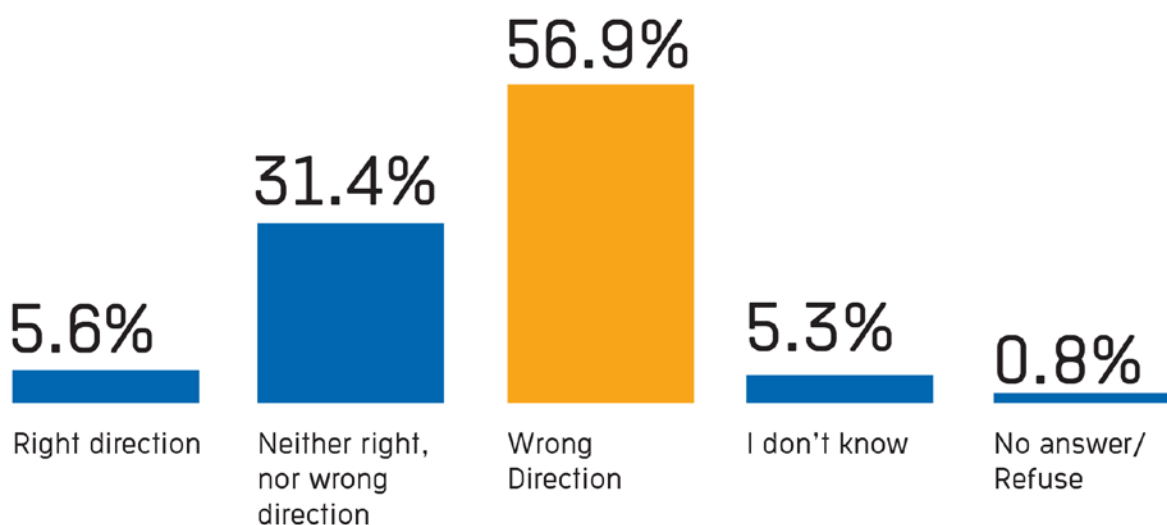
| Number of Focus groups | Number of participants Central-level Institutions | Number of participants Local-level Institutions | Number of participants Civil Society | Number of participants Gender Activists |
|------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| 4 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 09 |

Public opinion poll, interviews with local and central level public officials and focus groups were conducted by UBO Consulting in March – May 2016.

Public opinion poll on Corruption

To initiate the discussion, respondents were asked about their overall perception of the direction of governance in Kosovo. The results show that 57% of Kosovars are of the opinion that Kosovo is going in the wrong direction, while only six (6) % believe that things are headed in the right direction, whereas 31% believe that things in Kosovo are staying the same, followed by six (6) % who were undecided. This is similar to findings of the recent Public Pulse 11 where only 7% of Kosovans seem to be either satisfied or very satisfied with Kosovo's current political direction.⁴

Figure 1. Satisfaction level with overall direction of governance in Kosovo



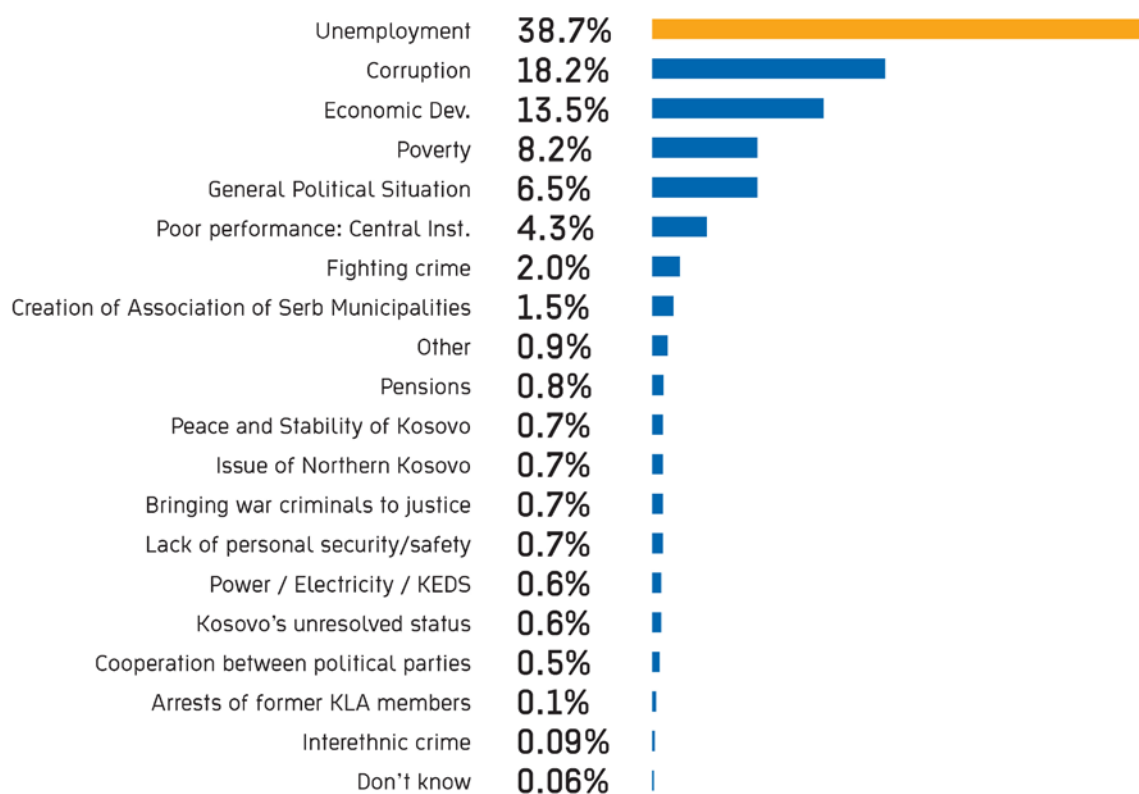
Corruption remains one of the most significant problems facing Kosovo today, as perceived by 18 % of interviewed citizens. This percentage puts corruption as the second largest problem Kosovo is facing today, trailing only unemployment which is perceived by 39 % of the respondents as the most pressing issue. These two are followed by “economic development” (14%), “poverty” (8%), and the “general political situation” (7%).

This represents an increase from the “traditional” third place that corruption had in most, if not all, previous Public Pulse reports.⁵ One explanation for this increase might be that in the months the survey was conducted, as part of the fulfilment of criteria for visa liberalization process, the fight against corruption was earmarked as the most important conditions, thus placing it very high on the agenda of the media and public opinion. Another explanation may be that respondents are more prone to identify corruption as a paramount problem when participating in a targeted survey looking in more detail into the phenomenon of corruption as opposed to a poll analysing general socio – economic trends. Regardless of this, it is clear that corruption is firmly rooted at the top of the pyramid of issues that are concerning citizens of Kosovo and that is closely correlated to the perceived lack of economic wellbeing.

⁴ See UNDP Public Pulse 11, page 4.

⁵ See Figure 6: Perception of the most paramount problems facing Kosovo, UNDP Public Pulse 11, page 10.

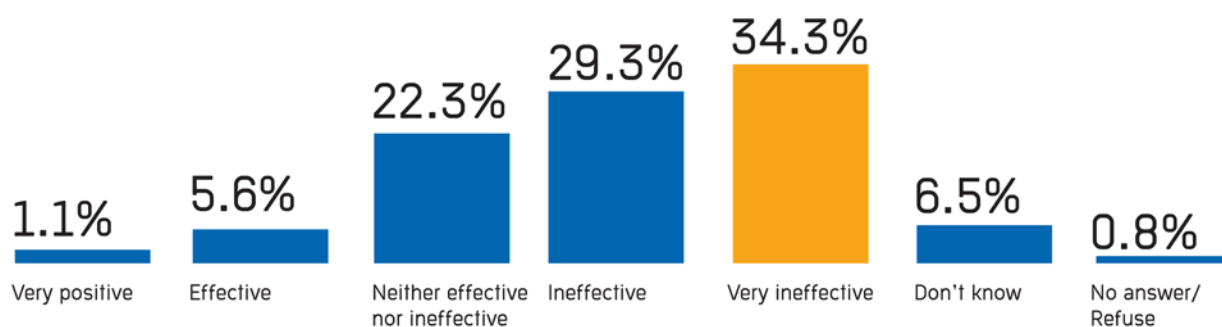
Figure 2. Perception of the most important problems facing Kosovo today



The majority of the interviewed respondents, 58% of them, consider that the level of corruption in Kosovo has not changed over the last 12 months. On the other hand, 31% believe that corruption has increased, compared to 12% that think it has decreased. In terms of satisfaction with institutional efforts in combating corruption, the majority of respondents (64%) saw these actions as “ineffective” or “very ineffective”. Only 7% of respondents said that they consider these efforts to be “effective” or “very effective”. This relates to the overall low level of satisfaction of Kosovans with their institutions, which for the majority of institutions is under 20 %.⁶

⁶ See, Table 1: Kosovans' satisfaction levels with Kosovo's key executive, legislative, and judicial institutions, UNDP Public Pulse 11, page 4.

Figure 3. Satisfaction with institutional efforts in fighting corruption



Prevalence of Corruption and Personal Experiences

In order to better understand the perceptions of respondents on the prevalence of corruption in various public sector institutions, the survey sought to analyse what acts respondents qualify as corruptive. The results of the opinion poll show that respondents in a very high percentage identify both petty and large scale corruption to be of an equal negative effect. Specifically, 85% of respondents see “extending cash to policemen not to revoke your driving license or escape a fine”, 91% of respondents consider “giving money to get a job in public sector” and 89% consider “giving cash or extending a favour in order to speed up the process” as corruptive acts. As shown in the figure below, other similar actions also fall under corruption for the majority of respondents. However, one deed that is seen as corruption only by 38% of respondents is “giving a gift to a doctor after a successful surgery”.

When asked to what extent is it acceptable for a person to give cash, gifts or extend favours to solve problems at various institutions, the vast majority of the respondents’ answers fell into the categories of “unacceptable” and “totally unacceptable”. In line with the previous question, there was a larger percentage of people (20%) who deemed giving cash, gifts or extending favours in a hospital to get something done as “acceptable” or “totally acceptable”.

This leniency towards understanding corruptive acts in the health sector may be explained with the vulnerability that respondents feel before and after dealing with a health sector institution. Although 65% of respondents consider that giving a gift or a bribe in order to be better taken care of is a corruptive act, only 38% consider that giving a gift to a doctor after successful surgery is corruption.

Figure 4. Which acts fall under the public phenomenon of "corruption"?

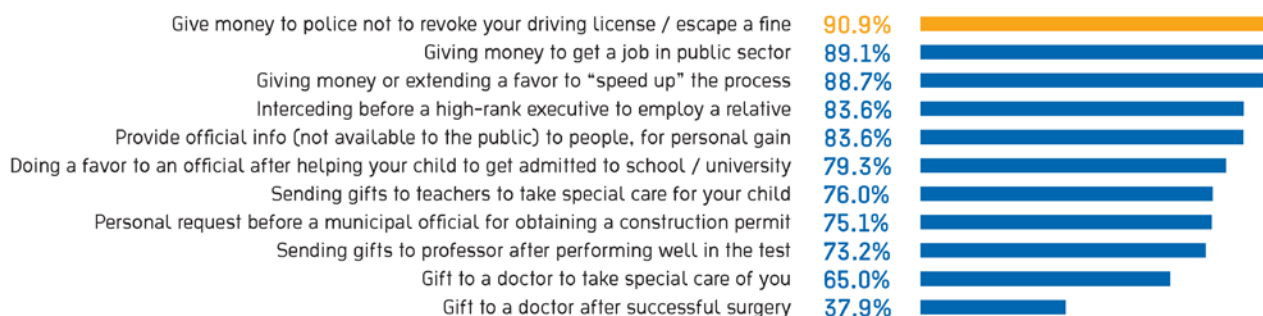
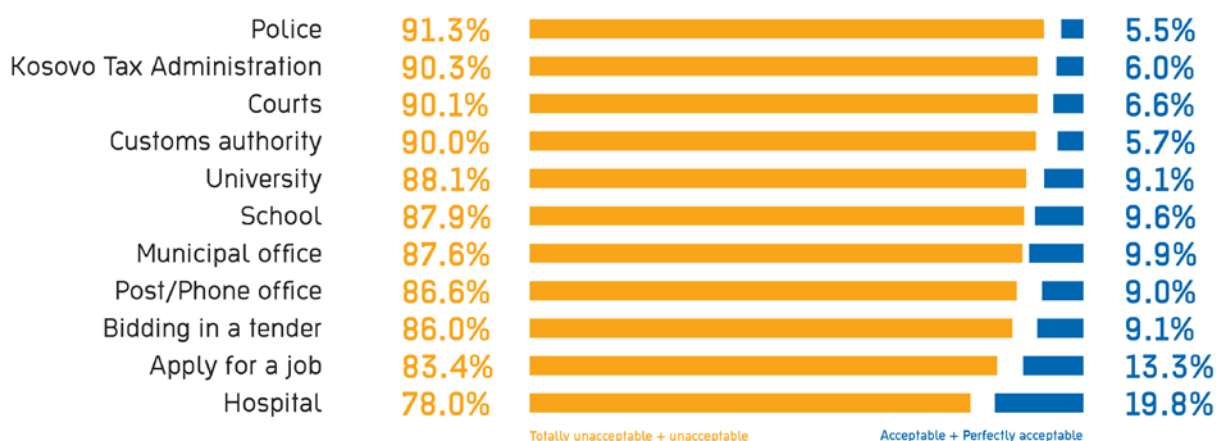
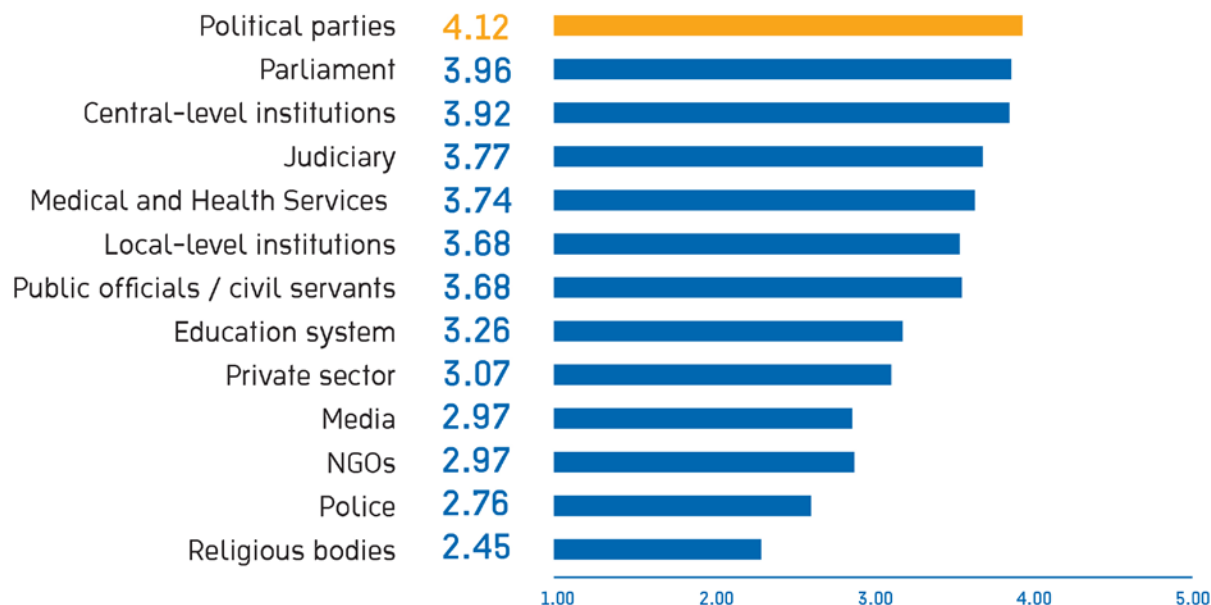


Figure 5. How acceptable is for a person to give cash, make gift or extend favor in order to help solving one's problem at...



In terms of perceptions of corruption in the public sector in Kosovo, respondents were asked to rank the prevalence of corruption across different sectors and institutions on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = not prevalent, 5 = very prevalent). Results show that Kosovo citizens see political parties (4.12), Assembly of Kosovo (3.96) and central-level institutions (3.92) as the most corrupt sectors, followed closely by the judiciary (3.77), health services (3.74) and local – level institutions (3.68), whereas religious bodies (2.45) and police (2.76) were seen as the least corrupt.

Figure 6. Perceptions on the prevalence of corruption in different sectors and institutions in Kosovo



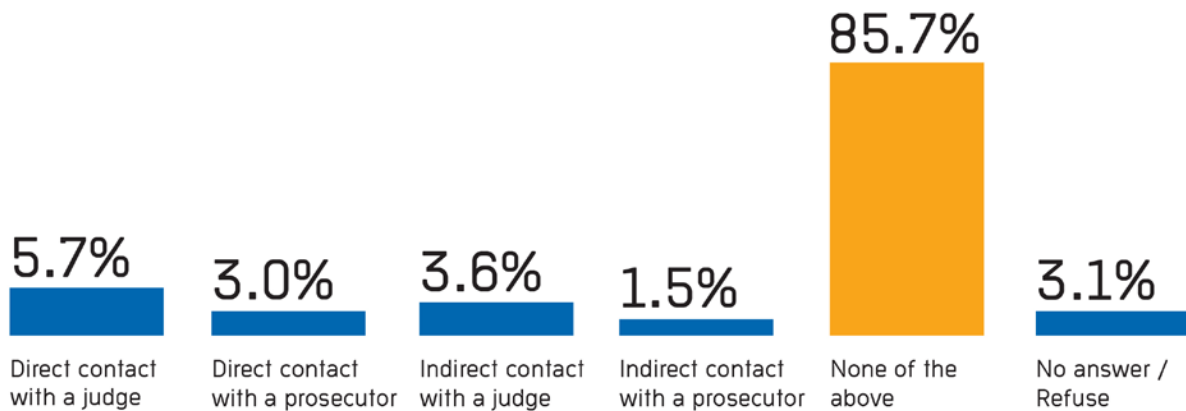
These results correspond with the findings of the UNDP Public Pulse 11⁷, where also central level institutions, the judiciary and healthcare are perceived as most corrupt institutions/sectors. Increase in dissatisfaction with political parties and the Assembly of Kosovo is clearly a reflection of political turmoil witnessed in previous months, which is also ascertained by a decrease in satisfaction with the general political direction in Kosovo.⁸

Measuring the perceived and actual level of corruption through personal experiences was one of the aims of this survey. The survey looked in more detail into personal experiences of respondents in dealing with public institutions in the last 12 months and witnessing corruption first-hand. Describing direct contacts with the judiciary, around 9 % of respondents stated they had direct or indirect contact with a judge, and around 5% said they had contact with a prosecutor during the past 12 months.

⁷ See Table 4: Perceptions of the prevalence of large-scale corruption in national and international institutions in Kosovo, UNDP Public Pulse 11, page 12.

⁸ Ibid, page 5.

Figure 7. Percentage of respondents within last 12 months who had direct or indirect contact with a judge or a prosecutor.



Twenty-three percent of those who had direct contact with a judge, and 33% of those who had indirect contact with a judge claimed to have given gift, goods or extra money; whereas in regard to prosecutors, 15% of those who had direct contact with a prosecutor and 34% of those who had indirect contact a prosecutor claimed to have given a gift, goods or extra money. For both judges and prosecutors, the majority of respondents who stated to have given goods, gifts or extra money have done so only once in the last 12 months, while only a few of them stated that have done it twice in that period.

Figure 9. Percentage of respondents in last 12 months, who gave a gift, any good or some extra money to a judge (with the exclusion of the correct amount of official fees).

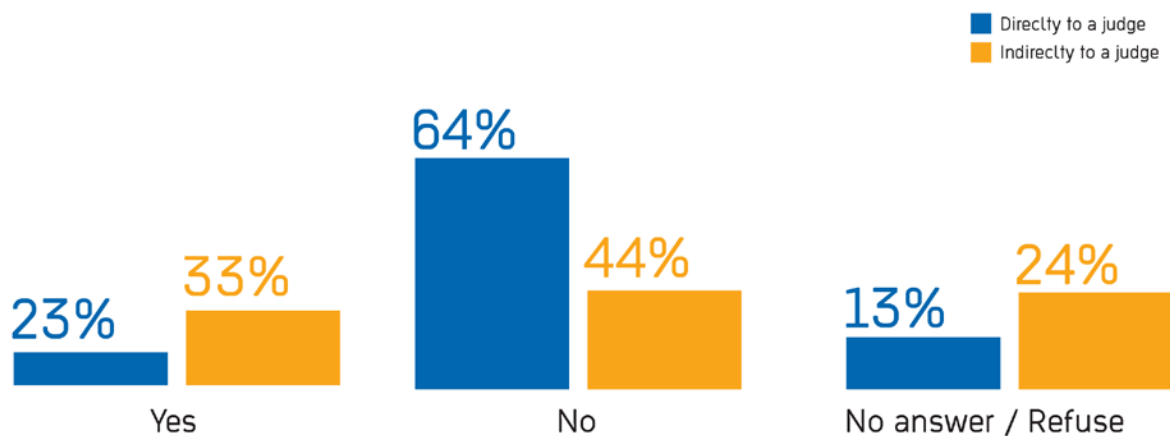
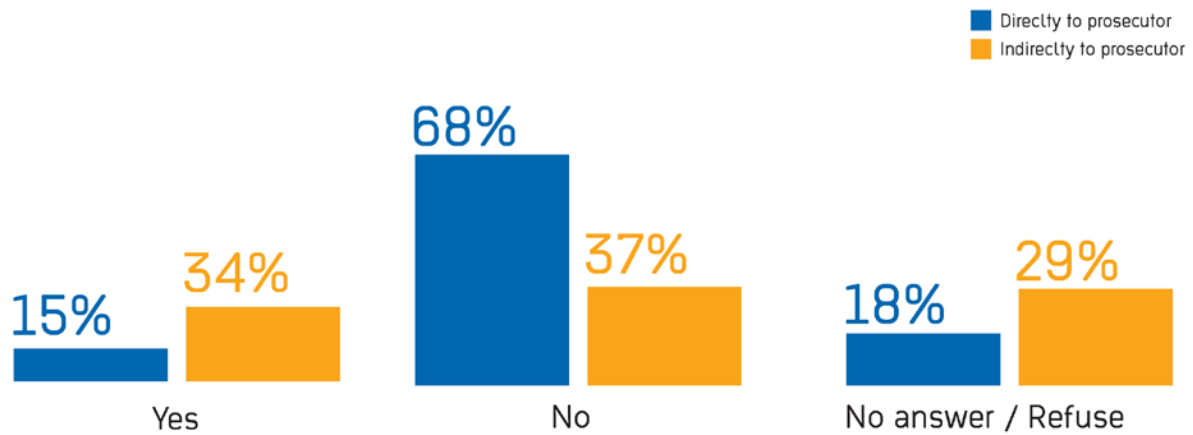
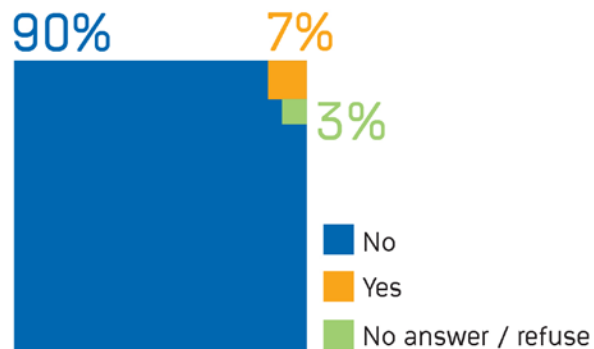


Figure 10. Percentage of respondents in last 12 months, who gave a gift or any good or some extra-money to a prosecutor (with the exclusion of the correct amount of official fees)



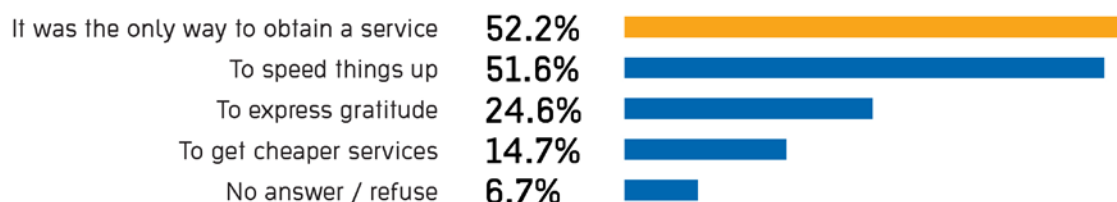
Apart from contact with judges and prosecutors in the last 12 months, around 7% of respondents stated that they had direct contact with court or prosecution administrative staff and one in four of them stated that they had to give a gift, goods or extra money to court or prosecution staff, once or twice over the last 12 months.

Figure 11. Percentage of respondents who have had in the last 12 months to give to staff at courts or prosecution offices a gift, any good or some extra-money (with the exclusion of the correct amount of official fees)



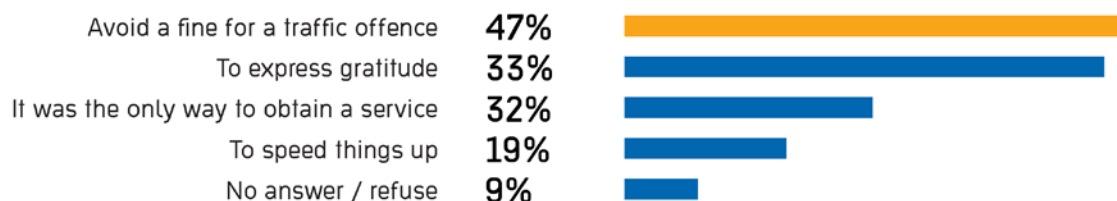
The majority of respondents who claimed to have given extra-money or gifts to court/prosecution office administrative staff, stated that this was done either to obtain a service (52%) or to speed things up (52%). While around 7 % of them refused to provide reasons for giving extra-cash or gifts.

Figure 12. Reasons for paying extra money or giving gifts to court/prosecution office administrative staff



In regard to Kosovo Police, out of 26% of respondents who stated that they have been in a direct contact with the Kosovo Police, only 5% said that they gave a gift, extra-money or some goods. The main reason for giving cash, gifts or goods to police was to avoid a fine for a traffic offence (47%). Other popular reasons were “to express gratitude” (33%) and “it was the only way to obtain a service” (32%).

Figure 13. Reasons for paying extra money or giving gifts to Kosovo Police.

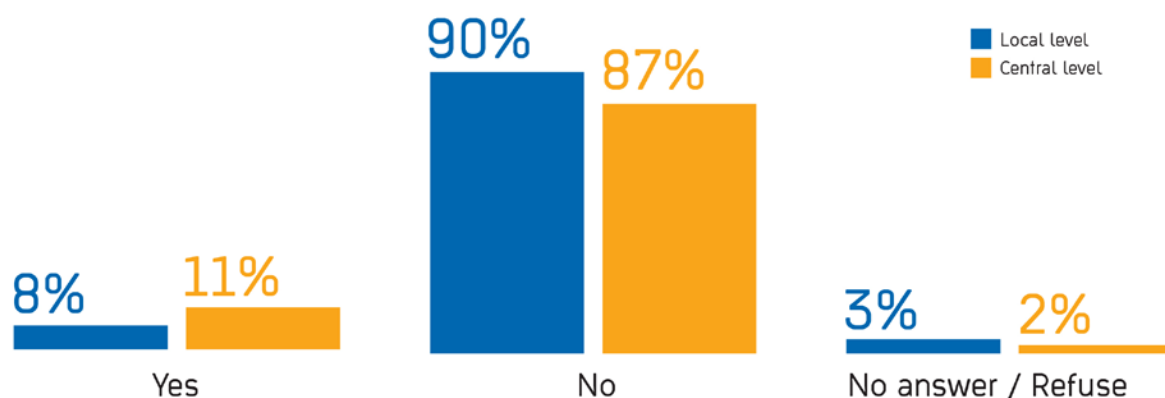


Results for law enforcement agencies show that in regards to the judiciary, a high percentage of perceived corruption is not followed with actual cases of corruption, whereas for the Kosovo Police it only confirms the trend of it being one of the most trusted institutions by the public when it comes to perception and actual reporting of corruption.⁹

Another sector that was discussed with respondents was that of local-level and central-level public administration staff. Around 37% of respondents said they were in direct contact with local-level public administration staff, and 11 % were in contact with central-level public administration staff. When asked if they had to give gifts, goods or extra-money to public administration staff, 8% of those who had contact with local-level staff and 11% of those who had contact with central-level staff said they gave extra cash, gifts or goods to them.

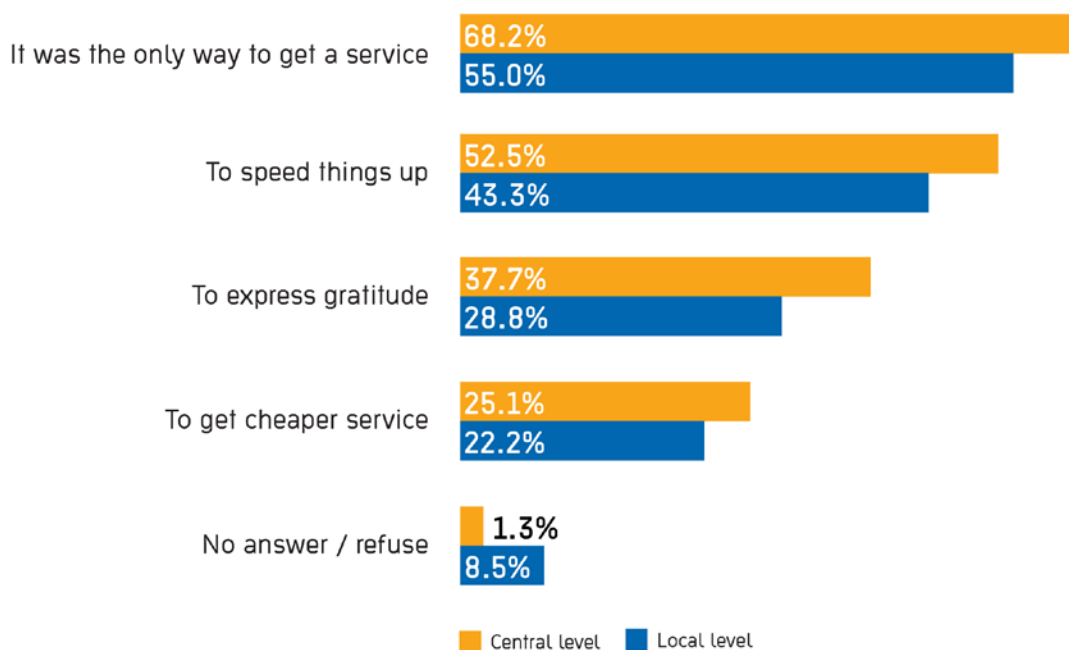
⁹ See, Table 4: Perceptions of the prevalence of large-scale corruption in national and international institutions in Kosovo, UNDP Public Pulse 11, page 12, which contains data from November 2010 to April 2016.

Figure 14. Percentage of respondents who gave a gift, goods or some extra-money to local or central level public administration staff within last 12 months (with the exclusion of the correct amount of official fees).



The two main reasons for giving cash to the local-level and central-level public administration staff were either to obtain a service” (68% central-level; 55% local-level), or to speed things up (53% central-level, 53% local-level). While 9% of those who gave gifts, money, or goods to local-level staff and 1% of those who gave gifts/money/goods to central-level staff refused to provide reasons for doing so.

Figure 15. Reasons for paying extra money or giving gift to local or central level public administration staff.



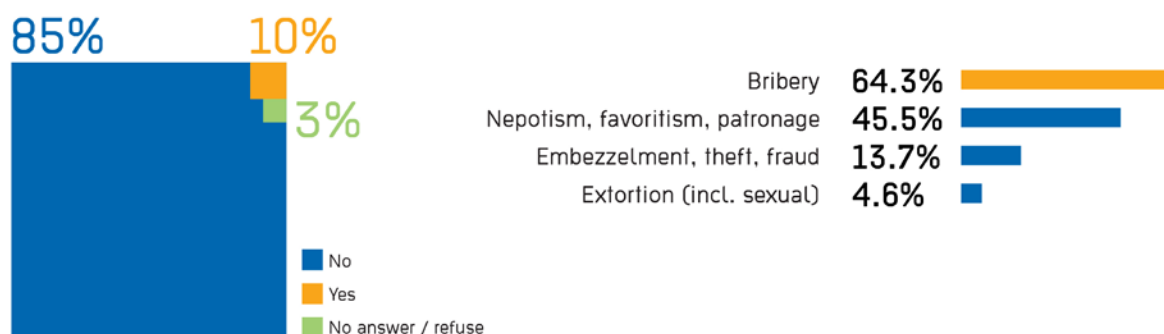
Two specific sectors of interest for the survey, complementary to the work of the UNDP Support to Anti – Corruption Efforts (SAEK) Project, were healthcare and education. In regard to healthcare services, survey results show that the largest percentage of respondents who claimed to have had first-hand experience in corruption by giving extra-money, gifts and goods, belong to this sector. From 61% of respondents that have

had direct contact with medical staff in the last 12 months, 18% of them said they had to give cash, gift or goods to them. Two main reasons for having to give cash, gifts or goods mentioned by respondents were “it was the only way to obtain a service” (55%) and “to speed things up” (53%). In terms of health services, despite the cultural misunderstanding as to what constitutes corruption in some cases, the results confirm the trend ascertained in previous Public Pulse Reports, that healthcare services are perceived as being one of the most corrupt sectors.¹⁰

In regard to the education sector, only 2% (11 respondents) out of 43 % of the respondents who said to have had direct contact with staff of elementary schools, high schools and/or, university claimed to have had to give extra-money, gifts or goods to school/university staff. Four of those who gave it with the purpose to pass or improve grade, three did it to get themselves/family member(s)/friend(s) registered, another three to express gratitude, whereas one of them refused to provide a reason.

The reluctance of citizens to report corruption that they witness in everyday life or workplace was also illustrated by this survey. Asked whether they had witnessed corruption, only 10% of respondents stated to have witnessed corruption. The most common form of witnessed corruption was bribery (64%), followed by nepotism/favouritism/patronage (45%), embezzlement/theft/fraud (14%) and lastly extortion (5%).

Figure 16 & 17. Percentage of respondents witnessing corruption and types of corruption witnessed



However, when it comes to reporting witnessed corruption, only 9% out of 131 respondents who claimed to have witnessed corruption, stated to have reported it, whereas 86% of them said they did not report it and 5% refused to answer the question. 44 % of those who reported corruption reported it to the police, 31% reported it to the municipality office, 13 % reported it to the media, and the same percentage reported it to the Anti-Corruption Agency. The majority of those that claimed to not have reported corruption did it for two reasons: 55% said since it wouldn't make any difference and 19% because they were afraid of the consequences. Around 14% of them said they don't have a particular reason why they did not report the corruption they witnessed, followed by 9% of whom stated that they were not sure where to report corruption, whereas 4% refused to provide an answer.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Figure 18. Institutions where corruption was reported.

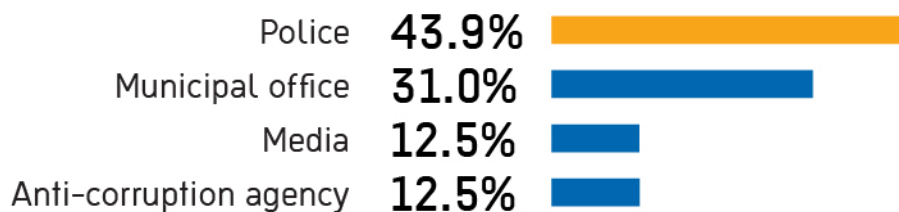
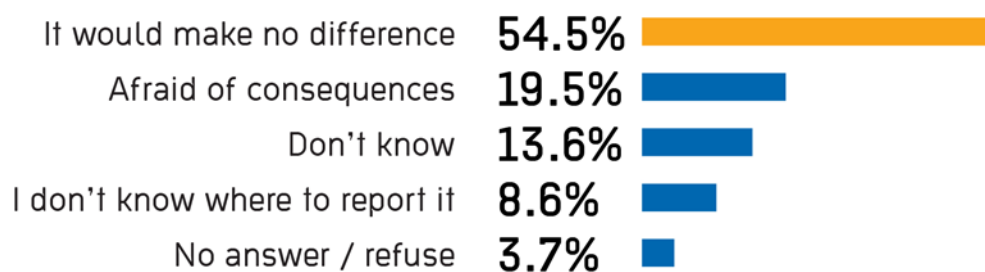


Figure 19. Reasons for not reporting corruption which was witnessed.

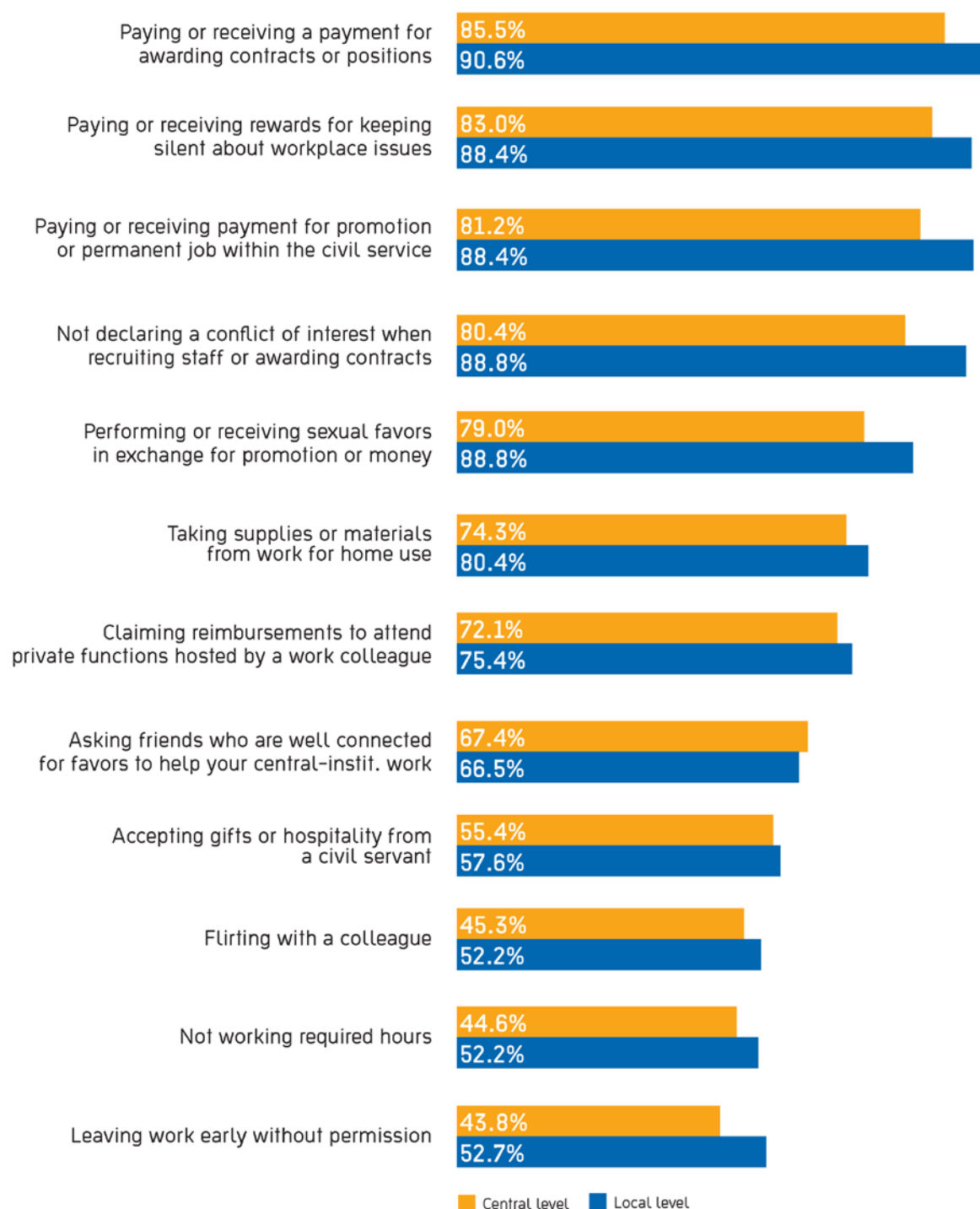


If we consider the general number of respondents to the survey, this means that only 1% of the interviewed respondents, or 9 % of those who have witnessed corruptive acts, actually reported corruption, which shows that there is still distrust in institutions tasked with preventing and combating corruption and that institutional and civil society mechanisms for reporting and addressing corruption need to be further strengthened.

Public sector employees and Corruption

The targeted survey with local and central level public officials firstly aimed to establish what officials consider as corruption within the workplace. The majority of public officials, over 85% of them, responded that the following practices in the workplace are considered as corruptive: paying or receiving a payment for awarding contracts or positions (85.5% of central level and 90.6% of municipal level officials); paying or receiving rewards for keeping silent about workplace issues (83.0% of central level and 88.4% of municipal level officials); paying or receiving payment for a promotion or permanent job within the civil service (81.2% of central level and 88.4% of municipal level officials); and not declaring a conflict of interest when recruiting staff or awarding contracts (80.4% of central level and 88.8% of municipal level officials). In addition, a smaller number of respondents considers that “leaving work early without permission” (43.8% of central level and 52.7% of municipal level officials), “not working required hours” (44.6% of central level and 52.2% of municipal level officials), and “flirting with a colleague” (45.3% of central level and 52.2% of municipal level officials) are corrupt practices.

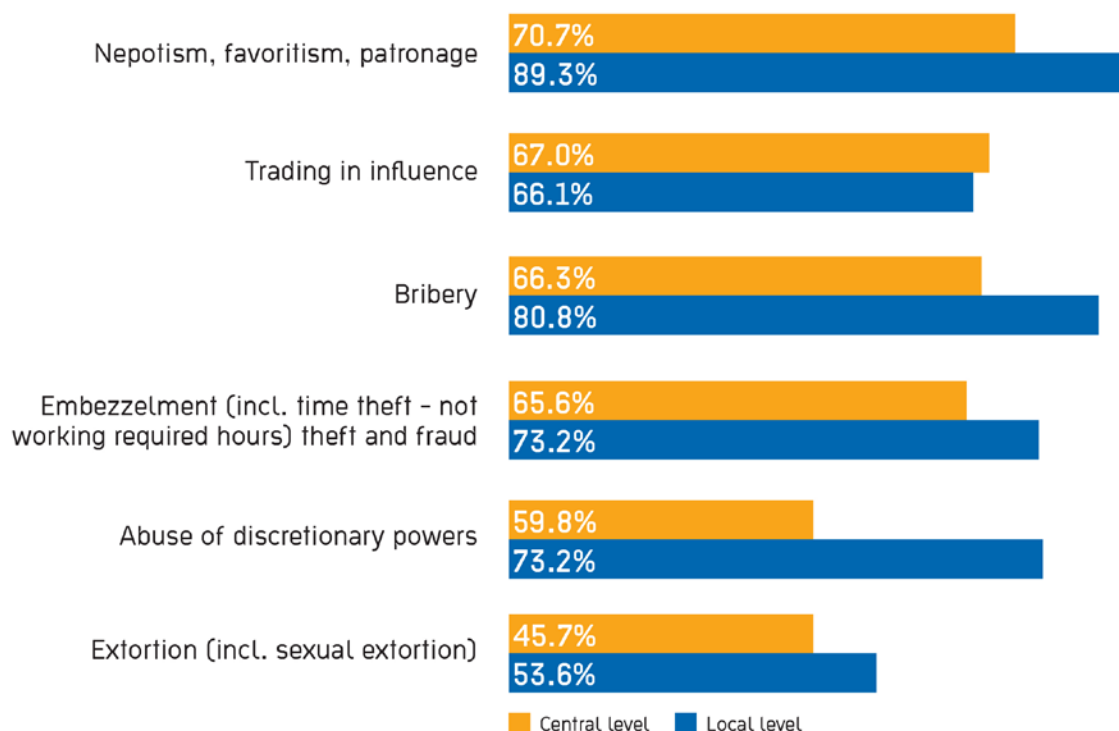
Figure 20. Workplace practices considered as being corruptive



With regard to the widespread forms of corruption across the entire civil service in Kosovo, the majority of officials from both central and municipal level believed that Kosovo's civil service is riddled with "nepotism,

favouritism and patronage”, “trading in influence” and “embezzlement (including time theft not working required hours), theft and fraud.” In relation to the issues of existence of bribery, there is a difference of around 15% between the institutions of municipal and central level; in municipal level institutions, 80.8% of the respondents believe that bribery exists within the civil service, while only 66.3% of those who work in central level institutions believe that bribery exists across the civil service in Kosovo. in relation to the existence of bribery within the civil service. On the other hand, less than half of the respondents believe that “extortion (including sexual extortion)” exists throughout the civil service in Kosovo. This last result is similar to what was reported by UNDP in 2014, where also 46.9% of respondents of the survey considered “extortion (including sexual extortion)” to be a prevalent form of corruption.¹¹

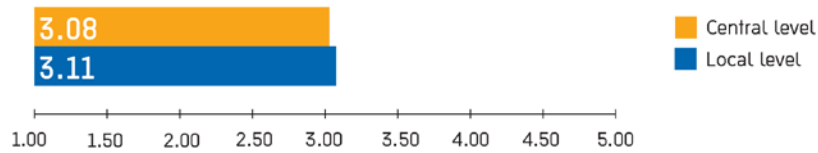
Figure 21. Perceptions on the forms of corruption existing across civil service in Kosovo



In regard to the overall prevalence of corruption in the civil service in Kosovo, similar results are yielded on average in the municipal and central levels. At the municipal level the average is 3.11 whereas on the central level the average is 3.08 ranked on a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 was “not prevalent” and 5 was “very prevalent”.

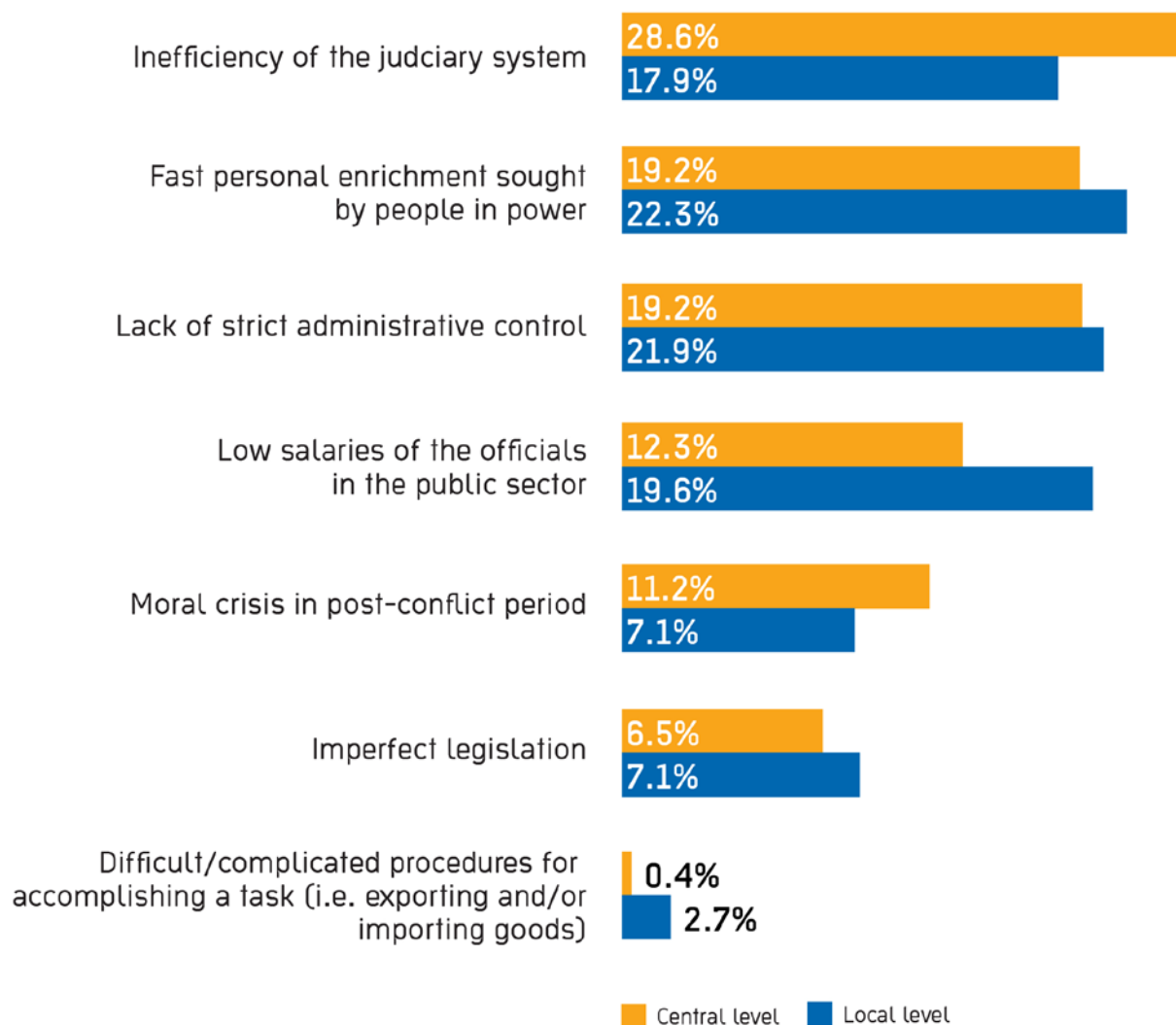
¹¹ UNDP Kosovo Report on “Gender Equality Related Corruption Risks and Vulnerabilities in Civil Service in Kosovo”, page 24.

Figure 22. Prevalence of the corruption is in the civil service in Kosovo



When it comes to the factors causing corruption in the civil service of Kosovo, 28.6% of central level officials chose “inefficiency of the judicial system,” followed by 19.2 % who chose “fast personal enrichment sought by people in power” and 19.2 % of those who believe “lack of strict administrative control.” On the other hand, municipal level officials listed first the fast personal enrichment sought by people in power” (22.3%), “lack of strict administrative control” (21.9%) and “low salaries of the officials in the public sector” (19.6%) as the main factors causing corruption in the civil service of Kosovo.

Figure 23. Most important factors causing corruption in the civil service in Kosovo



A similar trend of reluctance to report corruptive practices, witnessed cases and incitement to corruption was seen with public officials as with the general public. Around 51% of officials from central level institutions and around 49% of officials from municipal level institutions claimed to have witnessed corruption. As seen from the Figure 25 below, the majority of respondents from both institutional levels (40.9% of central and 41.5% of municipal level) have witnessed “nepotism, favouritism and patronage.” On the other hand, a small number of respondents witnessed “extortion (including sexual extortion)” and “bribery” in their workplace. However, even though the number of respondents from both levels is quite high when it comes to witnessing any form corruption in their current workplace, this number is much lower when it comes to reporting any form of corruption, at both levels. As seen in Figure 26, only 28.2% from the central level and 18.3% of officials from the municipal level institutions have reported the corruption they have witnessed.

Figure 24. Percentage of respondents that have witnessed corruption in their workplace

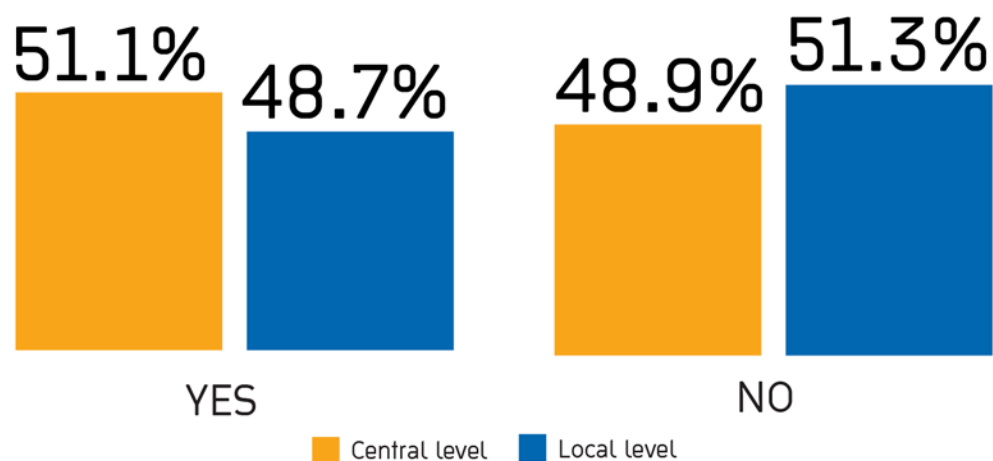


Figure 25. Forms of corruption that respondents have witnessed

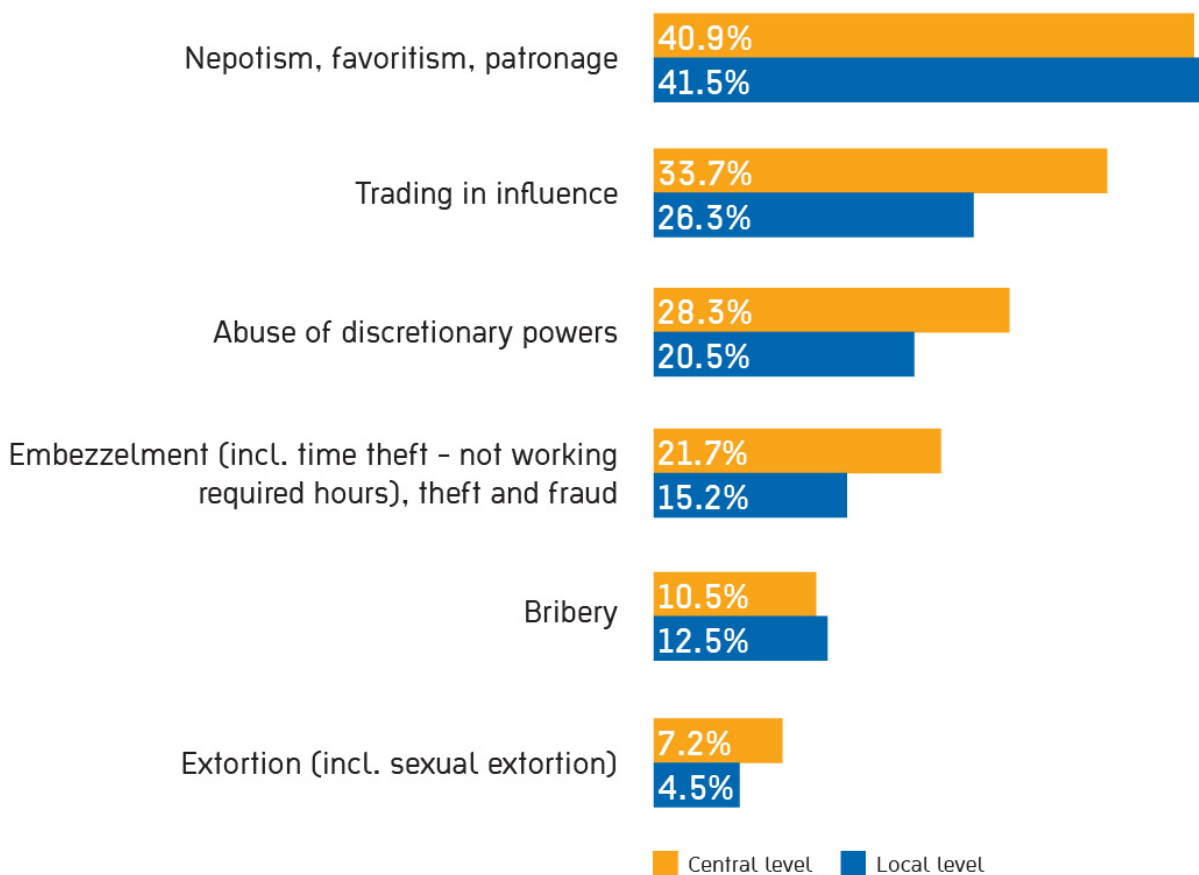
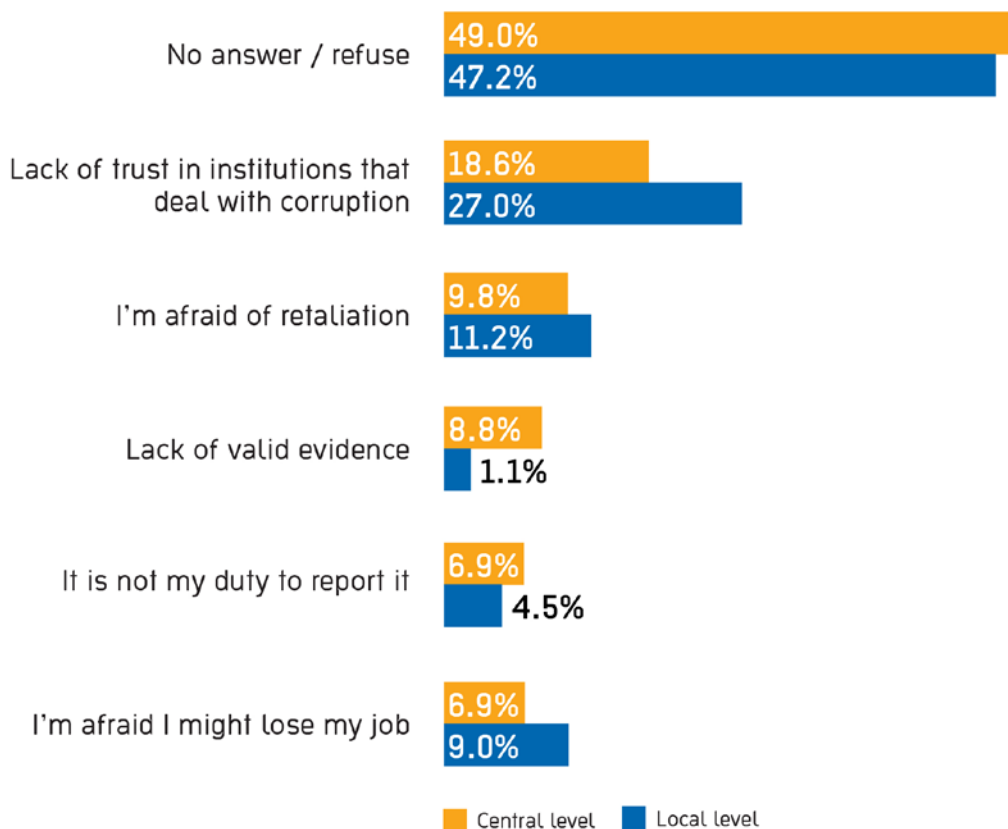


Figure 26. Percentage of respondents that have reported corruption they have witnessed



The majority of the respondents from both levels who did not report corruption, do not provide any reason for this. Among those who did not report corruption, 18% of them declared that they did not report since there is a *lack of trust in institutions that deal with corruption*. There were other reasons as well that have been mentioned by respondents such as “*afraid of retaliation*”, “*lack of valid evidence*”, “*not their duty to report it*”, and “*afraid of losing their jobs*.”

Figure 27. Reasons for not reporting corruption that was witnessed.



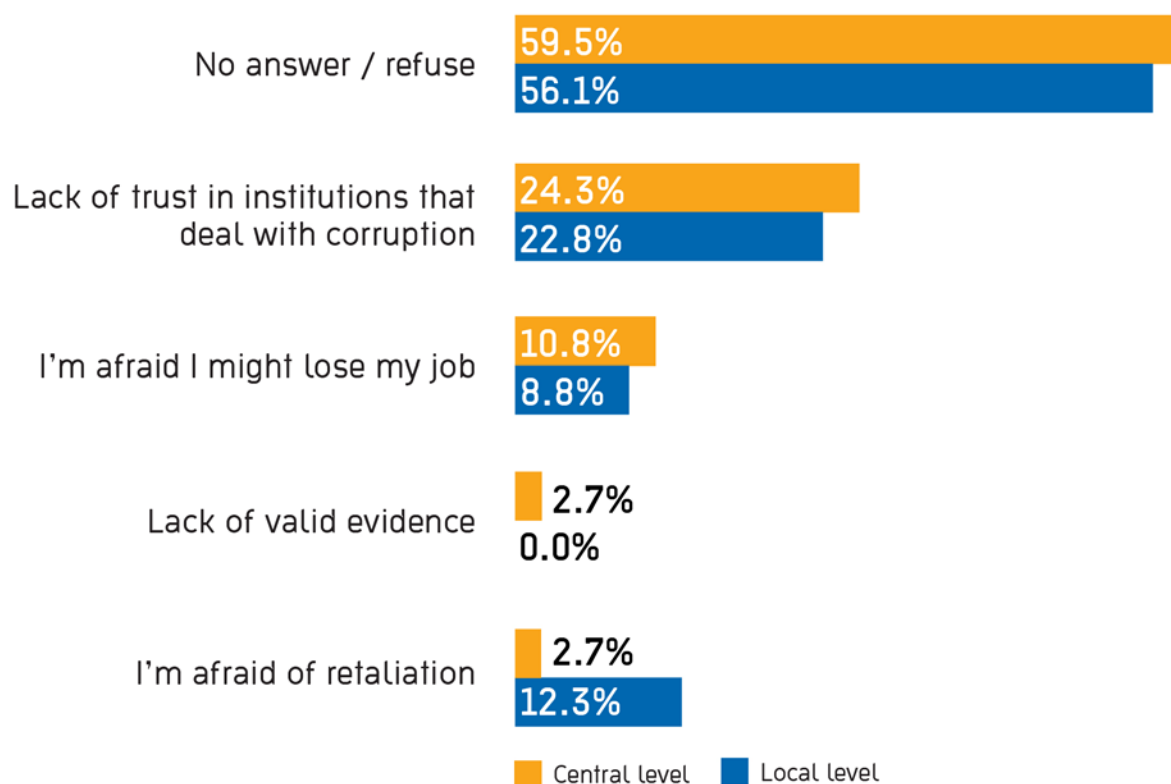
The situation is similar amongst those who were asked to participate in corrupt practices. 31.7% of respondents from the municipal level and 17% of respondents from the central level were asked at some point to

participate in corrupt practices. However, 80% of them stated that they did not report this (59.9% at the central level and 56.1% at the municipal level) and gave no specific reason for this. It is worrying that more than 20% of respondents stated that the reason for non-reporting was the lack of trust in institutions that deal with corruption.

Figure 28. Percentage of those that have not reported corruption they were asked to participate in.



Figure 29. Reasons for not reporting corruption that they were asked to participate in.



Lack of reporting of corruption amongst public officials is a worrying trend, in particular if we take into account the existence of inter-institutional mechanisms to prevent and combat corruption. When asked about how the officials are encouraged to speak out against corruption or a lack of transparency in management, respondents stated that information is available on laws and policies relating to corruption, accountability and good governance equally for men and women employees; gender equality considerations are included in all workplace policies; and that functional workplace grievance mechanisms are established.

In addition, the majority of the respondents stated that they were provided with a list of workplace policies such as the code of conduct, training or professional development opportunities, working hours' policies, recruitment policies and requirements, anti-corruption policies, disciplinary measures, and retirement policies, whereas only 1/3 of the respondents stated that redundancy policies and retrenchment policies have been made available to them during their employment. Figures below present answers to these particular questions.

Figure 30. How does the civil service encourage workers to speak out against corruption or a lack of transparency in management.

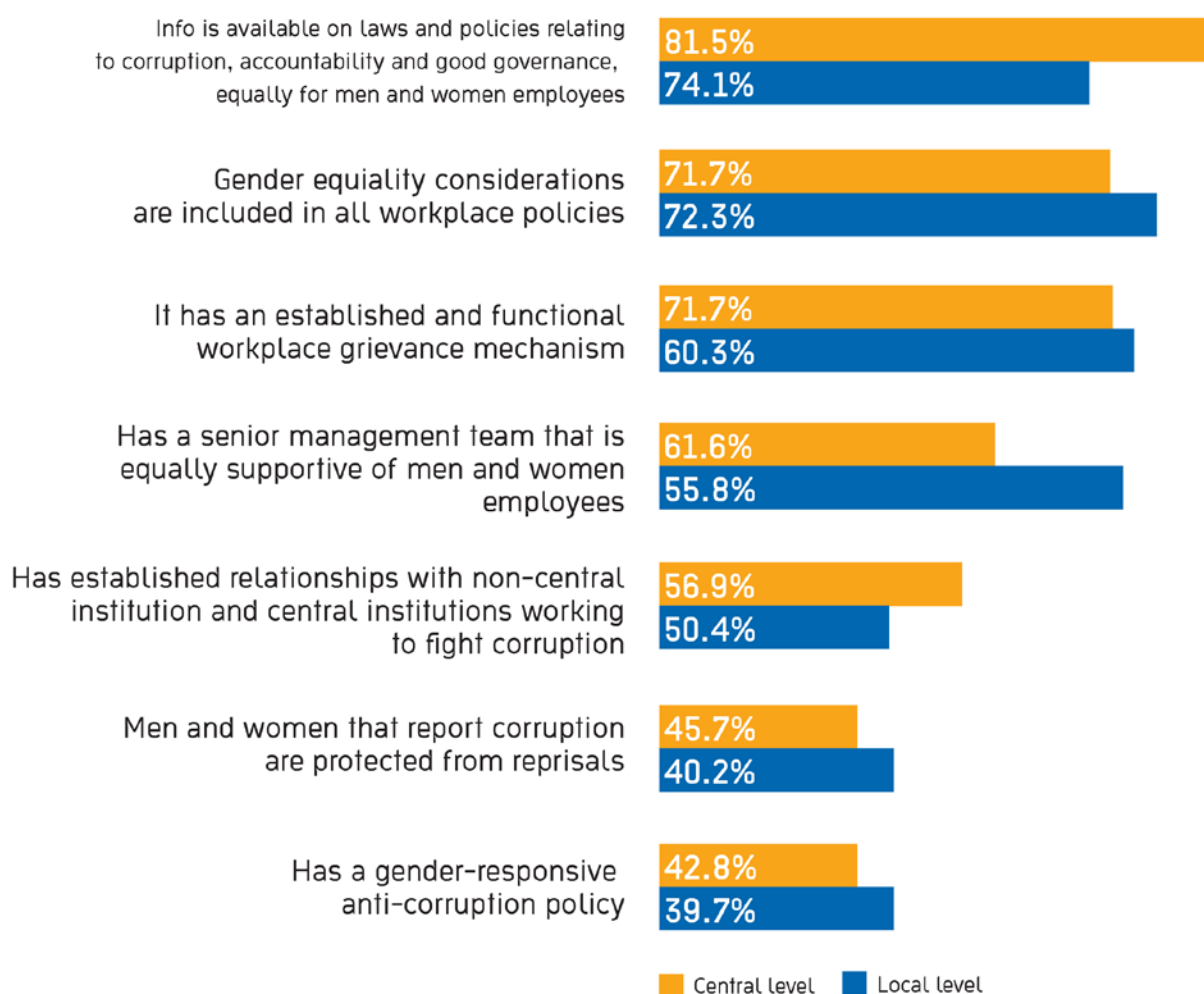
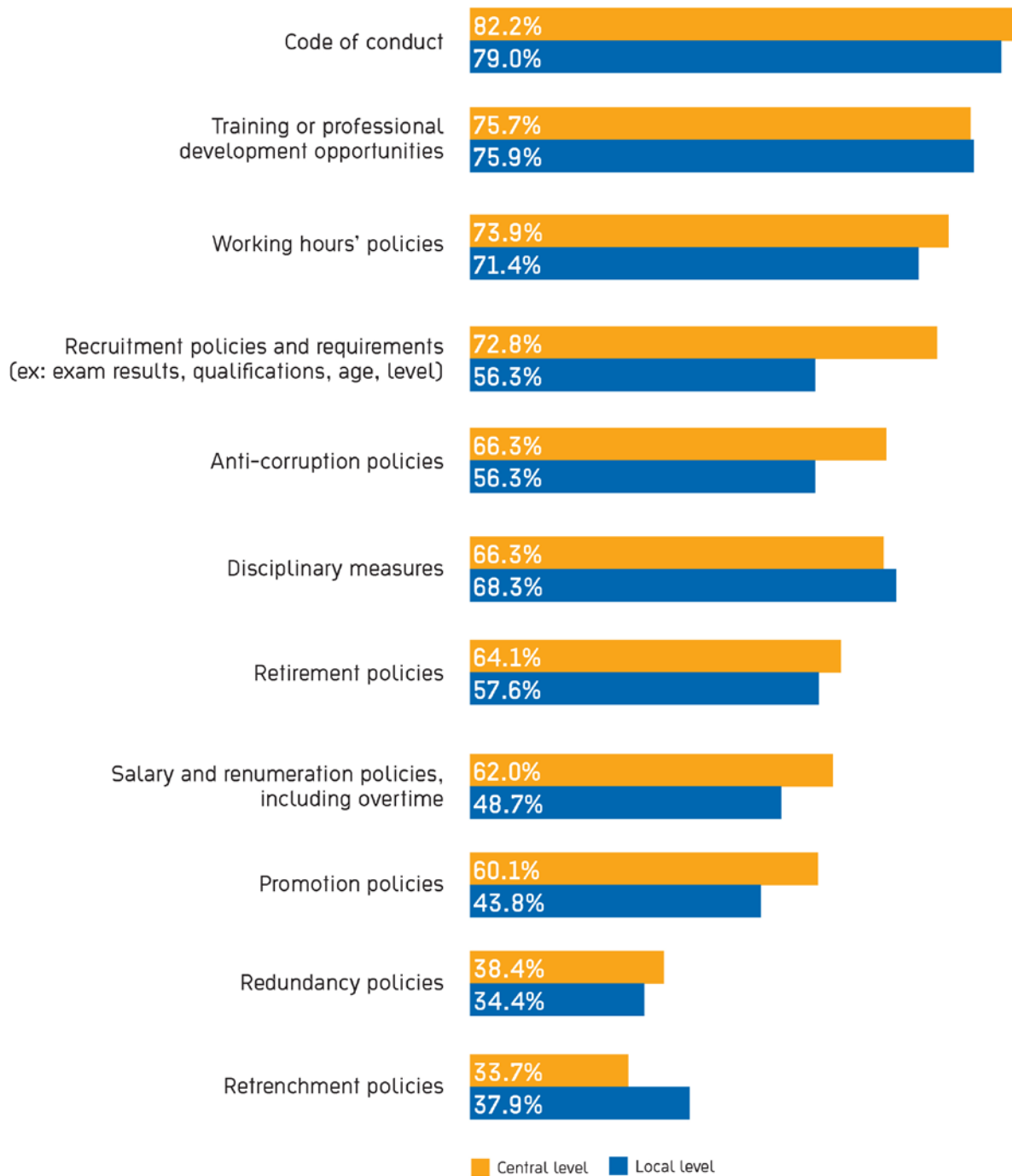


Figure 31. Percentage of those who been given workplace policies related to their employment.



Focus Groups

In order to validate the data from the public opinion poll and interviews with local and central level public officials, four focus groups were conducted, namely with local level public officials, central level public officials, civil society and gender activists.

Main findings of the focus group with civil society

According to participants from civil society, responses on the way the Kosovo is going have been influenced by the events that happened lately such as the mass migration, decrease in employment, political crisis between the position and opposition, inefficiency of courts, etc. Public opinion is also affected very much from the information received from media. If the respondents who were selected randomly for this survey have listened to any bad news, they most probably would give negative answers to this question.

Another factor affecting public opinion which was mentioned from some participants was the status or the actual situation of the respondents at the moment of surveying. According to civil society members, asking an unemployed respondent how things are going in Kosovo, he/she will focus on the employment only; as such he/she will most probably give a negative answer. However, participants of this focus group were not of the opinion that everything in Kosovo is going in the wrong direction. According to them, things in Kosovo are moving in the right direction, although this process is very slow.

In terms of corruption as a major problem in Kosovo, focus groups validated that unemployment and corruption represent two of the most pressing issues; they also identified corruption as an underlying cause for unemployment, poverty, and low economic development.

The majority of focus group participants believed that corruption is more prevalent in the central level institutions, public enterprises, procurement offices, and the justice system. However, results from the quantitative study showed that corruption is more prevalent in “political parties”, “parliament”, “central-level institutions”, and “judiciary.” When asked to comment on these results, three out of ten focus group participants argued that the reason citizens believed that corruption is more prevalent in political parties is related to the fact that the political parties in Kosovo do not have an ideology, are not democratic, and are isolated from the public; as such they reflect this model to public institutions such as Kosovo assembly, central level institutions, and in the justice system. In addition, as one participant stated, political parties have total control over the public enterprises; as such they are directly involved in corruption. Other representatives of the civil society were of the opinion that political parties are directly involved in corruption considering the fact that during the electoral campaigns they are financed by certain businesses which later on appear to be the direct beneficiaries of tenders from public institutions.

Despite differences on the role of the central level institutions versus the law enforcement authorities in fighting corruption, four out of ten participants from the focus group discussion agreed with the results extracted from the poll related to inefficiency of the central level institutions in fighting corruption. They argued that central level institutions have not taken any action to fight corruption and many times has even discouraged this process. According to one participant, the law for prevention on the conflict of interest has been retracted after being sent to the Assembly; hence, this is the best example showing that the central level institutions are impeding the process of fighting corruption.

Main findings of the focus group with gender activists

The majority of participants of this focus group agreed that there is a considerably high level of corruption within the civil service, both at the local and central level institutions. One participant claimed that the two levels of public administration are linked and affect each other to the point where civil servants co-participate in corrupt practices. Another participant stated that the form of corruption that is more prevalent within the civil service of Kosovo is that of nepotism, for example using connections/relatives within the civil service to get things done.

Additionally, gender activists shared their thoughts regarding the prevalence of corruption towards men versus towards women. Most of them agreed that men are more involved in corruptive practices for reasons including willingness and the courage of men to engage in corrupt practices and the higher number of opportunities provided to them due to holding decision-making positions within their workplace. However, a couple of participants stated that women would be as corrupted as men if they held decision-making positions, and that corruption is not associated with gender, or other demographics such as age or ethnicity, etc.

The majority of focus group participants agreed that women are likely to state that there is a higher level of corruption within the civil service. According to them, one of the reasons why women are more likely to believe that there is corruption in Kosovo's civil service is because they are affected more by it than men. As one participant stated, women face many difficulties in their workplace within the civil service. According to her, it's hard for a woman to get a job in the public administration, and it is even harder to maintain that job. Another participant stated that men working in civil service are more prone to be involved in corruption, therefore they reported a lower level of corruption within their workplace.

In regard to prevalent forms of corruption in civil service in Kosovo, the majority of the participants stated that nepotism and bribery are definitely the most prevalent forms of corruption within the civil service. Again, several participants argued that the central-level public administration and the local-level public administration are closely related as usually people transfer from the local level to the central level, depending on the political party governing the country/municipality. According to them, this allows civil servants at both levels to establish cooperation and engage in corrupt practices together. One focus group participant stated that nepotism is more likely to occur at the local level, whereas theft is more prevalent at the central level. Lastly, one of the gender activists participating in the focus group claimed that extortion, and sexual extortion in particular, is more prevalent than reported by civil servants in the quantitative poll.

Participants agreed that the number one factor causing corruption is the inefficiency of the judicial system. According to them, considering the fact that courts are corrupted it opens up the opportunities for others to engage in corruption and for people not to report it as they don't have any institution they can trust to deal with corruption. The majority of the participants agreed that raising the awareness on corruption is important.

In general, the participants agreed that it is men who benefit more from corruption and the lack of transparency. According to them, men hold leadership positions within the civil service, therefore they have more opportunities to engage in corruption. However, when asked if corruption is a gender-exclusive problem, most of them disagreed stating that it is only due to opportunities that men are more involved in corruption.