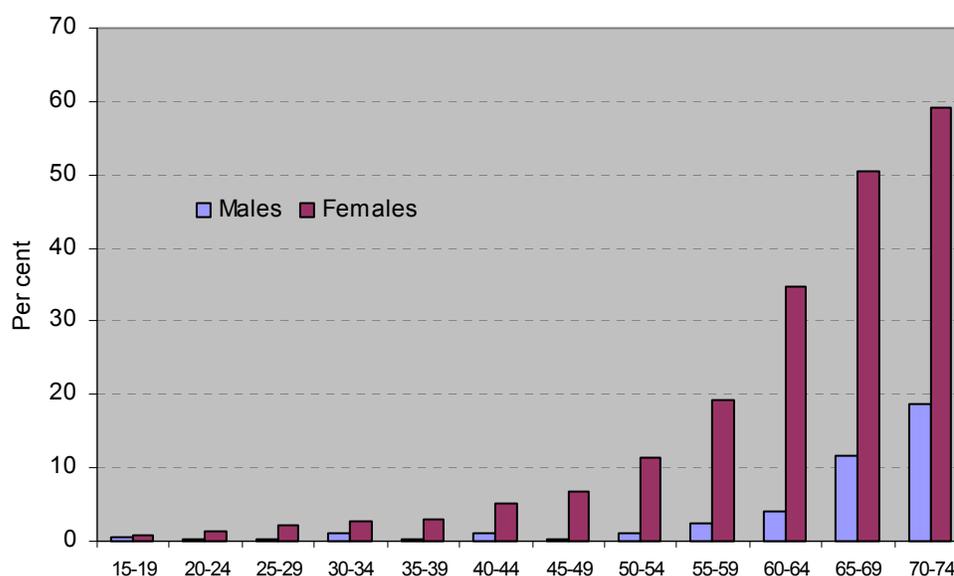


## Literacy in Kosovo

In Kosovo, illiteracy is a gender and age issue. This is clearly shown in the figure below. Illiteracy is low for the male population. Illiterate males exceed 10 per cent only among those over 65 years of age, while the corresponding figures among females exceed 50 per cent. But among the younger cohorts illiteracy is disappearing, and thereby closing the gap between male and female illiteracy rates.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 10.1: Illiteracy Rate by Age and Gender**



Source: Demographic and Socio-economic Survey 1999

According to the Demographic and Socio-economic survey conducted in 1999 on the average, 2.3 per cent of the men and 10.2 per cent of the women age 15 and above are illiterate in Kosovo. As shown above there are great age and gender differences but illiteracy is also a question of where you live. It is typically higher in rural than in urban areas. Almost 14 per cent of the women living in rural areas are defined as illiterate, while the corresponding share of illiterate men is 10 percentage points lower.

**Table 10.1: Illiteracy by Sex and Region, percent**

	Females 15+	Males 15+	Total 15+
Rural	13.7	3.7	8.8
Urban	7.1	1.2	4.3
Total	10.2	2.3	6.5

Source: Demographic and Socio-economic Survey 1999

<sup>1</sup> In the Demographic and Socio-economic Survey in October 1999 there was a question about literacy. The question read: Are you literate? The response alternatives were yes or no. In figure 10.1 and table 10.1 illiteracy is defined as the share that answered no on this question. In the Demographic and Health Survey 2003, the question asked was: Can you read and write? The response alternatives were yes or no. In tables 10.2 and 10.4 illiteracy is defined as the share that answered no to this question.

The Living Standard Measurement Survey (LSMS 2000) unsurprisingly found that illiteracy appears to be concentrated among the oldest cohorts (over 55 years of age) and falls below 5 per cent for the population aged 45 and under. Literacy is in that survey defined as the ability to read, even with difficulty (World Bank (2001)). These trends are shown to be representative of both Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb groups. However a sharp increase in illiteracy among the younger cohorts of the “other ethnic groups” has –according to LSMS 2000- been experienced over the last decade. Having dropped to single digits for the cohorts aged 26-45, illiteracy among these other ethnic groups has risen again very sharply, reaching 22 per cent for the cohort aged 16-17 and about 15 per cent of the cohort aged 18-25.

In the Demographic and Health Survey 2003 (DHS 2003) a question on literacy was asked. The figures in table 10.2 are a little different from table 10.1, but the pattern is the same. That the figures differ is natural depending on the different wording of the question, the different reference time and the sampling errors<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 10.2: Illiteracy by Sex and Region 2003, per cent**

	Females 15+	Males 15+	Total 15+
Rural	13.4	3.8	8.7
Urban	10.4	2.3	6.5
Total	12.5	3.4	8.1

Source: Demographic and Health Survey 2003

According to DHS 2003 92 per cent of the population above 15 years of age is literate. Other surveys show figures of the same magnitude.

**Table 10.3: Mean years of schooling 2003**

	Females 15+	Males 15+	Total 15+
Rural	8.2	10.3	9.3
Urban	9.9	11.2	10.6
Total	8.7	10.6	9.7

Source: Demographic and Health Survey 2003

The pattern is well known, urban males get most education and rural females get the least education.

<sup>2</sup> The generally lower illiteracy rates obtained in 1999 might be due to the broader definition used, resulting of the capturing of some respondents who could read but not write. The UNESCO definition of literacy is a person who can read and write simple sentences with understanding.

**Table 10.4: Illiteracy by Sex and Age 2003, per cent**

Age	Females 15+	Males 15+	Total 15+
15-39	2.7	0.9	1.8
40-64	13.7	1.9	7.7
65-	71.7	25.3	49.9
Total	12.5	3.4	8.1

Source: Demographic and Health Survey 2003

The conclusions are clear. In Kosovo, illiteracy is a gender and age issue, but it is also a question of where you live. Illiteracy is typically higher in rural than in urban areas. Almost 14 per cent of the women living in rural areas are defined as illiterate, while the corresponding share of illiterate men is 10 percentage points lower. Urban males get most education and rural females get the least education.

## References

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