



Partners-Albania,  
Center for Change and Conflict Management



# **ASSESSMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY AT LOCAL LEVEL**

Survey administered in  
municipalities of Kruja and Durrësi

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### Introduction

Although, a special importance was given to the decentralization and community development in Albania in the recent years, there is still limited transparency, accountability and public participation in decision-making processes at local level. The local authorities have taken into consideration only the minimum standards required by the actual legislation to this regard.

Public information and the consultive process is limited. There is a low public participation in the discussion of central government main issues, such as: priority setting, policy and strategy design, services to be offered by the municipality etc.

### Survey objectives

The survey goal was the assessment of services offered by Durrësi and Kruja municipalities. The survey also aimed to identify the real problems with regard to the basic services offered by these local government units, as well as to assist the local elected and the municipality officials to set priorities in planning and implementing projects and investments to improve the services, based on the citizens' opinion.

More in details the survey aimed:

- To assess the services offered by the municipality such as:  
Streets and sewage infrastructure, city cleaning, water supply, situation of green areas, city lighting, based on the citizens' perception;
- To solicit citizens' opinion in order to improve these services;
- To identify citizens' priorities in the area of services;
- To establish a database on the quality of services, based on the citizens' opinion;
- To provide recommendations to the local governments on where to focus their future work and efforts.

### Methodology

The survey was administered through individual interviews, based on a questionnaire drafted and consulted by Partners-Albania staff. The sample consists of 402 questionnaires, 121 administered in Kruja and 281 in Durrësi municipalities. The sample was structured by taking into consideration the number of population in both cities. The interviewees' selection was random.

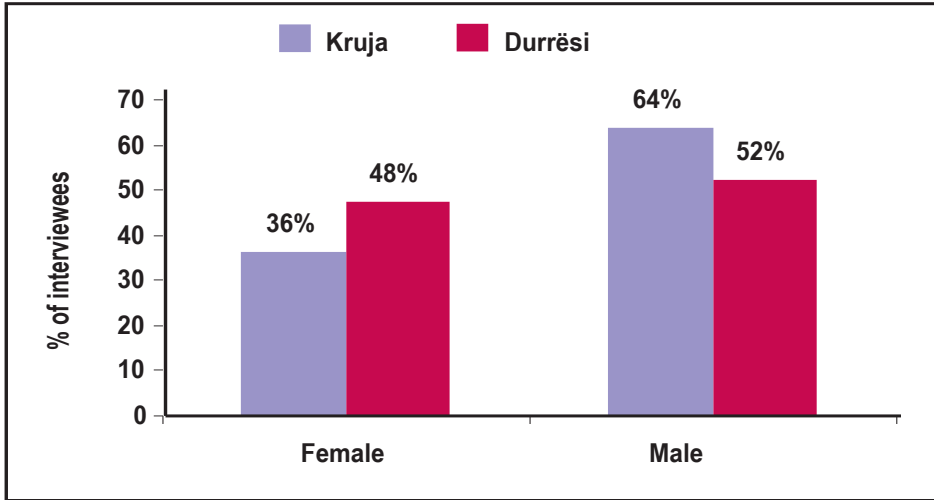
The data collection in field was made by two teams. The team of Kruja consisted of two interviewers while Durrësi team consisted of five interviewers. The interviews took place during July 2008.

The data were elaborated in SPSS program, with a calculation error +\_5.



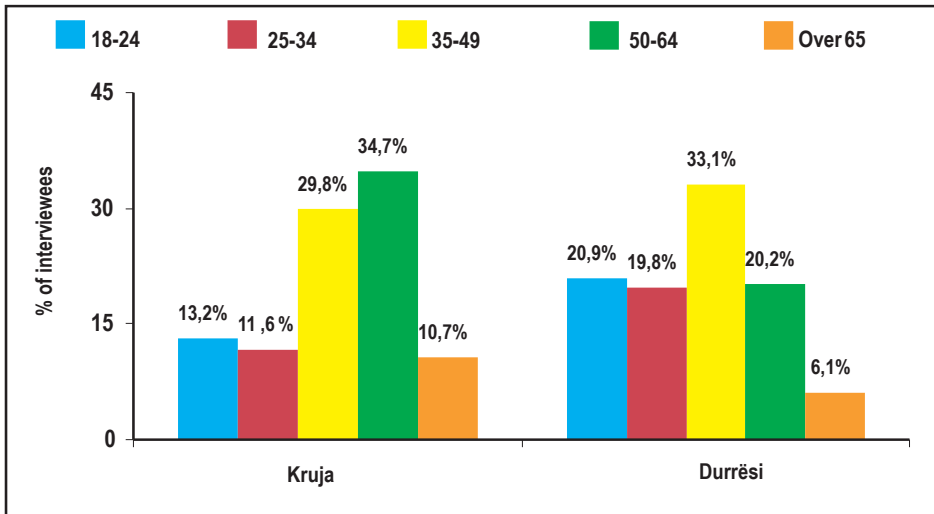


Graphic 1 - Gender



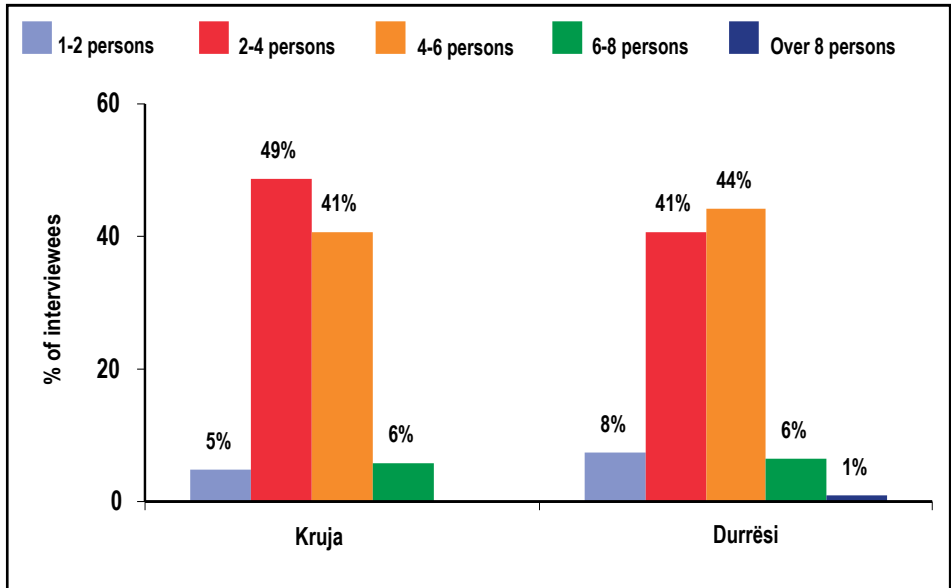
The gender representation rate seems balanced in the case of Durrësi, while in Kruja there is a domination of male interviewees. The random selection method has influenced this representation.

Graphic 2 – Age

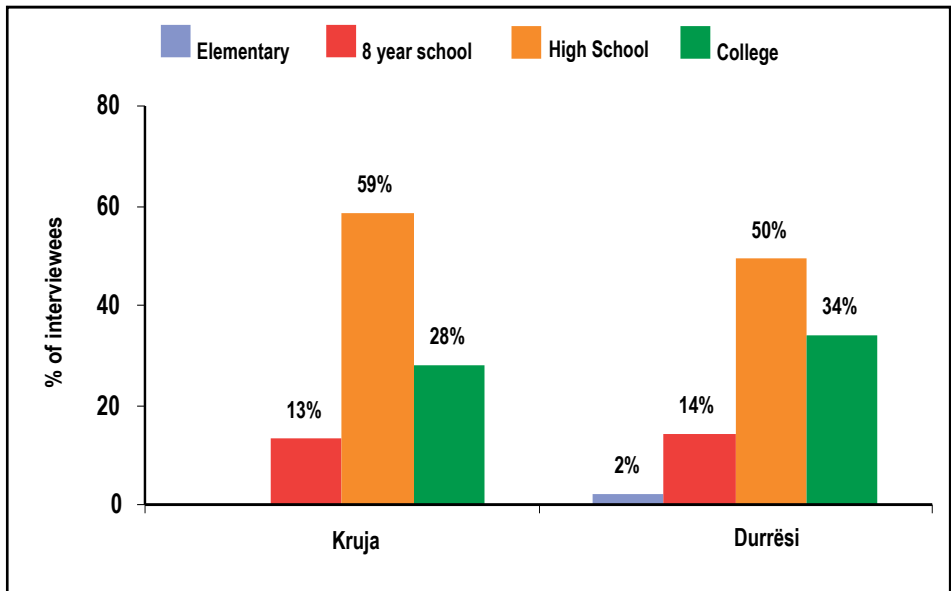


The survey aimed to solicit the opinion of all age groups in both municipalities, but it results that major part of interviewees are from 35-64 years old, the age group which more approaches local government units.

Graphic 3 – Number of family members



Graphic 4 – Education

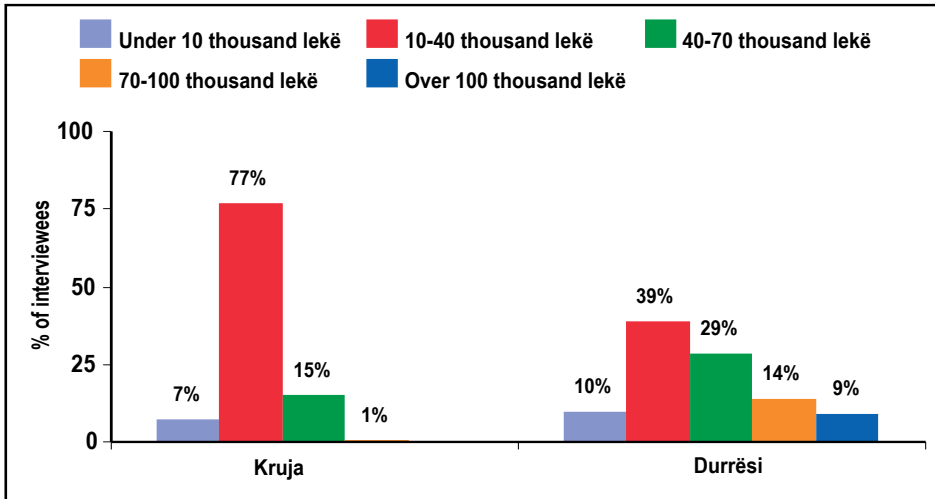


The Graphics 3 and 4 show that the majority of interviewees come from families with 2 to 6 members, while to a considerable degree, interviewees have high school and college education.





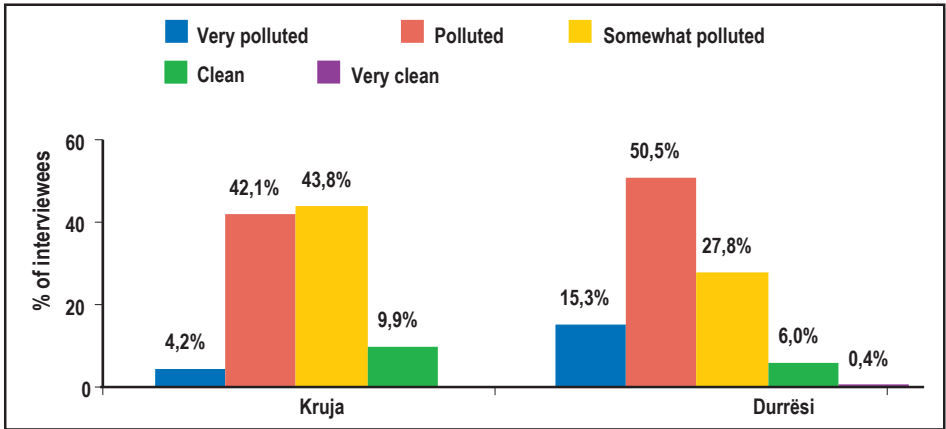
**Graphic 5 – Monthly income**



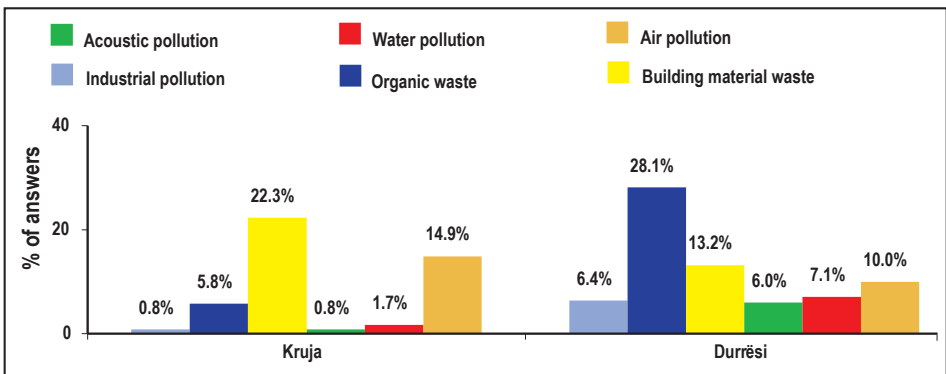
The sample is represented by a rich variety of social groups with different level of monthly income, as shown in the above graphic.



## Graphic 6 – Environmental situation



## Graphic 7 – Types of pollution (n=56, 199)

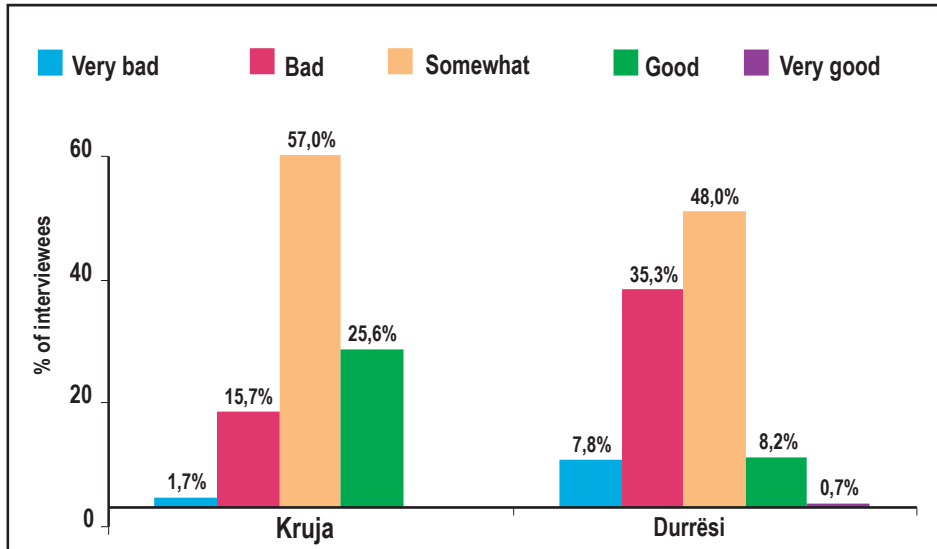


In general, the evaluation on the environmental situation in respective cities is negative, evidencing as main forms of pollution the construction waste and air pollution in Kruja, and acoustic pollution and biological waste in Durrësi.

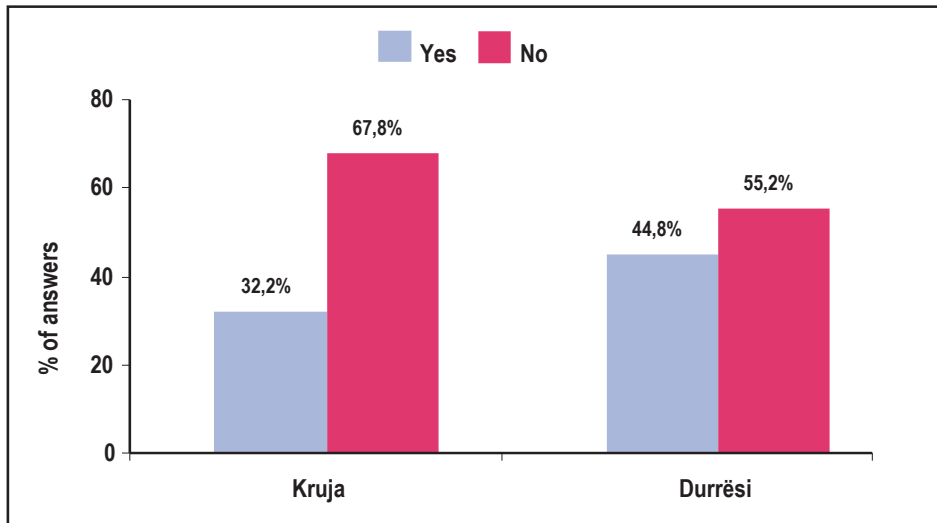




Graphic 8 – Quality of street cleaning



Graphic 9 – Citizens' willingness to pay higher cleaning tariffs (n=121, 218)



The majority of interviewees especially in Kruja, evaluate the quality of street cleaning as moderately good. Based on this opinion they do not consider it necessary and are not committed to pay higher than the actual tariff for their city cleaning service.

### Recommendations

The citizens' negative evaluation of the environmental situation in respective cities should draw the attention of responsible department in both municipalities, as well as the Regional Environmental Agency that operates in Durrësi.

The environmental situation in both municipalities presents problems requiring immediate and long-term intervention to change the current situation. Municipalities should develop intervention plans and should allocate necessary funds in the municipality budgets for activities which would improve the situation in the problematic areas identified. Municipalities should initiate and support more projects that would help improve the environmental situation in both cities. Despite the local sources, they may use central government and other sources (donors, business community etc.) to improve the quality of environment.

In order to improve the city cleaning, standards for this service need to be reviewed and the enterprises which provide this service should comply with these new standards. In addition, more work should be done toward raising citizens' awareness on their contribution towards improvement of city cleaning, through payment of municipal tariffs for this service. The responsible departments in both municipalities can set new standards, which would require higher tariffs, as well as organize community awareness campaigns on this regard.

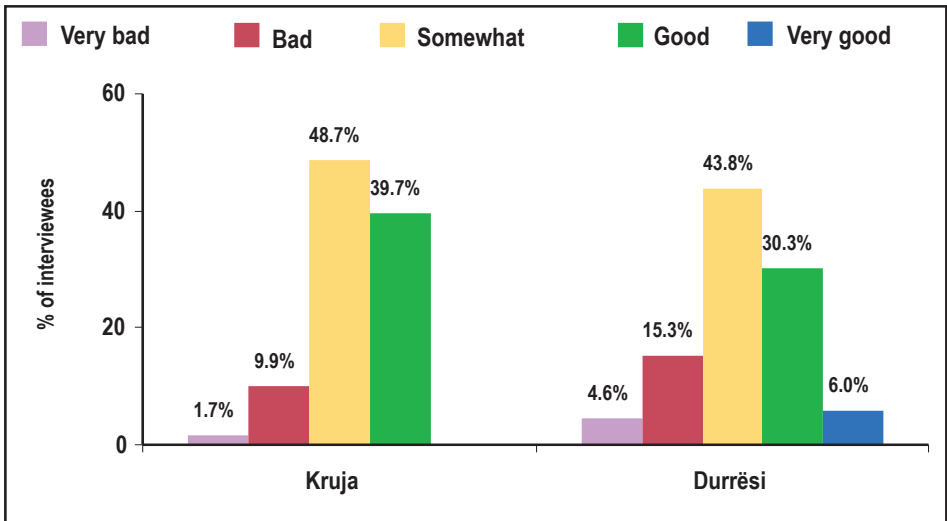




## Assessment of Service Quality at Local Level

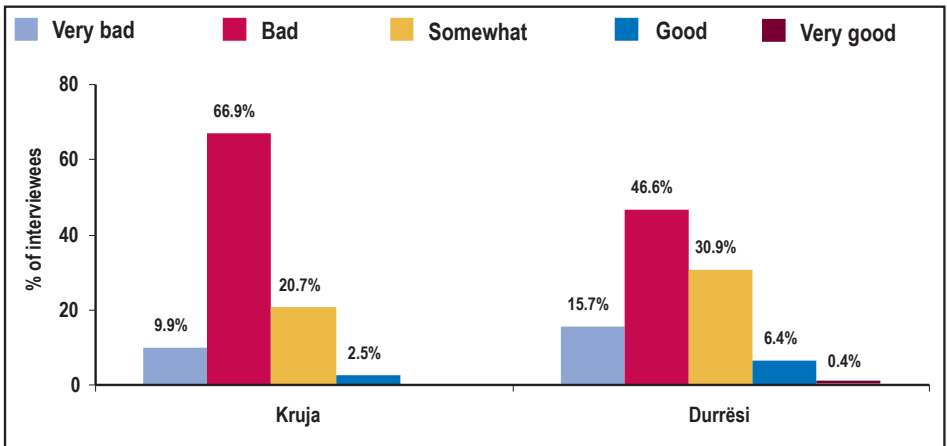
## II. City Infrastructure

Graphic 10 - Situation of main streets and boulevards



In both municipalities, especially in Durrësi, the majority of interviewed citizens evaluate positively the situation of main streets and boulevards in their city.

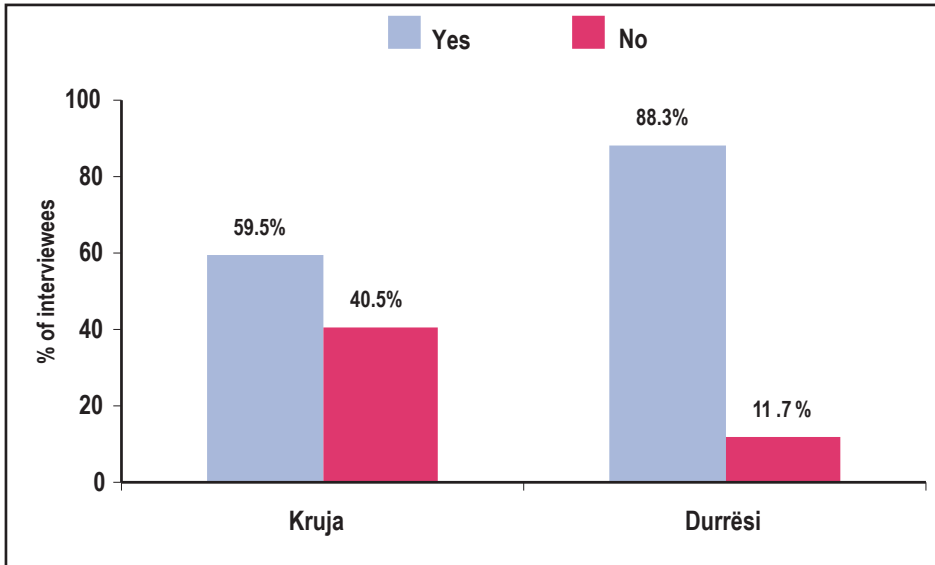
Graphic 11 - Situation of secondary streets



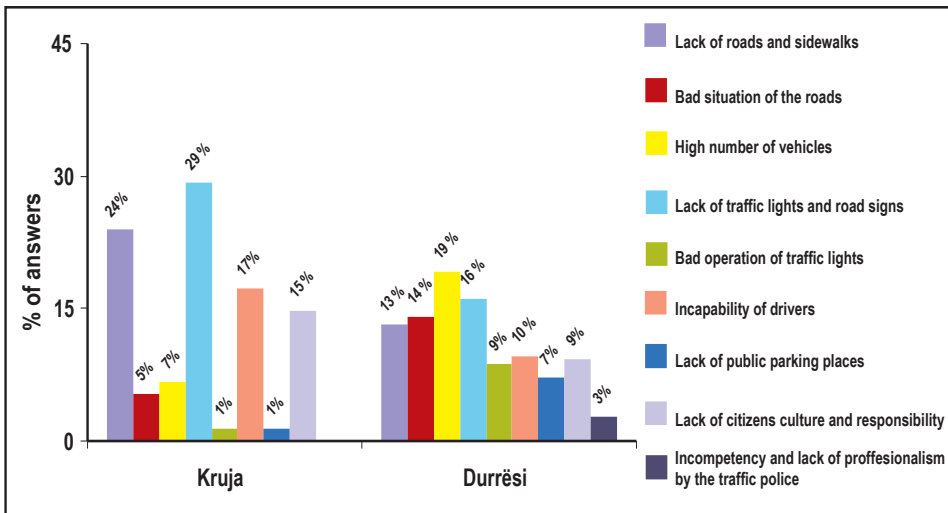
Their opinion is different related to the situation in the secondary streets of respective cities. Majority of interviewees evaluate the situation as bad and very bad.

The above mentioned results highlight the municipality's work to improve the infrastructure in the main streets and boulevards of the city, but also problems identified in some neighborhoods and especially in the suburb area.

Graphic 12 – Is traffic a concern to the citizens?



Graphic 13 – Main causes of traffic (n= 75,250)

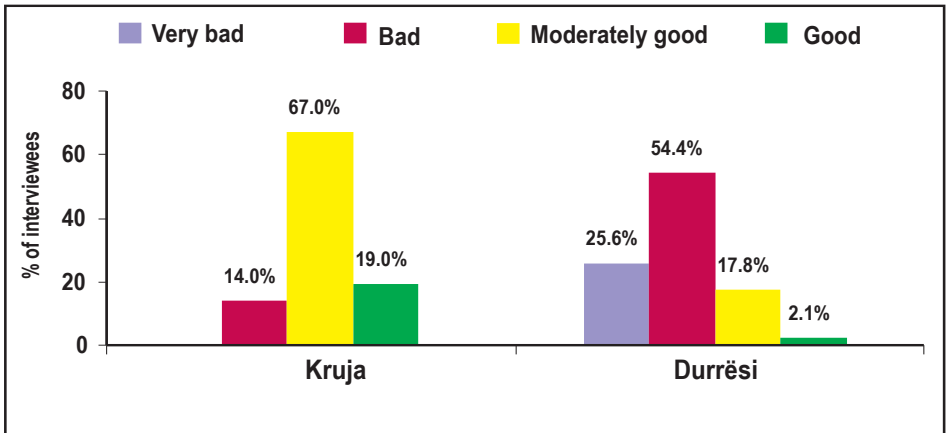


The survey shows that traffic is a main concern to the citizens in both municipalities, but mostly in Durrësi. This might have resulted by the period in which the survey was administered, during which Durrësi was populated by a large number of tourists.

Among the main causes mentioned by the citizens for the heavy traffic are: lack of traffic signs, lack of streets and sidewalks, bad conditions of streets, large number of vehicles (in Durrësi) etc.

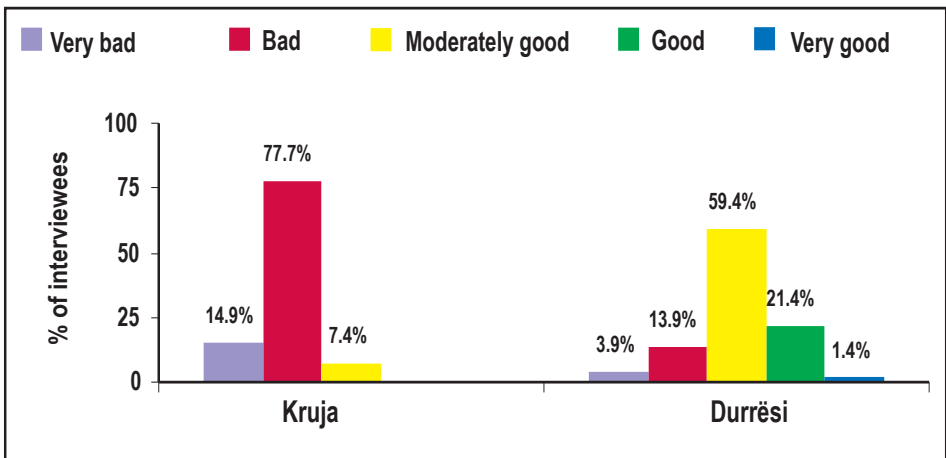
## II. City Infrastructure

Graphic 14 – Situation of sewage system



The situation of sewage system in Durrësi appears to be very problematic, evaluated by a high percentage of interviewed citizens as bad and very bad. The aged sewage system affects the quality of streets and the environment around the apartment blocks. In Kruja city, the situation in this regard is more positive, possibly due to the geographical position of this city and the lower number of constructions.

Graphic 15 – Situation of public lighting



The survey shows a very different situation regarding the public lighting. The citizens in Durrësi evaluate this service as moderately good and/or good, while in Kruja the quality of this service is not good. 92.6% of interviewed citizens in this city evaluate the situation of public lighting as bad and/or very bad. Taking into consideration this concern, Kruja municipality has foreseen on 2008 investments to improve the service.





## **Recommendations**

Both municipalities should design a plan to improve the infrastructure of the secondary streets. More investments should be allocated to address infrastructure concerns within apartment blocks.

During the discussion of survey findings in round tables with municipal officials, it was evidenced that both municipalities have projects in place for investments inside the apartment blocks, to be implemented in 2009.

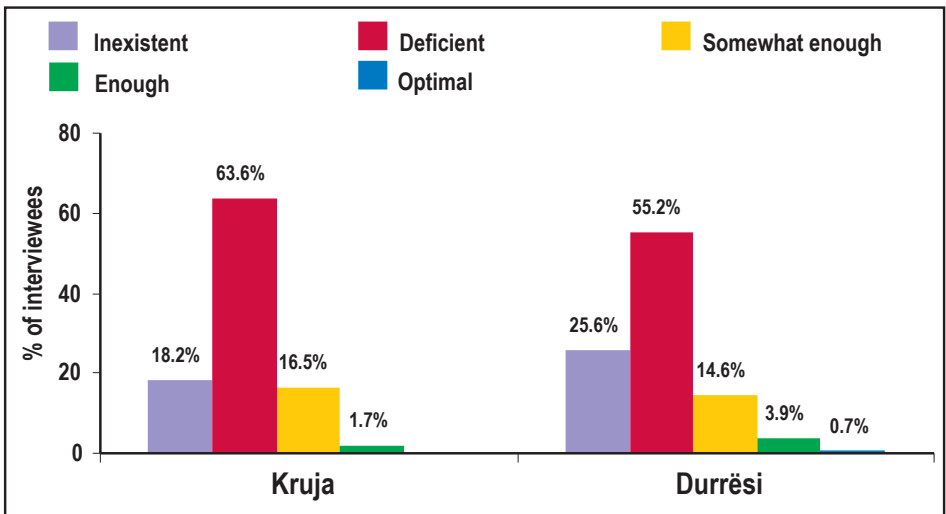
Municipalities should plan investments to improve traffic signs, roads and sidewalks in order to minimize the main causes of traffic in respective cities.

Municipalities, especially Durrësi, should plan immediate interventions in sewage system based on the problems identified in different parts of the city, prioritizing those areas where this problem is more evident and is becoming a source for spread of infections and diseases.

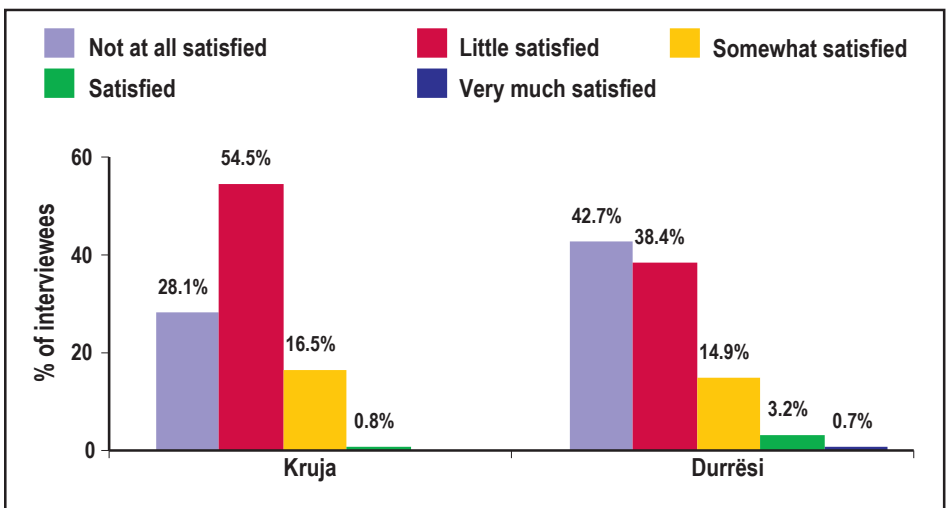


### III. Green Areas

Graphic 16 – Situation of public parks and green environments



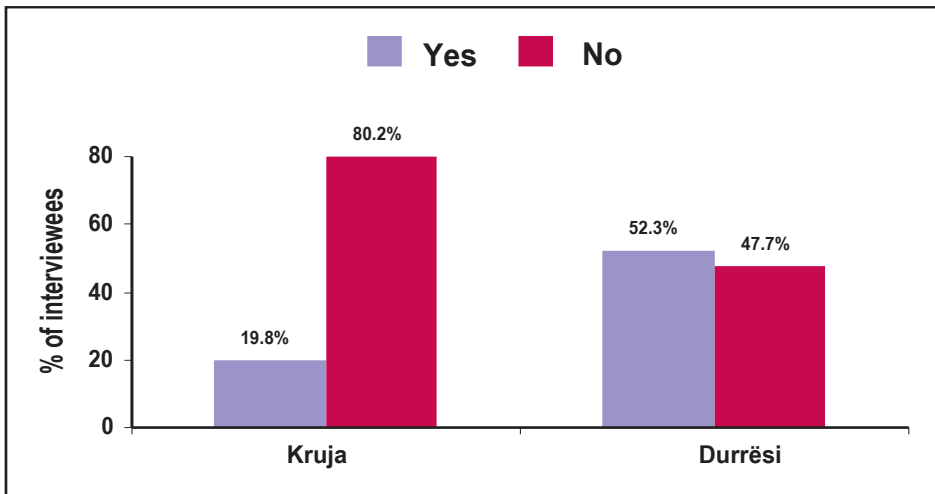
Graphic 17 – Citizens' satisfaction with situation of green areas in their city



Majority of citizens in both municipalities are of the opinion that their city lacks green areas or they do not satisfy citizens' needs. This has led to a lack of satisfaction for this municipal service. The citizens' opinion on the shortage of green areas raises again the concern on the level of pollution. The green environment is considered as one of the factors that influences the reduction of air pollution, which is a concern in both municipalities.



Graphic 18 – Citizens’ willingness to pay a higher “green” tariff



In Kruja city, where citizens evaluation about green areas is more moderate, they are not committed to pay a higher tariff which would help increase the green space, while in Durrësi there is a higher willingness in this regard.

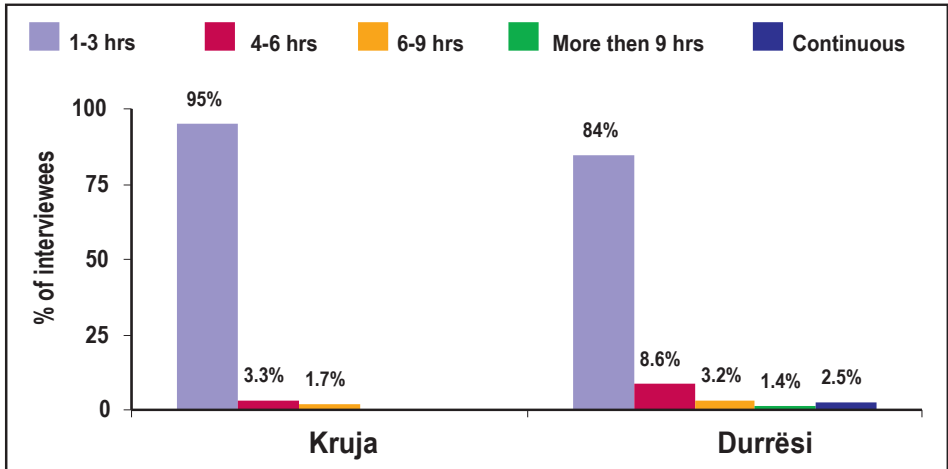
Besides the reasons mentioned above, the citizens’ reaction might be caused by the damage made by some businesses to the green area surrounding the city, disappearing a large amount of green space.

### Recommendations

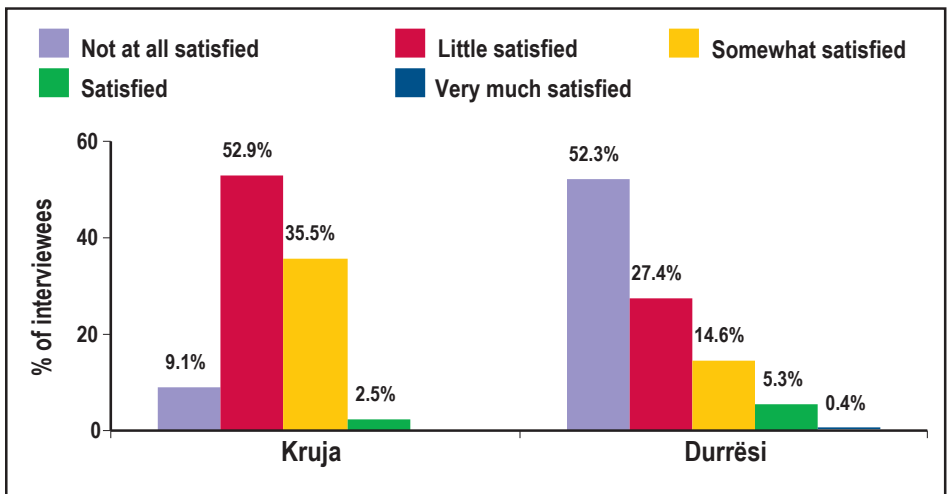
The respective departments in both municipalities should plan specific programs and ways to improve the quality of environment in their city. Besides the funds generated through municipal tariff, more private - public partnership initiatives should take place.

The water supply does not meet expectations of citizens in both municipalities (Graphic 19). The situation is very problematic considering that the water supply is one of most vital needs. Citizens are not at all satisfied with the water supply, especially in Durrësi.

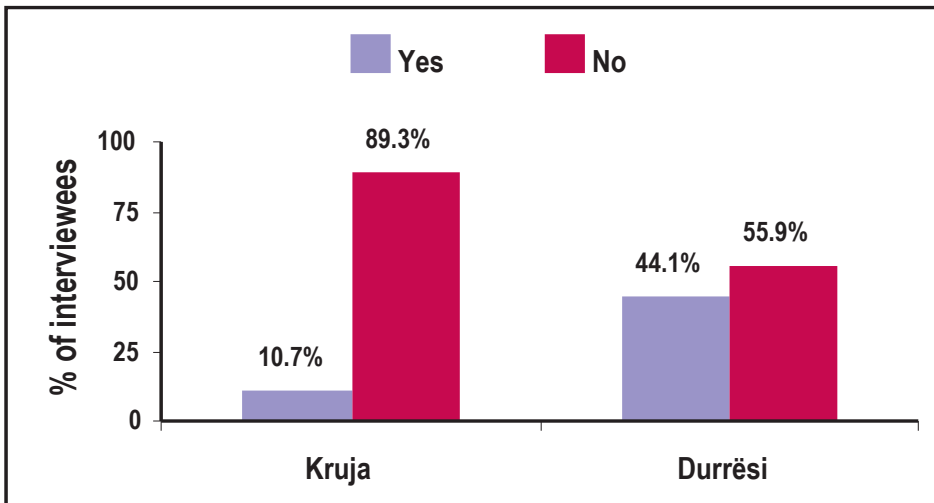
**Graphic 19 - Situation of daily water supply**



**Graphic 20 - Citizens' satisfaction with water supply**



**Graphic 21 – Citizens’ willingness to pay higher tariffs for water supply**



Citizens’ dissatisfaction with this service is clearly demonstrated in their lack of willingness to pay higher than the actual tariffs in order to receive a better service.

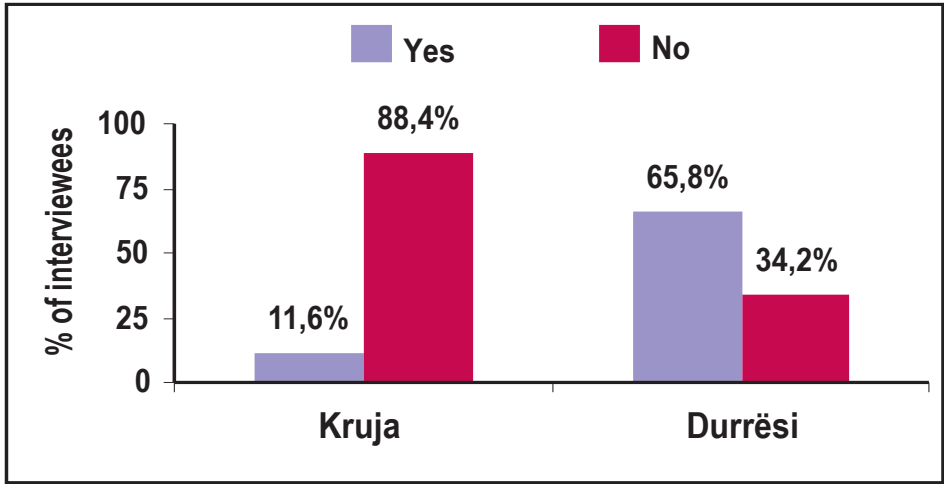
In both municipalities, the water and sanitation enterprises are not under the local government management. In the framework of decentralization reforms, these enterprises will become a responsibility of local government. This transition is expected to be problematic.

### **Recommendations**

The water supply does not meet the citizens’ needs. The municipalities should evidence the reasons for such situation through conducting a field survey. They should draft concrete action plans to improve the current situation, plan larger investments in this regard, in cooperation with the central government.

Municipalities should cooperate with the water supply enterprises, to explore new ways and possibilities to improve this service through a more efficient management. This cooperation would make the relationship between citizens and municipality easier, at the time when this service will be managed by the municipality.

Graphic 22 – Use of public transportation



Public transportation is a service offered only to Durrësi citizens, in Kruja this service is used mainly by private education institutions.

The survey shows that 64% of the citizens that use this service are not satisfied and they are not willing to pay a higher tariff for public transportation (71% of the citizens using this service do not agree to pay a higher tariff).

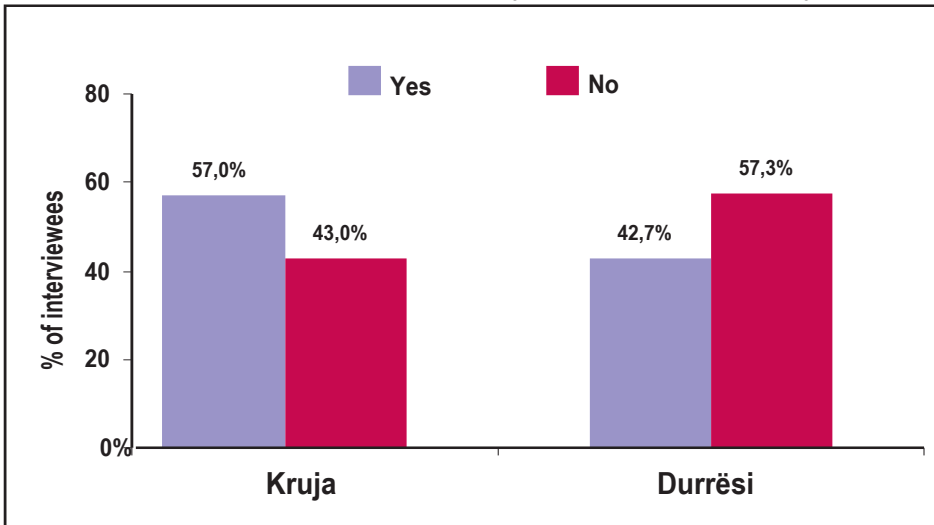
Based on these results the municipality should monitor in field the quality of this service and set conditions and sanctions to the companies offering this service.



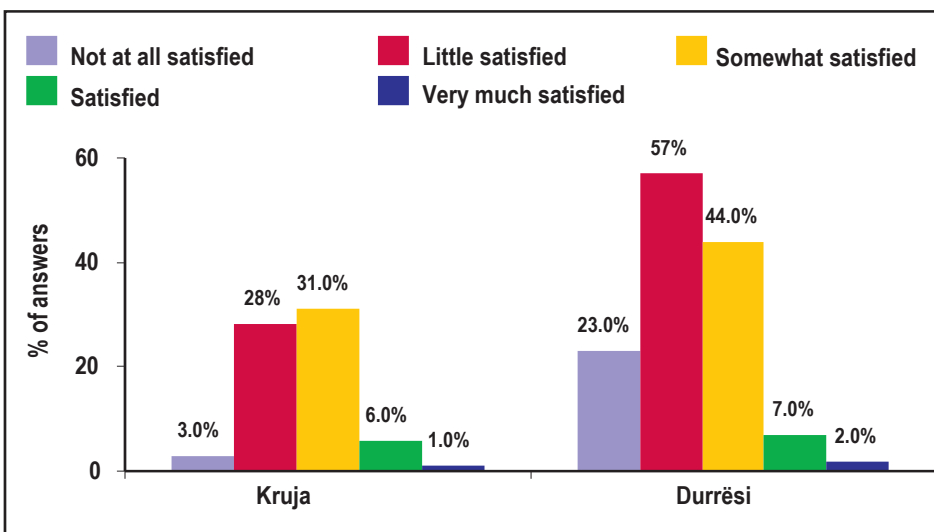


The role of local government units in offering social services is increased in these recent years. In framework of the decentralization reform, municipalities have gained more competencies and offer a wide range of services for vulnerable groups, elderly, youth and women. The level of information that citizens have regarding these services, differs in respective municipalities (Graphic 23). A large percentage of the interviewed citizens declare lack of information on their side.

**Graphic 23 – Are citizens informed regarding the social services offered by their municipality**



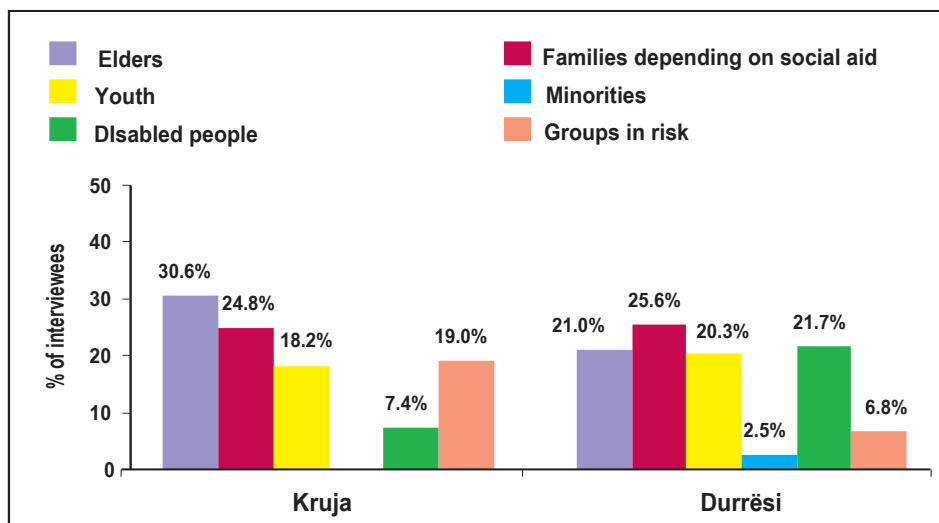
**Graphic 24 – Citizens' satisfaction with the quality of social services**



## VI. Social Services

The quality of services offered, is evaluated by the interviewed citizens as average with a tendency toward dissatisfaction (Graphic 24).

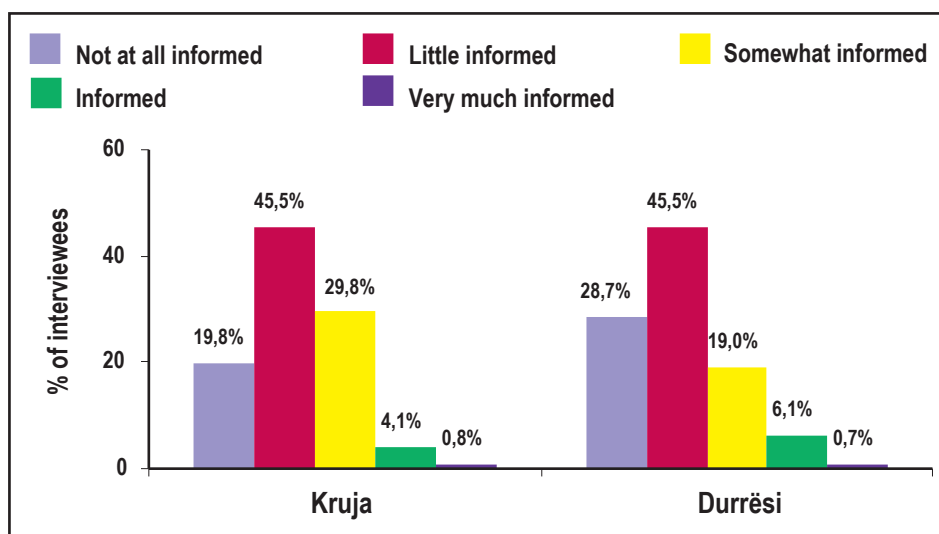
**Graphic 25 – Groups that should get priority in receiving social services**



100% of interviewees in Kruja and 97.9% in Durrësi fully agree that municipality should pay more attention to the vulnerable groups.

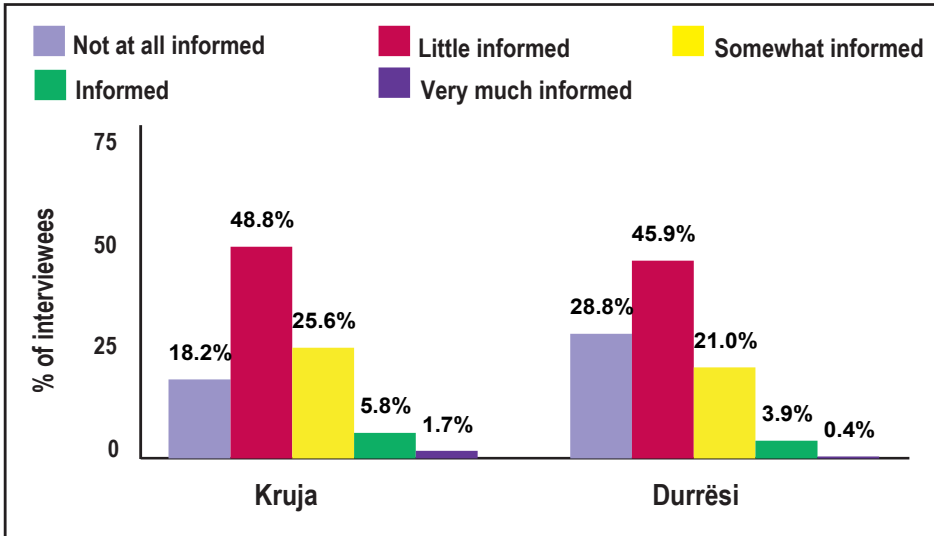
It is noted a high citizens' awareness towards all social groups in need benefiting from municipal services.

**Graphic 26 – Citizens' information on social services delivery**

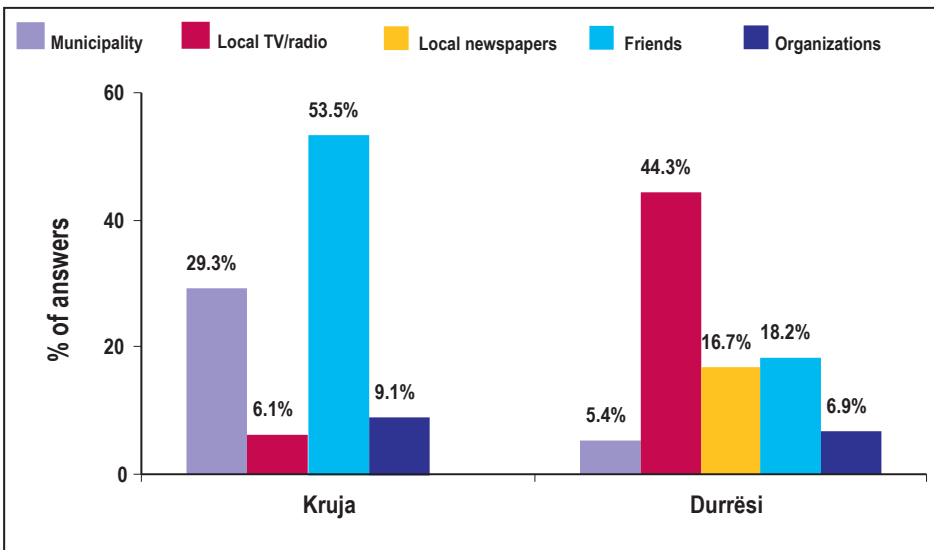




Graphic 27 – Citizens’ information on the municipality work



Graphic 28 – Sources of information on municipality work



A large percentage of citizens in both cities have not or very little information regarding the type of municipal social services and how to access them, as well as very limited information regarding overall activity of their municipality (Graphics 23, 26, 27).

The citizens in Kruja use friends as the main channel to access information, which shows that informal information is predominant. The municipal structures are seen as the second source to access information.

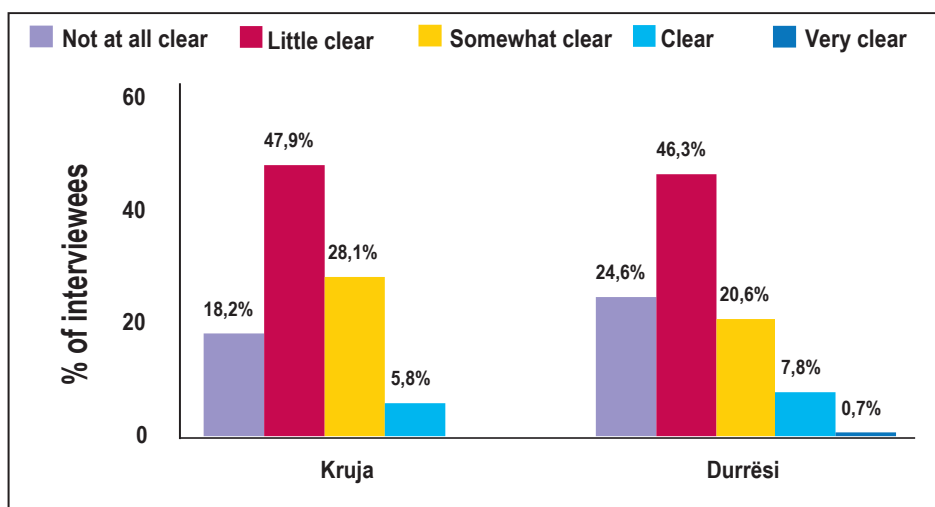


## VI. Social Services

Although in Durrësi there is a Public Information Office since 2005, media is the main source of information for the citizens (Graphic 28). This raises the issue that the Public Information Office is not delivering to the citizens the required amount of information that would enable them a better access in services.

Vagueness of application procedures, which is strongly evidenced by the citizens is maybe one of the main factors that influence the low citizens' access in services (Graphic 29).

**Graphic 29 - Clarity of the application procedures**



### Recommendations

The low public access in information in both municipalities requires immediate measures consisting in awareness campaigns which would increase transparency and public participation at municipal level.

Municipalities should consider issuing a special assistance to these social groups so they can benefit from the assistance schemes in compliance with legal requirements.

The nature and amount of public information is difficult to be absorbed. The municipalities' staff should simplify the application procedures and make them clearer. Municipalities should put in place an appeal procedure which is missing for the moment.

Based on the survey results municipalities may consider to include a wider range of services in their development strategies, which would increase benefiting groups and strengthen the social cohesion at local level. Considering that municipal funds are limited, it would be beneficial to support more local community initiatives and increase the efficiency of central government funds.