



Research on citizens' information and their participation in the decision-making process

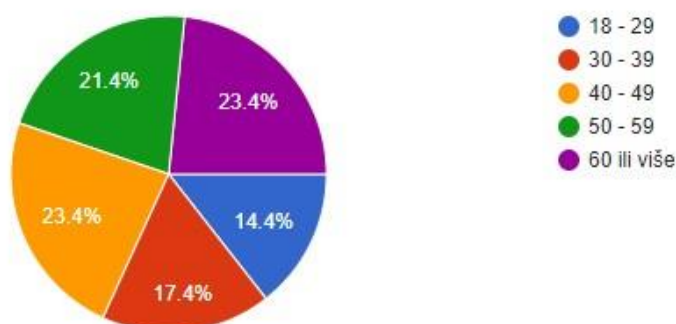
in Jablanica and Pčinja districts

The survey was carried out in two cycles on the territory of the Jablanica and Pčinj districts, in which 2 cities - Leskovac and Vranje and 8 municipalities - Bujanovac, Preševo, Surdulica, Vladičin Han, Lebane, Bojnik, Medveđa and Vlasotince were covered according to the principle of random sampling and criteria - number of inhabitants (300-1000), geographical location, answers were given by the person who last celebrated a birthday in the household, and the analysis covered the period of two cycles 2023/2024.

The aim of the survey is to evaluate the implementation of the law on local self-government, which in Article 11 obliges local governments to organize public hearings when it comes to the adoption of the budget of cities and municipalities, the statutes of local governments, strategies and planning documents, the way of information and informing citizens about the possibilities of participating in the process decision-making and the adoption of the aforementioned documents.

400 respondents from forty places in Jablanica and Pčinj districts (Suvi Do, Grdelica, Sumane, Medveđa, Negosavlje, Leskovac, Navalin, Turekovac, Presečina, Konjino, Pertate, V. Trnovac, Bunuševac, Rakovac, Dubnica, Međa, Vranjska banja, Donja Jajina, Šilovo, Alakince, Binovce, Batulovce, Boljare, Crnotince, Oraovica, Donja Lomnica, Dragovac, Gornje Brijanje, Kacabać, Lepenica, Masurica, Orasje, Prekodolce, Priboj, Pridvorica, Rajince, Suva Morava, Suvojnica and Žujince). Ten respondents from each place participated in the survey. Of the total number of respondents, 227 were men and 179 were women. According to age, the most respondents are between the ages of 30 and 39 and the respondents are 50-59 years old. Within the scope of the research, most of the unemployed respondents and respondents employed in the private sector were surveyed. Most of the respondents completed a four-year secondary school, while the number of research participants was smaller in the other groups.

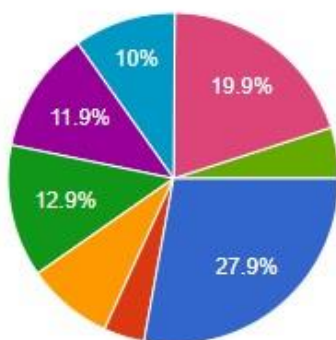
3. Godine starosti ispitanika



Najveći broj ispitanika je starosti između 40-49 godina i 60 ili više godina, dok su u nešto manjem procentu zastupljene ostale kategorije stanovnika od čega populacija od 18-29 godina, koja je bila obuhvaćena upitnikom čini svega 14.4%.



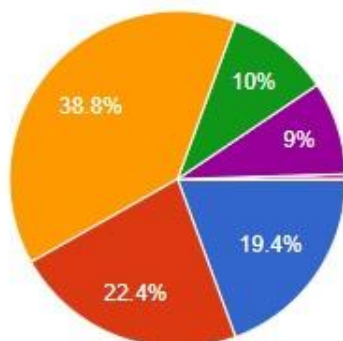
5. Radni status ispitanika



- Nezaposlen/a
- Zaposlen/a u javnom sektoru po ugovoru
- Zaposlen/a u javnom sektoru za stalno
- Zaposlen/a u privatnom sektoru po ugovoru
- Zaposlen/a u privatnom sektoru za stalno
- Privatnik/ca - preduzetnik/ca
- Penzioner/ka
- Učenik/ca - student/kinja

Out of the total number of respondents, the highest number is unemployed with around 28%, followed by employees in the private sector on a permanent or contract basis, which makes up around 25%, while the smallest of the categories covered by the research is employees in the public sector, around 12%.

6. Stepen obrazovanja ispitanika



- Osnovna škola
- Srednja škola (3 godine)
- Srednja škola (4 godine)
- Viša škola
- Fakultet
- Specijalističke studije
- Master studije
- Magistar nauka

According to the level of education, the largest number of respondents completed a four-year secondary school 38.8%, followed by a three-year secondary school 22.4%, followed by respondents with primary school 19.4%, while 19% of respondents participated in the survey with a college and higher education, while only one respondent completed his master's studies.

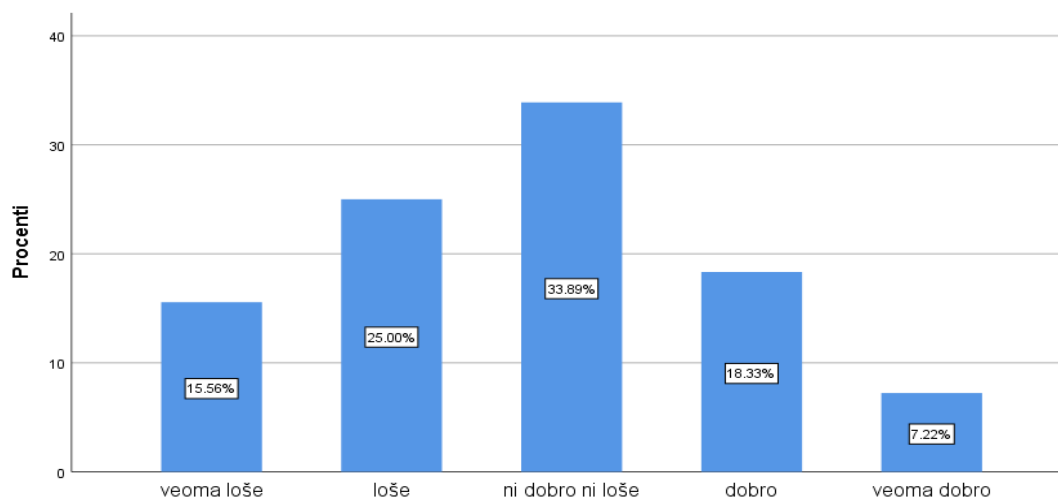


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Tablea . *Media that respondents follow - first cycle in 2023*

	Procenti [%]
Local media	4.4
National media but not via cable	11.7
Local and national media via cable	36.1
Exclusively internet portals	20.6
Just the radio	8.9
I follow all the media	18.4
In total	100

Chart: Assessment of the quality of objective media reporting - first cycle in 2023



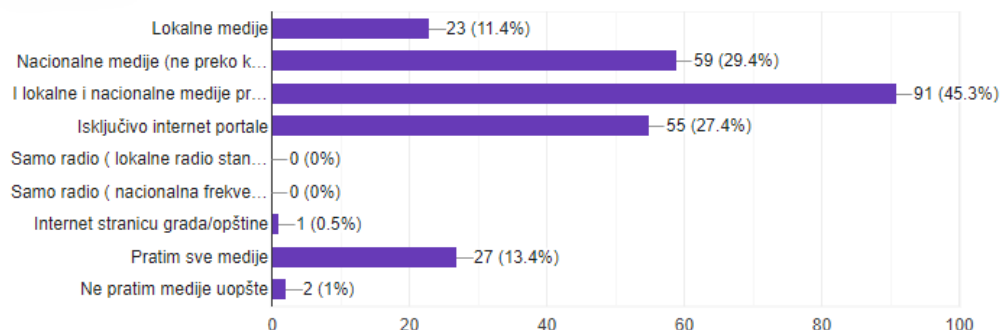


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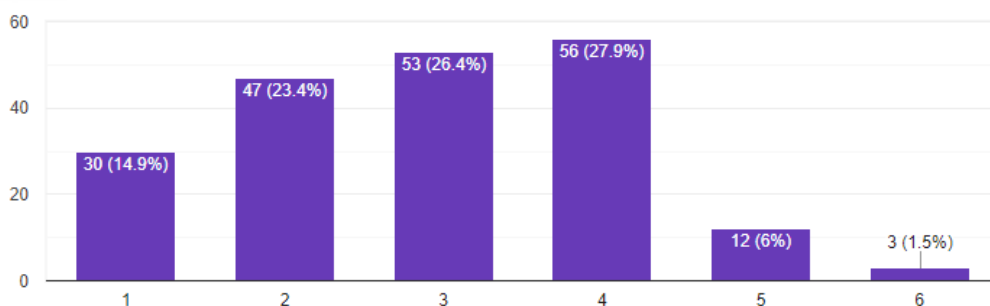
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7. Koje medije uglavnom pratite? Moguće više odgovora



8. Ocenite kvalitet i objektivnost izveštavanja lokalnih medija u Vašem gradu/opštini o lokanom budžetu i postupku donošenja lokalnih planova i strategija.



Charts:

Media that respondents follow - second cycle 2024 i

Assessment of the quality of objective media reporting - second cycle in 2024.

The respondents emphasized that they generally follow all media, both through internet portals and those with local and national frequency.

Reviewing the answers of respondents, it is noticeable that only 23% of respondents rated the quality of the media as good or very good in the first cycle of 2023, while in the second cycle only 7.5% of respondents gave the same answer in 2024. This indicates a deterioration in the objectivity of media coverage and citizens' satisfaction with media coverage of important topics for citizens.

Recommendation: Local media houses should provide more information about the problems of local communities, especially in rural areas. Inform citizens about information of public importance with timely information so that they can be actively involved in the decision-making process.



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9. Are you interested in how money from the budget of your city/municipality is spent?

Tables. Are you interested in how money from the budget of your city is spent? – the first cycle in 2023

	Procenti [%]
I'm interested, it's my money	33.3
I am interested, so that the money would not be misused	23.9
I'm interested, but I don't have time to deal with it	18.9
I don't care because I can't influence it	16.1
I don't care, but I'm sure the city or municipality is doing the right thing	7.8
In total	100

9. Da li Vas zanima na koji način se troši novac iz budzeta Vašeg grada/opštine?



To the question - Are you interested in how the money from the budget of your city is spent, the lack of interest of the citizens in 2024 is felt, mostly due to the impression that they cannot influence the decision-making process. A smaller drop is present among interested citizens, but the percentage is again at a high level and ranges from 52% to 57% of those interested, which represents an absolute majority in both rounds of research.



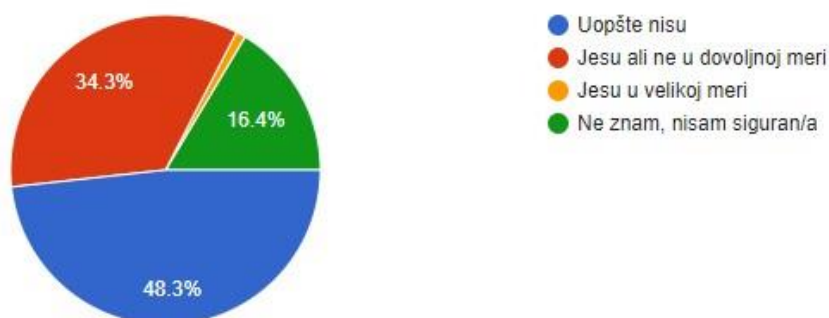
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Tables. To what extent is information available on the city/municipality budget – 2023 cycle

	Procenti [%]
They are not at all	50.6
They are, but not to a sufficient extent	22.8
They are to a great extent	6.7
No answer	20.0
In total	100

Chart - To what extent is information available on the city/municipality budget - 2024 cycle

U kojoj meri su Vam dostupne informacije o lokalnom budžetu Vašeg grada/opštine?



To the question: To what extent is information available about the city/municipality budget, there is an increase in the reduced availability of information by almost 10% compared to 2023. In 2023, 73.5% of respondents answered that the information is not available at all or is not in sufficient measures, while in 2024, almost 83% of respondents answered the same question. The fact that only 1% in 2024 answered that they are available indicates to a large extent the fact that local self-governments have not sufficiently brought citizens the opportunity to participate in decision-making, primarily in public debates, even though this is their legal obligation under the Law on local self-government, art. 11.



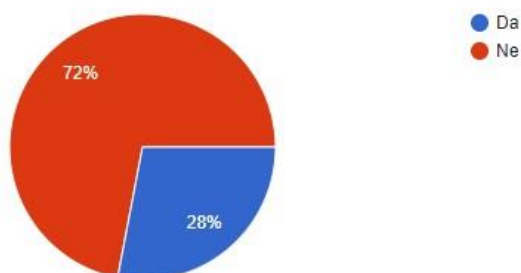
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Tables. Are you familiar with the possibilities to actively participate in decision-making at the local level, such as public hearings or consultation of local self-government representatives with citizens?

	Procenti [%]
Yes	16
Not	81
No answer	3
Total	100

11. Da li ste upoznati sa mogućnostima da aktivno učestvujete u donošenju odluka na lokalnom nivou, poput javnih rasprava ili savetovanja predstavnika lokalne samouprave sa građanima?

200 responses



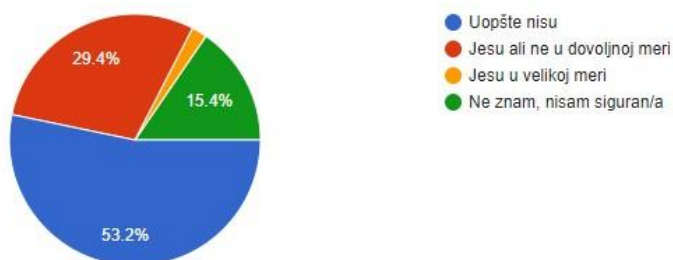


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Table . *To what extent is information available on the procedure for adopting local plans and strategies - 2023*

	Procenti [%]
They are not at all	52.8
They are, but not to a sufficient extent	27.2
They are to a great extent	4.4
No answer	15.6
In total	100

U kojoj meri su Vam dostupne informacije o postupku donošenja lokalnih planova i strategija?



When it comes to information about the decision-making process on strategies and plans, the situation is almost identical to information about the method of adopting the budget, so in 2024, 83% of respondents answered that they were not informed at all, or that they were, but not to a sufficient

extent to could be actively involved in the decision-making process.



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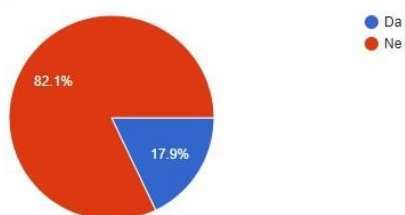
Table. Does the municipality/city organize meetings where citizens are consulted about spending funds from the budget - 2023.

	Procenti [%]
Yes	15.6
No	84.4
Total	100

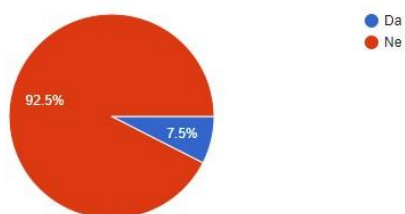
Table. In the past two years, have you participated in the process of adopting local regulations, plans, strategies and the budget of the city/municipality - 2023

	Procenti [%]
Yes	8.9
No	91.1
Total	100

15. Da li se u Vašoj opštini/gradu organizuju skupovi na kojima se nadležni organi konsultuju sa građanima kako treba trošiti sredstva iz budžeta?



16. Da li ste u protekle dve godine učestvovali na nekom sastanku, raspravi, ili zborovima kada su se predlagali lokalni propisi, planovi, strategija i budžet u Vašem gradu/opštini?



2024: The answers to these questions generally indicate that respondents who work in the public administration answered in the affirmative, bearing in mind that the percentage is almost identical to the answers to the question about the respondents' work status, of which 8% are employed in the public sector on contract, and 17% permanently. The rest of the respondents are generally not familiar with the information that such gatherings are organized, and therefore the answer to the question of whether they participated in such gatherings ranges from 7.5-8.9%, where a drop in participation by about 1.5% was observed in 2024 compared to 2023.



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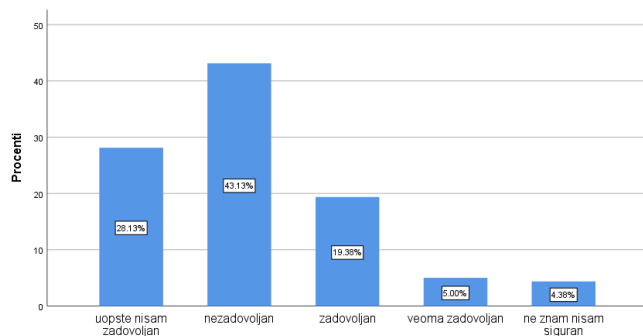


Chart - Respondents' satisfaction with the development of the city/municipality in the previous 5 years - 2023

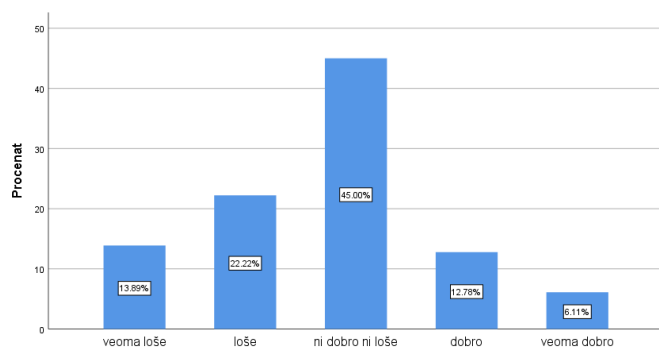


Chart - To what extent did the development of the city/municipality in the past five years affect your life - 2023



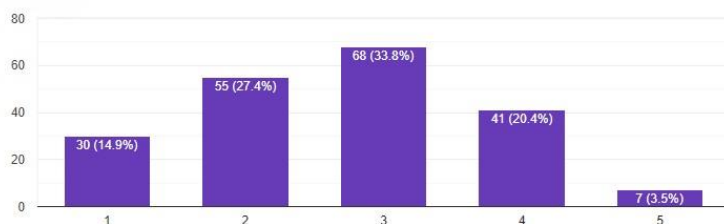
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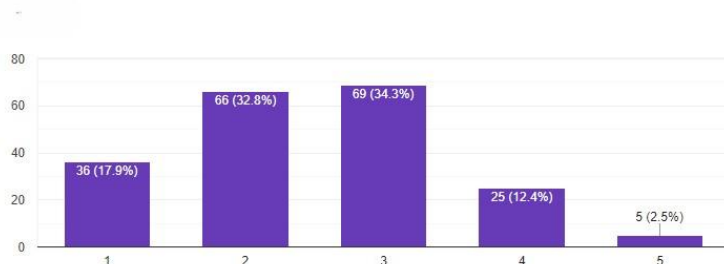
20. U zadnjih pet godina koliko ste zadovoljni razvojem Vaše opštine?

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21. U kojoj meri je razvoj Vaše opštine u proteklih pet godina uticao na Vaš život?

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In 2024 compared to 2023, there is an increase in satisfaction with the development cities or municipalities, but at the same time there is an answer that this development did not significantly affect the life of the respondents, so the frequency of quality impact on the life of citizens increases in the direction of bad, or very bad. While there is a noticeable drop in the direction of a favorable impact on the quality of life from 19% to 15%.

This trend indicates an increase in investments that are of less interest to citizens and that citizens could not have an influence on them.

Recommendation: in order to increase the favorable impact of development on the quality of life of the citizens of southern Serbia, create an environment where citizens could participate more actively in the decision-making process when it comes to strategies, plans and budgets of local self-governments, especially in the form of public hearings and consultative processes.

Grafikon - Zadovoljstvo ispitanika razvojem sela/naselja u predhodnih 5 godina.

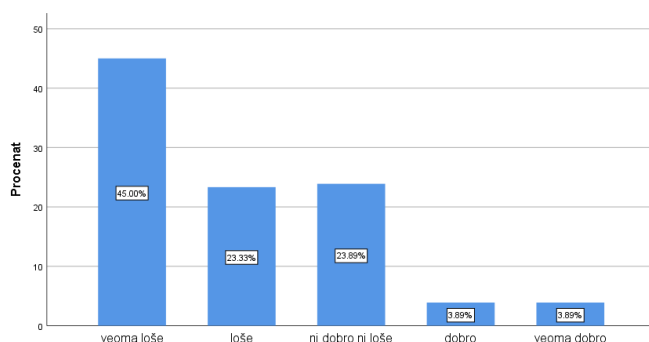


Chart-In the last five years, how satisfied are you with the development of your village/settlement?

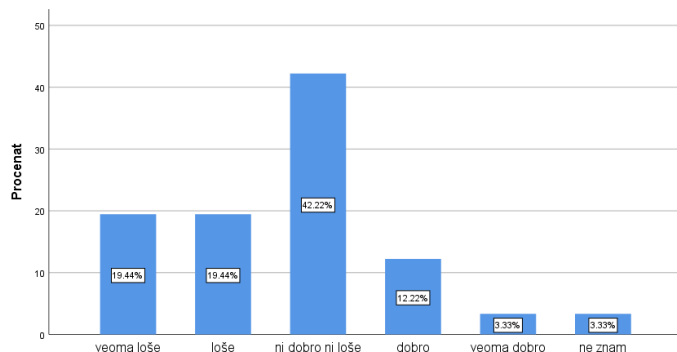
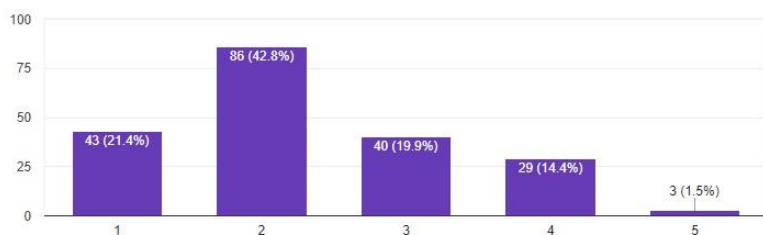


Chart- To what extent has the development of the village/settlement in the past five years affected your life.

The situation with the communities development satisfaction in rural and urban area is within 15% in 2024, which is an increase compared to 2023, but if we take into account that more than 64% are dissatisfied with

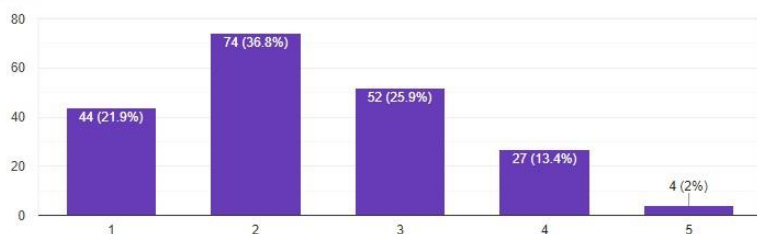
the development of their village or settlement, and that 59% of respondents stated that it did not significantly affect the improvement of their living conditions, then the previous observation was certainly confirmed and that it is necessary to encourage citizens to take a more significant part in the decision-making process, but that it is also necessary to create a favorable environment for that by the local authorities..

22. U zadnjih pet godina koliko ste zadovoljni razvojem Vašeg sela, naselja, zajednice?



2024: The situation with the communities development satisfaction in rural and urban area is within 15% in 2024, which is an increase compared to 2023, but if we take into account that more than 64% are dissatisfied with the development of their village or settlement, and that 59% of respondents stated that it did not significantly affect the improvement of their living conditions, then the previous observation was certainly confirmed and that it is necessary to encourage citizens to take a more significant part in the decision-making process, but that it is also necessary to create a favorable environment for that by the local authorities..

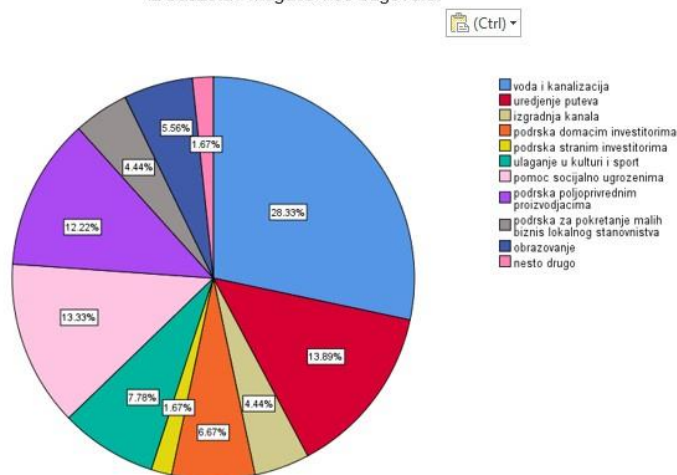
23. U kojoj meri je razvoj Vašeg sela, naselja, zajednice u proteklih pet godina uticao na Vaš život?





24. U kojoj oblasti bi po Vašem mišljenju grad/opština trebalo da više preusmeri sredstva iz budžeta? Moguće više odgovora.

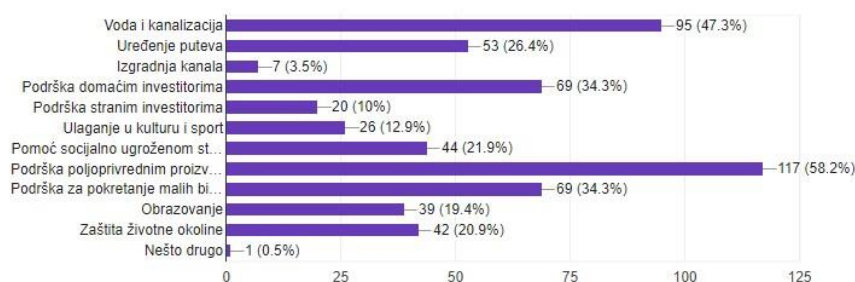
2023:



24. U kojoj oblasti bi po Vašem mišljenju grad/opština trebalo da više preusmeri sredstva iz budžeta? Moguće više odgovora.

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2024:



In both cycles of the research, to the question in which direction funds from the budget should be redirected, it is noticeable that the respondents gave the most answers for the basic needs of the

communities, such as water and sewage infrastructure, but in the second cycle, 2024, there is a significant increase in the answers related to support to farmers, start-up of small businesses and support to domestic investors. About 20% of respondents voted for education and environmental protection.



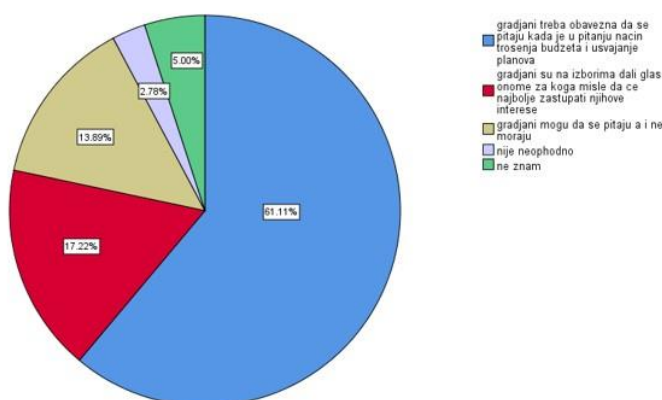
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Grafikon - U kojoj meri građani treba više da se uključe u donošenje odluka o načinu trošenja budžeta i planu razvoja grada/opštine

2023:



25. Po Vašem mišljenju u kojoj meri građani treba više da se uključuju kada je u pitanju donošenje odluka o načinu trošenja budžeta i kada je u pitanju donošenje planova razvoja Vašeg grada/opštine i vašeg naselja/sela?

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2024:



When asked to what extent citizens should be involved when deciding on the budget, or strategies and plans, in both cycles the answer was that 60% should necessarily be involved, 2.7%

answered that it was not necessary, and 23% In 2024, 4% believed that they voted for those who would best represent them in the elections.

Although a large number of respondents stated that citizens should definitely ask, the level of participation is still quite low (around 11.4%). The key reason is still not understanding the obligations of local self-governments to create an appropriate environment for the influence of citizens in decision-making, and especially the observance of Article 11. of the Law on State Administration and Local Self-Government. Through monitoring the organization of public hearings, the association "I Ja se Pitam" registered that only two cities and one local

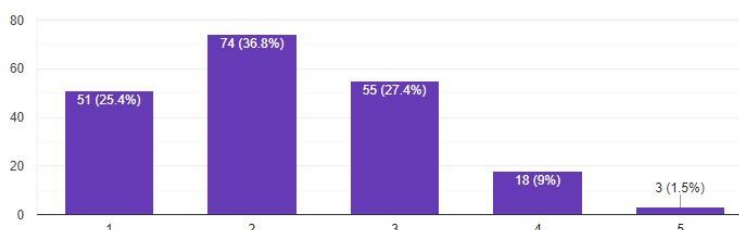


self-government organized a public hearing on the budget for 2023 and 2024. The others did not organize, or only formally announced the invitation without notification about the way to participate and propose changes, additions and proposals.

27. Kako ocenjujete transparentnost rada lokalne samouprave u vezi sa donošenjem odluka i mogućnošću uključivanja građana u donošenje odluka od javnog značaja?

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2024:



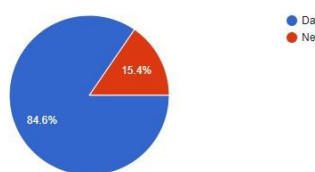
In the second cycle of research, a negative attitude was noticeable when it comes to the transparency of the work of local self-governments, only 10.5% answered that transparency is at a good or very good level, which coincides with the percentage of

employees in the public sector, while the rest of the respondents who did not connected with the public sector, they think it is very bad, or bad (64.2%) or they have no opinion about it (27.4%). This speaks in favor of the fact that the transparency of the work of local self-governments is still at a low level and that it is necessary to increase the level of information of citizens and work on transparency, when it comes to problems of importance for local communities. Although local self-governments most often use their website as a channel and excuse for communication, it is evident that this channel is the least viewed and least visited by respondents (only 0.5%), when it comes to information about the possibilities for citizens to participate in the decision-making process .

Recommendation: increase the transparency of the work of local self-government when it comes to public discussions, meetings and consultative processes, using all channels of communication with citizens, and in accordance with the logic of media monitoring by citizens, especially using local media and portals that are the most visited or followed by of respondents.

28. Da li je prisutna migracija u Vašem selu, naselju, zajednici?

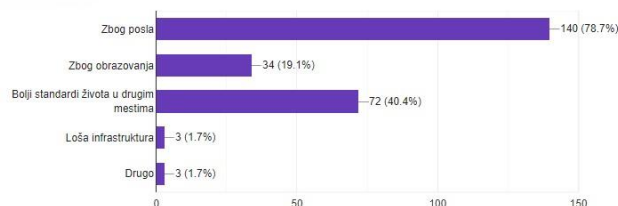
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2024: When asked if migration is present in your village or urban settlement, in 85% of cases we received the answer that it is present and that the main reasons are job search 78.7%, better standard of living in other places 40.4%, education 19.1 %. It was possible to give more than one answer to this question, and it is understood that one respondent gave one, two, or three answers, but in percentage terms, the biggest impact on the migration of the population was the impact of not/possibility of employment.

29. Ukoliko je u Vašem selu/naselju/zajednici prisutna migracija, koji je glavni razlog zašto se ljudi iseljavaju? Moguće je dati više odgovora.

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Recommendation: in accordance with the recommendations for the placement of the local budget, direct activities towards the strengthening of the local economic

environment, which would enable the creation of new opportunities and influence the reduction of migration, primarily of young people under 30, who were the least represented through the research based on the principle of a random sample.



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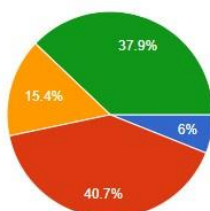
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30. Ukoliko je prisutna migracija iz Vašeg mesta, gde se ljudi uglavnom iseljavaju?



2024:



- U grad ili opštinu kojem/k kojoj pripada naselje/selo/zajednica
- U veće gradove koji nisu na teritoriji opštine u kojoj živim
- U druge regione Srbije
- U druge države (koje)

Migration is directed mainly to larger cities that are not on the territory of the municipality where 40.7% of people who migrate live, to other countries 37.9%, to other regions of Serbia 15.4%, while migration from villages to cities is only 6% .

As for the countries to which the inhabitants of the south of Serbia migrate, they are mainly Germany 40%, unspecified to all European countries about 28%, Austria 9%, to other countries of the former Yugoslavia 8%, to other countries about 15%. This is another indicator of the small impact of the development of local communities on the quality of life in Southern Serbia, as shown in the analysis of the answers to that question.

Households characterized as agricultural with 59%, non-agricultural with 24.5% and mixed with 16.5% participated in the survey.