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Energy Poverty in Albania

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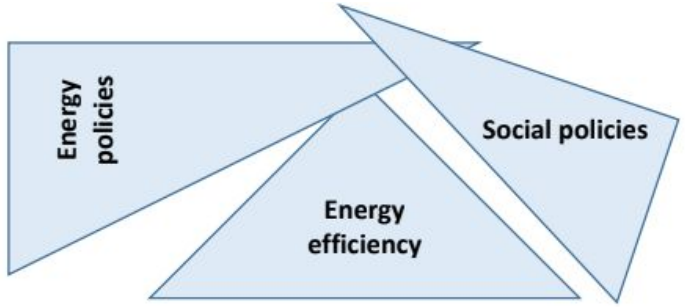
What`s energy poverty?

Energy poverty refers to a situation where a household cannot access energy services at home to a level that it could meet its social and material needs. This concept is powerful and it analyses three important pillars: energy policies, social policies, and practices of energy efficiency.

Buildings are at the risk of facing energy poverty due to:

- Increased price of electricity disproportionately to the increase of incomes
- Lack of alternative cheaper electricity
- Households' increasing needs for energy
- Inefficient use of energy
- Policy interference



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What`s energy poverty?

- According to the Energy Strategy Energy, poverty is not clearly defined or systematically monitored, and there are no specific policies to address it.
- The current legislative framework in Albania addresses vulnerable consumers entitled to support based on disability, health, and income status, it fails to capture the broader aspects of energy poverty.

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A preliminary assessment of households in energy poverty

37% of all households in Albania declare they cannot keep their homes adequately warm. Given that the reported 37% represents all households, the value of 37% can be considered an upper bound for the estimated number of energy poor households in Albania. Therefore, the estimated upper bound for the number of energy poor households in Albania is 272,000. Due to the lack of data, it is not possible to estimate the lower bound of the number of energy poor households in Albania.

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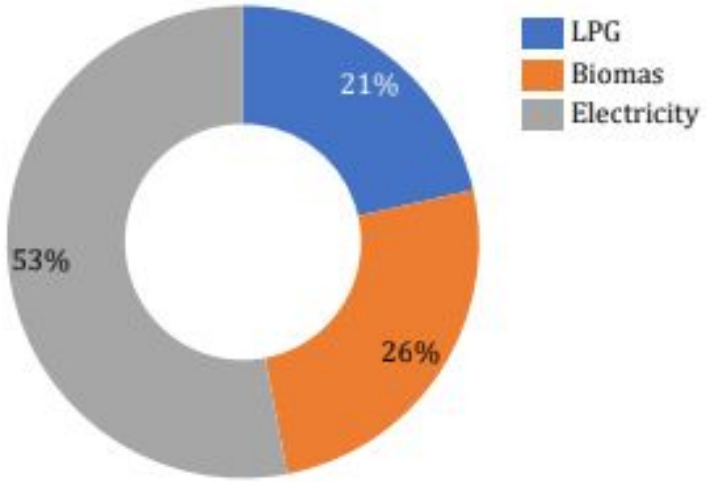
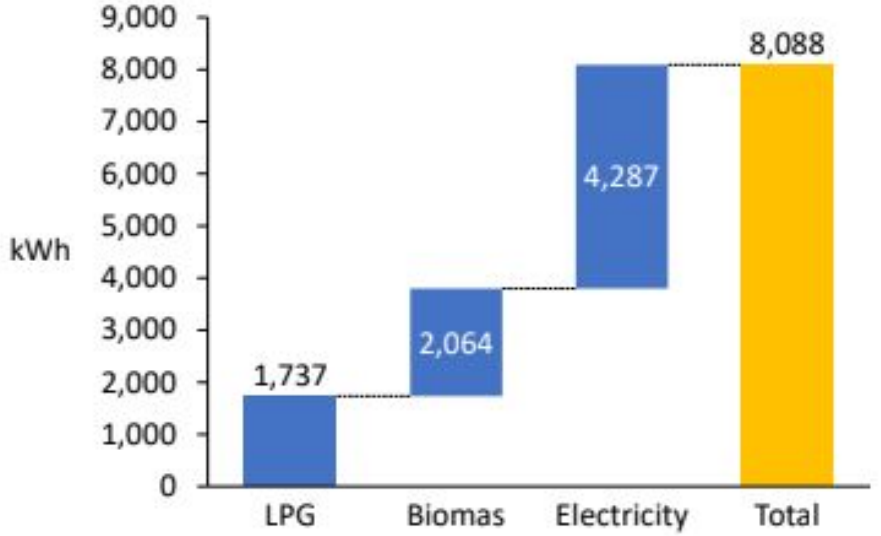
Energy consumption in Albania





Source:EUROSTAT Energy Balances (2018 data)

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Average monthly expenditure on electrical energy by households in relative poverty

	Poor households	Non-poor households	Total
Energy: average total spending	ALL 2,088 (€17)	ALL 3,342 (€27)	ALL 3,089 (€25.10)
Average total consumption spending	ALL 23,721 (€193)	ALL 80,967 (€658)	ALL 69,442 (€565)
Energy spending as proportion of total spending	9%	4%	4%

Source: INSTAT (2015), expert calculations (ESA Consulting).

- The 2014 Household Budget Survey data show that, on average, a household spent 3,089 ALL (€25.10) monthly, or 4% of its total budget, on energy consumption
- On average, for a household living under the relative poverty threshold, monthly spending on electricity amounted to 2,088 ALL (€17), or around 9% of total spending

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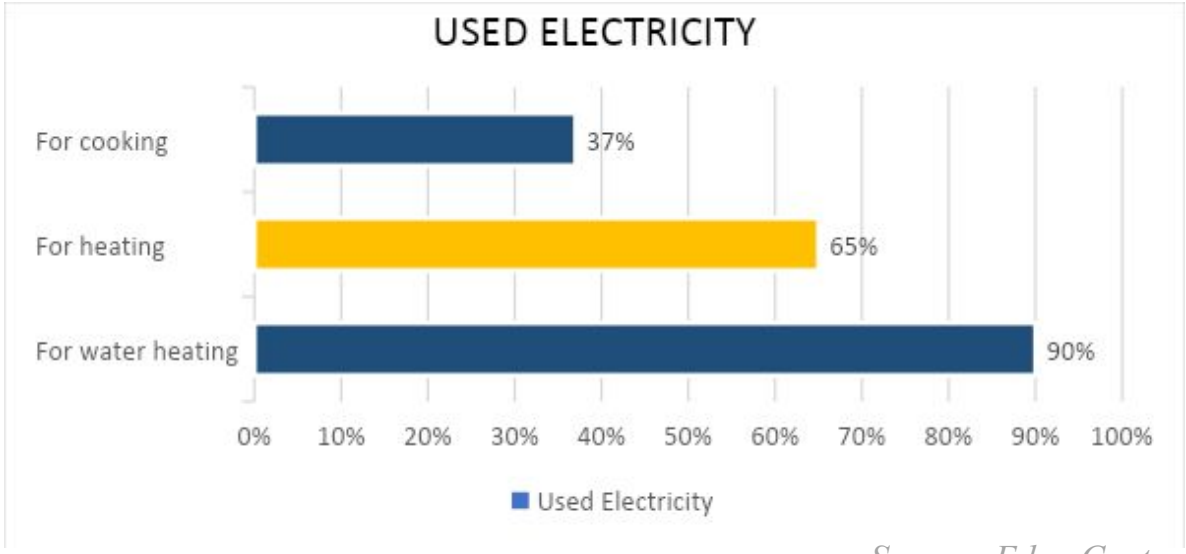
Used electricity



Source: Eden Centre

An assessment of energy poverty took place in 2017 in five cities of Albania – located in different geographical areas and with different population typologies (Eden Centre, 2018). The findings showed that 90% of interviewees used electricity for water heating, 65% used it for heating and 37% used it for cooking.

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Spending on electricity

Average monthly household income	Average monthly electricity costs	Share of income constituted by electrical costs
Under 10,000 ALL (€82)	3,607 ALL (€30)	At least 36%
10,000-25,000 ALL (€82-€205)	3,411 ALL (€28)	19.5%
25,000-35,000 ALL (€205-€287)	3,830 ALL (€31.50)	13%
35,000-50,000 ALL (€287-€410)	4,332 ALL (€36)	10%
Over 50,000 ALL (€410)	5,868 ALL (€48)	No more than 12%

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Energy consumption control mechanism

- The compensation scheme in 2006, provided a cash benefit of 640 ALL (€5.20) for customers in need who reach the threshold of 200 kWh of monthly consumption
- In 2015, a second measure was introduced, setting a unified price of 9.50 ALL/kWh (11.40 ALL including VAT), equivalent to €0.08/kWh.
- The government also approved an additional monthly cash compensation of 648 ALL (€5.30). Together with the previous measure, the total cash benefits for eligible individuals amounted to 1,288 ALL (€10.42) per month.

These are the only energy measures in the country, providing support to 213,000 individuals.
The cost to the state budget amounts to 1.76 billion ALL (€14.5 million) a year.

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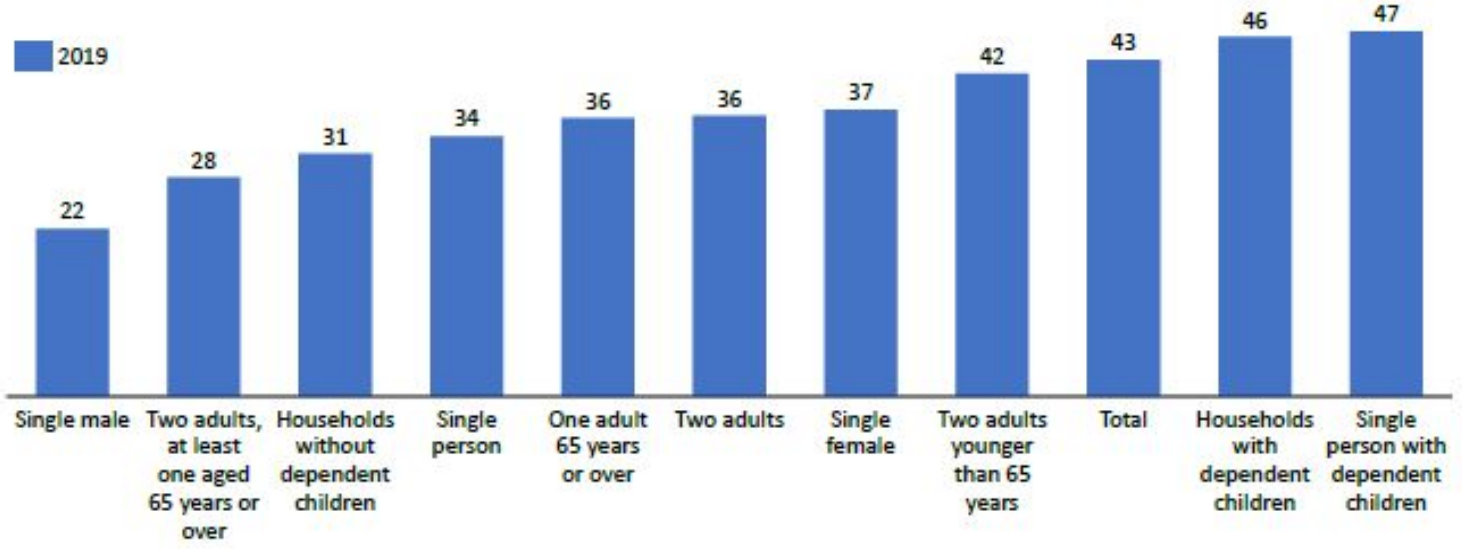
Arrears on utility bills

The highest proportion of households below 60% of the median equalized income in arrears on utility bills are those occupied by a single person with dependent children: 47% of such households in 2019 had arrears on utility bills.



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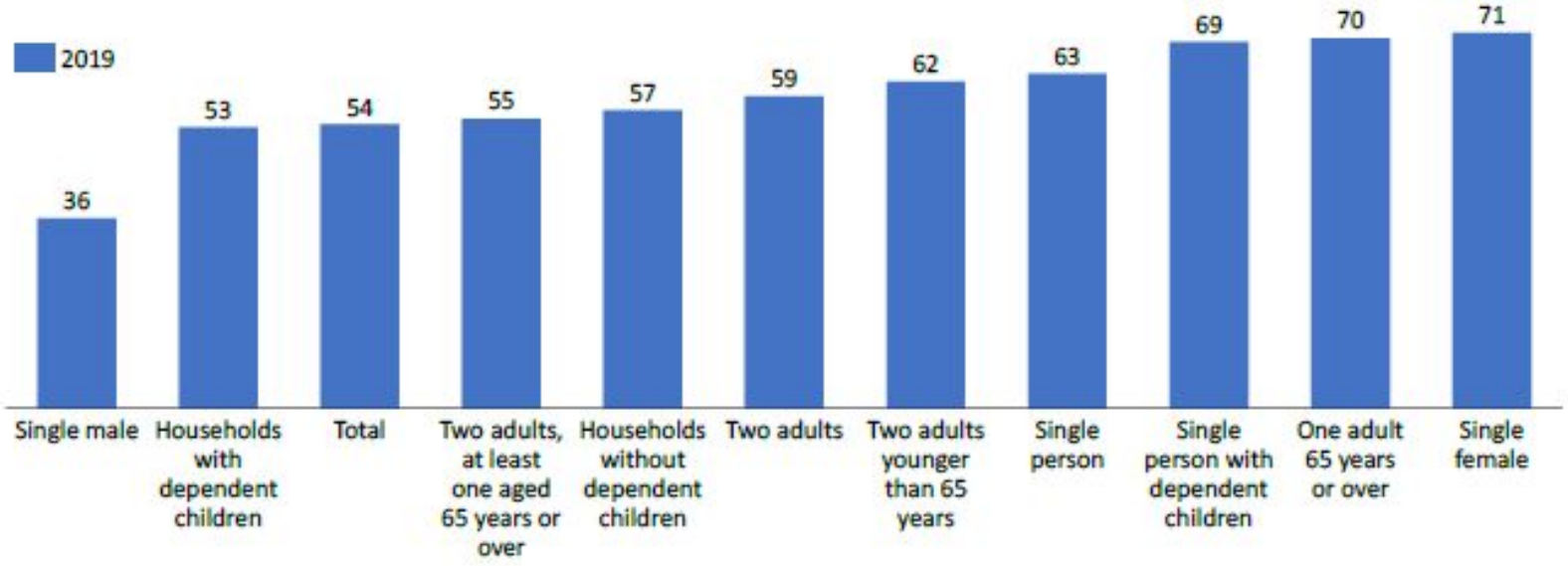
Inability to keep home adequately warm

These results point to the conclusion that probably single parent, single retired, and single-person households face the greatest difficulties in keeping their homes warm. Overall, 54% of households with income below 60% of the median equivalized income had difficulties in keeping their homes warm in 2019.



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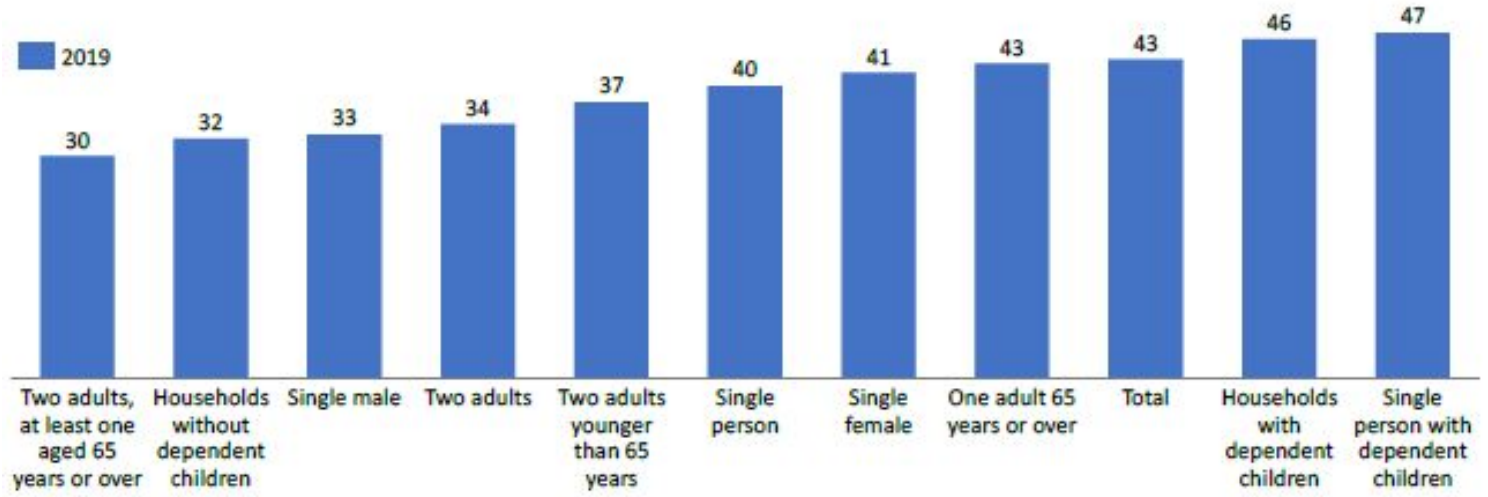
Condensation, leaking roof, rot in windows or doors

Households with a single person and dependent children are the most affected: 47% of such households in 2019 meet the criteria.



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Thanks for your attention!
Q&As?

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Energy Poverty in Kosovo

BALKAN GREEN FOUNDATION
LIRI KUÇI, Researcher

Ancona 2025

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#Some of the effects of Energy Poverty:

- Insufficient access to energy services
- High energy costs relatated to the income
- Poor housing insulation
- Frequent power outages
- Exposure to health risks from energy use

EU DIRECTIVES:

Directive 2009/72/EC: Protecting vulnerable consumers.
Directive 2019/944/EU: Identifying criteria for energy poverty.
Directive 2018/844: Renovation strategies to improve energy efficiency.

Housing stock is outdated, with poor insulation.
Only 20% of homes meet EU energy efficiency standards.

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Key Legislation in Kosovo:

- Law on Energy (05/L -081)
- Law on Electricity (05/L-08513)
- Law on Natural Gas
- Law on Thermal Energy
- Law on Energy Efficiency (06/L-079) (incorporates Directives 2012/27/EU)
- **Law on Energy Performance of Buildings**
- Law on Pressure Equipment (with exclusions for certain energy-related equipment)

Despite these laws, Kosovo's energy consumption remains inefficient, with a high reliance on **non-renewable** sources.

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Kosovo ranks among the most energy-inefficient countries in Europe, with poorly insulated homes consuming three times more energy per square meter compared to the EU average.

1. Affordability of Energy

*The % of household income spent on energy bills is a primary indicator. Energy poverty is often defined when households spend more than 10% of their income on energy.
*The proportion of households unable to pay utility bills on time is a critical marker of affordability issues.

2. Energy Access and Reliability

* The percentage of households with access to electricity and modern heating sources.
* The reliability of electricity supply, including blackouts and power cuts, is an essential indicator in Kosovo, where infrastructure is aging.

3. Adequacy of Energy Use

* The proportion of households unable to keep their homes adequately warm during winter.
* The percentage of households unable to meet increased energy demands during cold months.

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4. Energy Efficiency of Homes

* The extent to which homes are properly insulated and energy-efficient, affecting heating and cooling costs.
* Energy Consumption per Square Meter: A measure of how much energy is used per unit area, reflecting the efficiency of energy use.

5. Environmental and Health Impact

* The reliance on firewood or coal for heating, which impacts indoor air quality and health.
* The link between energy use and environmental health, particularly in areas relying on coal-fired power plants.

6. Economic and Social Vulnerability

* Households with low or unstable income are more vulnerable to energy poverty.
* The impact of fluctuating energy prices on household affordability.
* The extent of government programs or subsidies available to assist vulnerable groups.

7. Energy Import Dependency

* Share of Imported Energy: The proportion of energy that is imported, which can impact costs and security.s.

The Energy Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo (2022-2031) focuses on:

- Empowering vulnerable consumers.
- Investing in energy-efficient housing.
- Promoting renewable energy adoption.

Recent Developments:

- Establishment of the **Energy Efficiency Fund (2019)** (financing energy efficiency measures in public buildings, including schools, healthcare facilities, and other public buildings).
- Focus on near-zero energy buildings and **building renovation** strategies (implementation has started)
- Increased focus on energy security and import substitution due to the energy crisis.

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Lack of a clear and comprehensive definition of energy poverty in Kosovo legislation hinders effective policy responses.

Key Drivers of Energy Poverty:

- High energy costs relative to household income.
- Low energy efficiency in homes.
- Poor energy performance of buildings and appliances.

Challenges:

- Limited capacity in energy efficiency implementation.
- Shortage of energy auditors and skilled personnel.
- Insufficient investment in energy-saving measures.
- Low public awareness about energy efficiency.
- Slow implementation of energy efficiency strategies and plans.

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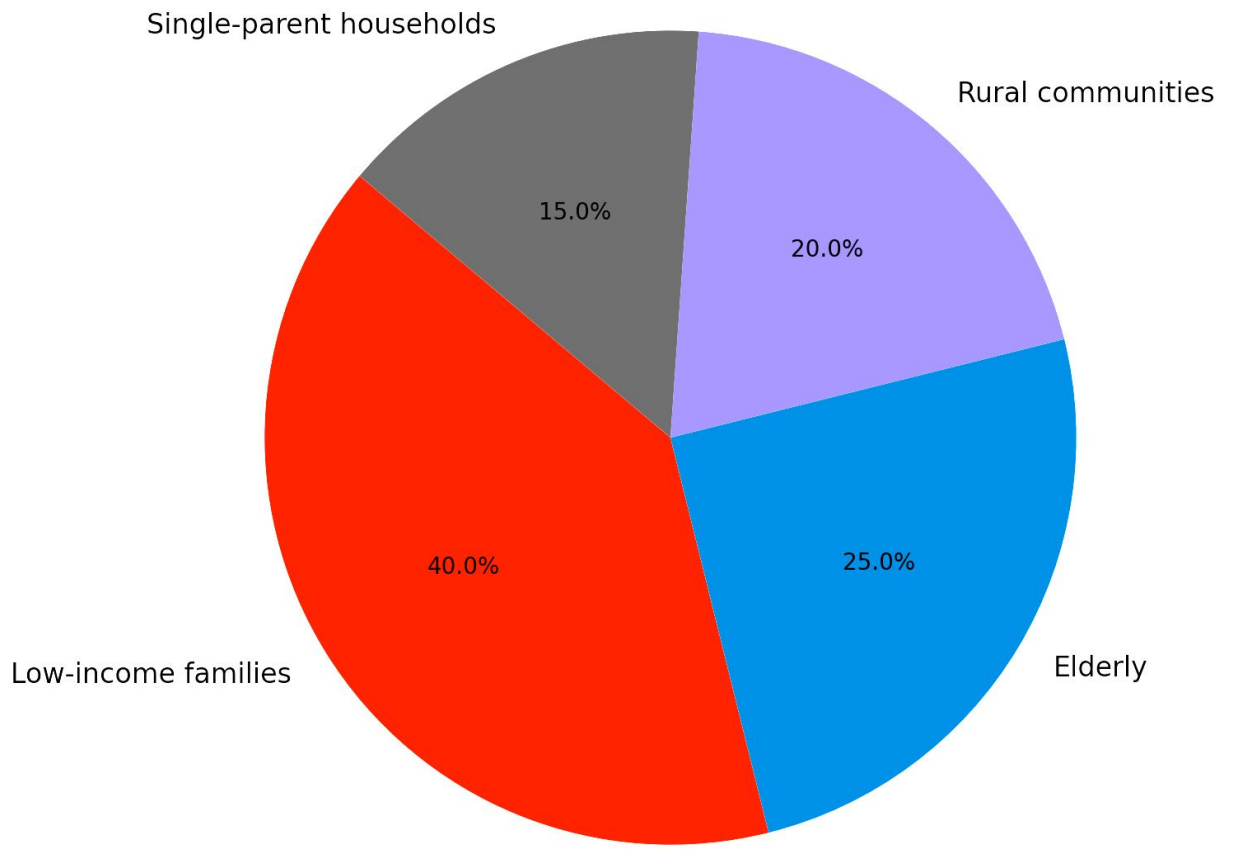
Statistical Overview on energy Poverty:

Vulnerable Consumers: The Energy Strategy briefly mentions "vulnerable consumers" but lacks concrete measures to address their needs.



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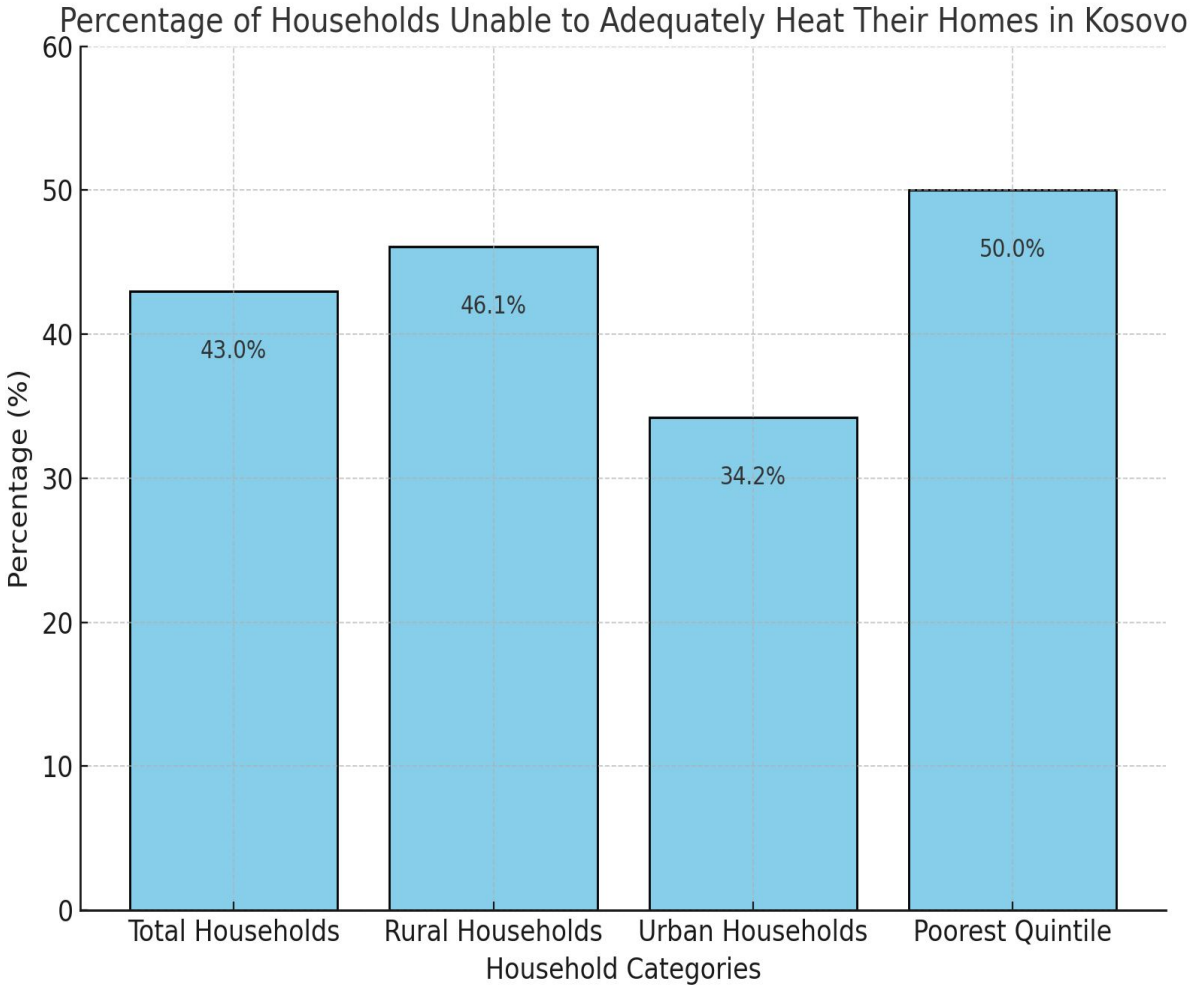
Regional disparities indicate rural areas are disproportionately affected:



Approx. 40% of households struggled to pay utility bills at least twice a year (2023, GiZ)

-Rural areas are more impacted, with 46.1% of households unable to afford sufficient heating, compared to 34.2% in urban areas.

Recent tariff increases further exacerbated energy poverty.

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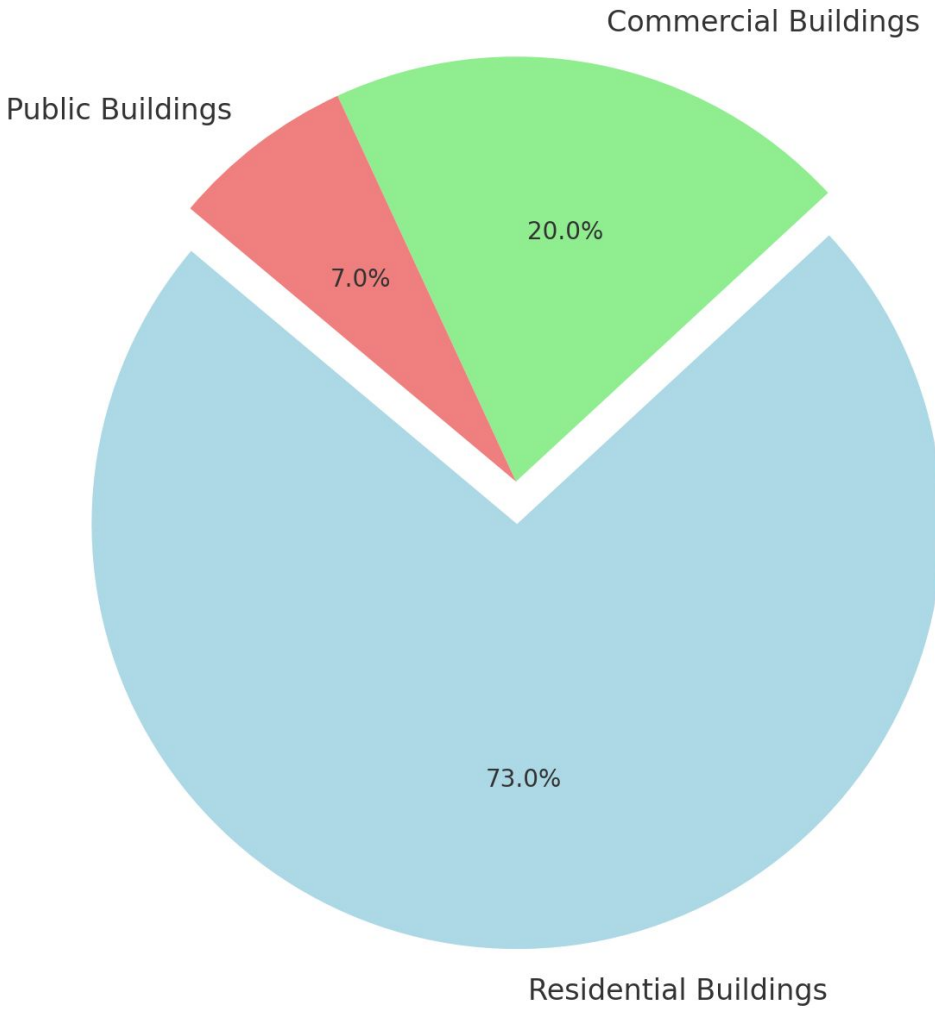
The building stock in Kosovo includes about 300,000 buildings (with a total area of 47.12 million square meters). Residential buildings makeup 73% of this stock, while commercial and public buildings account for 20% and 7%, respectively.

Most of these buildings have low energy efficiency standards, with poor insulation and inefficient heating and cooling systems.
This situation leads to high energy consumption, resulting in high bills for families and businesses,highlighting the significance of energy poverty. This also increases dependence on external energy sources, further straining the country's economy.



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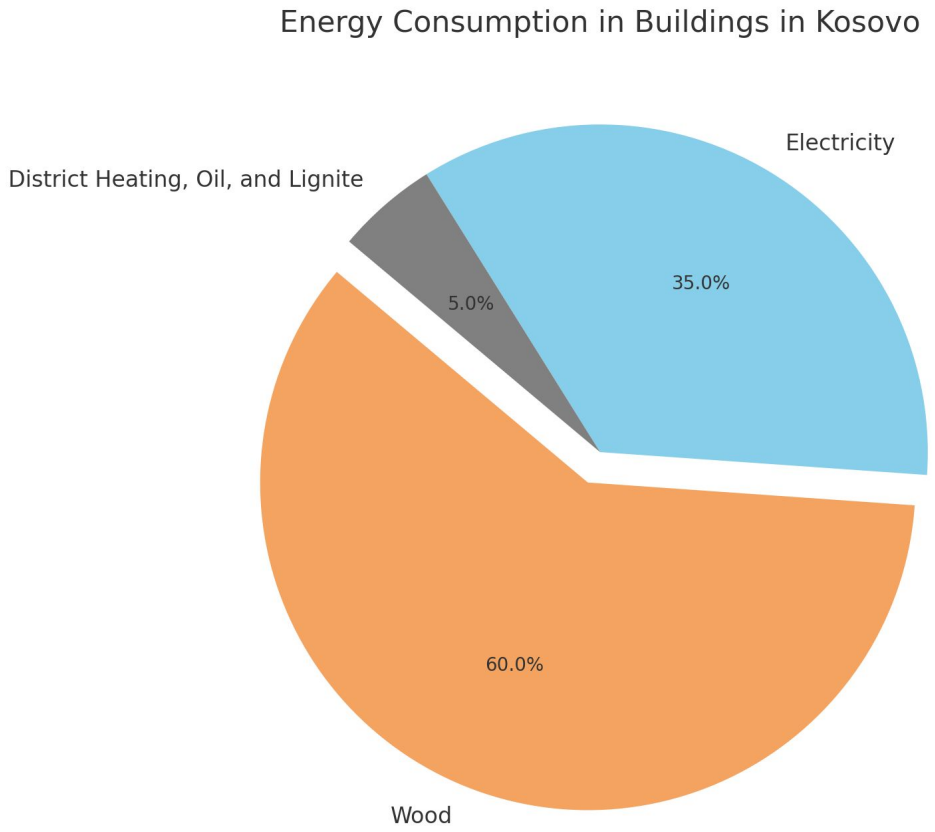

Energy intensity in Kosovo is **25% higher** than the Western Balkan average and nearly three times the EU average, illustrating the use of inefficient technologies that increase energy consumption and costs.

Buildings account for **40%** of the total energy consumption in the country (around 600 ktoe, of which about 60% is wood, 35% is electricity, and the rest is district heating, oil, and lignite), making investment in energy efficiency (EE) in the building sector crucial for improving living conditions and reducing energy poverty by 2050, inline with EU standards. (INDEP, 2024)

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IMPACTS:

- Limited lighting and heating in homes affect students' study conditions.
- School attendance drops in winter months due to inadequate heating.
- Energy poverty leads to increased household debt.
- Reduced productivity due to health-related issues.
- High prevalence of respiratory diseases from poor heating solutions.
- Increased stress and mental health issues due to financial pressure.

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ROLE OF YOUTH:

Deploying #digital skills, #innovative thinking, and #entrepreneurial drive essential for driving the country's energy transition.

- **Addressing Energy Challenges through** youth engagement is important for addressing energy poverty, promoting renewable energy sources, and improving energy efficiency.
- Ensuring **inclusivity** and addressing existing inequalities within the energy sector.
- **Digital Proficiency:** High internet penetration (96.6% in 2024) provides a strong foundation for Kosova’s young people engagement in digital solutions for the energy sector, such as smart grid technologies and data-driven energy management.
- **E**ngagement with **global networks** and international best practices in energy transition is crucial for aligning WB countries energy policies with European standards and sustainability goals.

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What can be done in short term:

- The Statistical Agency should regularly calculate energy poverty **indicators** according to EU guidelines and collect detailed data for a more accurate identification of affected households

- The national assessment of energy poverty should be accompanied by a l**ocal assessment** to help tailor measures and achieve a more targeted effect.

- Due to the increase in energy prices, short-term measures are essential to ease the financial situation of affected families. These measures should focus on vulnerable and **low-income and populations in need** to preserve the process of market liberalization and the energy transition.

- Policies and measures to reduce energy poverty should be included in the National Energy and Climate Plan (**NECP**). Policies promoting energy efficiency, such as investments in buildings as long-term plans, have shown positive results in reducing energy poverty in EU countries, and this is missing in the current NECP draft.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Renewable Energy Expansion:** Accelerate the deployment of solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources to diversify the energy mix and enhance energy security.
- **Energy Efficiency Drive:** Implement comprehensive energy efficiency measures across all sectors, including building retrofits, industrial upgrades, and promoting energy-efficient appliances.
- **Grid Modernization:** Upgrade the electricity grid to accommodate the integration of renewable energy sources and facilitate the development of a modern, resilient, and smart grid.
- **Community-Based Solutions:** Foster the growth of local energy communities to promote renewable energy generationand consumption at the local level.
- **Just Transition:** Ensure a just transition for workers and communities impacted by the shift away from coal, creating new green jobs and supporting affected regions.

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