

## FINAL REPORT

Grant Name: Albanian Center for Entrepreneurial Communities

Grant Number: 3

Grant Start and End Dates: August 1, 2008 – March 30, 2009

Reporting Period: August 1, 2008 – June 15, 2009

### 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This final report includes the results of the whole project time frame (including time frame for no-cost extension). Also period May 1, 2009- June 15, 2009 is included in the Final Report since this period is the last reporting period.*

*ACEC achieved all its project goals and objectives. All the project activities have been implemented and activity documentation is attached to the report.*



*The Project had a great impact in the District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec because it brought a new methodology of court monitoring, that of Citizens Court Monitors, which was not used before in Albania. The Chief Judges of Elbasan and Pogradec expressed in the final workshop the desire to continue the citizens' court monitoring in a later phase to be able to compare the results of the first monitoring with that of the second monitoring. This shows that both Chief Judges appreciate the Citizens Court Monitor initiative as an effective way of measuring how the Court services are scored in the eyes of the public.*

*A monitoring manual of the only kind so far in Albania has been prepared and donated to the judges, chancellors, chief judges, students of law and other professionals. This manual can be used by any Court monitoring group, such as citizens, or a team of Court personnel.*

*Despite ordinary citizens, students of Law University "Luarasi" were recruited to do monitoring of court sessions. This increased the quality of monitoring and also gave the students a chance to see real life stories of what they learn in theory. This initiative contributes to a better preparation of future judges.*

*The project enabled a stronger link between media and district courts. Media became part of the project and part of Citizens Court Monitor group. The results on media participation in the court monitoring showed that not only should the Court do its best to attract media in Court matters, but also media should be more interested in Court accountability to its community and not focus only on "big" stories of crime. Corruption of judges and their ethical behaviors should be in the agenda of media monitoring. The project enabled citizens' information in the absence of on-line information. The project developed flyers that can be updated and printed by the Courts for continuing distribution.*

## 1.2 REPORTING PERIOD PLANNED VS. ACTUAL OUTPUTS

### 1.2.1.1 Planned

#### 1.2.1.1.1 **Establish District Court Monitors Group**

#### 1.2.1.1.2 **Develop District Court Monitor Manual**

#### 1.2.1.2 Actual

*Both activities are completed successfully. The citizens Court monitors were recruited from citizens for Elbasan and Pogradec and from students of Law University “Luarasi”. These groups were trained on Court monitoring and monitored 60 trial sessions in two district courts of Elbasan and Pogradec.*



*The Court Monitoring Manual was developed based on best international court monitoring practices and reflected the suggestions of chief judges, chancellors, lawyers, ROLP, local journalists and monitors. ACEC will distribute this Manual to other NGOs and courts as an attempt to transfer tools and skills to other actors interested in court monitoring in the future and can be used as handy resource for any monitoring initiative that targets a specific Court to be monitored. The Court Monitoring Manual is delivered to ROLP as part of the final report.*

### 1.2.2.1 Planned

#### 1.2.2.1.1 **Develop Court Monitoring Forms and Public Confidential Surveys**

#### 1.2.2.1.2 **Training of District Court Monitors**

#### 1.2.2.1.3 **Conduct District Court Monitoring and Confidential Public Survey**

#### 1.2.2.2 Actual

*All activities are completed successfully. Monitoring forms and surveys are made available in the court monitoring manual. These forms, surveys, are considered as tools that can be used by NGOs to monitor the court performance. These tools can be used even by the court if chief judges and chancellors might want to consider court monitoring.*

*The monitoring tools are in the form of Questionnaires for Court Hearing Monitoring, Citizens Public Opinion Survey, and Judge Interview.*

*These monitoring forms and surveys were developed after receiving feedback from ROLP staff. In order to provide the monitors with the needed skills, training was done on these tools. The training took place in Elbasan in November.*

*The training on District Court Monitors helped the monitor understand the monitoring questions; learn more about Court services and functions and how to handle the process of monitoring. These are skills that the court monitors can use again in other monitoring initiatives. They can be recruited for court monitoring by the courts.*

*The public survey helped the personnel of the courts to see for themselves the public's opinions about them. We hope that the Chief Judges, chancellors and judges of the Elbasan and Pogradec will reflect on the results and recommendations of the monitoring report. For more detailed information on the findings of monitoring report please see **Attachment A “Court Monitoring Report”***

**1.2.3** *Communities of Elbasan and Pogradec, increase their knowledge and understanding on court issues, legal reforms and its effects on Albanian society.*

#### **1.2.3.1 Planned**

##### **1.2.3.1.1 Public Education Program**

##### **1.2.3.2 Actual**

*ACEC planned to broadcast two TV documentaries on Elbasan and Pogradec Court to inform the public on how the court works, its infrastructure, facilities problems and challenges. Public would also receive useful information on how to receive a court service*

*The project staff, in consultation with DPK and USAID has agreed to launch only the Education Program for Pogradec citizens. This was due to the failure of the Elbasan journalist to prepare a good program. The Documentary for Pogradec Court will be aired after the project is over. ACEC will submit a DVD copy of it to ROLP.*

**1.2.4** *Citizens of Pogradec and Elbasan find institutionalized mechanisms to raise concerns about judicial system.*

### **1.2.4.1 Planned**

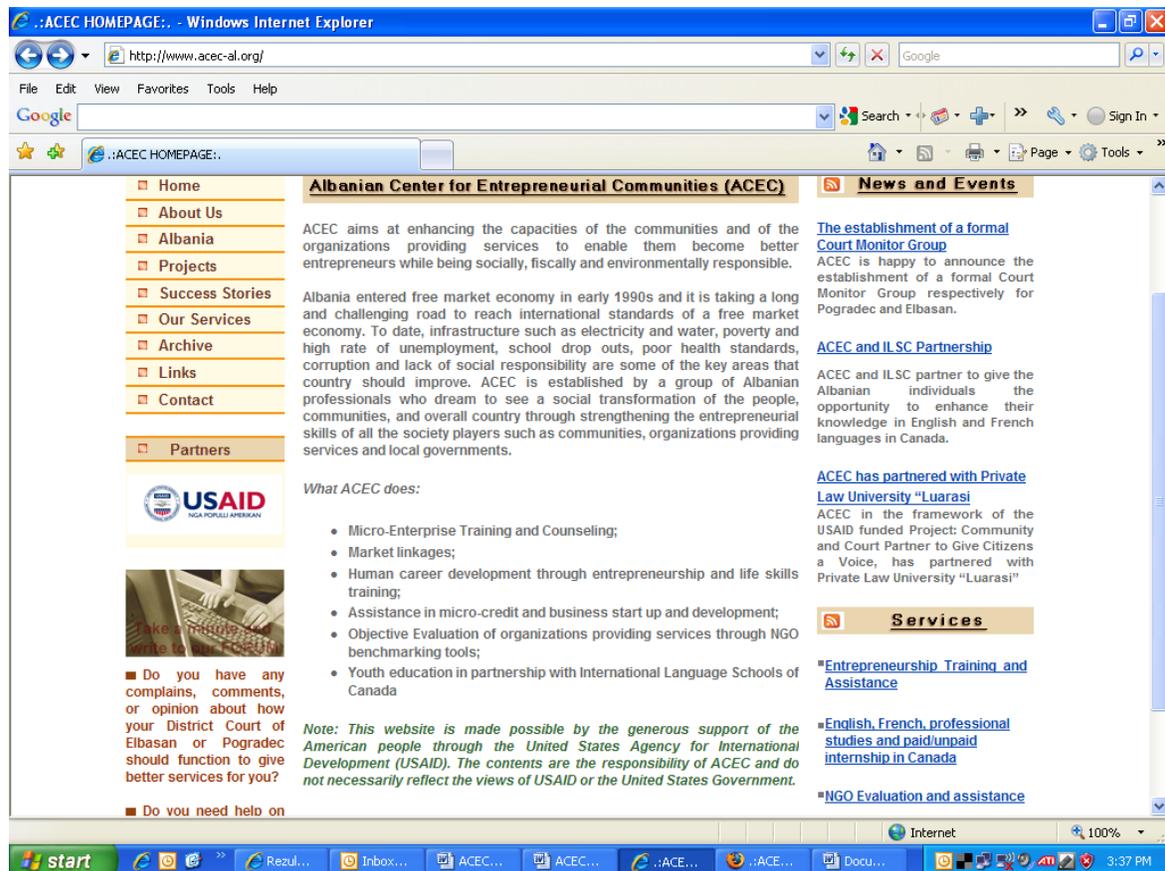
**1.2.4.1.1** *Help Line*

**1.2.4.1.2** *Distribution of Informative Brochures*

### **1.2.4.2 Actual**

*Both activities are completed successfully.*

*ACEC created a website [www.acec-al.org](http://www.acec-al.org) to inform the public on the project. Part of the website is the online forum as a tool to gather citizen's opinion and to present those to the chief judges at the end of the project.*



*The on-line Forum (<http://www.acec-al.org/phpbb3/>) was visited by students and citizens, who expressed their opinions on court performance stressing their concern on the poor infrastructure and services of the courts. The forum is slowly being recognized by public and ACEC hopes that in the future, it will have more visitors.*

*Below are some paragraphs taken by the Forum:*

**A)** *“Can I ask when will be that day when the court notices and other information will hanged on walls by the street, in the outside wall of the court? “*

**B)** *“I think that it is very necessary that public learns about change in relationship of courts with public.”*

**C)** *“A citizen, in order to learn about court procedures must direct himself to the court guard at the gate of the court, or may be to a judge, if he runs into him. The schedule for public meetings with the chancellor in my opinion is very limited”.*

**D)** *“A total lack of security is present in the court during the all 3 days that I did court monitoring, together with a friend of mine, we never were checked for guns or other dangerous materials or if we were OK to enter the court room. The life of the judge or the parties in the court session is in daily danger”.*

*All the opinions, concerns expressed by the citizens and students were part of the Monitoring Report and presented to the Chief Judges and Chancellors of Elbasan and Pogradec Courts. Project staff hopes that the citizens will continue to use the Online Forum.*

*ACEC prepare three types of informative leaflets to inform the public, called respectively: “The Justice System”, “Executives of District Court” and “Civil and Penal Cases and Complain”. The flyers, after being reviewed by ROLP, were printed in different color for each of the flyers topics and were distributed to citizens who were present on that day in the Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec for the business or cases. Citizens showed good interest in reading the flyers and we hope that they have taken them to their homes to share with their friends and family.*



*Citizens of Elbasan read informational flyers*



*Citizens of Pogradec read informational flyers*

### **1.2.5. Final Workshop**

*The final workshop was held on June 12, 2009. Its purpose was to share the results of court monitoring with the chief judges, chancellors, donors, local media, local NGOs, citizens, students and to give an opportunity to participants to discuss the experience of District Court Monitoring, what they learned from it, what they like to continue to use in their daily work from this project. The workshop was attended by USAID representative, Elina Koci, chief of party of DPK, Mr. Frederick Yeager and his staff, the Chief Judges Arben Vrioni and Niko Rapi, their chancellors and few judges from both Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec, students and professors from Law University Luarasi, recruited monitors, representatives for civil society of Elbasan, and citizens that were interested to hear about the results of monitoring of their Courts. Also media played an important role by becoming part of the workshop discussions and broadcasting the event.*

*Below are providing the key points discussed during the workshop:*

*Mr. Frederic Yeager made notice in his speech of the fact that ACEC not only did a good monitoring by identifying the flaws of court services, but also provided recommendations for both Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec. He said that this is done for the first time in Albania by this organization and that providing recommendations in a monitoring report is very important for the monitoring process. The Chief Judge of Elbasan, Arben Vrioni appreciated the monitoring results and he said that students kept ethical behavior during their monitoring. Mr. Vrioni mentioned that the monitoring gave its effect right away: the chief judge moved his session to the court room and this thanks to the monitoring of student Florenc Kavaja. The chief judge of Pogradec expressed that he was happy to read such a professional report. He was happy to learn about positive aspects of his Court but also to learn about flaws that he now can follow up to improve on.*

*It was interesting to see a small debate between the two chief judges with regards to the judge uniform. While the chief of judge of Pogradec justify the 10% of judges wear the uniform with the weak infrastructure of the court, the chief judge of Elbasan did not agree. He said that the lack of big rooms and court room should not be a reason why the judge does not wear the uniform. Just seeing that debate, we think that the monitoring achieved its objective. From the discussions it was made obvious the known problem of the poor court infrastructure and high workload of judges. This in fact reduces the efficiency of the work by the judges and the monitoring report recognized that as an issue outside of control of Chief Judges. However, both chief judges said that they are working hard to improve the infrastructure and that the work has started.*

*Both chief judges expressed that monitoring of the work of their courts are very important. They are interested to see a second monitoring process in order to mark the changes from the first report to the second. The public opinion about their district courts is more positive this time in comparison to the previous opinions. This is due to the fact that judges have improved their accountability and behavior toward public.*

*The issue of safety in the Court was raised by one journalist. The judges put the problem on the poor infrastructure. Recommendation was given during the workshop that courts need to improve the safety in their premises. Mr. Brozi from ROLP suggested that judges, chief judges should make their voice heard in the parliament so that the government can understand why it should provide higher budget for improvement of court conditions. ACEC, as representative of civil society can help in this aspect by sharing the report with the government and raise concerns of chief judges for poor infrastructure.*

*Ms. Luljeta Buza, professor at Law University Luarasi mentioned that in Albania the media is only interested on penal cases instead of focusing more on civil cases and public interest.*

*A student raised the point that media on the other hand should be careful when broadcasting a court case. They should keep confidentiality of the person until exact facts are gathered that prove the story true.*



## **Attachment A**

### ANALITICAL REPORT COURT MONITORING PROGRAM "MONITORING OF ELBASAN AND POGRADEC DISTRICT COURTS" OCTOBER 2008 – JANUARY 2009

#### Summary

*This report represents the results of the monitoring of District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec, conducted in the facilities of these two courts through monitoring a total of 60 sessions in both courts, and through personal interviews with 200 citizens.*

*The report is prepared by the Albanian Center for Entrepreneurial Communities (ACEC), as part of the project: "Community and court partner to give citizens a voice" in the framework of the Project for State of Justice of USAID. The view of the authors does not necessarily represent those of USAID or of the United States of America.*

*ACEC and Project Staff want to thank especially the Chief Judges, Chancellors, and judges and administrators of District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec for their excellent collaboration. .*

#### **a. Purpose of Monitoring**

*Monitoring aimed to collect transparent and independent information with regard to the status of the District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec on:*

- *The way court sessions are conducted*
- *How infrastructure supports or limits the quality of the court services*
- *Identifying the behavior of judges during court sessions, their relationship with parties involved in the case, and with public and media.*
- *Evaluating the public opinion on services of these courts*

#### **b. What was monitored**

- *Access in court's facility*
- *Safety*
- *Solemnity of the Judge*
- *Schedule of sessions and how they were respected*
- *Discrimination toward different groups of age, race, ethnicity, color, and sickness*
- *Relationship of Court with Media*
- *Infrastructure of the Building*
- *Public Information and Public trust toward their Courts*

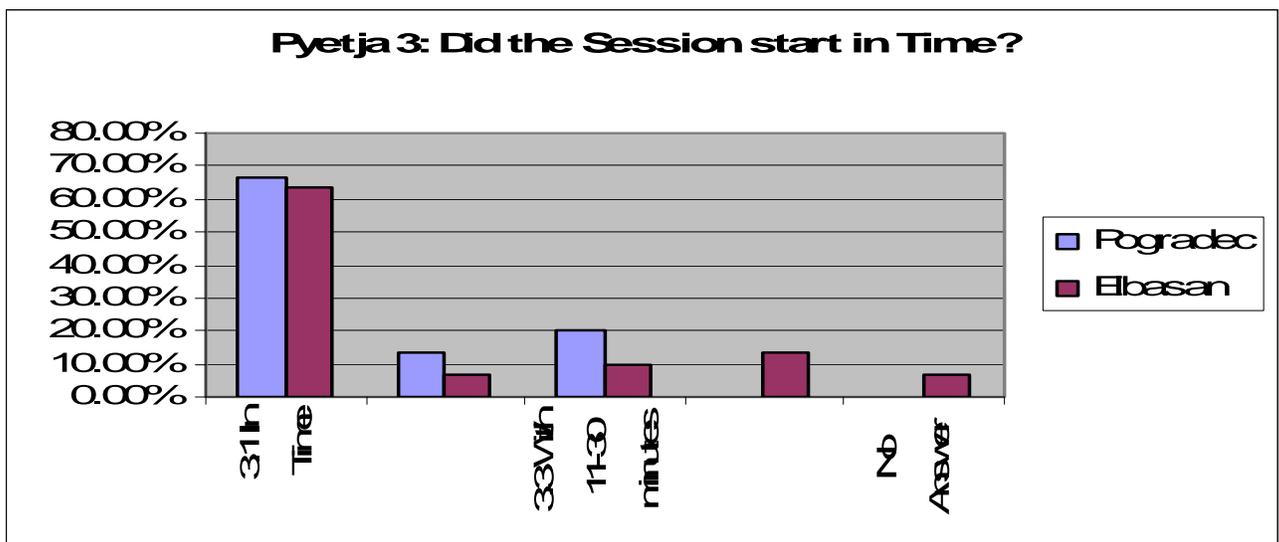
## Monitoring Methodology

Monitoring was conducted through the following processes:

### 1. Monitoring of Court Services

Monitoring was conducted inside the facilities of Elbasan and Pogradec courts, by engaging law students of the Law University “Luarasi”, respectively 4 monitors for Elbasan Court and 3 monitors for Pogradec courts, as well as journalists from these two cities. Monitors monitored 60 sessions in both Courts and observed how Courts’ infrastructure functions to serve citizens.

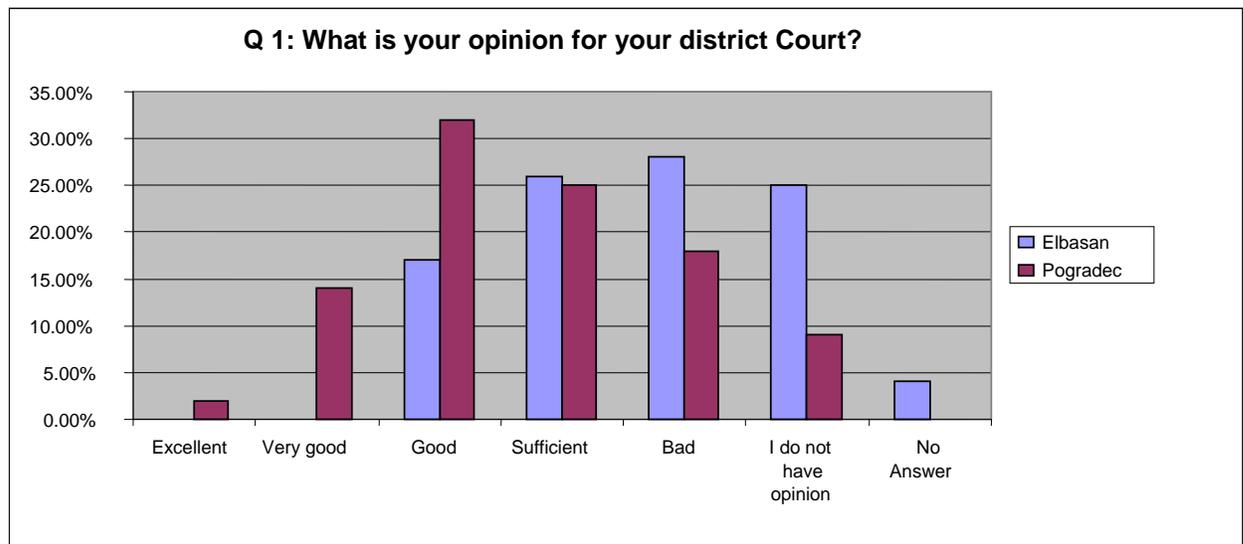
From Court Sessions Monitoring



## 2. Public Opinion Surveys

Monitoring of Public Opinion was done through personal interviews with citizens from both cities. Citizens were chosen randomly among those that were visiting the courts and those met randomly on the street that probably never had any court history.

The Project engaged citizens who were recruited as monitor volunteers – they were willing to devote their time for this very important project. The volunteers surveyed respectively 100 citizens over 18 years old in each of the cities.



From the Public Opinion Survey

## 3. Personal Interview with the Judges from both District Courts

The judges' interview was conducted to understand their personal position and the position of their Court with regard to the services they offer, to understand what their challenges that they face every day are, and to take into consideration their suggestions for further improvement of the hard and soft infrastructure in order to enhance the quality of public services. We interviewed on average 4 judges in each of the Courts, as well as the Chief Judges and Chancellors.

## 4. On Line Page to collect public opinion

ACEC established a webpage at [www.acec-al.org](http://www.acec-al.org), and utilized a forum where citizens can express their ideas and suggestions on any matter that concerns them with regard to their District Courts. These opinions are an integral part of the monitoring process conducted by ACEC. The following are some extracts from the Forum:

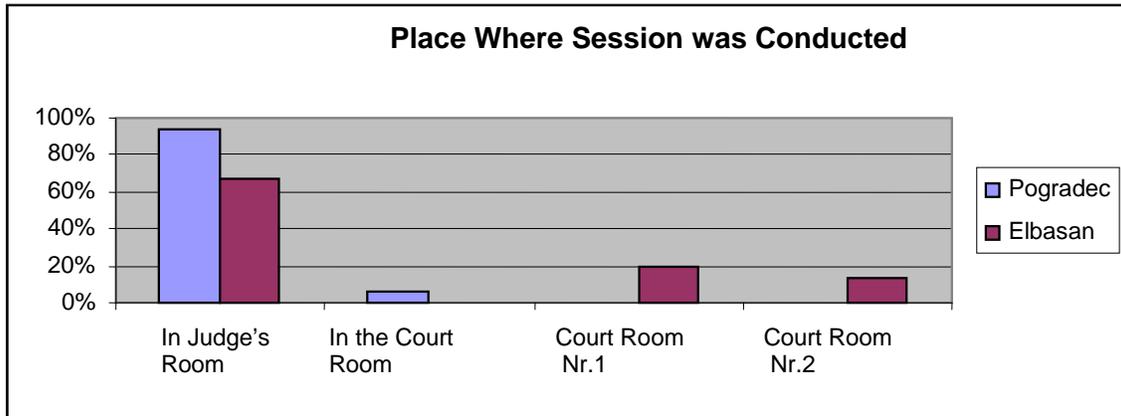
“Any citizen, in order to learn about the court procedures has to direct himself to the court guard or any judge that he/she could meet in the court corridor. In my opinion, the public meeting hours of the Chancellor are very limited.

“It is obvious that there is lack of security in the court. During the three days visit to the Court that I had with a friend of mine, we were never checked for guns or any other dangerous tools that might be a risk during the court session. The life of the judge or parties in the court session is in daily danger”.

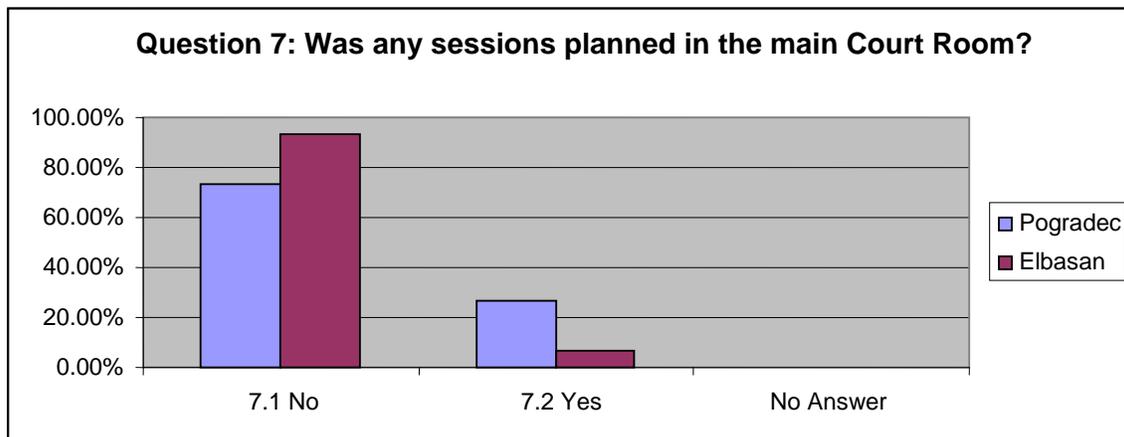
Source: <http://www.acec-al.org/phpbb3/>

## Findings

### 1. Administration of Court Sessions



*On average, 80% of the court sessions in both District Courts were conducted in the judge offices which are very small, and where the plaintiff and the defendant, as well as the judge are very close to each other. Thus, the security of the court personnel and of the public is always in question.*

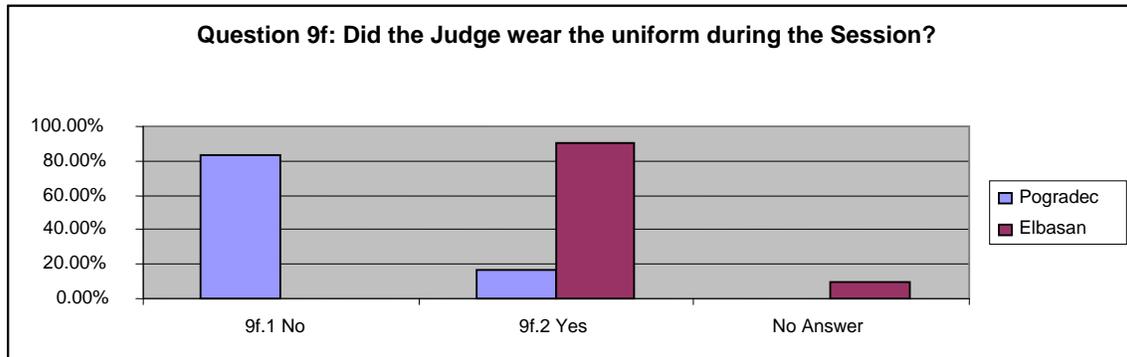


*The Project monitored the main court rooms to see if there was any sessions conducted there during the time that the monitored session was conducted in the judge's room. It was noticed that while the monitored sessions were conducted in the judges' rooms, there was not any advance scheduling of sessions to be held in Court Room and the Court Room was empty during the same time of monitoring. We draw conclusion that the use of judge's room for conducting the court session did not have any correlation with the fact that other sessions were conducted in the Court Room in the same time*

**Recommendation:** *The District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec need to have larger facilities that allow for improvement of the working conditions that in return improves the quality of court services. The Chief Judges of both courts are trying hard to get new buildings or expand the existing ones. However, these Courts can improve the planning and management of schedule of Court Rooms so that the number of sessions conducted in the rooms of judges can be limited to maximum.*

## 2. Solemnity of Judges

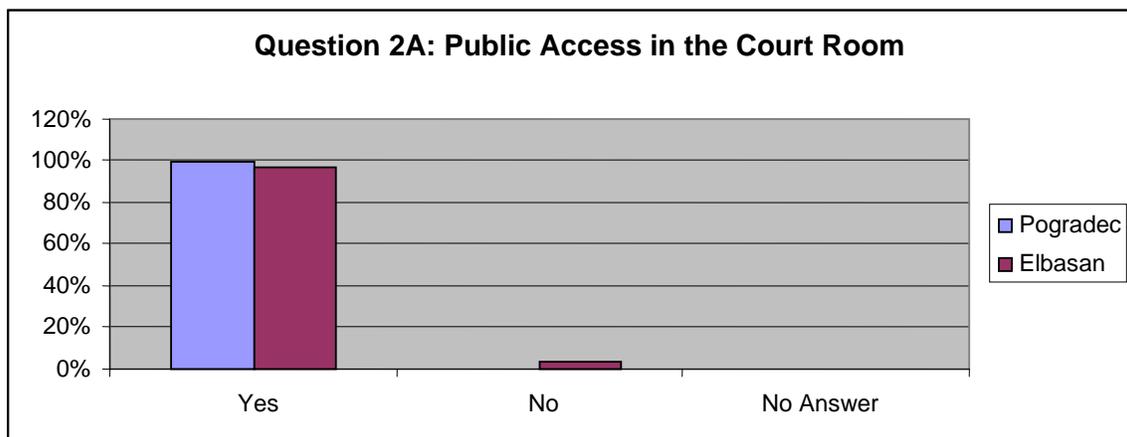
In 83.3% of the sessions monitored in Pogradec and in 10% of the sessions monitored in Elbasan, the judges did not wear their robes.



**Recommendation:** The Judge's robe is used to show respect and authority of the Institute of Law. We recommend that management staff of both district courts should improve the implementation of their rules and regulations, such as the wearing of judicial robes, through a more effective monitoring process. The High Justice Council (KLD) has defined clear ethical rules with this regard.

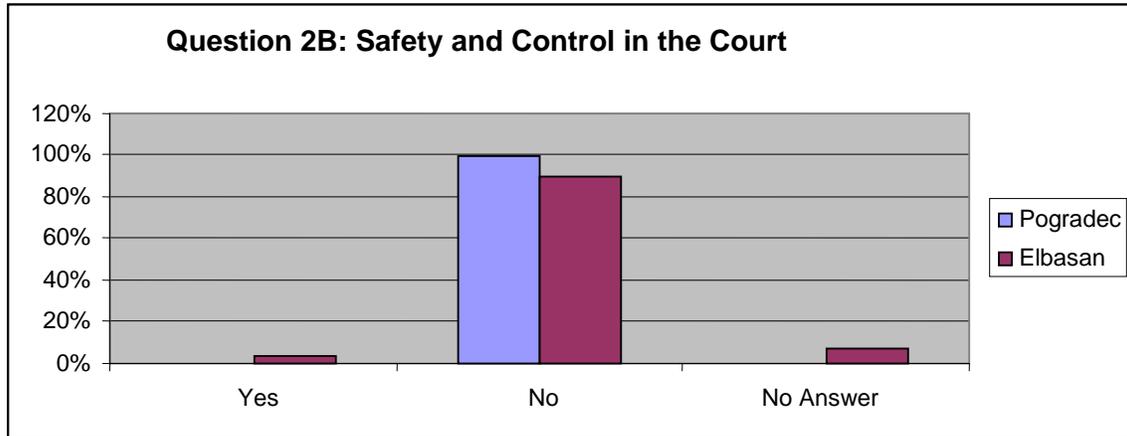
## 3. Public Access to Court Sessions

Both District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec, allow full access of public to their facilities and court sessions. The monitors have identified only one specific case in Elbasan Court where the guard tried to stop one of the monitors entering one of the sessions. In general, it was noticed that the Courts have shown a high improvement in this indicator. The public has been allowed to observe in the court sessions in 100% of the monitored sessions in Pogradec and in 96.7% of monitored sessions in Elbasan.



#### 4. Safety in the Court

In about all sessions monitored in District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec, there is total lack of citizens' control for guns or other dangerous tools. The monitors have identified only one control case in Elbasan.



#### Opinions of Monitors:

*The main problem is safety, it does not exist at all, and I think that this fact can impact the position of the judge. Every judge should have the hammer in use. One judge was using his finger ring to ask for silence. - Elbasan*

*The safety in the Court should be in higher level and the Court should control every citizen. - Elbasan dhe Pogradec*

*The door from which the judge, the plaintiff and defendant, and the public enter the Court Room is the same. I think that each category should have a separate door by which to enter the Room. - Elbasan*

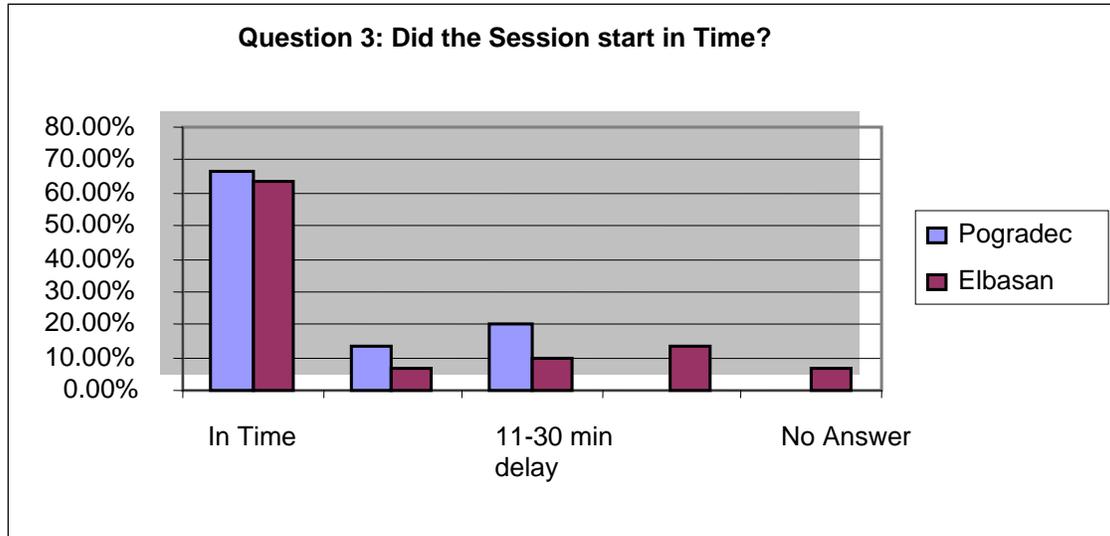
**Recommendation:** *The Chief Judge and the Chancellor should take maximum measures to ensure higher safety for their judges, parties in court process and public. The courts should use electronic methods of control, such as cameras and digital checking doors. We hope that Courts will be able to secure budgets for such important elements.*

#### 5. Timing of Court Sessions

From the monitoring of 30 sessions in Elbasan, only 63.3 % of them started on time. From the monitoring of 30 sessions in Pogradec, only 66.7% started on time.

In Elbasan, about 13.3% of the sessions started with over 30 minutes delay and in Pogradec, about 20% of the sessions started with 11-30 minutes delay.

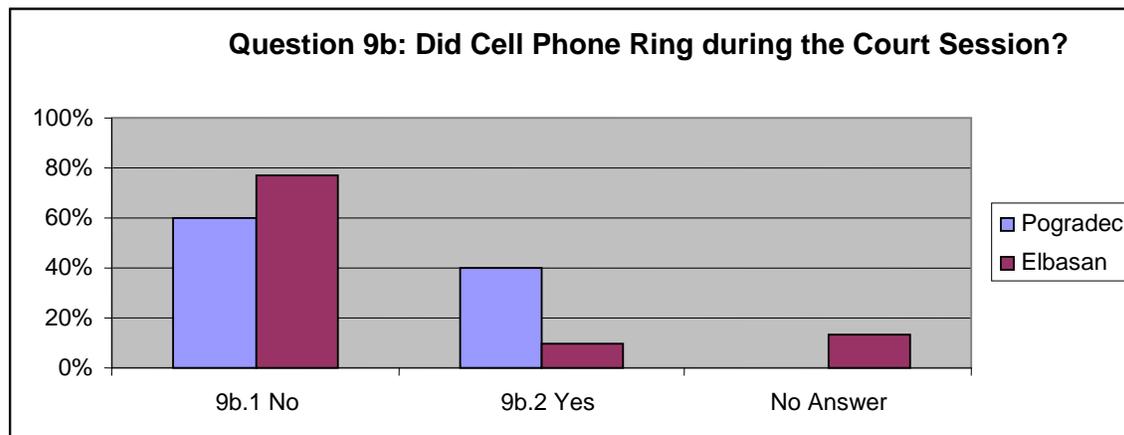
What is of a higher concern is the fact that judges did not consider it as obligatory to explain the reason of their delay. In 46.7% of the sessions monitored in Pogradec and in 16.7% of the sessions monitored in Elbasan, judges did not give any reasons at all.



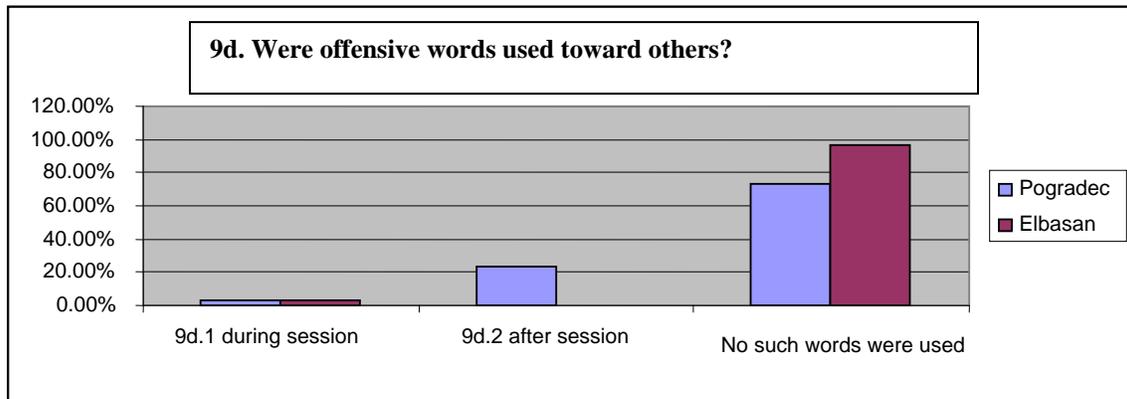
**Recommendation:** *Although in Albanian culture these delays might not seem important, an important institution such as the District Court should show high professionalism by starting from the “small” things, such as respect of time and schedule. It should be obligatory that the judge explains the reasons for his/her delay of the start of sessions because again it shows ethical behavior and higher professionalism. Some times the delay might come from the heavy workload of judges, or from delays in administration process (i.e. the file is not yet complete). Maybe the Courts need to add personnel but that depends on the budget allocations, or the Court might need to improve its operational procedures. However, we recommend that the Chancellor analysis these facts with their personnel to improve Court public image*

## 6. Discipline during Court Session

**a. Use of Cell phone:** *In 40% of the sessions monitored in Pogradec and in 10% of sessions monitored in Elbasan, judges and parties involved in the case used the cell phone.*



**b. Use of Offensive Words:** *In almost all the sessions monitored, the judges of Elbasan and Pogradec never used offensive words toward public. There was only one specific case in Pogradec.*



*In general the monitors have noticed professional and ethical behavior of judges and of court personnel. The cases in which lack of professionalism has been identified are small in number.*

*Below are some notes made by monitors:*

*The noise made outside of judge office by the court personnel was causing destruction during the court session- **Elbasan and Pogradec***

*The behavior of the judge was very professional. She kept objectivity during the process. - **Elbasan***

*There were many people involved in this case and I did not have a place where to sit – **Elbasan***

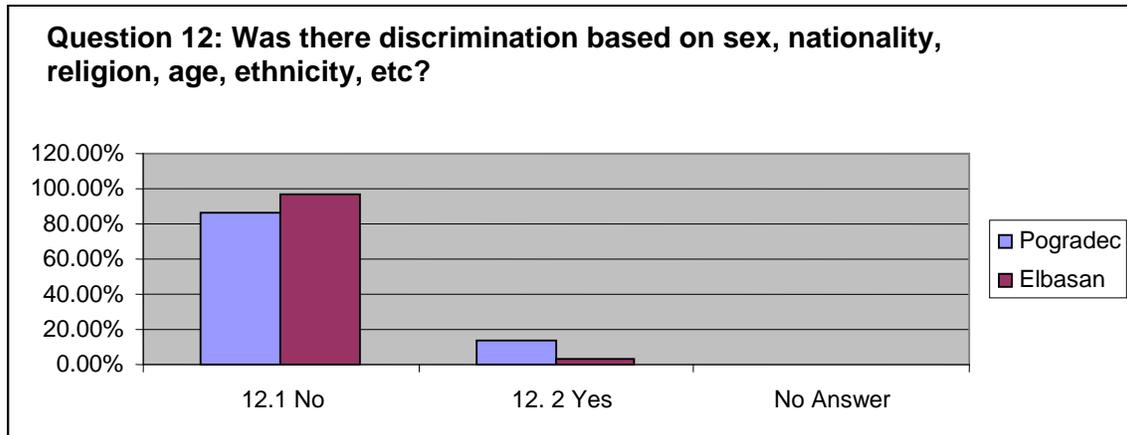
*I was stunt when I noticed that the secretary was missing during the court session. The judge continued alone in giving the court order and keeping notes by handwriting. - **Elbasan***

*I did not like the way how the secretary was dressed up. He had sportive outfit and also was very slow in writing the court notes. This caused delay of the process. The other secretaries were opening the door and were communicating with the judge of the case. . - **Pogradec***

*I liked the behavior of the secretary, she explained how the computer monitor was functioning and that the parties of the case and public could read what she was writing. – **Pogradec***

*The behavior of the court administration was correct, or better to say perfect. They allowed me to enter the court session and everybody respected me. - **Pogradec***

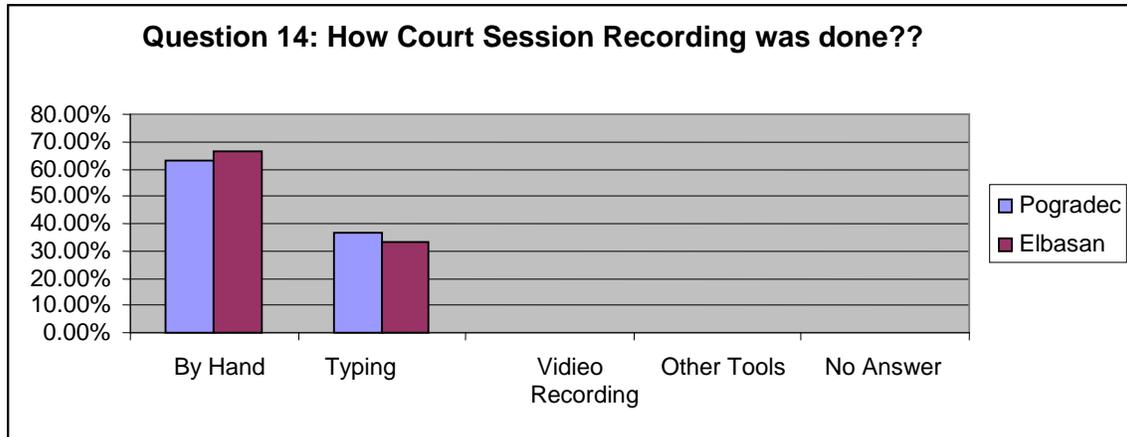
**c. Discrimination.** In 85% of monitored sessions in Elbasan and Pogradec, the judges and court personnel have not shown discriminatory behavior. There was one case of a judge in Pogradec, as mentioned above, who used offensive words toward one party involved in the case, and one judge in Elbasan who raised his voice toward the monitor and did not allow him to get the information that this monitor was requesting.



**Recommendation:** The District Courts should improve the implementation of the internal rules and regulations in order to show high ethical standards. One of the indicators for high ethical standards should be no use of a cell phone during hearings. The public should be notified to turn off cell phones. Although the cases of discriminatory behavior are rare, the Courts should have in place and should apply procedures of reporting these cases and should take measures so that they do not happen again. The courts should enforce internal monitoring so that the internal procedures are respected by all court staff. Also, the Chief Judge and Chancellor could organize trainings on work ethics for their personnel.

## 7. Court Session Notes

One of the standards under monitoring was also how the session notes were recorded. In 60% of sessions monitored in both courts the notes were handwritten, which have caused delays in the process and might reduce the reliability of the information (some details of facts might not be recorded for lack of time). Monitors have noticed computers in the court rooms but in many cases they have not been used.

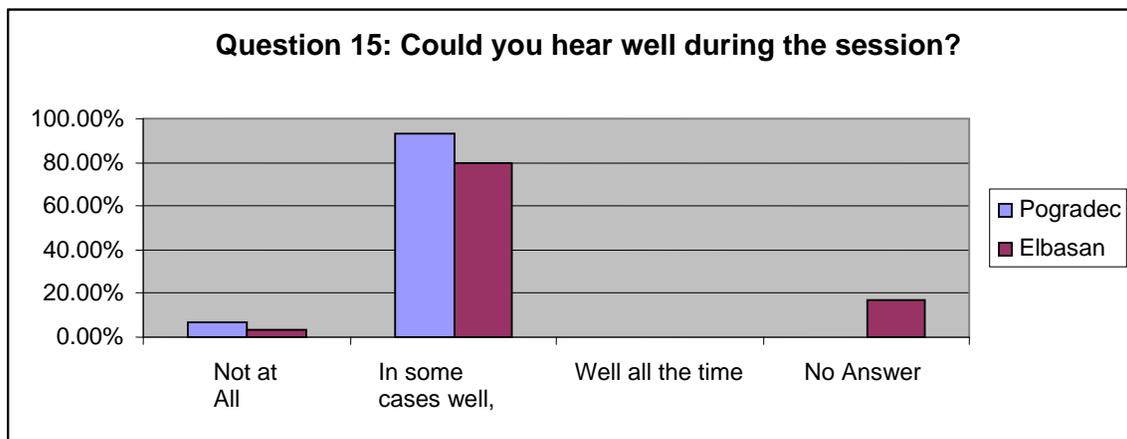


*The courts have all the possibilities to record notes by printing on computers. Maybe more training might be needed to be organized for computer skills. We recommend that the Chief Judges take measures to limit to maximum the handwriting of session's notes.*

### **8. Hearing in the Court Room**

*The court rooms did not have microphones (or they were not in use). However, the monitors were able to hear through out the session well in 94% of the sessions monitored, regardless of the position where they were sitting: in front, in the middle or at the back of the room. Some of the reasons when they could not hear well were:*

- *Outside of the building was too much noise and could inhibit hearing inside the room.*
- *The parties involved in the case were making noise.*
- *Defense lawyer was speaking in low voice and very fast.*

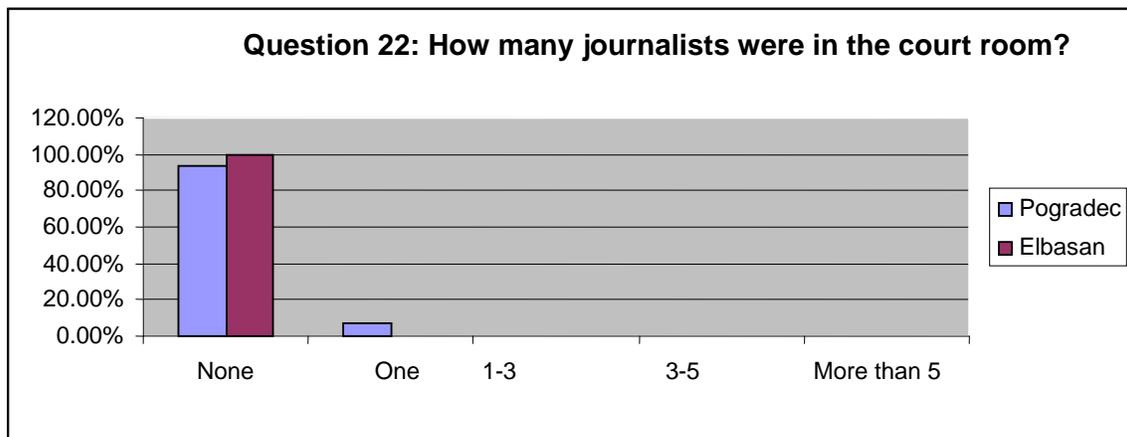


*The Courts should apply the Ethic Code to establish conditions that judges, personnel and public respect silence especially in court rooms.*

## 9. Relationship of District Court with Media

In 90% of the sessions monitored the presence of media was zero. We interviewed the judges to understand what they think about the media presence in the courts. They recommended that their courts should have a public relations department which can regulate the relationship with the media. The judges themselves are not allowed to call media upon their initiative.

In order to monitor whether media would be allowed in the court sessions and to give local media an opportunity to link with their district courts, the project staff sent local journalist to monitor respectively 6 sessions in the District Court of Elbasan and 6 in that of Pogradec. In all the cases the journalists were allowed to enter the sessions. They kept notes by hand because they should have prior permission for video registration of the session. The permission has been given by the Chief Judge of Elbasan in one case, but the parties involved in the court case as well as judges were very sensitive to the presence of media with video camera.



**Recommendation:** The Media-Court relationship can be regulated by institutional collaboration. A public relations department might be necessary to inform media on the cases to be scheduled by the Court. Maybe the calendar of sessions to be conducted the following week can be sent regularly to the local media. Media also will be present if a case is of high interest to the public.

## 10. Court Building

In both District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec there is lack of rooms for public and for judges where they can review their court materials, or can sit and wait, or drink a coffee, or make photocopy of their materials if needed. Usually these types of services are completed outside of the Court Building, near the small businesses of notary, photocopy or coffee shop.

Below are the observations of the monitors:

Pogradec

*The rooms are 2.50 by 4 m. Temperature is normal, the distance of judge by the parties is 1 m. There is only one window and partially other needed equipment. Safety measures are not good. Lightening and Cleanness are good. (In the judge's room)*

#### Elbasan

*The room is good for conducting a normal court process. I think that cleanness and lightening need to be improved. There were writings on the chairs. (Court Room)*

*Room is very small (Judge's office)*

*Room is small. Lightening is not very good. The judge had to free her chair to let the secretary use her computer to keep the notes of the session. (Office of the judge)*

*With regard to access of handicap individuals to the building, such as the use of a specific path for people in wheelchairs, in both courts there is total lack of such opportunities.*

*Safety in the building is weak. Cleanness is evaluated as good, the functioning of the building as good, and the access to exit in case of fire is evaluated as "not so good".*

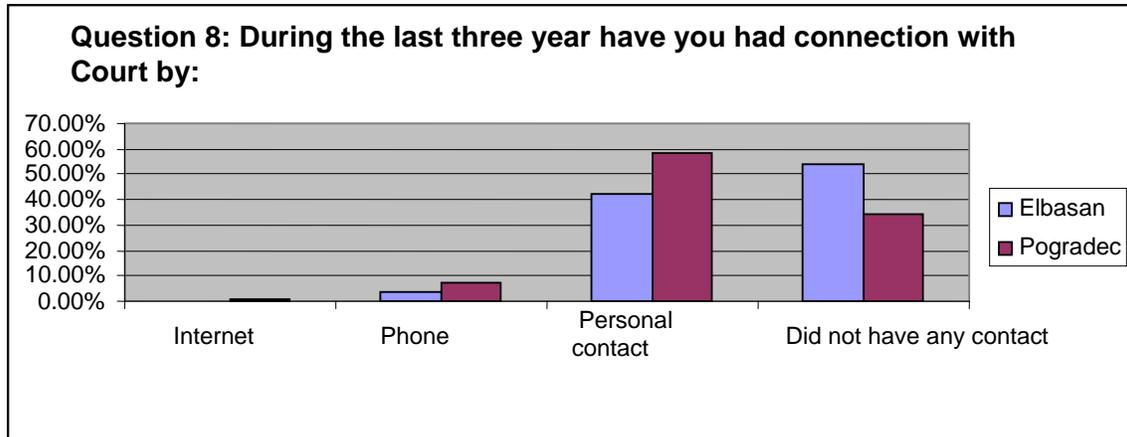
***Recommendations:*** *It is clear that the Court buildings need to be bigger and Chief Judges of Elbasan and Pogradec are working on building new District Courts or expanding the existing ones. We recommend that if possible, when they design the new buildings, the Chief Judges plan for spaces of photocopy service and coffee shop, in order to establish more comfortable environment and quality service for public. These services will also help them increase budget revenues. We recommend that access of handicap individuals to court and access to fire stairs should be taken into consideration when the new buildings are constructed.*

### **11. Publication of Information**

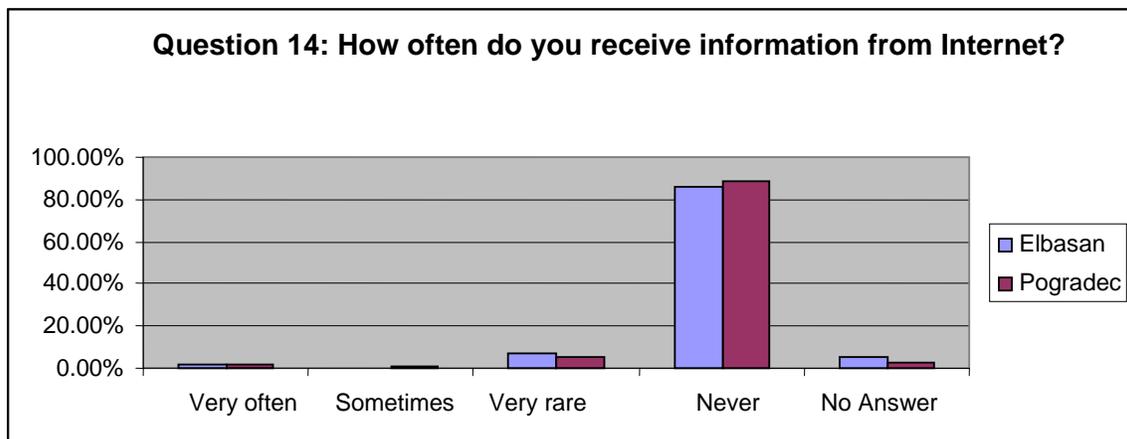
*The publication of information is given on the outside walls of the Courts. Both Courts did not have electronic means of information sharing during the court monitoring time, but shortly after, these Courts have secured the electronic screens.*

#### **Information of Citizens**

*In order to understand if the citizens receive information from their District Court through different means of communication, we asked them if they have received information from internet, radio, telephone, newspaper and other means as well as through personal direct contacts in the Court and how satisfied were they with information received.*



From all interviewed, 45% of them have received information through direct visit to the Court and other 45% had never have contact with the court. Internet is almost unknown for the citizens interviewed. One of the reasons is that both Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec do not have webpage and because majority of the individuals interviewed were over 40 years old, with only secondary education and not users of internet. To enhance the knowledge of citizens on Court procedures, court administration and fees, the project prepared and distributed 800 flyers with information on court procedures, role of chief judge and chancellors, and on how to file for a case.



With regards to the use of telephone for communication with the court, 25% of interviewed in Elbasan and 15% of interviewed in Pogradec are very unsatisfied. They were not able to receive any useful information through telephone communication.

**Recommendation:** The Court will increase its professionalism and efficiency if it adds the phone lines in service of citizens and trains the customer services who answer the phone to provide accurate information.

### Public Opinion of District Court

From the public surveys in Elbasan and Pogradec, it results that the public trust on their district court is still weak.

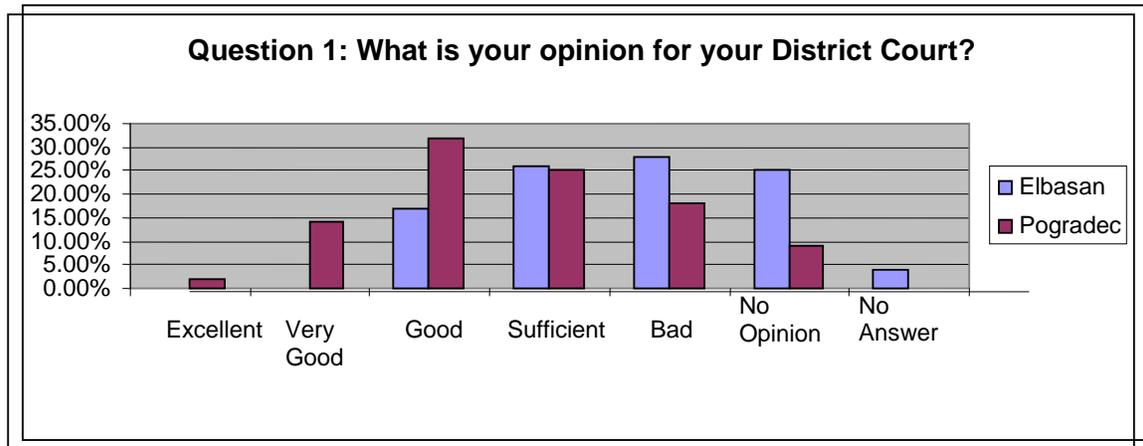
About 32% of 100 citizens interviewed in Pogradec, and 17% of 100 citizens interviewed in Elbasan have good opinion about their court.

18% in Pogradec and 28% in Elbasan have bad opinion, and 25% in Elbasan and 9% in Pogradec do not have any opinion at all about their court. Only 14% in Pogradec have very good opinion about their court.

From this analysis it is obvious that none of the interviewed citizens expressed excellent opinion about their court, while some of them have not hesitated to say that they have bad opinion. We suggest that the courts should work harder to improve the quality of their services and public trust.

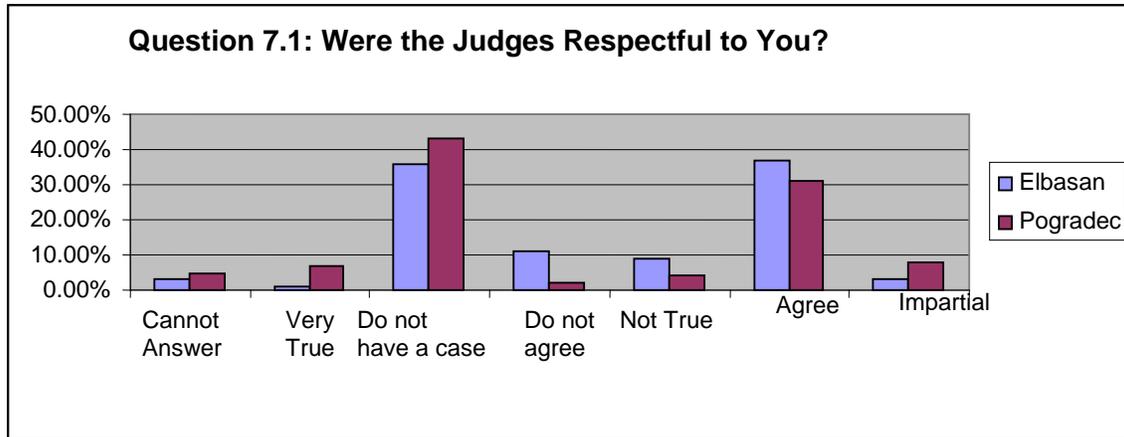
The majority of the interviewed citizens that have expressed “bad” or “sufficient” opinion for their courts belong to the group of citizens that either they or their family members had a case in the court. Thus, their opinion is based on their personal experience with the court.

### Trust on District Court



37% of the interviewed in Elbasan and 31% of those in Pogradec agree that the judge and court personnel have respected them, and have listened to the parties involved in the case.

12% in Elbasan agree that the judge has spent sufficient time with the parties involved in the case.

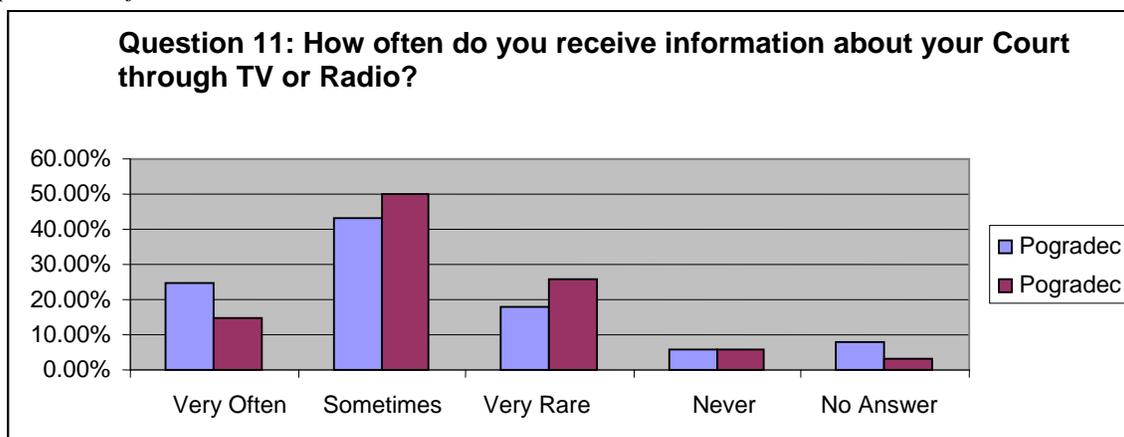


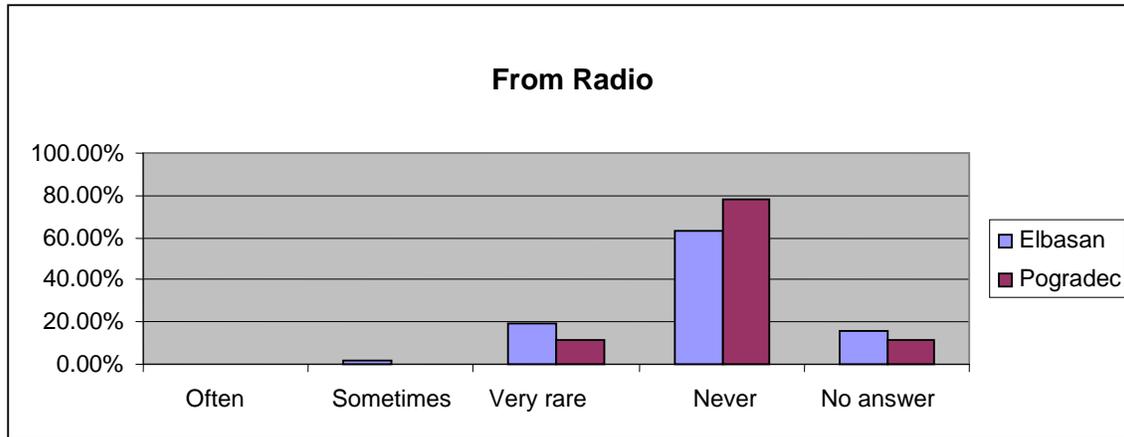
21% of the interviewed in Elbasan and 13% in Pogradec do not agree that the judge or someone else from the court was helping them; 17% in Elbasan agree that the judge has been just, but 17% do not agree; 15% in Pogradec agree that the judge has been just, but 7% do not agree.

18% in Elbasan and 8% in Pogradec do not agree that they received accurate information, but 13% in Pogradec agree that they received accurate information.

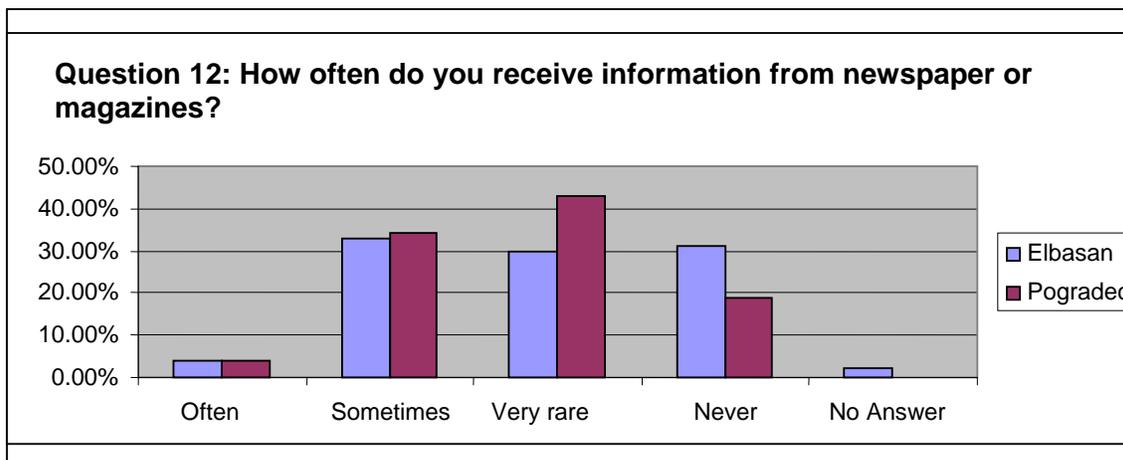
With regards to direct contact with the personnel of the Court, 16% in Elbasan and 23% in Pogradec are somewhat unsatisfied, 17% in Pogradec are very satisfied, and 16% in Elbasan very unsatisfied. These data demonstrates that the courts need to enhance their effectiveness and accuracy of information for the public. We recommend that the courts make available phone lines so that the citizens are not forced to visit the court from long distances for any questions that they might have. On line information is also necessary.

When citizens were asked about media as a source of information, 25% in Elbasan and 15% in Pogradec said that they receive information from television news and programs, 43% in Elbasan and 50% in Pogradec said that they rarely receive information through media, and 18% in Elbasan and 26% in Pogradec said very rarely. Receiving information from radios is also rare. These facts correspond with the results of the court sessions monitoring, where the presence of media was almost zero.





*It is almost an equal balance of answers with regards to magazines or newspapers as sources of information. About 33% in Elbasan and Pogradec receive judicial news sometimes, 30% in Elbasan and 43% in Pogradec receive news very rarely, and 31% in Elbasan and 19% in Pogradec never receive news from these two resources.*



*The conclusion is that the only sources of information for the public are the Court itself where the citizens must walk physically there, the TV programs, and the word of mouth. Legal teaching in schools almost does not exist. Civil society is not viewed by the public as source of information, the city library also.*

*We recommend that the District Courts take initiatives to educate the public with regard to the services they offer, the administration procedures and other necessary legal information. Courts can involve in the process of education high school pupils and University students, and the city library through distribution of posters and flyers that provide useful information for the citizens. City Libraries can have references of laws and other useful legal literacy. Legal education in schools, starting from lower grades such as pre-school, is necessary because children can help their parents to understand laws better, to find information on line, and to use other source of information.*

*ACEC helped a little bit by preparing 4 different flyers for each of the District Courts of Elbasan and Pogradec with general legal information, such as court structure and personnel,*

*role of Chief Judge and Chancellor, and how to file and petition for cases. About 800 flyers were distributed in both courts.*