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Olta Sokoli and Reiner Doluschitz

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Albania is a country with a specific profile and history, a favourable climate and geographical location, and is continuously building new bridges to improve social and economic life. A careful analysis of history provides awareness of a sustainable path for the future. As a post-communist country, the economy of Albania has gone through many ups and downs. Identified as having a fragmented land structure and predominantly subsistence farming, it shows the need for intervention in this situation. The co-operative organisation has been one of the victims of historical development. Moreover, due to potential conflicts with the political system, there has been no appropriate opportunity to adapt to the broad concept of co-operation in recent decades. As such, the co-operative phenomenon is still new despite the introduction of new co-operative law to support development of co-operatives in Albania. This paper focuses on farmers' experiences and identifies elements that are crucial in influencing co-operation among farmers. While some have had a positive experience of being part of a co-operative, for the majority it is still hard to distinguish the communist co-operatives from the democratic and voluntary access/membership co-operatives. This might be one reason that farmers are hesitant to get involved in a co-operative.

Introduction and Background

Albania is located geographically in south-eastern Europe, in the western part of the Balkans. In the northern part, Albania has common borders with Montenegro, in the north-east it borders with Kosovo, in the east it is bounded by Macedonia, while in the south we find common borders with Greece. In the western part, Albania has natural borders, the Adriatic and Ionian seas. Albania has a total area of approximately 28,700 square kilometres.

Demographic developments show that the Albanian population is decreasing, while population structure shows that the population is ageing. From the beginning of 2013 until the beginning of 2018, the population of Albania has decreased by some 27,000 inhabitants. Population changes are due to two essential components: natural increase (births) and decrease (deaths), and net migration. As seen in Table 1, in 2017, of the average total population of Albania, children and young people (0-14 years) constituted approximately 18%; the working-age population (15-64 years) is estimated at 69% of the total population, while the population over 65 years constituted 13% of the total.

Table 1: Group age of the Albanian population for 2017

Age Group	0-14 years	15-64 years	over 65 years
Percentage	18%	69%	13%

Based on the World Bank data (2018a), a reduction in population numbers of the age group 0-14 years and 15-64 years is anticipated, so by 2060 the age groups 65-79 and 80+ are expected to increase.

Net migration also has a significant influence on the fluctuation of the population growth because of economic issues. In the early 1990s, there was a decrease in the number of inhabitants living in rural areas (Hall, 1996). After communism, migration, whether rural to urban or internationally, has become the most common livelihood coping strategy in the country, and serves as a critical escape valve from unemployment and other economic difficulties brought on by the transition to a market economy (Carletto, Davis, Stampini & Zezza, 2006). These two main influences on population present profound changes and challenges in the social and economic development of the country as well as respective policy reflections and adjustment to be made.

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Agriculture is a significant and critical segment of the social and economic sectors in Albania (World Bank, 2018b). Even with the negative changes in the last years, it remains one of the sectors with a significant impact on the national GDP representing a share of 19% in 2017 (Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), 2020). Livestock has been and remains one of the most vital sectors of the progress of the country. Valuable foods such as meat, milk, eggs, honey, and processed products are delivered from livestock. Governmental arrangements have shown to have a high impact, especially when it comes to a sensitive and fragile but vital sector like agriculture. Since the formation of the first Albanian government in 1912, Albania's administrative division has undergone constant changes throughout history both in terms of geographic extent and structural functions. It has continued with an endless series of changes (Ibrahimaj, 2018).

Co-operatives have proven to be a very successful vehicle in many developing and transition countries (Sokoli & Doluschitz, 2019) and the inspiration for this research arose from legal problems and the lack of initiatives from policymakers to promote co-operatives with farmers as members. Numerous obstacles such as infrastructure, bargaining power, access to the market, have a negative impact on the co-operative system and founding of co-operatives in Albania. The current situation is one where major parts of the agricultural land are highly fragmented, and most farms are family farms. A such, farmers produce mainly for their own consumption (subsistence) and a small share for the domestic market.

This status quo is part of an historical series of events starting with agrarian land reform and collectivisation in 1945. At that time, land (property rights) was declared state property and in the period 1959-1990, communist co-operatives were predominant in Albania. The state had taken over control of all the activities of the co-operatives (Sokoli & Doluschitz, 2019). In the 1990s, the communist co-operatives and many other organisations were terminated mainly due to the migration of the population, especially to western Europe.

Significant changes occurred following the country's political and economic changes after 1990. In 2014, with the decision of the Albanian Parliament, a new administrative-territorial organisation of Albania was approved. It divides the country into 12 prefectures and 61 municipalities with subdivisions provided by law (Law 115/2014). Former municipalities and communes continue to be functional and are considered to be administrative units which constitute new municipalities.

The Fier region, which is a focal area of the research, is the second-largest region in the country. The population of Fier district is divided into six municipalities. The following will show some facts based on the country's statistical institute — INSTAT (Ibrahimaj, 2018; Institute of Statistics, 2018). Our research is focused on the dairy (milk) sector and Fier is the region with the largest number of breeding cattle, 14.5% (Institute of Statistics, 2018).

Referring to the structure of livestock in livestock units, according to recent statistics (Institute of Statistics, 2018, p. 170), in 2017, cattle have the largest number of heads with 47% of the total number. Sheep and goats are 31%, pigs 6%, and other groups 16% of the total number of heads of livestock units (Biçoku & Uruçi, 2013) — see Table 2. In 2017, the quantity of milk collected was approximately 131 thousand tons increasing by 5%, compared to 2016. In this period, the quantity of cows' milk delivered to dairies is approximately 110 thousand tons, increasing by 6.6% compared to 2016.

Table 2: Structure of livestock in Albanian agriculture in 2017

	Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Pigs	Others
Livestock structure total number of heads	47%	31%	6%	16%

Source: Institute of Statistics, 2018.

In this paper, the co-operative Myzeqeja Farm is examined as one of the best examples of co-operative implementation in Albania. The understanding of earlier movements and developments is crucial for explanation of the co-operative development, situation, and perspectives. The paper is structured as follows: the next section provides an overview of the research methods, the subsequent section shows the results and is divided in two subsections: a co-operative case, Myzeqeja Farm, and an overview of the Heifer Project (interview with the executive director of the Livestock and Rural Development Centre — http://bzhr.org); analysis of secondary data to produce a SWOT profile of agriculture sector; and analysis of a farmer survey. The last section is discussion and conclusions.

Methods

An important step included the results obtained from the analysis of the interviews with farmers to distinguish whether they were willing to embrace co-operatives and be members of one. Additionally, it was crucial to find out whether farmers were willing to give the co-operative form a new chance and their trust in order to generate more power to achieve more convenient access to the market. This organisational form might strengthen the position of the primary agricultural stage within the agri-food supply chain. In order to explore this, a number of actions have taken place, including: a workshop with currently identified co-operatives (mostly registered as NGOs or as co-operatives); interviews with farmers who are part of these organisations, specifically Myzeqeja Farm co-operative members; and interviews with farmers who may wish to join these initiatives but have not yet taken this step.

Data collection took place in 2017, after researching secondary data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD — https://bujqesia.gov.al); the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT - http://instat.gov.al); and expert interviews with researchers in Albania and other independent institutions like GIZ (https://www.giz.de) or the Food and Agriculture Agency of the United Nations (http://www.fao.org) who have conducted important research to support farmers initiatives. Subsequently, the farmers' production has been determined to identify the most appropriate area for the research. Due to this secondary research, the prefecture of Fier was chosen as the main area of milk production in Albania and the sector of dairy as processed food. Several problems that farmers confront are analysed and later a SWOT analysis was conducted to identify the obstacles and opportunities that this sector is facing. Farmers have a confused feeling when we talk about co-operatives. It is important to underline that the term "co-operative" was not used directly to ask farmers because of the negative perception and image created based on the past.

Descriptive analysis of the sample

From the total sample of 238 interviewees, 71% of the interviewees were male, and 29% female (figures rounded). In our sample, 56% have only primary education, and 41% have a high school education, and approximately 3% have a university degree (figures rounded). During the communist time, there were two kinds of diplomas issued by the government, especially in rural areas: professional high school with a focus on agriculture and the other one was a general high school degree. Of the 41% of interviewees with a high school degree, 10.5% have a professional high school diploma in agriculture and 30.7% have a general high school education (see Table 3).

Table 3: Socio-demographic aspects of the sample

Gender	Male			Female	
	70.6%			29.4%	
Age	Up to 25 years	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	56 and over
	2.1%	7.1%	15.1%	38.2%	37.4%
Education	Elementary School	General High School	The High School in Agriculture	University	
	55.9%	10.5%	30.7%	2.9%	

Source: author data elaboration analysis

Co-operative Case — Myzeqeja Farm

Myzeqeja Farm is one of the most important examples of co-operative implementation in Albania. It is essential to state that this co-operative is small compared to the size of co-operatives in developing countries or in countries where co-operatives have been promoted, supported, and developed for many years. We had the chance to interview 30 farmers who are part of this association. There are many other farmers or business firms who are registered as co-operatives, but do not run based on the values and principles of co-operatives. For instance, they do collect the farmers' production, but they do not involve the farmers and do not share the benefit from the price negotiation with them. Mostly, they choose the identification as a co-operative to benefit from different donations and training offered on behalf of promoting the co-operative movement.

The co-operative was established in 1999, when a group of farmers decided to work and organise an organisation together. After only one year, 12 farmers were registered as an organisation. With the support of the Livestock and Rural Development Association, they had the opportunity to be part of the Dutch project called Heifer, part of Heifer International (https://www.heifer.org). The project began in 2005 and, as its name suggests, has provided pregnant heifers to approximately 400 indigent families in Lushnja, Berat, and Fieri; communities without cows on their farms. The twelve farmers of the organisation received Irish cows, and as an organisation at that time, they also received two big cooling tanks to keep the milk in proper condition. The Heifer project not only donated the cows and heifers to the farmers of the region, it also trained farmers on issues such as "practical feeding, preparation of rations, manure management, preparation of hay and silage, and mechanisation. Training on animal health, breeding and artificial insemination was also organised for local technicians and farmers" (Heifer International, 2010, para 6).

With the support received from this project, the farmers decided to take the advantage of this and enjoy a further step in their development. In 2014, with the proposal of the Livestock and Rural Development Association, the group of farmers of milk production was registered as an Organisation of Reciprocal Collaboration (ORC). In Albanian law, an ORC, or Shoqëria e Bashkëpunimit Reciprok, is a different name for co-operative organisation; this takes into consideration the image of co-operatives in a post-communist country. The law in support of the co-operative movement was considered an important step towards support and policy development on the Albanian agriculture (Sokoli & Doluschitz, 2019).

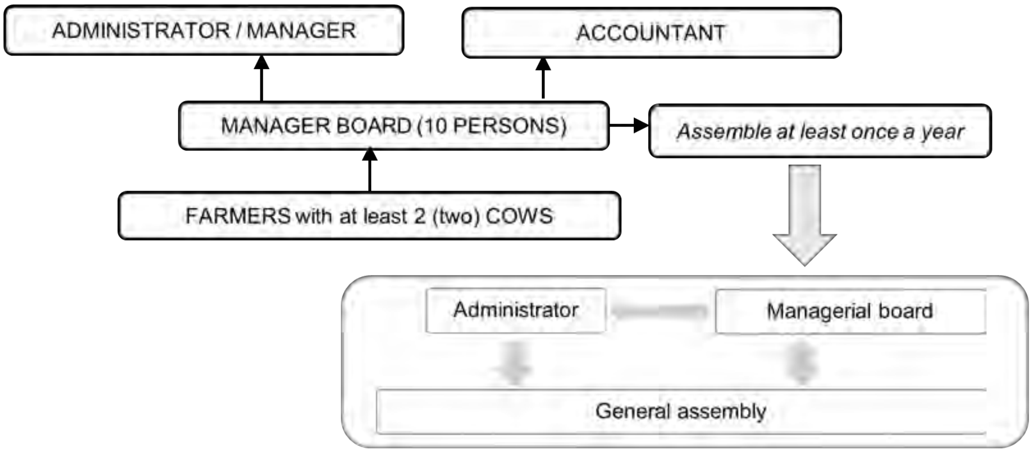
We can say with full conviction that it is the only co-operative in Albania built based on co-operative principles. The objectives of the co-operative Myzeqeja Farm were retrieved from the administrative office of co-operative where we had the interviews with the administrator and the accountant. The objectives include:

- Providing services at a favourable cost to members of the co-operative.
- Meeting the needs of society and members individually regarding society.
- Consolidation of marketing channels.
- Increased production and promotion of farmers in the market.
- Reduction of informal activities.
- Increasing the potential of small farms in the country.
- Benefiting from government and international grants.

Farmers who are part of Myzeqeja Farm have a minimum of two cows and a maximum of 15 cows. The managerial board of the co-operative consists of seven to ten persons. The start-up capital of the co-operative was composed of approximately 7,500 Euro (or 100,000 ALL in the

Albanian currency). It is divided into 100 (one hundred) shares. The organigram of society is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Myzeqeja Farm organigram



Source: Organisation chart realised based on data collection by authors.

The members of the co-operative meet in the general assembly whenever there is a situation of necessity. There is a meeting taking place once a year to report about the overall annual development, as well as to receive suggestions from its members. The managerial board indicates election, control, and discusses different issues, shares information related to different and key matters. The administrator is elected from the management board in the assembly. They are elected for a term of no more than five years. Another important role/position is that of the accountant who deals with the tax-administrative aspect of the association, following any changes in changes, and adapting it with the association.

Heifer project

The Heifer project has played a significant role in the development of the farmers in the area. As stated in the project itself, it had a high impact on the development of the farmers' organisations into the business, including Myzeqeja Farm. Training offered to the farmers by experienced professions from the Heifer project, such as maintaining the quality of the milk, hygiene conditions, as well as marketing, preparation of business plans, co-operation as a form of organisation, leadership, resource development, and gender issues were vital for the continuation of this group of farmers and especially for their registration as a co-operative. The project also provided steps to obtain access to a savings and credit union in the area (Heifer International, 2010).

In receiving the Interaction Award for Best Practice (Heifer International, 2010, para 8; InterAction, 2010), numerous benefits for farmers participating in this project were seen to have been realised, including:

- Improved farm management.
- Strengthening of associations.
- Active division of work within the family.
- Increased number of animals per farm, as a result, increasing income from the farm.
- Increased knowledge of supply chain development of milk production.
- Organised training for farmers in the required fields to improve their management and technical capacities, etc.

By reviewing the benefits for the farmers from the co-operative movement and the support this group of farmers had received from the Heifer project, it is demonstrated that some policy adjustments might be needed at the farm level in order to encourage and motivate farmers to be part of such initiatives.

SWOT profile of agriculture sector in Albania

To better understand farmers' attitudes and challenges they face it is important to analyse the environment that surrounds them. Based on the secondary data gathered from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD, 2014), Regional Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) and expert interviews with researchers in Albania, a summarised SWOT profile of the Albanian agriculture sector has been produced. The SWOT analysis (Schooley, 2019) has been done for three main sectors of agribusiness sectors, which based on the experts' opinions, have been specified as the most representative for Albanian problematics: agriculture inputs, production, and agroindustry. For each sector, we have highlighted the internal factors (strengths (S) and weaknesses (W)) — which are the resources and experience instantly available to agriculture; and external factors (opportunity (O) or threat (T)) for which farmers or agribusiness firms cannot have control. The identification of these factors emphasises the problems that farmers are tackling. Musabelliu and Meço (2013) emphasised, in their detailed analysis, the main factors that influence the following sectors and, based on their analysis, we have identified: (S) strengths, (W) weaknesses, (O) opportunity and (T) threat for each sector (Figures 2, 3, and 4 below) and in general.

Figure 2: The sector of agricultural inputs

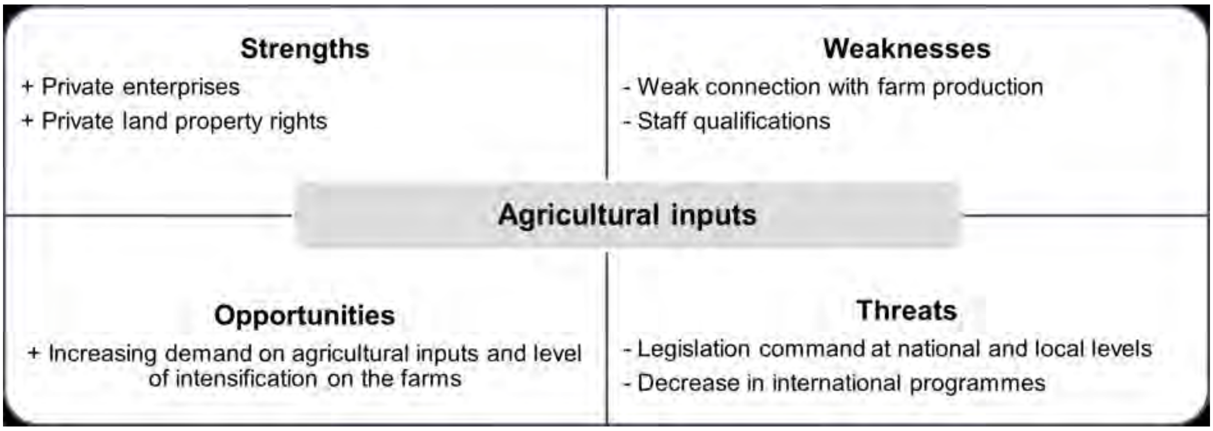


Figure 3: The production sector

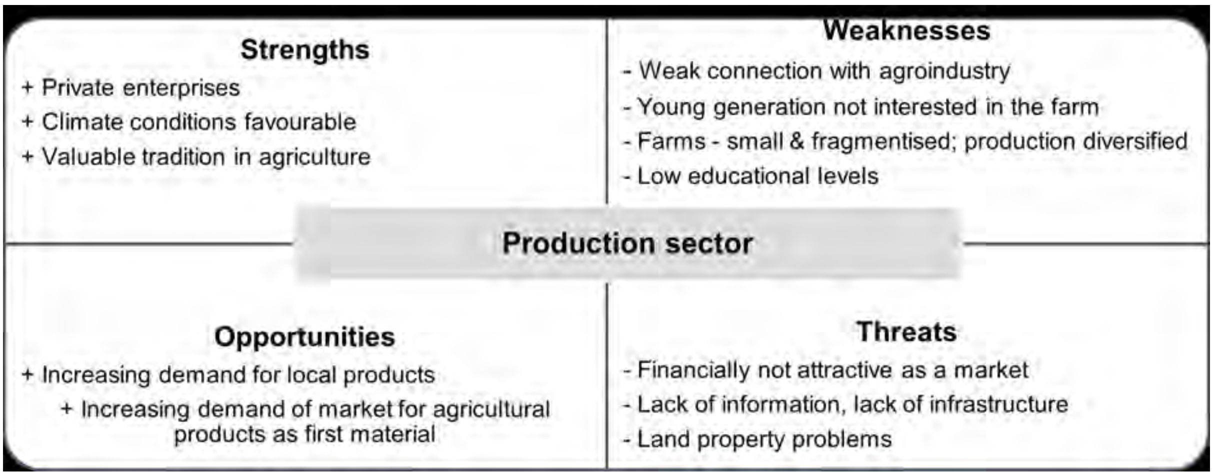
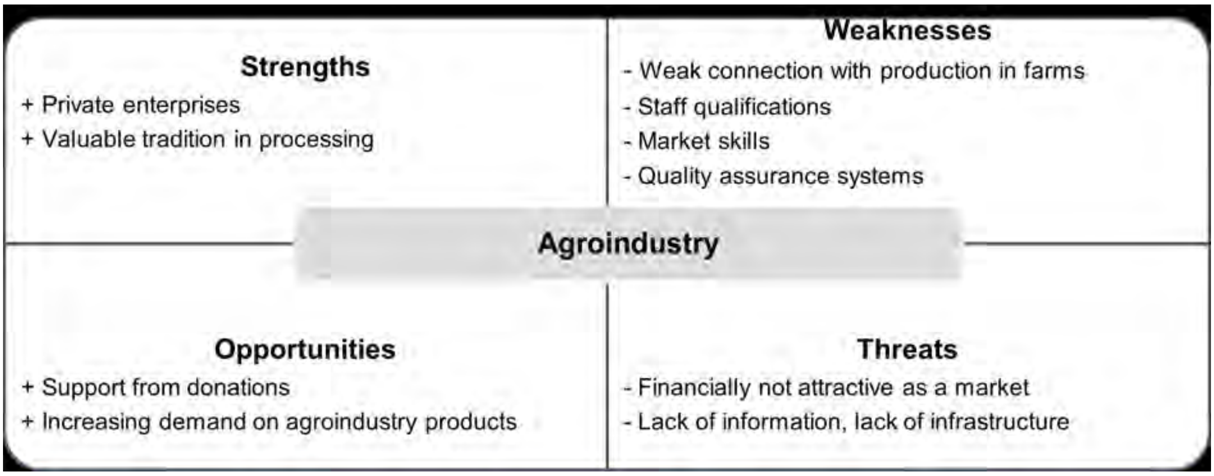


Figure 4: The sector of agroindustry



As shown in the figures above, one of the main weaknesses identified is the lack of educational qualifications in the three sectors. A low qualification level also creates barriers to the adaptation of new technologies, different approaches, and developments to reach the markets, as well as the way they deal with each other. Additionally, the willingness of the younger generation to be involved in agriculture in general is low. Furthermore, the lack of information within the sector and about one another as well as the lack of infrastructure are seen as crucial points to be considered for the development and improvement of necessary conditions in the sectors. Whereas infrastructure challenges the farmers and input suppliers, information is a huge barrier for farmers' development and their bargaining power in the market.

As indicated above, there is a strong relationship between the challenges of the sectors, and in the manner in which they function. Notably, as shown in the weakness and threat factors, it is clearly stated that the connection in terms of market access, information access, between the farm-production-agroindustry is lacking. One way to solve this issue would be the implementation of successful international programmes and subsidies (or donations). A demonstration or a start-up initiative would be a great support at the farmer level as well as point to the implementation of co-operation within these sectors in order to empower farmers' position and their competition in the market. Thus, the main factors the three segments the agricultural sector are facing are:

Strength:	Private enterprise
Weakness:	Weak connection through the supply chain
Opportunities:	Increasing demand for local development, subsidies
Threat:	Legislation command at the national and local level

The development of co-operatives as a successful governmental arrangement might be one opportunity for farmers to improve their market bargaining power. Support of farmers financially from the governmental bodies as well as with adequate information for the administrative units would increase the farmers' power and interest as well as make the agricultural sector attractive and solid (Bijman, Iliopoulos, Poppe, Gijselinck, Hagedorn et al., 2012).

Farmers' survey

Structured interviews were undertaken with 238 farmers. Questions covered the main issues of importance to farmers; the relationship between farmers — particularly around trust; their expectation of co-operative membership in relation to price premium; and market relationships. Table 4 indicates the importance of a series of factors concerning the main product by using the following evaluation scale: 1 — Not important at all, 2 — Not important, 3 — Important, 4 — Very important, 5 — Extremely important.

As has been observed, it is imperative for farmers to choose the right breed of cows as well as the right feedstuff or vaccination. The wellbeing of the animal means, among other things, more and better quality. It has been highlighted that most of the time, there is no support for them in this perspective. Farmers must cover everything on their own.

Another sensitive topic for dairy farmers is selling their product and access to the market. One of the reasons that we have chosen to interview the farmers in Fier region, except for the fact that this is the region with the highest milk production from cows, is the difficulty farmers have in accessing the market. This is to say that they feel dependent on the milk collectors. The selling process is critical for dairy farmers as they do not have access to the market. Meanwhile, different sectors influence this issue, such as cow milking, which is done by hand; cooling facilities, in the most common case, these consist of the farmer's fridge. In these conditions, the relation with the collectors has high importance for farmers, especially for small farmers who have two to four cows.

Table 4: The importance of selected issues by farmers judgments

How important it is for you?	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
The decision for the food that you use for your cows	0	0	6	49	183	4.74
Decision on the breed of cows	2	8	15	57	156	4.50
The milk price	0	2	17	45	174	4.64
The decision on the medicines and vaccines you use on your animals	0	5	26	63	144	4.45
The decision on vaccination time	1	10	23	58	146	4.42
Conditions regarding payment (e.g. payment delays, or a payment will be realised (e.g. in materials or instalments)	1	1	33	74	129	4.38
The decision on the terms of the contract / relationship with the buyer (e.g. time of payment, manner etc.)	4	9	33	64	128	4.27
The time when production will be sold to the buyer	2	23	45	64	104	4.03
Deciding how milk will be delivered	3	23	37	58	117	4.11
The decision on the total value of the milk payment from the buyer	0	6	28	64	140	4.42
The way milk is stored after milking (cooling facilities)	8	22	27	65	116	4.09
Decision on farm investment in infrastructure (type and organisation of stables), investment in machinery	8	18	26	67	119	4.14
The decision to invest in cooling facilities for a proper post-milking treatment	19	30	29	59	101	3.81

Source: Data analysed from authors.

The relationship between farmers is equally important. A series of questions was asked aimed at understanding how sensitive the relationship is; the results of which are shown in Table 5.

Generally, farmers do trust and respect each other's opinions. In table 5, the four highlighted questions show that the farmers' answers show a spread from totally disagree to strongly agree, giving a feeling of not being sure whether there is reciprocity among them. The reciprocity theory (Kahan, 2005), is centred around the promotion of trust.

During the analyses, farmers who were part of the Myzeqeja Farm were separated to see the tendency of their answers, as they are already benefiting from co-operative association. The following tables show how much farmers agree that being member of a group is much more advantageous for them.

Table 5: The trust among farmers and their relationships

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Some farmers are willing to help me when I need them	16	43	49	90	35	3.36
I know farmers who are professionally trained	9	20	59	95	55	3.70
I often find it difficult to envision how farmers can behave	29	53	51	60	24	2.99
There are farmers who tell me their secrets	52	25	41	35	8	2.52
I know farmers who know how to keep the secrets we share	41	17	40	47	14	2.85
There are farmers that if they promise something, they keep it	11	32	53	78	38	3.47
There are farmers who listen to me and make me cry	9	23	54	98	33	3.57
I know farmers who always tell and defend the truth	18	23	56	92	48	3.54
There are enough farmers who treat me fairly	9	17	37	104	71	3.89
There are a few loyal farmers in my community	15	19	49	81	74	3.76
There are farmers whom I trust	5	11	37	84	98	4.10

Source: Data analysed from authors.
1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neither disagree nor agree, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly agree.

As is shown in Table 6, more than 50% of farmers interviewed believe that they can sell their products at a better price when they are working collectively. Indirectly farmers admit and express time and again (as demonstrated also in the preceding Tables 4 and 5) that the creation of co-operation among them will be a positive asset. This is also enforced by the fact that 25 out of 30 farmers who are part of Myzeqeja Farm are convinced that collaborating and participating in a co-operative movement is an excellent approach to be part of and compete in a market. Frequently, farmers have noted as one farmer said, that "when we are a group of farmers with a stable price for our product — keeping the same price, this weakens the power of the intermediary to decide the price for our product", meaning that in this case the intermediary would not have the power to break them down by accepting the product at a very low price.

What is interesting in this question — "In a group, products are sold with a better price" — is the fact that three people from the co-operative group are sceptical on this issue. The tendency that we have also seen from the general group of farmers shows that almost 40% do not agree with this statement. There are many factors that might cause this behaviour, such as: trust among them might be a very sensitive factor (Barraud-Didier, Henninger & El Akremi, 2012), a good connection in the market, having a relatively bigger farm than the others (say, more than four cows).

Table 6: Farmers attitude towards price premium expectation due to co-operative membership

In a group, products are sold with a better price	Farmers	Farmers part of co-operative	Total
Totally disagree	32	1	33
Disagree	46	2	48
Neither agree nor disagree	30	2	32
Agree	52	4	56
Totally Agree	48	21	69
Total	208	30	238

Source: Data analysed from authors.

In Table 7, it is shown that approximately 30% of the total farmers interviewed point out that they do not find it beneficial to be part of a group and that it will reduce their negotiating costs. On the other hand, around 50% of the farmers believe that being part of a farmers' association will have an impact on their negotiation costs, whereas, of the farmers who are part of the co-operative over 80% believe that belonging to a co-operative reduces the negotiation costs.

There are two groups of farmers when it comes to the issue of inputs, the one group that needs to buy inputs and the one who needs to sell the amount that is not used in their farm. The following statement came up in our interviews while talking to farmers: “As we are not producing too much inputs it is hard for us to have the right quantity to sell it to the market, and when we need to buy inputs for our farm it is not easy to get a convenient price when we do not buy a large quantity”; this to say that when they participate as a group it has a higher benefit for them.

Table 7: Farmers’ opinions on insurance of the inputs and their selling with a reduced negotiation cost

	Farmers	Farmers part of co-operative	Total
Totally disagree	44	0	44
Disagree	32	3	35
Neither agree nor disagree	30	2	32
Agree	55	4	59
Totally Agree	47	21	68
Total	208	30	238

Source: Data analysed from authors.

It is important to stress that most of the farmers who already belong to the co-operative of Myzeqeja Farm find it beneficial to approach and deal with their presence in a market as a group or represented by the co-operative. Still, there are just three of them who seem to be sceptical about this. Here we might also take into account the previously mentioned factors as in Table 6.

Table 8 shows the sales channels and the durability of the relationship with buyers. As the results show, around 56% (126 out of 223 farmers interviewed) sell their product to independent collectors whereas 35% (79 out of 223 farmers interviewed) sell it to collectors of milk manufacturers of the area. The duration of the relationship with the buyer is very important.

Table 8: Relationships with collector and sales channels

		Beginning of the relationship (up to two years)	Moderate relationship (up to six years)	Consolidate relationship (more than six years)	Total
Selling Channel	Independent collectors	27	34	65	126
	Manufactory collectors	22	23	34	79
	Direct to the manufactory	4	4	7	15
	Others (send at home, grocery)	0	2	1	3
Total		53	63	107	223

Source: Data elaborated from authors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Very often in the literature one finds discussions that international projects are vital and unfortunately, by the time they are over, they do not have a further impact on the society (Sokoli, Musabelliu & Doluschitz, 2016). We cannot say that the Heifer project has been the opposite, but it is one of a few that has been continued due to volunteer support from the Heifer partners in Albania and the support that farmers involved in this organisation have provided for each other. Based on the Heifer project statistical data (InterAction, 2010), approximately 600 families have been empowered in rural areas, in order to increase their wellbeing and income. The transformation of subsistence farms into a sustainable resource by increasing collaboration between farmers has reinforced self-reliant associations. Improving farm management through training and technical assistance on dairy farm management, has influenced the economic viability of income-generating farms (Skreli, Kola & Osmani, 2011). The revitalisation of farmer associations has been encouraged by providing direct assistance to families, increasing access and visibility to the market, and encouraging greater co-operation and partnerships with different stakeholders. By being part of this radical change, farmers have embraced co-operatives as one of the best options for them in order to consolidate their market channel and to be better represented in the market. There might always be an uncertainty and scepticism in the continuation of the development of co-operatives in the future, but all the farmers who have been part of this movement are willing to trust and invest more in their farm by taking on responsibility and risk.

As has been elaborated by the results, one way to raise awareness of the benefits of co-operation among farmers would be the implementation of successful international programmes. The aim would be demonstration of positive and successful cases like Myzeqeja Farm, promoting and supporting these types of initiatives by including them in governmental support schemes in order to motivate and encourage the new generation to also be part of these initiatives as a promising upcoming field of investment.

Last but not least, we would like to conclude with the saying of one of the female members on the survey, who is also part of the co-operative, and which is also shared online on the website of Heifer:

> For many years we had only one cow with low productivity, not even enough for our family. Now, we have six cows and looking forward to increasing our farm more. We see a different future and I am ready to take the challenge, as far as I share my farm with the co-operative.

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