

WOMEN AND THE PANDEMIC

Health-related, Socio-
economic and Psychological
Impacts Worldwide: Where
does Kosovo stand?

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WOMEN AND THE PANDEMIC: HEALTH-RELATED, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS WORLDWIDE. WHERE DOES KOSOVO STAND?

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WOMEN AND THE PANDEMIC: Health-Related, Socio-Economic and Psychological Impacts Worldwide. Where Does Kosovo Stand?

Executive Summary

With women as the most vulnerable groups, 27 Mill jobs could be lost worldwide because of Covid-19, says the International Labour Organization (ILO). Particularly, sectors such as tourism, retail, food and beverage, women are overrepresented in, have significantly been hit by the pandemic. In fact, women make up 47% of employment in the air transport industry, 53% in food and beverage services, 60% in accommodation, 62% in retail, and three-quarters in the garment industry, reports the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). *In Kosovo more women than men have lost their job, following the outbreak of the pandemic, too with female making up only 14.1% of Kosovo's labour force in Q1 2020, compared to 44.0% of men, confirms the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (KAS). The pandemic has further enlarged the space for precarious jobs as well. A quarter of women employees across the EU work in unstable conditions following Covid-19, says the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Women spend around 2 hours per day more on unpaid work than men across the OECD average. This trend has been confirmed for Kosovo too, with a decrease in paid working hours up to 65% for women, emphasizes UN Women (UNW). Additionally, 780 Mill women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector due to Covid-19, as a consequence of the loss of secure jobs. In the Balkan country more than one-third of women workers have been employed in the informal economy before the outbreak of the pandemic. And, notwithstanding insufficient data afterwards, prognoses are that the number has considerably risen up due to Covid-19 related restrictions. Particularly women from Roma Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities have heavily been targeted by this trend. But no accurate data exist at present. Also, official statistics on employment rate are not disaggregated by ethnicity and/or origin Kosovo-wide.*

Because of loss of jobs and working in hazardous conditions many women have likely opted for the black market. This, however, has meant being without any protection of labour laws, social benefits such as pension, health insurance or paid sick leave. Particularly, women from RAE communities in Kosovo, having already limited access to health and public services before the outbreak of the pandemic, have seen these circumstances aggravating even further later on. But some local NGOs like ROMACTED are helping in this regard.

Also, more women than men have witnessed mental distress and anxiety due to Covid-19 related-measures. And, whether research is only at the beginning in this endeavour, this has partly been due to women working comparatively more than men in sectors (i.e., retail, tourism, healthcare, etc.) at a higher exposure to the public, and conversely to contagion, as well as to a higher mental distress. In Kosovo, 31% of women own businesses-offered services (i.e., hairdressing, beauty services) in continuous contact with the public and, thus, more likely to be exposed to psychological trauma, and possibly contagion, says Kosovo's Women Network (KWN). Also, women make up 70-85% of nurses and midwives in 104 countries worldwide, says the OECD. In Kosovo they represent 48%. Additionally, 72% of infected healthcare workers have been women globally, reports EIGE. Moreover, a higher psychological distress for women may also be explained with an increased burden, conversely percentage if compared to men, for long-term care (4.5 Mill out of 5.5 Mill), care work activities (women work 10 times as much than men), and home-based professional care for elderly and people with disabilities (83%) (EIGE & OECD). In Kosovo women have made up 5.3% of unpaid family workers compared to men (4.8%) in Q1 2020.

In addition to that, up to 76% of the 49 Mill care workers are women in the households EU-wide (EIGE). And, care responsibilities keep some 7.7 Mill women out of the labour market, compared with just 450.000 men (EIGE). With a look at Kosovo, even before the pandemic 43% up to 50% of inactive women have reported personal and family obligations as the primary reasons for not working. The outbreak of Covid-19 has inevitably increased this percentage. But statistics are still unavailable at present. On the whole, however, women *have likely spent more time on cleaning (24%) and cooking (18%) as compared to men (13% and 6% respectively) following the pandemic in Kosovo, reports the United Nations Team (UNT).*

Also, the majority of women are single-parents worldwide, reports the United Nations (UN). Whether before the outbreak of the pandemic women have spent more time (approx. four to five hours a day) than men (approx. 1 hour a day) in housework's and parenting's needs, numbers have considerably increased afterwards. In fact, the distribution has remained uneven (68% of women invest more in this type of activities vs. 40% of men), says the OCED. Inevitably, school's closure has significantly increased the burden on women in terms of homeschooling and childcare too. Also, this measure has negatively impacted on women living in poverty with Mill of them likely not to attend school, because of the chore at home, affirms the UN. Particularly, women RAE communities in Kosovo have reported a high school drop-out, because of intensively taking care of chores at home, cooking and elderly caring. Also, they have been less capable of attending distance learning because of lack, for instance, of internet access. But official data are unavailable at present.

Inevitably, Covid-19 has clearly shown to be more than just a health crisis. Rather its socio-economic and psychological effects have been substantial on women so far. The *lessons learned*, briefly mentioned at the end of the paper, are highly encouraged to be translated into targeted actions for future pandemics by key stakeholders. Concretely, cross-sectoral and gender-based interventions, whether not being a remedy for all solutions, would significantly soften pandemic-related impacts on women.

I. INTRODUCTION

The current Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the already existing gender inequalities globally. Kosovo, like other countries worldwide, has not been spared from that. Far from being a health crisis only, the current emergency has fully disclosed its socio-economic and psychological impact particularly on women. With children out of schools women, the majority of them living in single parent households have also become teachers and caregivers. Additionally, caring responsibilities, including informal care (just over 90% on average across OECD countries), have usually fallen heavily on women with numbers considerably rising up due to the pandemic.

Also, Covid-19 economic impact has been more pronounced on women than men worldwide (ILO). Across the EU a quarter of women employees are in a precarious job, in sectors at a higher risk of exposure to the public, and possibly to contagion as well as to mental distress. Besides that, more women than men are engaged in the informal economy with numbers rising up due to Covid-19.

Inevitably, the pandemic's restrictive measures have significantly impacted on women's mental health too. In fact, women more than men have experienced a severe state of anxiety and distress, high emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as a direct consequence of Covid-19. Along with the global trend, the recent crisis has negatively affected women from a socio-economic and psychological point of view in Kosovo as well. And, women from RAE communities have turned to be the most vulnerable group.

Undoubtedly, the gender dimension has considerably been hit by Covid-19. Ad hoc measures, for addressing each single endeavour (i.e., socio-economic and psychological), have been much like a piecemeal. But the key question remains: *How can the gender-dimensions be better integrated into country's policy-specific measures?* With a view at providing an answer, the analysis tries to picture the key issues affecting women as a direct consequence of Covid-19 related-restrictions in five parts.

The first part portrays the origin of the phenomenon breaking out in the far Wuhan City, Hubei province, in China and reaching the rest of the world in a couple of months. The second part highlights the considerable burden on women, if compared to men, being divided between home schooling, household and informal care. The third part deals with the psychological consequences of women's mental distress, because of a disproportionate share of the burden mentioned above. The fourth part covers Covid-19 economic impact on women with the majority of them losing their job, working in sectors at a higher exposure with the public and possibly of contagion, in precarious conditions, and/or in the informal economy with all the related social insecurities that this implies. The fourth part provides an overview of Covid-19 socio-economic and psychological impact on women (also from RAE communities) in Kosovo, with the country following a worrying global trend. The last part offers some key policy recommendations with a view at softening Covid-19 related-impacts on women.

II. THE PANDEMIC AND THE GENDER DIMENSION AT A CROSSROAD

On 12th of January 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that a new virus, Coronavirus¹⁻² (SARS-CoV-2), has been the cause of respiratory illness in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. From there, first infection cases have been detected in the north of Italy. Later on it has spread across Europe, and then globally in 188 countries at the end of May 2020.² By mid-March 2020 there have been 207.855 confirmed cases in 166 countries.³ One year later, over 116 Mill people have been infected with Covid-19 around the world, with fatalities exceeding 2.5 Mill.⁴ Kosovo, like other countries in the region, has not been spared from that. As of July 2020 3.508 infection cases and 75 confirmed deaths have been detected countrywide.⁵ At the end of March 2021, 84.172 total cases and 1.811 deaths have been registered in Kosovo.⁶

This is not just a public health crisis but a multidimensional one: its social, psychological and economic consequences are enormous and still highly difficult to measure at present. Particularly, existing inequalities and discrimination against women and girls, especially against the most marginalized ones and those living in extreme poverty, have been exacerbated. The ILO expects that 25 Mill jobs could be lost worldwide as a result of Covid-19, and women could be

¹Coronaviruses are viruses that circulate among animals and some of them also infect humans, being this the case with Covid-19 as this new virus has been named.

²The economic and social impact of Covid-19 on women and men: Rapid gender assessment of Covid-19 implications in Turkey, 7 October 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/economic-and-social-impact-covid-19-women-and-men-rapid-gender-assessment-covid-19> [Accessed: 16 March 2021].

³UN Women. Covid-19: Women front and centre, March 20, 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/statement-ed-phumzile-covid-19-women-front-and-centre> [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

⁴UN Women. How six grass-roots women's organizations are making sure that no one is left behind in COVID-19 response, March 10, 2021 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/3/compilation-womens-organizations-leave-no-one-behind-in-covid-19-response> [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

⁵Kosovo Confronts' New Situation' After Record Daily Deaths from COVID-19, 5 July 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/kosovo-confronts-new-situation-after-record-daily-deaths-from-covid-19/30707343.html> [Accessed: 28 March 2021].

⁶<https://corona.help/country/kosovo> [Accessed: 28 March 2021].

the most vulnerable groups.⁷ On the whole the pandemic poses a severe threat to the achievement of gender-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁸

With children out of schools, mums have also become teachers and caregivers, and their psychological burden has been most affected. Also, more women than men have lost their jobs because of the pandemic and/or are working part-time, or in underpaid working conditions. Besides that, *while men's economic activity has returned to pre-crisis levels shortly after the adoption of preventive measures, the impacts on women's economic security and livelihoods has lasted much longer.*⁹

Globally, women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector (780 Mill) as a consequence of the loss of secure jobs, because of Covid-19. *Data issued before the outbreak of the pandemic clearly show that more men, aged 25 to 54, are in the labour force than women, respectively 94% and 63%.*¹⁰ From street vendors and domestic workers to subsistence farmers and seasonal agricultural workers, women make up a disproportionate percentage of workers on the black market. In South Asia over 80% of women in non-agricultural jobs are in informal employment. In Sub-Sahara they account for 74%, and in Latin America and in the Caribbean 54%. Working in the informal or grey economy leaves women often without any protection of labour laws, social benefits such as pension, health insurance or paid sick leave.¹¹ Also, women have less access to social protection globally, and they represent the majority of single parent households.¹² *This is due to safety nets frequently depending on formal participation in the labour force.*¹³ Globally more women are living in poverty: those aged 25 to 34 are 25% more likely than men to live in extreme poverty (125 women for every 100 men).¹⁴ Even in developed countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Greece, women's average pension is more than 30% lower than men's.¹⁵ A combination of these factors makes women less capable of effectively absorbing Covid-related economic shocks. Nearly 48 Mill women and girls, including 4 Mill

⁷The economic and social impact of Covid-19 on women and men: Rapid gender assessment of Covid-19 implications in Turkey, 7 October 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/economic-and-social-impact-covid-19-women-and-men-rapid-gender-assessment-covid-19> [Accessed: 16 March 2021].

⁸Sustainable Development Goals are also known as Global Goals. They were adopted by all United Nations Members in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. In all they are 17. Specifically, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) calls for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. One key method for achieving SDG 5 is gender mainstreaming that is making gender perspectives embedded in all activities, so as to assess the implications of any planned action for women and men. UN Women. Rapid Guide. Gender, Covid-19 and Audit [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/rapid-guide-gender-covid-19-and-audit-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1231> [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

⁹United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 4, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

¹⁰United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 4&6, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

¹¹UN Women. Women in informal economy [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

¹²United Nations Peacekeeping. Security and Gender Group (SGG) urges the government to adopt measures to address the economic effects of Covid-19 pandemic, 21 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/security-and-gender-group-sgg-urges-government-to-adopt-measures-to-address-econ> [Accessed: 26 March 2021].

¹³United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 4 & 5, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

¹⁴United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 7, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

¹⁵UN Women. Women in informal economy [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

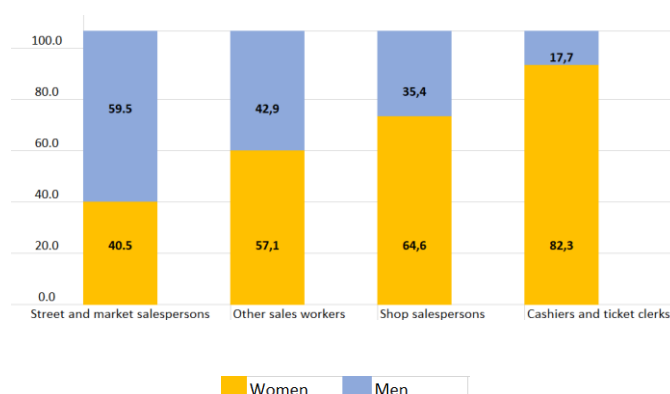
pregnant women, have been identified as in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2020, following the outbreak of the pandemic.¹⁶

Besides that, the closure or near-closure of many businesses affected numerous women-dominated professions (i.e., flight attendants, tour operators, sales assistants, hotel cleaners, healthcare workers and hairdressers). Consequently, a quarter of women employees are in a precarious job across the EU.¹⁷

III. WOMEN ON THE FRONTLINE. BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD, HOME-SCHOOLING AND INFORMAL CARE

Women work comparatively more than men in sectors (i.e., sales workers, shop salespersons, cashiers and ticket clerks) with a higher risk of exposure to the public, and conversely to contagion. More women are self-employed in family businesses and performing essential activities, such as retail, and pharmaceutical, health and social work, facing a greater risk of exposure.¹⁸

Figure 1: Percentage of women and men in sales role



Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (2018)

Also, women represent a higher percentage of healthcare workers, compared to men at the EU level. They make up 70-85% of nurses and midwives in 104 countries worldwide.¹⁹ And, while both men and women working in the health care system have been exposed to the virus in the same way, women healthcare workers have made up a higher share (72%) of infected

¹⁶UNFPA. Technical Brief Covid-19: A Gender Lens. Protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promoting gender equality, March 2020: 6 [online]. Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_A_Gender_Lens_Guidance_Note.pdf [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

¹⁷European Institute for Gender Equality. Coronavirus puts women in the frontline, 25 March 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/news/coronavirus-puts-women-frontline> [Accessed: 5 February 2021].

¹⁸United Nations Peacekeeping. Security and Gender Group (SGG) urges the government to adopt measures to address the economic effects of Covid-19 pandemic, 21 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/security-and-gender-group-sgg-urges-government-to-adopt-measures-to-address-econ> [Accessed: 26 March 2021].

¹⁹ OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021]. See also UN Women. Covid-19: Women front and centre, March 20, 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/statement-ed-phumzile-covid-19-women-front-and-centre> [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

healthcare workers globally.²⁰ Besides that, 4.5 Mill out of 5.5 Mill long-term care workers in people's homes are women. Also, most of the workers providing home-based professional care to older people and people with disabilities are women. EU-wide it is estimated that of these 1.8 Mill caregivers, about 83% are women.²¹

EU-wide the woman is the main caregiver in the household. Only about one third of families share care activities.²² Also, *women are the majority of single-parent households.*²³ Before the pandemic, women have already used a much higher percentage of their time doing household work, approximately four to five hours a day, while 74% of men do not spend more than one hour a day on these types of activities. Following the pandemic, housework's and parenting's needs have considerably increased. Both men and women are spending more time at home. However, the distribution remains uneven: 68% of women continue to invest more time in these activities, while only 40% of men equate them in hours of domestic work. The latest available data show that employed women spend on average 90 minutes more than employed men on housework and direct care activities everyday.²⁴ Women carry out far more care-work than men – up to ten times as much according to the OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI).²⁵

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1.52 Bill students (87%) and over 60 Mill teachers have been at home as COVID-19 school's closures has expanded. Consequently, as informal supply of childcare has declined, the demand for unpaid childcare provision has been falling more heavily on women, both because of the existing structure of the workforce and social norms.²⁶ *Women are, thus, shouldering much of the burden at home, given school and child-care facility's closures and longstanding gender inequalities in unpaid work.*²⁷ *But the percentage of time invested in the care and education of children is a little more balanced: 61% of women spend more time on these activities compared to 51% of their male counterparts.*²⁸ *On the whole, however, women provide most of homeschooling.*²⁹ In addition to that, *school's closures have an impact not only in terms of more*

²⁰European Institute for Gender Equality, Health workers [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/essential-workers> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

²¹European Institute for Gender Equality. Care workers [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/essential-workers> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

²²European Institute for Gender Equality. Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market, 20 January 2021: 9 [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-consequences-labour-market> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

²³United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 4, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

²⁴European Institute for Gender Equality. Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market, 20 January 2021: 9 [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-consequences-labour-market> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

²⁵OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

²⁶United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 13, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

²⁷OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

²⁸Sofía García-Bullé. Las mujeres y el trabajo: Una pandemia socioeconómica, 6 November 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://observatorio.tec.mx/edu-news/exodo-laboral-mujeres> [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

²⁹OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

*girls taking on additional chore at work. Rather it may lead to Mill more girls living in poverty, girls with disabilities or those living in rural, isolated locations not to attend school.*³⁰

*Caring responsibilities usually fall heavily on women.*³¹ EU-wide 76 % of the 49 Mill care workers are women. However, these figures are probably underestimated due to the large share of undeclared employment, especially in the domestic care sector.³² Employed women are 50% more likely than employed men to report that they regularly take care of ill, disabled or elderly adult relatives.³³ They are engaged more than men in informal care activities within families with consequences limiting their work and economic opportunities.³⁴ On average they spend 4.1 hours/day on unpaid care and domestic work compared to 1.7 hours/day for men. Also, women's unpaid contributions to healthcare equate to 2.35% of global GDP of US\$ 1.5 Trill. When women's contribution to all types of care (not just healthcare) is taken into account, this figure rises up to US\$ 11 Trill.³⁵ Such invisible economy has real impacts on the formal economy on the one hand, and women's lives on the other hand. In times of pandemic the increased demand in care work is considerably deepening already existing inequalities in the gender division of labour.³⁶

On the whole care responsibilities keep some 7.7 Mill women out of the labour market, compared with just 450.000 men. Among women who are employed, 60% report experiencing some change in employment as a result of childcare responsibilities, compared with 17% of employed men. Only 3% of men have reduced their working hours due to childcare responsibilities, something that 18 % of employed women have done.³⁷ These numbers have significantly increased because of the pandemic with Mill of women losing and/or obliged to leave their job.

*Also, women make up the overwhelming majority of the long-term care (LTC) workforce – just over 90%, on average across OECD countries.*³⁸

³⁰ United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 14, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

³¹ European Institute for Gender Equality. Coronavirus puts women in the frontline, 25 March 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/news/coronavirus-puts-women-frontline> [Accessed: 5 February 2021].

³² European Institute for Gender Equality. Care workers [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/essential-workers> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

³³ OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

³⁴ UNFPA. Technical Brief Covid-19: A Gender Lens. Protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and promoting gender equality, March 2020 [online]. Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_A_Gender_Lens_Guidance_Note.pdf [Accessed: 12 March 2021]. See also The Lancet. Covid-19: the gendered impacts of the outbreak, March 6, 2020 [online]. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30526-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30526-2/fulltext) [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

³⁵ United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 14, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

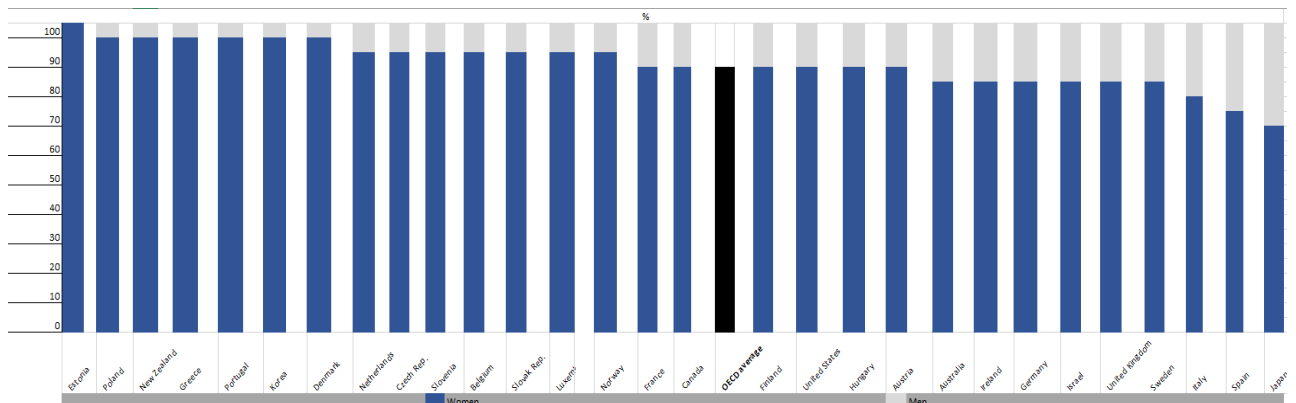
³⁶ United Nations. Policy Brief: The Impact of Covid-19 on Women: 13, 9 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1406> [Accessed: 18 March 2021].

³⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market, 20 January 2021: 9 [online]. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-inequalities-care-and-consequences-labour-market> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

³⁸ OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

Figure 2. Women represent the overwhelming majority of long-term care workers

Distribution of the long-term care workforce, by sex, 2016 or nearest year



Source: OECD

IV. THE PANDEMIC AND WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH AT A HARD TEST

Continuous exposure to a risk of contagion, high burden between work and home, fear of losing the job together with social distancing, following Covid-19 restrictive measures, have disproportionately affected *women's mental and* emotional health.³⁹ Women more than men have experienced a severe state of anxiety and distress, high emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as a consequence of the pandemic.⁴⁰

Acute Stress Disorder (ASD)⁴¹ may have increased due to the pandemic, but research is only at the beginning. Conversely, mental disorders directly related to the pandemic and manifested by a state of anxiety, panic, obsessive disorders strictly linked with the reasoned recommendations of washing, disinfection and sterility can get into an exaggerated and harmful form.⁴² Also, women, who have spent more time on unpaid housework and childcare than men, and who have more likely reduced working hours, reported higher levels of psychological distress, according to a recent study published in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE*⁴³, *in the first Covid-19 lockdown in the UK*.

³⁹UN Women. Gender assessments in Europe and Central Asia reveal pandemic's devastating impact on women, 21 July 2020 [online]. Available at <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/7/gender-assessments-reveal-pandemics-devastating-impact-on-women> [Accessed: 9 February 2021].

⁴⁰COVID-19 pandemic-related anxiety, distress and burnout: prevalence and associated factors in healthcare workers of North-West Italy, 7 January 2021 [online]. Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bjpsych-open/article/covid19-pandemic-related-anxiety-distress-and-burnout-prevalence-and-associated-factors-in-healthcare-workers-of-northwest-italy/BF2215A4BBBFCBB3BE792845769EA863> [Accessed: 28 March 2021].

⁴¹The diagnosis of acute stress disorder appeared in the DSM-IV classification of the American Psychiatric Association (1994) as filling the so-called 'no so logical gap' between adjustment disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

⁴²Janusz Heitzman. Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on mental health, *Psychiatri. Pol.* 2020; 54(2): 188-189 [online]. Available at: http://psychiatriapolska.pl/uploads/images/PP_2_2020/ENGver187Heitzman_PsychiatrPol2020v54i2.pdf [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

⁴³Baowen Xue and Anne McMunn. Gender differences in unpaid care work and psychological distress in the UK Covid-19 lockdown 4 March 2021 [online]. Available at: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0247959> [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

A recent research of the UK-based Sheffield University, being the largest global review of factors associated with distress among healthcare workers during an infection outbreak⁴⁴, revealed that nurses and women healthcare workers are more at risk of experiencing psychological distress because of the pandemic. Besides that, it appears that distress for healthcare workers can persist for up to three years after the initial outbreak.⁴⁵ A report by the University of Exeter found that women are almost twice as likely as men to have suffered an anxiety attack during the lockdown in the UK. Concretely, the study has revealed that around 1 in 4 women have experienced an anxiety attack in the previous two weeks, compared with around 1 in 7 men – a difference of 81%.⁴⁶

Covid-19 mental distress on women has also been confirmed by a study, drawing on 17.452 participants, carried out by the University of Manchester, King's College London and the National Centre for Social Research. Concretely, 33% of women have been found to have experienced clinically significant levels of psychological distress, compared with around one fifth before the pandemic. Conversely, the research team has not found significant deterioration in mental health in men and the over- 45s, although it is acknowledged that many men will be suffering the effects of low income or having young children at home.⁴⁷

V. COVID-19 ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WOMEN: KEY FIGURES

Women have particularly been hit by the economic impacts of Covid-19, considering that they have disproportionately been working in more part-time, temporary, insecure, low-paid employment and often with no paid sick leave.⁴⁸ Women have spent around 2 hours per day more on unpaid work than men across the OECD average.⁴⁹ Gender gaps, as far as unpaid work is concerned, are largest in Japan and Korea (2.5 hours) and Turkey (4 hours per day), because of prevailing traditional norms on gender. However, even in Denmark, Norway and Sweden – countries expressing strong and progressive attitudes towards gender equality – gender gaps in unpaid work still amount to about one hour per day. On the whole gender gaps in unpaid work are often larger in developing and emerging economies. Much of women's unpaid work time is spent on childcare.

Also, key sectors (i.e., tourism, retail, food and beverage), women are overrepresented in, have particularly suffered from the economic consequences of the pandemic. On average across the OECD countries, women make up 47% of employment in the air transport industry, 53% in food and beverage services, and 60% in accommodation services. As far as the retail sector is concerned, on average, 62% of workers are women, rising up to 75% or more in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Also, the garment manufacturing industry, women are heavily over-

⁴⁴The review of 139 studies included data collected between 2000 and November 2020.

⁴⁵Nurses, women healthcare workers most at risk of distress during COVID-19 pandemic: Sheffield university study, 7 February 2021 [online]. Available at: <https://www.firstpost.com/world/nurses-women-healthcare-workers-most-at-risk-of-distress-during-covid-19-pandemic-sheffield-university-study-9279461.html> [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

⁴⁶University of Exeter. COVID-19 a driver of widespread gender inequality, study finds, 15 July 2020 [online]. Available at: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/research/title_805482_en.html [Accessed: 25 March 2021].

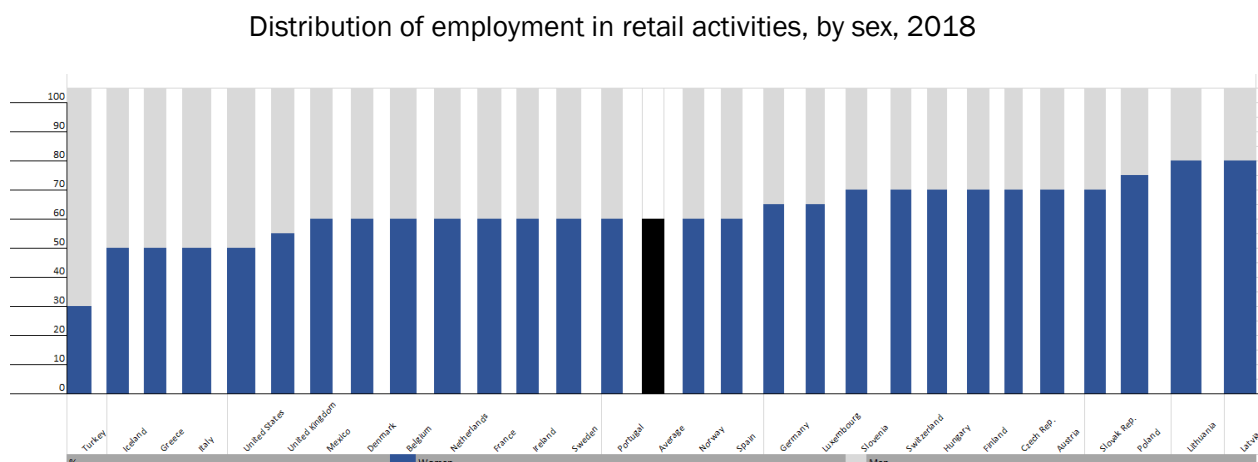
⁴⁷ Mental health of women, young adults and parents worst hit by pandemic, 22 July 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/mental-health-of-women-young-adults-and-parents-worst-hit-by-pandemic/> [Accessed: 28 March 2021].

⁴⁸ UN Women. Rapid Guide. Gender, Covid-19 and Audit [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/rapid-guide-gender-covid-19-and-audit-en.pdf?la=en&vs=1231> [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

⁴⁹ OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

represented (with three-quarters of worldwide garment industry workers being women) in, have been hit hard by the pandemic.⁵⁰

Figure 3. Women make up a large share of employment in many of the industries most immediately affected by Covid-19, such as retail



Note: Data refer to women's share of employment in ISIC Rev 4. Category 47 (Retail trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles)

Source: OECD calculations based on data from ILO ILOSTAT, <https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/>, April 2020.

A report by the University of Exeter has found that women are almost twice as likely as men to have lost their job in the UK since the outbreak of the pandemic.⁵¹ In India, 60% of the people who left the workforce have been women. According to the ILO 50% of women are risking to lose their jobs in Mexico, because of the pandemic.⁵² In April 2020 women have made up 55% of the 20.5 Mill jobs, who have lost to the health crisis and they have left their jobs 8 times more than men in the US. Since the outbreak of the pandemic 2.5 Mill women have left the workforce, compared to 1.8 Mill men in the USA. The higher number is due to women's higher demand for childcare, coupled with layoffs and furloughs.⁵³ In December 2020 unemployed women have been 9.819 compared to 6.197 men in Italy.⁵⁴ In the same period they have made up 7.4% of unemployment compared to 6.9% of men in Portugal.⁵⁵ Also, about 29% of women in Spain have worked in jobs that have strongly been hit by social distancing and lockdowns, compared with

⁵⁰ OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

⁵¹ University of Exeter. COVID-19 a driver of widespread gender inequality, study finds, 15 July 2020 [online]. Available at: https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/research/title_805482_en.html [Accessed: 25 March 2021].

⁵² Sofía García-Bullé. Las mujeres y el trabajo: Una pandemia socioeconómica, November 6 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://observatorio.tec.mx/edu-news/exodo-laboral-mujeres> [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

⁵³ 2.5 Million Women Left the Work Force During the Pandemic. Harris Sees a 'National Emergency', The New York Times, 18 February 2021 [online]. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/18/us/politics/women-pandemic-harris.html> [Accessed: 12 March 2021]; See also Sofía García-Bullé. Las mujeres y el trabajo: Una pandemia socioeconómica, November 6 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://observatorio.tec.mx/edu-news/exodo-laboral-mujeres> [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

⁵⁴ ISTAT. Occupati e disoccupati, December 2020: 3 [online]. Available at: https://www.istat.it/files/2021/02/Occupati-e-disoccupati_dicembre_2020.pdf [Accessed: 12 March 2021].

⁵⁵ Instituto Nacional de Estatística [online]. Available at: https://www.ine.pt/xportal/xmain?xpgid=ine_main&xpid=INE. [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

21% of men.⁵⁶ In November 2020 women's unemployment rate in Greece has been 20% compared to 13% among men.⁵⁷

Notwithstanding this gloomy scenario, the public sector may offer some protection in the short-term, considering that on the OECD average just over 60% of women work in this sector, rising up to 70% in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden.⁵⁸ Also, whether SMEs in service sectors (i.e., retail, tourism and transportation) are heavily suffering the consequences of the containment measures, from the collapse in demand, and from the resulting liquidity shortage, evidence from the 2008 financial crisis suggests that women-led businesses are not necessarily more vulnerable than men-led businesses. This can be partially explained by the nature of women-operated businesses, which are more likely to focus on health services, educational services, and other personal service sectors that are less susceptible to economic downturns.⁵⁹

VI. The Pandemic in Kosovo: Health-Related and Socio-Economic Impact on Women

Along with the global trend, the pandemic has heavily impacted women in Kosovo too. They are highly represented in those sectors at a higher risk of contagion and mental distress, as many of them are employed in the healthcare sector (48%).⁶⁰ On the whole women are more represented in this branch, as well as in the education alone too, than men (23% vs. 12%) countrywide.⁶¹ Also, *at least 1.200 nurses, midwives and other clinical personnel in Kosovo have been affected by the pandemic, while nine being tested positive for the virus have died.*⁶² Additionally, 31% of women own businesses-offered services (i.e., hairdressing, beauty services)⁶³ in continuous contact with the public and, thus, more likely to be exposed to mental distress, and possibly contagion. Moreover, women have been witnessing a decrease in paid working hours up to 65% in Kosovo following the breakout of the pandemic.⁶⁴ Consequently, they have been working from home more than men (42% vs. 19%), right after the outbreak of the

⁵⁶ Five Charts on Spain's Economy and Response to COVID-19, 13 November 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/11/12/na111320-five-charts-on-spains-economy-and-response-to-covid-19> [Accessed: 15 March 2021].

⁵⁷ Greek Unemployment Rate Eased to 16.2% in November 2020, 11 February 2021 [online]. Available at: https://www.thenationalherald.com/greece_economy/arthro/greek_unemployment_rate_eased_to_16_2_in_november_2020-1775063/ [Accessed: 28 March 2021].

⁵⁸ OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

⁵⁹ OECD. Women at the core of the fight against Covid-19 crisis, 1 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a8269/> [Accessed: 14 March 2021].

⁶⁰ Kosovo Women's Network. Kosovo Gender Analysis, 2018: 2-3 [online]. Available at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁶¹ UNDP Kosovo. Rapid Socio-Economic impact assessment of Covid-19 in Kosovo, 10 June 2020: 33 [online]. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/poverty/rapid-socio-economic-impact-assessment-of-covid-19-in-kosovo.html> [Accessed: 24 March 2021]; See also Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Labor Force Survey, Q1 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/labor-force-survey-q1-2020> [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁶² Bujar Vitija. Between Death and Hope: Kosovo Nurses Reflect on Long Year, 21 December 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/12/21/between-death-and-hope-kosovo-nurses-reflect-on-long-year/> [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁶³ Kosovo Women's Network. Kosovo Gender Analysis, 2018: 2 [online]. Available at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁶⁴ UN Women. Gender assessments in Europe and Central Asia reveal pandemic's devastating impact on women, 21 July 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/7/gender-assessments-reveal-pandemic-devastating-impact-on-women> [Accessed: 9 February 2021].

virus, due to household and home schooling activities⁶⁵, with direct consequences on their health (i.e., increase of stress, anxiety, etc.). And, whether *childcare in Kosovo has mainly been responsibility of women within households (32% of women versus 1% of men)*⁶⁶ even before the outburst of the pandemic, the number has considerably risen up afterwards.

Figure 4. Reasons for working part-time by gender (%)

Kosovo	Male	Female	Total
Caring for children or adults with disabilities	1,0	1,9	1,2
Disability or illness	0,7	0,0	0,5
Other personal or family reasons	2,5	13,0	5,0
A student	1,8	10,5	3,8
No option to make a full-time job	78,0	58,5	73,5
Does not want a full-time job	2,1	3,5	2,4
Other reason	13,9	12,7	13,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, Q1 2020

On the whole women have made up 5.3% of unpaid family workers compared to men (4.8%) in Q1 2020.⁶⁷ In fact, already before the pandemic 43% up to 50% of inactive women in Kosovo have been reporting personal, family obligations (with 26% for maternity leave) and a patriarchal society, as their primary reasons for not working. Additionally, considering that the country effectively lacks elderly care facilities, the burden has heavily fallen on women within their families⁶⁸ in a more consistent way, but still unmeasurable, due to Covid-19.

Also, women under 23 years old, married with no education, and residing in rural areas, have been more prone to be inactive.⁶⁹ This trend can be explained, among others, with lower levels of education and experience among women, barriers in the labour market such as a high cost of maternity leave for employers, family responsibilities with limited access to quality and affordable child and elderly care, as well as to conservative social norms and discrimination.⁷⁰ And, while women before the pandemic have already been doing most of the unpaid care work, recent developments have shown that the Covid-19 crises, and its subsequent

⁶⁵ UNDP Kosovo. Rapid Socio-Economic impact assessment of Covid-19 in Kosovo, 10 June 2020: 33 [online]. Available at: <https://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/poverty/rapid-socio-economic-impact-assessment-of-covid-19-in-kosovo.html> [Accessed: 24 March 2021].

⁶⁶ Kosovo Women's Network. Kosovo Gender Analysis, 2018: 2 [online]. Available at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁶⁷ Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Labour Force Survey, Q1 2020: 17 [online]. Available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5610/afp-tm1-2020-anglisht.pdf> [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁶⁸ Democracy for Development Institute. Women's inactivity in the labour market. Factors hindering women's participation in the labour market, November 2017 [online]. Available at: https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D4D_PI_12_W4D_ENG_WEB.pdf [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

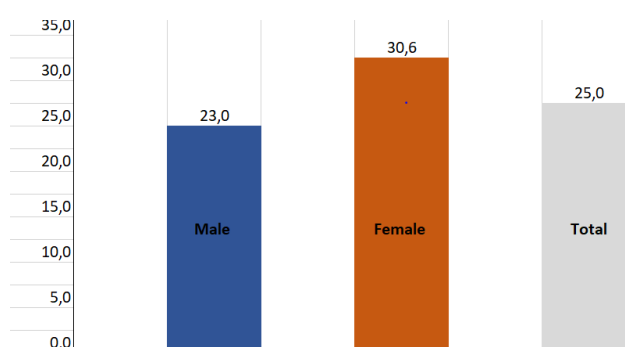
⁶⁹ World Bank. Improving the integration of women in Kosovo's labour market. What can the Public Employment Agency do?, 21 June 2018 [online]. Available at: <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/147651536212494453/pdf/1297655-9-2018-15-53-58-WBImprovingwomensemploymentKosovoWhatCanPublicEmploymentAgencyDoFinal.pdf> [Accessed: 19 March 2021]. See also Democracy for Development Institute. Women's inactivity in the labour market. Factors hindering women's participation in the labour market, November 2017: 6 & 8 [online]. Available at: https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D4D_PI_12_W4D_ENG_WEB.pdf [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁷⁰ World Bank. Promoting Women's employment in Kosovo, 12 September 2018 [online]. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kosovo/brief/promoting-women-employment-in-kosovo> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

restrictive measures, have resulted in a dramatic increase in this burden. Data have revealed that the share of unpaid care work has risen up for women, as they have likely spent more time on cleaning (24%) and cooking (18%) as compared to men (13% and 6% respectively).⁷¹

Besides that, more women have been working in unstable jobs (i.e., professionals, service and sale workers in shops and markets, craft and related trade workers, etc.) in Q1 2020⁷², and this scenario has been contributing to a certain degree of discrimination and isolation. This ill-fated constellation has further been exacerbated by higher unemployment rates for women than men in Q1 2020.

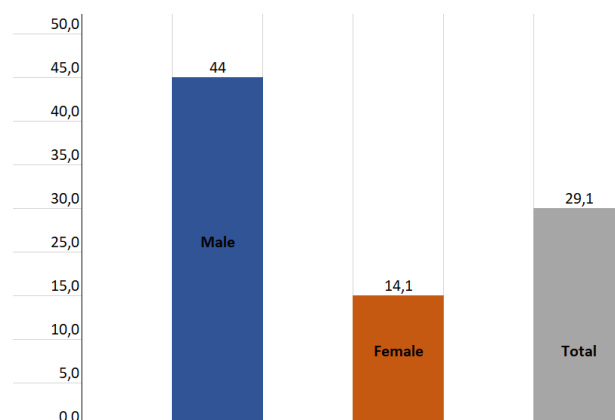
Figure 5. Unemployment rate by gender



Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, Q1 2020

Conversely, more women than men have lost their job due to Covid-19, in line with the global trend. Overall female make up only 14.1% of Kosovo's labour force (Q1 2020), whereas men make up 44.0%.

Figure 6: Employment rate by gender (%) Q1 2020



Source: Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, Q1 2020

⁷¹United Nations Kosovo Team. Covid-19 has challenged Kosovo's households and businesses in many ways – UN Kosovo Team's second Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, 19 January 2021 [online]. Available at: <https://kosovoteam.un.org/en/108425-covid-19-has-challenged-kosovos-households-and-businesses-many-ways-un-kosovo-teams-second> [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁷²Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, Q1 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/labor-force-survey-q1-2020> [Accessed: 24 March 2021].

Also, evidence suggests that more than one-third of women workers are employed in the informal economy.⁷³ And, whether insufficient recent research exists regarding women's involvement in this endeavour, even more with a look at the Covid-19 crisis, prognoses are that the number has considerably increased due to pandemic-related economic restrictions.

The socio-economic and psychological impacts of Covid-19 have also *negatively affected* women from minority communities (i.e., RAE).⁷⁴ Particularly, these have been witnessing discrimination on the job market in line with a global trend.⁷⁵ In fact, their disadvantaged position, already present before the outbreak of the pandemic⁷⁶, has further been deteriorating afterwards. But there is no accurate data on employment rate for RAE women. The only available official statistics refer to unemployment levels nation-wide. However, they are not disaggregated by ethnicity and/or origin. Nevertheless, many of them work in the informal economy (i.e., selling cigarettes, other small goods, scrap collection activities), as well as in the healthcare and education sector,⁷⁷ being mostly affected, in terms of mental and physiological burden by the pandemic. Data from 2015 report that only 6% of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women in Kosovo have had paid employment.⁷⁸ But recent statistics are unavailable, and even more those on the health-related, as well as socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on women from minority communities.

Also, high school dropout for women from RAE communities has been another major issue accentuated by the pandemic. They have more intensively been taking care of chores at home, cooking and elderly caring. Additionally, they have been less capable to deal with information technology and/or do not have access to internet, in order to participate in distance learning. There are, however, no official data on the number of RAE's member communities, especially female ones, who have been either at attending or not attending distance learning, one of the measures the government of Kosovo has undertaken during the quarantine. The only available data are those of a survey carried out by UNDP in May 2020 which, however, is limited to 1,412 respondents, with no reference to RAE, with overall numbers of distance learning attendance in general terms being positive (96%).⁷⁹ But there are some projects going on with a view at addressing the issue⁸⁰. It is too early, though, to assess their long-term impact.

⁷³Kosovo Women's Network. Kosovo Gender Analysis, 2018: 2 [online]. Available at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁷⁴OSCE. Overview of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, 9 January 2020 [online]. Available at: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/7/443587_1.pdf [Accessed: 23 March 2021]; International Labour Organization. Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018: 19 [online]. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---sro-budapest/documents/publication/wcms_648875.pdf [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁷⁵Statement on the Impact of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic on Persons with Disabilities from Minority, Indigenous and other Marginalized Communities, 27 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://minorityrights.org/2020/04/27/statement-covid-19-pandemic-on-persons-with-disabilities-from-minority-indigenous-communities/> [Accessed: 24 March 2021].

⁷⁶International Labour Organization. Perspectives of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian youth on decent work opportunities and challenges in Kosovo, 2018 [online]. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---sro-budapest/documents/publication/wcms_648875.pdf [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁷⁷OSCE. Overview of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, 9 January 2020: 8, 13, 16, 21, 24-25 [online]. Available at: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/7/443587_1.pdf [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁷⁸UN Women. Building businesses, and inclusive peace, in Kosovo, 8 June 2015 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/6/building-businesses-and-inclusive-peace-in-kosovo> [Accessed at: 19 March 2021].

⁷⁹UNDP Kosovo. Rapid Socio-Economic impact assessment of Covid-19 in Kosovo, 10 June 2020: 27 [online]. Available at: <https://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/library/poverty/rapid-socio-economic-impact-assessment-of-covid-19-in-kosovo.html> [Accessed: 23 March 2021].

⁸⁰United Nations Kosovo Team. Leave No One Behind, in Practise, 22 February 2021 [online]. Available at: <https://kosovoteam.un.org/en/114500-leave-no-one-behind-practise> [Accessed: 24 March 2021].

Together with a lack of gender-disaggregated data on the impact of Covid nation-wide, with a specific focus on the health-care sector⁸¹, there is also a lack of data on its impact on women from RAE communities.⁸² This is in line with the global trend, where lack of quality of collected and reported data on marginalized groups means that their needs are unaccounted for emergency response strategies.⁸³ Concerning with Kosovo, it is not known how many women have lost their jobs, how many have heavily been dealing with the unpaid care work and households since the outbreak of the pandemic, how many have registered stress diseases, etc. Neither the KAS, nor any other official body of the Republic of Kosovo have provided for such data so far. And, whether everyone has equally been affected by the pandemic, women from RAE communities have particularly been vulnerable to it.

Besides that, women from minority groups have had limited access to health and public services⁸⁴ long before the pandemic. This situation has significantly been exacerbated by Covid-19 with considerable consequences in terms of health and social protection. However, some local NGOs like ROMACTED in Kosovo have been providing support (i.e., food, masks, etc.) to women and other vulnerable groups (i.e., children and the elderly) from Roma communities.⁸⁵ But compliance with personal hygiene recommendations is also questionable, considering that 40% of Roma have no sanitary facilities. Up to 80% of Roma live in cramped, overcrowded neighbourhoods making physical distancing next to impossible.⁸⁶

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Ad hoc financial mechanisms** should particularly protect those sectors women are overrepresented in (i.e., retail, tourism, food and beverage, healthcare)
- **Targeted measures** should be crafted at the local and national level for women working in precarious conditions
- **Specific support programmes** should be setup for sustaining women, particularly those from single parent households, heavily burdened, because of homeschooling and elderly care
- **Concrete procedures** for properly addressing informal economy employment-related disadvantages (i.e., lack of protection of labour laws, social benefits such as pension, health insurance or paid sick leave) should be adopted

⁸¹Kosovo Women's Network. Kosovo Gender Analysis, 2018: 2-3 [online]. Available at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁸¹Kosovo Women's Network. Kosovo Gender Analysis, 2018: 2 [online]. Available at: <https://womensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/womens-network.pdf> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁸²NgadhnjimAvdyli. The pandemic worsens conditions in Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, 20 July 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/the-pandemic-worsens-conditions-in-roma-ashkali-and-egyptian-communities/> [Accessed: 24 March 2021].

⁸³Statement on the Impact of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic on Persons with Disabilities from Minority, Indigenous and other Marginalized Communities, 27 April 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://minorityrights.org/2020/04/27/statement-covid-19-pandemic-on-persons-with-disabilities-from-minority-indigenous-communities/> [Accessed: 24 March 2021].

⁸⁴UN Women. Building businesses, and inclusive peace, in Kosovo, 8 June 2015 [online]. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/6/building-businesses-and-inclusive-peace-in-kosovo> [Accessed: 19 March 2021].

⁸⁵Council of Europe. Covid-19: ROMACTED assiststhemost vulnerable in thecommunity, 30 March 2020 [online]. Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/pristina/-/covid-19-romacted-assists-the-most-vulnerable-in-the-community> [Accessed: 26 March 2021].

⁸⁶European Union. Overview of the impact of Coronavirus measures on themarginalized Roma communities in the EU:1 [online]. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/overview_of_covid19_and_roma_-_impact_-_measures_-_priorities_for_funding_-_23_04_2020.docx.pdf [Accessed: 26 March 2021].

- **Free of charge psychological support** should be provided to women having worryingly reported high level of mental distress, anxiety, panic attack, etc., due to a pandemic-related restrictions
- **Gender-disaggregated data** for employment/unemployment rates, participation in the informal economy, health- and socio-economic Covid-19/pandemic-related impact for women in general, and for women from minority (i.e., RAE) communities in particular, should be developed
- **Existing ad hoc programmes/mechanisms** for more effectively addressing school drop-outs, as well as for providing health and public services particularly for women from minority/RAE communities, should be further boosted.

Policy Analysis

Policy Analysis in general is a policy advice paper which particularly aims to influence the key means through which policy decisions are made in both local and central levels of government. The purpose of Policy Analysis is to address, more in-depth, a particular problem, to examine the arguments related to a concerned policy, and to analyze the implementation of the policy. Through Policy Analysis, Group for Legal and Political studies seeks to stimulate wider comprehensive debate on the given issue via presenting informed policy-relevant choices and recommendations to the key stakeholders and parties of interest.



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