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Gendered Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women

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Introduction

Several expert articles and papers have been written about the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social and economic situation of people around the world in general. However, the human population is not a homogeneous group. Therefore, it can be expected that the social and economic effects of this pandemic will have different effects on women than on men. In addition, the different intersecting identities that women have also factor into the differential impacts they feel - including their access to resources and decision making. For example, Roma women have historically been marginalized and discriminated against in society, in general, because of their skin colour and nationality. Because of this historical marginalization, their work in the informal economy and rural sectors have faced additional burdens and negative impacts as a result of COVID-19. It is clear that the pandemic and its economic fallout are having a regressive effect on gender equality and this also applies to women in

policy and decision making. Various studies before the pandemic have shown that women MPs have to deal with greater challenges than their male counterparts and since the start of the pandemic such challenges only become worse.¹

Women and girls face multiple forms of discrimination. "While everybody is vulnerable to COVID-19, people are far from equally affected by pandemic responses. There are stark gendered disparities, and the most marginalized people are the hardest hit. Women and girls are at heightened risk of domestic violence, inadequate access to essential health care (both before and during the pandemic), COVID-19-related punishment, economic insecurity, and the imposition of unpaid and unrecognized care work. Combine this with the stigma and intersectional discrimination that marginalized women and girls already face, and we can see that women and girls are undeniably being "left behind"."²

Burden of Unpaid care

Considering that women are responsible for the vast majority of the world's unpaid domestic and care work³, the closure of schools to control COVID-19 transmission in Europe, and beyond, has proven to have a differential and disproportionate effect on women. "There is a direct link between the unequal division of unpaid care in households and gender inequality in the labour market, according to a study

by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Across the EU, the bulk of unpaid care work is done by women, with 92 percent providing unpaid care several days a week – as opposed to 68 percent of men."⁴ Women provide most of the informal care within families, including, but not limited to caretaking of family members, homeschooling of their children, unpaid domestic work. All of this is limiting their

¹ SASKIA BRECHENMACHER, CAROLINE HUBBARD. 2020. How the Coronavirus Risks Exacerbating Women's Political Exclusion. Online: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/11/17/how-coronavirus-risks-exacerbating-women-s-political-exclusion-pub-83213>

² UNAIDS.2020. *Six Concrete Measures To Support Women And Girls In All Their Diversity In The Context Of The COVID-19 Pandemic*. Online: https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/women-girls-covid19_en.pdf

³ TNH. 2018. *Unpaid Care and Domestic Work*. Online: <https://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/womensadvancement/background/unpaid-care-and-domestic-work>

⁴ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).2020. *More equal sharing of care would reduce workplace gender inequality*. Online: <https://eige.europa.eu/news/more-equal-sharing-care-would-reduce-workplace-gender-inequality>

work and economic opportunities. At the same time, research shows that one in ten employed women have been forced to take unpaid leave. Across the region, unpaid leave was imposed on almost 10 percent of women, whereas only six percent took

partially paid leave. As a result, women working in low-income jobs are more at risk of becoming unemployed and, consequently, of falling into poverty, if no measures are taken to subsidize their loss in income.⁵

Financial challenges - reduction of working hours, job losses

According to the McKinsey Global Institute⁶, women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to loss during the crisis than men's jobs. Women make up 39 percent of global employment but account for 54 percent of overall job losses. One reason for this greater impact on women is that the virus is significantly increasing the burden of above-mentioned unpaid care, which is disproportionately carried by women. This, among other factors, means that women's employment is dropping faster than average, even accounting for the fact that women and men work in different sectors.⁷ In addition, COVID-19 has had a significant and disproportionate impact on job sectors where women are heavily represented or overrepresented, leading to greater job losses for women. Moreover based on a rapid gender assessment from the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, over 40 percent of women in Europe and Central Asia performed less paid work than men during the outbreak period (the rapid gender assessment survey was rolled out between April and June 2020). A decrease in the paid working hours of women was observed across all subregions and countries/territories. Overall, women were hit harder than men

and the share of women who had to reduce their working hours was greater. Given that women's participation in the labour market was lower than men's pre-crisis, the loss of jobs and reduction in paid work hours is likely to further exacerbate gender inequalities across the region, and more so in these countries/territories. Disaggregated data also shows that a loss of paid work hours affected more young women in the 18–34 age group. In most countries/territories, younger women were more likely to report decreases in working hours (but without losing their jobs) compared to women of other age groups. The outbreak has particularly impacted self-employed women, as 25 percent lost their jobs (compared to 21 percent of self-employed men) and another 49 percent saw reduced working hours (versus 53 percent among men).⁸

Furthermore, women migrant workers around the world are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. They work in essential but often low-paid and vulnerable jobs, as health and care workers, nurses, cleaners and laundry workers, placing them not only at high risk of exposure to coronavirus⁹.

⁵ UN Women.2020. *THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN'S AND MEN'S LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment*. Online: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/the-impact-of-covid19-on-womens-and-mens-lives-and-livelihoods>

⁶ McKinsey Global Institute. 2020. *COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects*. Online: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/COVID-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects#>

⁷ McKinsey Global Institute. 2020. *COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects*. Online: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/COVID-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects#>

⁸ UN Women.2020. *THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN'S AND MEN'S LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment*. Online: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/the-impact-of-covid19-on-womens-and-mens-lives-and-livelihoods>

Women in the informal economy, including many migrant workers, face a higher risk of losing their livelihoods, having their labour and human rights violated and contracting coronavirus. These gendered jobs in the informal economy, especially domestic service and the care sector, often have insecure contracts and no paid leave or ability to work from home. Women in the informal economy as well as women migrant workers are also more likely to be engaged in short-term, part-time work. "Their jobs are generally excluded from contributory social insurance schemes, which means limited or no social safety nets to compensate for lost income and limited or no access to health care and maternity protection. For many of the 8.5 million women migrant domestic workers, the onset of the pandemic has led to dismissal from jobs, with their health and safety ignored and even violated. For live-in migrant domestic workers, losing their jobs also

means losing their place to live. The onset of travel restrictions has increased financial challenges and uncertainty, with many stranded far from home."¹⁰ This also applies to the vast majority of female foreign domestic workers across Europe, especially those traveling from Central and Eastern Europe to Western Europe. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the circular migration of live-in care workers between their home country and seniors' households in other European countries. "Many of the latter were unable to return to their workplaces or to start a new contract due to travel restrictions or cancelled assignments, e.g., when the care workers they were supposed to replace extended their rotas. Whereas governments implemented a variety of measures to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic on both companies and employees, many live-in carers were not eligible for this support."¹¹

Gender-based violence

Gendered implications of quarantine, such as the increase in gender-based violence should be also recognised. Researchers have observed a link between the COVID-19 pandemic and gender-based violence, often referred to as a "shadow pandemic."¹² "The lockdown imposed to deal with COVID-19 has granted greater freedom to abusers. Several media reports indicate a surge in cases of domestic violence in various countries."¹³ For example, in Australia, the domestic abuse rates increased by 5 percent, China witnessed a three-fold increase in the cases of domestic violence after imposing

quarantine, different states in the United States also reported an increase of about 21–35 percent in domestic violence, and even the UK has been facing concerns due to rising family violence.¹⁴ Violence against women and families was reported more widely by the public during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Slovakia. The total number of calls to the National Line for Women Experiencing Violence, provided by the Institute for Work and Family Research, has doubled between March and June 2020, when Slovakia had announced emergency measures due to a pandemic.¹⁵

⁹ UN Women. 2020. *Addressing the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women Migrant Workers*. Online: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/guidance-note-impacts-of-the-COVID-19-pandemic-on-women-migrant-workers-en.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Leiblfinger M.; Prieler V.; Schwiter K.; Steiner J.; Benazha A.; Lutz H. 2020. *Impact of COVID19 Policy Responses on LiveIn Care Workers in Austria Germany and Switzerland*. Online: <https://journal.ilpnetwork.org/articles/10.31389/jltc.51/print/>

¹² UN WOMEN. 2020. *The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19*. Online: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-COVID-19-response/violence-against-women-during-COVID-19>

¹³ Shalini Mittal; Tushar Singh. 2020. *Gender-Based Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Mini-Review*. Online: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fgwh.2020.00004/full>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ IVPR. 2020. *Násilie na ženách a v rodinách verejnost' nahlasovala viac v období pandémie koronavírusu (Violence against women and families was reported more widely by the public during the coronavirus pandemic)*. Online: <https://ivpr.gov.sk/nasilie-na-zenach-a-v-rodinach-verejnost-nahlasovala-viac-v-obdobi-pandemie-koronavirusu-tlacova-sprava/?fbclid=IwAR3Ymgha89uPJ4SmbxCLax-ynPX1I8Uvc9CrbagClExNFChwR6T-vtv3Y>

The situation of Roma women

The social and employment situation of Roma women, their everyday life, including their socio-economic situation and their experiences of discrimination, harassment and violence is different from the majority population in both North Macedonia and other European countries. It is necessary to take into account the fact that Roma women often work in seasonal or temporary jobs, or deliver services in local markets or small enterprises. As a consequence of the coronavirus, many have seen their workplaces close and their income reduced. Roma women face intersecting forms of discrimination, including gender-based violence (GBV), which deepens their vulnerability to the crisis

situation. With the closure of schools and the abrupt transition to online teaching during the pandemic, many Roma children have been left without education, due to a lack of access to computers and the internet.¹⁶ “The pandemic has also deepened the division of gender roles in Roma households. The care duties have increasingly become the responsibility of women, increasing overall the burdens placed on women in particular.”¹⁷ Roma women stated, in research performed by the Roma National Center in partnership with UN Women, “that the number of hours they spend for cleaning has increased (70 percent), and so did the time spent for cooking (62 percent).”¹⁸

Women’s time/space to engage in leadership and decision making in politics

The female political voice is very important in persuading gender equality issues, women’s political representation is therefore crucial. “Even before the pandemic, progress toward gender equality had been uneven. The gender effects of the COVID-19 crisis highlight the uneven progress toward gender equality. The world has made progress on a few aspects of gender equality, such as maternal mortality, the share of women in professional

and technical jobs, and political representation.”¹⁹ However, it is the pandemic that often erases this progress. That’s why women involved in politics must also cope with the unique challenges and opportunities from the coronavirus pandemic, and governments around the world need to take steps to safeguard women’s political inclusion during the pandemic and beyond. The research results of the National Democratic Institute and

¹⁶ UNHCR. 2020. *Many Roma families are particularly vulnerable in the current crisis of COVID-19*. Online: <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en/21189-many-roma-families-are-particularly-vulnerable-in-the-current-crisis-of-COVID-19.html>

¹⁷ Roma National Center in partnership with UN Women. 2020. *Roma population is affected disproportionately by the COVID-19 pandemic*. Online: <https://moldova.unwomen.org/en/noutati-si-evenimente/noutati/2020/09/roma-women>

¹⁸ Roma National Center in partnership with UN Women. 2020. *Roma population is affected disproportionately by the COVID-19 pandemic*. Online: <https://moldova.unwomen.org/en/noutati-si-evenimente/noutati/2020/09/roma-women>

¹⁹ McKinsey Global Institute. 2020. *COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects*. Online: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/COVID-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects#>

its partners in Burkina Faso, Mexico, Poland, and Uganda²⁰ points out that since the start of the pandemic such challenges only become worse during the emergency. The research identified four emerging risks to women's political participation and political inclusion in light of COVID-19 - increasing economic precarity and a return to traditional gender roles, limiting the ability and time for women to participate in politics; greater reliance on informal practices that may limit women's access to party resources and financing for electoral campaigns; inequities in access to online platforms and decreased public visibility of women during the

pandemic has resulted in issues related to gender and political empowerment are less likely to be at the center of the political debate as the emergency subsides. However it is important to remember that "having women in decision-making bodies alone is not sufficient to ensure gender-sensitive policies: female and male politicians need to be informed by and accountable to gender and social justice movements. Networks with the civil society will be essential in ensuring the adoption and implementation of progressive policies that can help mitigate the intergenerational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality."²¹

In general

On the basis of previous findings, it can be argued that women's economic and productive lives are affected by the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately and differently from those of men. Given that, the response to it should not be gender-blind. The expert literature, data and findings presented so far demonstrate that women's economic and productive lives have been affected by the crisis disproportionately and differently from those of men considering that "women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs, and are more likely to

be employed in the informal sector (e.g. domestic work). They have less access to social protections and are the majority of single-parent households. Moreover, women spend disproportionately more time on unpaid care work than men. Their capacity to absorb economic shocks is therefore weaker than that of men.²² There is also an elevated risk of sexual and gender-based violence in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.²³ These findings foreshadow the aims and hypotheses of this paper.

²⁰ SASKIA BRECHENMACHER, CAROLINE HUBBARD. 2020. *How the Coronavirus Risks Exacerbating Women's Political Exclusion*. Online: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/11/17/how-coronavirus-risks-exacerbating-women-s-political-exclusion-pub-83213>

²¹ SASKIA BRECHENMACHER, CAROLINE HUBBARD. 2020. *How the Coronavirus Risks Exacerbating Women's Political Exclusion*. Online: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/11/17/how-coronavirus-risks-exacerbating-women-s-political-exclusion-pub-83213>

²² ELSI Report. 2020. *Gender aspects of COVID-19 and pandemic response*. Online: <https://scienctaskforce.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Gender-aspects-of-COVID19-and-pandemic-response-14-May-20-EN.pdf>

²³ IFRC. 2020. *Prevention and response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in COVID-19*. Online: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IFRC-SGBV-COVID-19-Technical-Guidance-Note-FINAL_14May.pdf

Research goals

The aim of this research paper is to identify policy measures and direct support which effectively address the economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in Europe. Therefore, the research paper will point out the best practises from specific European countries in relation to socio-economic measures aimed at eliminating the negative effects of COVID-19 on women, including the roles of Parliaments in monitoring of the public policies. Based on examples of good practice from the countries analysed - Estonia, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland - and the result of a phone survey measuring the

effect of COVID-19 on women, including Roma women, in North Macedonia, this paper will propose actions needed to protect women workers within the informal sector and other job sectors that have been most affected by the pandemic. Moreover, the paper will make recommendations on how to adapt existing national social protection programs to ensure income women and girls affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance the scrutiny role of Parliament over the implementation of inclusive government measures to combat COVID-19 and introduction of new policies in North Macedonia.

Hypotheses

To date, the scientific literature suggests that, globally, women and girls face multiple forms of discrimination and have been disproportionately impacted by the social, economic and political effects of COVID-19. Therefore, the hypotheses of this research paper are as follows:

H1: Women in North Macedonia are at risk of suffering more economic damages than men from the disruption generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

H2: A larger share of women remain out of work due to unpaid domestic and care work during the pandemic in North Macedonia.

Situation in North Macedonia

To validate the hypotheses, it is first necessary to compare available statistical data from several sources, which include percentage of women engaged in the informal economy; percentage of reported job losses of self-employed women; percentage of women responsible for running the household; percentage of women engaged in the industries most immediately affected by COVID-19 and any

other relevant and available data. For their second validation, telephone survey analysis will be used.

The data collected by UN Women North Macedonia show that a domain where the country saw persistent gender inequalities even before the pandemic is the economy, and inequalities are particularly prominent when it comes to earnings

²⁴ Marija Bashevka - UN Women. 2020. *RAPID GENDER ASSESSMENT: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN AND MEN IN NORTH MACEDONIA*. Online: https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field_percent20office_percent20eca/attachments/publications/2020/09/rga_the_percent20impact_percent20of_percent20COVID-19_nm_eng_final_2020_09_29-min.pdf?la=en&vs=2420

and access to financial resources.²⁴ “Women on average have lower net incomes and lower earnings compared to men, and thus are at higher risk of poverty. Women have much lower formal employment rates compared to men (48.4 percent of women versus 70 percent of men) whereas more than half of the inactive persons in the labour market are women (64.4 percent). Furthermore, formally employed women earn less than men, as the latest data for the unadjusted gender pay gap show on average that women’s wages are 15 percent lower than men’s wages. This is due to the lower representation of women in managerial positions, discrimination against them in the labour market, and higher representation in industries with lower labour valuation and wages. Men make up the majority of employers (78 percent) and self-employed (82 percent). Women constitute the majority of employees in education, health care and social protection. They also comprise the majority in the textile industry at 24 percent, where the vast majority (87 percent) receive salaries lower than the average.”²⁵

Their analysis also confirms still an ongoing trend of a disproportionate burden on women when it comes to unpaid domestic and care work. These duties are constantly predominantly performed by women, where such obligations mainly include cooking, cleaning, laundry, household maintenance, child care, and care for adults and people with disabilities. Recent country estimates show that women in North Macedonia perform 72.5 percent of unpaid work at home and childcare, which significantly affects their ability and time to perform paid work, pursue career development or greater participation in public life, volunteer or take part in other activities of interest.²⁶

As this analysis also showed, it should be emphasized that “with COVID-19, besides the health sector and the activities of doctors, nurses and other health workers, several other activities stood out as essential for daily functioning. These included industries related to the production and sale of food products, pharmacies, shops and supermarkets, financial services and hygiene maintenance. Unlike the general recommendations for employers to organize work from home where possible, in these activities, the need for a physical presence at work did not change, thereby increasing the risk of exposure to the infection, and imposing more difficult working conditions and responsibilities. These jobs in North Macedonia are predominantly occupied by women (30 percent of the employed women versus 16 percent of the employed men). Women comprise the largest percentage of employees in health care, accounting for 74 percent of the total.”²⁷

As stated previously, politicians must aim to address multiple forms of discrimination and improve access for all women and girls to all socio-economic measures aimed at eliminating the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis. As Stevo Pendarovski, President of North Macedonia, said “the COVID-19 pandemic is deepening gender inequality and emphasizes the relevance of the transformative vision laid out in the Beijing Declaration. It is crucial to demonstrate political will and tangible effort to empower women and girls.” He said North Macedonia has sustained its commitment to gender equality and the Declaration and to removing systemic barriers to gender parity.²⁸ It is therefore very important that other politicians and stakeholders who are responsible for proposing actions, measures, action plans, and laws

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Marija Bashevska - UN Women. 2020. *RAPID GENDER ASSESSMENT: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN AND MEN IN NORTH MACEDONIA*. Online: https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field_percent20office_percent20eca/attachments/publications/2020/09/rga_the_percent20impact_percent20of_percent20COVID-19_nm_eng_final_2020_09_29-min.pdf?la=en&vs=2420

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ UN General Assembly. 2020. *Progress towards gender equality under threat, world leaders warn as General Assembly marks twenty-fifth anniversary of landmark women's rights conference*. Online: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/progress-towards-gender-equality-under-threat-world-leaders-warn-general-assembly-marks>

aimed at achieving gender equal socio-economic policies not only identify with his words, during and outside crises, but they must play a decisive role in accelerating progress toward gender equality. This is their overall responsibility as elected officials.

In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to note that women have not been fully included in the Government of North Macedonia's decision making. Before the Parliamentary Elections in July 2020, the Government had only 5 women ministers out of 26 positions, and following the elections, there are 4 women ministers out of 20 positions now. Politicians within the crisis management bodies have informally shared with the National Democratic Institute, that there are either no or only a few women participating. Even at party leaders' meetings summoned by President Pendarovski, there have been none or one woman at the table, usually the former Minister of Justice, Renata Deskoska. Unfortunately, this is a reflection of the general position of women in political parties. Only a few women hold high positions in the parties' leadership (deputy president or vice presidents), and there is one president of a political party represented in Parliament²⁹.

The previous Government³⁰ in North Macedonia adopted three packages of crisis measures to support citizens and the economy. These packages have been adopted without parliamentary intervention since Parliament was dissolved and there was a state of emergency. These recovery packages were adopted on March 19, March 31, May 17, and cost a total of 550 million euros. The new Government adopted a fourth set of measures worth 470 million euros, which was adopted on September 27, 2020. The packages included measures to stimulate the economy (fiscal and

monetary), support businesses and preserve jobs, extend social protection for the most vulnerable citizens, protect the health and safety of workers, stimulate consumption of domestic products, and develop and improve the competitiveness of Macedonian companies.

Within the first two sets of crisis measures, only two measures out of 27 stood out as taking into account the specificity of the crisis, and how it may impact women differently than men. The first measure, adopted with the closure of kindergartens and schools, provided the right to release one parent, with paid leave, to care for a child/children under age 10 during the crisis period. In practice, however, this measure was more commonly used by employed women, resulting in women taking a step away from their professional responsibilities and potential growth opportunities.

The other measure that focused on women was the temporary extension of paid maternity leave that ended during the crisis months, as well as the paid release from work for employed persons with chronic health issues and persons with disabilities. The former provided a continuation of receiving a salary from the Health Fund of all women that were on maternity leave at the moment the measure was adopted.

In addition to this, the Ministry of Interior stated that the victims of domestic violence are to be excused from the police curfew. This measure was developed in cooperation with the National Network against Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence. With regard to these measures, the aim of the next part of the research paper is to assess the adequacy of the measures taken from the perspective of women and girls in North Macedonia.

²⁹ *Win with Women Violence Against Women in Political Parties Assessment Report*, National Democratic Institute, Skopje, 2020: <https://www.ndi.org/publications/north-macedonia-violence-against-women-politics-assessment>

³⁰ Early parliamentary elections were held in North Macedonia on 15 July 2020. It was originally scheduled for November 2020, but Prime Minister Zoran Zaev called early elections after the European Council failed to come to an agreement on starting talks with North Macedonia on joining the European Union in October 2019. The election date was set for 12 April, but was postponed until July due to the COVID-19 pandemic in North Macedonia.

Survey of women and girls in North Macedonia

The survey was conducted from November 21 to 25, 2020 based on a quantitative approach using Telephone survey (CATI) Computer Assisted Telephone Interview³¹. The national public opinion survey assessed the impact of COVID-19 on women aged 18 years and over and the usage and impact of the recovery policies. The research covered a national representative sample of 1,100 respondents, women of the Republic of North Macedonia, aged 18 years and additional booster sample of 370 respondents from the following categories: women engaged in informal economy, women business owners of micro enterprises, women farmers, Roma women engaged in the labour market, young women with a potential for entrepreneurship aged 18+; 75 respondents in each of the groups mentioned above. The sample was representative at the national level in terms of age, ethnicity, statistical regions and place of residence (urban and rural areas). Each of the eight statistical regions in North Macedonia was stratified by the level of urbanization. The number of interviews

in each of 16 strata (the regions, and urban and rural) was proportional to the size of the estimated strata population. The estimated margin of sampling error for the survey was ± 2.95 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval.

From the surveyed respondents 100 percent were women. Fifty-eight percent lived in urban areas and 42 percent in rural areas. Since the sample was regionally representative, the highest percentage (28, 7 percent) of respondents lived in the Skopje region. In terms of ethnicity, 67 percent of respondents were Macedonians, 24 percent Albanians and 9 percent members of other ethnic communities (Roma, Turks, Serbs, Bosniaks, etc.). The sample distribution by age groups shows 30 percent of women were between the ages of 18 and 34, while 39 percent of women were aged 35 to 54, and 31 percent of women were aged 55+. Further information on the questionnaire and the demographic characteristics is found in Annex 1 and Annex 2, respectively.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

In general, it may be assessed that the results of the survey can be divided into 6 subsections - *Concern about the COVID-19 situation*, *Financial consequence*, *Use of assistance / financial measure*, *Caring for children*

and elderly people/ people with disabilities, *Health protection*, and *Challenges*. The results of the survey will therefore be further analysed according to these subsections.

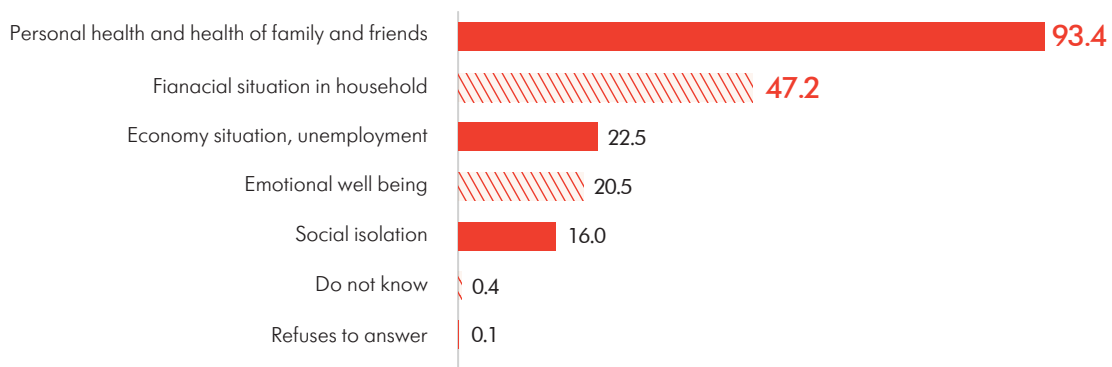
³¹ This research was conducted by TEAM Institute (Skopje, North Macedonia) with support from NDI. Respondents were selected randomly; depending on gender and the household member with the first, next birthday. has the "first next birthday".

CONCERN ABOUT THE COVID-19 SITUATION

The survey results showed that the vast majority of respondents (86 percent) are worried about the situation with COVID-19 in the country. For more than half of the respondents (53 percent), the COVID-19 situation is extremely worrying, while 32 percent of respondents are somewhat worried. Nine percent of respondents are neither worried nor not worried, whereas 4 percent of respondents are not worried.

Respondents were most worried about their personal health and health of their family and friends (93 percent) and financial situation in their household (47 percent). Twenty two percent of respondents were concerned about the economic situation, and unemployment in the country, 20 percent about their emotional wellbeing, and 16 percent about social isolation.

Figure 1. What are you MOST worried about? (Multiple answers) (%)

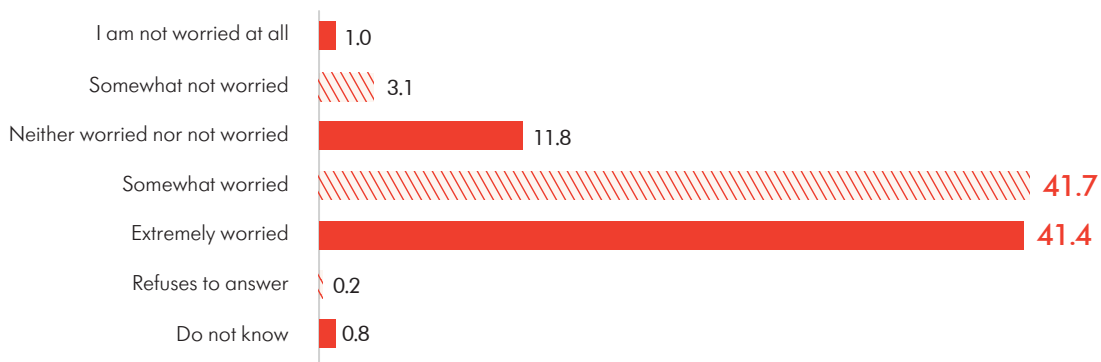


FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

The survey findings demonstrate that women are concerned about the economic consequences of COVID-19 in North Macedonia. More than 80 percent

of respondents are somewhat (41 percent) or extremely worried (41 percent).

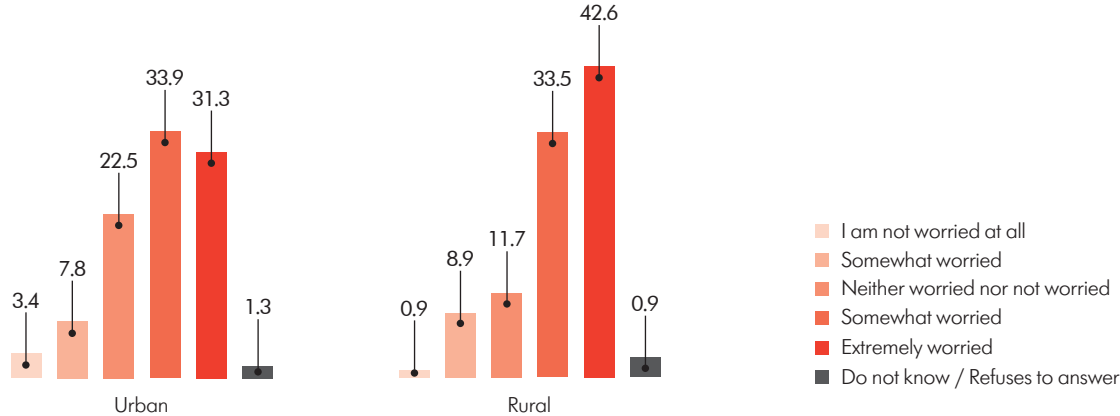
Figure 2. How concerned are you about the economic consequences of the COVID-19 (Corona) crisis in the country? (%)



The majority (69 percent) of women are concerned about the financial situation in their household as consequences of the impact the COVID-19 crisis has had on their family. When comparing the answers of women from urban and rural areas a higher percentage of women in rural areas expressed

concern. Seventy-six percent of respondents from rural areas are somewhat (33 percent) or extremely (42 percent) concerned. In urban areas 65 percent of respondents are concerned about the financial situation in their household as consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on their family (Figure 3).

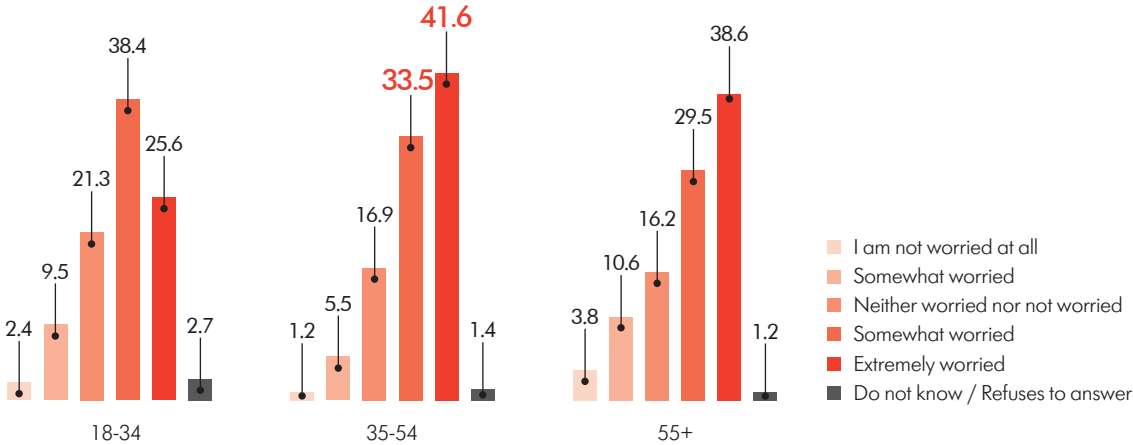
Figure 3. How concerned are you about the financial situation in your household as consequences of the COVID-19 (Corona) crisis on your family? (%)



By age, women aged 34 to 54 are the most worried (75 percent) about the financial situation in their household. After them, the second most worried

are women aged 55 and older. Sixty-eight percent of women over 55, compared to 64 percent women aged 18 to 34. (Figure 3a).

Figure 3a. How concerned are you about the financial situation in your household as consequences of the COVID-19 (Corona) crisis on your family? (%)



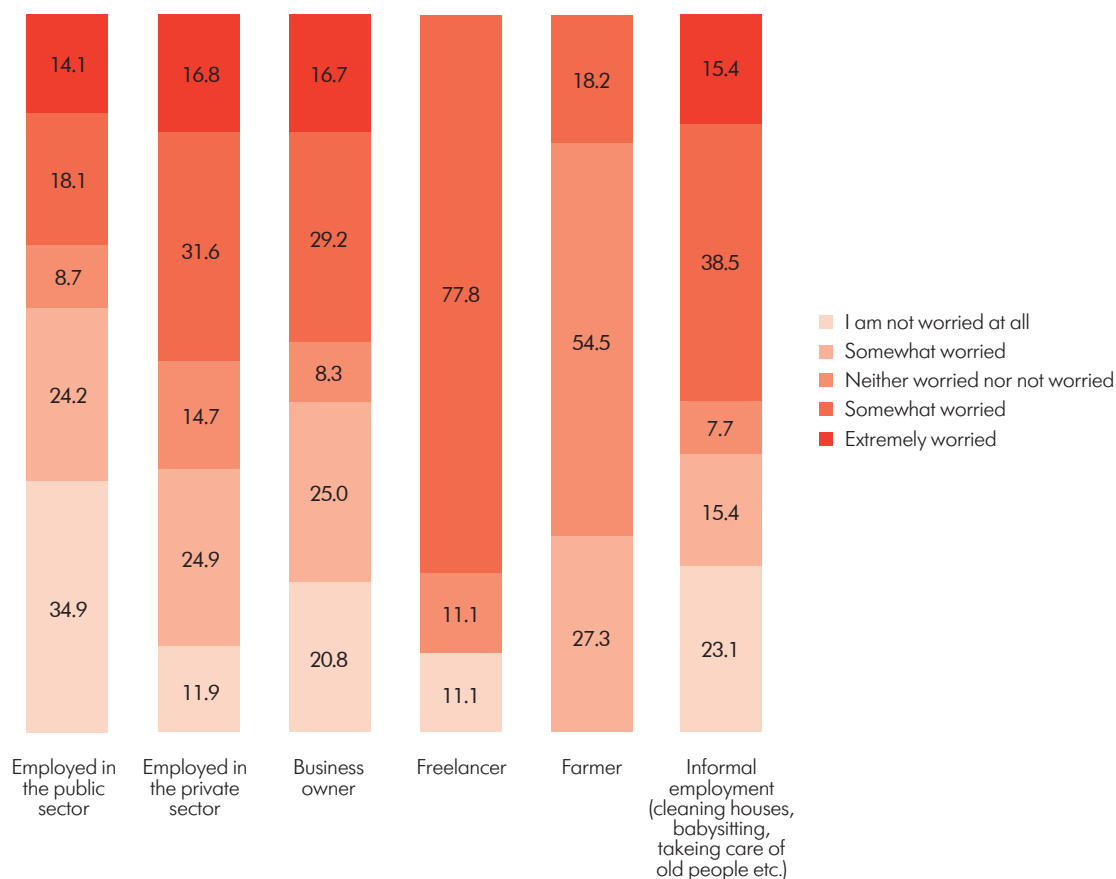
In terms of working activity or inactivity, 55 percent of women were not working (unemployed, housewife, student, retired). Among the 44 percent of people who are actively working, the 44 percent of respondents are worried about their employment security / future employment as consequences of the COVID-19 crisis compared to 42 percent of somewhat or not worried women. The highest share of concerned women are in the ages between 35 and 54 (48 percent), while the smallest percentage of worried women are in the ages between 18 and 34 (34 percent).

As for the level of education attained the highest share of concerned women about their employment security / future employment as consequences of the COVID-19 crisis are women and girls who have completed primary education (68 percent). Women with a higher than secondary education are the least concerned (34 percent). Between these two categories are women who have completed

secondary education (48 percent).

Concerns about employment security / future employment as consequences of the COVID-19 crisis also vary depending on the area in which the women work. The highest proportion of worried women are freelancers (77 percent), followed by farmers (72 percent) and women working in the informal sector such as house cleaners, babysitters, carers of old people etc. (53 percent). On the contrary, women employed in the public sector are the least concerned about their jobs. Only 32 percent of respondents working in the public sector are worried about their job, while 59 percent are not worried. Women employed in the private sector (48 percent worried) follow them. An interesting finding is that almost the same percentage of women who own a business are concerned about their business (45 percent) as well as not (45 percent). Eight percent of these women are neither worried nor not worried. (Figure 4).

Figure 4. How concerned are you about your employment security / future employment as consequences of the COVID-19 (Corona) crisis? (%)



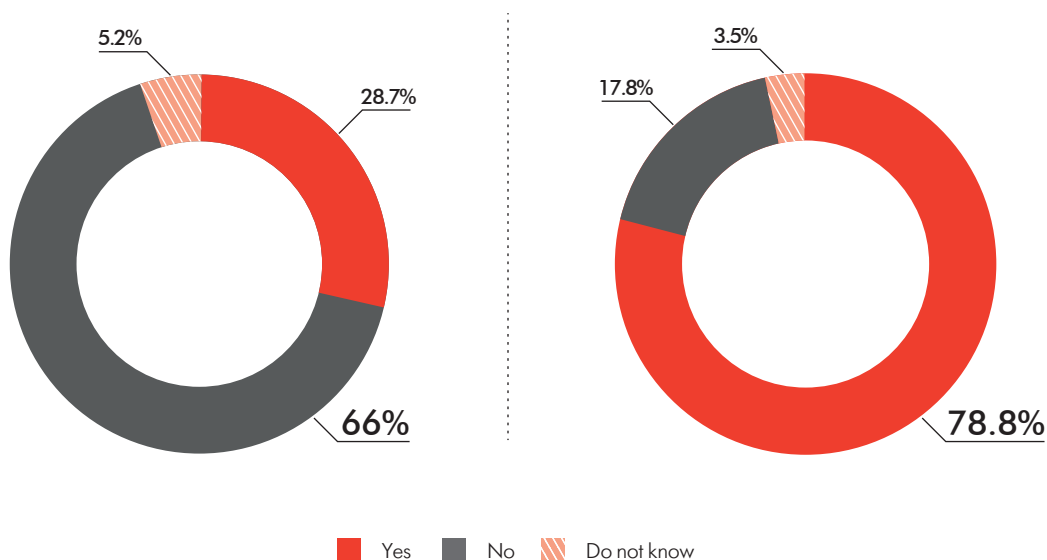
USE OF ASSISTANCE / FINANCIAL MEASURE

Findings suggested that in the last 6 months, 20 percent of respondents have used some kind of assistance, financial measure, work-related or social assistance. In contrast 79 percent of respondents did not use any kind of assistance. The highest percentage of women who used any kind of assistance was in the 18-34 age group (31 percent), followed by the age group 35-54 (20 percent). The lowest number of women who used any type of state assistance was 55 and over.

Among the 20 percent of women who have accessed financial assistance provided by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia 65 percent consider this assistance to be insufficient. Only 28 percent of respondents consider the provided assistance to be sufficient. On the other side among these 20 percent of the women who have used assistance

78 percent of women consider this assistance to be easily accessible. The most commonly used type of assistance was a payment card for domestic products (66 percent), followed by a voucher for vacation (37 percent) and assistance in the amount of 14,500 Macedonian Denars per employee (8 percent), then voucher for young people (7, 8 percent). The same percentage of women – 5 – used unemployment insurance and guaranteed minimum assistance. Four percent of respondents stated that they used nursing benefits for staying home due to a child under 10 years old. Three percent of respondents used vouchers for accommodation of first cycle students and 2 percent women and girls used vouchers for the purchase of school equipment. Only 0,4 percent of girls and women applied and then used vouchers for acquiring digital skills. Surprisingly, none of the respondents used the energy supplement.

Figure 5 and 6. In your opinion, was this assistance sufficient? /Was this assistance easily accessible? (%)

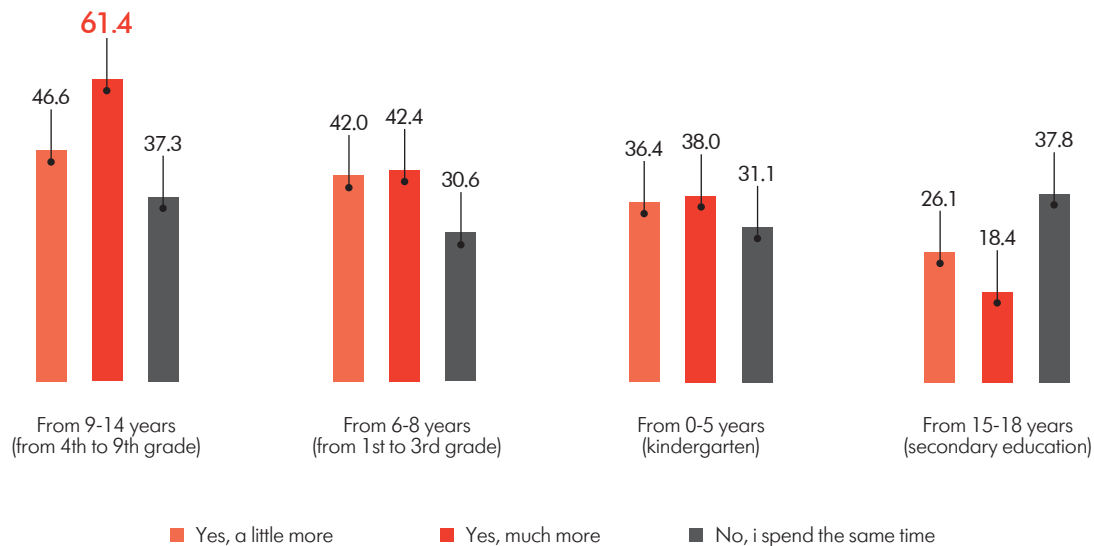


CARING FOR CHILDREN AND ELDERLY PEOPLE/ PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The survey results showed that 39 percent of respondents have children under 18 in the household (17 percent - one child; 18 percent - two children; 3 percent - three children). Among the 40 percent of people who have children under 18 in the household the majority of women personally spend more time caring for children than they did before the COVID-19 crisis. Thirty-six percent of respondents spend much

more time and 20 percent a little more time caring for children than they did before the COVID-19 crisis, while 44 percent of respondents spend the same time caring for children as they did before. Women had to spend more time caring for children aged 9 – 14 (from 4th grade to 9th grade). On the other hand, they spent the least time caring for the children aged 15-18 years (secondary education). (Figure 7)

Figure 7. Do you personally spend more time caring for children than you did before the COVID-19 crisis?



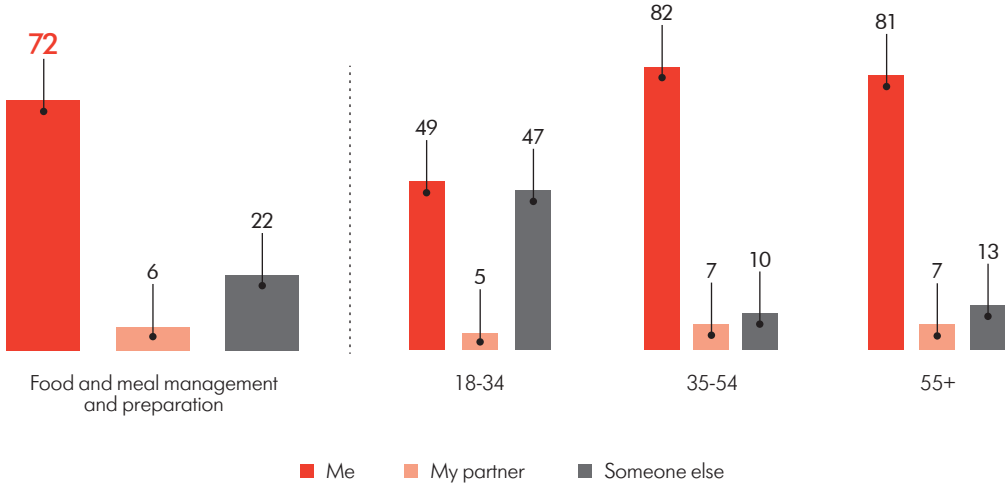
In terms of caring for elderly people or people with disabilities the vast majority of respondents (86 percent) do not live in a household with an elderly person / person with disabilities. Of the 23 percent of women living with an elderly or disabled person, 45 percent spend more time caring for him or her than before (24, 7 percent -much more time and 21, 2 percent a little more time).

When we focus on the results of the survey in terms of unpaid domestic work such as food management and preparation, cooking, cleaning, caring for children, elderly and disabled persons, helping with school activities, it is easily visible that these responsibilities had to be managed especially by women. When it comes to food management and meal preparation up to 72 percent of women

devoted more time to these activities during the pandemic than their male partner. Only 6 percent of respondents answered that their male partners spent more time doing these activities, while 22 percent stated that someone performed this task, but did not specify their gender. This can also be confirmed by the answers of the respondents divided by age groups. While in the age groups 35-54 and 55+ more than 80 percent of women

were in charge of procuring and preparing food, in the age group 18-34 it was less than half of the respondents. On the contrary, in all age groups, male partners spent more time doing these activities only in 5 to 7 percent cases. In the case of the age group 18-34, up to 47 percent someone else did these activities, such as a relative. (Figure 8 and 8a)

Figure 8 and 8a. In the last 6 months, in your household, who spends the MOST TIME doing the following:



The results of the survey are very similar in other activities such as cleaning, caring for children, elderly and disabled persons, and helping with school activities. The only difference is in the age group 55+ in terms of childcare, school activities and care for the elderly or disabled persons. The most common answer in this

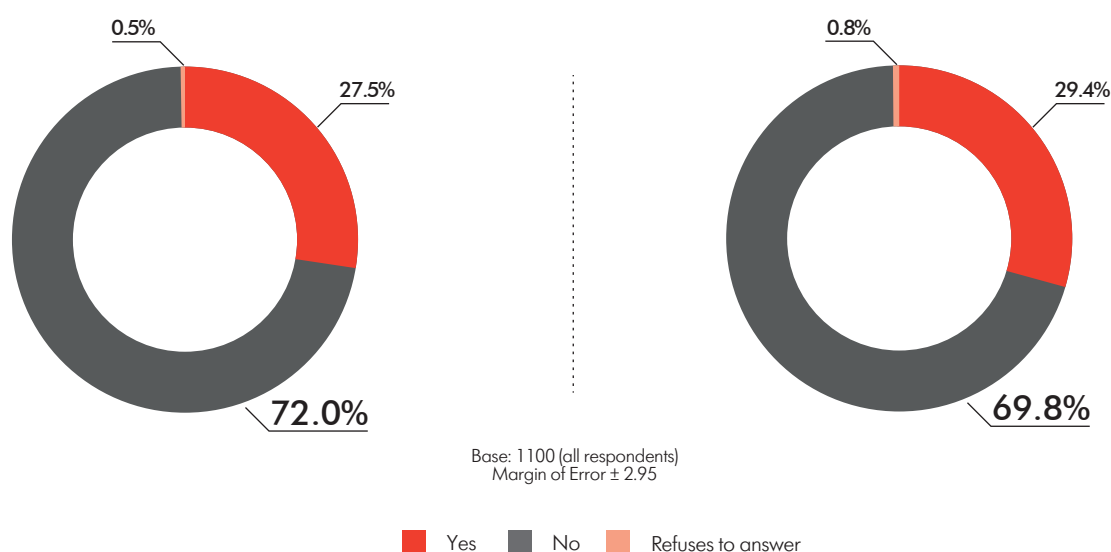
age group was that these activities were performed by someone else. This is understandable given that these activities, on the other hand, are mostly carried out by women of lower age categories. However, this survey also confirmed that unpaid domestic work still places a significant burden on women and girls.

HEALTH PROTECTION

In terms of health protection, 72 percent of respondents did not need to use health care for non-COVID-19-related health problems in the last 6 months (from March until now), while 27 percent of

women did. As for the health care needs of a family member in the last 6 months, results are very similar, almost the same. (Figure 9 and 9a)

Figure 9 and 9a. In the last 6 month (from March until now), did you need to use health care for non-COVID-19-related health problems? / In the last 6 month (from March until now), did any family member (child / elderly / person with disability) need to use health care for non-COVID-19-related health problems?



Among 42 percent of people who personally needed health care or have a family member who needed health care for non COVID-19 related issues 41 percent of respondents received all the necessary health services at a public health facility or with a family doctor, while

46 percent of women received it only partially. Five percent of respondents did not receive all the necessary health services at a public health facility or with a family doctor, while 5 percent of women received health care in a private health institution.

CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a challenge to all countries and regions around the world in different fields, from health sector to economics and to security, to sustainable development. Starting from results of the survey, for women in North Macedonia the biggest challenge they have faced during the COVID-19 crisis is fear of getting the virus, anxiety and insecurity (19 percent of respondents). The second place was taken by the social distancing, isolation and quarantine (18 percent), followed by the economic and financial crisis (11 percent). These challenges are followed by reduced income, reduced work and increased expenses (5 percent), then job loss and unemployment (4 percent); chaos in public health and lack of terms for regular examination (4 percent

); then the pandemic and the virus itself (3 percent); the quality of education and online education (2, 6 percent); caring for the health of children and elderly family members (2 percent) and some more similar answers. Ten percent of respondents do not have a significant problem and 9 percent do not know.

In all age groups examined, the top three biggest challenges are the same (fear of getting the virus, anxiety and insecurity; social distancing, isolation and quarantine; the economic and financial crisis), differing only in their order. The 18-34 age group considers social isolation to be the biggest challenge, while the other two age groups consider fear of infection, anxiety and insecurity as the biggest challenge. (Figure 10)

Figure 10. What is the biggest challenge you are facing during the COVID-19 crisis?

What is the biggest challenge you are facing during the COVID-19 crisis?	18 - 34	35 - 54	55+
Economic. financial crisis	8,5	14,8	8,8
I got the virus, was COVID-19 positive	1,8	0,7	2,1
Fear of getting the virus, anxiety, insecurity	13,7	20,3	25,1
Social distancing, isolation, quarantine	22,9	13,9	19,8
The general crisis, the chaos in society	1,2	2,3	2,9
The quality of education, online education	5,5	2,3	0,3
Hygiene, frequent disinfection of hands and clothes, wearing masks	1,5	1,4	0,9
Chaos in public health, lack of terms for regular examinations	2,4	2,5	7,4
Caring for the health of children and elderly family members	2,1	1,8	3,2
Large crowds in markets and pharmacies	0,9	0,5	0,6
Job loss, unemployment	5,2	4,4	2,4
Reduced incomes, reduced work, increased expenses	5,8	7,4	3,8
Non-compliance of the protection measures by the citizens	1,8	0,2	0,3
I do not have significant problem	11,6	10,4	9,4
The pandemic, the virus itself	3,0	3,7	3,2
Greater responsibilities at work and home	0,6	0,9	0,6
Changing lifestyles, a new reality	0,6		0,3
Other	0,6	1,8	1,5
Do not know	10,1	10,6	7,4
Total	100	100	100

In terms of ethnicity, Macedonians are almost as afraid of social distancing, isolation and quarantine as they are of virus infection. While Albanians are

the most feared of getting the virus and then the economic and financial crisis. (Figure 10a)

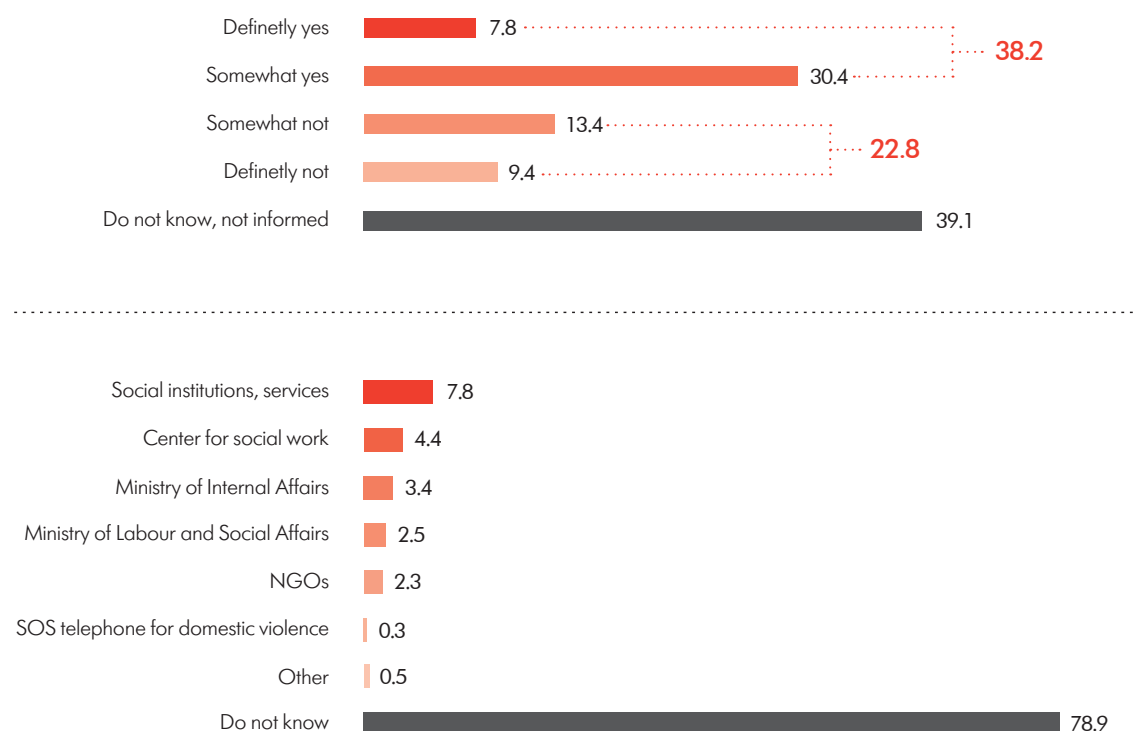
Figure 10a. What is the biggest challenge you are facing during the COVID-19 crisis?

What is the biggest challenge you are facing during the COVID-19 crisis?	Macedonian	Albanian	Other
Economic. financial crisis	9,8	13,9	13,5
I got the virus, was COVID-19 positive	1,6	1,5	
Fear of getting the virus, anxiety, insecurity	21,0	18,1	15,4
Social distancing, isolation, quarantine	21,3	9,7	19,2
The general crisis, the chaos in society	2,8	0,8	1,0
The quality of education, online education	2,7	9,7	19,2
Hygiene, frequent disinfection of hands and clothes, wearing masks	1,6		1,9
Chaos in public health, lack of terms for regular examinations	4,6	1,5	5,8
Caring for the health of children and elderly family members	1,6	3,9	3,8
Large crowds in markets and pharmacies	0,7		1,9
Job loss, unemployment	3,0	6,9	3,8
Reduced incomes, reduced work, increased expenses	6,1	3,1	10,6
Non-compliance of the protection measures by the citizens	0,9	0,4	
I do not have significant problem	12,6	3,9	11,5
The pandemic, the virus itself	2,2	6,9	2,9
Greater responsibilities at work and home	0,9		1,0
Changing lifestyles, a new reality	0,4		
Other	1,2	1,5	1,9
Do not know	4,7	26,3	1,0
Total	100	100	100

Gendered implications of quarantine, such as the increase in gender-based violence should be also recognised as a challenge. Thirty-eight percent of respondents think that the State took appropriate measures to protect women who have suffered physical or psychological violence, while 22 percent of respondents think otherwise. An important finding is the fact that the majority of respondents (39 percent) do not know or do not have information about the increased risk of gender-based violence since the start of the pandemic. This may indicate that access to information about this issue and information on the services provided for survivors of domestic violence is

insufficient (Figure 11). This finding is also confirmed by the respondents' answers to other questions: *Do you know which institution or civil society organizations provide assistance or protection to those in need as a result of physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)?* The vast majority of respondents (78 percent) do not know. Only 7 percent of respondents mentioned social institutions and services, less than 5 percent of respondents mentioned centre for social work (4, 4 percent), ministry of internal affairs (3 percent), ministry of labour and social affairs (2 percent), NGOs (2 percent) and SOS telephones for domestic violence (only 0, 3 percent) (Figure 12).

Figure 10 and 11. In your opinion, does the State take appropriate measures to protect women who have suffered physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)? / Do you know which institution or civil society organizations provide assistance or protection to those in need as a result of physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)?



Given the financial and economic crisis as a result of COVID-19, together with social isolation and quarantine, which has disproportionate impacts on women, it is necessary to point to examples of good

practice aimed at addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls from other European countries.

Best practises from other countries - Concrete Measures to Support Women and Girls³²

To identify best practises aimed at addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, this paper will draw on examples from five European countries – Estonia, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. For this purpose, the author designed a questionnaire to gather information on the measures taken by individual states, their governments and parliaments, to prevent the negative socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls. Employees of the Research Centers of the individual parliaments and Swiss Federal Office of Gender Equality answered this questionnaire, unless otherwise specified.

In general, it may be assessed that the individual measures can be divided into 6 groups - *Income compensation measures, Pandemic parental allowance and nursing benefits / reconciliation of private and professional life during the crisis, SOS subsidy for those who cannot ask for any other aid / access to partial unemployment, sickness benefit scheme / Leave days for people who are ill, measures in order to reach and protect female workers from the informal sector and measures to prevent gender - based violence*. An important point to note is that while the vast majority of the measures taken and presented below are gender-neutral, in practice they often alleviate the burden on women in particular.

INCOME COMPENSATION MEASURES

In Estonia the *Temporary subsidy programme to compensate for the drop in labour earnings* was adopted. The subsidy granted an income for the employees and helped the employers to surpass temporary difficulties without need to lay off staff or declare bankruptcy. It was paid, up to two months, from March until May for the employees whose employers are impacted by the extraordinary circumstances caused by COVID-19. The maximum allowance was 1000 EUR per month and per employee. The allowance was paid, as a general rule, at 70 percent of the gross salary of the employee over the previous 12 month.

In Slovakia employers and the self-employed, that also means women business owners from micro-

enterprises, e.g. hairdressers, cosmetic salons, clothing boutiques were able to ask for the financial compensation within the First Aid project until March 2021. At the same time, the provided subsidies increased from October 2020. Employers who closed or had to close their shops were able to ask for aid, also for employees hired after March 1, 2020, but no later than September 2, 2020. At the same time, the group of applicants for compensation now includes subjects and the self-employed who started their business after February 1, 2020, but no later than September 2, 2020. The contribution increased from the 80 percent of the average income per employee to 80 percent of the total labour cost of an employee for the time the employers had problems. At the same time, the period during which

³² Written on the basis of data provided by the research centres of the individual parliaments and Swiss Federal Office of Gender Equality unless otherwise specified.

they will be required to keep the employee under employment will shorten from two months to one month during the national emergency. The group of the self-employed expanded by those required to pay sickness and pension insurance after July 1, 2020. At the same time, the condition banning these people from having both a trade licence and an employment contract was cancelled.

The Swiss government has also taken measures of an economic nature. For example, the compensation for financial losses, which supports the independents directly or indirectly affected by official closures and bans on events was adopted in Switzerland. It is also aimed at independent artists whose performances have been cancelled. Those affected can be compensated for their loss of earnings.

PANDEMIC PARENTAL ALLOWANCE AND NURSING BENEFITS / RECONCILIATION OF PRIVATE AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE DURING THE CRISIS

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In Estonia all schools from primary level up to universities were closed by the order of the Government from March 16, with regular studies substituted by e-learning, then operation and organization of work of kindergartens and day-care centres was decided by local governments or other kindergarten operators. Depending on the local government, parents were exempt or partially exempt from paying for the childcare. The state did not oblige to close the childcare facilities, but called on parents not to bring their children into childcare. The local governments were obliged to guarantee childcare if parents needed to go to work, i.e. for parents who work e.g. in healthcare, police, rescue, social services, transport, food production, grocery stores etc. Moreover, a number of local governments continued to provide school meals for children (some as hot meals, some as food packages), but the concrete target group (for example children from families with coping difficulties etc.) and other conditions for school meals were determined by local governments.

Temporary special allowance for parents of children with special needs who require further monitoring and support in both studying and personal hygiene procedures at home was adopted in Estonia as well. This allowance was made available to provide replacement income for the parent who due to the

need to care for the child with special needs was temporarily forced to be absent from work. The allowance was granted for a parent who raises a child with severe or profound disability, a child who has weakened immunity or a child with certain special educational needs, whereas the parent had to be registered to unpaid leave. The amount of the allowance was 70 percent of the average wage of the parent, whereas the minimum amount of allowance per month was 540 EUR and the maximum amount 1050 EUR. The measure was applicable until the end of emergency.

As an example of good practice from Slovakia can be considered the introduction of the possibility of alternation of parents when receiving a nursing benefit. In the case of a child under the age of 11, or in the case of a child up to 18 years of age, in case of a child with a long-term adverse health condition, there is no need to contact the paediatrician (no need for the paediatrician to confirm anything), the entitlement to nursing benefit commences automatically, after the child's school / pre-school facility has been shut down. Social Insurance Agency in Slovakia (SIA) shall grant a nursing benefit due to childcare to all parents (including surrogate ones) up to the age of 11 regardless of whether or not they attend a school / preschool facility without a doctor / paediatrician's confirmation, i.e. also to those parents

who have been receiving the parental allowance from the Office of Labour, or those who have ended the parental leave before the child was three years old, and also to those parents whose child was not placed in a kindergarten but was cared for by a carer / grandparents, etc. Parents who receive this benefit may alternate (even after days). Such a proposal has been discussed several times in Slovak parliament in the last parliamentary term (2016-2020), but has never been approved. Today, parents in Slovakia who receive this benefit may alternate. This is a novelty, in the past only one parent, usually a woman, could receive this benefit. This change ensures that not just one parent, usually a woman, is left out from the work process. Due to the long-lasting closure of schools, parents who stay at home with the child alternate.

Pandemic parental benefit is provided in Slovakia to parents who are not entitled to parental benefit because their child turns three years of age (or six years if they have long-term health problems) during the crisis. The benefit includes children in substitute care or if three years passed since the first decision on entrusting a child to the substitute care of an authorised person was adopted. These people should receive the benefit at the same amount as the ordinary parental benefit they had been receiving, until the crisis is over.

The Swiss government introduced measures to limit the loss of earnings linked to the crisis. Parents of children under the age of 12 may receive an allowance if they have had to interrupt their gainful activity because of a lack of childcare facilities. This also applies to single-parent families. Cases where childcare can no longer be provided by vulnerable persons (ex. grandparents) are taken into account. The allowance covers 80 percent of previous income. The duration of entitlement to the allowance varies according to the situation. As at 30 August 2020, more than 14,000 allowances had been paid.

In order to enable the reconciliation of private and professional life during the crisis, childcare in day-care centres, day families and schools was guaranteed in the Swiss Bern Canton. On 22 April 2020, the Council of State (Canton's government) decided to relieve parents who were exceptionally caring for their children at home due to COVID-19, by covering the costs for childcare places not used due to the pandemic.

Germany has set up new wage subsidies for carers to cover, in part or in full, the salary of parents or those attending to sick family members during the pandemic. Germany provided parents with extra cash when childcare services and schools are closed, too.³³

³³ UNDP-UN Women. 2020. COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker: Global Fact Sheet. Online: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/COVID-19-Global-Gender-Response-Tracker.html>

SOS SUBSIDY FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT ASK FOR ANY OTHER AID / ACCESS TO PARTIAL UNEMPLOYMENT

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In Slovakia, the cabinet during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic approved and during the second wave restored the SOS subsidy, giving the declaration of national emergency as reason. It is an amount to 300 Euro and is provided to some 10,000 applicants each month. Those who have lost their income due to the crisis and cannot ask for any other aid, like the project to preserve employment or aid from the social insurance systems, state social support and social support, are able to apply for the subsidy. While this measure seems to be gender-neutral, in practice it often alleviated the burden on women in particular.

The Swiss Government also facilitated access to partial unemployment. Short-time working has been extended and the procedures for qualifying

for it have been simplified, notably through the following measures. Until the end of August 2020, compensation for short-time work could also be paid to employees with fixed-term contracts, employees with on-call work and persons working for a temporary work organization. Until the end of May, persons in a position similar to that of an employer and for the spouses or registered partners of such persons, employed in the company, as well as apprentices were also entitled to short-time work compensation. (The first group was entitled to a flat-rate allowance). In general, short-time working covers 80 percent of previous income. At the peak of the use of short-time working compensation in April 2020, 2.7 billion Swiss francs were paid out for 1.3 million employees.

SICKNESS BENEFIT SCHEME / LEAVE DAYS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL

-

The sickness benefit scheme was temporarily expanded to also cover the first three days of sick leave which previously has been a person's own liability in Estonia.

The Canton of Schaffhausen in Switzerland, as an employer, has largely supported the home office possibilities. The number of childcare leaves has been increased. Leave days were created for people who are ill and for those who have to care for sick

members of their household or other persons for whom care was compulsory. While the measures taken were gender-neutral, in practice they often alleviated the burden on women in particular.

As stated previously also Germany has set up new wage subsidies for carers to cover, in part or in full, the salary of parents or those attending to sick family members during the pandemic.³⁴

³⁴ UNDP-UN Women. 2020. COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker: Global Fact Sheet. Online: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/COVID-19-Global-Gender-Response-Tracker.html>

MEASURES IN ORDER TO REACH AND PROTECT FEMALE WORKERS WITHIN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

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The COVID-19 pandemic has massively affected the circular migration of live-in care workers between their home countries. In particular Slovak female elder care workers in Austria. That is why Austria asked for simpler rules for Slovak care workers in Austria. In addition, Austria was at that time deemed as a risky country. As a result, those entering Slovakia from Austria were required to either show a negative PCR test no older than 72 hours or register at korona.gov.sk (phone number, a place of isolation,

and the name of attending physician) and start home isolation. When entering the country, you should be able to show police officers a confirmation of your registration on the website. However there are some exceptions, which include female elder care workers, but for example also people who need to take care of their family members; medical workers; farmers with land within a 10-km distance from the borders; social workers; workers in critical infrastructure; cross-border workers and some athletes and artists.³⁵

MEASURES TO PREVENT GENDER - BASED VIOLENCE

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In Estonia, the police, victim support, women's support centres, local governments, and other institutions continue to help victims – the number of services has not been reduced during the pandemic. Victims are also advised by the free victim helpline, which is open 24 hours a day and people can ask for help and advice in Estonian, Russian and English. In addition, the Estonian Social Insurance Board has a focus also on information campaigns. In 2019, a campaign was carried out with the message "Asking for help is the biggest heroic deed" suggests that the most important thing is to take the first step and ask for help. This year, during pandemic the hypothesis of the campaign was that may be the victim of domestic violence cannot ask help, as both the offender and the victim are constantly at home and the aim of the launched information campaign was to invite bystanders to notice and help victims of domestic violence (colleagues and neighbours who are aware

of the violent relationship would contribute to ending the violence).

Violence against women and families was reported more widely by the public during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Slovakia. The total number of calls to the National Line for Women Experiencing Violence (NLWEV), provided by the Institute for Work and Family Research, doubled from March to June 2020, when Slovakia had announced first emergency measures due to a pandemic. The consultants working at NLWEV, as well as the analysts of the Coordination and Methodological Centre for the Prevention of Violence, consider the increased media coverage of the existence of violence against women in Slovakia to be one of the reasons for reporting domestic violence. Furthermore, one of the priorities Slovak first female president, Zuzana Čaputová, focused on during the pandemic was helping women, children and other groups of people

³⁵ Valid in November 2020, during December 2020 or January 2021 the situation may have changed.

experiencing domestic violence. The social isolation with which people suppressed the spread of the virus meant for them greater vulnerability and a higher risk of experiencing psychological, physical, sexual or other violence. At the same time, fewer options to call for help. The crisis has shown how it is necessary for victims of domestic violence to be able to call for help quickly, safely and discreetly. Slovak police have developed a tool in the form of a mobile application. The application, which has been launched on a pilot basis in the Trenčín Region so far and should be gradually extended to the entire territory of the Slovak Republic. The application should help to call for help quickly, securely and discreetly.

During the crisis, the Intervention Centre against Domestic Violence in the Swiss Bern Canton launched the campaign #stressathome, aimed at raising awareness of the problem of domestic violence among those directly concerned and witnesses. In May, five messages were sent to the residents of the canton of Bern via Facebook and Instagram, raising awareness of this issue.

At the beginning of the crisis, specialists feared that the problem of domestic violence would intensify due to the restricted freedom of movement in Switzerland. The Confederation and the cantons therefore set up a task force against domestic violence in order to be able to regularly reassess the situation in the field of domestic violence, including the issue of child protection. Its actions include a poster campaign in thirteen languages so that all those concerned know where to find help. In addition, several cantons have adapted their victim support services and increased their accommodation capacity in shelters to cope with a possible increase in cases of violence. Throughout the COVID-19 period,

access to counselling services and emergency accommodation has been guaranteed on a continuous basis. The Confederation also provided additional financial support to various telephone hotlines. In addition, the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Social Affairs carried out a campaign on social networks to publicise the benefits of victim support in Switzerland. This campaign is aimed in particular at young people who are victims of domestic violence. The task force still meets on a regular basis to ensure the continuing coordination, information exchange and collaboration between the Confederation and the cantons. Up until now, the police have not found a significant increase in cases of domestic violence throughout Switzerland. However, a tendency towards an increase in the number of new reports of cases of domestic violence has been observed in some of the victim counselling centres. The situation varies from region to region/canton to canton.

“The website of the initiative #strongerthanviolence developed by the Government of Germany brings together existing support services for women who are affected by violence, and offers practical solutions. As part of this initiative, the Government has launched the nationwide “Not safe at home?” campaign in supermarkets, with the aim of informing people who experience domestic violence and their friends and family about available help and support services.”³⁶

Additional funding – approximately €9 million Euro (USD 10.5 million) – has been channelled to civil society organizations to support their work to address violence against women, children and LGBTIQ+ persons by intimate partners or family members in Sweden.³⁷

³⁶ UNDP-UN Women. 2020. *COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker: Factsheet: Europe, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand*. Online: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/COVID-19-Global-Gender-Response-Tracker.html>

³⁷ UNDP-UN Women. 2020. *COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker: Global Fact Sheet*. Online: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/COVID-19-Global-Gender-Response-Tracker.html>

THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS

The main role of parliaments in such crises is to respond as quickly as possible to the measures taken by the government, to cooperate with the government and, last but not least, to come up with their own initiatives, action plans and laws responding to the negative socio-economic situation of their citizens and, of course, to take the gender perspective into account in this process.

For example, the adoption of laws under the fast-track legislative procedure can be considered a quick response. In Slovakia, under extraordinary circumstances, when fundamental human rights and freedoms, or the national security is in jeopardy or when there is a threat that the state could suffer considerable economic damage, the National Council may, at the request of the Government, resolve to consider a bill under the fast-track legislative procedure. Above-mentioned Slovak policy measures were almost exclusively adopted under the fast-track legislative procedure.

In Estonia, during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic when the emergency situation was declared in the country, parliament passed four laws in two and a half weeks regarding measures related to the spread of the coronavirus that causes the COVID-19 disease.

In Switzerland, several studies dealing with the pandemic from an equality perspective have been published during the pandemic. These studies can serve as a good basis for the government and parliament in deciding what measures need to be taken to avoid the negative gender impacts resulting from the pandemic. For example, the Swiss National COVID-19 Science Task Force, which advises the authorities in

the context of the crisis, has published a Policy Brief related to equality issues.³⁸ A study commissioned by the Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE) and published in June 2020 provided indications on the evolution of the Swiss population's workload during the pandemic. The study shows that the additional tasks related to home-schooling and the reduction of childcare options have affected the working capacity of the respondents. This influence was found to be greater for working women than for working men.³⁹ *The Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, in collaboration with the Idiap Research Institute and the Institute of Psychology of the University of Lausanne*, published a study on the experiences of Swiss men and women during the period of semi-confinement due to COVID-19, particularly in terms of equality. This study shows that during pandemic there are unequal burdens for women. In Switzerland, "the partial lockdown resulted in – or heightened – many forms of gender inequality. Whereas only 3 percent of respondents reported losing their jobs, 70 percent of those who did were women. The majority of women also felt that their working conditions had become more difficult; a large proportion of them stated that they were employed in the health and social services sector, and therefore ran a greater risk of infection. Moreover, one woman in two reported being solely responsible for homeschooling, compared with only one out of every 10 men. Interestingly, significantly more men than women stated that this task had been shared. Lastly, young working women with diplomas were the most likely to report having taken on too many household chores."⁴⁰ The Swiss government and parliament can use these findings to adopt policies to support girls and women can use these findings.

³⁸ See more: ELSI Report. 2020. *Gender aspects of COVID-19 and pandemic response*. Online: <https://sciencetaskforce.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Gender-aspects-of-COVID19-and-pandemic-response-14-May-20-EN.pdf>

³⁹ See more: FOGE. 2020. *Schweizer Familien in der COVID-19-Pandemie*. Online: <https://www.news.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/61708.pdf>

⁴⁰ EPFL, the Idiap Research Institute and the University of Lausanne's Institute of Psychology. 2020. *How the Swiss fared under partial lockdown*. Online: <https://actu.epfl.ch/news/how-the-swiss-fared-under-partial-lockdown/>

Recommendations for changing existing policies and introduction of new policies in North Macedonia

The results of the survey showed that, according to the majority of women, state assistance and measures taken to mitigate the negative socio-economic effects of the pandemic were not sufficient. Findings also suggested that in the last six months only 25 percent of respondents have used some kind of assistance, financial measure, work-related or social assistance. Eighty percent of respondents did not use any kind of assistance. However, this does not mean that these women and

girls did not need state aid. It can also mean that they did not meet the conditions for the granting of any aid and thus could not apply for it. Therefore, when adopting socio-economic measures, it is important that the largest possible number of affected populations can apply for them and that this “state safety net” is sufficient, people in need should not fall through. Recommendations for changing existing policies and introduction of new policies in North Macedonia will be thus proposed in this section.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADOPTING INCOME COMPENSATION MEASURES

In general, it is possible to propose the adoption of the subsidy, which will guarantee an income for the employees and help the employers to surpass temporary difficulties without need to lay off staff or call bankruptcy, in particular for sectors most affected by the pandemic, in which women are usually heavily represented or overrepresented. This subsidy shall be paid by the state for the employees whose employers are impacted by the extraordinary circumstances caused by COVID-19.

Another recommendation is to adopt financial compensation for the self-employed persons that also means women business owners from micro-enterprises, e.g. hairdressers, cosmetic salons, clothing boutiques. These professions were unable to do their job during the pandemic, as there is a high risk of COVID-19 infection during their work performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALLEVIATING THE BURDEN OF WOMEN CARING FOR CHILDREN, THE FAMILY, THE ELDERLY AND THE HOUSEHOLD

The results of the survey confirmed that unpaid domestic work still places a significant burden on women. In terms of unpaid domestic work such as food management and preparation, cooking, cleaning, caring for children, elderly and disabled persons, helping with school activities, it is easily visible that these responsibilities had to be managed mainly by women. On this basis, it is appropriate to recommend a change of the measure adopted with the closure of kindergartens and schools in North

Macedonia, which provided the right to release one parent to care for a child/children under age 10 during the crisis period and in practice was more commonly used by employed women. It would be worth considering the introduction of the possibility of alternation of parents when taking care of children or even elderly people. Parents who take care of children or the elderly should have the right to alternate (even after days) and receive nursing benefits. This change could ensure that not just one

parent, usually a woman, is left out from the work process.

The second option is not to oblige that childcare facilities close, but call on parents not to bring their children into childcare similar to Estonia. The local governments should be obliged to guarantee

childcare if parents need the service to go to work, i.e. for parents who work e.g. in healthcare, police, rescue, social services, transport, food production, grocery stores etc. Moreover, the local governments may provide school meals for children (some as hot meals, some as food packages), the concrete target groups particularly affected by the pandemic.

SOS UNIVERSAL SUBSIDY FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT ASK FOR ANY OTHER AID / ACCESS TO PARTIAL UNEMPLOYMENT

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In the course of the pandemic so far, there is a possibility that some women could not apply for any socio-economic assistance due to the access criteria outlined. Thus, it would be appropriate to consider the introduction of a SOS universal subsidy that could be claimed by women, who have lost their income or cannot be employed due to the crisis situation and cannot ask for any other aid, like the project to preserve employment or aid from the social insurance systems, state social support and social support, will be able to apply for the subsidy.

Another option is also to facilitate access to partial

unemployment. Short-time working may be extended and the procedures for qualifying for it may be simplified, through the similar measures as the Swiss Government adopted. Such as: compensation for short-time work can also be paid to employees with fixed-term contracts, employees with on-call work and persons working for a temporary work organization. Persons in a position similar to that of an employer and for the spouses or registered partners of such persons, employed in the company, as well as apprentices may also be entitled to short-time work compensation. In general unemployment shall cover 80 percent of previous income.

SICKNESS BENEFIT SCHEME / LEAVE DAYS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE ILL

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Several expert articles argue that women may be more exposed to COVID-19. "It may be that more women are employed in higher-contact care and frontline service work (such as cashiers, cleaners and nurses). Globally, some 70 percent of healthcare workers are female and this may be one of the drivers for a higher rate of female infection cases (as well as the higher rate of testing of women)."⁴¹ The state should review whether this has been the case in North Macedonia and take this into account when granting sickness benefit.

The sickness benefit scheme may be temporarily expanded to cover at least 10 days of sick leave

which represent the minimum length of quarantine. During quarantine, the employee shall be entitled to a sickness benefit in the appropriate amount and to claim this benefit should be possible without visiting responsible authority, thus online.

Second option is to guarantee the home office possibilities or leave days created for people who are ill and for those who have to care for sick members of their household or other persons for whom care was compulsory. While these measures should be gender-neutral, in practice they often alleviated the burden on women in particular.

⁴¹ Clint Witchalls. 2020. *How COVID-19 puts women at more risk than men*. Online: <https://theconversation.com/how-COVID-19-puts-women-at-more-risk-than-men-in-gauteng-south-africa-150570>

RECOMMENDATION IN ORDER TO REACH AND PROTECT MIGRANT FEMALE WORKERS FROM THE INFORMAL SECTOR

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As stated previously, the COVID-19 pandemic has massively affected the circular migration of live-in care workers between their home countries and seniors' households in different countries, in particular female elder care workers. States should

therefore not completely close themselves off, but rather negotiate and try to simplify rules for female care workers, so that women are not left without work and income and older people without care and assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PREVENT GENDER - BASED VIOLENCE

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In each country around the world - police, victim support, women's support centres, local governments, and other institutions must continue to help victims. Especially in times of a pandemic, it is necessary not to neglect the topic of domestic violence and discuss it a lot – the number of services cannot be reduced. Victim helplines available 24 hours a day are very important and should be available in all languages used in North Macedonia.

In addition, it is very important to focus on information campaigns, too. Given the results of the survey, which showed that the majority of respondents do not know or do not have information about this negative phenomena. This may indicate that the debate and knowledge about the very important topic such as domestic violence are still insufficient in North Macedonia. This finding is also confirmed by the respondents' answers to other questions: Do you know which institution or civil society organizations provide assistance or protection to those in need as a result of physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)? The vast majority of respondents (78 percent) do not know. Only 7 percent of respondents mentioned social institutions and services, less than 5 percent of respondents mentioned centre for social work (4 percent), ministry of internal affairs (3 percent), ministry of labour and social affairs (2 percent), NGOs (2 percent) and SOS telephones for domestic

violence (only 0.3 percent). Stakeholders in North Macedonia thus may be inspired by a campaign carried out in Estonia aimed to invite bystanders to notice and help victims of domestic violence such as colleagues and neighbours who are aware of the violent relationship would contribute to ending the violence (during pandemic the hypothesis of the campaign was that the victim of domestic violence cannot ask help, as both the offender and the victim are constantly at home and the). Another example which may be used in North Macedonia is a poster campaign in all languages used so that all those concerned know where to find help. In addition, victim support services can increase their accommodation capacity in shelters to cope with a possible increase in cases of violence. Throughout the COVID-19 period, access to counselling services and emergency accommodation has been guaranteed on a continuous basis in Switzerland. The Confederation also provided additional financial support to various telephone hotlines. In addition, the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Social Affairs carried out a campaign on social networks to publicise the benefits of victim support, which can serve as an example of good practice for North Macedonia.

Last but not least, the police in cooperation with the government and other institutions may try to develop a tool in the form of a mobile application. The social

isolation with which countries suppressed the spread of the virus meant for women, children and other groups of people experiencing domestic violence greater vulnerability and a higher risk of experiencing psychological, physical, sexual or other violence. At the same time, there are fewer options to call for help. In Slovakia such an application was launched on a pilot basis in 2020. The application should help to call for help quickly, securely and discreetly.

As mentioned above, governments and parliaments around the world have taken some steps to address the negative socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some have been more successful in this, others less successful. When adopting these measures, it is important that the largest possible number of affected populations can apply for them and that this “state safety net” is sufficient, people in need should not fall through. However, it is also important to evaluate the measures taken and, if necessary, change them and also to be willing to get inspiration by examples of good practice from abroad. It should also be borne in mind that during crisis situations it is more necessary than ever to do not forget, that “Measures are needed to reinforce the integration of the knowledge, experiences and expertise of women and other marginalized groups, into political and social organizations as well as in media and other public realms.”⁴²

⁴¹ ELSI Report. 2020. *Gender aspects of COVID-19 and pandemic response*. Online: <https://scienctaskforce.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Gender-aspects-of-COVID19-and-pandemic-response-14-May-20-EN.pdf>

Conclusion

Our research paper and other international studies of this and previous epidemics show that these types of crises affect women differently than men. One reason is that they often have to cope with the burden of reduced employment on the one hand and increased childcare on the other. Despite the fact that, the current crisis is having a major impact on many sectors and professions “compared to “regular” recessions, which affect men’s employment more severely than women’s employment, the employment drop related to social distancing measures has a large impact on sectors with high female employment shares. In addition, closures of schools and daycare centers have massively increased child care needs, which has a particularly large impact on working mothers.”⁴³ Literature, data and findings presented in this paper confirmed that women and girls have suffered great social and economic damage from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, the aim of this paper was to identify policy measures and direct support which address effectively the economic impact of COVID-19 on women and girls. The research paper pointed out the best practises from other Europe countries in relation to socio-economic measures aimed at eliminating the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls, including the roles of Parliaments in monitoring of the public policies. Based on examples of good practice from the countries analysed - Estonia, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland - and the result of the phone survey for the effect of COVID-19 on different categories of women in North Macedonia, this paper recommended how to adapt existing national social protection programs to ensure income for sectors

affected by COVID-19, where women are heavily represented and enhanced the scrutiny role of Parliament over the implementation of government measures to combat COVID-19 and proposed introduction of new policies in North Macedonia.

Hypotheses that assumed that the women are at risk of suffering more than men from the trade disruption generated by the COVID-19 pandemic and that a larger share of women remain out of work due to unpaid domestic and care work during the pandemic in North Macedonia have been confirmed. We validated the hypotheses based on available statistical data and results of the telephone survey. “Women have much lower formal employment rates compared to men, whereas more than half of the inactive persons in the labour market are women. Furthermore, formally employed women earn less than men due to the lower representation of women in managerial positions, discrimination against them in the labour market, and higher representation in industries with lower labour valuation and wages. Men make up the majority of employers and self-employed. Women constitute the majority of employees in education, health care and social protection. They also comprise the majority in the textile industry, where the vast majority receive salaries lower than the average.”⁴⁴ In addition, these sectors have often been hit harder by the COVID-19 crisis.

Our analysis also confirmed an ongoing trend of a disproportionate burden on women when it comes to unpaid domestic and care work. The results of the survey in terms of unpaid domestic work such as food management and preparation, cooking,

⁴³ Alon et al. 2020. *THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GENDER EQUALITY*. Online: https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w26947/w26947.pdf

⁴⁴ Marija Bashevskaja - UN Women. 2020. *RAPID GENDER ASSESSMENT: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN AND MEN IN NORTH MACEDONIA*. Online: https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field_percent20office_percent20eca/attachments/publications/2020/09/rga_the_percent20impact_percent20of_percent20COVID-19_nm_eng_final_2020_09_29-min.pdf?la=en&vs=2420

cleaning, caring for children, elderly and disabled persons, helping with school activities confirmed that these responsibilities had to be managed almost exclusively by women.

An interesting finding of this paper is also that a lot of women and girls do not know or do not have information about the gender based violence. This may indicate that the debate and knowledge about the very important topic such as domestic violence are still insufficient in North Macedonia. This finding underlines the importance of information campaigns aimed at raising awareness of this negative phenomenon.

The words of the President of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski also confirm that the COVID-19 pandemic is deepening gender inequality and emphasizes the relevance of the transformative vision laid out in the Beijing Declaration. According to him "It is crucial to demonstrate political will and tangible effort to empower women and girls."⁴⁵ In conclusion, it can be said that the pandemic in

North Macedonia made the existing structures more visible: Women constitute the majority of employees in sectors which have often been hit harder by the COVID-19 crisis (education, health care, social protection, textile industry, sale of food products, pharmacies, shops and supermarkets, financial services and hygiene maintenance etc). In North Macedonia women already took on more responsibility in the household. In these extraordinary times, the burden has a multiplier effect. Thus it is very important that words of the President of North Macedonia are also mastered by other politicians, whether members of the government or parliament, and stakeholders who are responsible for proposing actions, measures, action plans, and laws aimed at achieving gender equal socio-economic policies during but also outside crises. This paper can therefore serve as a basis for starting a debate, stimulating the adoption of new and changing policies already adopted taking into account the gender perspective and the gender impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly. 2020. *Progress towards gender equality under threat, world leaders warn as General Assembly marks twenty-fifth anniversary of landmark women's rights conference*. Online: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/progress-towards-gender-equality-under-threat-world-leaders-warn-general-assembly-marks>

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Telephone survey (CATI) Computer Assisted Telephone Interview by TEAM Institute.

Data provided by the research centres of the individual parliaments and Swiss Federal Office of Gender Equality.

Annex 1: Public Opinion Research on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women and Girls

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ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHËTETJE PARLAMENTARE
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME



Public Opinion Research Report

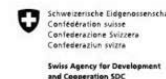
Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women and Girls

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PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT PROGRAMME
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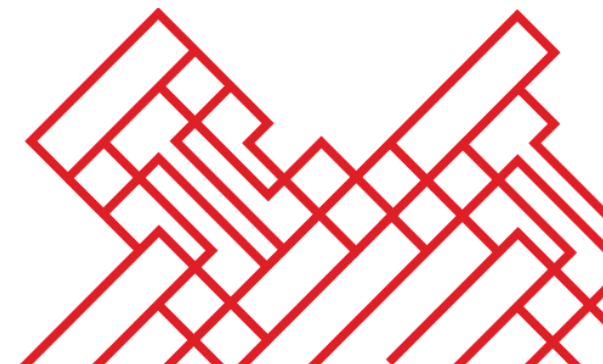


ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHETËJE PARLAMENTARE
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME



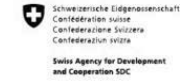
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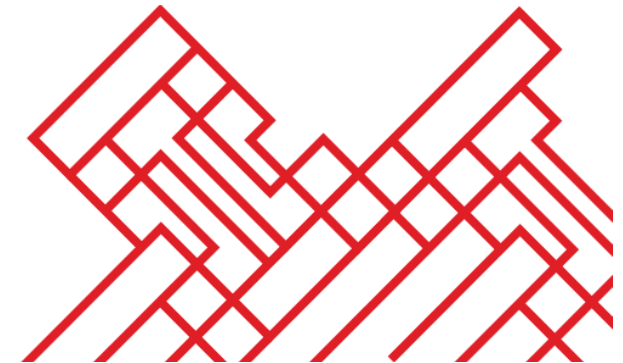




ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
PROGRAMI PËR MBËSHITËTJE PARLAMENTARE
PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

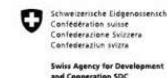


I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY





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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY - QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

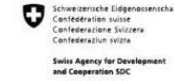
SURVEY OF REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF 1.100 RESPONDENTS

SURVEY OF BOOSTER SAMPLE OF 370 RESPONDENTS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	QUANTITATIVE: Telephone (CATI) survey Computer Assisted Telephone Interview	QUANTITATIVE: Telephone (CATI) survey Computer Assisted Telephone Interview
Time Frame	21 - 25 November, 2020	25 – 30 November, 2020
Population	Women of the Republic of North Macedonia, aged 18 years and older	Women engaged in informal economy, women business owners of micro enterprises, women farmers, Roma women engaged in the labour market, young women with a potential for entrepreneurship
Sample Design	Nationally representative, multistage stratified sample of 1,100 women aged 18+. Households are distributed proportionally in urban and rural areas and by ethnicity in all eight regions of the country.	Booster sample of 370 women aged 18+ 75 respondents in each of the groups mentioned above
Sample Size	1,100 respondents Estimated margin of error of ± 2.95 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence	370 respondents
Research Team	Interviewer network of 27 telephone interviewers	
Average Length of Interview	22 minutes	



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NOTES

- ✓ The **estimated margin of sampling error** for the survey is ± 2.95 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval.
 - Meaning: If the same survey is conducted **100 times**, we expect that in **95** of those surveys the responses would **fall somewhere within our margin of sampling error**.
 - **The margin of error will be larger among subgroups of respondents**, such as among ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.

- ✓ The research provides **opinions that are time bound**.

- ✓ All sample surveys and polls may be subject to **multiple sources of error**, including, but not limited to sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error.



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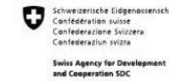


II. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS



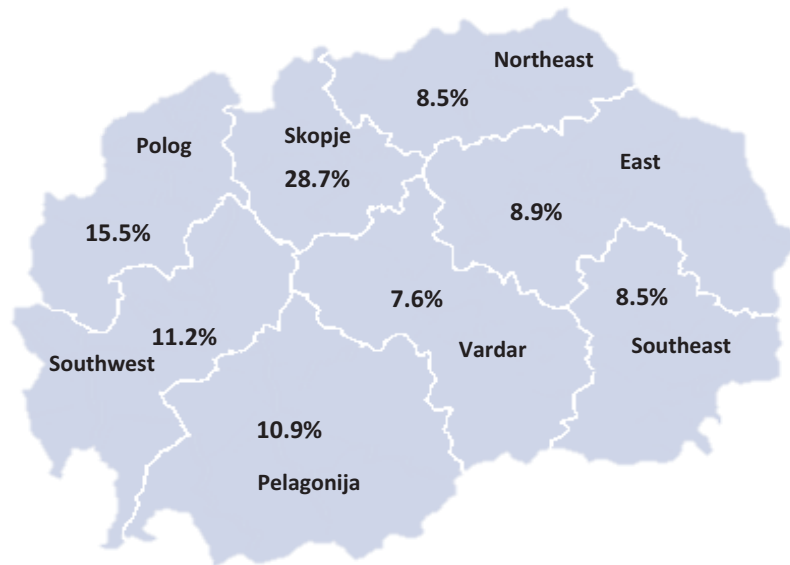


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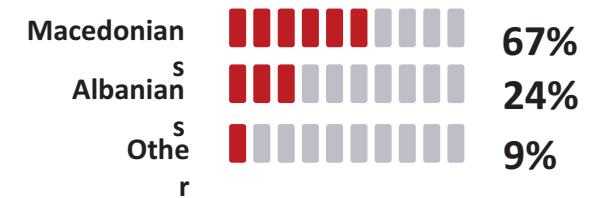


DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS – REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

Survey Distribution by Region



Survey Distribution by Ethnicity



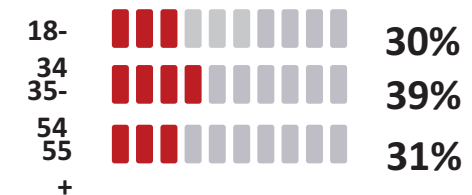
Survey Distribution by Gender



Survey Distribution by Settlement



Survey Distribution by Age Group

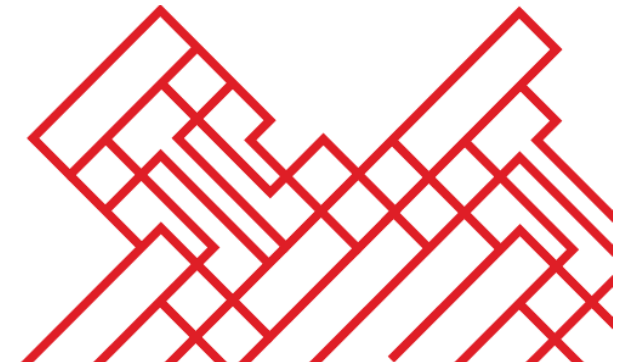




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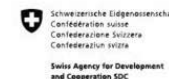


III. GENERAL SECTION





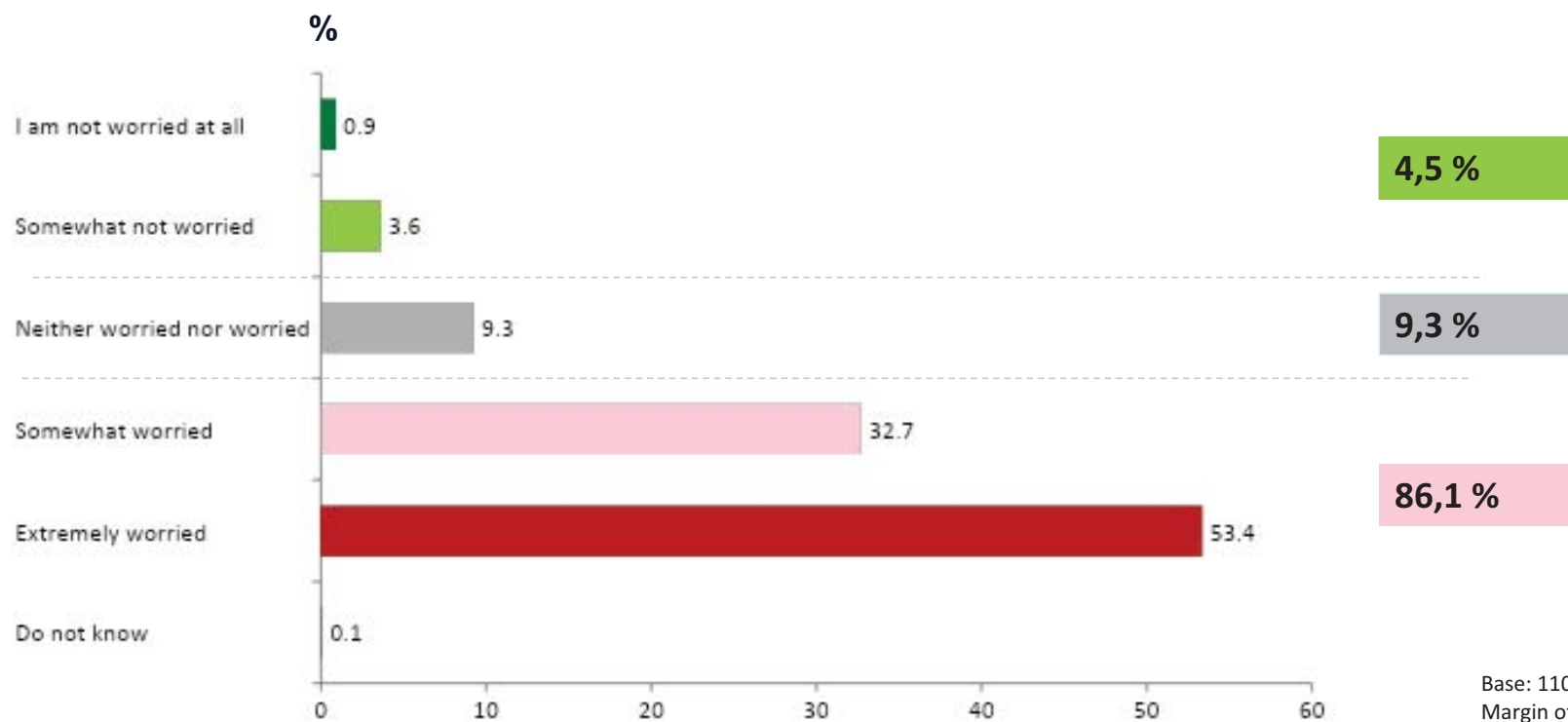
ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
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GENERAL SECTION

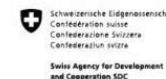
Q1. How worried are you about the COVID-19 situation in the country?

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE





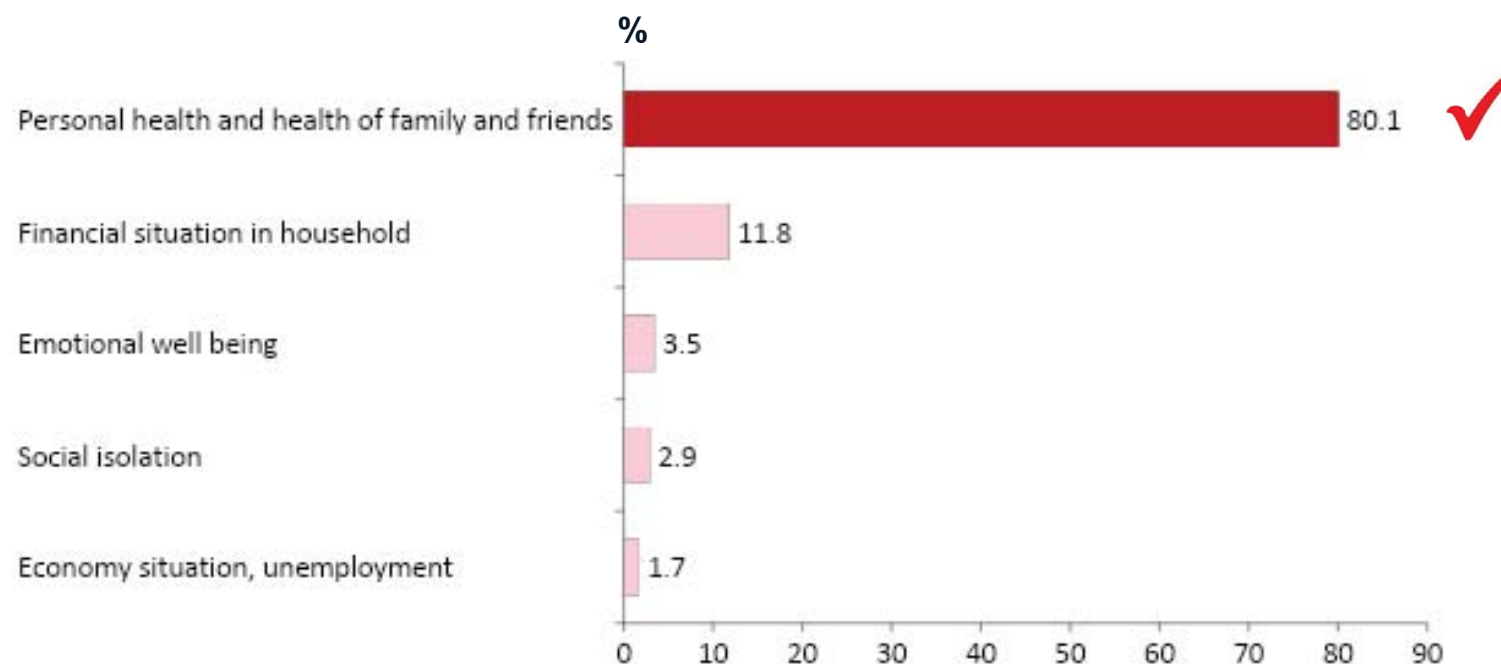
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GENERAL SECTION

Q2. What are you most worried about?

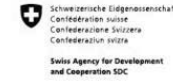
REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE



Base: 1100 (all respondents)
Margin of Error \pm 2.95



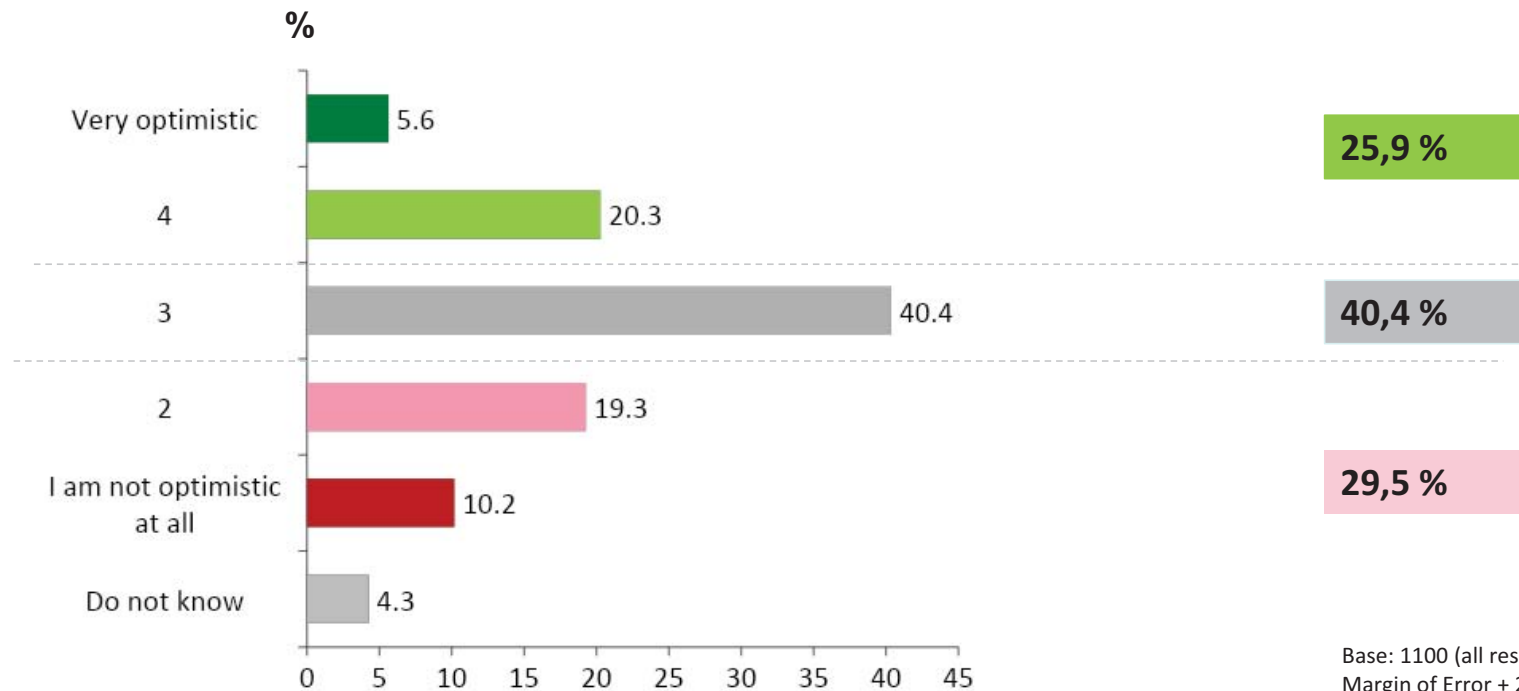
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GENERAL SECTION

Q3. How optimistic are you that the country will deal with the COVID-19 crisis, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=I am not at all optimistic and 5=Very optimistic?

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE



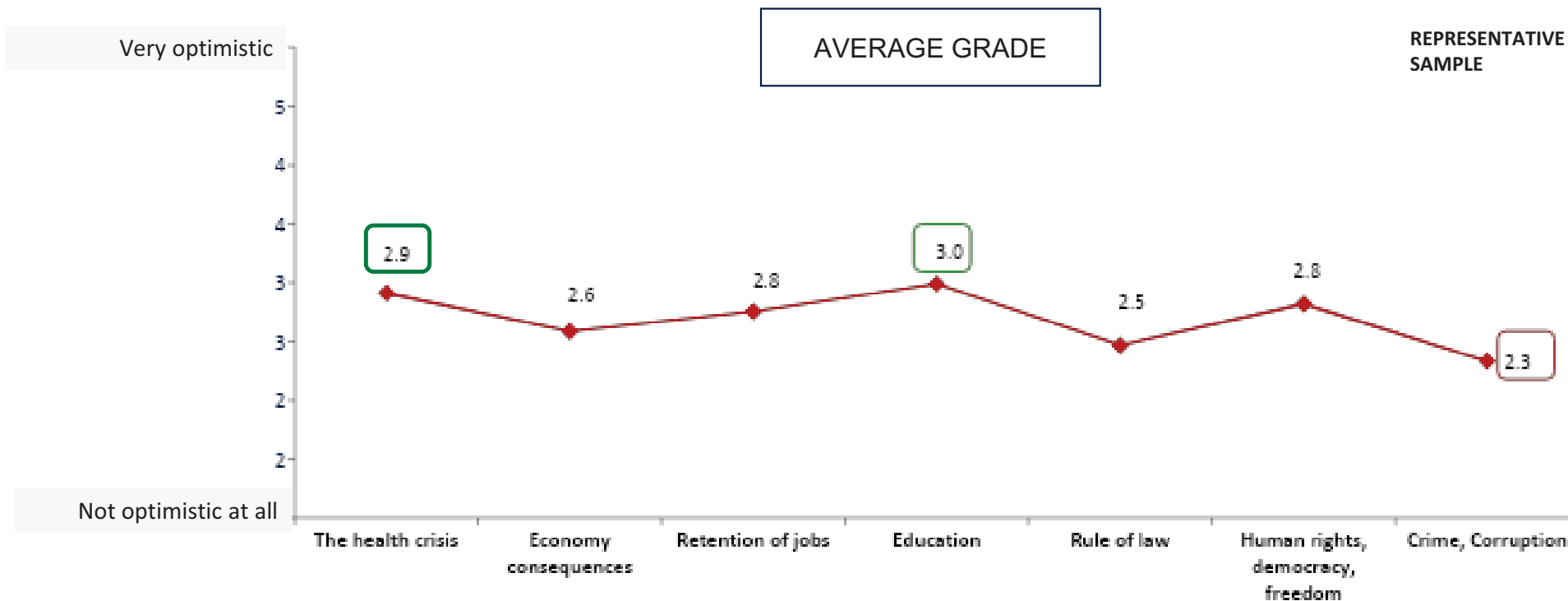


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GENERAL SECTION

Q4. How optimistic are you that the country will deal with the consequences of the pandemic during the COVID-19 crisis for each of the following areas?



North Macedonia: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic of Women and Girls - Phone Survey Findings



86%

Majority of women are extremely or somewhat worried about the situation with COVID-19 in the country

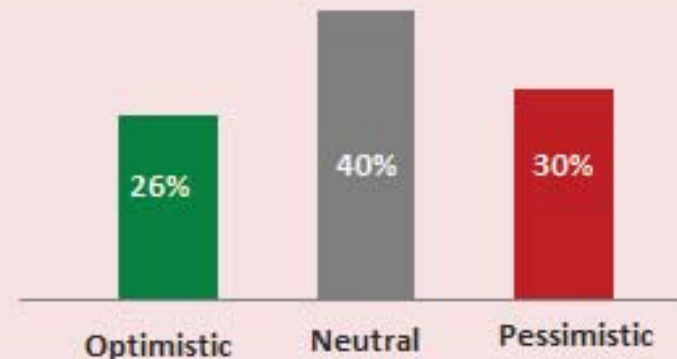


93% are mostly worried about their personal health and health of their friends



47% are worried about the financial situation in their household

26% of women are optimistic that the country will deal with the COVID-19 crisis, mostly regarding the health crisis and education

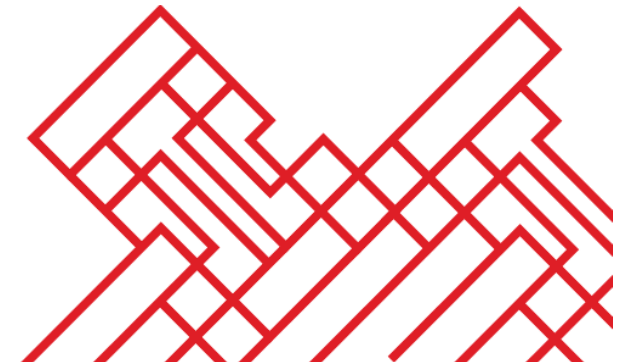




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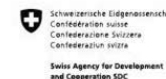


IV. FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES



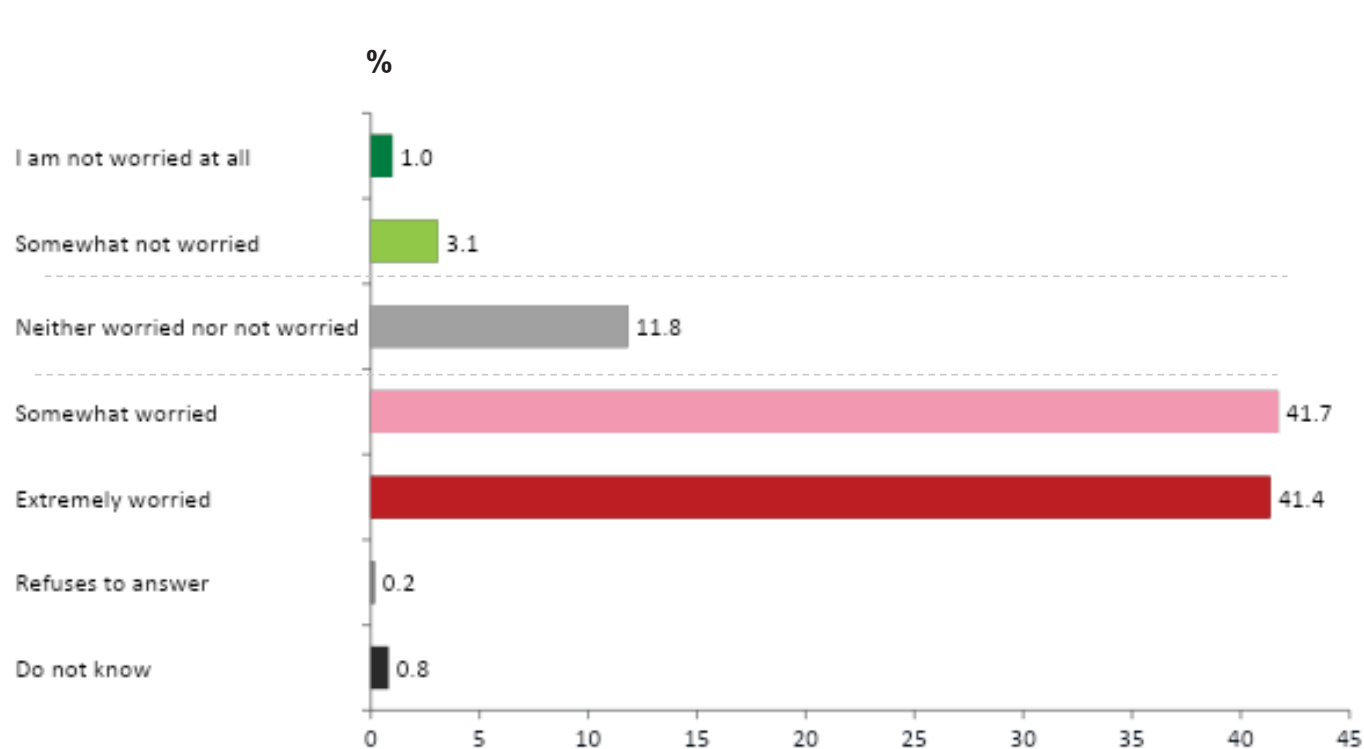


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FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q5. How concerned are you about the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in the country?





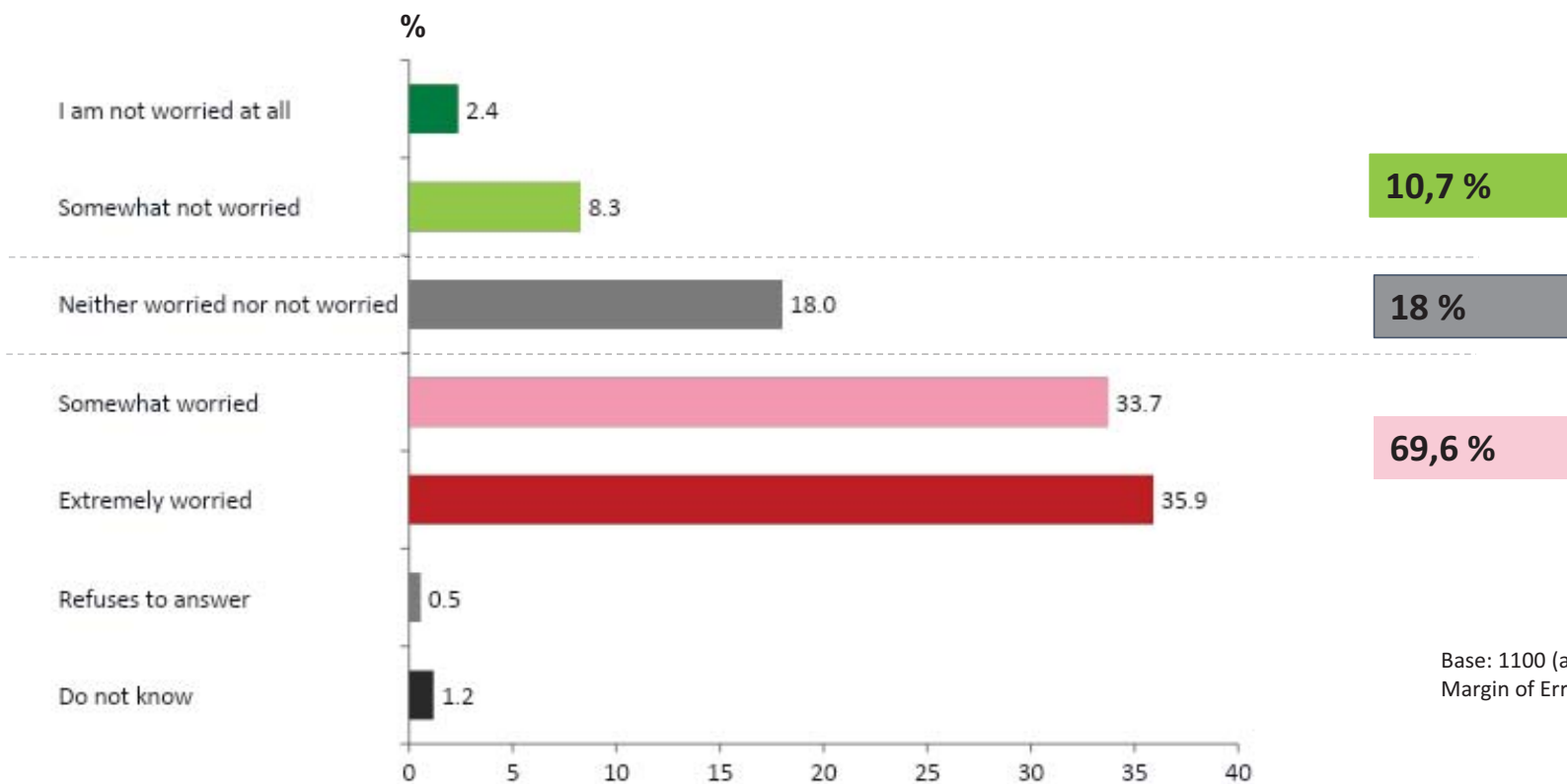
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FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

Q6. How concerned are you about the financial situation in your household as consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on your family?





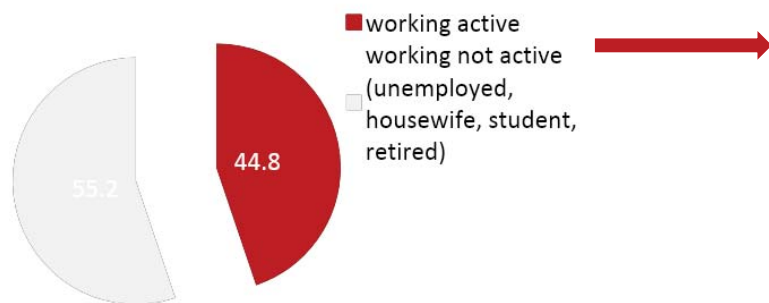
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FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

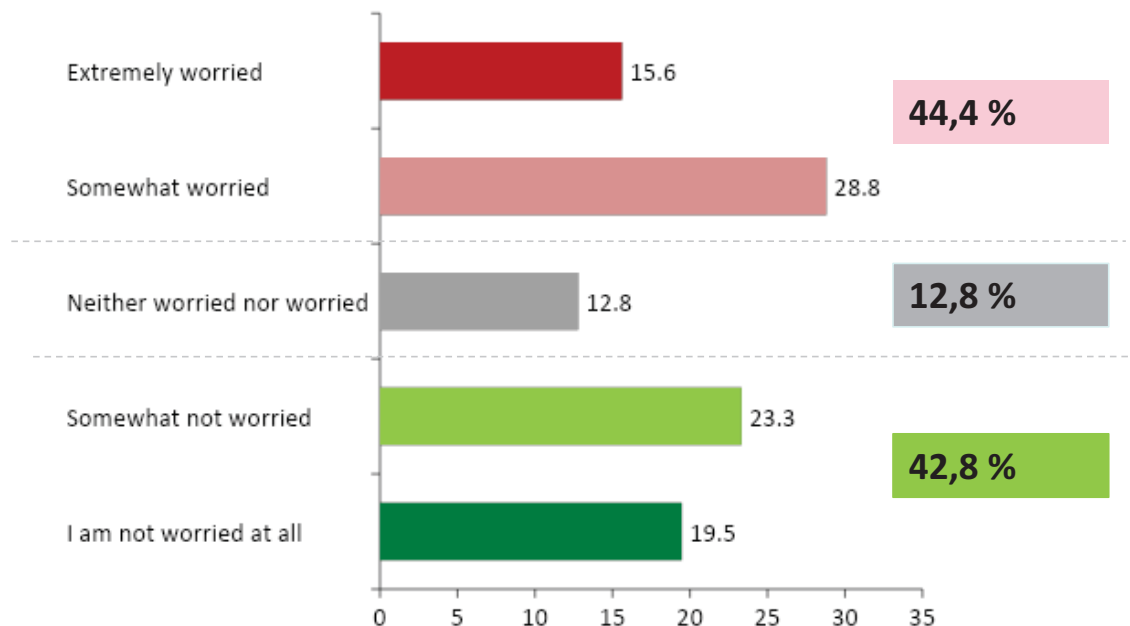
REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE

Q7. How concerned are you about your employment security / future employment as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis?



Base: 1100 (all respondents)
 Margin of Error ± 2.95

AMONG THE 45% OF PEOPLE WHO ARE ACTIVELY WORKING



Base: 493 (respondents who are working active)

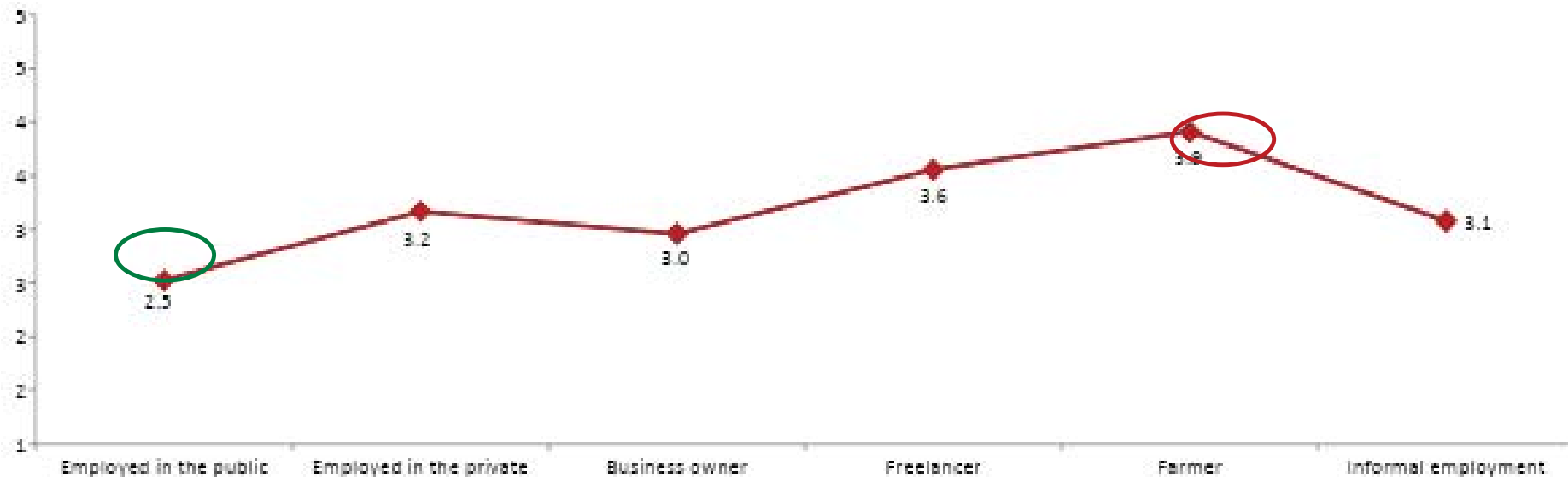


REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q7. How concerned are you about your employment security / future employment as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis?

AVERAGE GRADE



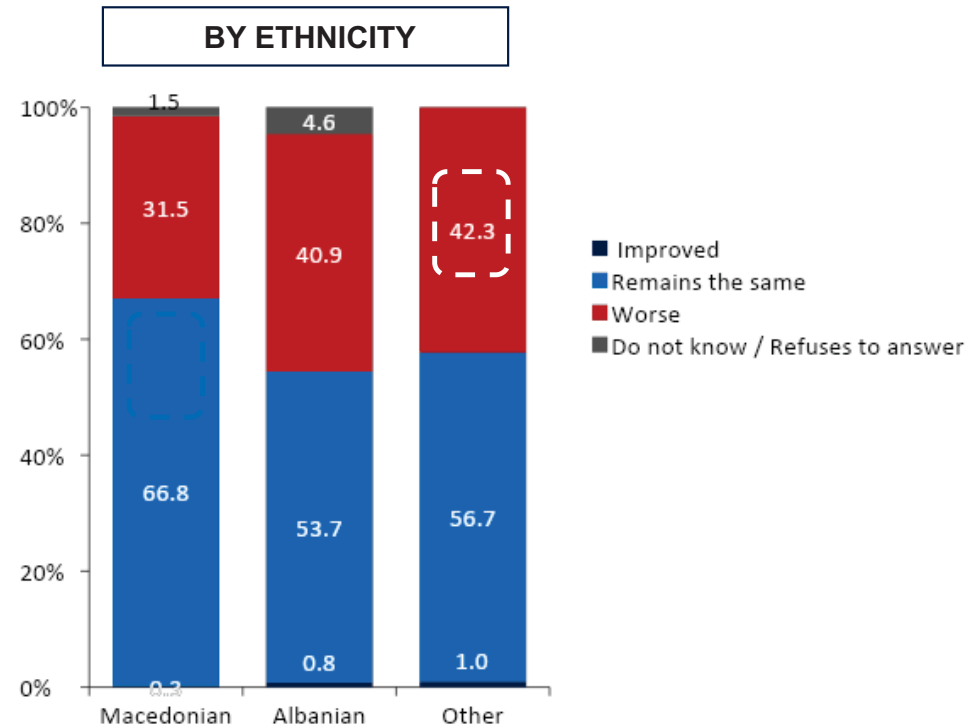
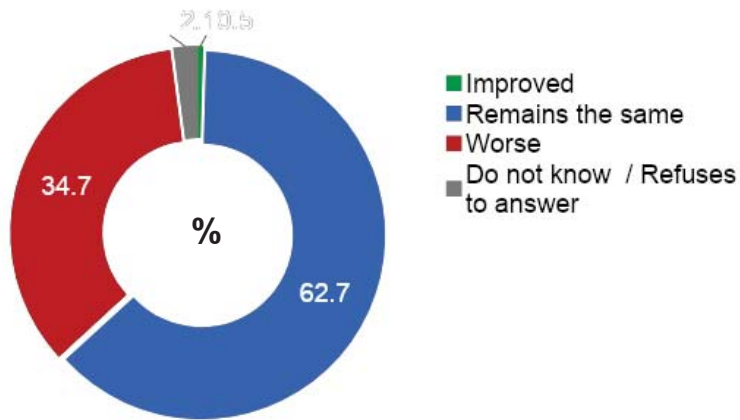
Base: 1100 (all respondents) Margin of Error \pm 2.95



FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q8. Please assess your private financial situation over the past six months?

REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE



Base: 1100 (all respondents) Margin of Error ± 2.95



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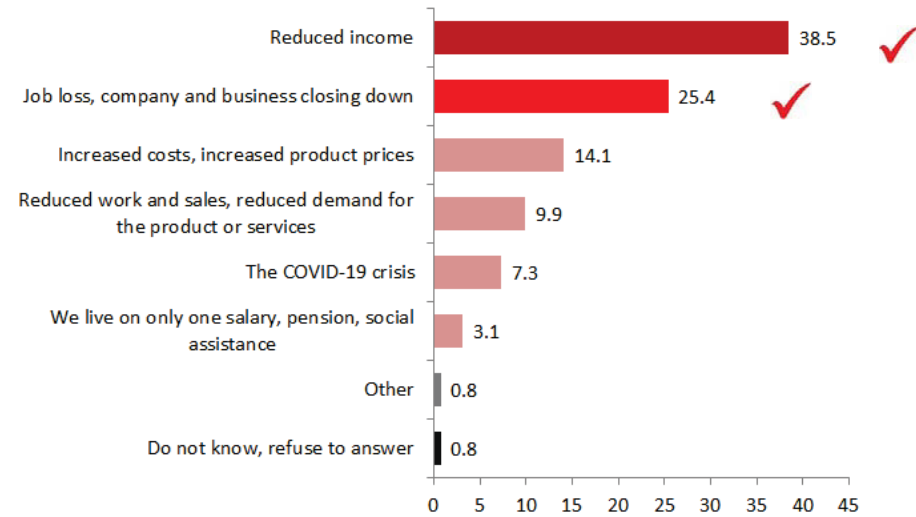
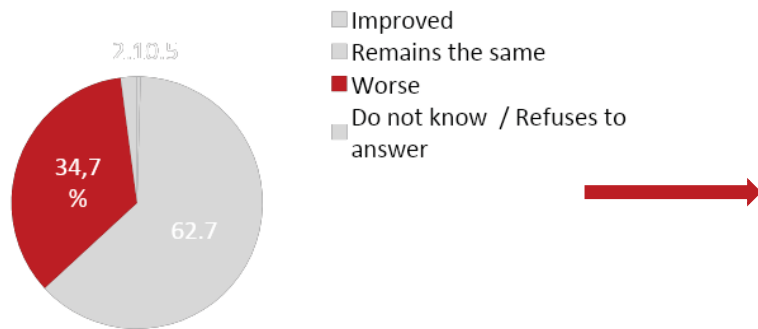


FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE

Q8b. Please indicate the reason for worsening of the financial situation in your household?

AMONG THE 35% OF PEOPLE WHO ASSESSED THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD AS WORSE



Base: 382 respondents



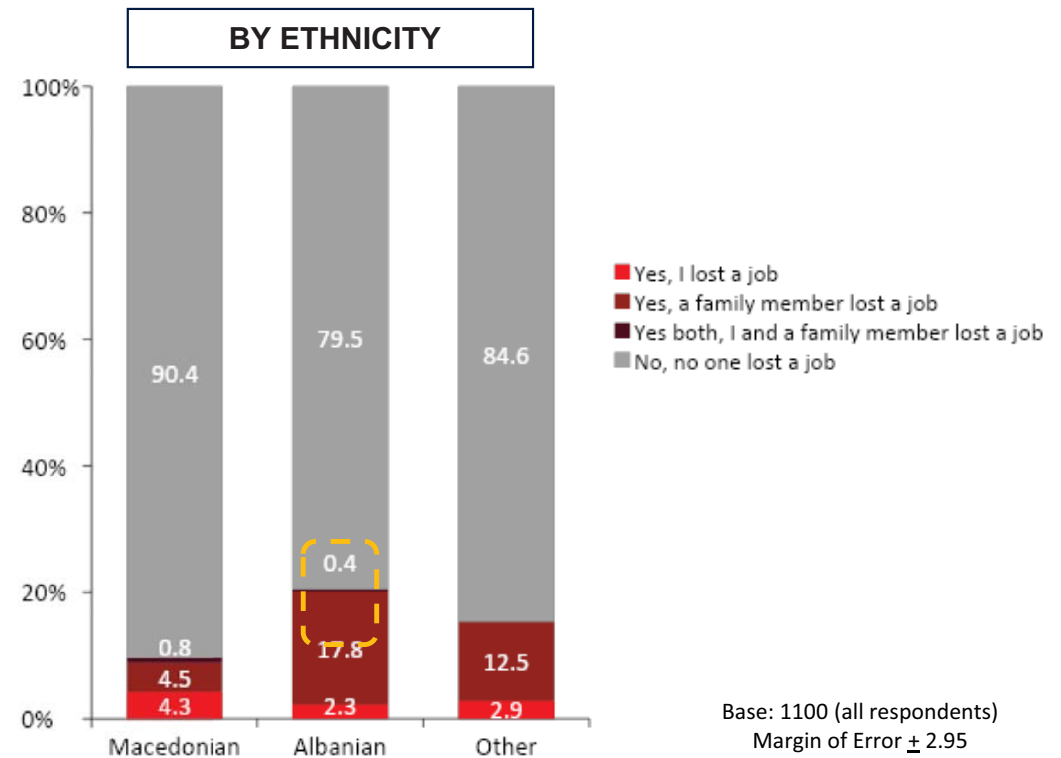
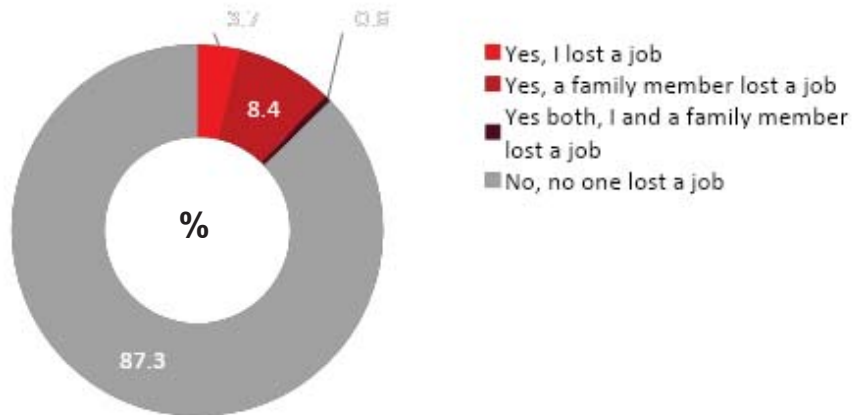
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FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q9. Did you or a family member lose their job as a consequences of the COVID-19 crisis?

REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE





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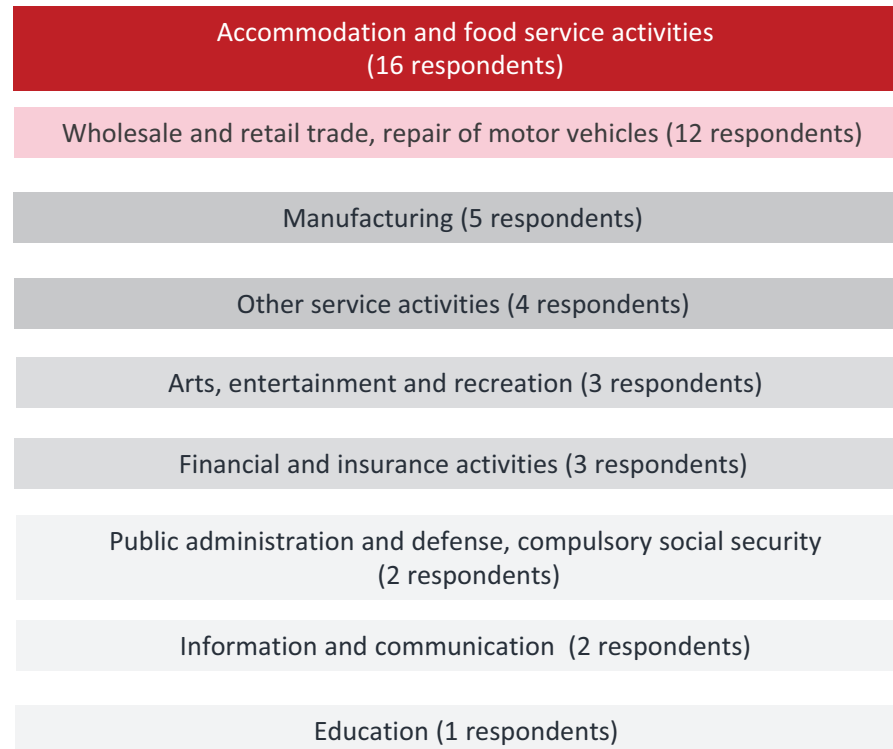


FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q9a. In which sector of activity were you employed?

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

AMONG THE 4% OF PEOPLE WHO LOST THEIR JOB



Base: 48 respondents



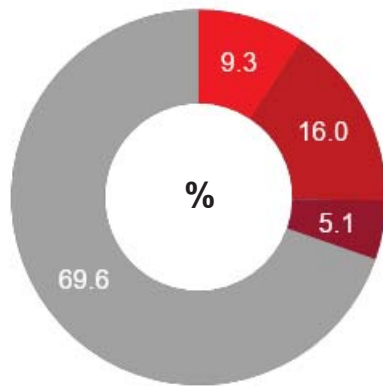
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FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q10. Do you or a family member have a lower salary now compared to the period before the COVID-19 crisis?

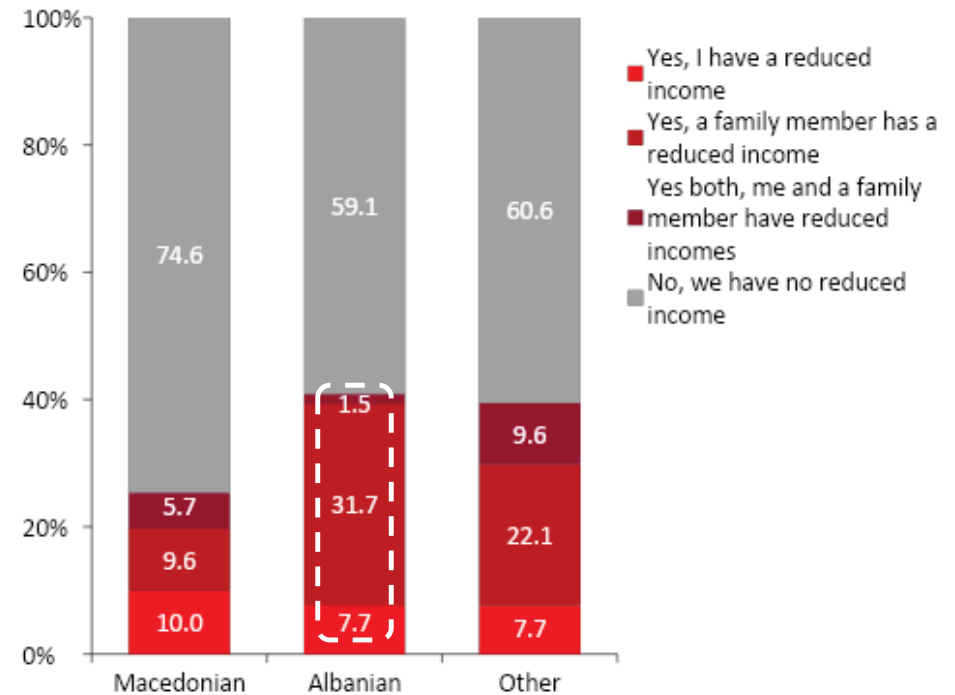
REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE



- Yes, I have a reduced income
- Yes, a family member has a reduced income
- Yes both, me and a family member have reduced incomes
- No, we have no reduced income

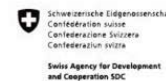
Base: 1100 (all respondents) Margin of Error ± 2.95

BY ETHNICITY

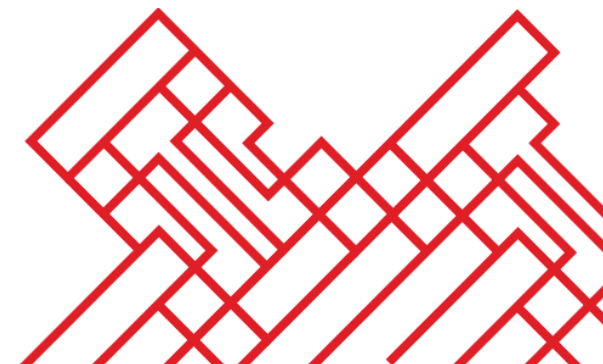




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IV. FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES for different groups





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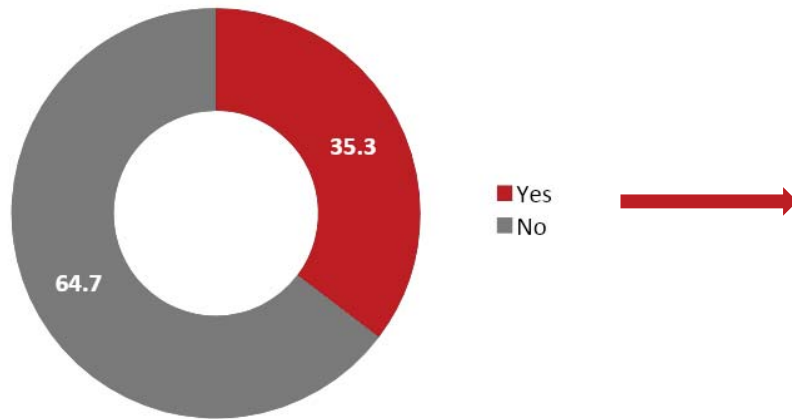


FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q13. Does COVID-19 crisis affect your ability to get the materials / supplies and everything you need to work?

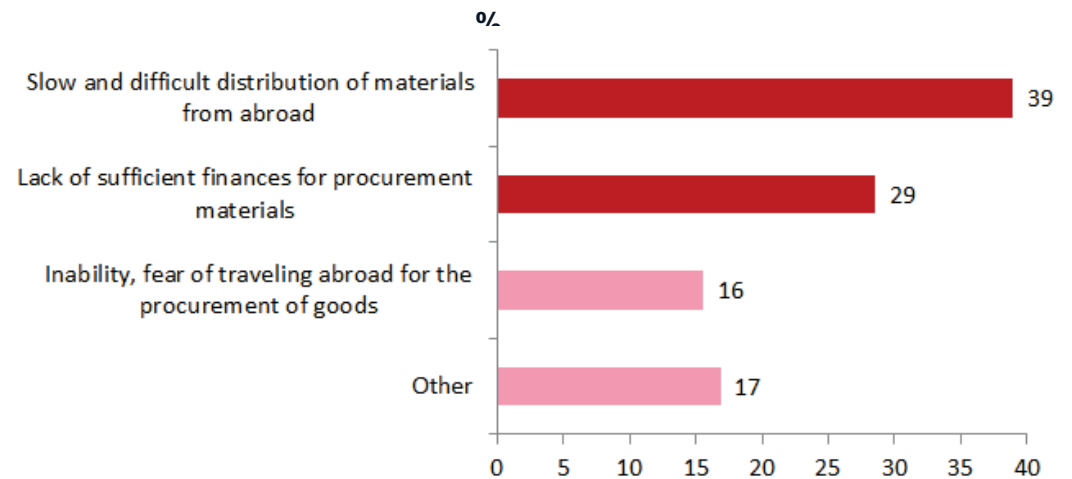
Q13a. In which way the COVID-19 crisis affect your ability to get the materials, supplies and everything you need to work?

AMONG SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN, BUSINESS OWNERS/
 FARMERS/ FREELANCERS



Base: 218 respondents

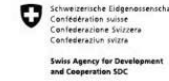
AMONG 35% OF SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN, BUSINESS OWNERS/
 FARMERS/ FREELANCERS WHO REPORT COVID-19 CRISIS
 AFFECTED THEIR ABILITY TO GET MATERIALS/ SUPPLIES



Base: 77 respondents



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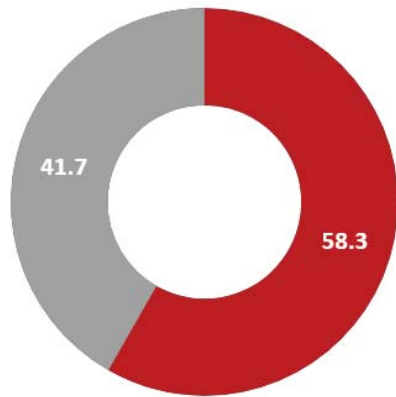


FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q14. Does COVID-19 crisis affect your ability to market / sell your products / services?

Q15. In which way, COVID-19 crisis affect your ability to market / sell your products / services?

AMONG SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN, BUSINESS OWNERS/
 FARMERS/ FREELANCERS



Base: 218 respondents

■ Yes
 ■ No

AMONG 58% OF SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN, BUSINESS OWNERS/
 FARMER/ FREELANCERS WHO REPORT COVID-19 CRISIS AFFECTED THEIR ABILITY TO MARKET/ SELL THEIR PRODUCTS/ SERVICES



Base: 91 respondents



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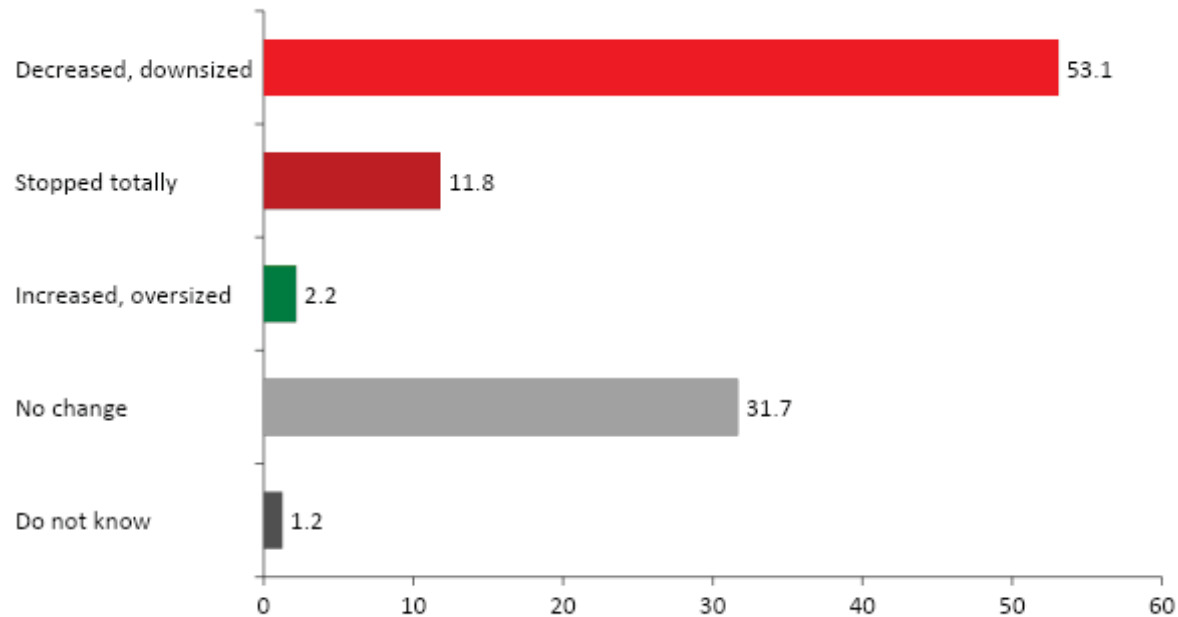


FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q16. How has the spread of COVID-19 affected your business?

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

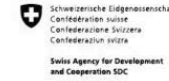
**AMONG SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN, BUSINESS OWNERS/ FARMERS/
FREELANCERS AND WOMEN ENGAGED IN INFORMAL ECONOMY**



Base: 322 respondents



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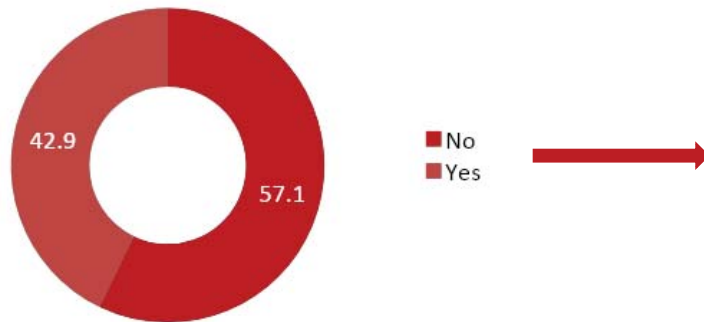
FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE

Q17. Is your business formally registered?

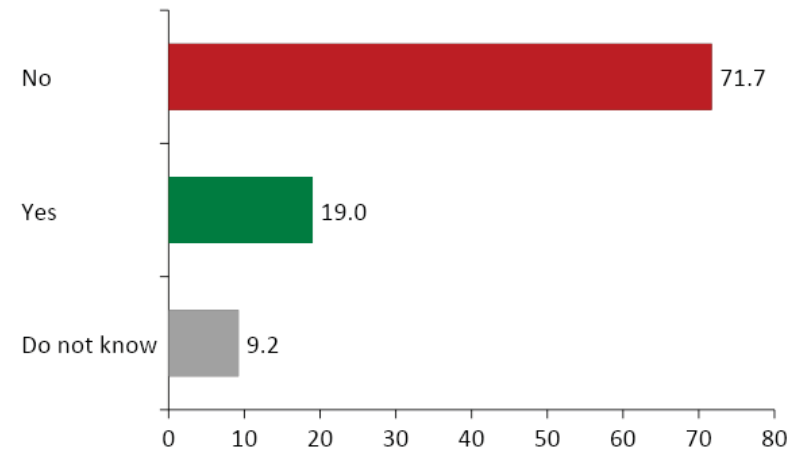
Q18. Would you register a business knowing that the Government is defining measures/assistance to assist official (registered) business?

AMONG SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN, BUSINESS OWNERS/
 FARMERS/ FREELANCERS AND WOMEN ENGAGED IN
 INFORMAL ECONOMY



Base: 322 respondents

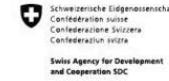
AMONG 57% SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN, BUSINESS
 OWNERS/ FARMERS/ FREELANCERS AND WOMEN
 ENGAGED IN INFORMAL ECONOMY WHOSE BUSINESS
 IS NOT FORMALLY REGISTERED



Base: 184 respondents



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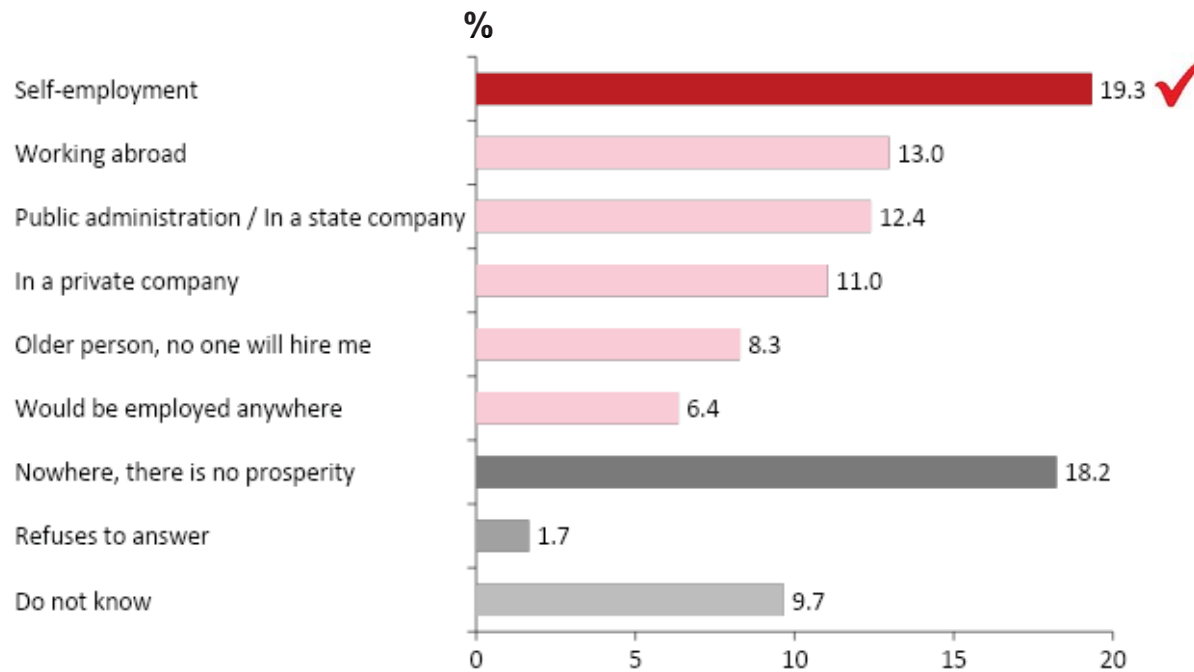


FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Q19. Where do you see your future employment?

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

AMONG STUDENTS, UNEMPLOYED WOMEN LOOKING FOR A JOB AND
WOMEN ENGAGED IN INFORMAL ECONOMY



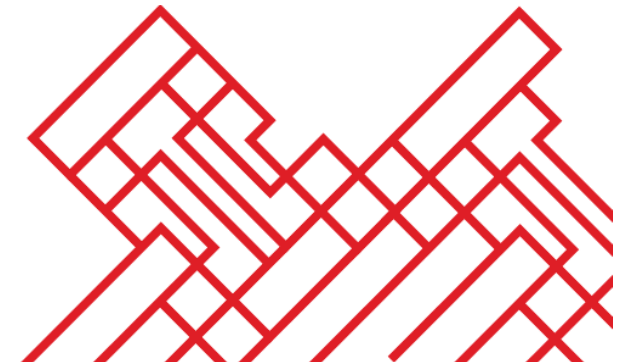
Base: 362 respondents



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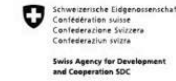


V. USAGE OF ASSISTANCE / FINANCIAL MEASURES





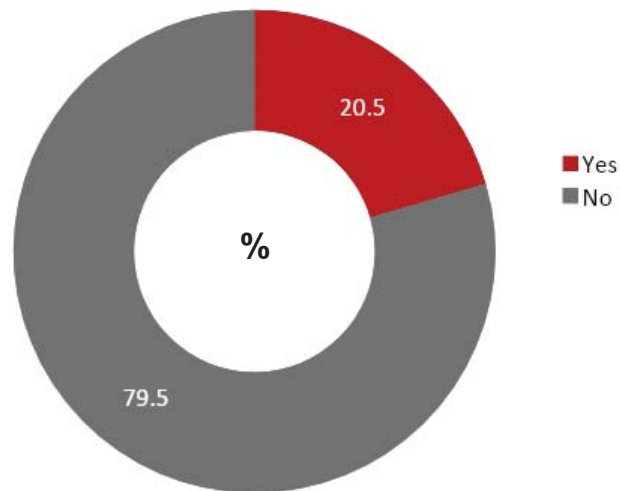
ПРОГРАМА ЗА ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНА ПОДДРШКА
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USAGE OF ASSISTANCE / FINANCIAL MEASURES

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

Q21. In the last 6 months, have you used any kind of assistance, financial measure, work-related or social assistance (since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis)?



Base: 1100 (all respondents)
Margin of Error \pm 2.95



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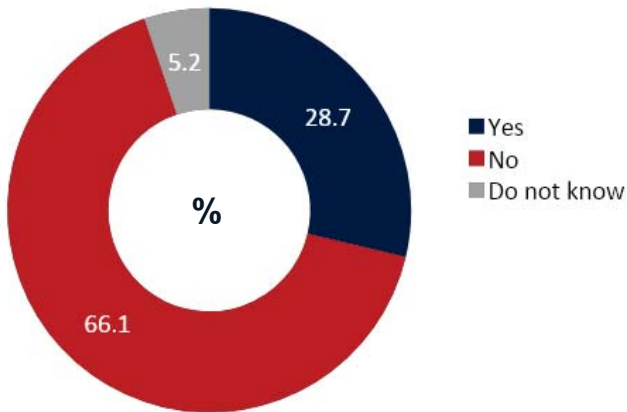
USAGE OF ASSISTANCE / FINANCIAL MEASURES

Q23a. In your opinion, was this assistance sufficient?

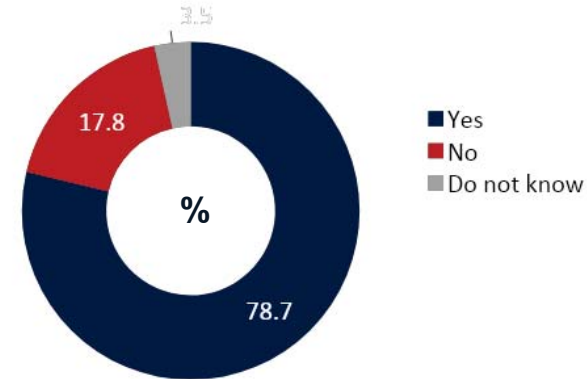
Q24. Was this assistance easily accessible?

REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE

AMONG 20% OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE USED ASSISTANCE, FINANCIAL MEASURES SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS



Base: 230 respondents



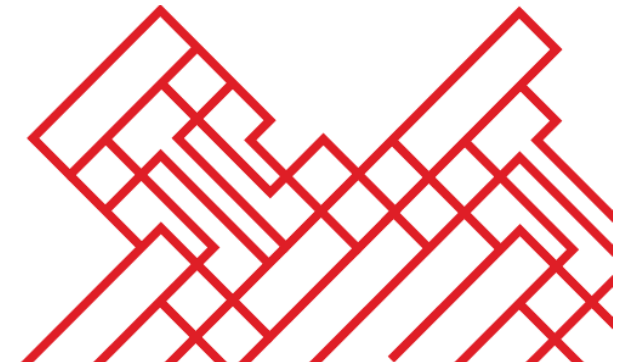
Base: 230 respondents



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VI. CARING FOR CHILDREN AND ELDERLY PEOPLE/ PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES





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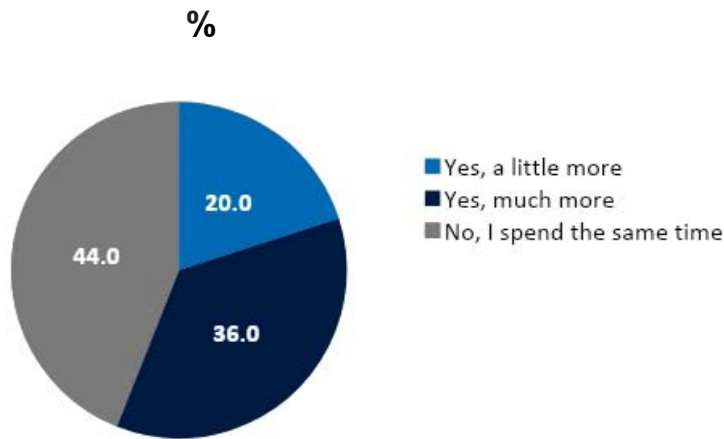


CARING FOR CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

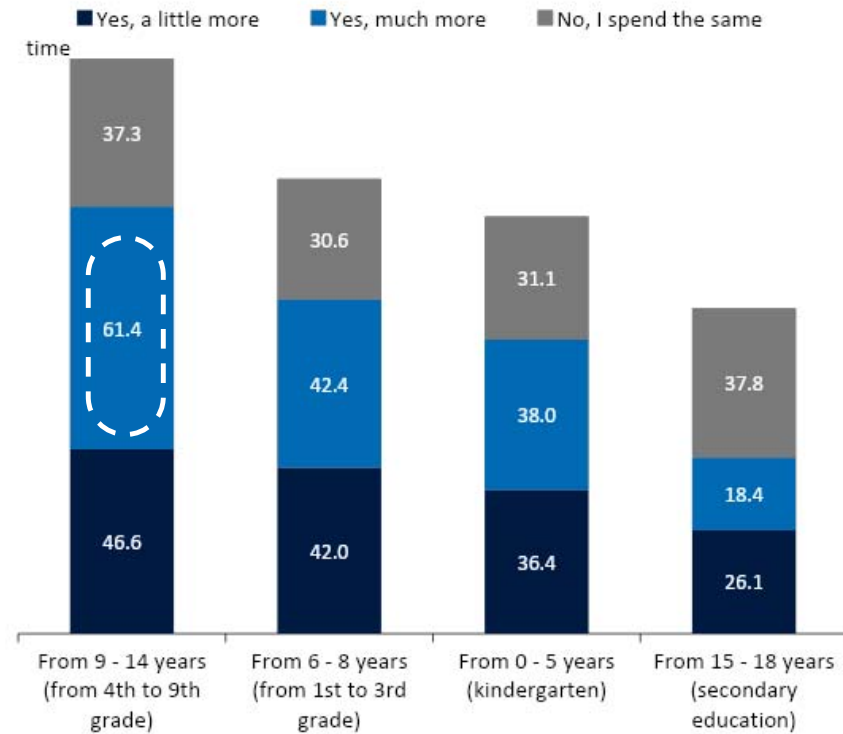
REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE

Q28. Do you personally spend more time caring for children than you did before the COVID-19 crisis?

AMONG THE 40% OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN THE HOUSEHOLD

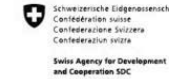


Base: 439 (respondents)





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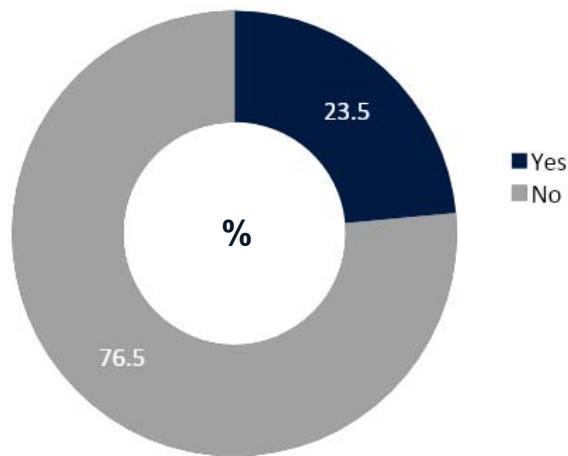


CARING FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE/ PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

REPRESENTATIVE
 SAMPLE

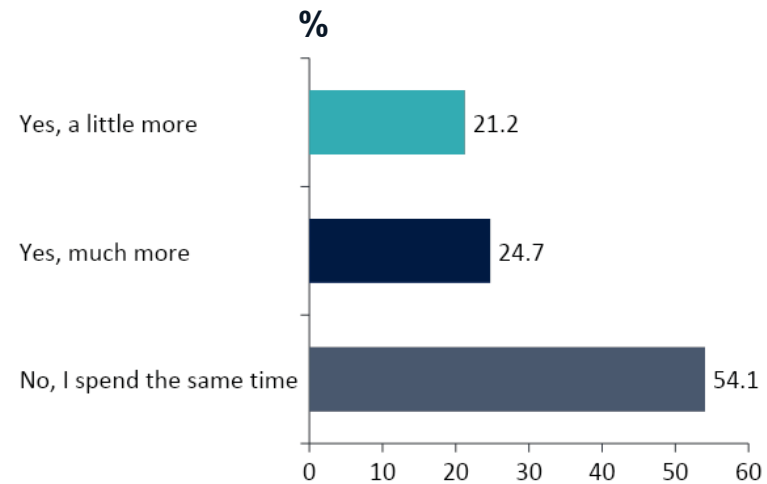
Q29. Are there people in the household who are elderly person / person with disabilities?

Q30. Do you personally spend more time caring for elderly person / person with disabilities than you did before the COVID-19 crisis?



Base: 1100 (all respondents)
 Margin of Error \pm 2.95

AMONG THE 24% OF PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE/ PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE HOUSEHOLD



Base: 259 (household with elderly person / person with disabilities)



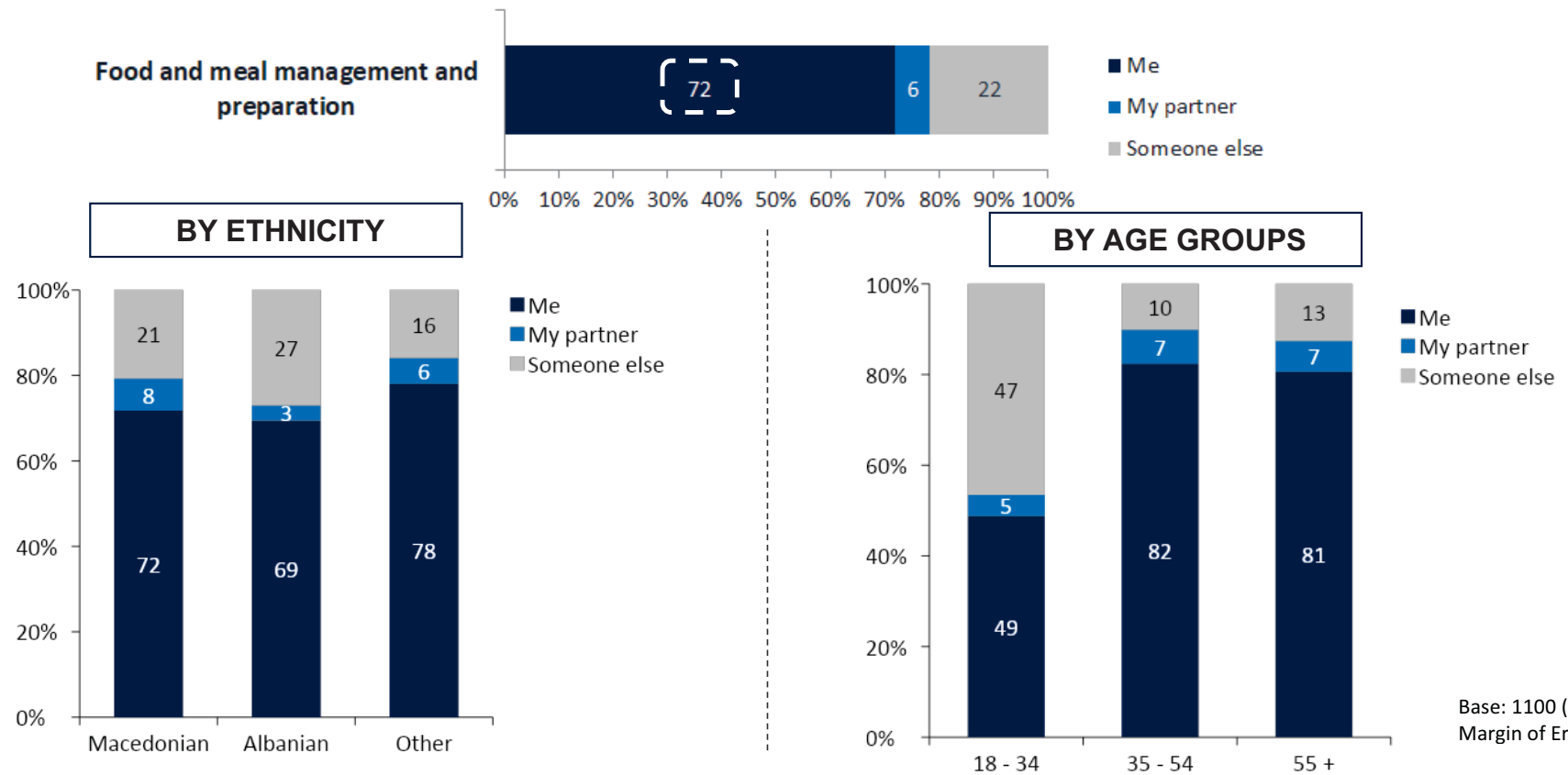
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HOUSEHOLD CHORES

Q31. In the last 6 months who in your household spends the most time doing the following:

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE



Base: 1100 (all respondents)
Margin of Error ± 2.95



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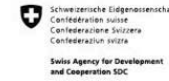


VII. HEALTH PROTECTION





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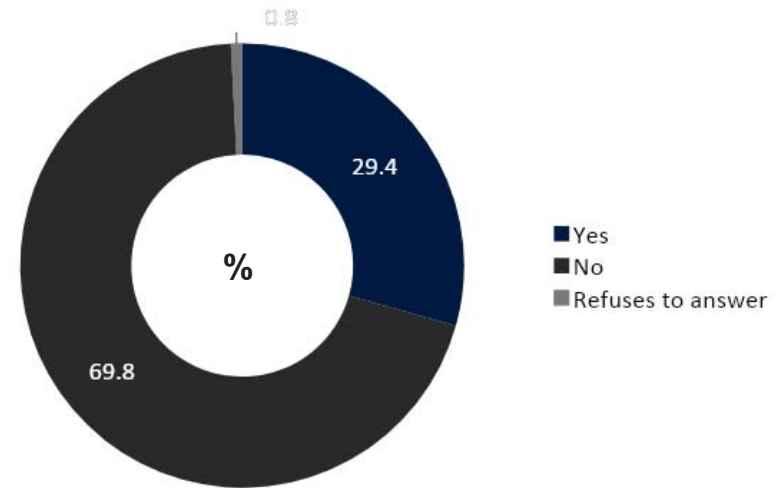
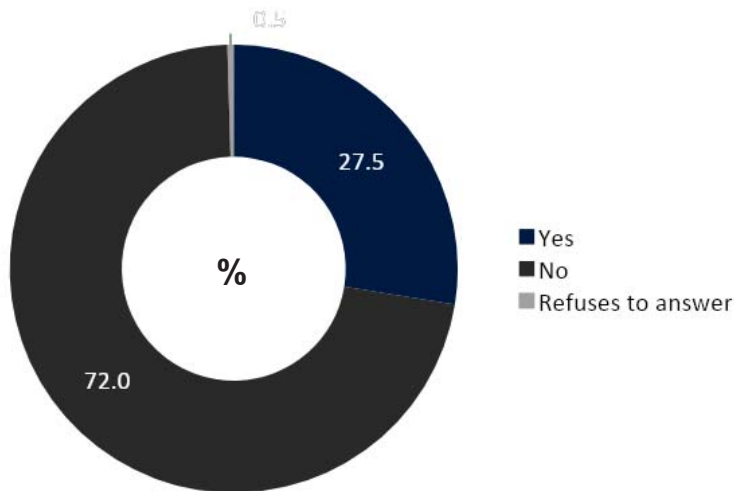


HEALTH PROTECTION

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

Q33. In the last 6 month (from March until now), did you need to use health care for non-COVID-19-related health problems?

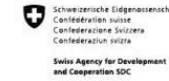
Q34. In the last 6 month (from March until now), did any family member (child / elderly / person with disability) need to use health care for non-COVID-19-related health problems?



Base: 1100 (all respondents)
Margin of Error ± 2.95



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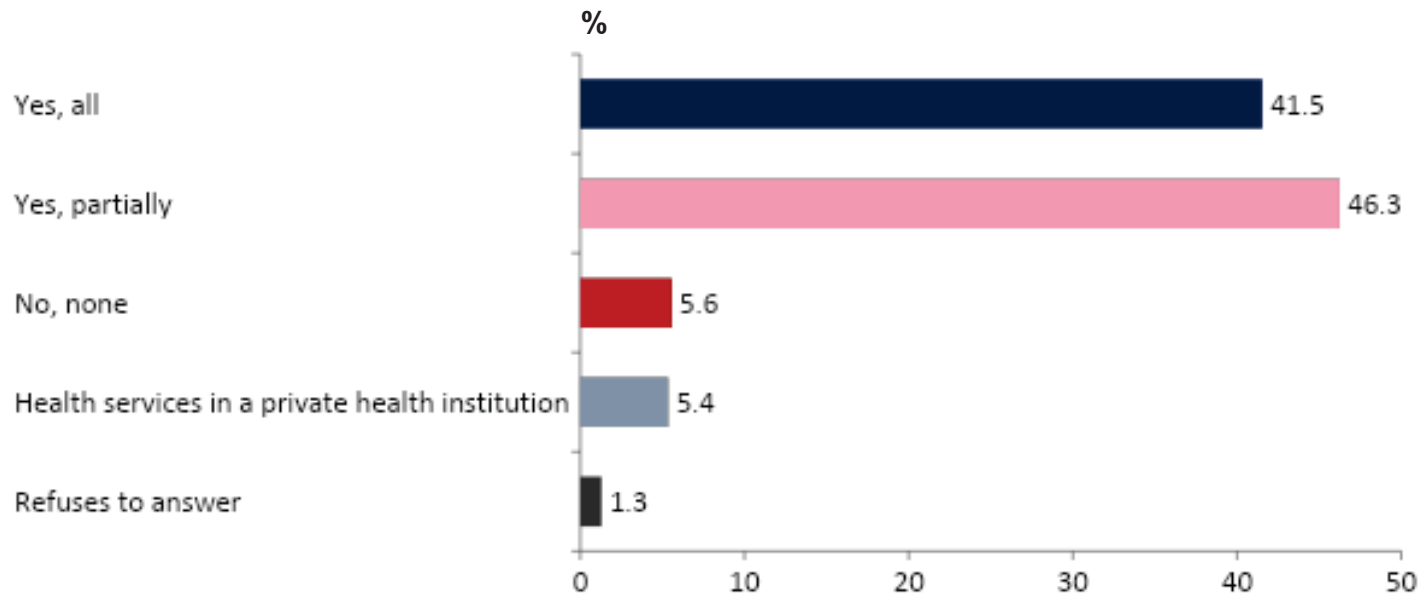


REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

HEALTH PROTECTION

Q35. Did you or any of your family member receive all of the necessary health services at a public health facility or with a family doctor in the last 6 months?

AMONG THE 42% OF PEOPLE WHO PERSONALLY NEEDED HEALTH CARE OR HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER WHO NEEDED HEALTH CARE FOR NON COVID-19 RELATED ISSUES



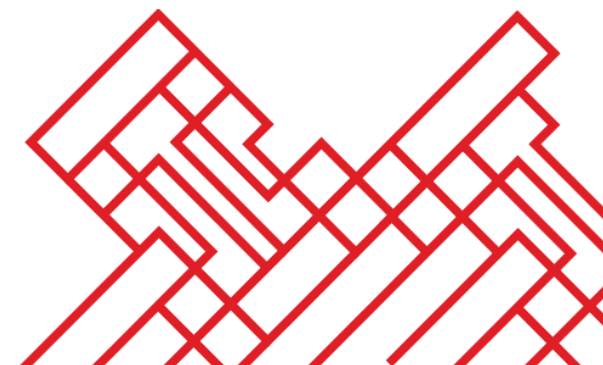
Base: 467 (respondents)



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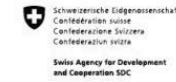


IV. CHALLENGES





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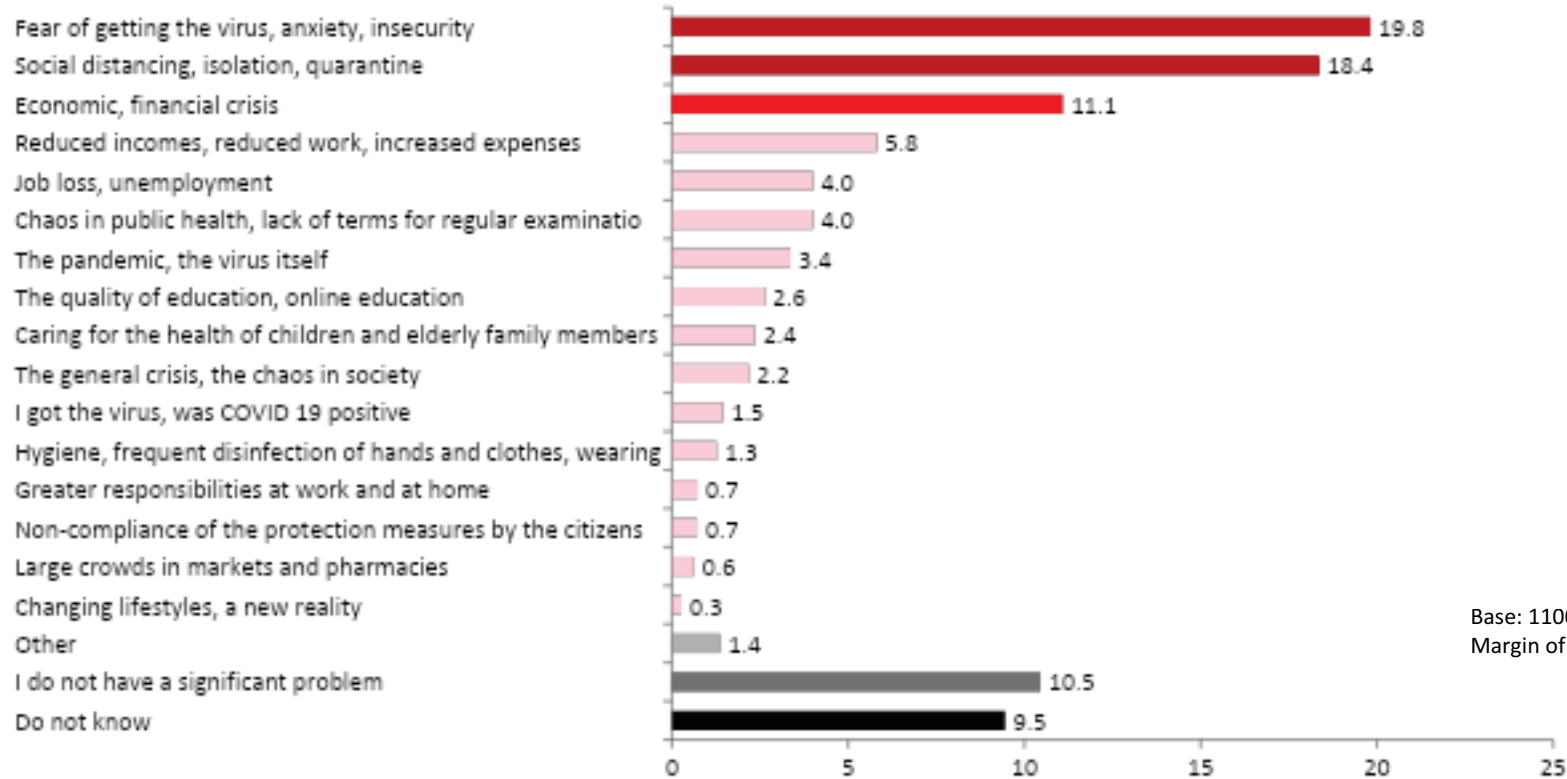


CHALLENGES

Q37. What is the biggest challenge you are facing during the COVID-19 crisis?

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

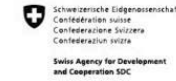
PERCENTAGE



Base: 1100 (all respondents)
Margin of Error \pm 2.95



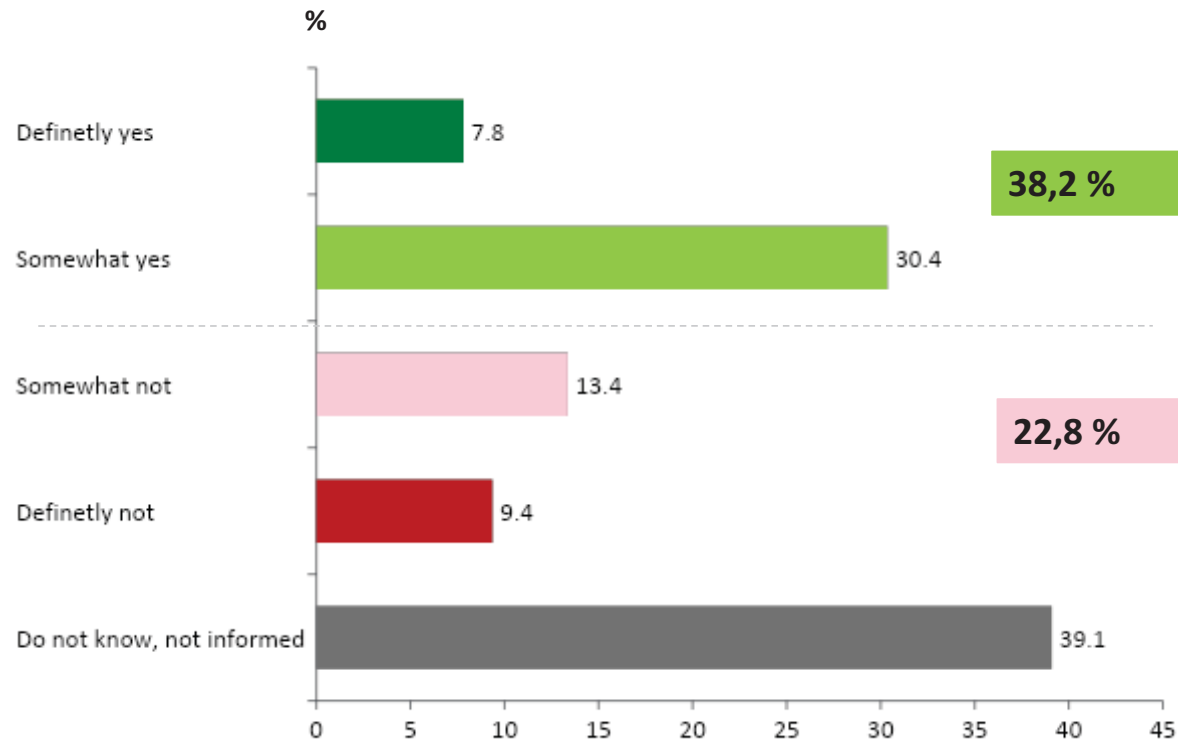
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CHALLENGES

Q39 In your opinion, does the State take appropriate measures to protect women who have suffered physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)?

REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE



38,2 %

22,8 %

Base: 1100 (all respondents)
Margin of Error \pm 2.95



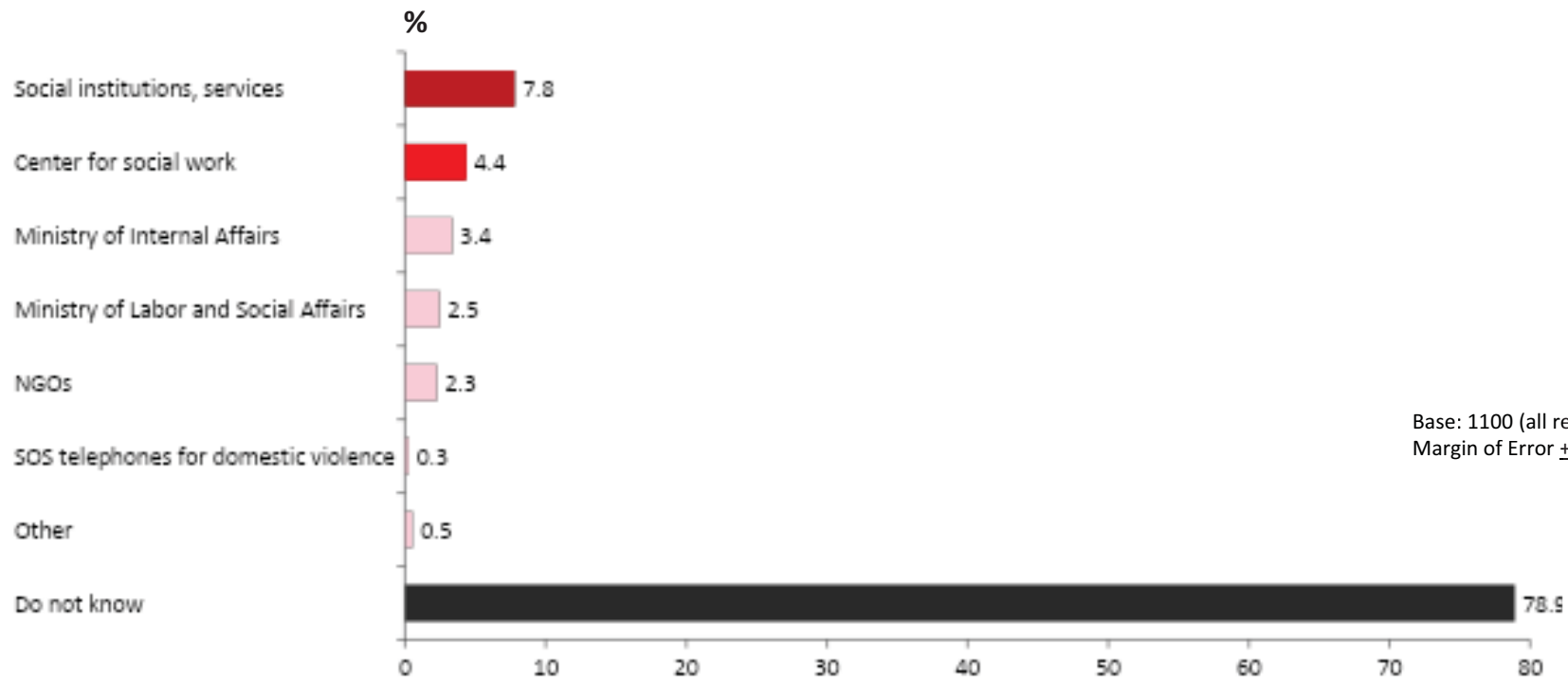
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REPRESENTATIVE
SAMPLE

CHALLENGES

Q40. Do you know which institution or civil society organizations provide assistance or protection to those in need as a result of physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)?



North Macedonia: Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic of Women and Girls - Phone Survey Findings



56% of women generally spend more time caring for children than before the COVID-19 crisis (among women who have children under 18 years of age)



46% of women generally spend more time caring for elderly family member than before the COVID-19 crisis (among women who live with elderly family members)

28% of women needed health care for non-COVID-19 related health issues in the past 6 months



40% of women who needed health care for non-COVID-19-related health problems received all the health care they needed

CHALLENGE

Fear of getting the virus, anxiety, insecurity, social distancing, isolation and quarantine are the biggest challenges women are facing during the COVID-19 crisis



79% of women are not familiar about any organization or institution who provide assistance or protection to those in need as a result of physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)



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XI. PROFILE OF GROUPS



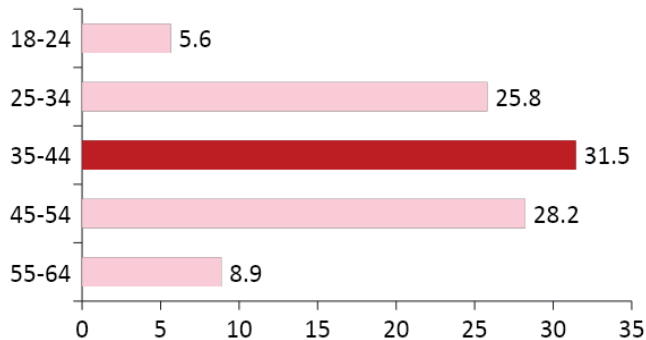


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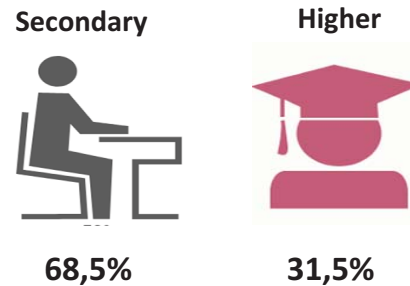


PROFILE: Women business owners from micro-enterprises (124 respondents)

Age groups



Education



Nationality



Place of living

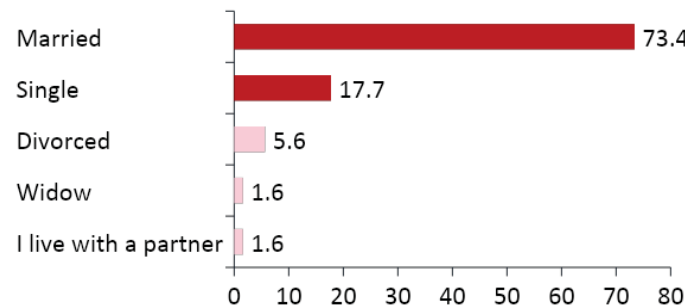


Urban 84%



Rural 16%

Marital status



85%

have formally registered business



PROFILE: Women business owners from micro-enterprises (124 respondents)

85%

Somewhat or extremely **concerned** about the **economic consequences** of the COVID-19 crisis in the country.

77%

Somewhat or extremely concerned about the **financial situation** in their household.

74%

Assess their **financial situation** over the past six months as **worse**.

Main reasons:
reduced work and sales,
reduced demand of the Product.

24%

Somewhat or extremely worried about their employment security.

57%

Stated that they feel overwhelmed with responsibilities .



PROFILE: Women business owners from micro-enterprises (124 respondents)

44%

COVID -19 crisis affect their ability to get the materials and other supplies needed for their work, mostly due to the slow and difficult distribution of materials from abroad, as well as the lack of sufficient finances for procurement of materials.

63%

COVID-19 crisis affected their ability to place their product / services on the market , mostly due to reduced number of customers and reduced demand for their products or services on the market.

60%

Stated that the spread of COVID-19 decreased or downsized their business.

64% have a lower income now compared to the income before the COVID-19 crisis.

41%

Have used some kind of assistance, financial measures, work-related or social assistance since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis. In this regard, 65% stated that it was not sufficient, while 75% assessed this assistance as easily accessible.

77%

Stated that they would not open a new business in these conditions.

Further more 65% somewhat or strongly agree that even if they wanted they would not try to change their job in these conditions.

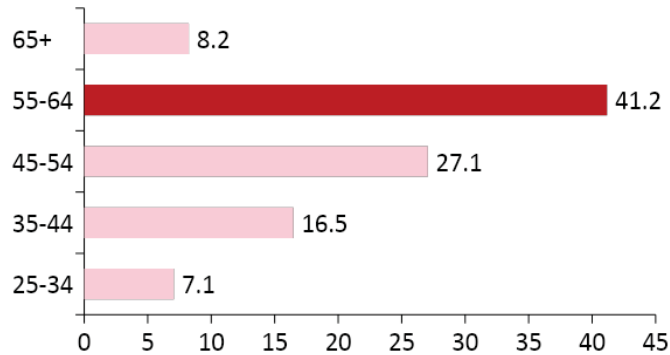


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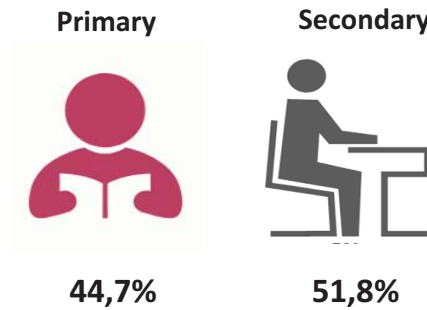


PROFILE: Women agro-business owners and farmers (85 respondents)

Age groups



Education



Nationality

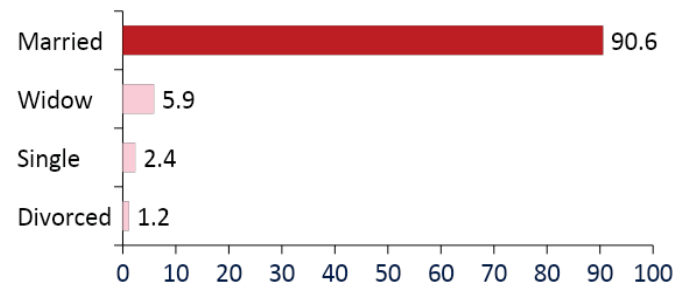


Place of living



Rural 100%

Marital status





PROFILE: Women agro-business owners and farmers (85 respondents)

89%

are somewhat or extremely worried about the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in the country.

The biggest challenges they are facing are: financial crisis, reduced work / incomes, social distancing and isolation.

85%

are somewhat or extremely concerned about the **financial situation** in their household.

58% are somewhat or extremely worried about their employment security.

71%

stated that their private financial situation gotten worse over the past six months mostly due to the reduced incomes and reduced sales or placement of their product and services .

91%

stated that no one in the family lost a job, while 28% stated that they as well as a family member have a lower income now compare to the income before the COVID- 19 crisis.

39%

have formally registered business

77% of those with unregistered businesses reported that they would not register their business even if they know that the Government is offering measures to assist formally registered business.



PROFILE: Women agro-business owners and farmers (85 respondents)

65%

stated that the spread of COVID-19 decreased or downsized their business.

22%

state that the COVID-19 crises affect their ability to get the materials/supplies for their work mostly due to the inability or fear of traveling abroad for the procurement of goods, as well as the lack of sufficient finances for procurement of the materials

54%

stated that COVID-19 crisis affect their ability to place their product on the market or to sell their products and services, mostly as a result of the reduced demand for the product or service and low purchase prices of goods.

89%

have not used any kind of assistance, financial measure, work-related or social assistance since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.

65%

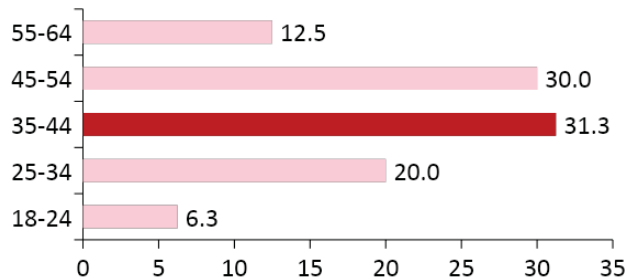
somewhat or strongly agree that even if they wanted they would not try to change their job in these conditions.

Furthermore, 76,6% stated that they would not open a new business in these conditions.

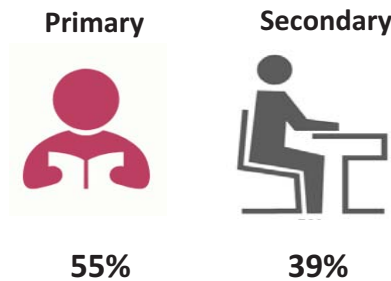


PROFILE: Roma women engaged in the labor market (80 respondents)

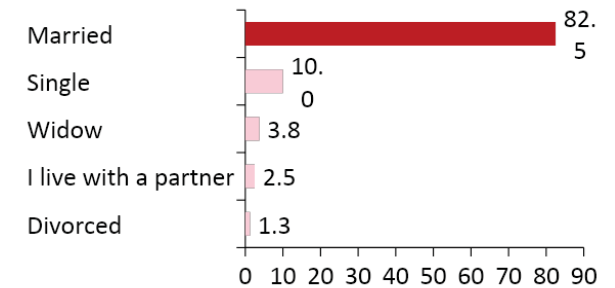
Age groups



Education



Marital status



Place of living

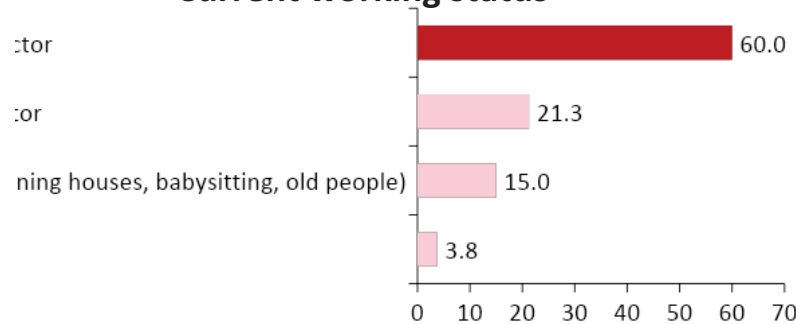


Urban 89%



Rural 11%

Current working status





PROFILE: Roma women engaged in the labor market (80 respondents)

95%

are somewhat or extremely worried about the situation in the country, while 83% are concerned about the economic consequences of the COVID-19.

As the biggest challenges they are facing, they pointed: fear of getting the virus and reduced incomes / work.

78%

are somewhat or extremely worried about their employment security.

Even though, 64% stated that there are no changes in their professional status, about 14% stated that due to COVID-19 crisis they are on an unpaid leave, while 7,5% are using paid leave.

90%

are somewhat or extremely concerned about the financial situation in their household.

About 20% stated that a family member has lost a job as consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

64%

64% assessed their private financial situation as worse.

30% reported reduced personal incomes, mostly due to the reduced demand or placement of their products or services on the market.

67%

of those who have their own businesses reported decreasing or downsizing their business because of the spread of COVID-19, while 13% stated that their businesses has totally stopped.



PROFILE: Roma women engaged in the labor market (80 respondents)

0%

none of the Roma women who are business owners or are informally employed have officially registered their businesses.

Only 27% of them stated that they would register their business if they know that the Government is offering measures to assist registered business.

21%

stated that in the last 6 months they have used some kind of assistance, financial measure, work-related or social assistance from the Government.

65% found this assistance easy accessible, but about 76% stated that this was not sufficient.

65%

somewhat or strongly agree that they would not change their job in this situation, even if they wanted to, while 51% somewhat or strongly agree that they feel overwhelmed with responsibilities, since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.

33%

stated that in the past 6 months they used health care for non-COVID-19 related health problems.

30% stated that a family member used health care for non-COVID-19 related health problems.

48%

somewhat or completely agree that the State does not take appropriate measures to protect women who have suffered physical or psychological violence (domestic violence).

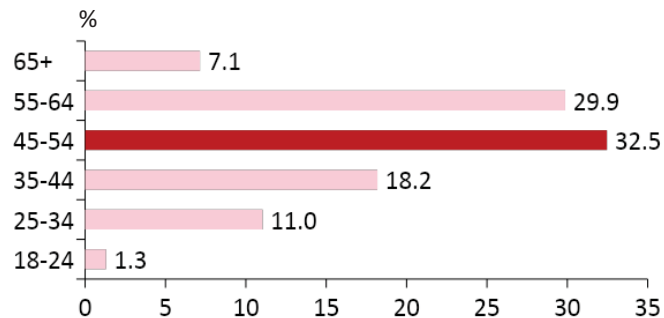


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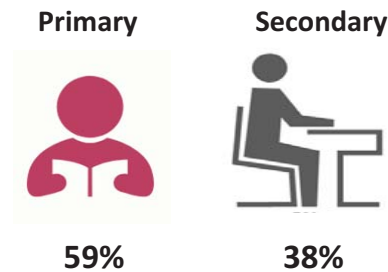


PROFILE: Women – Housewives (154 respondents)

Age groups



Education



Nationality



Place of living

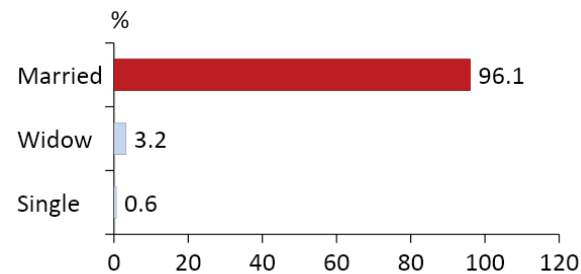


Urban 38%



Rural 62%

Marital status





PROFILE: Women – Housewives (154 respondents)

82%

are somewhat or extremely worried about the situation with COVID-19 in the country.

81% are mostly worried about their personal health and the health of their family or friends.

78%

are somewhat or extremely concerned about the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in the country.

79%

are somewhat or extremely concerned about the financial situation in their household

60% assessed their private financial situation as the same, while 86 % stated that no one in the family lost their job.

36%

assess their private financial situation as worse compared to the period before the COVID-19 crisis, mostly due to reduced incomes.

14% stated that a family member lost a job, while 35% reported that a family member has a reduced income

18%

have used some kind of assistance, financial measure or social assistance from the State.

71% stated that this assistance was accessible, but 79% stated that it was not sufficient.



PROFILE: Women – Housewives (154 respondents)

55%

stated that there are no children in their household, while 20% have up to 2 children.

52% stated that they personally spend more time caring for children than they did before the COVID-19 crisis.

81% stated that there are no elderly person or person with disabilities in their household.

54%

somewhat or strongly disagree that they would open a new business in these conditions.

57% strongly or somewhat agree that it is better to stay at home and take care of the household and children than to go to work.

58%

strongly or somewhat agree that since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis they feel overwhelmed with responsibilities.

The biggest challenge they are facing during the COVID-19 crisis is the fear of getting the virus, stress and anxiety, as well as social distancing and isolation.

59%

stated that they partially received the necessary health services at a public health facility or a family doctor, mostly because of the lack of free terms for examination, due to COVID-19 crisis.

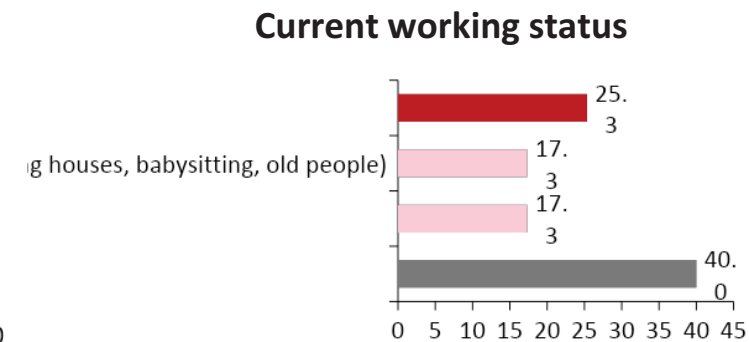
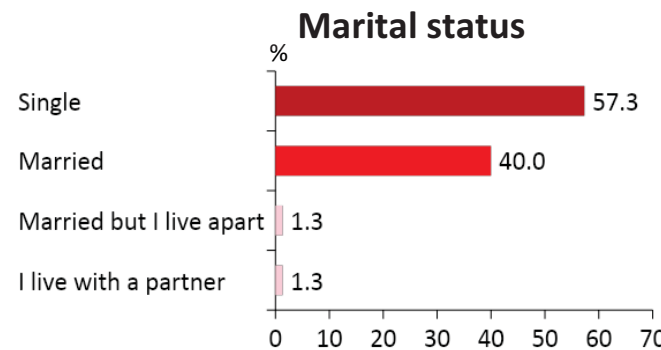
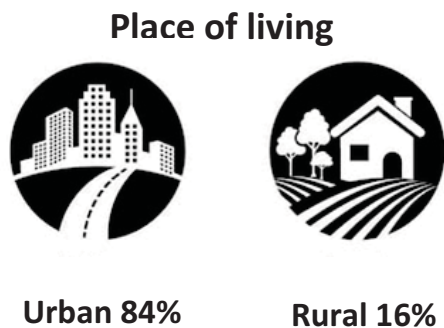
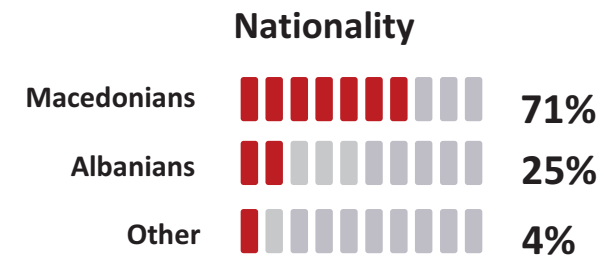
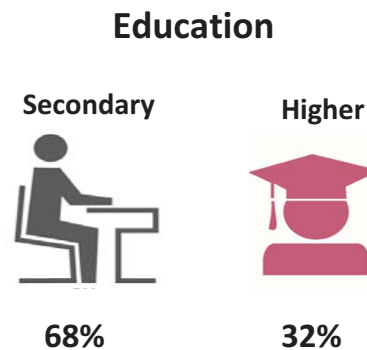
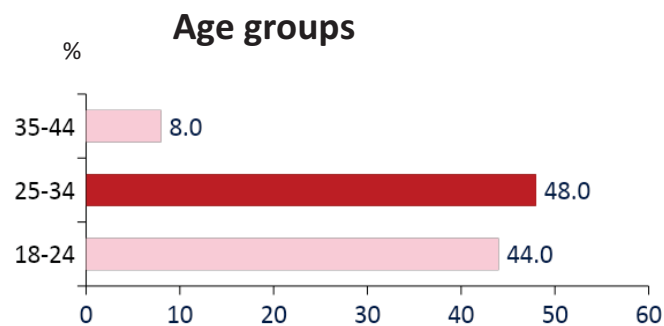
86% stated that no one in their family was infected with COVID-19.

25%

somewhat or completely agree that the State does not take appropriate measures to protect women who have suffered physical or psychological violence (domestic violence)



PROFILE: Women – Potential young entrepreneurs (75 respondents)





PROFILE: Women – Potential young entrepreneurs (75 respondents)

89%

are somewhat or extremely worried about the situation with COVID-19 in the country. They are mostly worried about their personal health and the health of their family or friends, while the biggest challenge for them was social distancing, isolation, as well as the economic crisis

80%

are somewhat or extremely concerned about the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in the country

67% are somewhat or extremely worried about their employment security or future employment as consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.

51%

stated that their private financial situation remained the same, while for 47% the financial situation worsened.

The main reasons for the worsening of the financial situation are: reduced incomes, job loss, reduced work or sales, as well as reduced demand for their products / services.

81%

stated that they did not lose their job.

Only 12% stated that they had lost their job as a consequences of COVID- 19 crisis.

20% stated that they have lower income now compared to the income before the COVID- 19 crisis

37%

of the business owners stated that COVID-19 crisis affect their ability to get the materials, for their work, while 48% reported difficulties in placing or selling their product on the market.



PROFILE: Women – Potential young entrepreneurs (75 respondents)

47%

have formally registered business.

Only 23% of the respondents who do not have formally registered business would register their business knowing that the Government is offering measures to assist official (registered) business.

38%

stated that the spread of COVID-19 decreased their business, while the same percentage stated that there is no significant change in their business compared to the period before the COVID-19 crisis.

For 25% the business stopped totally.

40%

have used some kind of financial measure, work-related or social assistance by the State.

The most used measures are: payment card for domestic products, voucher for vacation and voucher for young people.

55%

somewhat or strongly disagree that even if they wanted to change job now they would not do that.

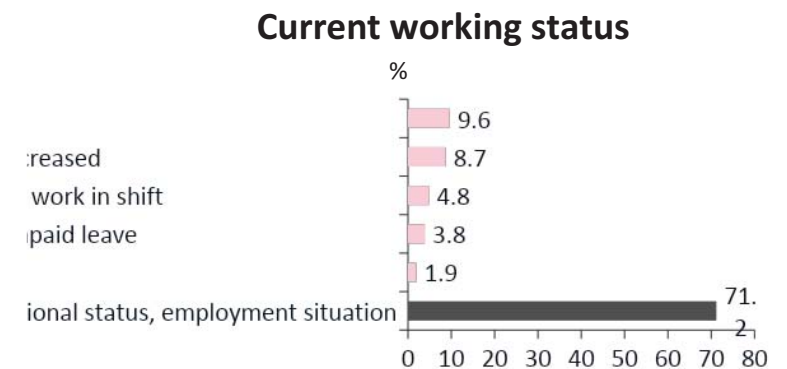
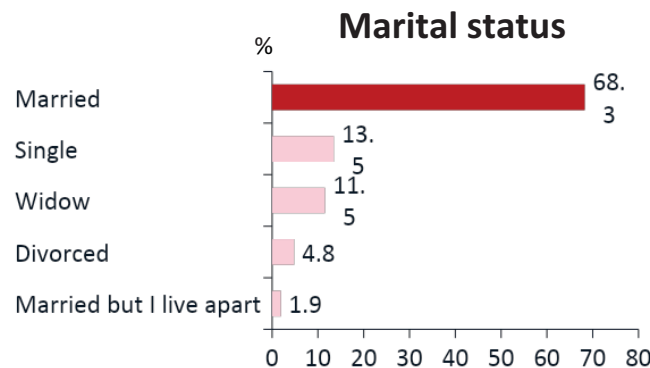
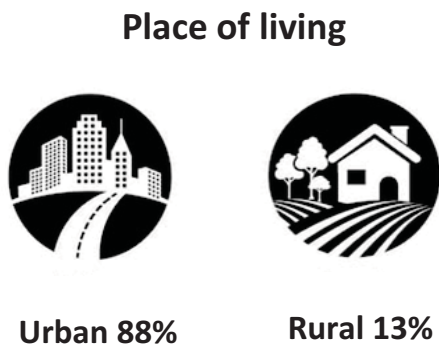
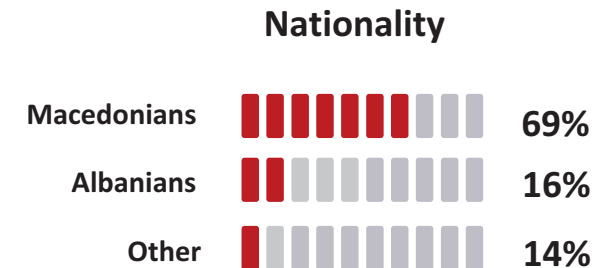
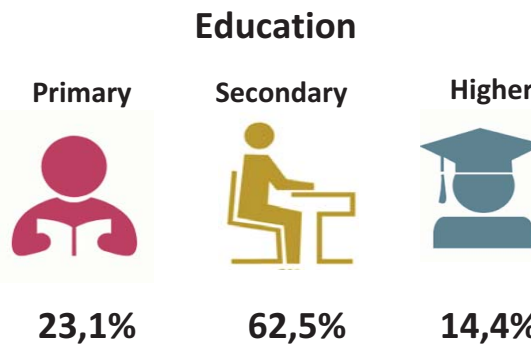
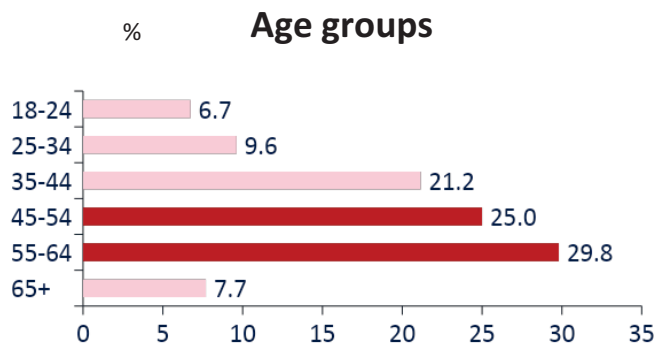
60% somewhat or strongly disagree that it is better to stay at home and take care of the household and children than to go to work.

23%

stated that they only partially received the necessary health services from the public health, mostly due to the lack of free terms for examination or because they were scared to go to a health facility because of COVID-19.

76% stated that no one in their family was infected with COVID-19.

PROFILE: Women employed in informal economy (cleaning houses, babysitting, taking care of old people etc.) (104 respondents)



PROFILE: Women employed in informal economy (cleaning houses, babysitting, taking care of old people etc.) (104 respondents)

92%

are somewhat or extremely worried about the situation with COVID-19 in the country.

They are mostly worried about their personal health and the health of their family or friends, while the biggest challenge for them was economic crisis, as well as the social distancing, isolation

81%

are somewhat or extremely concerned about the economic consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in the country.

80% are somewhat or extremely worried about the financial situation in their household as consequences of the COVID-19.

72%

are somewhat or extremely worried about their employment security.

47%

stated that their private financial situation worsened.

The main reasons for the worsening of the financial situation are: job loss, reduced work and reduced incomes.

44%

stated that they or family members have lower income now compared to the income before the COVID-19 crisis.



PROFILE: Women employed in informal economy (cleaning houses, babysitting, taking care of old people etc.) (104 respondents)

35%

stated that the spread of COVID-19 decreased their business or stopped totally.

For 14% the business stopped totally

100%

have not formally registered business.

Only 13% would register their business knowing that the Government is offering measures to assist official (registered) business.

19%

have used some kind of financial measure, work-related or social assistance by the State.

The most used measures are : payment card for domestic products, voucher for vacation and voucher for young people

From those who have used, 40% assessed this assistance as sufficient.

65%

somewhat or strongly disagree that they would open a new business in these conditions.

42% somewhat or strongly agree that even if they wanted to change job now they would not do that.

23%

See no future regarding the employment, there is no prosperity in this country according to their opinion.

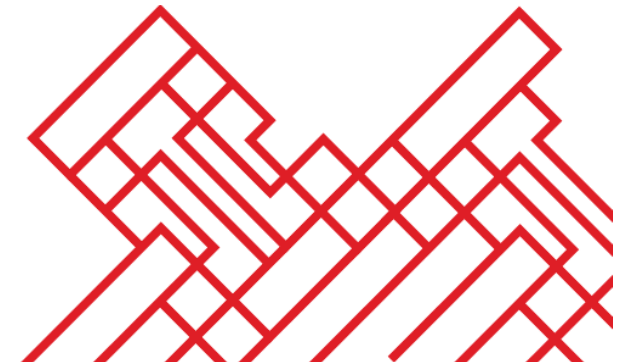
28% older person, no one will hire me
22% Self-employment
6% Working abroad



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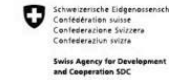


XII. REPRESENTATIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY AND STATE INSTITUTIONS WORKING WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS





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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY - QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

SURVEY OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY AND STATE INSTITUTIONS WORKING WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	QUANTITATIVE: Telephone (CATI) survey Computer Assisted Telephone Interview
Time Frame	10 - 21 December, 2020
Population	CIVIL SOCIETY AND STATE INSTITUTIONS WORKING WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS
Sample Size	25 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls
Research Team	Interviewer network of 5 telephone interviewers
Average Length of Interview	19 minutes



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List of participants:

1. Edna Moze (One Can) -- an organization dedicated to help single mothers.
2. Center for Research and Policy Making - Skopje
3. Helsinki Committee for human right
4. Association HERA – Health Education and Research Association – Skopje
5. Ohrid Institute for economic strategies and international affairs
6. Coalition MARGINS- The Coalition ‘Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities’
7. Roma Women and Youth Association "Luludi"
8. Macedonian Women Lobby
9. First children’s embassy in the world “Megjashi”
10. Ministry of labor and social policy
11. National Council for Gender Equality
12. Women’s Organizations in Sveti Nikole
13. Organization of Turkish Women from Macedonia “Derja”
14. Polio Plus
15. Reactor - Research In Action
16. TAKT - Together Advancing Common Trust
17. “Elit”- Association of women managers
18. Association of Business Women - Macedonia
19. Association for Equal Opportunities – “SEMPER”
20. ESEM-Union for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women’s
21. The Association for Local Rural Development
22. Women Civic Initiative – “Antiko”
23. “Glasen Tekstilec” – Loud Textile Worker – Stip
24. Nesime Salioska - activist for human rights „Roma SOS“ Prilep
25. HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje



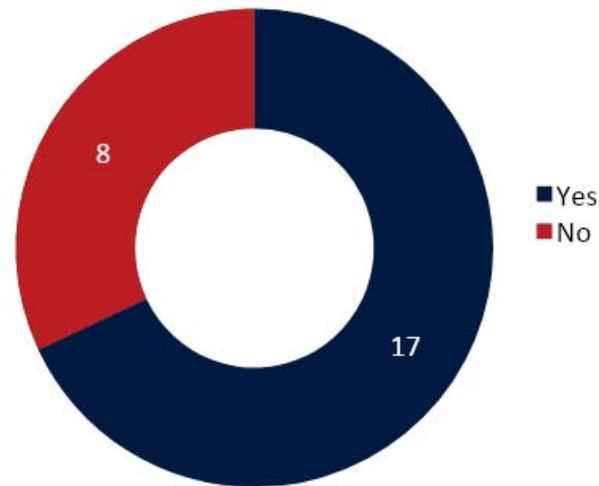
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GENERAL

In the field and activities of your work, do you work or have conducted work related to COVID-19?

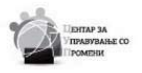
Number of respondents



Base: 25 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls



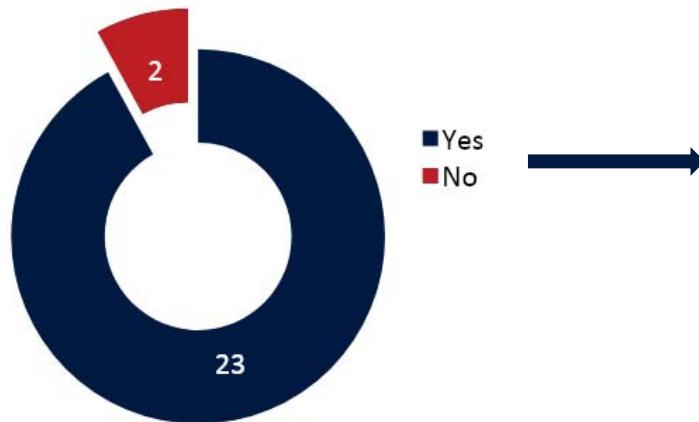
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GENERAL

Were there any changes in the scope and nature of the activities or areas in which your organization operates before and during the COVID -19 crisis?

Number of respondents



If Yes, what are the changes?

Reducing the volume of work, canceling activities, trainings, campaigns
(10 respondents)

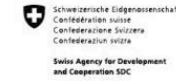
Working online from home, conducting online trainings
(9 respondents)

Other changes
(4 respondents)

Base: 25 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls



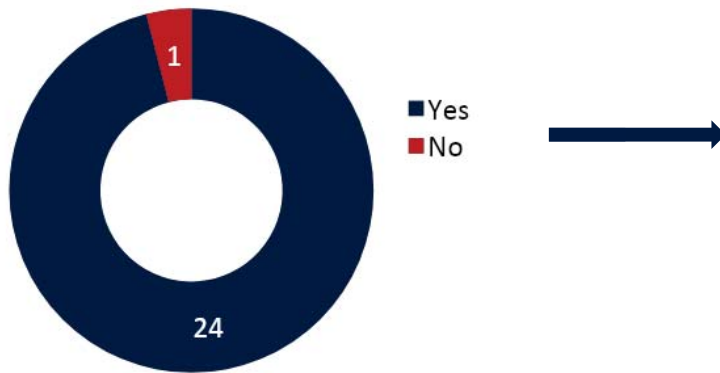
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GENERAL

Do you have information about the impact and consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on women?

Number of respondents



Base: 25 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls

If Yes, what are the sources of information?

From surveys, contacts and cooperation with other state institutions and NGOs
(10 respondents)

From the women participants in the activities
(9 respondents)

Other responses
(5 respondents)



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ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Which sectors of activity in which women work are most affected by the COVID-19 crisis?

According to respondents the most affected sectors by the COVID-19 crisis, in which women work are the following:

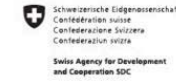
- ✓ Service sector, tourism and catering
- ✓ Textile industry
- ✓ Health & Healthcare
- ✓ Agriculture
- ✓ Education system
- ✓ Private sector

NOTE: Respondents had no information on new registered businesses during the COVID-19 crisis

Base: 17 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls, in the field of economics, finance, support for women entrepreneurs



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ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

What are the biggest challenges facing women owners of the businesses?

Women prejudices and stereotypes
(6 responses)

Business maintenance and survival, keeping the employees
(2 responses)

Dealing with new measures, noncompliance of the existing politics
(2 responses)

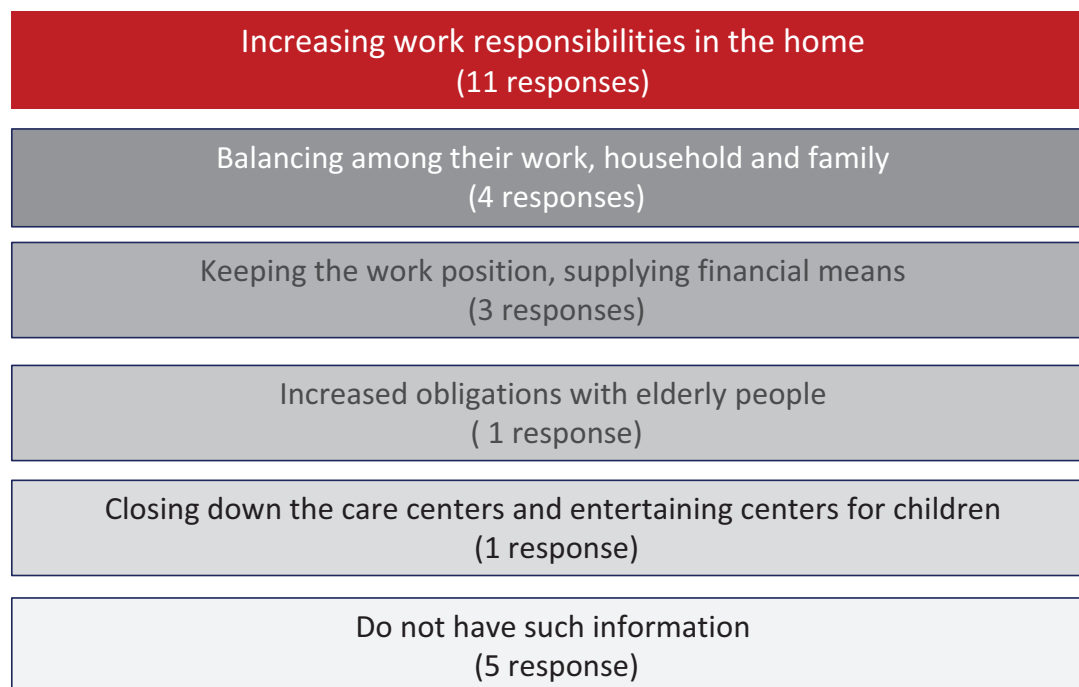
Placement of products
(1 response)

Access to information, finances and business knowledge
(1 response)

Base: 17 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls, in the field of economics, finance, support for women entrepreneurs

HOUSEHOLD AND CHILDREN

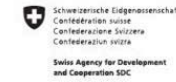
What are the biggest challenges women are facing in terms of their responsibilities to care for the household, children, the elderly and people with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis?



Base: 25 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls



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HEALTH PROTECTION

To your knowledge, what are the biggest challenges related to women's health care during the COVID 19 crisis?

AMONG THE 13 REPRESENTATIVES FROM CIVIL SOCIETY AND STATE INSTITUTIONS WHO WORK IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH CARE

MULTIPLE ANSWER QUESTION

Postponement of examinations due to fear of infection
(6 responses)

Lack of adequate health care in public health institutions
(5 responses)

Lack of terms for regular examination
(5 responses)

Financial burden on the budget due to the use of private health services
(3 responses)



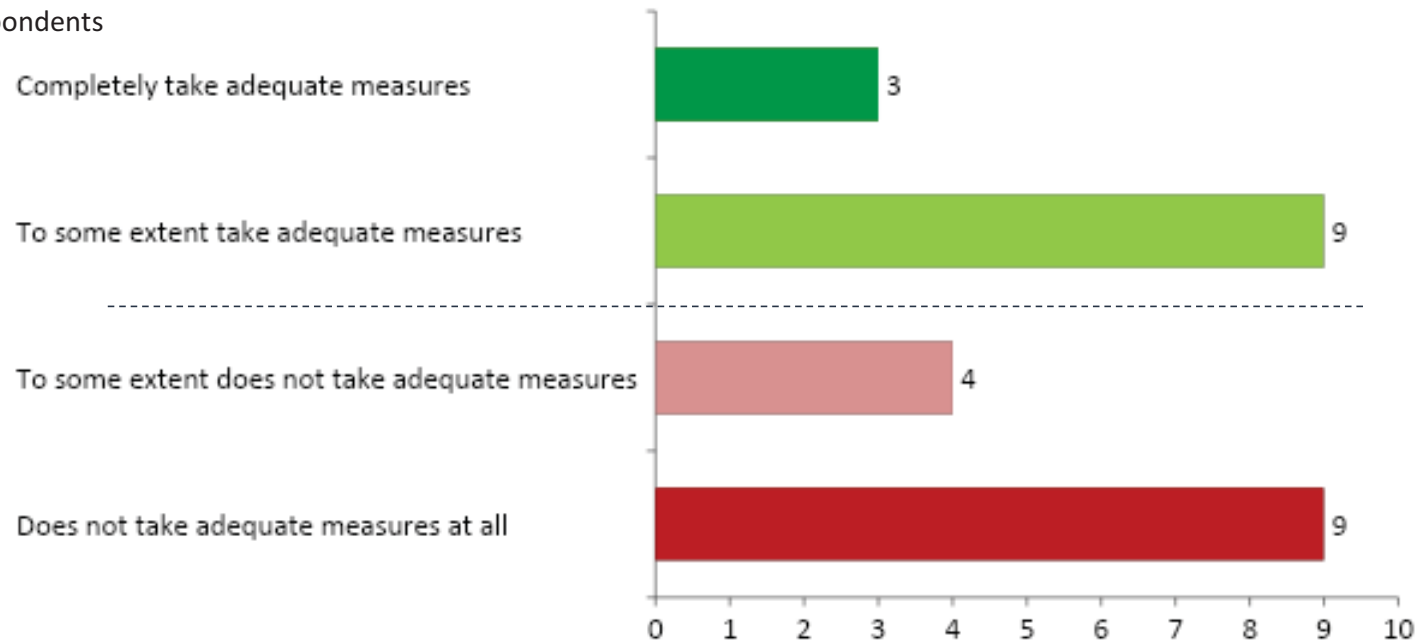
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In your opinion, does the state take appropriate measures to protect women who have suffered physical or psychological violence (domestic violence) since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis until today?

Number of respondents



Base: 25 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls



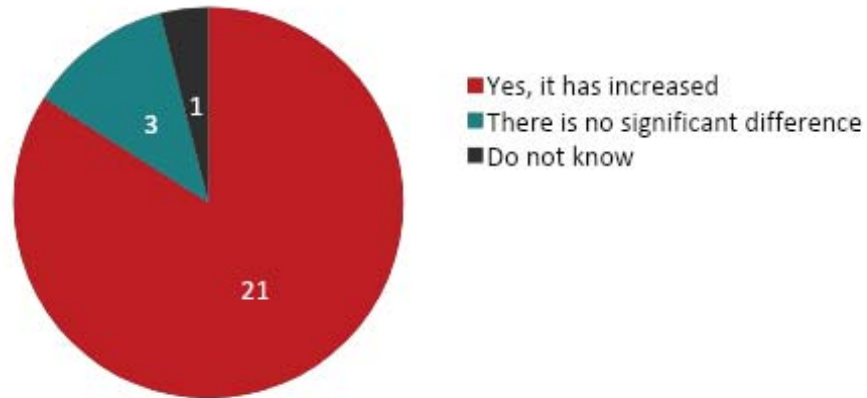
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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Do you notice a large number of women who need protection from physical or psychological violence (domestic violence) since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis until today who have contacted your organization?

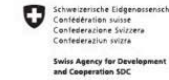
Number of respondents



Base: 25 Representatives from civil society and state institutions working with women and girls



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RECOMMENDATIONS

What do you think should be the priorities in the next period for dealing with the COVID-19 crisis?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

AUTHENTIC ANSWERS OF THE RESPONDENTS

- ✓ The hospitals to be equipped, the medical care and conditions to be improved
- ✓ Reorganization of health care system
- ✓ Introducing adequate protocols regarding the family doctor, the first link should not be over the phone and at least 70-80% of the health care system should function
- ✓ COVID-19 vaccines should be supplied as soon as possible
- ✓ Wide screening, complete lockdown for three weeks, financial means for every citizen during those three weeks, severe penalties in case the measures are not respected
- ✓ Health care protection, improving the working conditions, employment
- ✓ Mental health, psychological help and support
- ✓ Analysis, timely budgeting, improving the public health care system
- ✓ Consistent implementation of the Convention for the rights of people with disabilities, instigating responsibility actions, statistics in every field where it would be included
- ✓ Protection of the most vulnerable categories of women



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RECOMMENDATIONS

What do you think should be the priorities in the next period for dealing with the COVID-19 crisis?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

AUTHENTIC ANSWERS OF THE RESPONDENTS

- ✓ Online forums to be supplied which would help women in economics and women hit by domestic violence; new form for future support of women should be found
- ✓ Educating men for taking over house chores and obligations with the children as part of their responsibility and care as well, the husband should feel as part of the family, not as a guest. In that way, the pressure on the woman regarding all uncertainties from COVID-19 pandemic would decrease. It should be invested in mental health of women because it is endangered due to all obligations and violence
- ✓ More campaigns, meetings and financial means
- ✓ Financial help for families without employed members
- ✓ For the crisis politics, it is necessary to consult people who work on field about this issue, to turn toward micro companies, toward vulnerable categories, the help distribution should be improved, the analyses should be consulted
- ✓ The institutions should be trained for better accession to victims, the police forces should be trained to work with victims
- ✓ Certain institutions stopped functioning properly due to COVID-19, so a module how they would start functioning should be found, the capacities should increase and women protection from physical and psychological violence should be implemented, most women do not recognize and do not report physical and psychological violence
- ✓ Measures in favor of protecting women's rights should be foreseen
- ✓ Support for all women entrepreneurs, support for women who are victims of domestic violence



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RECOMMENDATIONS

What do you think should be the priorities in the next period for dealing toward gender equality?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

AUTHENTIC ANSWERS OF THE RESPONDENTS

- ✓ To work with male population
- ✓ The gender machinery should function properly and strategies should be implemented
- ✓ Consistent implementation of the obligations and the rights of people with disabilities, introducing the issues related to disabilities in the gender analysis
- ✓ Measures for positive discrimination should be implemented so that they could transit from bad positions to higher ones
- ✓ Introducing new strategy for equal opportunities and its implementation
- ✓ Proper functioning of the mechanisms on local and central level, gender responsibility, what women need should be followed, proper budgeting
- ✓ The existing laws should be initially respected and implemented, systematic measures for increasing the percentage of women on managing positions in public and private sector should be brought
- ✓ Online trainings
- ✓ Finances, transparency and legal regulations
- ✓ Special program for women who lost their jobs
- ✓ Strengthening the integrity and skills of women from an early age so that they can be financially independent



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RECOMMENDATIONS

What do you think should be the priorities in the next period for dealing toward gender equality?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

AUTHENTIC ANSWERS OF THE RESPONDENTS

- ✓ The legal provisions should be applicable for all, the priority should be in terms of economy, consultations with unions and chambers should not be the only activities, civic organizations should also be contacted. In terms of measures which are brought for financial help, only 10% were assigned for citizens as direct help, this is not extraction from poverty.
- ✓ Taking care of women's mental health and strengthening the measures for protecting the victims of gender-based violence
- ✓ More campaigns and trainings for women for gender equality
- ✓ The equality should be essentially understood both by men and women
- ✓ Changing the law on equal opportunities for greater efficiency of gender-based politics on every level and their adequate implementation so that the budget for this sphere to be bigger. The children should be set free from stereotypes from kindergarten, educational programs, discussions, campaigns for changing the norms for other generations, changing the whole concept regarding the meaning of typical traditional norms, especially among men from the earliest age.
- ✓ New measures and recommendations to be brought which would refer to women exclusively
- ✓ Equal representation of men and women should be taken care of, as well as the economic rights of women
- ✓ Women's access to leadership positions, trainings for women entrepreneurs



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Public Opinion and Policy Analysis

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Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women

Author: Petra Āurinov

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