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## The impact and implication of COVID- 19 pandemic on Gender Equality in Kosovo

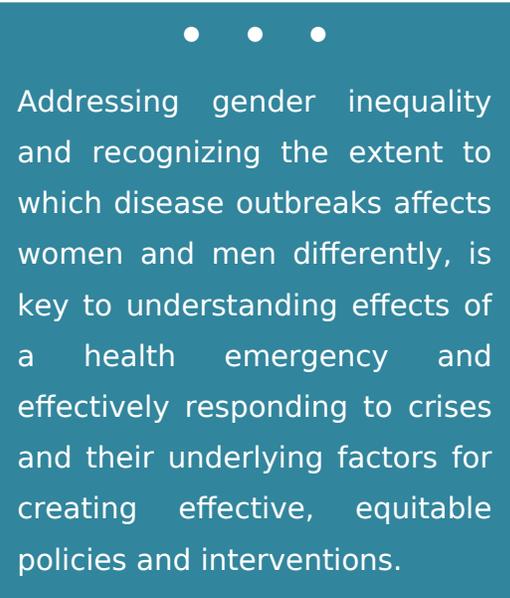
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**Introduction:** Even though the global pandemic COVID-19<sup>1</sup> is not the world's first public health emergency, or the first to which development and humanitarian agencies have been called on to respond to, there is a marked lack of research on the implications of public health emergencies on different groups, especially women and girls<sup>2</sup>. Latest analysis for current situation shows that COVID-19 outbreaks in development or humanitarian contexts could disproportionately affect women and girls in a number of ways, including adverse effects on their education, food security and nutrition, health, livelihoods, and protection<sup>3</sup>.

This shows that addressing gender inequality and recognizing the extent to which disease outbreaks affects women and men differently, is key to effectively responding to crises and their underlying factors, but furthermore is a fundamental step to understanding the primary and secondary effects of a health emergency on different individuals and communities, and for creating effective, equitable policies and interventions<sup>4</sup>.

For these reasons, NORDK is deeply concerned about the implications that the spread of COVID-19 might have on women and girls in Kosovo in context of development and humanitarian settings.

In the current situation in Kosovo - with almost stagnant economy, suspension of the teaching process and restriction of freedom of movement, women face more than usual with family obligations and



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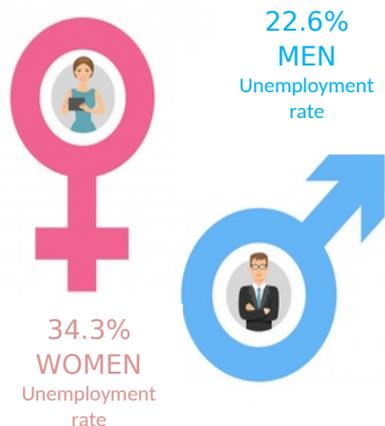
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1 World Health Organization. ©2020 WHO. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic.  
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

2 Care International. 2020. Gender implication of COVID-19 outbreaks in development and humanitarian settings.  
[https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/gendered\\_implications\\_of\\_covid-19\\_-\\_full\\_paper.pdf](https://www.care.org/sites/default/files/gendered_implications_of_covid-19_-_full_paper.pdf)

3 Venham C., Smith J., Morgan R. Vol 395 March 14, 2020. COVID-19: the gendered impacts of the outbreak.  
<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2930526-2>

4 Interim Guidance: Gender alert for Covid- 19 outbreak, March 2020. ©2020 reliefweb.  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/interim-guidance-gender-alert-covid-19-outbreak-march-2020>



housework, as well as greater need for the care of family members, especially children and the elderly<sup>5</sup>.

As for the participation of women in the labor market according to the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, the labor force is characterized by low employment rates of women, and at the same time with a high percentage of their inactivity in the labor market. The unemployment rate among women is 34.3%, compared to men 22.6%<sup>6</sup>, while among the main reasons that keep women out of the

labor market are considered to be: responsibilities of caring for children and the elderly in the family, lack of employment opportunities, gender discrimination in the employment process, low wages and pronounced patriarchal culture in society regarding gender roles and expectations<sup>7</sup>. On the other side, it's very important to distinguish the sectors in which mainly women in Kosovo are employed which are the education, trade and health care sectors<sup>8</sup>.

## Possible gender implications of COVID-19 pandemic

1

**Health social norms:** Females are the main caretakers of the household doing domestic chores and nursing sick family members; they are responsible for household-level disease prevention and response efforts which it can expose them to greater health risks. As a result, the lack of family gender equality in the sharing of responsibilities can cause overload of women's household chores, which can have emotional and physical consequences.

2

**Domestic violence and protection crises:** While data on Kosovo are still scarcely, the small number of daily reports issued by the Kosovo Police signals a serious concern about the situation of women in abusive family settings. In general, domestic violence has been shown to increase during crises, as self-isolation and quarantine have been implemented as strategies to prevent the spread of COVID- 19 pandemic.

5 Democracy for Development. March, 2020. Possible gender implications of COVID-19 in Kosovo [https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/D4D\\_Analize-e-politikave\\_8.pdf](https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/D4D_Analize-e-politikave_8.pdf)

6 Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Labor Force Survey 2019 <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5369/anketa-e-fugjis%C3%AB-pun%C3%ABtore-afp-2019.pdf>

7 Morina L., Delibashzade R. 2017. Women's inactivity in the labor market. [https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D4D\\_PI\\_12\\_W4D\\_SHQ\\_WEB.pdf](https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/D4D_PI_12_W4D_SHQ_WEB.pdf)

8 Kosovo Agency of Statistics. Labor Force Survey 2019 <https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5369/anketa-e-fugjis%C3%AB-pun%C3%ABtore-afp-2019.pdf>

3

**(Un) employment:** With 78.9% of women's inactivity in the labor market<sup>9</sup>, the economic crisis will negatively affect the increase of women's employment or even their return to the labor market. Also they are more likely to be engaged in short-term, part-time and other precarious employments/ contracts.

4

**Gender implications on rural areas:** Pandemic crises can trigger economic crises and as the majority of rural women work in the informal economy - i.e. in low-paying and insecure jobs they can face dramatic declines in incomes and livelihoods security<sup>10</sup>. Rural women lack access to information and may be more affected. The economic impact of public health emergencies may force rural families to take their children, particularly their daughters, out of school or work, potentially leading to early forced marriages.

These are just some of the issues that females in Kosovo are most likely to be affected by as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, but a more thorough and detailed gender analysis would provide more implications and influences about the relevant state of gender equality.



## Recommendation

For all actors

- Strategic plans for preparedness and response taking into account promotion of gender equality should be based on a detailed gender equality analysis, because making data and information gaps known allows appropriate action to be taken.

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Sida and We Effect do not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed.

<sup>9</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics. 2019. Labor Force Survey QT 2019

<https://ask.rks-gov.net/media/5365/afp-tm4-2019.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Interim Guidance: Gender alert for Covid- 19 outbreak, March 2020. ©2020 reliefweb.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/interim-guidance-gender-alert-covid-19-outbreak-march-2020>