



IMPACT STORY



GENDER ASSESSMENTS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REVEAL COVID-19'S DEVASTATING IMPACT ON WOMEN

Photo: UN Women Moldova/ Eduard Bizgu

On the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia conducted a [rapid gender assessment](#) to effectively and accurately evaluate its gendered impacts. The report, which presents results of surveys conducted in 10 countries and territories across the region between April and May 2020, reveals a troubling situation: in Central Asia, three out of every five women reported a higher risk of not being able to access health services. A decrease in the paid working hours of women was observed across all countries/territories¹ ranging from 31 per cent in Georgia to 65 per cent in Kosovo². Decreased earnings for women ranged from 15 per cent in North Macedonia to 52 per cent in Turkey. An alarming proportion of women (60 per cent) reported that it will be difficult to maintain basic expenses, such as rent and utilities, if restrictive measures continue.

As women's economic security has been shaken, the COVID-19 crisis has also disproportionately affected their mental and emotional health. The most probable reason is the increased burden of unpaid domestic and care work, compounded by financial distress. Data shows that women's psychological and mental health is being affected at higher rates than that of men, with worryingly high proportions seen among women in Albania (69 per cent), Kazakhstan (52 per cent), Turkey (54 per cent) and the Republic of Moldova (49 per cent).

Photo above: Social workers from Moldova are receiving the protection equipment offered by UN Women Moldova and Sweden.

Where women have been receiving help from partners and children, they are actually providing much more time and care in return. Approximately half of women said they received some respite from their husbands/partners,

PARTNERS FOR CHANGE

The UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia developed the Rapid Gender Assessment through the **Making Every Woman and Girl Count** global programme with the support of the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** and other partners. Data collection at the country/territory level was also made possible through the generous support of the Governments of **Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland**, and the **European Union**.



Women Count is UN Women's global gender data programme that is radically improving

how gender statistics are produced, shared and used. It is generously supported by the Governments of **Australia, Ireland, Mexico, Sweden**, the **United Kingdom**, and the **United States**; and the **Alibaba Foundation, Alwaleed Philanthropies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** and **Elizabeth Arden**.

sons and daughters, and other family members. However, in some countries/territories, women are helping men by up to 30 per cent more than men are helping women with household chores and care activities, compared to pre-pandemic times. This is a clear case of entrenched gendered stereotypes that create a situation where women are disproportionately burdened with household responsibilities.

“The pre-existing discrimination and inequalities that women and girls faced before the pandemic became starkly exposed in the face of lockdowns and restrictive measures.”

The gender assessment exposed the prevalence of the shadow pandemic of violence against women. According to the survey, a number of women (and men) reported having felt/heard of increases in domestic violence and discrimination. It is also concerning that the share of women who did not know where to seek help in cases of domestic violence ranges from around 20 per cent in Turkey to at least 40 per cent in Kyrgyzstan.

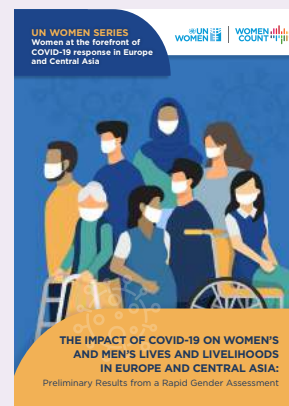
Overall, the findings reveal that women across the region are experiencing increased vulnerabilities and suffering from a multitude of problems due to COVID-19, with the greatest impact seen among women and girls in vulnerable domestic and economic situations.

“The pandemic undoubtedly had a profound social and economic impact on everyone, but the preliminary results of our rapid survey in the region exposed particular threats to women’s lives and livelihoods. The pre-existing discrimination and inequalities that women and girls faced before the pandemic became starkly exposed in the face of lockdowns and restrictive measures. We hope that the survey findings will inform, guide and support the response planning in the region and help countries to address the gendered impact of the pandemic,” said Alia El-Yassir, UN Women Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia.

UN Women started conducting rapid gender assessment surveys to ascertain the effect of COVID-19 on women and girls as soon as the pandemic hit. Europe and Central Asia and the Asia-Pacific regions were the first to share their findings, and their reports are now available. Cognizant of the imperative for sex-disaggregated data, UN Women is leading global data-collection efforts to close this knowledge gap and to inform policy action and programme interventions.







SOME KEY PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE RAPID GENDER ASSESSMENT ACROSS THE REGION

- The outbreak has particularly impacted self-employed women: 25% lost their jobs (compared to 21% of self-employed men) and 49% saw reduced working hours.
- On average, 70% of women spent more time on at least one unpaid domestic work chore, such as cleaning, cooking or laundry, which is significantly higher than for men (59%).
- Around 50% of women reported increased time spent on at least one care activity for children and/or elderly family members.
- If restrictive measures continue, women in 7 out of 10 countries/territories will have greater difficulties paying for basic expenses than men, particularly in Albania, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.



The full report, country factsheets and regional facts and figures can be found [here](#).

FOLLOW UN WOMEN AT:

-  www.unwomen.org
-  www.facebook.com/unwomen
-  www.twitter.com/un_women
-  www.youtube.com/unwomen
-  www.flickr.com/unwomen
-  www.instagram.com/unwomen

[1] This article refers to data on Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Turkey.

[2] All references to Kosovo on this website should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).