Bosna i Hercegovina

Center for the Promotion of Civil Society, as part of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network took a short overview of gender implications of the measures that are taken by governments in order to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to available data, there are 905 infected and 37 dead in BiH. The FBiH at https://www.covid-19.ba/ has data on the gender structure (532 patients with COVID-18, of whom 285 are women (54.49%). 22 persons have died, of which 11 are women (50%)). Data for Republika Srpska and Brčko District are not gender segregated.

Governments at all levels of government are taking certain measures to prevent the spread of the virus. There is no single place where all decisions of all levels of government are located, but they can be found on websites. Measures vary from level to level, but measures that are unique to all levels of government are:

* Closure of pre-school and school facilities,
* Prohibition of public gathering,
* Prohibition of work for all except grocery shops, bakeries, industry, pharmacies, gas stations,
* Prohibition of movement (curfew) for a certain period of day,
* Suspension of public transport,
* Keeping social distance in public space,
* Use of protective equipment in a public area.

The slowdown in economic activity is further affecting women because some of the activities in which they are present, or especially represented, were among the first to be hit by the crisis, namely branches in which the female workforce, hotels, catering and tourism, hairdressers, florists and the like predominate.

Pandemics and measures to combat the spread the virus have hit the whole society, but the special impact is on:

* Women who continue to care for and provide for their own families, women who are the sole guardians of their household;
* Women at risk or currently poor, socially excluded or homeless;
* Women at home are at risk of male violence or victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking;
* Refugees and women seeking asylum due to insecure migration tensions, especially those currently left outside the camps left on the streets;
* Women who already experience multiple discrimination in our societies, such as Roma women, migrant women, women with unstable employment;
* Women with disabilities and older women who have limited or no access to permanent and quality services and / or live in care settings where life in self-isolation is extremely challenging;
* Women with mental health problems like anxiety, depression are exacerbated in this current pandemic.

We urge to the government to:

* Keep all data sorted by gender;
* Ensure access to gender disaggregated data, including data on rates of infection and death;
* Take gender perspective into account when adopting measures (especially on particularly sensitive categories such as victims of gender-based violence; female head of household; female entrepreneurs; unemployed women and women not on the register of employment services; women working in the informal economy; and women from rural areas);
* Women must be provided with access to essential and appropriate sexual and reproductive health services;
* Food availability must be ensured for all, especially women from rural areas;
* When rebalancing the budget, make sure that it is gender responsible;
* Make sure to involve civil society organizations in consultations regarding the implementation of legislation and public policies.

As women are the majority of those currently working in hospitals, providing basic care and cleaning services or continuing to work in stores and education that allow the rest of the community to live in self-isolation, we are reminded of the invaluable care that women provide for the well-being and functioning of our societies and the planet. Gaps in the provision of care for those exposed to the crisis once again demonstrates the urgency of taking steps towards establishing a socio-economic model that recognizes the invaluable contribution of women to society and places care at the center where all women and men have equal, flexible opportunities to balance their jobs, care and responsibility, and live a dignified life.