



Assessment of COVID-19 impact on gender roles



The research was carried out by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in partnership with 'Partnership for Development' Centre (PDC) and financed by Sweden. Data were gathered by the Centre for Sociological Investigations and Marketing 'CBS-AXA'.

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EVALUATION SECTION
UN WOMEN
Moldova, Chisinau 2020



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SUMMARY

THE CARE CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed and, at the same time, worsened the inequalities related to sharing the care responsibilities. The closure of educational institutions overloaded the parents, especially women. This measure revealed that the working days, especially of parents that are working remotely, are not so compatible with taking care of children and dependent adults. If we include as well the supervision of children's remote school work, then the amount of home care work grows exponentially. Data show that during the COVID-19 crisis over 50% of women dedicated several hours to do lessons with children.

During the social isolation, women took on the most demanding work in the household. They are much more involved in cleaning, taking care of family and children, cooking, etc. – these are activities that need a significant amount of effort and time. On the other hand, men spend more time for lighter, household management activities – paying invoices, providing the household with what is needed, taking care of pets/domestic animals, etc.

Figure 1

Share of people stating that the number of hours dedicated to training/lessons with children has increased

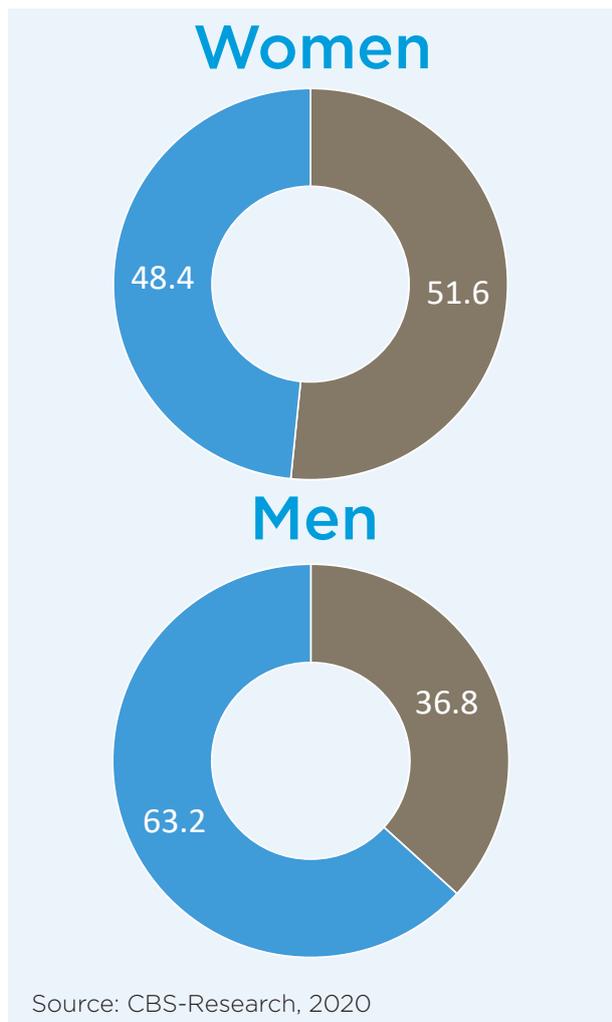
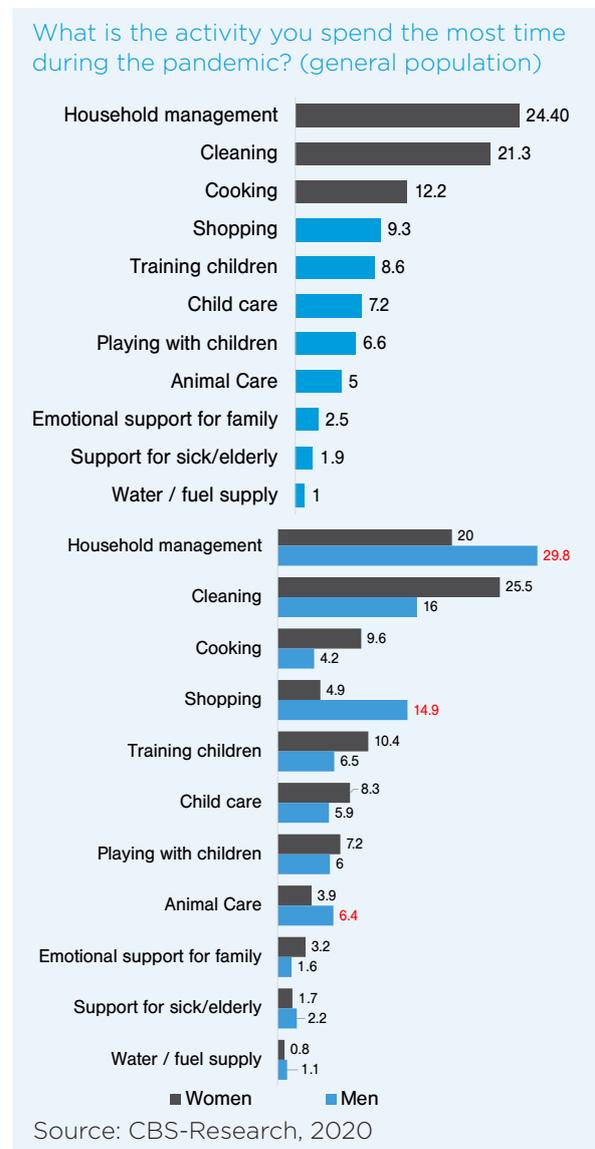


Figure 2

Activities for which the population spent most of the time during the COVID-19 pandemic, %

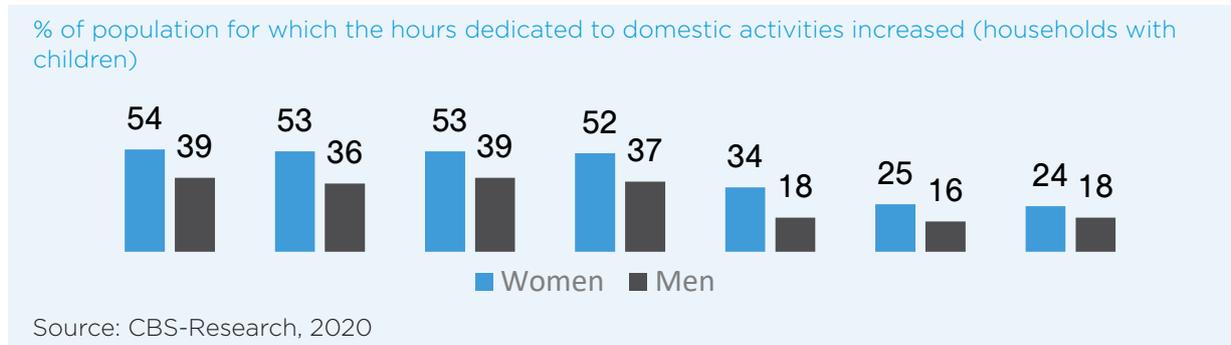


Inequalities related to care are stronger in households with children. Although the number of hours dedicated to taking care of family and children has

increased among men too, women spend much more time for this purpose.

Figure 3

% of population believing that the number of hours used for household work has increased, by presence of children

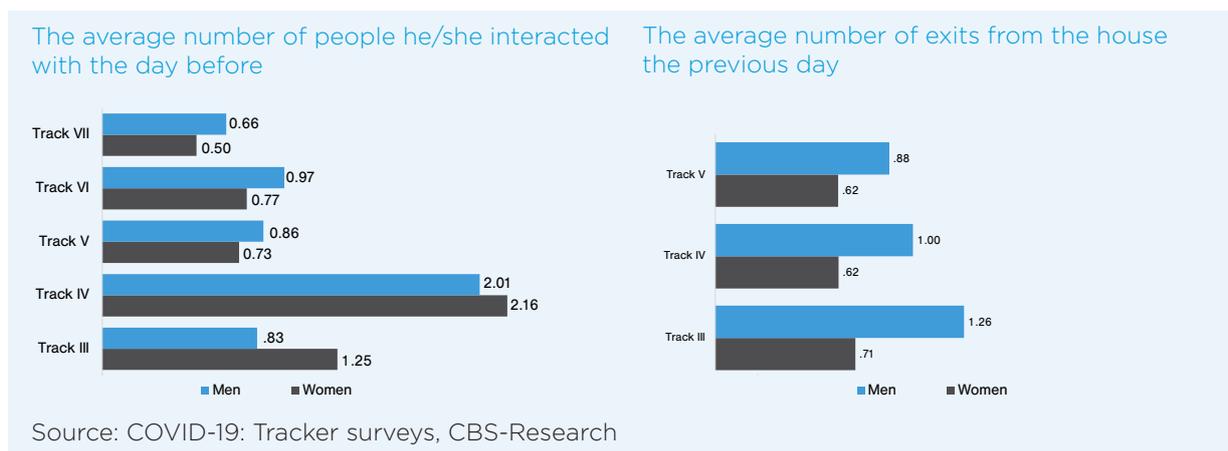


Care responsibilities have isolated and will isolate even more the women in the time of pandemic. So, besides the overall crisis related to care responsibilities, household members face psychological challenges and anxiety in connection with the need to obey the lockdown regime. Data of tracker-surveys regarding

COVID-19 pandemic in Moldova highlight that men have been going out of their house more often and interacted with more people outside their family or household, while women spent more time in isolation at home.

Figure 4

Level of population interaction with the environment outside their home (Track = mini survey tracker)

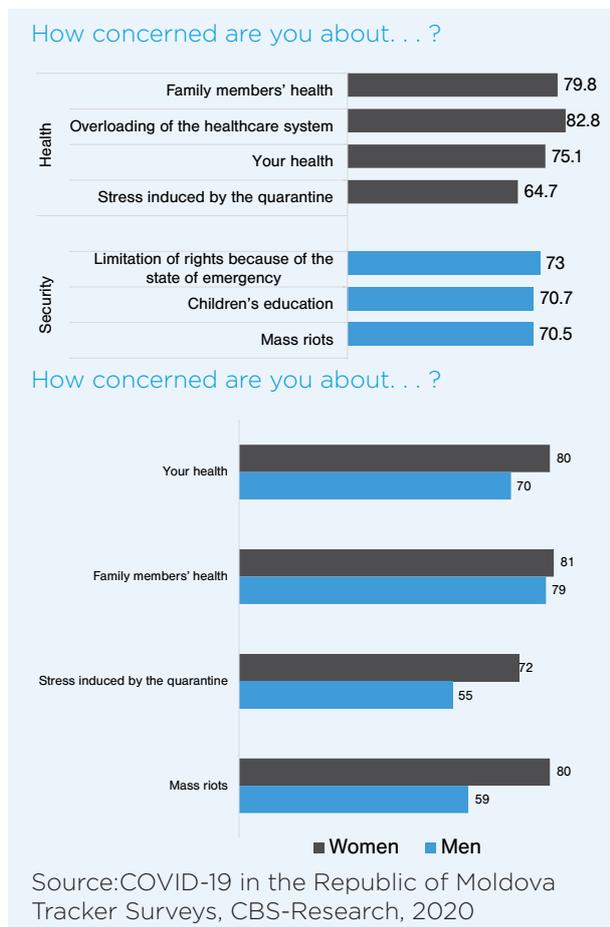


SUMMARY

WELLBEING

The pandemic also exposed most of the population to uncertainties and anxiety. The fear for one's health, the fear of losing someone dear and the financial and social pressure caused a greater risk of mental/emotional health issues, frustrations and anxiety among the population. Women are more exposed to anxiety and psychological pressure because of the social distancing measures and social constraints (time spent in lockdown at home, household duties, etc.)

Figure 5
Concerns of the population during the COVID-19 pandemic, %

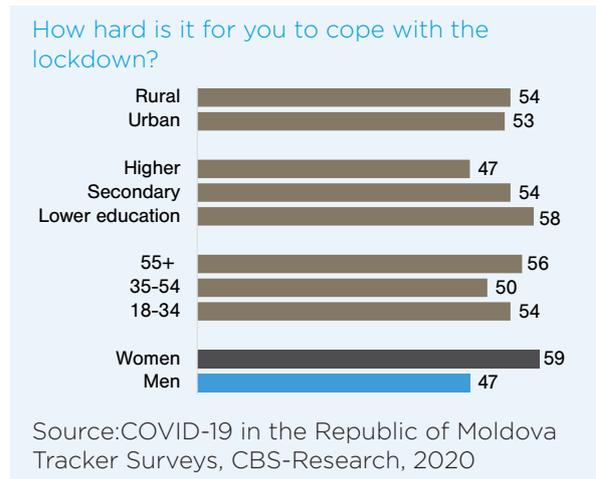


For more than half of the population, especially for women, the quarantine and lockdown at home proved to be extremely difficult to cope with from the point of view of mental health, as they had to either take on most of the household duties while in lockdown, or to

combine them with working remotely.

Figure 6

The effects of the lockdown on the mental health of the population



Domestic violence during lockdown has also become a cause for concern for about half of the population. With the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic and the enforcement of the lockdown, the risk of domestic violence is going up. Women are the most affected in this regard, about half of them fearing it (46%).

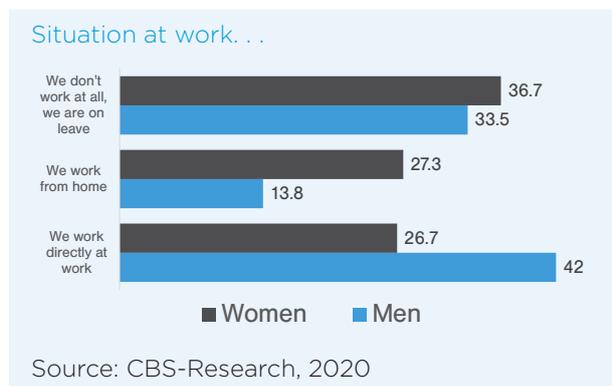
SUMMARY

TRANSITION TO WORK

Since the emergency period, women have already begun to back down from the labour market. A first way of backing down relates to the remote work, with 27% of women working remotely during the emergency period. In the future, the work of women doing their job from home is likely to be considered lower-value work, which will have a negative impact on their remuneration, promotion opportunities and professional development opportunities.

Figure 7

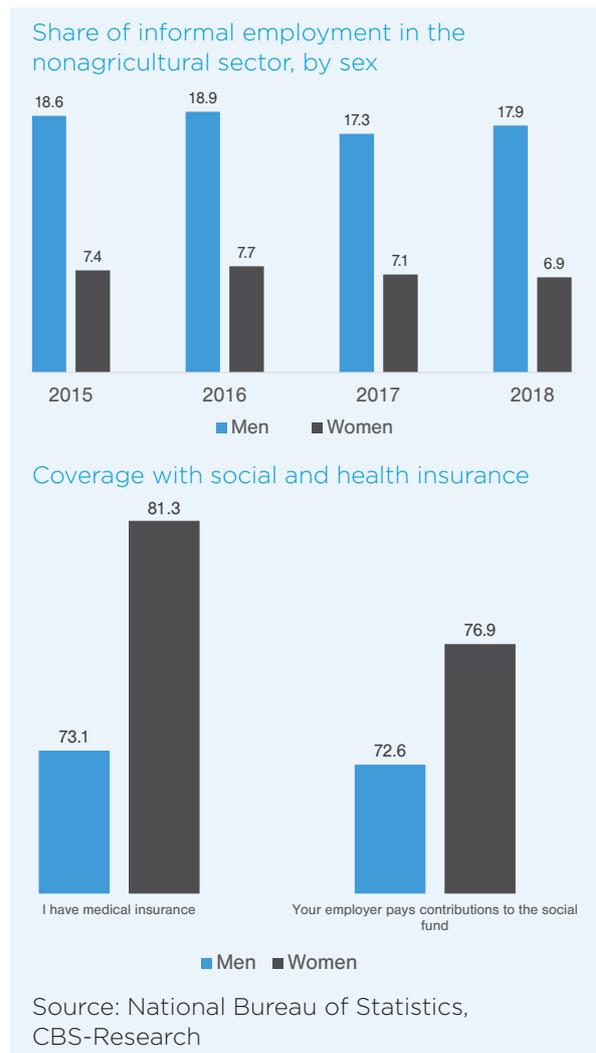
At work situation of men and women during the emergency period



At the same time, some of the men who will lose their jobs during this period will not be able to fully benefit from the social and health insurance system. Given that the quality of men's employment is lower than that of women, they risk not being able to fully benefit from the insurance system if they lose their job.

Figure 8

Indicator on the level of occupational insurance and protection for men and women.

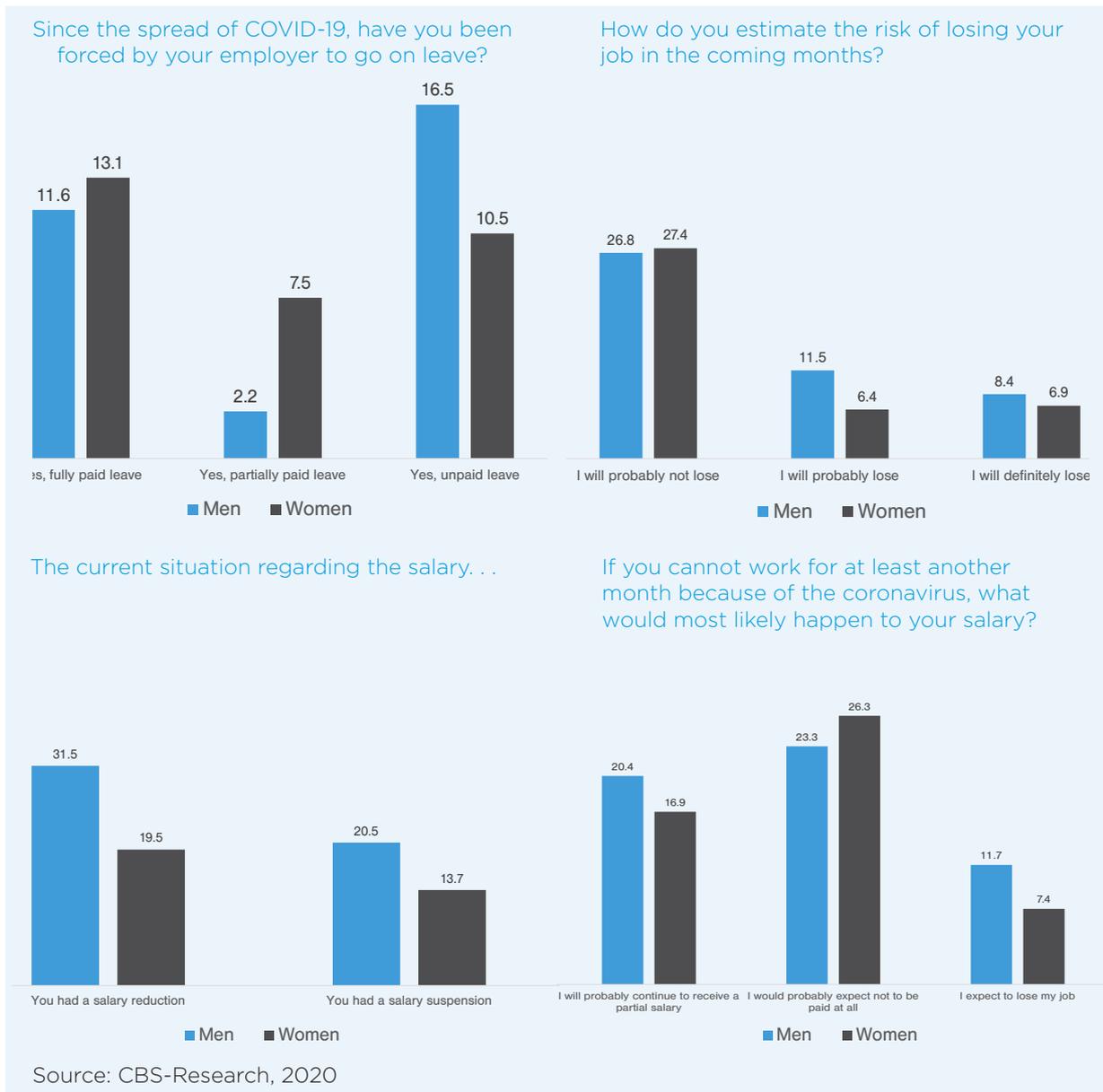


In addition, the labour rights of a number of men will be infringed during the pandemic. During the emergency period, a number of men reported their salaries were reduced or suspended. Concurrently, many of them anticipate a worsening of the work situation. This is explained by the gender inequality (where men are much more affected) related to the much higher level of informal work. We can assume that informal work will increase in general, and even more among men, this being a way in which employees will respond to

the unfavourable economic context. The inability of a number of men to resort to labour migration will be another factor that will contribute to the increase of informal work among men.

Figure 8

Impact of measures imposed by employers on men and women during the period



SUMMARY

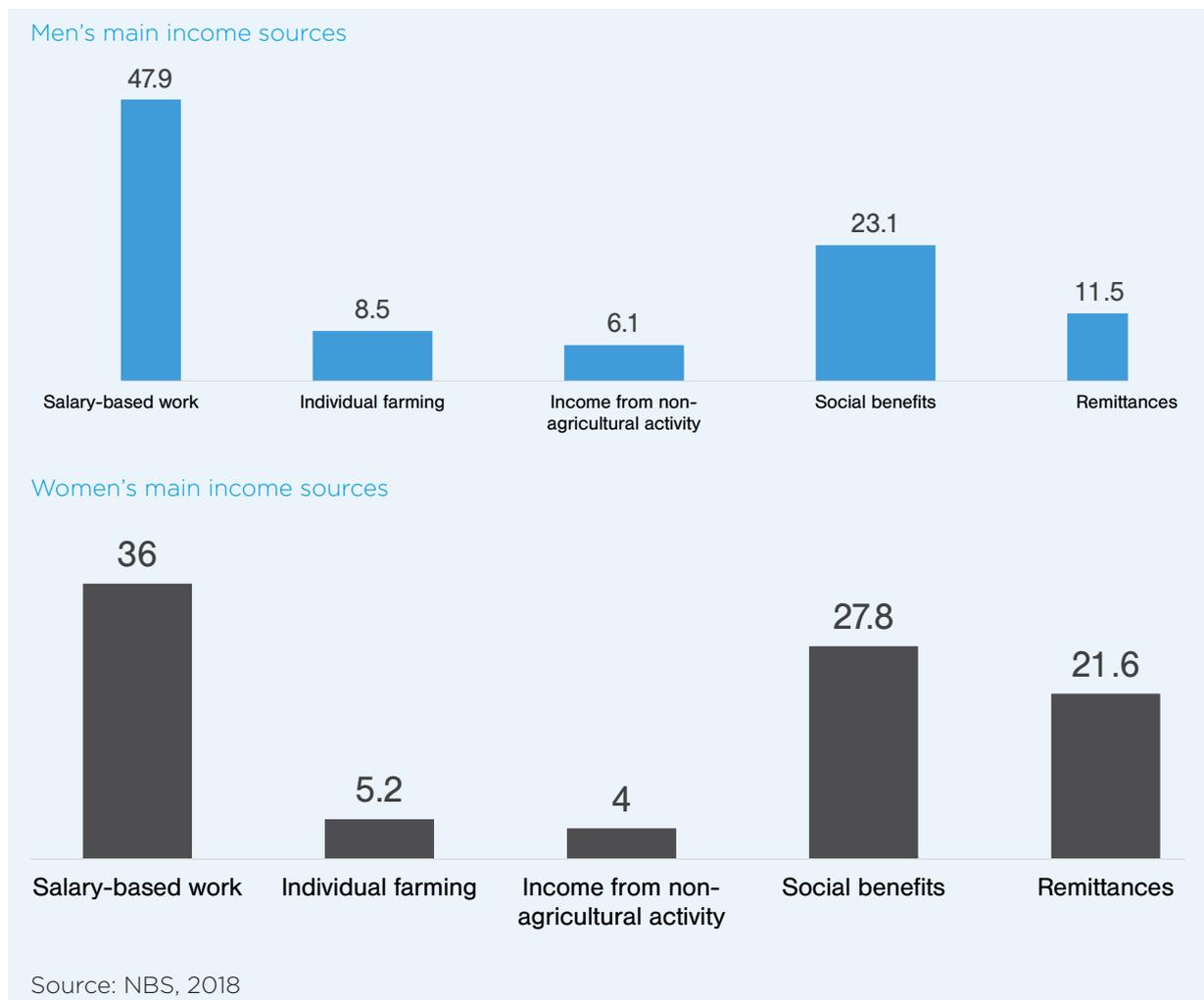
FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY

Men receive more income from productive activities, while women – from social allowances and remittances. Namely, on the basis of data provided by NBS, it was possible to highlight that in 2018 this specific activity generated most revenues in households, accounting for 56.5% of the total disposable income. While for men this specific source accounts for the biggest share in income (62.6%), around 50% of the disposable income of women consists of social allowances and remittances.

In the future, the work of women doing their job from home is likely to be considered lower-value work, which will have a negative impact on their remuneration, promotion opportunities and professional development opportunities.

Figure 10

Gender-based analysis of the share of various income sources in total disposable income, %



By area of residence, we see that women from rural areas depend on remittances to a larger extent. Data in the figure below reveal that (!) as much as 30% of the income of women in the rural areas consist of remittances, which makes them most dependent on this source. According to the forecasts of the World Bank, in 2020 remittances will decline suddenly all over the world by about 20 per cent, because of the economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Moldova, this decrease might push several socially vulnerable categories underneath the poverty threshold.

In terms of wage-related vulnerability, men have been and will be affected by the pandemic crisis to a larger extent. This includes both immediate loss of earnings obtained from a job, and potential risks of being made redundant in the near future.

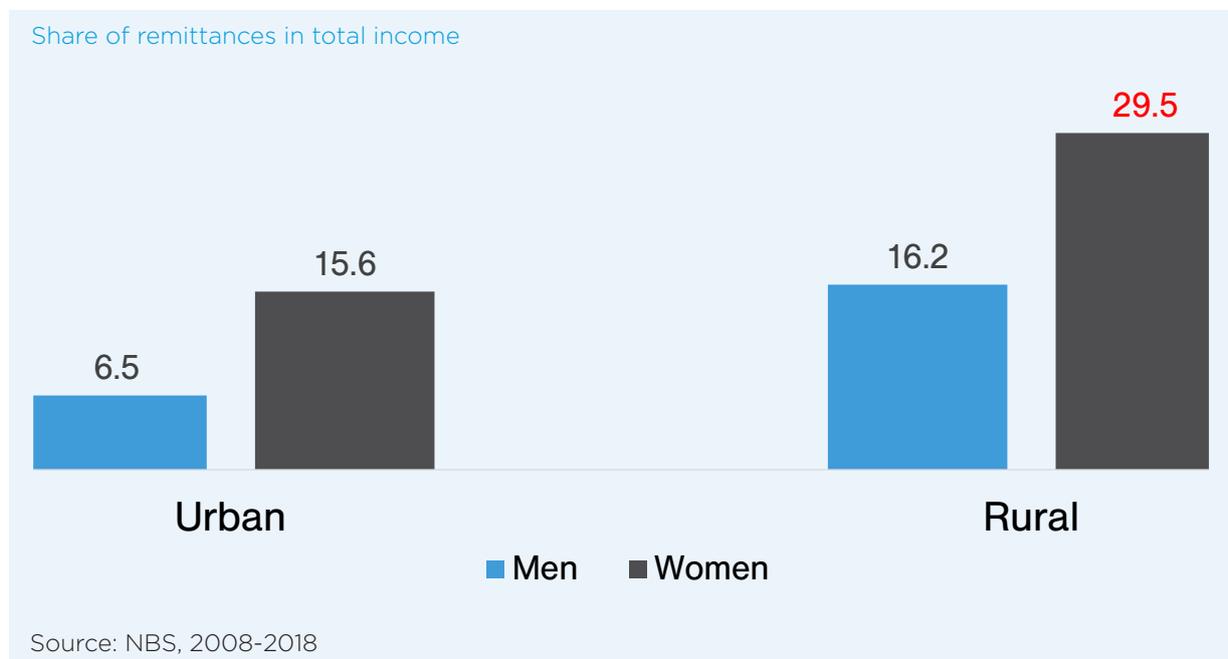
Still, over a medium term, it would be more difficult for women to cope if restrictions aimed at containing the COVID-19 pandemic are kept in place. The survey highlights that as much as 63% of women state that

it will be difficult for them to cover the essential needs, such as buying food, hygiene products, etc. The availability of savings explains the vulnerability to which women are exposed (only 22.5% of the respondents say that they have some savings, but they keep them for a rainy day, compared to 28.3% among men). As women generally have lower income than men, are more involved in unpaid work (childcare, household chores, etc.) and their share is much larger in the group of poor and vulnerable people, the pandemic crisis may push even more women, in medium term, into the disadvantaged categories of people, thus deepening the gender inequality in terms of financial dependence.

1. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history>

Figure 11

Analysis of the share of remittances in total income, by gender and area of residence



FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A Gender Analysis of the Pandemic Crisis Impact on the Income of Moldovan Women and Men

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a number of shocks for the population, the impact of which was different for women and men. Following the outbreak of the new virus and the introduction of restrictive measures by authorities of the Republic of Moldova, we noticed that the situation has different effects on men and women, both economically and socially. This is also determined by the different roles women and men play in society and family.

This analysis aims to identify the effects of the pandemic on women and men, highlighting their short- and long-term specific needs, and also their response to the new challenges and changes in the social and economic field.

Particularly, this paper reveals the main findings related to the spreading of COVID-19 pandemic effects on income of women and men, as well as to the ways the gender inequalities might worsen. As the pandemic crisis led to a higher involvement – especially women's – in childcare, which deepened the gender inequalities on the labour market, we decided to see how this logical chain of effects translated into the disposable income of women and men. Therefore, we focused on identifying the main channels that emphasise financial vulnerability of women and men and how they can determine the expression and expansion of gender inequalities.

Under this research, the current and potential gender-based financial vulnerability is analysed from the perspective of three main sources of earnings, namely: (i) productive activities, (ii) social allowances, and (iii) transfers, including remittances. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), these are the three main components of the disposable income. At the

same time, given the national context, particularly the measures taken to diminish the effects of the pandemic, as well as the global one, in relation to the forecasts of crisis effects on the remittances in 2020,

we focused mostly on the assessment of vulnerabilities caused by the fluctuation of remittance level and of the income obtain from the workplace.

In the Republic of Moldova there is a trend of worsening the epidemiological situation regarding COVID-19 cases, women being more affected than men. Currently, 12732 cases of infection with the new Coronavirus have been confirmed in the Country, [1] and the number of people who are facing this virus daily is sharply rising (for example, from 109 cases reported on June 1st this year to 478 cases reported on June 17th). According to national statistics, the number of women infected with the new type of coronavirus is higher than the number of men (58.47% women versus 41.53% men) [2]. The huge gap between women and men would be due to the large number of front-line medical staff, who are mostly women. As the pandemic impact is becoming more and more felt, deepening the already existing inequalities, in case of maintaining or aggravating the current situations in Moldova, it is not to disregard that men, and especially women, will be exposed to a more drastic social and economic vulnerability on short and medium periods.

The research was carried out by the 'Partnership for Development' Centre (PDC), in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and financed by Sweden. The data were collected by the Centre for Sociological Investigations and Marketing 'CBS-AXA', and the related survey covered a sample of 1,003 people aged 18+. The sample was stratified, probabilistic and representative for the adult population of the country, except for the inhabitants from the region on the left bank of the Nistru river. The maximum error was +3.1%. The data were collected through a telephone survey during 13-26 April 2020, and the questionnaire was drawn up in Romanian and Russian languages, respondents being provided with the opportunity to choose the language.

Additionally, there have been interpreted the official data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics regarding population income for the period that is relevant for this analysis. Annually, on the basis of the Household Budget Survey (HBS), NBS identifies and calculates the households' disposable income. As NBS presents data in this specific way (at household level), it is worth mentioning that in this analysis, when it comes to the gender equality dimension, we make reference to household-specific values where the head of household is a man or a woman when we use this specific source to present data from the perspective of men and women. At the same time, we do not exclude that, should there be presented income and expenditure data of women and men as individuals, not at household level, there would be even bigger gender inequalities with respect to income of women and men and their income sources. Likewise, given that over the last decade the structure of population income, expenses and consumption suffered a number of changes and that the HBS respondents' non-response rate has been growing constantly in 2018, the National

Bureau of Statistics adjusted the methodology used to calculate the poverty threshold and HBS methodology. Taking into account these methodology adjustments, in this Report we will mostly focus on the analysis of trends, rather than of precise figures for one year or another.

FINDINGS HIGHLIGHTED BY PRIOR ANALYSES DEVELOPED IN THIS CONTEXT

DISPOSABLE INCOME OF THE POPULATION MEANS ALL MEANS, FINANCIAL AND IN KIND, OBTAINED FROM EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT, FROM THE SALE OF PRODUCE FROM THE AUXILIARY HOUSEHOLD, REVENUE FROM PROPERTY, PENSIONS AND OTHER SOCIAL ALLOWANCES, AS WELL AS OTHER CURRENT TRANSFERS (INCLUDING GOODS AND MONEY RECEIVED FROM OUTSIDE THE HOUSEHOLD).

1. FIGURES SPECIFIC FOR THE DAY OF 18 JUNE 2020, [HTTPS://MSMPS.GOV.MD/RO/CONTENT/SITUATIA-EPIDEMIOLOGICA-PRIVIND-INFECTIA-COVID-19-18-IUNIE](https://msmmps.gov.md/ro/content/situatia-epidemiologica-privind-infectia-covid-19-18-iunie)
2. [HTTP://GISMOLDOVA.MAPS.ARCGIS.COM/APPS/OPSDASHBOARD/INDEX.HTML#/D274DA857ED345EFA66E1FBC959B021B](http://gismoldova.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/d274da857ed345efa66e1fbc959b021b)

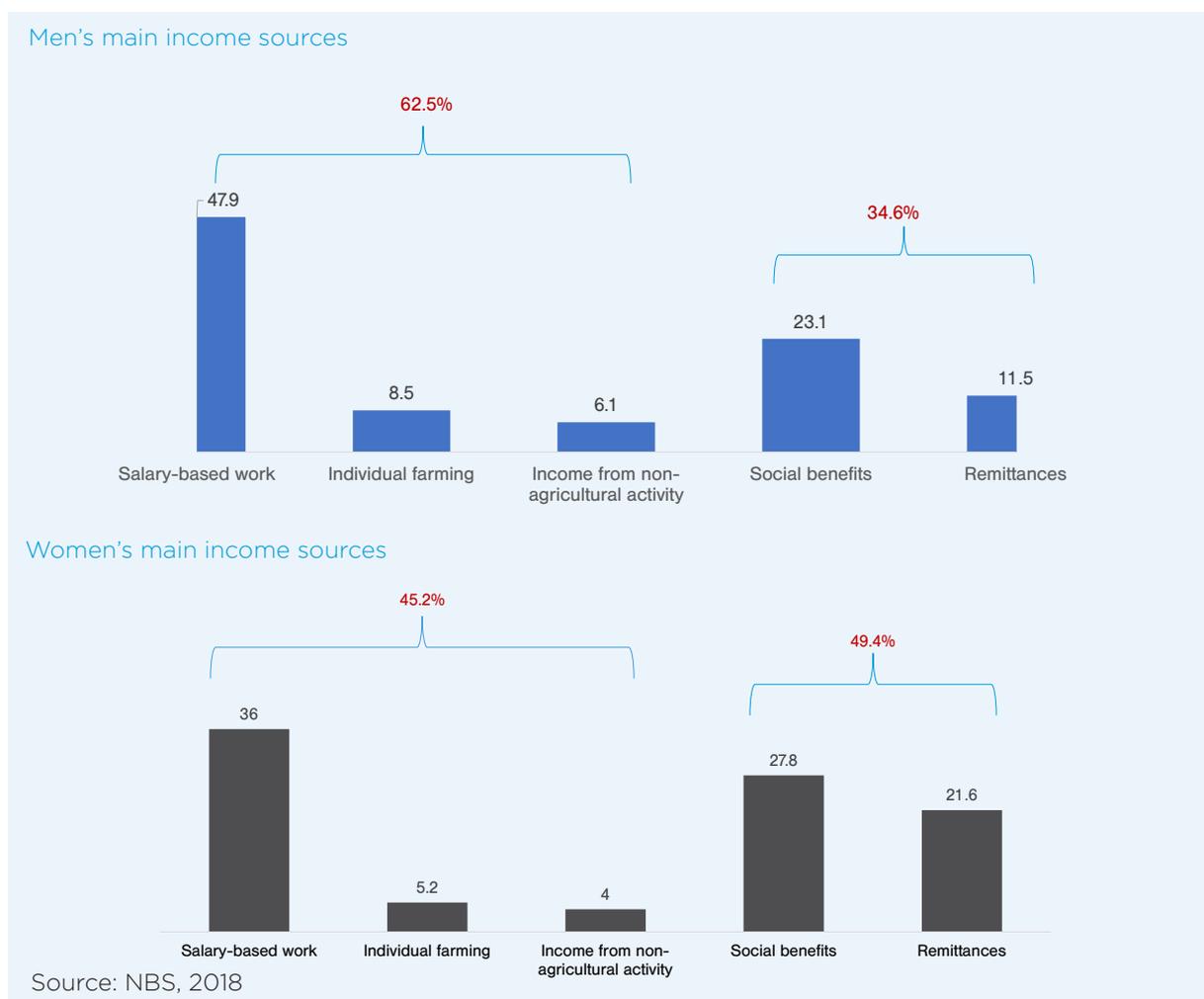
FINDINGS

Men receive more income from productive activities, while women – from social allowances and remittances. Namely, on the basis of data provided by NBS, it was possible to highlight that in 2018 this specific activity generated most revenues in households, accounting for 56.5% of the total disposable income. The disaggregated analysis of data, reflected in the figure below, reveals that major discrepancies are found when we look from the gender perspective. While for men this specific source accounts for the biggest share in income (62.6%), around 50% of the disposable income of women consists of social

allowances and remittances. It is noteworthy that in case of social allowances no significant gender discrepancies were found (the difference is 4, 7 pp), while in case of remittances we see that women are twice as dependent on them compared to men. To be precise, remittances account for one-fifth of women's disposable income.

Figure 1

Gender-based analysis of the share of various income sources in total disposable income, %



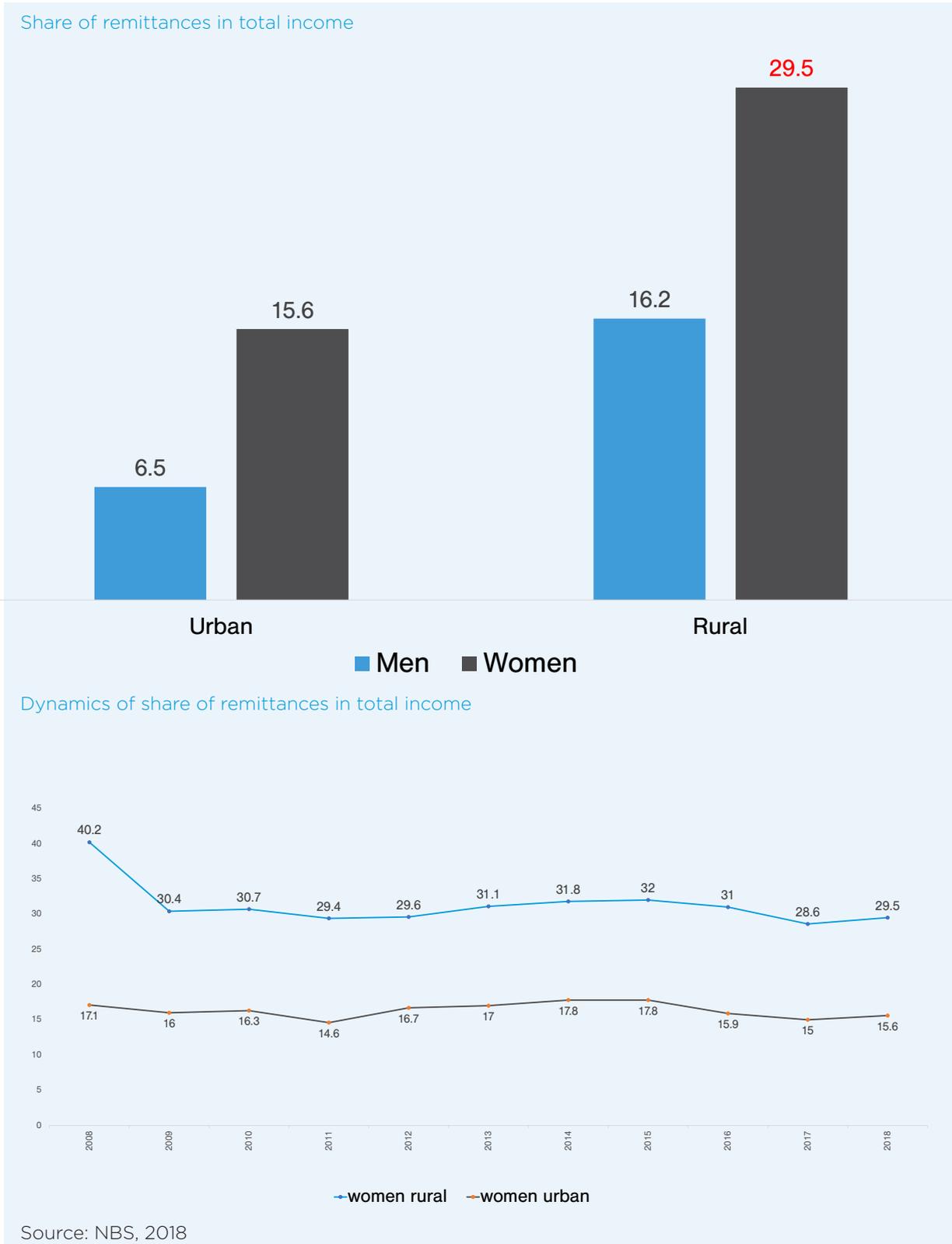
By area of residence, we see that women from rural areas depend on remittances to a larger extent. Data in the figure below reveal that (!) as much as 30% of the income of women in the rural areas consist of remittances, which makes them most dependent on this source. Compared to women that reside in urban areas, the rural women are twice as dependent and if we compare them to men residing in urban areas – the dependence of rural women is fivefold. Also, the analysis of trends point out clearly a constant dependence on remittances. The huge difference in the share of social allowances and remittances

in women's total income may be explained by such structural factors as: (i) higher migration among men, who send money home and (ii) many households where a woman is the head of the household are the ones where women are retired and/or widows.

3. THE NON-RESPONSE RATE ACCOUNTS FOR MORE THAN 30 PER CENT AND IT HAS BEEN INCREASING OVER TIME. THIS ISSUE IS BIGGER IN THE URBAN AREA, ESPECIALLY IN CHISINAU MUNICIPALITY.
4. ACCORDING TO NBS, IN 2018 THE SHARE OF MEN IN TOTAL PEOPLE WHO WERE ABROAD WAS 67.5%.

Figure 2

Analysis of the share of remittances in the income of households with and without children, including breakdown by area of residence

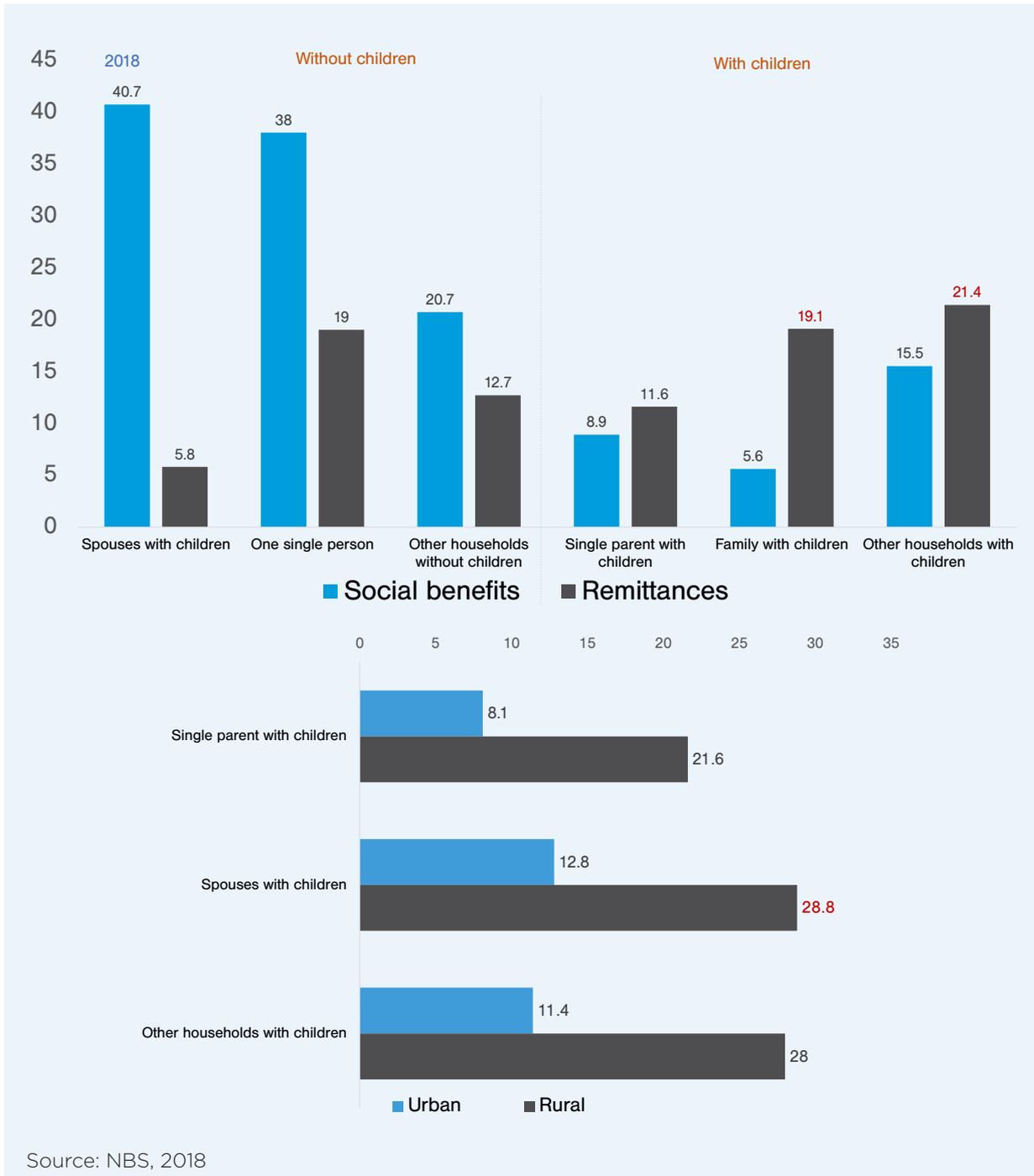


Families with children are more dependent on remittances. This may be explained by the fact that in households with children, in order to ensure a decent living and a greater access to child development, education, and health services, parents or relatives,

particularly men, leave to work abroad, which is why such families are more dependent on this source of income. In case of families without children, there is a greater dependence on social allowances, because such situations relate mostly to elderly people.

Figure 3

Analysis of the share of remittances in the income of households with and without children, including breakdown by area of residence



Source: NBS, 2018

According to the forecasts of the World Bank, in 2020 remittances will decline suddenly all over the world by about 20 per cent, because of the economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The estimate for countries from Europe and Central Asia is as much as 27.5%. The projected fall, which would be the sharpest decline in recent history, is largely due to a fall in the wages and employment of migrant workers, who tend to be more vulnerable to loss of employment and wages during an economic crisis in a host country.

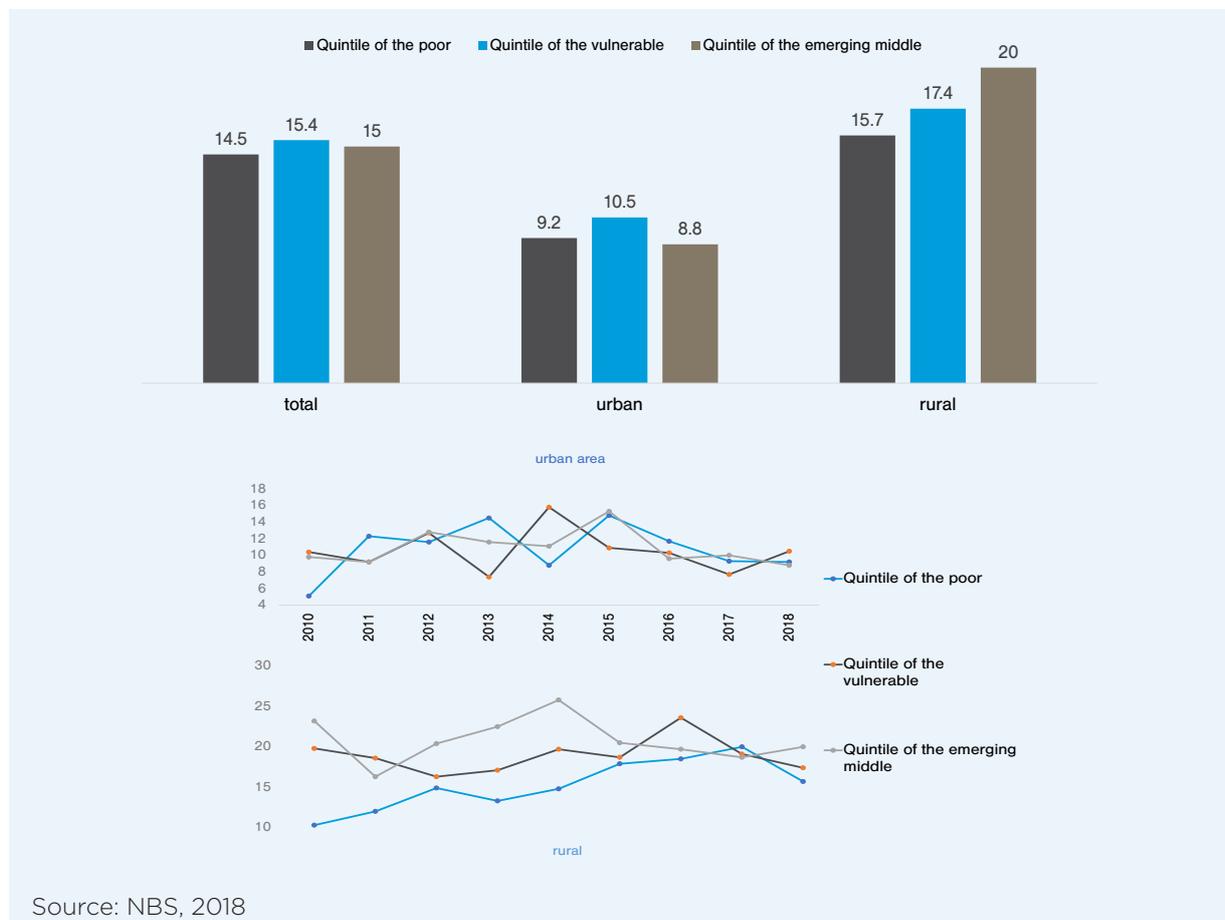
In Moldova, this decrease might push several socially-vulnerable categories underneath the poverty threshold. On the basis of data specific for Moldova, with reference to the value of remittances in 2019 (which was USD 1,909.29 million, accounting for 16.3% of GDP) and their estimated decline (forecast by WB for countries in Europe and Central Asia – 27.5%), we can compute that the monetary value of remittances in 2020 will decrease by USD 525 million on average,

an amount that is quite significant for our country. As remittances represent an important source of income and during the pandemic crisis many people returned to the country, putting their work abroad on hold temporarily or for good, we can forecast a strong financial impact on the poorest and most vulnerable categories of people, particularly in the rural area (see the Figure below).

5. [HTTPS://WWW.WORLDBANK.ORG/EN/NEWS/PRESS-RELEASE/2020/04/22/WORLD-BANK-PREDICTS-SHARPEST-DECLINE-OF-REMITTANCES-IN-RECENT-HISTORY](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history)
6. [HTTPS://WWW.WORLDBANK.ORG/EN/TOPIC/MIGRATIONREMITTANCESDIASPORAISUES/BRIEF/MIGRATION-REMITTANCES-DATA](https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data)
7. 'UNEQUAL TRANSITION TO WORK DURING THE PANDEMIC. A GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE PANDEMIC CRISIS IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MOLDOVAN WOMEN AND MEN', PDC, UN WOMEN, MAY 2020

Figure 4

Dynamics of remittances share in the income of poorest categories of population



The dynamics of how these categories depend on the inflow of remittances into the country reveal two main findings: (i) first of all, we see a continuous dependence of most disadvantaged categories of people on these sources, particularly people from the rural area and (ii) secondly, the decrease in the share that remittances have in the income of households as of 2015-2016, both in rural and urban areas, may be caused by the economic crisis in Russia, where most men from Moldova choose to go to work. Thus we deduce that the decrease of remittances because of the COVID-19 pandemic-related crisis will have an even greater impact on the poverty level of the most vulnerable categories of people.

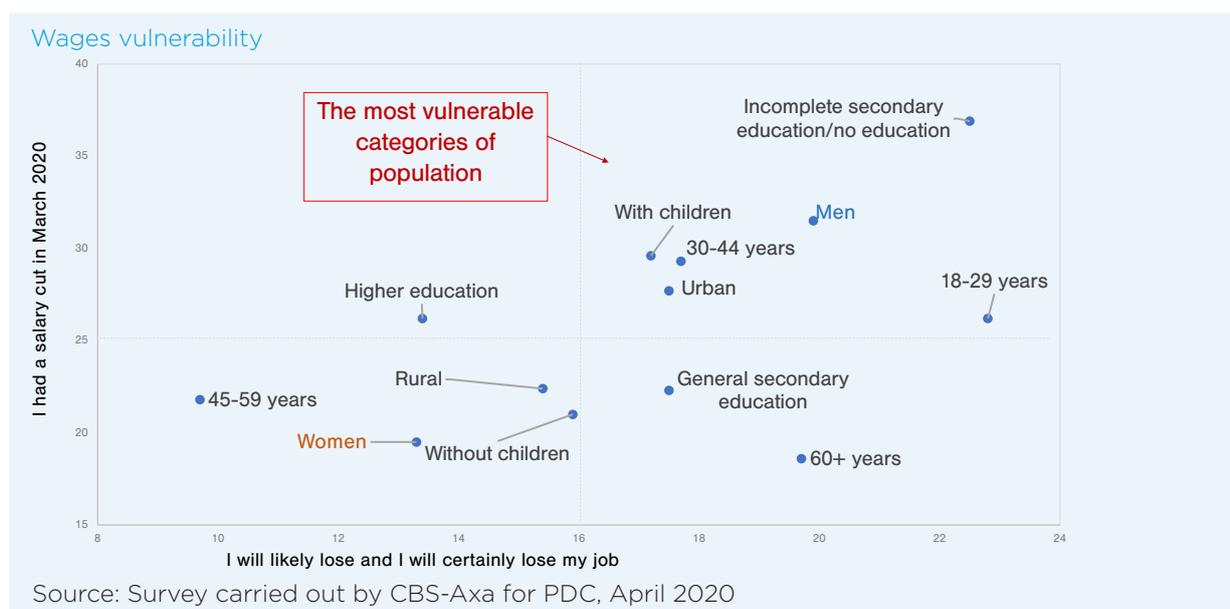
Besides the reported information, that would mean that women and families in rural area will suffer most of all because of the decline in remittances. Consequently, a decrease in remittances among these disadvantaged groups will affect negatively their ability to invest in health services, education and other essential services, as more of their finances will be directed to solve food shortages and immediate livelihoods needs. Even though the effects of these changes will not be felt immediately, the effects of the crisis will become stronger in a medium term. Hence we can conclude that variations in this respect may be deemed as an important channel of gender inequality display and deepening.

In terms of wage-related vulnerability, men have been and will be affected by the pandemic crisis to a larger extent. This includes both immediate loss of earnings obtained from a job, and potential risks of being made redundant in the near future. Data generated by the survey conducted in April 2020 revealed that the appreciation of the pandemic effects on the income obtained by women and men from productive activities. The figure below presents the answers provided by respondents in this regard. It is visible that men are the most vulnerable category from the wages perspective. This is a vulnerability that has already displayed itself and will keep doing so in the nearest future. The figure also reveals that the most vulnerable categories include people with no education or incomplete education, young and adults (18-44 years of age) and the ones having children. This shows that the restrictions decreed at national level in order to diminish the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (including social distancing, stopping the operation of multiple economic operators, etc.) reflected immediately on the disposable income of the citizens.

8. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/04/22/world-bank-predicts-sharpest-decline-of-remittances-in-recent-history>

Figure 5

Respondent mapping in terms of wage vulnerability, %

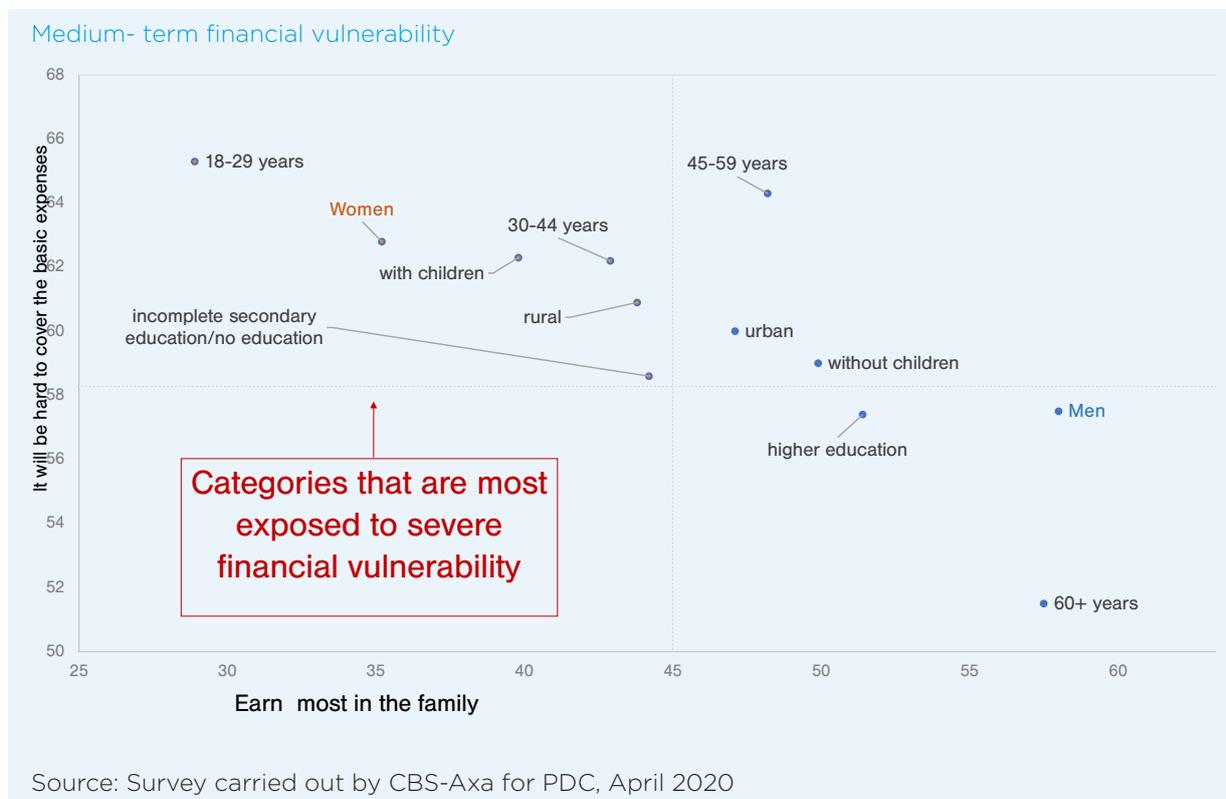


Still, over a medium term, it would be more difficult for women to cope if restrictions aimed at containing the COVID-19 pandemic are kept in place. The survey highlights that as much as 63% of women state that it will be difficult for them to cover the essential needs, such as buying food, hygiene products, etc. , thus the gender inequality equals 5.3 pp in this regard. The availability of savings explains the vulnerability to which women are exposed (only 22.5% of the respondents say that they have some savings, but they keep them for a rainy day, compared to 28.3% among

men). As women generally have lower income than men, are more involved in unpaid work (childcare, household chores, etc.) and their share is much larger in the group of poor and vulnerable people, the pandemic crisis may push even more women, in medium term, into the disadvantaged categories of people, thus deepening the gender inequality in terms of financial dependence. What draws attention is that this category also includes people who have children, people from rural area and people with a low level of education.

Figure 6

Respondent mapping in terms of exposure to severe financial vulnerability over a medium term

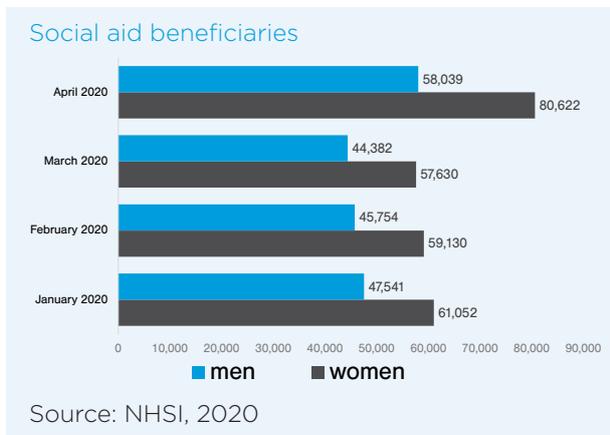


In terms of social allowances, the financial vulnerability will not be that deep. The figure below reflects the number of people who started to receive social aid in the first four months of 2020. So, we can see in April a visible increase of disadvantaged categories that needed to benefit of state financial support and women are most dependent on these sources. Furthermore, the survey conducted in April 2020 reveals that among most female respondents the amount of pension or other social allowances increased or stayed the same

(gender inequality had an average value of 5.5 pp). We can conclude, therefore, that despite women are more dependent on social allowances, it is not excluded that this specific income source will not affect negatively the total earnings of women and men in a short or medium term.

Figure 7

Gender-based analysis of social aid beneficiaries

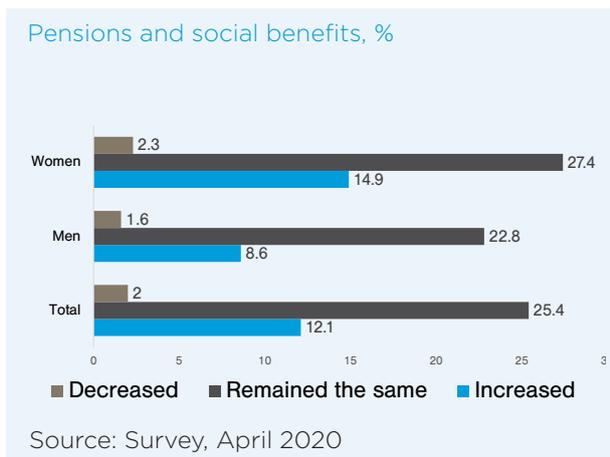


2. In the short run, taking into account the decrease of income from productive activities, men will be more affected by the pandemic crisis. Still, we do not exclude that in a medium term the gender inequalities related to salaries and pensions will grow stronger, to the disadvantage of women. This might happen because women will become less active on the labour market (they will either resign or work remotely) because of unfair sharing of care responsibilities, which has already shown up during the pandemic and it might worsen.

3. Given that women, especially the ones in rural areas, are more dependent on remittances, it is likely that the decline of remittances will have a greater impact on this specific category. However we do not know how soon this effects will show, because this transition will not be as sudden as the variations related to the income obtained from employment.

Figure 8

Respondents' self-analysis of the pandemic crisis impact on social allowances, %.



Finally, from the perspective of financial vulnerability caused and deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, we can highlight three major findings:

1. Despite the fact that social allowances are an important source of income for women, the variations observed during the pandemic do not highlight a negative change in this respect, which means that income will not be affected on this side in a short or medium term and that women's vulnerability will not be that profound. Nevertheless, it is necessary to carry out a much more thorough analysis in order to monitor this situation.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND UNEQUAL IMPACT ON POPULATION'S WELLBEING

An Analysis of the Pandemic Crisis Impact on the Level of Well-Being of Women and Men

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic determined a number of changes and impacts on the population, internalized differently by women and men. Following the outbreak of the new virus and introduction of restrictive measures by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova, we noticed that the situation impacts differently men and women, both economically and socially. This is also determined by the different roles women and men play in the society and family.

This analysis aims to identify the impact of the pandemic outbreak on women and men, highlighting their short- and long-term special needs, and also their response to the new challenges and changes in social and economic sectors.

The analysis particularly reveals the impact of the pandemic crisis on the population's wellbeing, focusing on the women's and men's issues with physical and emotional health, especially of those ones from vulnerable groups. The study highlights the emotional crisis caused by the pandemic, to which women were mostly exposed.

In the Republic of Moldova there is a trend of worsening the epidemiological situation regarding COVID-19 cases, women being more affected than men.

At the same time, the analysis highlights the issues related to physical security during the pandemic. Social distancing and isolation at home have increased the risk of domestic violence. The effects of this phenomenon are felt significantly on women. In Moldova there is a worsening of the epidemiological situation regarding COVID-19 infection, women being more affected than men.

Currently, 12732 cases of infection with the new Coronavirus have been confirmed in the Country, [1] and the number of people who are facing this virus daily is sharply rising (for example, from 109 cases reported on June 1st this year to 478 cases reported on June 17th). According to national statistics, the number of women infected with the new type of coronavirus is higher than the number of men (58.47% women versus 41.53% men) [2]. The huge gap between women and men would be due to the large number of front-line medical staff, who are mostly women. As the pandemic impact is becoming more and more felt, deepening the already existing inequalities, in case of maintaining or aggravating the current situations in Moldova, it is not to disregard that men, and especially women, will be exposed to a more drastic social and economic vulnerability on short and medium periods.

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The data were collected by the Centre for Sociological Investigations and Marketing „CBS-AXA”, and in this regard, the opinion poll covered a sample of 1003 persons aged 18+. The sample was stratified, probabilistic and representative for the adult population of the country, except for the inhabitants from the region on the left bank of the Nistru river. Maximum error of +3.1%. The data were collected through a telephone survey during 13-26 April 2020, and the questionnaire was drawn up in Romanian and Russian languages, respondents being provided with the opportunity to choose the language. In addition,

official data provided by the national statistics for the relevant period were included in the analysis.

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The surveys are representative for the population of the Republic of Moldova aged 18+.

- [1.1] COVID-19 IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA – TRACKER SURVEYS, [HTTPS://EEF.MD/INDEX.PHP?PAG=NEWS&ID=929&RID=1503&L=RO](https://eef.md/index.php?pag=news&id=929&rid=1503&l=ro)
- [1] FIGURES SPECIFIC FOR THE DAY OF 18 JUNE 2020, [HTTPS://MSMPS.GOV.MD/RO/CONTENT/SITUATIA-EPIDEMIOLOGICA-PRIVIND-INFECTIA-COVID-19-18-IUNIE](https://msmps.gov.md/ro/content/situatia-epidemiologica-privind-infectia-covid-19-18-iunie)
- [2] [HTTP://GISMOLDOVA.MAPS.ARCGIS.COM/APPS/OPSDASHBOARD/INDEX.HTML#/D274DA857ED345EFA66E1FBC959B021B](http://gismoldova.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/d274da857ed345efa66e1fbc959b021b)

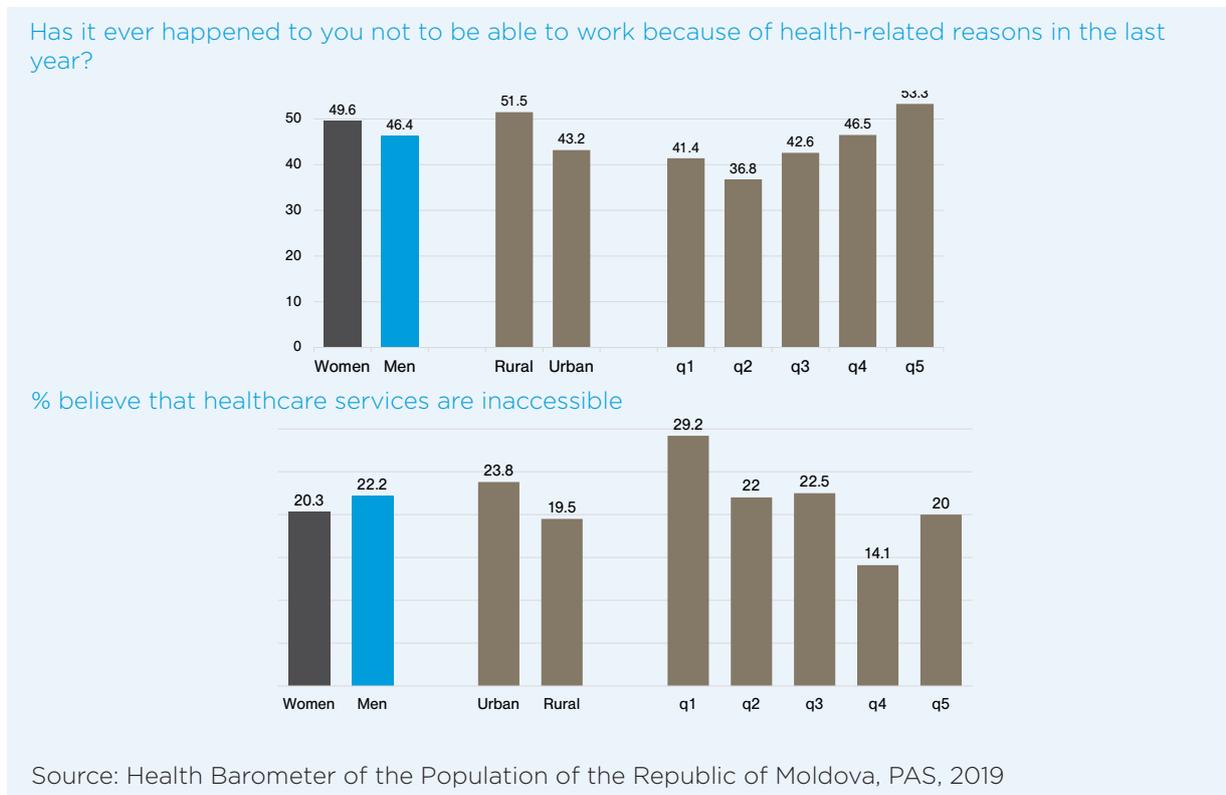
FINDINGS

Every sixth person in Moldova is not happy with their health. It is prevalingly older people living in the rural area and having low income – in other words, the vulnerable groups – that claim that their health condition is bad or very bad. At the same time, half of the population had to give up work because of health conditions, women being more affected by

this phenomenon than men. On the other hand, there are more men believing that healthcare services are inaccessible than women. Unequal access is linked to the level of income: healthcare services seem to be inaccessible for about 30% of people from quintile 1 (the poorest).

Figure 1

Perceptions of health status and level of access to healthcare services, %

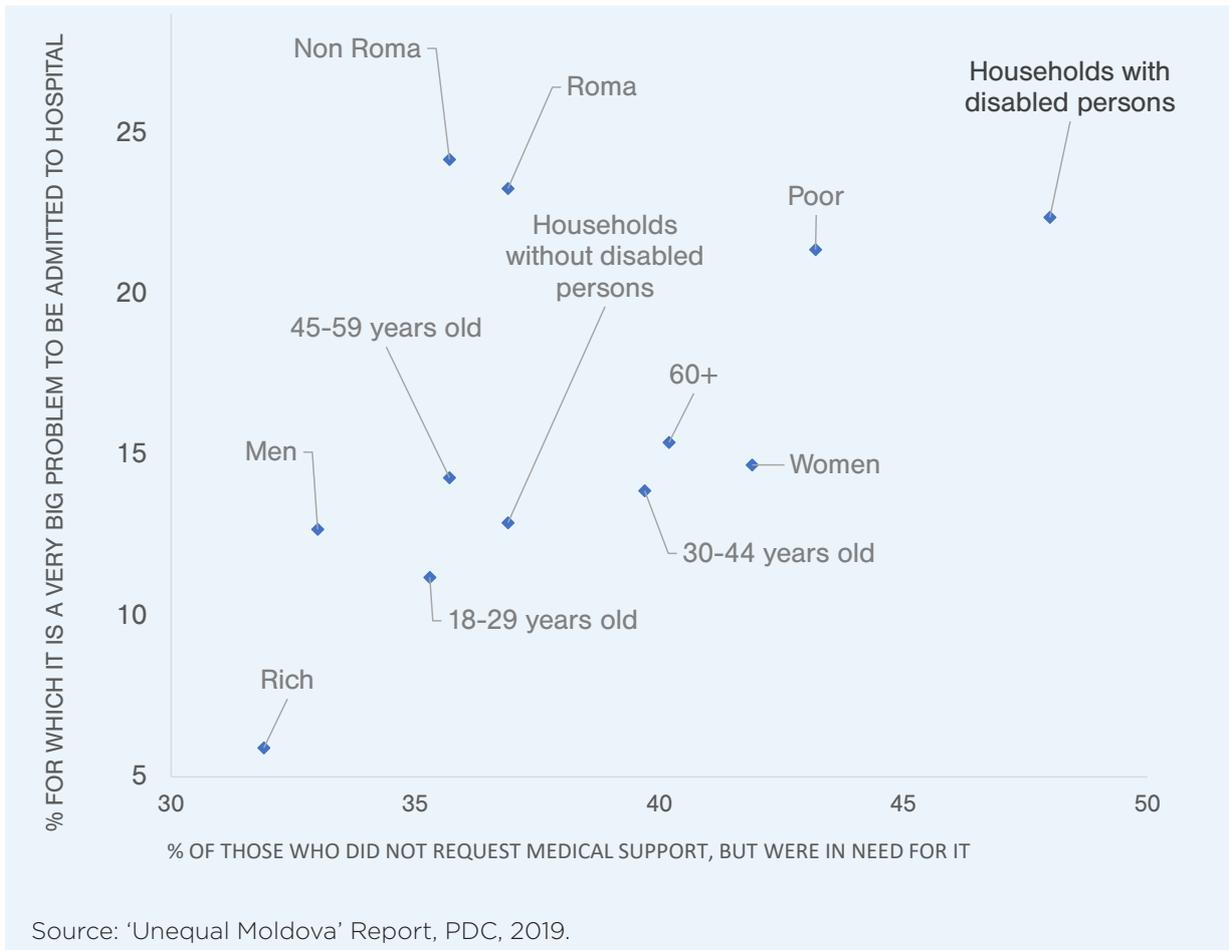


The health needs of the population, especially of the most vulnerable population, remain uncovered. The latter enjoys healthcare services the least. We have thus found that about 48% of households with people with disabilities did not see a doctor even if

they needed to. The same was true for low-income households, for elders and women.

Figure 2

Uncovered demand for healthcare services



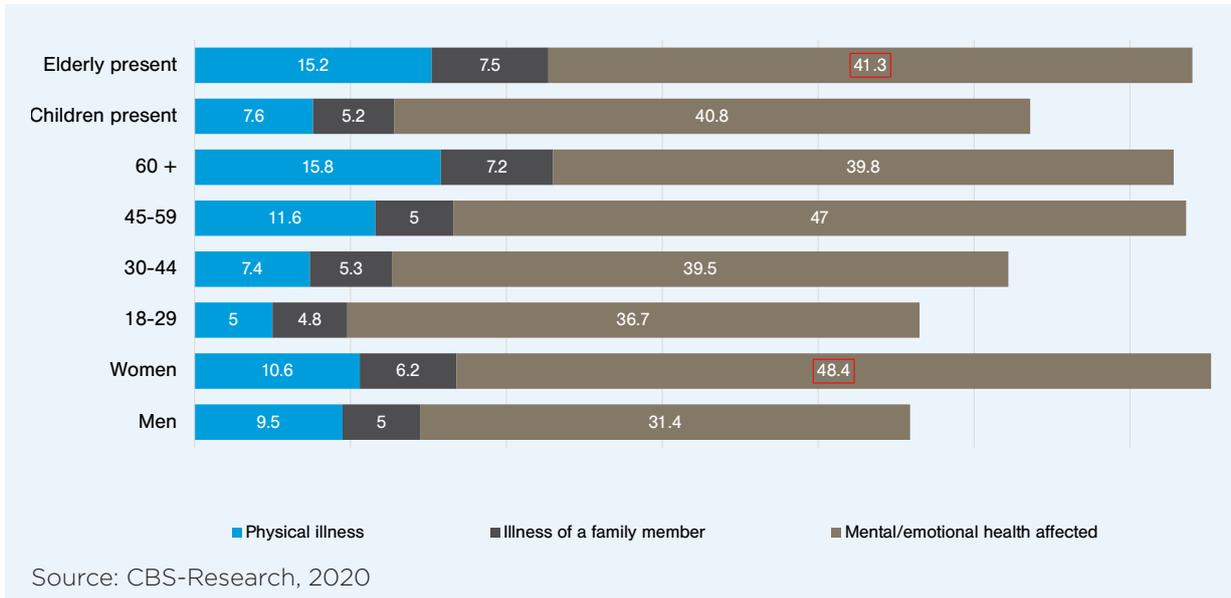
The COVID-19 pandemic crisis aggravated health issues, especially those linked to emotional well-being. More than 15% of the population had personally had one family member suffering from a particular disease (other than COVID-19) during the lockdown, the most vulnerable people, in this regard, having been the elderly. Their vulnerability increased twofold, should we take into account the restrictions on leaving one's home or engaging in social interaction imposed on people older than 60. The mental or emotional health of the population – about 40% of it struggling with issues of such nature – was affected at the same time with the spreading of the epidemic and the

enforcement of lockdown measures. Women, who took on most of the household duties and spent more time in lockdown than men, were the most affected (48%).

2. HEALTH BAROMETER OF THE POPULATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, PAS, 2019, [HTTP://PAS.MD/RO/PAS/STUDIES/DETAILS/147](http://pas.md/ro/pas/studies/details/147)

Figure 3

The health conditions that the population suffered from during the COVID-19 pandemic, %

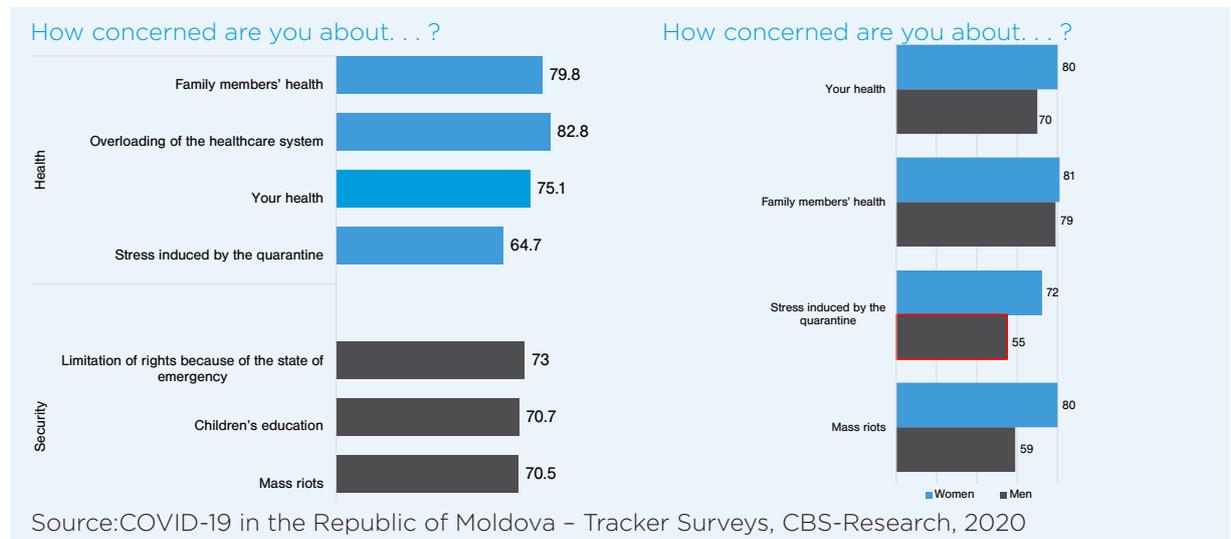


The pandemic also exposed most of the population to uncertainties and anxiety. The fear for one's health, the fear of losing someone dear and the financial and social pressure caused a greater risk of mental/emotional health issues, frustrations and anxiety among the population. Most of the population is concerned both with the physical and mental health of their own or of their family members (more than 75%). Furthermore, one key concern of the population is related to the

physical security and well-being during the pandemic crisis. More than 70% of the population is afraid of rights violations during the state of emergency, mass riots and even domestic violence. Women are more exposed to anxiety and psychological pressure because of the social distancing measures and social constraints (time spent in lockdown at home, household duties, etc.).

Figure 4

Concerns of the population during the COVID-19 pandemic, %



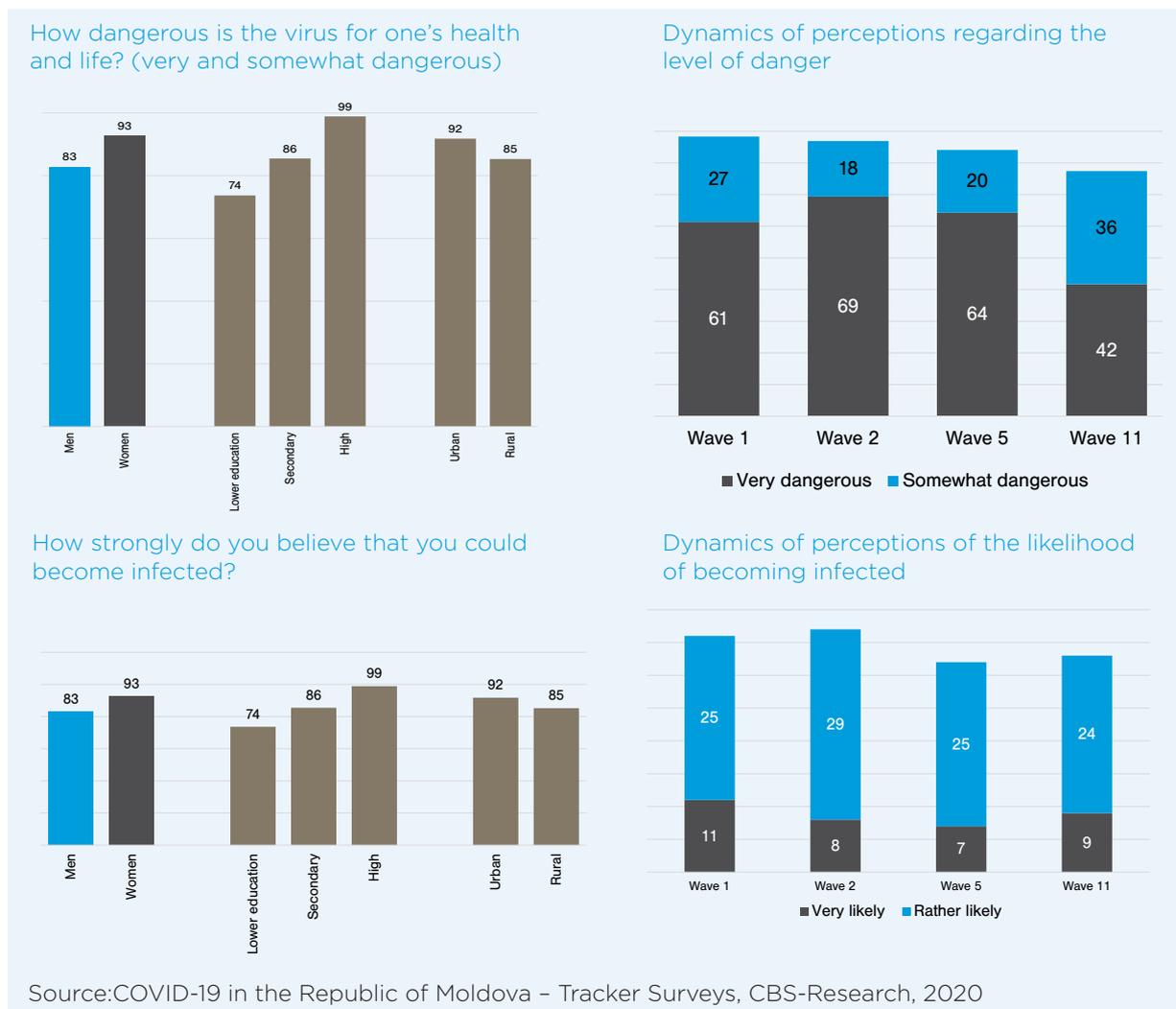
The greater the risk of getting infected with COVID-19, the greater the level of anxiety. With the spread of the pandemic, people's concerns and fears about health increased visibly. The entire population, regardless of age and status, was gripped by the fear of getting infected with COVID-19. Emotionally, women were more affected by the epidemiological situation as they were more worried about the risk of getting infected and the implications for health. However, for an appropriate policy response, it is important to take into account inequalities by education and place of residence. People with a higher level of education, living in the urban area, are more worried about getting infected and are more aware of the imminence of the danger of infection. This is explained by: (i)

poorer access to relevant information in the rural area, (ii) unequal participation, learning and information of different categories of population, (iii) low level of interest for researching, analysing the information among the population with lower levels of education. Relaxing quarantine restrictions caused changes in perceptions and behaviours: in the beginning of May (the 11th research wave) the share of the population concerned about the danger of infection was shrinking.

3. COVID-19 IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA – TRACKER SURVEYS, [HTTPS://EEF.MD/INDEX.PHP?PAG=NEWS&ID=929&RID=1503&L=RO](https://eef.md/index.php?pag=news&id=929&rid=1503&l=ro)

Figure 5

Level of concern of the population with the risk of getting infected with COVID-19, Wave = longitudinal survey

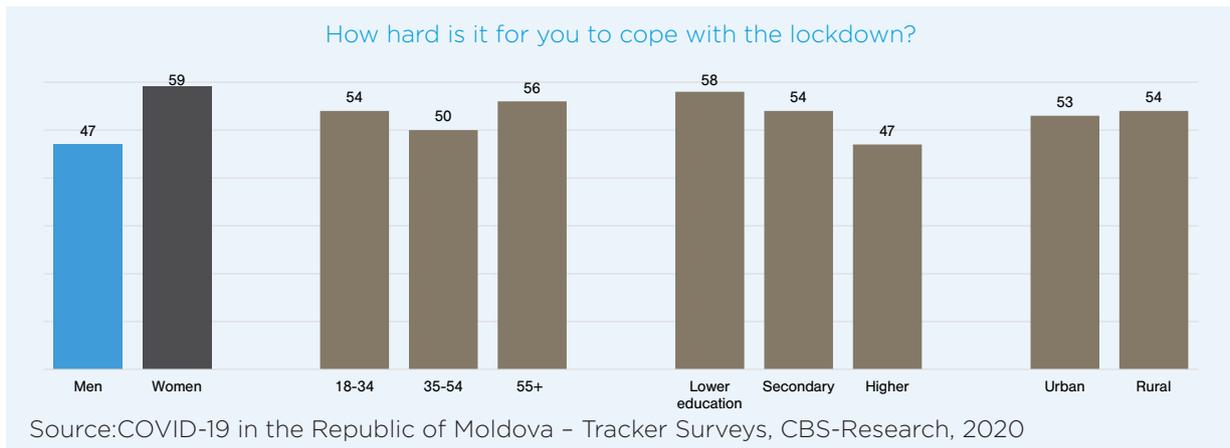


At the same time, the lockdown imposed by the authorities affected even more the emotional health of the population. For more than half of the population, especially for women, the quarantine and lockdown at home proved to be extremely difficult to cope with from the point of view of mental health, as they had to either take on most of the household duties while in

lockdown, or to combine them with working remotely. The lockdown seems to have affected to a lesser degree people with a higher level of education, which is indicative of the fact that there's a higher likelihood of them working in those sectors of the economy that allow them to observe social distancing measures and work from home.

Figure 6

The effects of the lockdown on the mental health of the population



Domestic violence during lockdown has also become a cause for concern for about half of the population. With the spreading of the COVID-19 pandemic and the enforcement of the lockdown, the risk of domestic violence is going up. Women are the most affected in this regard, about half of them fearing it (46%). The risk of being subject to domestic violence is higher among older people, them also being targeted by the most restrictive social distancing measures.

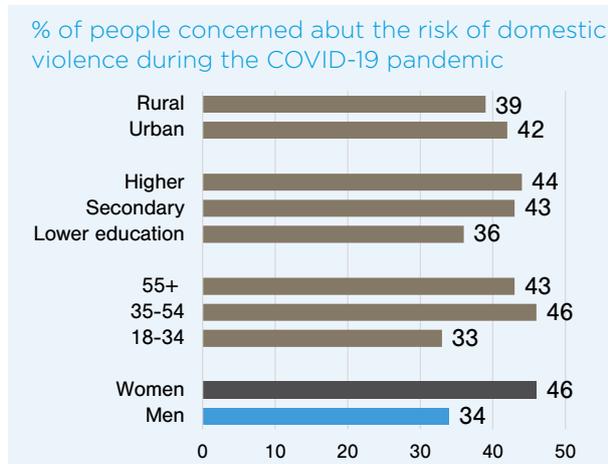
The rate of violence has increased compared to previous years. The monthly average number of domestic violence cases registered by the police increased in the first four months of 2020, compared to the previous two years. The monthly average number of police calls also increased from 986 in 2019 to 1100 in 2020. In terms of hotline support in cases of domestic violence, it bears mentioning that the number of calls to the trust line for women and girls increased meaningfully in April when the measures of social distancing and lockdown became stricter. During January-April 2020, 4213 cases of domestic violence were registered (reviewed petitions), thus significantly exceeding the value for the same period of previous years. At the same time, in the first 4 months of 2020, around 1500 restriction orders were issued, with over 1000 more

compared to 2019. Regarding the hotline calls in cases of domestic violence, it is important to note that the number of calls to the hotline for women and girls increased substantially in April, when social distance and home isolation measures intensified. An objective estimation of the incidence of domestic violence in the period of social isolation is quite difficult. Given that the majority of the population was isolated at home during the state of emergency, this reduced the chances of people subjected to domestic violence to seek assistance / help from the Police or the hotline, as they were in close proximity to the aggressor.

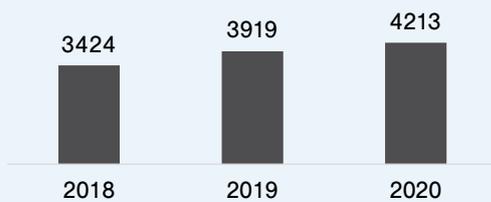
4. THE DATA ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, RECORDED BY POLICE, REFLECTS THE SITUATION FOR THE FIRST 4 MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

Figure 7

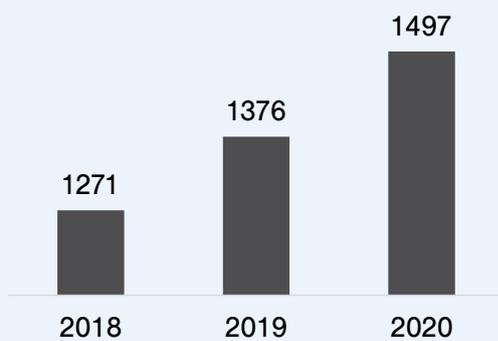
The effects of the lockdown on the mental health of the population



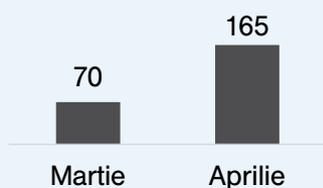
Total petitions examined in the first 4 months of the year



Total order of restrictions issued in the first 4 months



No. of calls to hotline, 2020



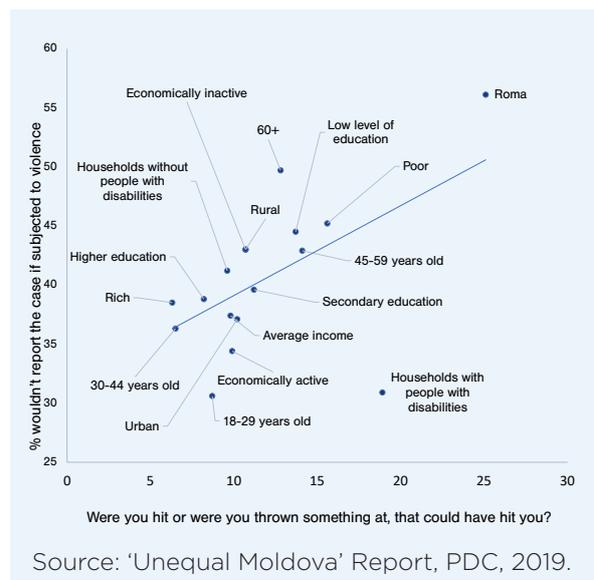
Source: COVID-19 in the Republic of Moldova – Tracker Surveys, CBS-Research, GPI, La Strada

The fears about physical security during lockdown are justified.

The institutional measures taken by the authorities to halt the pandemic created an enabling environment for abuses and domestic violence. Domestic violence has been a major problem for the Moldovan society even before it was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 9). The share of women subject to the most frequent forms of gender-based violence is greater in the pre-retirement age group. The number of domestic violence cases is twice greater among women in households with people with disabilities and among Roma women. Women’s concerns and fears associated with the higher risk of domestic violence during the lockdown, alongside economic and health issues, are justified.

Figure 8

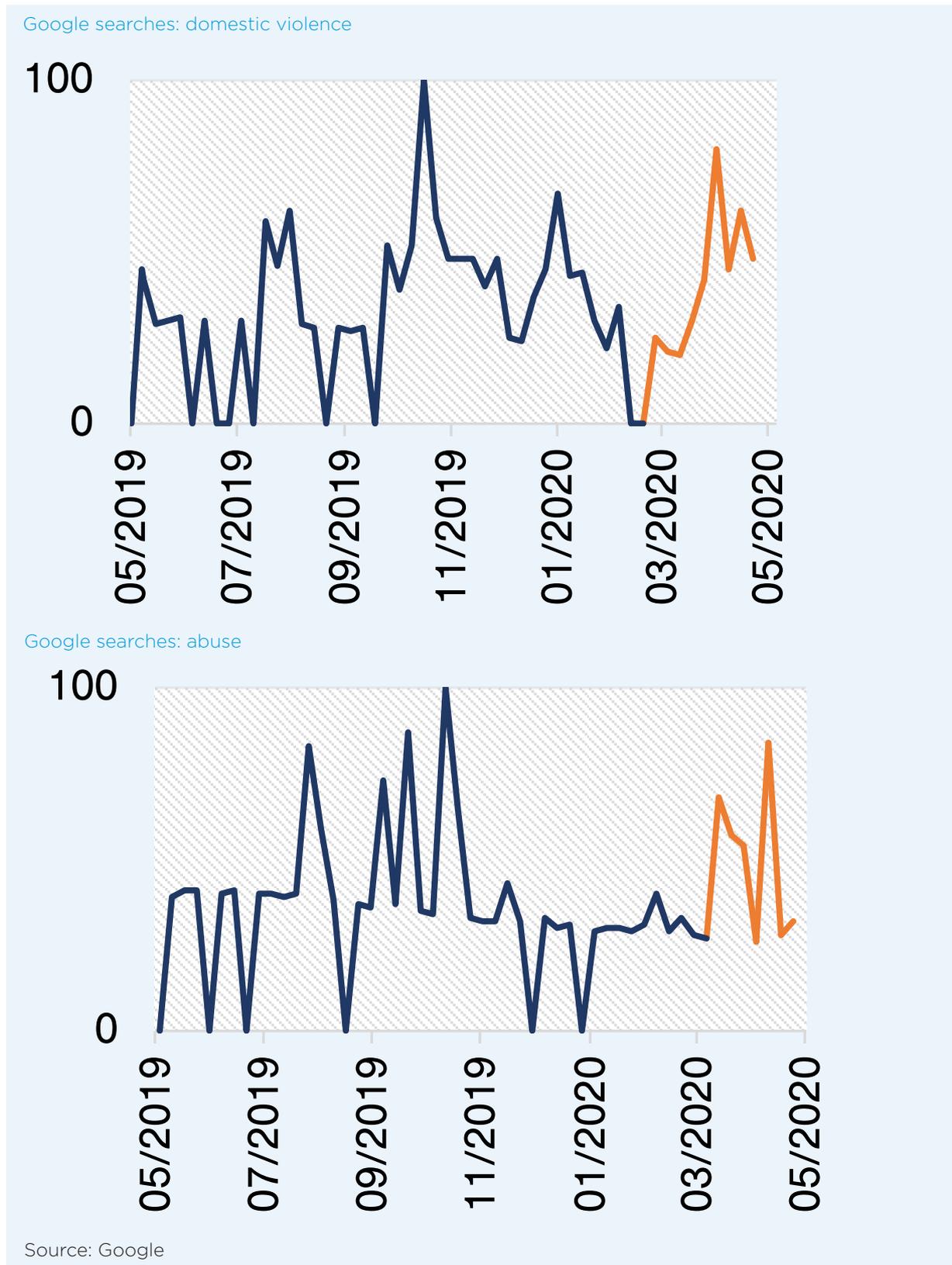
Gender-based violence among women from vulnerable groups



The concerns of the population about the surge in violence cases during the pandemic were also confirmed through the fact that there’s increased interest about it on the internet. From March to May 2020, when the state of emergency was declared and quarantine and lockdown measures were taken, the number of Google searches about violence and abuse, especially about domestic violence, increased in comparison with the first months of the previous year. This allows us to indirectly deduce there was an increase in the number of domestic violence cases, which determined the need to look for information on this matter.

Figure 9

Google trends and search interests during the COVID-19 pandemic, Republic of Moldova



(INVISIBLE) CARE CRISIS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Assessment of the pandemic crisis impact on the gender roles in care and women empowerment

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic determined a number of changes and impacts on the population, internalized differently by women and men. Following the outbreak of the new virus and introduction of restrictive measures by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova, we noticed that the situation impacts differently men and women, both economically and socially. This is also determined by the different roles women and men play in the society and family.

This analysis aims to identify the impact of the pandemic outbreak on women and men, highlighting their short- and long-term special needs, and also their response to the new challenges and changes in social and economic sectors.

The analysis particularly reveals the impact of the pandemic crisis on the employment of women and men, the possibility to earn an income during this period and the level of workload implementation. In this context, the research highlighted that the pandemic crisis had a negative impact on people directly involved in providing care and on those working in the economic sectors that do not allow or only partially allow the teleworking.

In the Republic of Moldova there is a trend of worsening the epidemiological situation regarding COVID-19 cases, women being more affected than men. Currently, 12732 cases of infection with the new Coronavirus have been confirmed in the Country, [1] and the number of people who are facing this virus daily is sharply rising (for example, from 109 cases reported on June 1st this year to 478 cases reported on June 17th). According to national statistics, the

number of women infected with the new type of coronavirus is higher than the number of men (58.47% women versus 41.53% men) [2]. The huge gap between women and men would be due to the large number of front-line medical staff, who are mostly women. As the pandemic impact is becoming more and more felt, deepening the already existing inequalities, in case of maintaining or aggravating the current situations in Moldova, it is not to disregard that men, and especially women, will be exposed to a more drastic social and economic vulnerability on short and medium periods.

The research was organized by the Centre 'Partnership for Development' (CPD), in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and funded by Sweden.

The data were collected by the Centre for Sociological Investigations and Marketing „CBS-AXA”, and in this regard, the opinion poll covered a sample of 1003 persons aged 18+. The sample was stratified, probabilistic and representative for the adult population of the country, except for the inhabitants from the region on the left bank of the Nistru river. Maximum error of +3.1%. The data were collected through a telephone survey during 13-26 April 2020, and the questionnaire was drawn up in Romanian and Russian languages, respondents being provided with the opportunity to choose the language. In addition, official data provided by the national statistics for the relevant period were included in the analysis. At the same time, data from COVID-19 tracker-surveys in the Republic of Moldova were used. The tracker surveys

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[1. 1] COVID-19 IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA – TRACKER SURVEYS, [HTTPS://Eef.Md/INDEX.PHP?PAG=NEWS&ID=929&RID=1503&L=RO](https://eef.md/index.php?pag=news&id=929&rid=1503&l=ro)

[1] FIGURES SPECIFIC FOR THE DAY OF 18 JUNE 2020, [HTTPS://MSMPS.GOV.MD/RO/CONTENT/SITUATIA-EPIDEMIOLOGICA-PRIVIND-INFECTIA-COVID-19-18-IUNIE](https://msmps.gov.md/ro/content/situatia-epidemiologica-privind-infectia-covid-19-18-iunie)

[2] [HTTP://GISMOLDOVA.MAPS.ARCGIS.COM/APPS/OPSDASHBOARD/INDEX.HTML#/D274DA857ED345EFA66E1FBC959B021B](http://gismoldova.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/d274da857ed345efa66e1fbc959b021b)

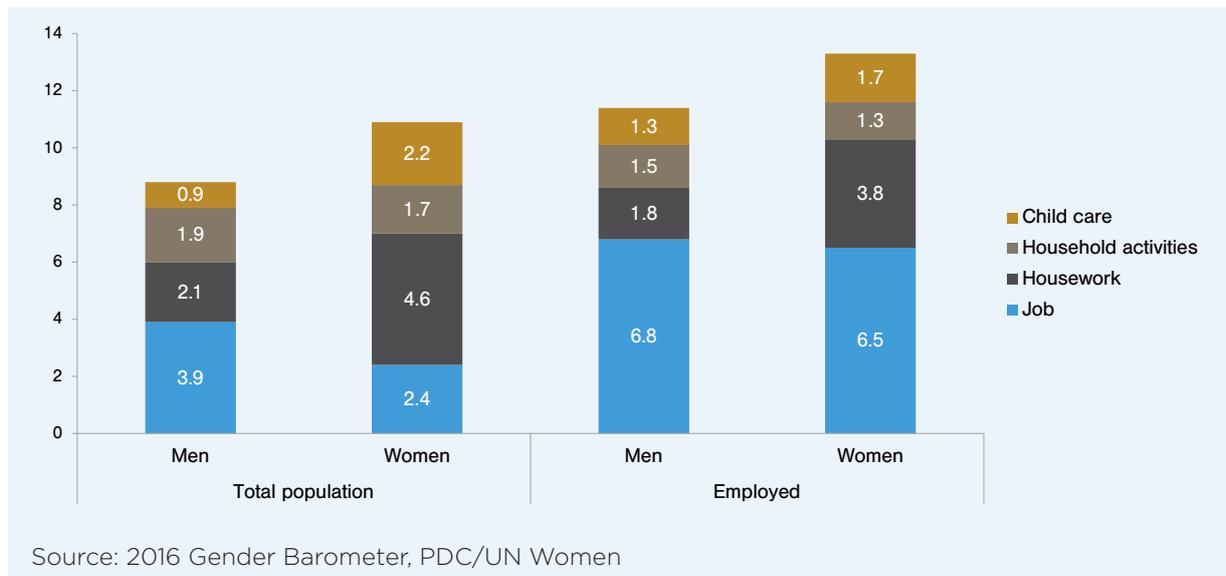
FINDINGS

Unfair division of tasks makes women dedicate twice as much time to family care work. An analysis of the time, broken down by types of activities, reveals significant discrepancies between the time used for house chores and child care. Household responsibilities account for the biggest part of a day of a woman – 4.6 hours

among the general population and 3.8 hours among employed women. While men mostly use the biggest part of their time for work – 3.9 hours in the total men population. At the same time, the duration of the day used for main activities is about 2 hours longer for women compared to men.

Figure 1

Average number of hours per day used by women and men for main activities



Unfair division of care roles is mainly determined by overall perceptions about traditional gender roles in the society. They are reflected among both men and women – around 60% of them believe that family responsibilities are mostly their obligation. Consequently, there are two main challenges: on one hand, a constraint and moral pressure from the society, while on the other hand – women are willingly taking on the traditionally ‘prescribed’ roles. Stereotyped opinions are more emphasised among the age group 30-44 years: 76% of them believe it’s a man’s duty to

support his family, while 67% believe that women should deal most of all with taking care of family and home. It is worth mentioning that the perceptions of care roles are much more emphasised compared to the ones related to participation (or non-participation) of women in decision-making and in political processes. In other words, the most members of the Moldovan society do not believe that women are less capable to get involved in politics, but believe that their involvement should not be at the expense of their family and other care roles.

Figure 2

Average number of hours per day used by women and men for main activities

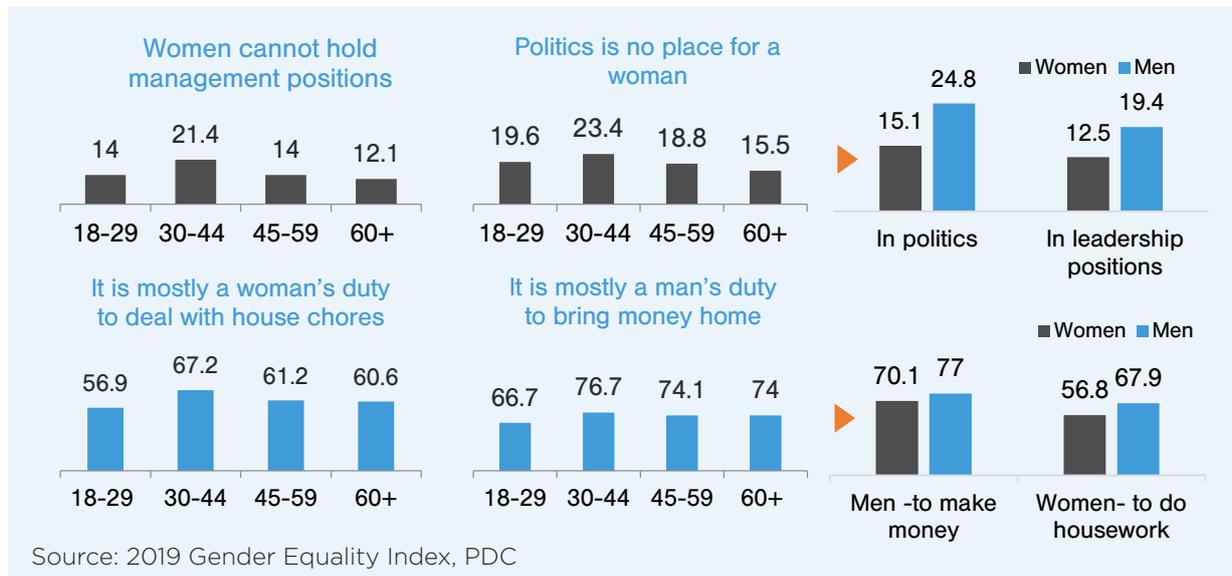
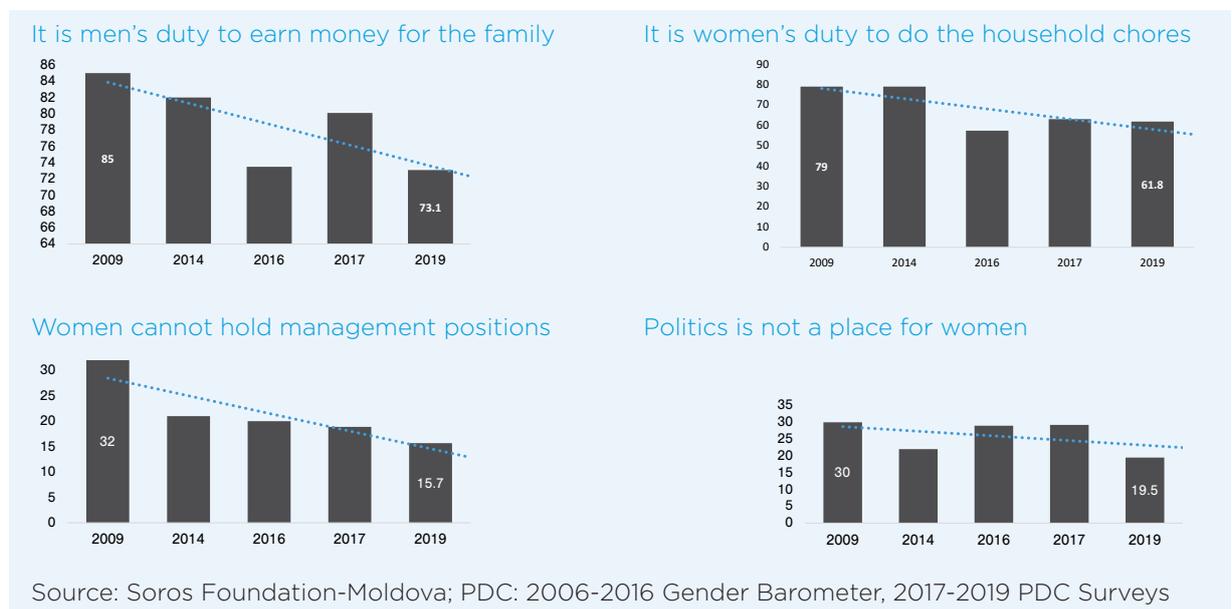


Figure 3

Dynamics of population perceptions about gender roles



Over the last decade, the perceptions of traditional roles of women and men have slightly improved. Nevertheless, gender inequality in terms of perceived and taken roles both in public and private life have the same intensity. Even though the overall situation has improved, there is a major difference in the speed and force of perception improvement. Thus, when it

comes to women participation in public life (politics, management) the speed with which perceptions changed is twice faster than of the ones related to family responsibilities. This confirms once more the extent and depth of the inequalities.

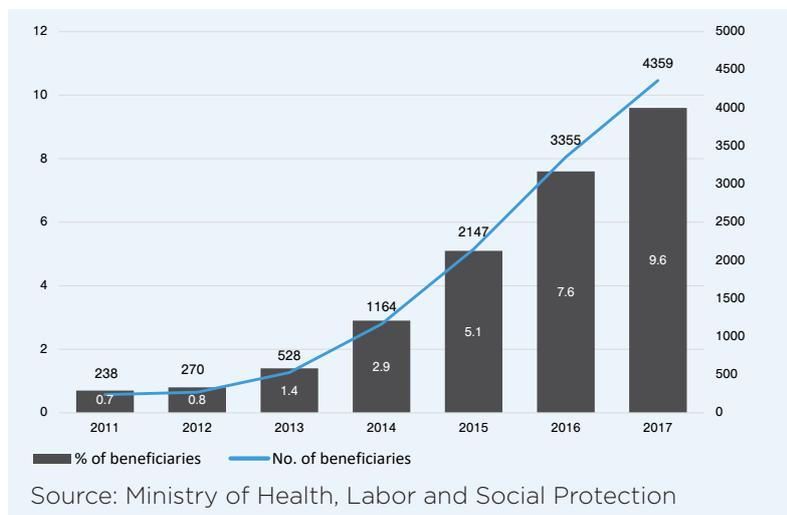
3. 2019 GENDER EQUALITY INDEX, PDC [HTTP://PROGEN.MD/_LES/1421_INDEXUL_EGALITATII_DE_GEN_2019_NAL.PDF](http://progen.md/_LES/1421_INDEXUL_EGALITATII_DE_GEN_2019_NAL.PDF)

While gender role stereotypes related to care work have toned down over the last decade, the current policy response is inefficient. Women continue to struggle with reaching the work-life balance. According to official data, mothers are the absolute beneficiaries of the parental leave to take care of the child until the age of three. In 2017, fathers accounted for less than 10% of the child care allowance beneficiaries. Even though their number has increased lately, the share of men who take on the role of caring for children is

still very low compared to female beneficiaries, which highlights that the existing model of parental leave does not encourage gender equality between parents and more participation of fathers in child education and care. At the same time, Moldova has a low level of access of population to early childhood education services (nurseries). The shortage of such services limits the participation of women in social-economic life and, at the same time, aggravates the gender inequalities in care.

Figure 4

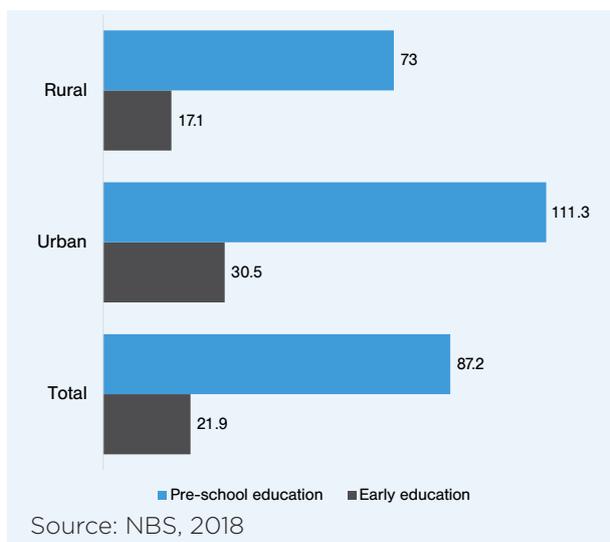
Share of fathers benefiting of parental leave



Family responsibilities are an important barrier obstructing the active participation of women in social life. They limit the access of women to education (formal or not) – valid for more than 50% of women who did not follow a professional education – or led to the interruption of education. Unequal distribution of family responsibilities keeps women away from social and political life and hampers their professional life, despite the access to various services (child education, care and health services for adults, etc.)

Figure 5

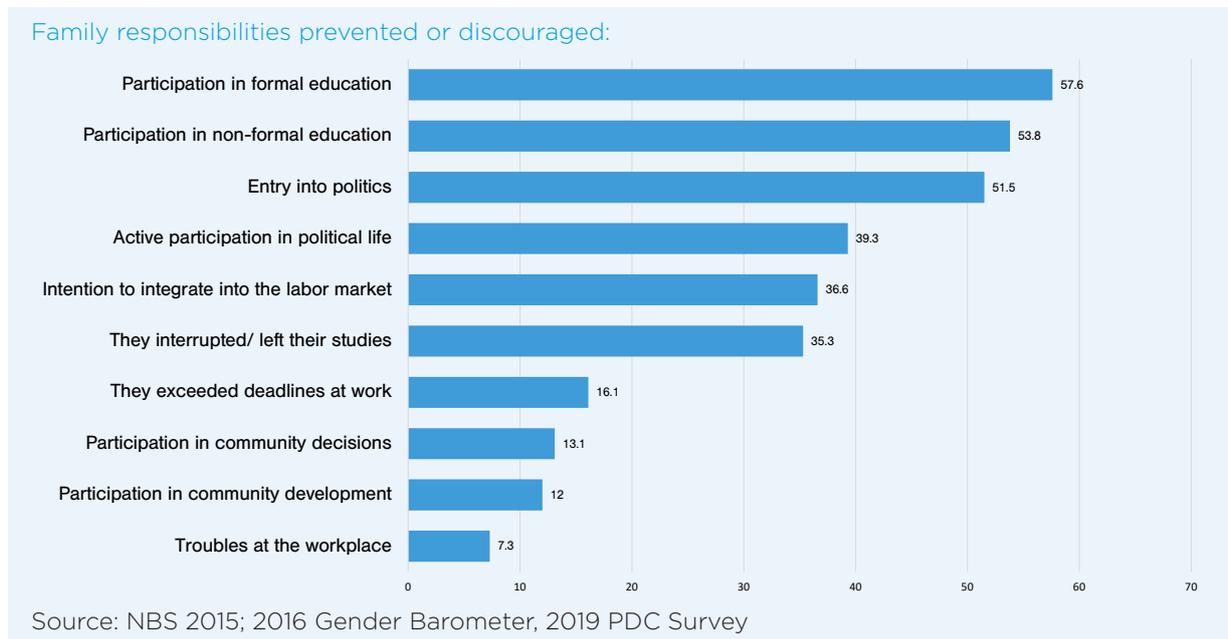
Preschool and ante-preschool (nursery) education coverage rate



As the COVID-19 epidemic spread and institutional measures were taken to stop it, most of the services were stopped (in the field of education, care, entertainment, etc.) In the absence of institutional support and public services, the burden of care activities moved automatically onto the household members, particularly on women, thus starting a real care-related crisis and pressure.

Figure 6

Share of women, whose participation/involvement was obstructed by family responsibilities



The COVID-19 pandemic revealed and, at the same time, worsened the inequalities related to sharing the care responsibilities. The rapid spreading of the pandemic and the applied institutional measures, aimed at social isolation, put in the spotlight one of the weakest links: the care. As a result of the implemented measures, a significant share of population had to face household and family chores, thus raising a big challenge – the way these responsibilities are shared in a household. Women are most of all involved in unpaid work and the burden of care tasks has increased substantially during the social isolation.

The closure of educational institutions overloaded the parents, especially women. This measure revealed that the working days, especially of parents that are working remotely, are not so compatible with taking care of children and dependent adults. If we include as well the supervision of children's remote school work, then the amount of home care work grows exponentially. Data show that during the COVID-19 crisis over 50% of women dedicated several hours to do lessons with children.

Figure 7

Share of people stating that the number of hours dedicated to training/lessons with children has increased

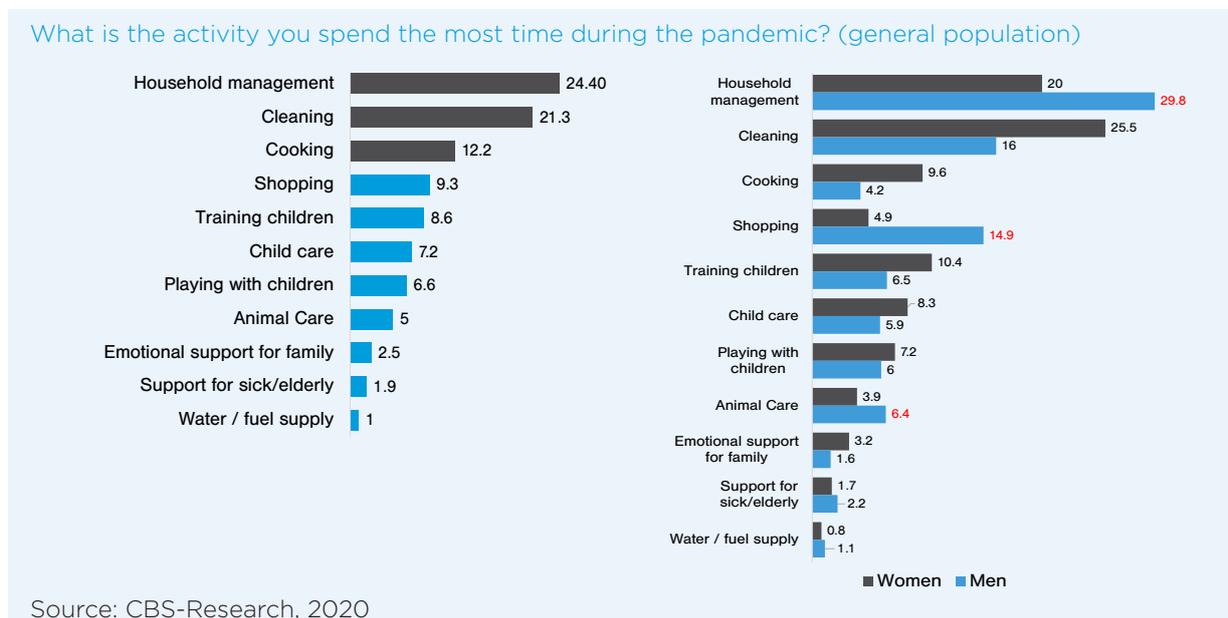


During the social isolation, women took on the most demanding work in the household. They are much more involved in cleaning, taking care of family and children, cooking, etc. – these are activities that need a significant amount of effort and time. On the other hand, men spend more time for lighter, household management activities – paying invoices, providing the household with what is needed, taking care of pets/domestic animals, etc. This shows a clear division of tasks and responsibilities of women and men in households. The need for care has increased

substantially during the social isolation time, while the distribution of roles and tasks in a family is still unfair. At the same time, the burden of domestic care is felt in the case of single-parent families, where care work is undertaken by a single member. In the case of both genders, there are no regional differences, with one exception: men from rural areas participate more in cleaning work than the ones from urban areas (21.7% compared to 10%), and less in cooking (4.6% compared to 14.9%).

Figure 8

Activities for which the population spent most of the time during the COVID-19 pandemic, %

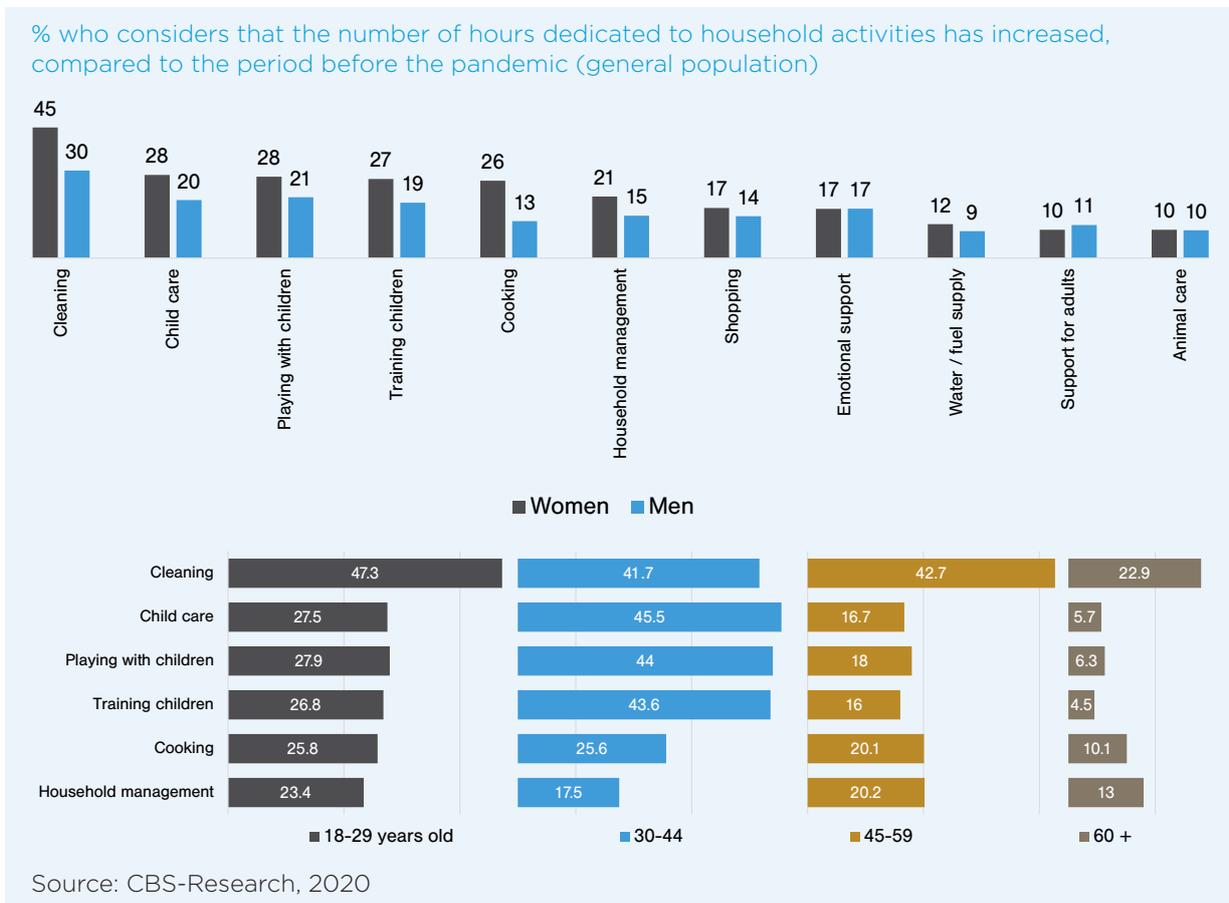


The burden of care activities becomes heavier on women. Although the number of hours used for house chores has increased for the entire population during the pandemic, this becomes more obvious for women: the time used for cleaning has increased for around half of the women, compared to around 30% of the men. The gender differences are more significant when

it comes to work that needs a bigger effort, such as taking care and educating children, household chores (cleaning, cooking, etc.). The overloading with care activities is more visible in case of people in the age interval 18-44 years and this is the population group that (under normal circumstances) is employed or has underage children.

Figure 9

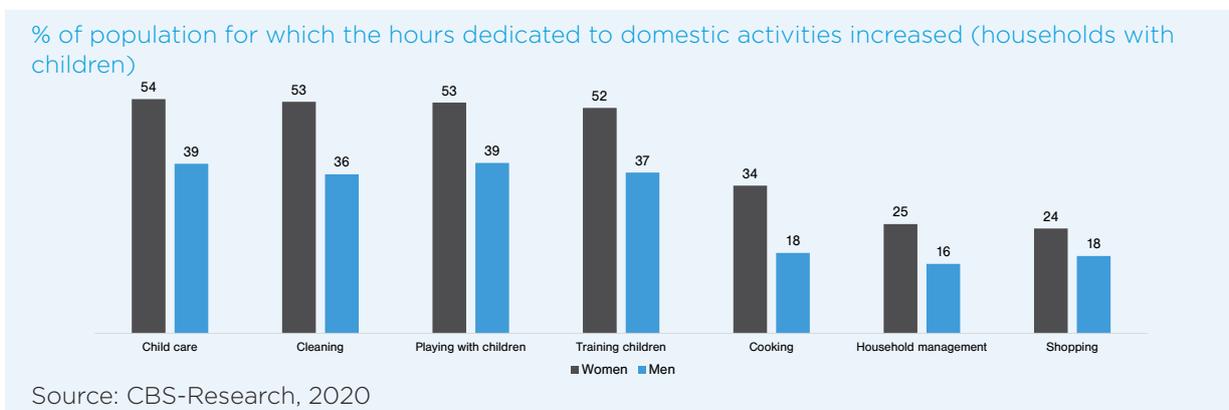
Share of population believing that the number of hours used for household work has increased



Inequalities related to care are stronger in households with children. Although the number of hours dedicated to taking care of family and children has increased among men too, women spend much more time for this purpose.

Figure 10

% of population believing that the number of hours used for household work has increased, by presence of children

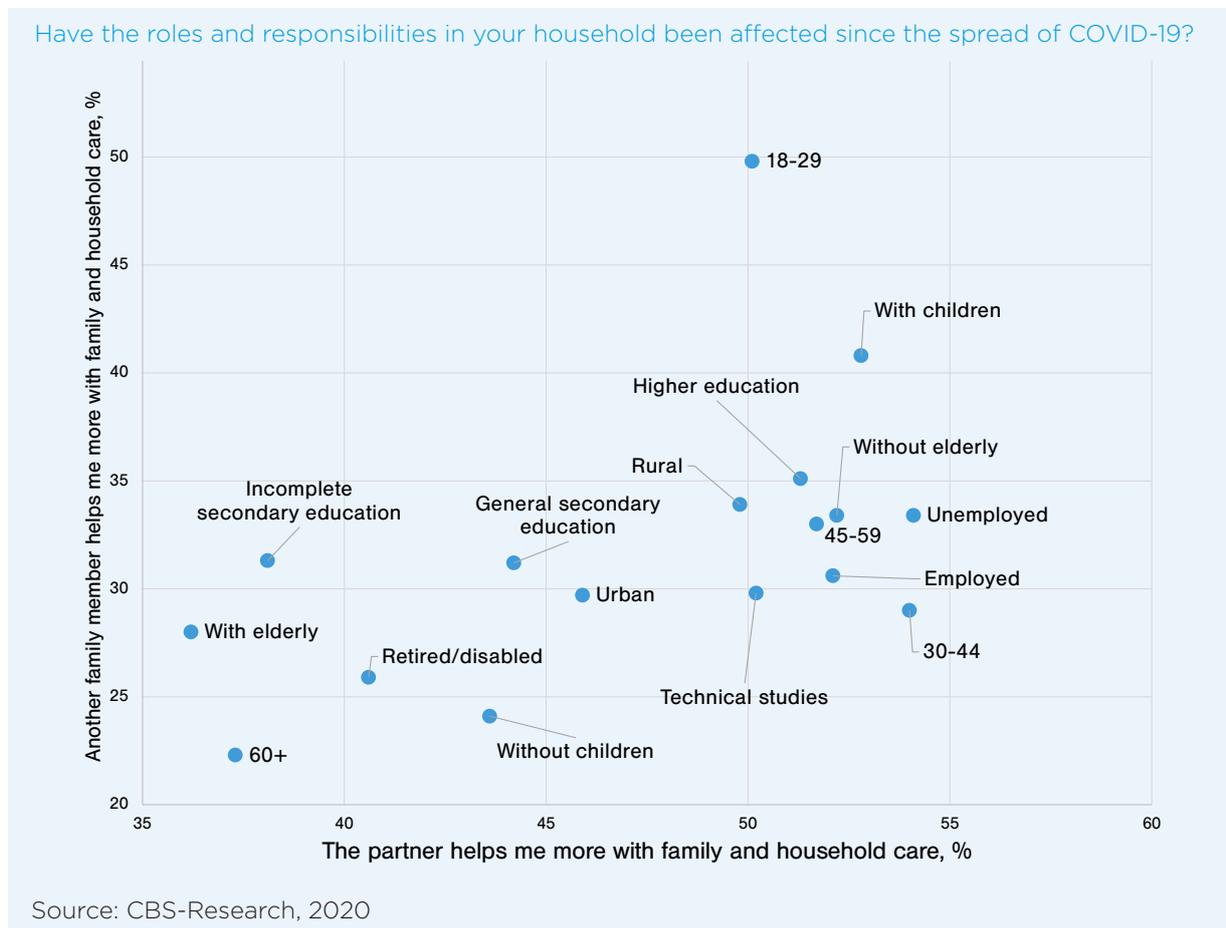


During the pandemic some women benefited of bigger support from the family, while others were left alone with household responsibilities and concerns. About half of the women stated that, during the pandemic, their partner had more involvement in household chores and family care, while 1 in 3 women was helped by another family member. In this respect, the most favored are young women (aged between 18 and 44 years) that take care of children. This means that the pandemic crisis led to a slight decrease of care inequality in the young population group. In contrast, marginalization and exclusion happened to

elderly women (60+) in households, where gender role stereotypes are strongest. The vulnerability of these women doubles in time of isolation, as the access to specialized care and health services meant for this age group is limited. At the same time, it should be noted that other 50% of women did not benefit of a lot of help from their partner, despite the fact that the care needs of the family and household increased substantially and that the number of hours used for these activities increased by more than 30% compared to the period before the pandemic.

Figure 11

Mapping of the groups of women that benefited of more help from their family during the pandemic

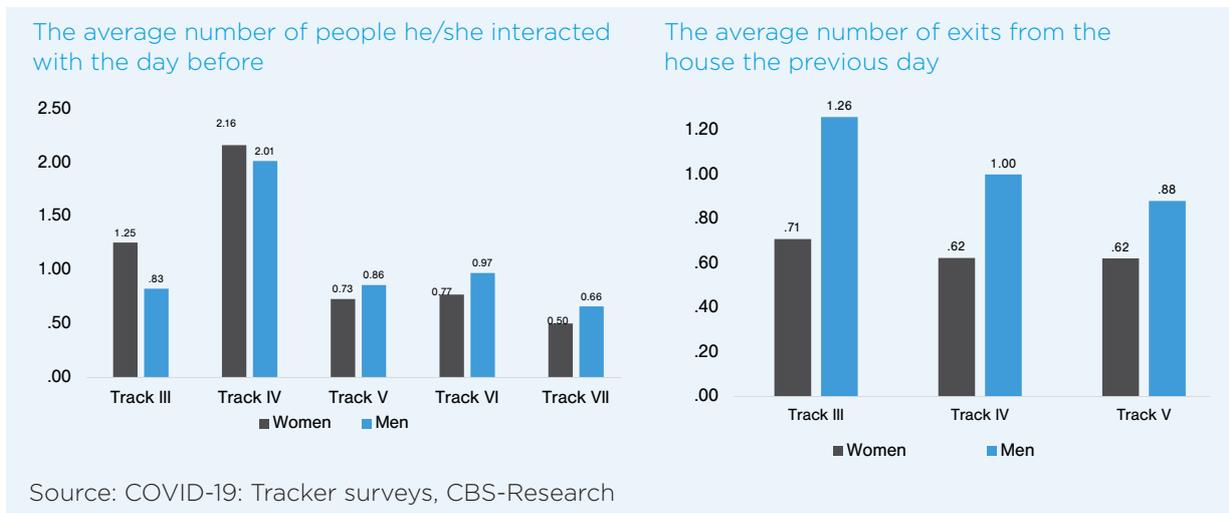


Care responsibilities have isolated and will isolate even more the women in the time of pandemic. So, besides the overall crisis related to care responsibilities, household members face psychological challenges and anxiety in connection with the need to obey the lockdown regime. Data of tracker-surveys regarding

COVID-19 pandemic in Moldova highlight that men have been going out of their house more often and interacted with more people outside their family or household, while women spent more time in isolation at home.

Figure 12

Level of population interaction with the environment outside their home (Track = mini survey tracker)



COVID-19 pandemic lead to a care crisis, which determined the following:

- **Worsened inequalities related to sharing the care responsibilities.** Women are most of all involved in unpaid work and their burden of care tasks has increased exponentially during the social isolation.
- **Women will keep being involved in the household work that requires most effort and time,** such as taking care of children and dependent adults, cleaning, cooking, etc. At the same time, men continue to be involved in lighter activities. The gender differences are more significant when it comes to work that needs a bigger effort.
- **The care crisis affected households with children,** where care and support needs are bigger. Their amount increased substantially as a result of the transition to distance learning and women are involved to a larger extent in doing lessons with their children.
- **Elderly women are stuck in circumstances of marginalisation and exclusion.** During the pandemic these women benefited of least support from their partner or another family member. The vulnerability of these women doubled in time of isolation, as the access to specialised care and health services meant for this age group is limited.
- **Care responsibilities will isolate women even more.** The care crisis has been and still is accompanied by psychological challenges that stem from the lockdown measures that were imposed. Unlike men, women spend more time in isolation at home.

UNEQUAL TRANSITION TO WORK DURING THE PANDEMIC

A Gender Analysis of the Pandemic Crisis Impact on Employment Opportunities for Moldovan Women and Men

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic determined a number of changes and impacts on the population, internalized differently by women and men. Following the outbreak of the new virus and introduction of restrictive measures by the authorities of the Republic of Moldova, we noticed that the situation impacts differently men and women, both economically and socially. This is also determined by the different roles women and men play in the society and family.

This analysis aims to identify the impact of the pandemic outbreak on women and men, highlighting their short- and long-term special needs, and also their response to the new challenges and changes in social and economic sectors.

The analysis particularly reveals the impact of the pandemic crisis on the employment of women and men, the possibility to earn an income during this period and the level of workload implementation. In this context, the research highlighted that the pandemic crisis had a negative impact on people directly involved in providing care and on those working in the economic sectors that do not allow or only partially allow the teleworking.

In the Republic of Moldova there is a trend of worsening the epidemiological situation regarding COVID-19 cases, women being more affected than men. Currently, 12732 cases of infection with the new Coronavirus have been confirmed in the Country, [1] and the number of people who are facing this virus daily is sharply rising (for example, from 109 cases reported on June 1st this year to 478 cases reported on June 17th). According to national statistics, the

number of women infected with the new type of coronavirus is higher than the number of men (58.47% women versus 41.53% men) [2]. The huge gap between women and men would be due to the large number of front-line medical staff, who are mostly women. As the pandemic impact is becoming more and more felt, deepening the already existing inequalities, in case of maintaining or aggravating the current situations in Moldova, it is not to disregard that men, and especially women, will be exposed to a more drastic social and economic vulnerability on short and medium periods.

The research was organized by the Centre 'Partnership for Development' (CPD), in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and funded by Sweden.

The data were collected by the Centre for Sociological Investigations and Marketing „CBS-AXA”, and in this regard, the opinion poll covered a sample of 1003 persons aged 18+. The sample was stratified, probabilistic and representative for the adult population of the country, except for the inhabitants from the region on the left bank of the Nistru river. Maximum error of +3.1%. The data were collected through a telephone survey during 13-26 April 2020, and the questionnaire was drawn up in Romanian and Russian languages, respondents being provided with the opportunity to choose the language. In addition, official data provided by the national statistics for the relevant period were included in the analysis.

At the same time, data from COVID-19 tracker-surveys in the Republic of Moldova were used. The tracker surveys were conducted by the Centre for Social Studies and Marketing 'CBC-Research', with the conceptual and expertise support provided by the Centre for Health Policies and Analyses [1]. The surveys were conducted between 4 April and 10 May 2020 during XIV waves. The surveys are representative for the population of the Republic of Moldova aged 18+.

[1.1] COVID-19 IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA – TRACKER SURVEYS, [HTTPS://EEF.MD/INDEX.PHP?PAG=NEWS&ID=929&RID=1503&L=RO](https://eef.md/index.php?pag=news&id=929&rid=1503&l=ro)

[1] FIGURES SPECIFIC FOR THE DAY OF 18 JUNE 2020, [HTTPS://MSMPS.GOV.MD/RO/CONTENT/SITUATIA-EPIDEMIOLOGICA-PRIVIND-INFECTIA-COVID-19-18-IUNIE](https://msmps.gov.md/ro/content/situatia-epidemiologica-privind-infectia-covid-19-18-iunie)

[2] [HTTP://GISMOLDOVA.MAPS.ARCGIS.COM/APPS/OPSDASHBOARD/INDEX.HTML#/D274DA857ED345EFA66E1FBC959B021B](http://gismoldova.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/d274da857ed345efa66e1fbc959b021b)

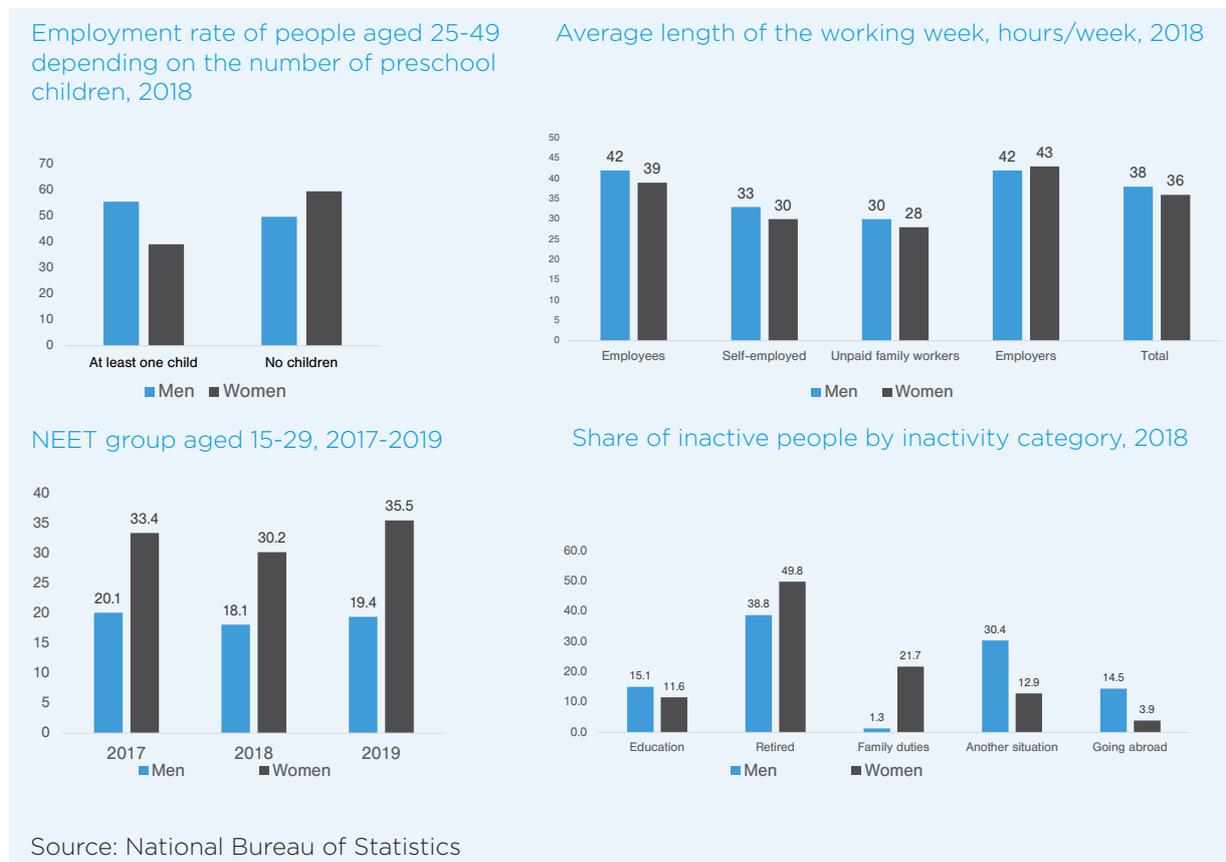
FINDINGS

Due to their care duties, many Moldovan women become inactive on the labour market. The inability to effectively combine family and work life causes more women to back down from the labour market. Thus, note that the employment rate of women is highly determined by the presence of preschool children in the household. Around 22% of women are inactive on the labour market due to their care duties, as

compared to only 1% of men. The inactivity on the labour market characterises both NEET women aged 15-29, and women aged 55+ (see the Figure below). According to NBS estimates, the employed women tend to work less (except for women in management positions).

Figure 1

Mapping of the groups of women that benefited of more help from their family during the pandemic



The pandemic crisis caused by COVID-19 will expose and worsen this inequality. Since the educational institutions are closed, women are even more forced to further back down from the labour market. Although the available data related to the gender analysis of the effects caused by the crisis have shown that this situation has already manifested itself, the probability of its worsening is quite high. This will happen either by becoming more inactive, working fewer hours or working remotely. As the care duties will increase during the pandemic, gender inequalities on the labour market will further exacerbate: fewer opportunities to combine work and family life, women discrimination upon employment on grounds of maternity, segregation of women and men by industry, widening of gender pay gaps, decrease in the opportunities to promote women. The return to work will be announced before schools and kindergartens will be opened. Once the state of

emergency is over, a number of employees will have to return to their workplace. This will depend on both employer and employee desire. The workplaces will open in a decentralized manner, considering the specific context of the industry and of the employer. Because of this, there is a greater consensus in society to open the workplaces (see the Figure below). The schools and kindergartens will open in a centralized manner, and only after a number of preconditions regarding the control and management of risks related to the epidemiological situation will be clarified. A consensus in society to open the schools and kindergartens will definitely be much more difficult to negotiate. In these circumstances, the industries will open despite the fact that educational institutions are still closed, thus putting a significant pressure on working parents, especially on mothers' employment opportunities.

Figure 2

General opinion on the opportunity to open certain sectors of the society

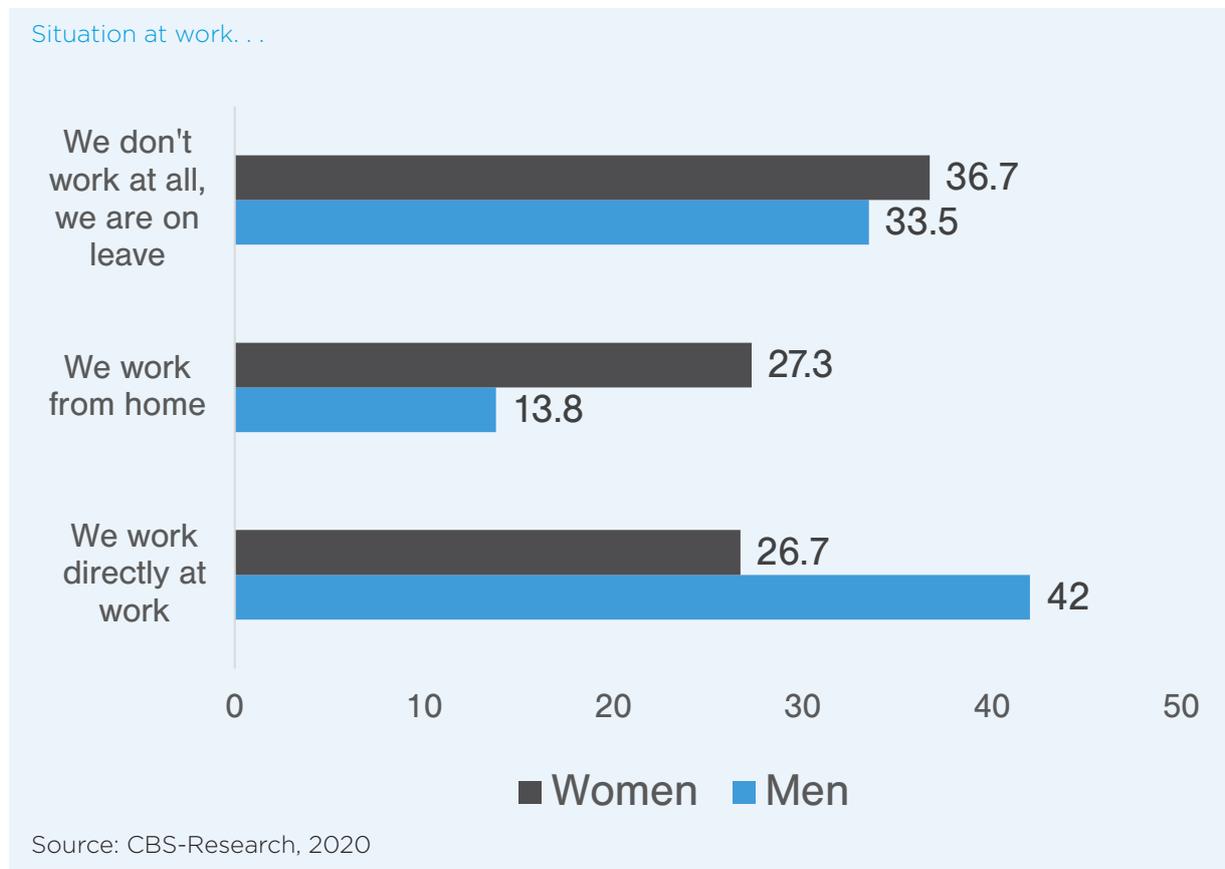


Since the emergency period, women have already begun to back down from the labour market. A first way of backing down relates to the remote work, with 27% of women working remotely during the emergency period. If the work from home is not normalised in society among employers and employees and continues to be a form of work more specific to women, then we risk having a new form of gender

segregation of work. In the future, the work of women doing their job from home is likely to be considered lower-value work, which will have a negative impact on their remuneration, promotion opportunities and professional development opportunities.

Figure 3

At work situation of men and women during the emergency period

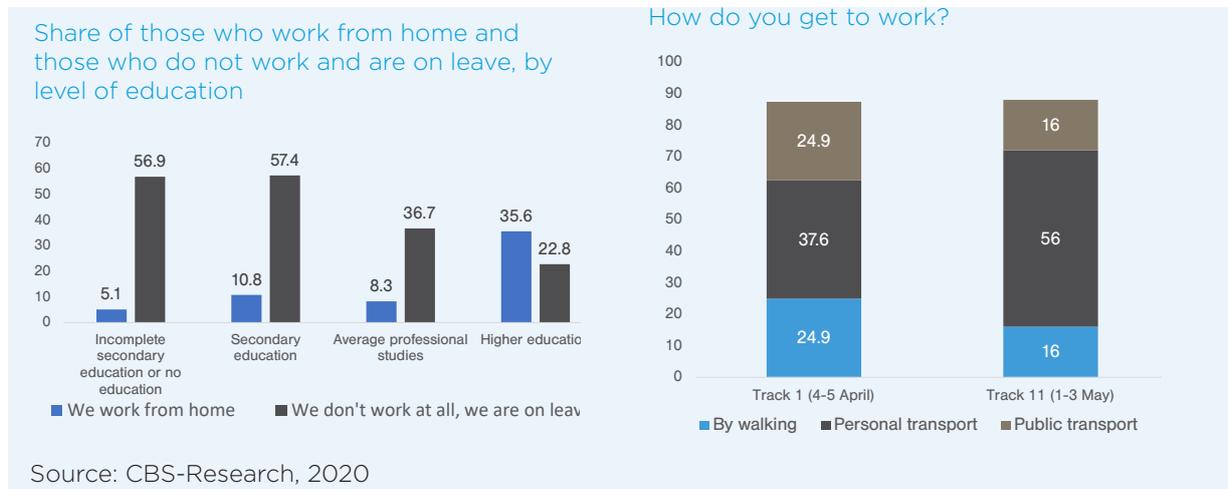


Women who have stopped working during the emergency period are less likely to return to work compared to men in the same situation. During the emergency period, a relatively equal share of men and women stopped working (33.5% men and 36.7% women). Their return to work will be conditioned on the risks related to infection, prevention and social distancing rules, and the economic situation specific to certain industries. Women's return to work is specifically conditioned on household ability to care for children/other family members given that schools and kindergartens will continue to be closed. Most likely, remote work will only be accessible to women with higher education, who are employed in industries where this type of work is possible. This will not be possible for women with lower education, who are employed in industries where work cannot be done remotely (and where the remuneration is much lower). Moreover, if the risk of infection continues to be quite significant, women will find it difficult to travel to work, as few of them have their own means

of transport, and in the most important cities of the country it is extremely hard for them to go on foot to their workplace. Thus, in addition to deepening gender inequalities, note that the pandemic crisis will also contribute to the marginalization of the most vulnerable women.

Figure 4

Level of education and at work situation

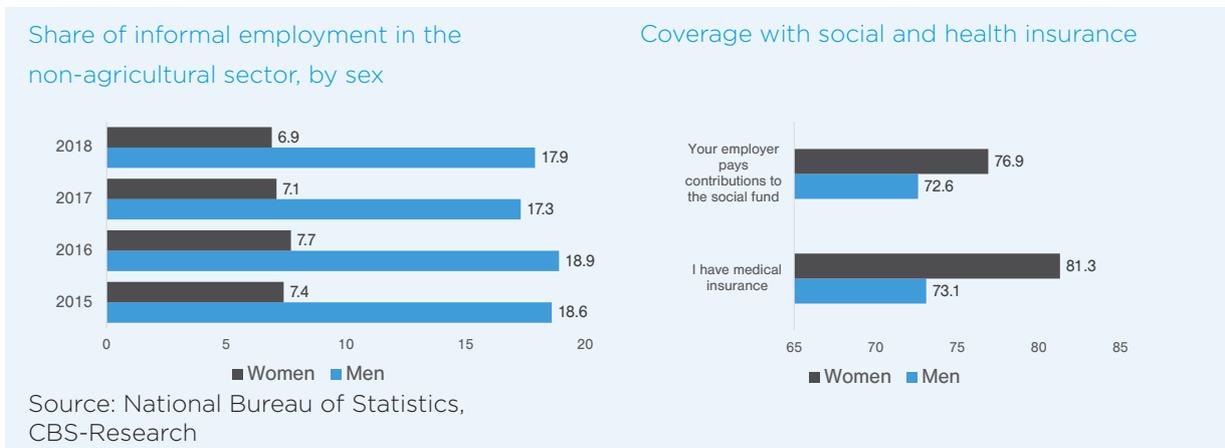


At the same time, some of the men who will lose their jobs during this period will not be able to fully benefit from the social and health insurance system. Given that the quality of men's employment is lower

than that of women, they risk not being able to fully benefit from the insurance system if they lose their job.

Figure 5

Indicator on the level of occupational insurance and protection for men and women.

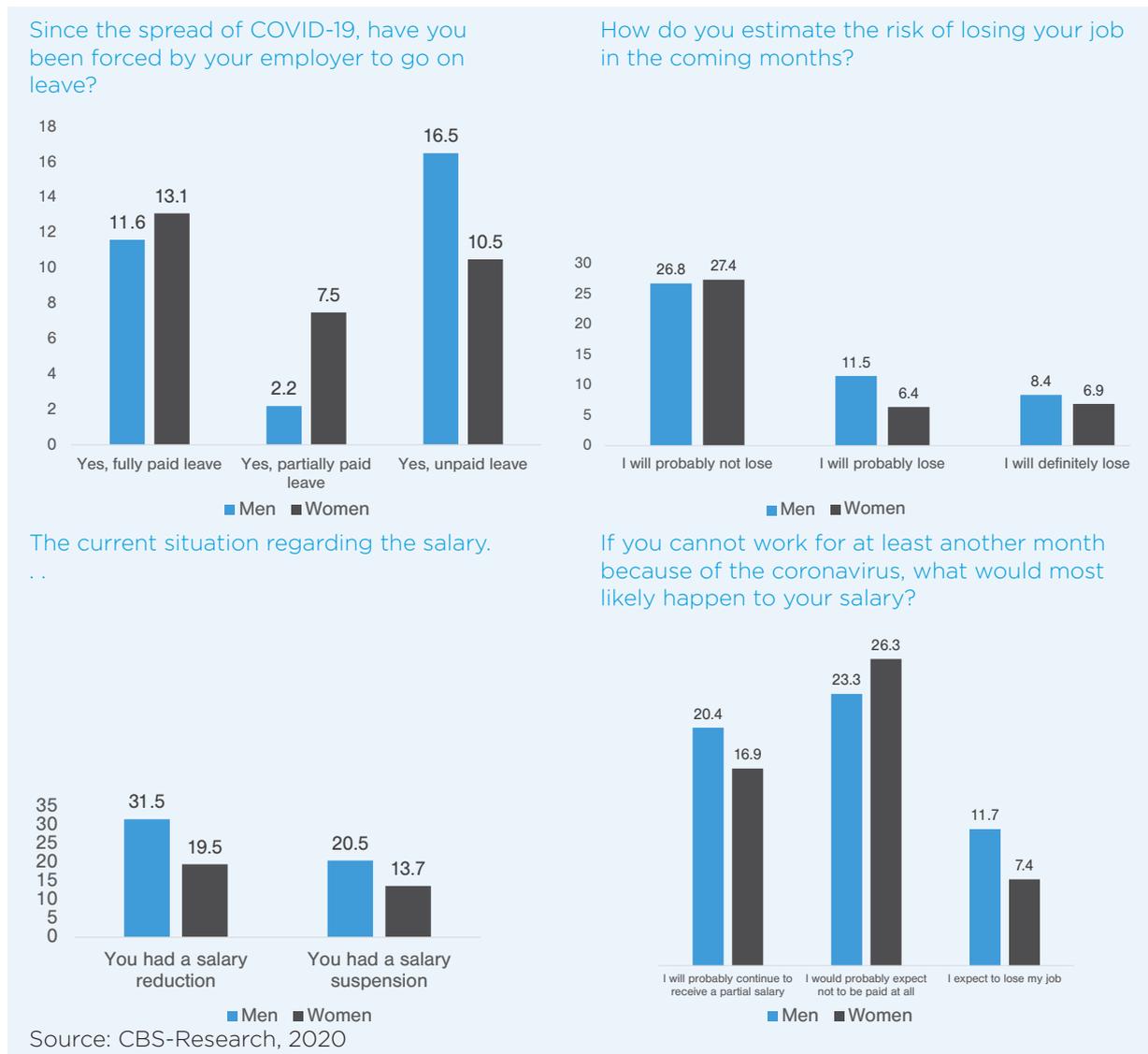


In addition, the labour rights of a number of men will be infringed during the pandemic. During the emergency period, a number of men reported their salaries were reduced or suspended. Concurrently, many of them anticipate a worsening of the work situation. This is explained by the gender inequality (where men are much more affected) related to the much higher level of informal work. We can assume that informal work will increase in general, and even more among men, this being a way in

which employees will respond to the unfavourable economic context. The inability of a number of men to resort to labour migration will be another factor that will contribute to the increase of informal work among men. For certain young men with low education, informal employment may not be possible either. The NEET share will increase for many young people in urban areas, and the share of those who are unpaid workers in their own household will increase in rural areas.

Figure 6

Impact of measures imposed by employers on men and women during the period

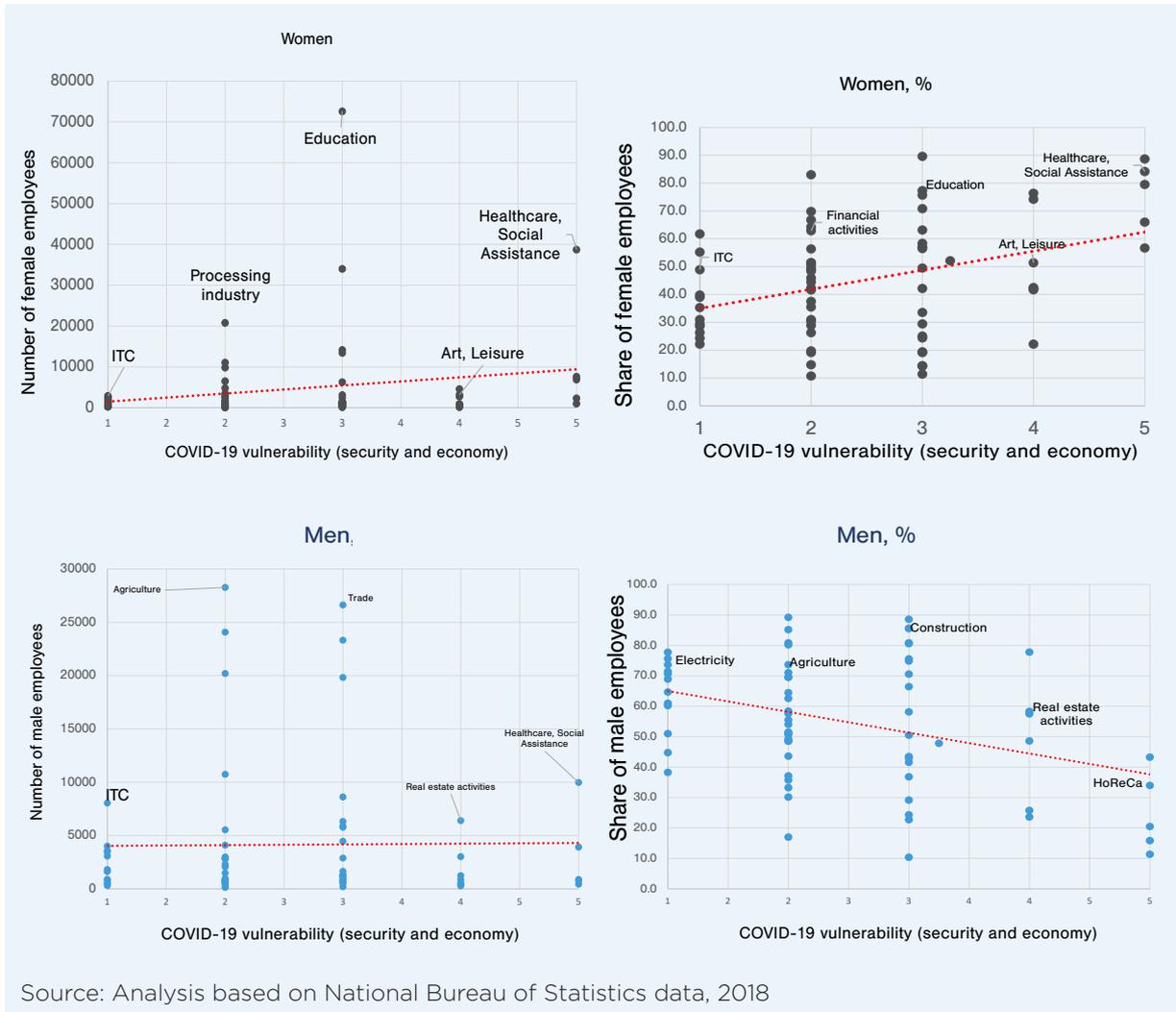


The industries overrepresented by women seem to be more vulnerable. The segregation of women and men by different industries will mean that the pandemic crisis will affect men and women in a different way and time. The service industry, which is overrepresented by female workers, will definitely be affected by the need to maintain rules of social distancing. To better understand these vulnerabilities, we tried to analyse all industries in terms of how they were or will be affected: risks of infection, restrictions imposed by the authorities, the ability to adjust to the rules of social distancing, the ability to work remotely, economic vulnerability, etc. The level

of vulnerability for each industry was assessed on a scale from 1 (relatively low or neutral impact) to 5 (significant impact). The figures below show this situation for the industries overrepresented by female or male workers. The preliminary analysis (based on 2018 data) indicates that both in relative terms and in absolute numbers, several industries overrepresented by female employees are more vulnerable. Hence, a more granular analysis, building on much more up-to-date data, is required, but certainly this aspect should be considered even in the circumstances where a number of industries will need and will benefit from specific support and interventions from authorities.

Figure 7

Level of vulnerability of industries overrepresented by female and male employees



Source: Analysis based on National Bureau of Statistics data, 2018

Due to the pandemic, a number of men returned to the country. The figure below shows that the gender gap in this context is 8.8 p. p. Similarly, note that the pandemic caused a number of young people to return home. Two factors explain this situation. First, some of the returned young people are those who went abroad for educational purposes, i. e. to continue their higher studies – bachelor’s, master’s, PhD, etc. Second, some of the young people who came back, mostly men, worked abroad on a short-term basis, mostly informally.

Figure 8

Share of those who returned to the country as a result of the pandemic, %

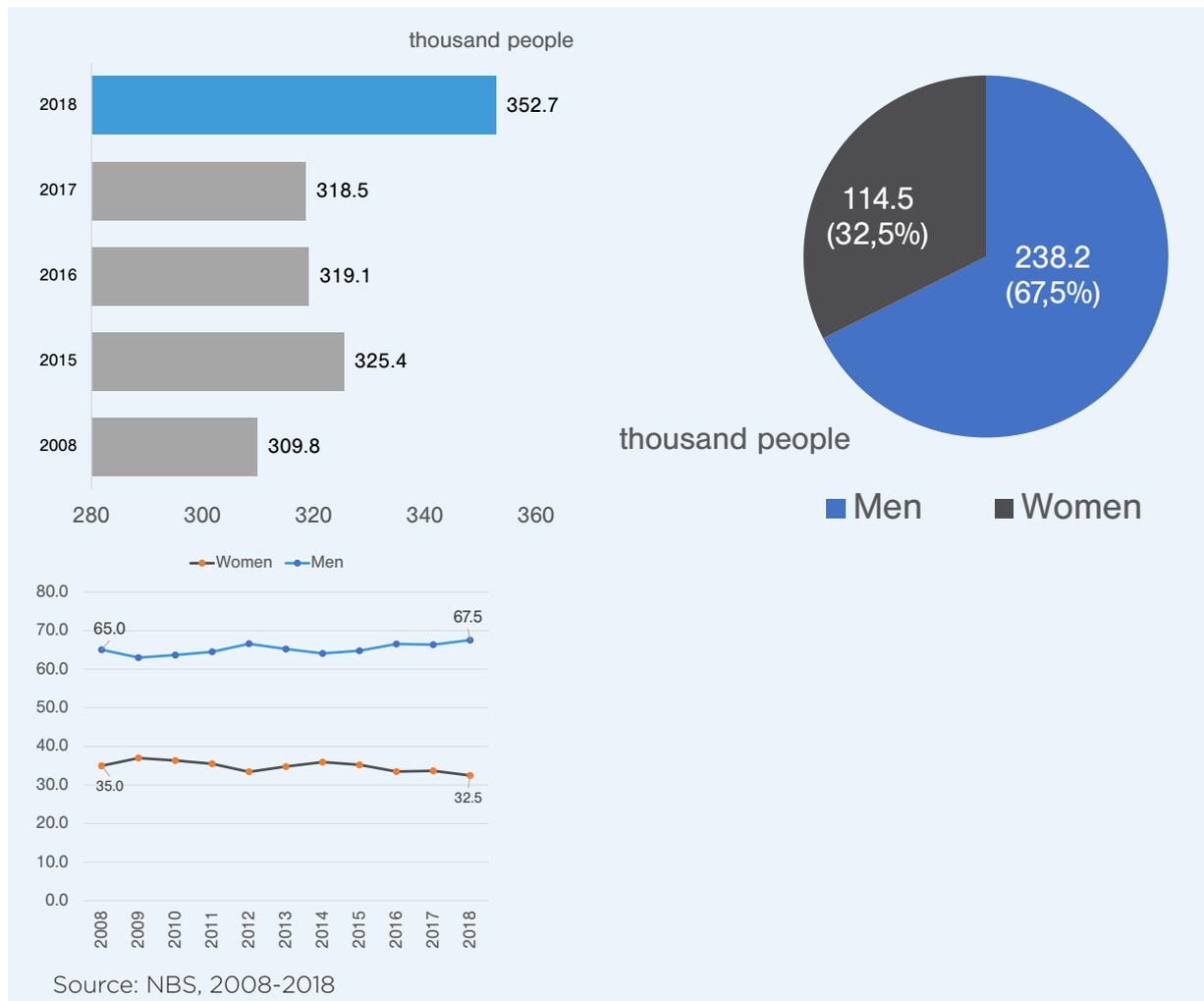


More men returned because more men are working abroad. According to the latest data provided by NBS, in 2018 – **352.7 thousand** Moldovan citizens went abroad, where women accounted for the third part of this number (i. e. 32.5%). At the same time, the gender gap increased over time – from 30 p. p. in 2008 to 35 p. p. in 2018 (being also the biggest gender gap recorded). The different condition of women and

men working abroad will most likely generate the following situation: in the short term, those who have been involved in seasonal and informal work will return, these being mostly men; the women who tend to do fewer seasonal works and who enjoy a greater formality will not return significantly; some young men with low education will not be able to migrate during the pandemic.

Figure 9

Gender dynamics of people aged 15+ who went abroad to work or to search for work, %



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Development of strategies to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, responsive to specific problems of women and men. As the pandemic crisis has affected women and men differently, in terms of employment, earning income, distribution of parenting roles, affecting as a result their well-being and safety, the policy responses too should have a specific character depending on the affected area and the vulnerable group at risk.

The inclusion of women, especially those from under-represented groups, in the decision and policy-making process related to the impact of COVID-19. Starting from the fact that in general, Moldovan women are less represented in the decision-making process, in the context in which research shows that in the medium and long term, from a social and economic perspective, women are going to be more vulnerable to this crisis, the local and national decision-making process should be an inclusive one and to take into account the specific needs of women, especially those in the under-represented categories (such as young women, Roma women, elderly women, women with disabilities, etc.).

Providing tax support to employers while taking into account the need to ensure the work-life balance of staff. Considering that the measures taken by the authorities to combat the effects of the pandemic (e. g. cessation of the operation of multiple economic agents, educational institutions, etc.) impacted women and men differently, both in terms of their presence on the labour market and in terms of earning income, especially due to unequal distribution of parenting responsibilities, it will be fair for employers' actions to be aligned with the response meant facilitate the overcoming of these inequalities. Thus, the support provided by the authorities, such as the one of fiscal nature, is to be directly proportional to the outcomes of the action undertaken by employers to address the issue of

women's exclusion, especially of those employed, having preschool children.

Investing more resources to ensure that childcare institutions are safely reopened in order to prevent these entities from becoming potential hotbeds for the expansion of COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, the authorities will develop internal operating procedures for kindergartens, nurseries, etc. adjusted to the current situation, will allocate sufficient resources to ensure that the staff of these entities can work in a safe manner with access to the necessary equipment, without endangering their health, the safety of children and their parents. The opinion poll conducted in April 2020 showed that about 73% of parents believed it was too early for preschool and school institutions to resume their work. In this context, the decision of the authorities to reopen the educational entities will have to instil an increased level of trust among parents.

Constant monitoring of the pandemic crisis effects, in order to effectively and promptly address the challenges faced by Moldovan women and men. A much more detailed and constant assessment by the authorities is required, both at national and regional level, which will generate manifold disaggregated data (on the basis of sex, age, living environment, economic status, education status, family status, etc.) so as to track how the crisis has impacted vulnerable categories or what are the potential risks in this context and to develop and implement effective response plans in order to diminish the existing and worsening inequalities.



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