



WOMEN AND MEN IN SERBIA: AT A GLANCE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN SERBIA

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has strongly impacted the health of populations, economies and public services, including social services, working patterns and everyday life of people around the globe. Since March 11, 2020, when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak to be a global pandemic, Serbian government introduced a diverse set of measures, which had a significant impact on already profound gender gaps grounded in patriarchal culture and structures of the Serbian society.

The burden of the COVID-19 crisis has been particularly heavily placed on the shoulders of women. They make up the majority of frontline workers in the health sector and the majority of the workforce in supermarkets and pharmacies, and thus are not only exposed to higher health risks but are also facing the challenges of commuting to work in spite of the periodic public transportation cancellations. They are also organizing childcare during the closure of kindergartens and schools, and taking care of older family members as their movement is reduced or prohibited.

The challenges faced by women who are working from home during the pandemic are of a different kind – interference of work and family care and stress caused by the difficulties to commit adequately to work under the pressure of family needs and vice versa. The pandemic has also impacted women providing per-

sonal services whose microbusinesses are closed, as well as the army of women informally providing services to households, such as cleaning/household maintenance, childcare and care for the elderly, who have been left without work and income.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thus demonstrated the profoundness of gender inequalities and the fragility of progress made to date. Violence against women as the most extreme manifestation of gender inequalities followed the same pattern. Frustration related to health risks, but also economic losses, uncertainty, lockdowns, and restrictions in movement, increase violence against women. At the same time, due to the measures placed in response to the pandemic, services for the prevention and protection of women from violence are not as easily available, whether due to changed work regimes, lack of information on new modes of access to services, restricted movement or firmer control of perpetrators over women during lockdowns.

As the coronavirus crisis unfolds, UN agencies in Serbia are working hard to support different groups of women, ensure their equal participation in decision-making, and analyze the impact COVID-19 has had on them.





COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The project “**Improved Safety of Women in Serbia**” has entered a new phase of implementation in November 2019 when a direct contract between the donor - the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the UN Women was signed. The key objective of the project remains the same – that women and girls in Serbia live in a society free from gender-based discrimination and violence. The main partners on the project are the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, women’s civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media.

Since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic at the beginning of March and robust measures around the world emerged attempting to contain its spread, it was obvious that social impact of the Novel Coronavirus was going to be particularly great on women. As the risks of violence against women and girls increased in the emergency context, as a result of the amplified tensions at home, UN Women highly prioritized services for prevention and response to gender-based violence in the affected communities. In addition, it was decided as paramount that we support women’s organizations at the community level in delivering messages about prevention and response strategies to all women. At the same time, it was critical to leverage alternative channels of communication, and to improve identification and support at the community level for cases of violence against women.

As for Serbia, there has been substantial evidence from the field that the on-going COVID-19 crisis and isolation are leading to a significant increase of gender-based and domestic violence cases in the country and that attempts to reach out to victims can be lifesaving. Moreover, due to changed circumstances during the state of emergency, local self-governments withdrew already limited financial support to women’s CSOs providing services to women in risk of gender-based and domestic violence, such as SOS helplines and counselling services. This, unfortunately, led to the deterioration of the working conditions in which women’s CSOs are providing services to women victims of violence, which particularly distressing given that these organisations were already facing problems in day-to-day functioning.

Therefore, as a rapid response to the new predicament with find ourselves in, and with the intention of supporting women grass root organisations in providing services to women in risk of gender-based and domestic violence, with the support of the donor, a budget reallocation was made under one of the project’s activities. Funds were directed to provide a short-time support to 20 women’s organisations providing services to women in risk of gender-based and domestic violence for a period of three months, thus ensuring that SOS helplines and counselling services remain continuously available to women in need. More precisely, during the period April – June 2020, women CSOs were asked to:

- Ensure that existing SOS helpline services remain available 24 hours/day to women in situations of violence;
- Provide online (chat, SMS, call) individual rights, psychosocial and legal counselling to women in situation of violence;
- Share information about the available services during the state of emergency on social networks and other available communications channels in order to ensure that it is reaching the women in situation of violence.

Statistics are the best indicator of the necessity of SOS helplines and counselling services to women in risk of gender-based and domestic violence, especially in a social environment transformed by the pandemic. In the given three-month period, 20 CSOs received over 2,800 calls and provided almost 5,500 services to 1,700 women in need. Women were looking for:

- Psychological support in order to overcome insecurities, fear, anxiety and even suicidal thoughts;
- Legal support, especially related to reporting violence, parental rights, divorce etc.;
- information about their rights and related procedures and documents, in terms of different social and health care services;
- Safety plans for leaving the perpetrator of violence; and
- Someone to simply listen to their problems and understand them without passing judgment.

In addition, further steps were taken under the project to purchase electronic monitor-

Support to women in Serbia during the COVID-19 crisis



KEEPING 24- HOUR HELPLINES OPEN

Representatives from 20 civil society organizations are staffing SOS helplines, providing 24-hour support to women facing the risk of gender-based and domestic violence. This includes online advice (chat, SMS, call), and psycho-social and legal help. UN Women is supporting these important activities through a Norwegian funded project aimed at improving the safety of women in Serbia.



ing system (EMS) to track domestic violence offenders. The bid for procuring the needed equipment was published in late April and the evaluation and selection processes were finalised by the end of June. The objective of the assignment was to provide ICT equipment needed for piloting a new monitoring system for victim protection – the bracelet for victim[s] and perpetrator[s] system in 10 out of 27 Regional Police Directorates in Serbia. This innovative practice will enhance the realisation of urgent measures for victims' protection against perpetrators of violence. Trainings for Police Directorates staff on EMS will follow in the next reporting period.

Due to insufficient capacities and lack of solid institutional framework for promoting zero tolerance to violence, the media in Serbia often feeds into gender-stereotypes, perpetuates traditional social norms and 'victim blaming', and condones violence against women and girls (VAWG) and gender-based discrimination. Furthermore, secondary victimization often originates from inappropriate media reporting on VAWG, harms victims in numerous ways, causing severe physical and emotional consequences. That is the reason why the UN Women has initiated a comprehensive qualitative analysis of media reporting on violence against women and girls in Serbia, including femicide. Key findings and related experts' recommendations will serve as a baseline for identifying areas in which journalist and editors should be trained to improve their reporting on VAWG and femicide in the future.

Finally, in the coming period the UN Women will define the most suitable cooperation framework with the Commissioner for the

Protection of Equality on strengthening their capacities for raising awareness, knowledge and confidence of rural women to report violence and reach for measures and actors responsible for protection of gender-based violence and discrimination.

Phase II of the regional programme "**Implementing Norms, Changing Minds**," aimed at ending violence against women (VAW) in the Western Balkans and Turkey, kicked off in February 2020. Building on the concrete results achieved and partnerships fostered during the Phase I of the programme, UN Women is continuing its collaboration with seven leading civil society organizations, including: SOS Network Vojvodina, Association Fenomena, Center for Support of Women, ...Iz kruga – Vojvodina, Gender Knowledge Hub, FemPlatz and Women Research Centre.

For 18 months, or the duration of the programme's Phase II, we are directing our joint energies towards achieving four specific goals ensuring that:

- Relevant laws and policies are reviewed and reformed to conform with international human rights standards, including CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention.
- Women, girls, men, and boys at both community and individual levels better understand and internalize the concepts of gender equality.
- Providers of general and specialist support services for victims of all forms of violence have the capacity to implement the standards enshrined in CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention.
- Providers of specialist support services for victims of all forms of violence improve their case management practices,

especially when it comes to their work with women and girls from minorities and disadvantaged groups.

WE ARE DOING SO BY IMPLEMENTING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:

SOS Network Vojvodina has been developing an online/mobile SOS helpline application to allow simplified reporting of violence and ease communication between the victims and the SOS helpline service, while respecting the safety and anonymity standards. Apart from that, they have also been monitoring the progress on the implementation of the CEDAW Concluding Observations to the Fourth Periodic Report of Serbia during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Association Fenomena has been raising public awareness about the alarming gender equality decline and increased VAW during the pandemic through their tailor-designed communication campaigns. They have been monitoring government efforts to provide uninterrupted services for prevention and adequate response to violence against women during and after COVID-19 pandemic in line with domestic law and international standards. Also, Fenomena has been examining media coverage and will utilize the results of its research to advocate for increased standards in media reporting on VAWG.

Center for Support of Women has been ensuring continuous services of three existing Rape Crises Centres (RCCs) in Vojvodina province, namely those in Novi Sad, Zrenja-

Support to
women in Serbia
during the COVID-19 crisis



DELIVERING ESSENTIALS TO WOMEN IN SHELTERS

A partnership between UN Women and the Serbian Government's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit delivered hygiene kits and household essentials to 138 women taking refuge in 11 safe houses across the country.



nin and Kikinda, and is backing the re-establishment of the RCC at the Sremska Mitrovica General Hospital. In addition, the Centre is developing an online learning platform designed to enhance the knowledge of health professionals affiliated with RCCs. Finally, the Centre for Support of Women is actively advocating for the replication of the already tested and successful 'Vojvodina model' in processing of sexual violence against women cases in hospitals in Čačak (West Serbia) and Leskovac (South Serbia).

...Iz kruga – Vojvodina has been working to ensure that general and specialized services in healthcare, social, justice, and security systems are accessible and available to women with disabilities in times of and after the crisis in 10 municipalities across Serbia. They will initiate establishment of at least 5 innovative services within the targeted municipalities. Apart from that, **...Iz kruga – Vojvodina** are ensuring permanent psychological support for women with disabilities experiencing violence, in line with the Istanbul Convention and health safety standards. They are working to provide masks featuring a transparent window in the middle, which enables lip reading, as a service for women with hearing impairment, in 10 targeted municipalities. And lastly, they are organising an online campaign about the rights of women with disabilities in times of crisis and in the post-crisis period.

Gender Knowledge Hub, FemPlatz and Women Research Centre have been working together to conduct different sets of workshops and awareness-raising sessions with

representatives of the Government Council for Eradication of VAW, police, prosecution, and centres for social welfare. The partners are also undertaking research, data collection and analysis to improve the risk assessment capacities of general service providers as well as their ability to accurately observe the dynamics between perpetrator and victim of femicide, all with the aim to develop a model for risk assessment and protocols for femicide review investigation. Finally, workshops with the Government Council for Eradication of VAW, and advocacy meetings regarding the setup of a data collection and femicide monitoring system, are being planned.

The Phase II of the programme is funded by the European Union and is set to last until 31 July, 2021 with €2,8 million allocated for activities in Serbia.

Support to
women in Serbia
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OFFERING A MOBILE PHONE APP TO HELP WOMEN STAY SAFE

A UN Women-EU programme aimed at ending violence against women "Implementing Norms, Changing Minds" is offering women in violent situations a safe online environment for chat support with SOS helpline services, and a panic button option through a mobile phone application.



Support to Priority Actions for
Gender Equality in Serbia

#EUzatebe

SUPPORT TO PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN SERBIA

Under the project “**Support to Priority Actions for Gender Equality in Serbia**”, the Gender Equality Facility Serbia, funded by the European Commission within the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) II, UN Women continued its support to the Government of the Republic of Serbia in its efforts to effectively implement the EU Gender Equality Acquis and the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2016- 2020.

We celebrated the International Women’s Day jointly with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, the Ministry of European Integration and the EU Delegation to Serbia by marking the Beijing +25. The celebration provided an opportunity for 12 women’s rights activists, from different age groups and diverse backgrounds, to present achievements in the critical areas of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action over the last 25 years.

UN Women Office in Serbia continues to support the efforts of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality to engage in dialogue with key stakeholders, including the academia and women’s organisations. Under the umbrella of this collaboration, we supported the establishment of the initiative to improve the position of women in academia. The initiative serves as a platform for dialogue, where the position of women both in the academia and the society at large can freely be discussed, and using which we can help raise awareness of the general population about gender equality and the importance of women’s empowerment.

As part of the COVID-19 response, UN Women engaged the Red Cross of Serbia as a Responsible Party to reach the most vulnerable of our citizens, especially elderly men and women from remote rural areas, but also other at high-risk persons. As a result, approximately 3,000 families from 50 municipalities received hygiene and food packages, while some 40,000 women and men received valuable information on COVID-19 including on related health issues, psychological support, domestic violence and abuse of the elderly as well as their prevention.

UN Women developed a Gender Analysis of the Effects COVID-19 Crisis has had on Women in Serbia. By covering key topics such as women in the labour market, women entrepreneurs, rural women and the economy of care, the analysis mapped out and measured the impact crisis has had on women’s lives. The analysis confirmed the increasing inequalities and different effect of the pandemic on women and men. Particularly poignant is the observed women’s vulnerability in the workplace as well as the significant burden carried by women living in families with children and/or dependent household members.

UN Women initiated cooperation with four women’s organizations to improve the economic position of multi-discriminated women, particularly Roma women, rural women and women with disabilities. We also continued our effort to increase access to labour market for women through partnership with additional four women’s organizations. This benefited more than 200 women from 27 municipalities across Serbia who increased their knowledge and skills needed for their economic empowerment through various capacity development programmes, mentoring and equipment donations.

To address the impact of COVID-19 crisis to livelihoods of women farmers, whose businesses were affected by closure of green markets and restrictions of movements during the declared state of emergency, UN Women’s partner organization **Women’s Association of Kolubara District** launched an online market for selling women’s products – zuko.rs. Through this initiative, they were able to support their families and avoid financial losses.

Future activities: UN Women Serbia Office will support the Sub-regional virtual consultations for the Western Balkans and Turkey as a way to open the dialogue around critical issues within the sub-region. The objective of these consultations is to centralize the voices of gender equality advocates and civil society actors in the period leading up to and during the Gender Equality Forums, as well as to create an opportunity to mobilize partners around critical issues within the sub-regions. More specifically, the objective is to meaningfully and efficiently engage women’s rights CSOs, key stakeholders and governments from the Western Balkans and Turkey in advance of the Gender Equality Forums and to shape the blueprints for the coming years of gender equality action. The consultations are organized around four topics and will take place over the course of several months:

- General consultations on the status of gender equality and priorities over the next 5 years, 9 September
- Innovation and technology, and gender equality, 17 September
- Climate justice and gender equality, 1 October
- Women’s organizations and national gender equality mechanisms, October, date TBD

Support to women in Serbia during the COVID-19 crisis



HELPING FEMALE FARMERS GO ONLINE TO REACH CUSTOMERS

Female agriculture producers from Kolubara district (Western Serbia) have launched an online green market to reach customers, alleviating the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. This initiative is supported by the EU-funded programme: Support to priority actions for gender equality.

Support to women in Serbia during the COVID-19 crisis



REACHING OUT TO VULNERABLE GROUPS NATIONWIDE

Essential information, alongside hygiene and humanitarian kits are reaching the most vulnerable and at-risk groups of women and men in 50 municipalities across Serbia through the Red Cross. This is made possible through the EU-funded project: Support to priority actions for gender equality, together with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality and the Ministry of EU Integration.



GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

In the previous period, UN Women continued to advance the implementation and institutionalization of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) at the national, provincial and local level. In March 2020, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Serbia issued the **Annual Plan for the Introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting**, obliging 47 national-level budget users to further progress in introduction of gender perspective in their budgets – a task that also applies to all 26 provincial-level budget users.

Under the project “**Supporting Implementation of GRB at the Local Level**,” UN Women provided technical support to 10 local self-governances (LGSs). Our activities took us to Užice, Prijepolje, Sjenica, Kosjerić, Pećinci, Ruma, Šid, Mionica, Krupanj, and Plandište where we assisted local administrations to develop GRB annual plans and form local GRB teams, while we also supported the development of gender analysis of budgets and GRB recommendations. This was all done in an effort to help LGSs improve their response to specific needs of women in their local communities, particularly those from multi-discriminated groups.

In order to broaden and make the demand for GRB more robust, UN Women also linked-up with 13 civil society organizations active on 12 LSGs territories, including 10 municipalities supported through the above-mentioned project. Specifically, we worked to increase their capacities to monitor local budgeting, particularly in terms of GRB, and to more effectively advocate for women’s needs.

As a response to an increasing demand for supporting GRB implementation at all levels

of government, UN Women capacitated 12 experts to provide technical assistance to GRB implementation through a training of trainers.

GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE – REDISTRIBUTION OF UNPAID CARE WORK

Building on our initial momentum, through the project “**Gender Responsive Governance – Redistribution of Unpaid Care Work**” implemented in close cooperation with the Coordination Body for Gender Equality of the Republic of Serbia and funded by the United Kingdom’s Good Governance Fund, UN Women continues to shine a light on the unequal distribution of care work by providing concrete data, challenge the existing norms at the root of this problem, and advocate for policy and practice changes in the economy of care.

Most recently, the project published a first ever gender analysis of the **‘Economic Value of Unpaid Care Work in Serbia’**. Its key contributions and findings include:

- Calculations of unpaid care work as contributions to national GDP and economic growth;
- Simulation models for 0%-20%-100% increase of public investment in public/alternative service development, and subsequent economic short- and long-term outcomes, both national and individual;
- Evidence of increased time women in Serbia spend caring for children and dependent family members over the last few years.

These valuable findings will serve as irrefutable evidence in favour of policy changes, as well as strong arguments for testing and upscaling of

policy initiatives advancing equal distribution of unpaid work and care work in the society.

UN Women also continued and expanded our support to women’s organizations developing and implementing pilot measures for redistribution of unpaid care work at the local level. From four, we grew the list of our beneficiary women’s CSOs to nine, implementing a total of 14 local innovative initiatives tackling the following aspects of the economy of care:

- Promotion of father’s involvement in child care;
- Raising awareness among youth about the dynamics of the economy of care;
- Challenging the existing stereotypes that promote unequal sharing of care work;
- Establishing the national association of nannies;
- Establishing new, innovative services that address unpaid work performed by rural women;
- Gender equality in parenting – equal parenting and caregiving responsibilities;
- Creating local services for informal caregivers of dependent persons.

Between the **Association for Development of Creativity, Women Association of Kolubara District, Amity, SeConS, AFA, Center E8, Fenomena, Peščanik, Women’s Forum Prijepolje and International Aid Network**, we are covering Aleksinac and its 7 rural communities, Valjevo region, Čačak, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Šabac, Kraljevo, Zaječar, Kruševac and its 5 municipalities, Prijepolje, Zlatar and Zlatibor regions, with a myriad initiatives engaging the business sector, urban and rural women, and high school children, among others.

Local initiatives have been tested during the COVID-19 state of emergency in Serbia and

proved to be of importance to beneficiaries, many of them in remote and rural areas. Keeping in mind limited mobility and/or isolation of the elderly during the quarantine, which significantly increased the burden of daily care for women, pilot services at the local level were particularly helpful for both male and female beneficiaries around Serbia. The pandemic highlighted certain undercurrents of care work. Women, especially those from rural areas, have no or limited information or understanding of procedures in a crisis situation. At the same time women are especially burdened with care responsibilities during a crisis. The crisis has served as an opportunity for women’s disproportionate load of care work to become more visible, due to the fact that all family members, including men, spent significantly more time at home.

Support to women in Serbia during the COVID-19 crisis



DEPLOYING MOBILE TEAMS AND SPECIAL PHONE LINES TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN NEED

Mobile teams are helping older women, those living in rural areas and others in need to pay their bills and do other essential tasks. Special phone lines are also now open for overburdened caregivers. Here they can get psychological support and informative health assistance as they provide care for children, the elderly and other dependents. These activities are made possible through the UK funded project: Redistribution of unpaid care work.



HIGHLIGHTS OF UNFPA WORK IN SERBIA

Cervical cancer can be prevented! - this was a key message of public activities organized in Serbia to mark the European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week 2020.

Although this malignant disease is preventable and curable if detected on time, Serbia, after Latvia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia and Moldova, ranks fifth in Europe when it comes to cervical cancer incidence rates. In addition, according to the latest estimates, our country ranks fifth in Europe, after Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria and Lithuania, when it comes to dying from this type of cancer in women.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in cooperation with the Institute of Public Health of Serbia, the Ministry of Health, the Committee on International Cooperation of Students of Medicine - Serbia, and the student parliaments of the faculties of Belgrade University (Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Law Faculty, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Political Science and Faculty of Organizational science), as well as secondary medical schools in Belgrade (Medical School "Belgrade", Medical School - Zvezdara), organized series of educational and health-promotion activities that took place throughout the week.

Over 500 young people learned more about cervical cancer: what causes it, how it can be diagnosed and what preventive measures to take, highlighting the importance of regular gynaecological check-ups.

In Belgrade, in support of the campaign during the European Cervical Cancer Pre-

vention Week, the dome of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, the Albania Palace and the Ada Bridge were illuminated in green.

COVID-19

Since the beginning of crises, evidence showed that pandemics affect women and men differently and may further exacerbate gender inequalities. UNFPA [technical brief: 'A Gender Lens'](#) was shared with the GBViE working group co-lead by UNFPA and Ministry of Labour in April.

Together with UN Women, UNFPA is currently completing a rapid gender assessment of COVID-19 impact in Serbia. Results will help us understand influence on women and men in Serbia, and to support partners in the country to enhance preparedness and response, especially now as situation evolves.

WOMEN WITH DISABILITY

UNFPA programme for advocacy mentorship of women with disabilities continued during the pandemics, reaching total of 41 women with physical, sensory and mental disabilities from different organizations from Raška, Temerin, Vranje and Užice. Through online sessions women were empowered to recognize their rights, to map existing barriers and to advocate for fulfilment of their reproductive rights at the local level.

On 3 August, ...Iz Kruga – Vojvodina in partnership with UNFPA organized first virtual

conference for women with disability under the title **Barriers in Fulfilling Reproductive Rights**. Women with disability from selected municipalities presented their view on the most important challenges they are facing in their local communities.

YOUTH

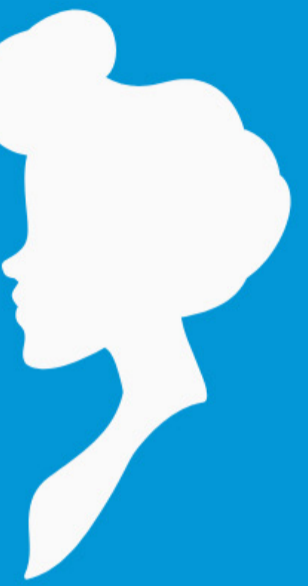
UNFPA partnered with Prezi and the International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA Serbia) to share information for young people and how to keep themselves, their families and friends safe with #YouthAgainstCOVID19. Six episodes dealt with sexual and reproductive health in COVID pandemics, gender equality, mental health and other issues.

INFORMING PREGNANT AND LACTATING WOMEN

COVID-19 pandemics raised special concerns among pregnant and lactating women. UNFPA issued a statement and Q&A based on WHO materials, that addressed some of their most urgent concerns. Materials were shared with parenting platforms, media, and distributed via social media.

Additionally, UNFPA and UNICEF produced posters and leaflets and distributed them to Roma settlements and refugee/asylum centres across the country, reaching women who are not able to access such information in Serbian.

Nearly
1 in 5 women are employed
by the care sector.



Source | UN Women's Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020

#coronavirus #COVID19

UN
WOMEN

Globally,
women do **three** times
as much unpaid care
work as men.



Source | UN Women's Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020

#coronavirus #COVID19

UN
WOMEN

740 million women work
in informal employment
worldwide.



SOURCE | ILO, Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture 2018

#coronavirus #COVID19

UN
WOMEN



REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

On 16 June, UNFPA organized a meeting of the Working Group for GBV among refugee and migrant population. Partners agreed that COVID-19 put many challenges for field support to women and girls during lockdowns. Partners agreed that the most important lessons learned during the epidemics are: ensuring the privacy and confidentiality, ensuring constant internet & phone connection with people in centres, mobilizing informal group/community leaders in centres, range of communication materials, including audio messages, and field coordination and cooperation among stakeholders remain a priority for first line service providers in the future.

UNFPA initiated partnership with Danish Refugee Council to support COVID-19 response in five governmental accommodation centres accommodating women, through risk communication on importance to maintain all epidemiological measures to prevent spread of disease, distribution of dignity items for refugee and migrant women, awareness raising activities about availability and access to GBV services after abolishing state of emergency and through individual counselling, tailored according to the specific needs of women and girls.

MEN ENGAGEMENT

With thousands of families confined to their homes, UNFPA called men to take their share in unpaid work and parenting through

social media campaign #DadInQuarantine. Campaign had a reach of over 335K users and shared tips for fathers and families, interviews with sociologist and psychologist, and invited fathers in Serbia to share their quarantine moments.

OLDER PEOPLE IN COVID-19

UNFPA together with the Red Cross of Serbia, distributed hygiene items and information materials for physical and mental health to the most vulnerable older people across the country. 4,340 of older people living alone or with low income are being reached in 31 municipalities.

Info lines providing psychosocial support, medical, legal advice and other types of assistance started functioning in April and managed over 330 calls. Through these calls older people not only receive support they very much need, but it also helped map and address system gaps to improve institutional response.

For example:

- Commissioner for the Protection of Equality initiated an appeal to the MoI to loosen penalties for older people and to pay special attention to people suffering from dementia;
- Informal caregivers were provided with papers allowing them to move during curfew;
- Army pensioners were provided with extended prescriptions for medication, extending their duration to six months, making them equal to civilian pensioners.

OTHER

Latest 'State of the World Population Report' issued on 30 June by UNFPA called for urgent, accelerated action needed to stop female genital mutilation, child marriage, and other practices that harm women and girls.

While progress has been made in ending some harmful practices worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse gains. A recent analysis revealed that if services and programmes remain shuttered for six months, an additional 13 million girls may be forced into marriage and 2 million more girls may be subjected to female genital mutilation between now and 2030. When it comes to Serbia, as many as 57 of girls in Roma settlements marry before the age of eighteen, while almost 17 marry before the age of 15. And many more girls from Roma settlements give birth before the age of eighteen compared to underage girls from the general population. The birth rate of adolescent girls in Roma settlements is 157 compared to 22 in the general population.

The pandemic may increase the risk of forced early marriage as a strategy to reduce the economic burdens in the family. And lockdowns, school closures and movement restrictions are disrupting adolescent girls' routines and their support systems.

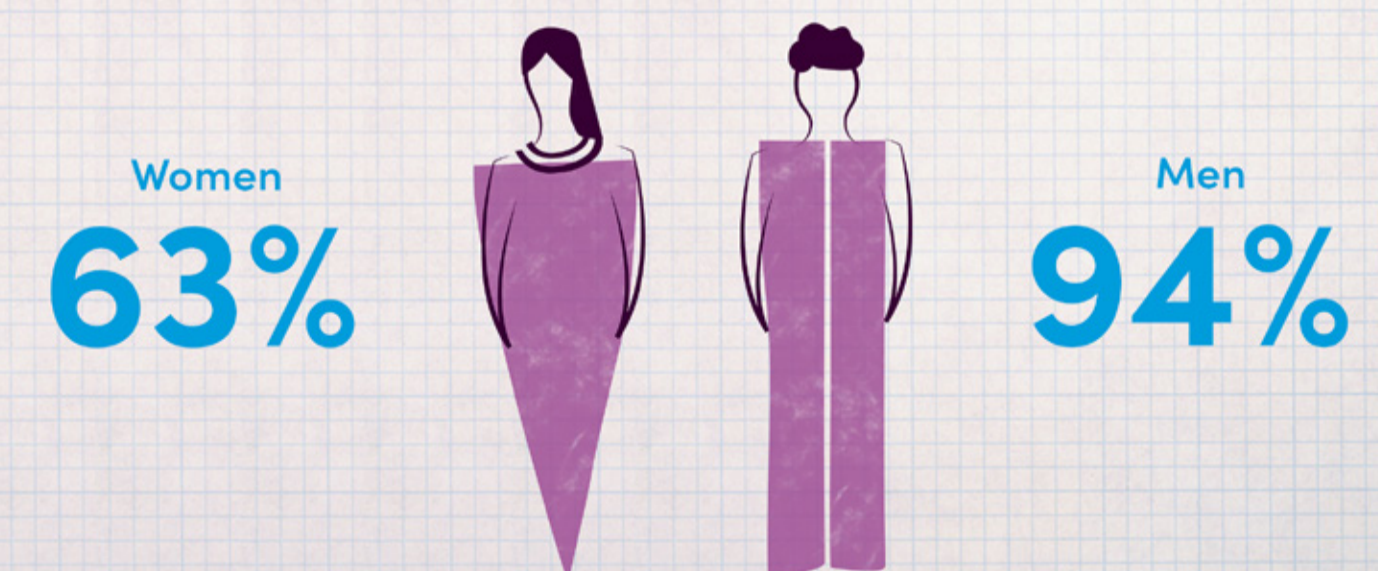
We need to reframe the narrative – explicitly recognising that these practices are egregious human rights violations, rather than casting them as traditional or cultural practices which is often used to justify them.

There are at least **101.3 million** lone mothers in the world.



Globally, women do **3 times** as much unpaid care and domestic work as men.

Global labour force participation rate



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS TEAM

FemPlatz organization published the **'Report on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Serbia for 2019: Zero Report,'** with the idea to give a brief overview of the situation of women in Serbia in 2019, including women from multiple marginalized groups. The report is based on existing studies and reports from international organizations, national institutions and organizations as well as civil society organizations, and also presents the views and opinions of women from Serbia. With this Report and in cooperation with the UN Human Rights Team in Serbia, the regular annual reporting begins. The report uses the structure of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adapted to the

national context. The main findings of the report are that women in Serbia are discriminated against based on sex and gender, that they are in a worse position than men, both in the public and private spheres, and that they are exposed to discriminatory gender stereotypes and violence. Also, women are less employed even though they are more educated, work in lower-paid jobs, are burdened with household work and child care more than men, and participate less in decision-making. Women from multiple marginalized groups are at risk of multiple discrimination, they are exposed to specific forms of violence and are at a disadvantage both compared to women in the general population and compared to men in their groups.

“
We will get through
this together, but only
if we stick together.
**Be strong
and be kind.**”

Jacinda Ardern

Prime Minister of New Zealand

@UN_Women



UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

UN
WOMEN



(The Gambia)

JAAHA DUKUREH

UN Women Regional Ambassador for Africa

“We won't have equality
until girls can grow up
with control over their
own bodies and futures.”

Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown



UNDP SEESAC supports the governments in the region in integrating gender equality into the Security Sector Reform in accordance with UNSCR 1325, which reflects the need for the increased participation of women in peace and security agenda.

At the request of the Ministries of Defence (MoDs) and Armed Forces (AFs) in the Western Balkans, UNDP SEESAC developed the second phase of the “**Strengthening of Regional Cooperation on Gender Mainstreaming in Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans**” project, which facilitates regional cooperation on gender equality in the military and provides support for measures that contribute to better integration of women into the military.

This Regional Project is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

FURTHER ADVANCEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND SERBIAN ARMED FORCES IN IMPLEMENTING UNSCR 1325 AND INCREASING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MILITARY

The MoD of the Republic of Serbia established the *Persons of Trust* network consisting of the MoD and SAF employees who have been selected by their colleagues to act as an internal complaint mechanism. Their main duty is to provide primary peer assistance in cases of (potential) discrimination. The MoD is committed to increasing the capacities of this important mechanism. Thus, at

the MoD’s request, UNDP SEESAC organized and delivered **the third seminar for Persons of Trust** with the aim of strengthening the capacities of Persons of Trust to effectively prevent and respond to discrimination and harassment. The topics addressed at this interactive seminar ranged from the basic form and concept of discrimination to the protection mechanisms. The participants were presented with a model of mediation enabling them to distinguish the cases that can be resolved through mediation from those that cannot be addressed in this manner.

The implementation of the Persons of Trust network is crucial in achieving gender equality in the security sector institutions in the Republic of Serbia and might be used as an example of good practice for establishing and strengthening an internal anti-discrimination mechanism.

Two representatives of the MoD and SAF actively participate in **the Working Group** for development of the *Regional Manual on Combating Gender-based Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Abuse*. The Manual represents the first knowledge tool of this kind in the region, which will enable MoDs in the Western Balkans to effectively prevent and address cases of gender related discrimination.

The MoD of the Republic of Serbia is preparing an international conference to mark the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 – Women, Peace and Security. The conference is planned to take place in Belgrade in November 2020 with UNDP SEESAC support and in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Serbia.

FROM SOUTH EAST EUROPE TO ASIA AND AFRICA: UNDP SEESAC SUPPORTS UN REGIONAL CENTRES FOR DISARMAMENT IN ASIA AND AFRICA TO MAINSTREAM GENDER IN SMALL ARMS CONTROL

In cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) United Nations Regional Disarmament Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and Pacific (UNRCPD) and United Nations Regional Disarmament Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), UNDP SEESAC delivered a comprehensive coaching programme on mainstreaming gender in small arms control to the UNRCPD and UNREC staff.

A coaching programme on mainstreaming gender in small arms control kicked off with three-day onsite sessions from 9 to 12 March on the premises of **UNRCPD** in Kathmandu. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the programme continued through April with three online workshops and was completed on 23 April. The coaching programme for **UNREC** was delivered online in May and June 2020.

Funded by the **European Union**, the coaching programme was implemented within **a multi-year programme** led by **UNODA** in support of gender mainstreamed policies, programmes and actions in the fight against small arms trafficking and misuse.

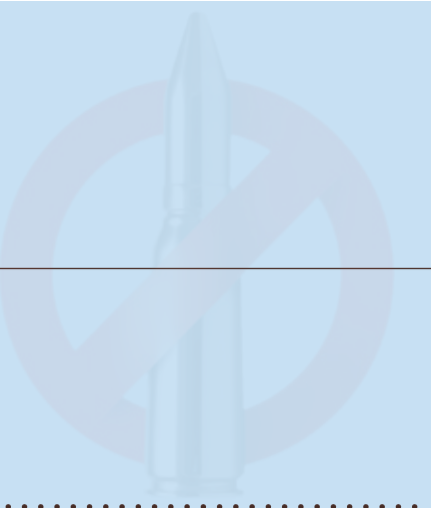
Within its framework and building on the experience in developing and delivering training on gender and small arms control in South East Europe, UNDP SEESAC acts in an advisory capacity to the project implementation. In addition, UNDP SEESAC participates

in the development of a training manual on gender and small arms, which will be used by regional centres to deliver training to beneficiary countries in the respective regions.

The bespoke coaching programme aimed to provide comprehensive support to centres’ staff, both in designing and delivering training on gender and small arms and in further enhancing their capacities for integrating gender perspectives into its portfolio. In doing so, the coaching programme relied on SEESAC’s long-standing experience in increasing gender responsiveness of small arms control in South East Europe.

The coaching covered a diverse set of topics related to main gendered concerns of small arms and build on the upcoming training manual. Participants discussed practical approaches to overcome data scarcity and apply gender analysis in the small arms context, strategies to increase the participation of women in arms control, prevention of the use of firearms in gender-based violence as well as linkages of masculinity and misuse of and demand for firearms. In addition, coaching provided insights into convergence between Women, Peace and Security and small arms control agendas and transformative approaches to boost gender responsiveness to arms control. Emphasis was placed on designing gender responsive arms control policies and different scenarios on how to mainstream gender in arms control in a holistic manner.

The coaching proved to be an excellent forum for experience sharing and mutual learning. In that regard, international and regional best practices were highlighted as a means of showcasing how common barriers to advancing gender equality are addressed in different settings.





SWISS PRO SUPPORT TO ENHANCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY AT LOCAL LEVEL

The Swiss PRO Programme launched in February 2020 the comprehensive technical assistance for capacity development and improvement of gender equality policy framework in **31 local governments (LGs)**. The technical assistance started with two training courses when **44 GEM representatives from 27 LGs** had the opportunity to improve their knowledge on the importance of GEMs and policy dialogue at the local level.

Within the first phase of the support, municipal profiles were developed for 31 LGs and support was provided in drafting decisions to be adopted by LGs, such as the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, the structure and instructions for the adoption of Local Action Plans for Gender Equality (LAP). The activities will be intensified from September after the constitution of local assemblies, when support will be provided in the process of establishing local GEMs and adopting LAPs, European Charters and advanced GE policies at the local level, but also in establishment of **Local Women Councillors Networks**. It is planned that all participating LGs will have established or institutionally strengthened GEMs and have developed/updated and adopted their LAPs.

Parallel with that, the Programme will support **30 LGs in strengthening GEMs** with small grants in order to promote gender equality, improve the position of women in local communities and women's participa-

tion in the decision-making process, as well as to improve the knowledge and competencies of local GEMs. The Call for Proposals will be published in September, while the implementation of grant projects is expected by the end of 2020.

Going further, the Programme has recorded substantial outcomes in applying **socially innovative measures** to improve access to the rights and/or public services and meet the needs of local socially excluded groups. The Programme support provided through 34 socially innovative projects has contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic situation of **3,434 direct beneficiaries** out of which 2,115 vulnerable women.

As the examples of projects focused exclusively on gender topics, two SOS phones i.e. **SOS Phone for Victims of Domestic Violence in Pčinja District** (Vranje, Bujanovac, Preševo, Vladičin Han, Surdulica, Trgovište and Bosilegrad) implemented by the Committee for Human Rights Vranje and **SOS Phone for Victims of Domestic Violence in Toplica District** (Prokuplje, Blace, Žitораде and Kuršumlija) implemented by Roma Women Association "Osvit", **supported a total of 194 women victims of domestic violence through provision of legal and psycho-social support**. Both projects enhanced sustainability through signing of regional, inter-municipal Memorandum of Understanding for financing of the licensed specialised service for women victims of domestic violence while 61 professional workers in the social protection area raised the capacities through the accredited training "Support to the improvement of the

position of Roma women". In addition, the project **"Women Can!"** implemented by the Association "Open Club" from Niš **economically empowered 20 women from various vulnerable groups**, mainly Roma nationality and single mothers, who finalised training for different occupations out of which six are immediately employed.

EU PRO - IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC POSITION OF WOMEN AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Within efforts to enhance competitiveness and sustainability of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSEs), the EU PRO Programme implemented by UNOPS supported MSEs to procure equipment and introduce related services through a grant scheme. Out of the 94 supported enterprises, 30 percent (29 enterprises) are owned by women. Moreover, the supported enterprises are located in the underdeveloped and deprived areas, and more than half of the beneficiaries have production facilities in rural areas.

Over 300 jobs are created as a result of this activity, with 44 percent occupied by women. Overall, **137 women improved their economic position through this activity**. The achieved results are particularly significant in a broader context when knowing that women in Serbia are underrepresented in the business sector and have lower participation in the labour market.

Social cohesion grant projects **contributed to the improvement of the socio-economic position of 130 women coming from the most marginalised categories**, such

as women with disabilities and from rural areas, young girls, Roma women. These women acquired and improved their knowledge of organic farming, rural tourism and are provided with appropriate equipment to generate income, start their own businesses or be more competitive in the labour market. One group of women and girls from national minorities groups is empowered to engage in social activism. Most of the projects are on-going, but first results are already visible. For example, a social enterprise for the provision of printing services that gathers women with disabilities is established. Two women of Roma nationality found employment after undergoing vocational training.

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GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

UNDP as an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), provides assistance to the Serbian Government, namely Ministry of Environmental Protection, in the implementation of the GEF funded projects “**Establishing Transparency Framework for the Republic of Serbia**” (CBIT project). The project contributes to acceleration of Serbia’s EU accession process in the area of environment, energy and climate change, contributing to creation of enabling policy and institutional environment for effective implementation of relevant EU Acquis and related national legal acts.

More specifically, CBIT project supports the Government of Serbia in mainstreaming and integrating gender sensitive climate change considerations into development strategies and sector-based policy frameworks by strengthening and sustaining efforts to monitor, report, and verify activities to address climate change taking into account different needs and roles of men and women.

As a precondition for gender sensitive, evidence-based policy making in the area of climate change, development of a gender sensitive monitoring framework has been initiated. Monitoring framework covers seven broad areas: *Access to resources, Participation in decision making and climate change policies, Economy and work, Consumption and livelihoods, Education, Health, and Climate change knowledge, attitudes and behaviour*. Also, it provides guidelines on how and where to mainstream gender perspective not only in climate change policies but also in other relevant policy areas as gender

equality, as well as climate change are being cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral issue.

Moreover, revision of NDCs for Serbia is currently ongoing, considering social and gender aspects where appropriate.

Gender Mainstreaming of the Innovation Challenge Winning Projects

Acting as the implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP supports the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MoEP) in the implementation of the five-year “**Climate Smart Urban Development Challenge**” project, jointly financed by the GEF, MoEP and selected Serbian municipalities. All activities and measures undertaken by the project are aimed to result in tangible GHG emissions reduction and are to include climate smart perspective in urban planning. Having in mind that climate change is not only the environmental and development challenge but also have the critical impact on human rights and gender equality, the project is also working towards integration of gender perspective into climate smart urban planning.

Within the project the Innovation Challenge calls were launched. The Innovation Challenge is a public call for proposing innovative and cost-effective ideas for the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) emission created by public services and facilities, while simultaneously providing social, economic and environmental benefits for the community and its citizens. In total, 39 project ideas, proposed by individuals, public and private companies, CSOs, local self-governments and research community, have been selected and are being further mentored by the Climate Incubator towards mature proj-

ect stage. Selected project ideas under the Innovation Challenge are related to the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, urban mobility, agriculture, green infrastructure, the waste management, the forestry.

The project also requires all solutions that are supported through the Climate Incubator to have a strong gender dimension, taking into account that climate change affects men and women in different ways and that climate smart solutions need to be gender-sensitive to maximize their effects. Up to now, 11 projects had been selected as finalists, analysed from a gender perspective and provided by guidelines and recommendations how the proposed innovative ideas and activities could contribute to address, ensure and enhance women’s needs, capabilities, voices and agency within climate smart planning and projects implementation.

COVID-19: UNDP URGES SWIFT ACTION TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS DURING THE PANDEMIC

The impacts of the COVID-19 on women and girls include rising rates of domestic or intimate partner violence, while lockdowns and physical distancing may be particularly hard on survivors of gender-based violence, who may already be economically dependent on their abusers.

Together with other UN agencies, UNDP is working with more than 40 governments around the world to prevent and address gender-based violence during the crisis. Governments across the world have been urged to

prevent and tackle the rising rates of violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 crisis by putting stronger measures in place such as opening shelters and hotlines as emergency services and supporting police and the justice sector during lockdowns.

From the beginning of the **COVID-19 Crises in Serbia**, UNDP Serbia and the **Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia** held regular consultations having in mind the possible escalation of violence and problems that may be encountered in implementing the institutional response to violence against women. The High Court Council classified cases of domestic violence (including protective measures for the victims of violence) among those that the courts continued to deal with even during the state of emergency, specifying that such cases will continue being prosecuted before courts of law without delay.

What is more, **UNDP Serbia supported 20 public prosecutors from 8 prosecution districts in Serbia to organize on-line multi-agency meetings for processing newly reported and ongoing cases of domestic violence**. Multi-agency cooperation is regulated by the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence in Serbia and binds the responsibility of three state bodies: police, prosecutors and centres for social work, but also includes other institutions such as healthcare and the education system, employment services, and civil society organizations. Thanks to this support, significantly more cases of domestic violence were considered and more individual plans for victim support and protection were developed than in previous months.

UNDP provided 3 centres for victims of sexual violence and rape with **sanitation packag-**



es and protective equipment and supported them to open additional phone **helplines** for women survivors of gender-based violence.

UNDP Serbia also helped the **Autonomous Women's Centre**, which provides legal and psychological assistance to women survivors of violence, to increase their **SOS helpline** capacities. During the state of emergency this SOS helpline received 6 times more calls for assistance than usual. Having in mind that COVID-19 crisis particularly affects vulnerable groups exposing them to additional risks of poverty and violence, UNDP also supported **ASTRA-CSO**, which provides assistance to victims of human trafficking. Since the beginning of 2020, ASTRA's Victim Support Team has identified 22 new victims of human trafficking, while the number of calls to ASTRA's SOS hotline has increased by 71%. The calls do not only refer to new cases, but old users also call - some due to job loss, some due to fear of losing it, and some due to the deepening economic crisis and lack of money for basic needs. Most of ASTRA's clients are women who live in deep poverty in the suburbs of cities or in smaller places in the country. Being often exposed to discrimination, those persons are hard-to-employ category and in the conditions of a pandemic, all these problems are even bigger. With UNDP and ASTRA's support former victims of human trafficking have been supported with the **packages of hygiene products and protective equipment, and if those families include school-age children - with packages of school equipment**.

UNDP supported the group **Journalists Against Violence** ([Novinarke protiv nasilja](#)) in spreading the messages about the available psycho-social support provided by SOS

help-lines, in developing advice for women in situation of violence, in creating a social network campaign to encourage citizens to report violence in their neighbourhood, as well as in responding to media coverage of violence against women and sexism.

UNDP is coordinating with UN sister agencies and development partners, for example, through the **Spotlight Initiative, a joint EU-UN partnership** to end violence against women and girls. The global, multi-year initiative is targeting 50 million direct beneficiaries across five regions and more than 25 countries.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND MEDIA REPORTING

In half of the media reports on violence against women published in 2019, the identity of the survivors, victims and members of their families, was revealed. As many as 40 per cent of them used sensationalist or stereotyped turns of phrase pertaining to violence, the victim or the perpetrator of violence, as evidenced by **'Analysis of Media Reports on the Issue of Violence against Women,'** conducted by the Journalists against Violence against Women group, with the support of the **United Nations Development Programme** (UNDP).

During the course of the last year, the issue of violence against women was most often covered by portals (60% of the reports), printed media (34% of the reports), whereas TV and radio stations dedicated considerably less attention to this topic (6% of the reports).

The analysis encompassed **over 11,000 articles** published in electronic and printed media **from January to December 2019**, us-

ing the principles of professional reporting on this topic as indicators.

In as many as **45% of reports, some of these indicators contained violations in the very title**, which is particularly problematic, in view of the fact that it is precisely the headlines that draw most attention and are the most widely read part of the text in question.

As it turned out, the actual cause for presenting a given report was most often **an individual incident of violence** (78% of the reports), whereas the media dealt rather less frequently with **the phenomenon of violence against women from an educational perspective**, through an analysis of the social context of violence, ways of preventing it, protection and support, as well as pointing out the unequal power relations between men and women as a cause of violence (22% of the reports).

Apart from revealing the identity of the survivor, that is, the victim and members of her family, as well as using sensationalist and stereotyped turns of phrase such as "horrible", "horror", "the hapless/unfortunate/miserable woman", "maniac", **more than one-third of the media reports contain specific details pertaining to the given case of violence or murder**, as well as statements that are not relevant to the actual act of violence.

It is also noticeable that media often use photographs and video covers which present violence in an inadequate and stereotyped manner, such as those wherein the woman in question is in tears or visibly shaken, with visible physical signs of having suffered violence (28% of the reports).

Among the bad examples of reporting to be found in the media are statements which

justify the actual act(s) of violence by referring to **the personal traits of the perpetrator or the external circumstances of it** such as alcoholism, poverty, unemployment (20% of the reports), as well as **expressions such as** "the tragic end of a love story" and "marital conflicts", which, in effect, minimise the effects of violence and directly manifest lack of confidence in the survivor or victim (15% of the reports), and also result in shifting the responsibility of the act(s) of violence committed from the perpetrator onto the survivor or victim (10% of the reports).

As a consequence of inadequate reporting, violence is normalised in eye of the public, while female victims of violence suffer additional damage due to the fact that their safety and privacy are endangered, and also due to additional victimisation. Responsible reporting may provide support to women who have suffered violence, and in society at large such reporting promotes absolute unacceptability of violent behaviour.

The Journalists against Violence against Women group has prepared **Guidelines for Media Reporting on Violence against Women** in order to contribute to improving the quality of reporting on this issue, resolving the dilemmas with which journalists are often faced, and also to avoid or at least minimise the degree of the traumatising of women who have suffered violence, which occurs as a result of public exposure.

The full text of the Guidelines can be downloaded from [here](#), while those parts of it that are in video format are available in Serbian [here](#). **Analysis of Media Reports on the Issue of Violence against Women** is available through [this link](#).

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CHILD MARRIAGE

Within the framework of implementation of the program “**Towards the End of Child Marriages in Serbia 2018 - 2020**” UNICEF and implementing partners - Roma women’s organizations, relevant national and local institutions, CSOs - continued their work in changing norms and behaviours towards achieving demonstrable outcomes. The program aims to leverage and coordinate the existing network of services, resources and trained practitioners addressing issues that cross-cut child marriage and introduce and further develop evidence-based approaches that have been demonstrated internationally and locally to mitigate the factors driving child marriage.

As a product of the program, in the respective period with informed development and adjustments of the intervention due to COVID-19 outbreak, the implementation at community and municipal/local levels has continued in the same targeted localities – Belgrade (6 municipalities), Novi Bečej and Pirot – with total of 20 Roma communities. A total of over 340 Roma girls and their parents have benefitted from different socializing activities and psychosocial and socio-educational workshops focusing on information and skills, particularly around life aspirations, reproductive health, gender roles, negotiation and decision-making. In addition, the mentoring support program was implemented in Belgrade and Novi Bečej by activists of RWC Bibija and Association of Roma Novi Bečej in cooperation with the Center for Education Policies supporting 55 Roma girls and young women who have dropped out from education to finish vocational courses and raise their educa-

tion and employment opportunities. The roles of education and social welfare in respective communities have been further strengthened to identify girls at risk of child marriage and improve practices to prevent child marriage. Building capacities of 8 schools in the vicinity of girls-at-risk-of-child-marriage contributed further to raising awareness of early warning signals for school drop-out and support to girl’s education. During the state of emergency, activities were adapted to online modalities or were held in a modified form (meetings of girls and mentors, volunteer actions, online support to prevention of dropouts from the education system etc.). Work with Roma men and boys intensified in Belgrade and Pirot with aim to engage Roma fathers and boys in transformational workshops. As the result, 143 boys and men from Roma settlements in Pirot and Belgrade participated in workshops as part of innovative training program while at the same time young Roma male activists raised their capacities as trainers in the area of inter-personal communication on the topic. Expansion of the partnership and efforts to strengthen Roma male activism have contributed development of a more systematic approach to challenging the attitudes and social norms among Roma males conducive to the practice of child marriage.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic meetings of the Coalition to End Child Marriage (planned for March and June) were postponed, but the necessary preconditions for smooth continuation of the Coalition work are set. The Coalition actions will be directed in the forthcoming period towards removal of institutional and social barriers to law enforcement and promoting examples of good practice in part-

nership with local communities, non-governmental, governmental and private sectors and the media.

DIRECT GENDER-BASED PREVENTION AND RESPONSE SERVICES FOR REFUGEE/ MIGRANT WOMEN, GIRLS AND BOYS

Within the framework of the implementation of the Phase III of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) funded regional project “**Action Against Gender-based Violence Affecting Refugee and Migrant Women and Children**”, UNICEF and implementing partners Info Park and ADRA have continued to ensure increased availability and accessibility of **GBV prevention and response services, as well as gender sensitive child protection, health, psychosocial and safety services for refugee/migrant children, adolescents and women in Serbia**, and have served **close to 1,200 persons** in the period covered by the report. UNICEF continued to support outreach teams and **Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS)** in two locations in Belgrade providing specialized psychosocial assistance as well as access to information and case management and referral to further support. Due to the high fluctuation of people prior to COVID-19 emergency situation, **mobile safe spaces** have been introduced for monitoring women’ and girls’ and UASC conditions in Šid and Bogovadja centers. In the context of COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF and partners have worked on adapting the GBV prevention and response

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One of the five teams that received small seed grants to implement their ideas within the UPSHIFT – a youth empowerment and skills-building programme



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Young girls who shared their stories to support their peers, sharing 1st person advice for better coping, adapting and resilience building



activities to reach target group in conditions of lockdown and restricted movement - switching to remote modalities, introducing **hotlines for PSS/counselling, establishing Viber/What's up groups for information dissemination** on GBV and gender sensitive COVID-19 information. Recognizing the specific vulnerability of women and girls in this context, **870 dignity kits were distributed** with key hygiene and NFI items for women and girls in 4 centres.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RELATED CAPACITY BUILDING AND COLLABORATION

UNICEF has been providing technical assistance to Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration (SCRM) in a comprehensive revision of internal policies, as well as development of new ones, **enhancing the standards and introducing new SCRM's beneficiary safeguarding measures and procedures, with specific focus on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**. All revised/developed policies/procedures have been published together as annex in the newly developed guidance note available on this link: [Overview of SCRM's Measures for Safeguarding of Beneficiaries with the Focus on PSEA](#) (version in Serbian available [here](#)). Additionally, in June a training module on safeguarding and PSEA was developed and a training of trainers was organized for the SCRM trainers who will continue to roll out the newly introduced procedures among SCRM staff and other professionals in reception and asylum centres.

UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED GIRLS IN FOCUS

While boys traveling unaccompanied or separated have been in focus of protection actors throughout European refugee crisis response, there has been little information and understanding of the phenomenon of girls in the same situation travelling along migration routes that are notoriously dangerous for adolescent girls. Within the framework of the implementation of the Phase III of the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) funded regional project **"Action Against Gender-based Violence Affecting Refugee and Migrant Women and Children"**, UNICEF has undertaken an analysis to better understand who these girls are, what are the reasons for their migration, what risks are they facing and how well are they recognized by those who should provide support and protection to them along the migration route. [The analysis 'Making Invisible Visible: the identification of the unaccompanied and separated girls in Italy, Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia'](#) highlights the specific challenges faced by girls travelling to and through Europe via the Eastern and the central Mediterranean route, and aims to demonstrate to national authorities, frontline workers, and service providers the critical importance of identifying unaccompanied and separated girls to ensure their protection. It includes a practical 'tip sheet' for frontline workers, outlining 10 signs that a girl might be unaccompanied or separated which was developed through comprehensive consultations in all participating countries. The analysis was translated to [Serbian](#) and launched at the event in Belgrade, which will be followed

by the comprehensive roll-out of the tool for identification of unaccompanied girls at the level of asylum/reception centres.

UPSHIFT PROGRAMME FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Empowering children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable, during their most formative years will ensure that all can be more independent, with increased employability and entrepreneurial spirit. Through a social innovation and entrepreneurship programme **"UPSHIFT"**, we organized 5 cycles of workshops, mentorship and seed funding for teams in different regions across Serbia.

A tailored training program is developed with a strong inclusion component to ensure that children from underserved or marginalized communities can participate, ensuring the participation of girls. Teams identify an issue in their community that they want to tackle and, through the design thinking methodology, with continuous support of their mentors they come up with youth-led initiatives. Participants of one of the cycles, the residents of the reception centre for refugees and migrants in Šid and their classmates from local population, developed and implemented the initiative to enhance social inclusion of refugees/migrants in the local community. They brought together their communities, fostered multicultural dialogue and a spirit of togetherness and openness.

Teams address the issues to enhance social inclusion of their classmates, to provide more space for information and topics rel-

evant to the marginalized youth, or boost habits for better environment protection in their town.

Young girls boost their effective problem-solving skills, and encourage their peers and community members to embrace a more open, and empathic perspective. Such links between adolescents' hands-on approach and their psychological well-being are closely intertwined. Empowering young girls and boys to engage and lead community development initiatives not only boosts their skills but also encourages them to have a more meaningful and purposeful role and thus feel more valued, independent and connected. As young agents of change, their mission makes them stronger, more resilient and better prepared to respond to the pressures of their social environment.

ONLINE VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVE FOR STRONGER YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Through the **"Volunteers on the Net"** initiative young people provide support to their peers through volunteering online, sharing key information on general health, addressing online safety, stigma and discrimination, creating content on coping with stress and mental health. In addition, throughout the state of emergency declared due to COVID-19, the U-Report platform has been used for multiple purposes – disseminating information in a youth-friendly way and rapid assessments to inform the program response, including assessing the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on youth.



The information captured shows that the pandemic caused heightened sensitivity among young people and increased the need for peer interaction, while the physical distancing measures reduced adolescents' opportunities for social contact, and also affected their ability to make plans or maintain the usual routine. Young volunteers and U-Reporters' perspective underlines this, too.

However, many adolescent girls and boys are well positioned to mitigate the deprivation of social stimuli using digital means of connection. Through digital media, social interaction was boosted, and space was created for content made by youth. Volunteer efforts of adolescents and young people in containing and fighting the negative effects of COVID-19, have been thus coordinated through online engagement. The online volunteering initiative and sharing perspective through U-Report established a sense of group effort, connectedness, shared experience and joint coping. As of end of July 2,882 young people have been engaged including young people receiving volunteering support and those engaged in volunteering group activities. They have realized 654 volunteer activities in the course of 7,954 volunteer hours.

For the healthy brain development, environment should not be punitive, it should be nurturing, securing space for children and young people to be heard and their needs satisfied. A lot of stories that young people, particularly girls, created and shared are conveying that message to their parents, peers and other important social networks. Peer support, group volunteering activities and info campaign entailed topics of coping and mental health, time management, maintaining routine and fami-

ly relations. The young volunteers and U-Reporters shared their stories on socializing, solidarity, violence prevention, online safety and fighting stigma. Their engagement and elevating their voice proved useful for ensuring support to their peers, sharing 1st person advice for better coping, adapting and resilience building.

SUPPORTING GENDER-BALANCED PARENTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

COVID-19 pandemic has challenged parenting globally by exacerbating existing vulnerabilities experienced by many families and children. In order to support families in Serbia coping with parenting-related challenges, especially during pandemic, awareness-raising and advocacy activities were tailored by UNICEF Serbia to promote gender-balanced, responsive and playful parenting practices in early childhood. This response has reached so far 2 million people, in the period from April to August 2020.

In this regard, a **strategic partnership with national TV broadcast** agency, launched with the slogan *RTS And UNICEF For Parents*, has been established to jointly promote playful parent-child interactions, fathers' involvement in caregiving, gender-balanced parenting, family well-being and resilience. UNICEF has organized 56 TV appearances so far with the participation of over 45 different experts, parents and influencers to promote and support playful parenting. Seven guest appearances were directly dedicated to gender issues in parenting. Relevant guests of-

fered evidence-based knowledge of how gender-equal parenting and father's engagement support surviving and thriving of young children, the realization of children's rights, preventing domestic and violence against children, and building supportive communities.

UNICEF Serbia has addressed gender-balanced parenting also through a **Social Media Campaign** entitled **Parents in the Spotlight** that included development of diverse communication tools such as a Human Interest Story – Every Day is a Father's Day, as well as visuals and animations highlighting father-child interactions. The human-interest story has been documented with the aim to highlight and promote also the role of Home Visiting Nurses in supporting father's engagement in early playful parent-child interactions. Please consult also the following link: Article 'Every Day is Father's Day.'

In addition to that, promotion of gender-balanced parenting was underpinned through **printed and on-line media** with an average readership of 560,850 reached so far. An article published in **Danas** daily has specifically addressed the role of Home Visiting Nurses in supporting positive parenting practices and incentivising father's engagement in activities with new-borns and small children.

Moreover, the **Networks of Early Intervention Teams** has developed learning resources for parents composed of 8 video materials, including topics such as free play, early development, soothing a crying baby, toilet training, including children in daily routine, etc. One of the videos, entitled **Fathers and Children**, has been dedicated to father's engagement.

In the light of country COVID-19 response to crisis, a **National Guideline/Instruction**

for supporting pregnant women, women during and after delivery and new-born children with suspected or confirmed infection by the new corona virus SARS-CoV-2 has been developed and consolidated with a special focus on breastfeeding. Implementation of such Guidelines will be further supported by UNICEF.

This year's edition of **'World's Breastfeeding Week - Support Breastfeeding for a Healthier Planet,'** was supported by UNICEF Serbia through mass media and social media activities focusing, through a gender-balanced perspective, on both mothers and fathers, when it comes to promoting of such an irreplaceable aspect of parenting during early child's development – breastfeeding.

It's worth announcing that, with UNICEF support, a **Halo Beba Counselling Application** has been developed and prepared to be launched in Autumn 2020. It is conceived as "Family Companion Through Parenting". The structure of this counselling format reflects the shift in understanding the importance of investing in the overall development of children at earliest age, by supporting playful, responsive and gender-balanced parenting, not only the health component of care, through easy-to-use advices and examples including FAQ channel for parents/caregivers.

Further support activities in this area would focus on reinforcing gender-equal roles and practices through capacity building of front line workers, improving the quality and the continuum of family support services (as existing services still often engage only with mothers), as well as through promoting the importance of truly shared parenting and caregiving in fostering optimal child's outcomes.



Following proclamation of the state of emergency on 15 March, UNHCR and its 11 partners remained open and fully operational, with many services transferred online or provided through phone to reduce health risks for persons of concern and service providers. Upon lifting the state of emergency, in close coordination with authorities and full respect of hygiene and health precautions, UNHCR and partners, carefully resumed and increased field presence and activities while maintaining channels of remote counselling that had proven invaluable during lock-down. The COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have exacerbated old and contributed to new vulnerabilities among persons of concern to UNHCR in particular women and children including Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC). In cooperation with SCRM, UNHCR and partners enhanced psychosocial counselling and cultural mediation services, among others, to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

UNHCR and partners provided some 28,000 interventions to asylum-seekers, refugees and potential asylum seekers across the country (of which 28% was legal aid, 3% psychosocial services, 66% mediation and 3% skills training).

They conducted the profiling of over 12,000 refugees and migrants, out of whom 533 were women and 205 were girls. They organized Focus Group Discussions to raise awareness on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, workshops for local and refugee youth focusing on concepts of gender equality and SGBV as well as workshops for UASC peer educators on Community Based Protection of the Rights of UASC in Preventing SGBV Project.

Out of a total of 13 positive asylum decisions made by the Asylum Office, there were 3 women. UNHCR and partners provide legal assistance and an individualized integration support to recognized refugees.

LEGAL AWARENESS AND CONSULTATION

- CRPC referred 35 persons to appropriate legal aid actors including 5 women and 1 girl.
- DRC continued with timely identification of vulnerable cases and first line response. DRC Women Protection Counsellor monitors the implementation of legal procedures and referral pathways in SGBV cases. A total number of 19 female asylum seekers and refugees were provided with legal information and counselling on asylum in Serbia and protection against SGBV.
- Sigma Plus counselled 62 women and 364 men.
- HCIT counselled more than 50 women on asylum procedure.
- BCHR provided free legal aid to asylum seekers and persons granted asylum in Serbia in all 5 asylum and 8 reception centres, including one SGBV survivor accommodated in a Shelter run by Atina NGO. Among those provided with legal counselling were 447 women. BCHR focused on monitoring effective access to asylum during the state of emergency and associated restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic. BCHR presented its annual report Right to Asylum in the Re-

public of Serbia 2019 and Complementary Forms of International Protection in the Republic of Serbia with analysis and recommendations concerning access to the asylum procedure, asylum authorities' practice, asylum seeker accommodation, situation of UASC, situation of SGBV survivors and integration. BCHR called on state authorities to ensure that emergency law abstain from derogation of human and minority rights guaranteed by the constitution and international treaties. BCHR also published its Report on the State of Human Rights in Serbia in the first half of 2020, focusing on respect for human rights during the state of emergency.

PSYCHOSOCIAL COUNSELLING FOR WOMEN REFUGEES

- CRPC identified and supported 293 women and 139 girls including referrals for specialized services. 3 women and 8 girls were supported and empowered within the refugee community for integration purposes.
- Indigo provided 3 PFA and 3 PSS to 4 girls and 1 PFA and 7 PSS to 6 women.
- PIN provided 110 women and girls (92 women, 18 girls) with individual and group psychological counselling, psychosocial support, relevant information and referral for required specific services. 229 psychological counselling sessions and psychoeducational workshops were conducted with women and girls throughout the reporting period, including 13 PFA in-





terventions. PIN conducted 3 psychological assessments for the purpose of asylum procedure on the request of BCHR. The assessments were conducted for 3 SGBV asylum seekers accommodated in AC Banja Koviljača and privately accommodated in Belgrade.

BORDER MONITORING AND LEGAL AWARENESS FOR WOMEN REFUGEES AT TRANSIT POINT

- Sigma Plus observed 40 women and 18 girls as new arrivals.
- HCIT observed 228 women and 82 girls in border areas, including the Transit zones.
- CRPC observed 167 women and 96 girls as newly arrived.
- UNHCR team observed 163 women and 51 girls as new arrivals in the South.
- BCHR focused on the situation at Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport in order to ensure that all refugees who arrive there may access the asylum procedure, referring problematic cases to the proper judicial institutions, including the ECtHR. In cases when BCHR was contacted by women, or a group that includes women, from the transit zone of the Nikola Tesla Airport in order to provide gender sensitive legal counselling, the BCHR team always included one female legal officer and female translator when that was possible. During the reporting period, there was only 1 woman in total who contacted the BCHR team and who was provided with free legal assistance at Nikola Tesla Airport.

WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND GENDER EMPOWERMENT IN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

- DRC initiated training of two eligible asylum-seeking women on human rights and women's rights, to act as focal points and peer support for women and girls accommodated in Krnjača AC. In consultation with an epidemiologist, DRC organized two COVID workshops for women to inform them on how to protect themselves and their families in Banja Koviljača AC. Total number of female participants was 18.
- PIN supported 1 female asylum seeker who provided 53 free online language lessons to the members of the local community. PIN provided support to 1 female asylum seeker in presenting her handmade jewellery and other handicrafts during June *Belgrade Night Market* by providing assistance throughout the complete process of organizing, preparing and realizing her participation at the event.

EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Sigma Plus developed an online platform for learning the Serbian language for asylum seekers and refugees without an immediate access to a teacher. Following the state of emergency, Sigma Plus upgraded its online platform for learning the Serbian language to enable asylum-seeking children access to the platform during suspension of formal education.

- DRC has conducted intensive Serbian language classes for PoCs accommodated in AC Banja Koviljača, including 9 female asylum seekers.
- Indigo organised 555 group activities (recreational, educational and PSS) with children and parents in five RTCs in the south and the east of the country including 37 women and 71 girls.
- Sigma Plus organized 79 group activities (recreational, educational and PSS) with children and parents in RTC Bosilegrad with a total of 95 participants.
- CRPC assisted 4 children in elementary school enrolment, 20 children in formal high school and elementary school education, assisted with homework and better understanding of school subjects and provided 22 cultural mediation services for UASC of Branko Pešić School or Vodovodska Centre.
- PIN provided 53 Serbian language lessons to UASCs and privately accommodated PoCs during the state of emergency.

SGBV IDENTIFICATION AND FOLLOW-UP

- DRC's focused activities, within UNHCR funded project, is on GBV prevention and protection including legal representation before the courts. The DRC Protection Team has regularly visited 3 asylum centres, with on-call visits to other reception/transit centres. In order to provide effective SGBV prevention and response, DRC implements a set of actions at all levels (individual, community and society level).

During the reporting period, a total number of 19 SGBV cases has been identified and followed up by DRC protection team, while they worked altogether with 26 SGBV survivors. DRC established a safe space for women and girls in Krnjača AC where they can benefit from thematic workshops, legal and psychosocial counselling, reproductive health education, etc. It would also serve women and girls with a space to report GBV in confidence for appropriate interventions. DRC also organized an online seminar on SGBV prevention in COVID-19 situation for social workers engaged in governmental centres, in cooperation with partner IDEAS and MOLEVSA.

- Indigo followed 3 SGBV cases in Vranje and Preševo.
- BCHR provided 447 women in total with free legal assistance. The BCHR legal team currently represents 32 women and 9 unaccompanied children in the asylum procedure before the relevant national institutions. Out of these numbers, 17 are survivors of SGBV, both women and UASC. BCHR pays special attention during identification and further representation of members of these particular groups, and fully respects and advocates for gender sensitive approach of asylum process (lawyers, AO officials and translators of the same sex).
- CRPC identified, provided with support and referred 3 female GBV cases. Supported by IRIS network, CRPC conducted seminar on LGBTI+ Sensitive Migration Management (including sexual orientation and gender identity-based asylum claims, position of LGBTI+ persons in mi-



gration etc.) for 60 stakeholders and national and international actors.

- Throughout the reporting period 20 previously identified SGBV survivors have been followed up and provided with psychological support and counselling by PIN, in coordination with all relevant actors (CSW, UNHCR, DRC, ATINA).

PROTECTION AND WELLBEING OF REFUGEE AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

- Eight UNHCR's partners networked expertise and services into a joint fb page offering a wealth of information and services to refugees in six languages.
- BCHR's Youth Project launched a Newsletter on human rights in the time of emergency, practical information related to the pandemic, tips for wellbeing and stories of solidarity. BCHR brought refugee and local youth together to form a buddy system which conducted a first joint workshop on equality, gender and GBV including 2 women. (There were 5 workshops in the first 6 months of 2020). CHR provides child-sensitive information, counselling and support to children to file an asylum claim and guides them through the entire asylum procedure, making sure that the best interests of a child are properly taken into consideration with due diligence. During the reporting period, BCHR provided legal counselling to 100 minors, out of which 39 are UASC.
- Indigo continued to support authorities with cultural mediation, identification of UASC, provision of psychological aid and

support to UASC, organizing outdoor activities and workshops in the RTCs of Bujanovac, Preševo, Pirot and Vranje and the UASC home in Niš. Indigo provided 374 information, referral, education, recreation or interpretation services to UASC and other refugee children in South Serbia. Indigo provided 6 services of PFA and PSS to 4 refugee girls; assisted in further actions and referred and cooperated with the other actors, including SWCs. Indigo provided 8 PFA and PSS services to 6 women.

- PIN conducted 46 counselling sessions and psychoeducational workshops to 87 children (18 girls, 69 boys) in Centres for accommodation of UASCs in Vodovodska, Zmaj and Loznica, AC Banja Koviljača and RC Šid.
- MOLEVSA concluded an MOU with partner IDEAS to collaborate in the development of public policies, instructions and practices for the temporary protection and integration of UASC.
- CRPC was present (directly and online) in 3 MOLEVSA and NGO-run UASC homes, as well as a number of the government run asylum centres to provide direct and remote support.
- During the reporting period a total of 513 UASC children (including 1 girl) were identified and referred to specialized services.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS AT RISK OF STATELESSNESS IN SERBIA

- Praxis continued working with stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness, mainly with members of Roma pop-

ulation. With Praxis assistance, more than 56 persons (including 29 women) had their nationality granted or confirmed.

- Praxis appealed to the Government of Serbia to include persons who do not possess personal documents or residence as beneficiaries of soup kitchens, humanitarian aid and welfare by local authorities, and referred discriminatory practice of local self-governments to the Ombudsperson and/or the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. Praxis also advised the Red Cross to not rely solely on lists of local authorities but include stateless persons or sans papiers in its planned distribution of food packages in Roma settlements.

IDPS

- A total of 546 IDP families received targeted UNHCR-funded COVID-19 aid, when A11 Initiative assisted eighty vulnerable families in Šabac with food parcels and partner Indigo distributed food and hygiene parcels to support the home-schooling of 236 Roma children (114 girls and 122 boys) in Kraljevo, Novi Pazar and Bela Palanka.
- A11 Initiative, presented a report 'Second-order Rights: Social Rights in Light of Austerity Measures (2012-2020)' on the economic and social challenges faced by Roma and IDPs, warning that one in four citizens of Serbia is at risk of poverty. Report warns that austerity measures, and particularly the Law on the Method of Determining the Maximum Number of Employees in the Public Sector, affected women more than men. The ban on employment in the

public sector has disproportionately affected the position of women in the labour market, especially those coming from multiple discriminated groups. Likewise, the report warns this ban also caused women to move into even more precarious jobs, with precarious employment, and income and poor working conditions.

- A11 initiative joined another 51 CSOs to criticize the failure of Parliament to elect a new Commissioner for the Protection of Equality within the legally prescribed timeframe. Non-functioning of this mechanism of protection against discrimination will primarily affect citizens who belong to multiple vulnerable and marginalized groups, particularly those who do not have enough money and resources to turn to the courts in Serbia for protection against discrimination. Therefore, failure of the Parliament to elect a new Commissioner could also have negative consequences on internally displaced women.
- A11 published a study on 'What Life Looks Like in Informal Collective Centres in Serbia.' Data collected for purposes of this research served as a basis for mapping vulnerable men and women in need of aid during the pandemic and state of emergency.
- A11 delivered packages consisting of food, water and hygiene products for 230 most vulnerable households of internally displaced persons (approximately 920 IDP women, men, girls and boys) in four Belgrade municipalities.
- The joint UNHCR-UNDP-UNV project trained 20 new young Roma volunteers (9 women and 11 men) online. They started their 6 months engagement in local self-governments as of May.

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

8 March - International Women's Day - As many as 128 women's rights advocates and key stakeholders (86 women and 42 men) gathered at the National Library of Serbia on 6 March to launch the "Generation Equality" campaign in Serbia on the occasion of the International Women's Day. The event was kicked off with welcoming remarks of the Minister of EU Integration of Serbia, Jadranka Joksimović, Head of the UN Country Team in Serbia Françoise Jacob and Head of EU Delegation to Serbia Sem Fabrizi.

Twelve women's rights activists from different age groups and diverse backgrounds presented achievements in the critical areas of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action over the last 25 years.

UN Women in Serbia also ran a Facebook campaign featuring these activists' inspiring quotes with great success. A total reach on Facebook stands at 213,924, while 31 reports were registered in traditional media.

15 May - International Family Day - UNFPA together with the Cabinet of the Minister for Demography and Population Policy, prof. dr Slavica Đukic Dejanović, marked International Family Day virtually by announcing 10 best submissions for the #DadInQuarantine campaign. Families shared how they spent isolation times.

20 June - World Refugee Day (WRD) - On this occasion, UNHCR partners issued a press release and started two public campaigns entitled #StanimoJedniUzDruge (Let's stand by one another) and #BetterSideOfTheWorld. In the period 18-22 June, local and global WRD video clips were broadcasted three times per hour on screens in central public squares of Belgrade and Niš and on two major TV stations. Partner BCHR gave two WRD-related interviews to N1 TV and Radio Belgrade and partner Psychosocial Innovation Network (PIN) brought refugee teachers and students together to mark WRD. The Representative and Comms Associate gave five WRD interviews. Indigo organized the World Refugee Day marking in Vranje RC, encouraging the participation of refugee girls and women.

11 July - World Population Day - UNFPA marked the World Population Day virtually this year and focused on COVID-19 lessons learned and ways forward in Serbia. Prof. dr Slavica Đukic Dejanović, Minister without portfolio in charge of Demography and Population Policy, John Kennedy Mosoti, UNFPA Director for Serbia, Francine Pickup, UNDP Resident Representative in Serbia, Jelena Hrnjak, NGO Programme Manager and Dr Dragan Stanojević, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy discussed how COVID-19 affected commitments to women and girls in Serbia, how it affected older people, migrations and family organization, what are possible ways to go forward, to mitigate the consequences and to increase resilience of all population groups. Participants concluded that COVID-19 presented us with unseen challenges but they are not insurmountable. Pandemic showed that we need more to fulfil our promise to women and girls who were especially affected, but also to create platforms where voices of older people can be heard in response to a crisis in which they were most affected.

Watch What's next? #WorldPopulationDay
Talk <http://bit.ly/3h0ehZE> (ENG)
<http://bit.ly/2ZrIBrh> (SRB)