

CSOs Addressing Women in Agri and the Pandemic: On Actions, Issues, and Solutions

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Abstract

The beginning of 2020 witnessed the global spread of COVID-19, a non-traditional threat that has since affected every part of life in all countries. In response to this non-traditional threat, national and international governments and bodies have toiled to implement targeted measures to contain the spread of the pandemic, causing many official activities and events held online, the notable example being education institutions and civil society organizations outright opting to conduct their programs online for about a year. This entire process has created challenges for each sector; however, CSOs have been faced with a distinct set of difficulties arising from this non-traditional threat in terms of their practical functionality due to the conventionally central role of face-to-face interactions in their organizational activities.

This study determines the current state of two civil society organizations working to address the needs of women in Agri along with the issues they have encountered and the solutions they have come up with during the pandemic. The study employed semi-structured interviews held during face-to-face meetings with the presidents of both CSOs. The interviewers asked 10 questions to them. The study primarily found that CSOs had suffered a negative impact due to the pandemic.

Keywords: *Coronavirus (COVID-19); women; civil society organizations; workload; violence*

Civil Society Organisations and the Pandemic

A pandemic is defined as “the spread of a disease or an infectious agent in countries, continents, or even much wider areas and the entire world” (Ministry of Health, 2020). The current pandemic of COVID-19 has affected Turkey significantly as it as the entire world leading the country to declare a state of pandemic starting on 11.03.2020, i.e., the day of the first case.

The onset of the pandemic in early 2020 immediately made its pervasive effects known in almost all parts of life. A look at the problems and implications arising from the pandemic reveals an important fact: the pandemic is a non-traditional threat that is not limited only to matters of health. The pandemic has created concurrent problems in economic, social, and cultural spheres. Specifically, when considered from an economic perspective, it becomes clear that the negative effects of the pandemic have affected the non-traditional security of entire communities in all countries.

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This unprecedented pandemic crisis caught the world by surprise and resulted in a recession in every country, regardless of economic development. However, the pandemic has seen specifically underdeveloped countries and regions within countries with vulnerable economies seeking tougher methods to address the issues arising from the crisis.

More specifically, the repercussions of the pandemic in business culminated in a search for new corporate identities, whereas public bodies and the private sector entered a process of adaptation to the new working conditions shaped by restrictions. Some businesses have managed to keep to their performance levels with financial support, while others have found themselves on the verge of going out of business. However, public bodies, to respond to the new conditions, implemented certain measures such as flexible working hours and postponement of activities.

As a distinct sector affected by the pandemic, the civil society is conceptually based on combinations of varying perspectives in social sciences. In its simplest form, “the concept of civil society in Western societies represents a social area that builds on certain civil freedoms granted to the urban middle class and enjoys growth through decentralized independent or autonomous bodies” (Erdoğan Tosun, 2001: 31). Therefore, the civil society is an autonomous area, i.e., not dependent on the state, and may be defined, in a way, as “an area of communities that bring together individuals that can separate themselves from the state” (Çaha, 2007: 3), adding a civil element to state-individual relations with the balance tilted in favor of the individual rather than the state. Following this logic, civil society organizations are “key actors that move civil society” (Keyman, 2020: 241).

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are undoubtedly the group that have shouldered the most severe impact during this process. The pandemic has created numerous problems and disruptions to CSOs in terms of both their activities and capacities. The pandemic has also caused various studies that endeavoured to identify the extent to which CSOs had been affected by this process, offering valuable insights on the matters addressed in this chapter. Among these studies, the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV) studied the impact of COVID-19 on the activities of civil society organizations through a survey, the results of which have been compiled in its publication titled “The Impact of COVID-19 Outbreak on Civil Society Organizations Operating in Turkey Survey II Report” dated September 2020. The survey found that 78% of 141 responding CSOs underlined the impact of the pandemic on conferences, seminars, and demonstrations, etc., while 60% observed the same impact on their training activities. Moreover, some of the responding CSOs had stopped their resource development (39%) or territory activities and service provision (38%) and 16% observed the impact of the pandemic on their advocacy. Finally, 16 responding CSOs stated that their activities had come to a halt altogether (TÜSEV, 2020: 12).

In another attempt to identify the impact of the pandemic, Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research (DISA) conducted “Challenges, Trends, and Opportunities in Pandemic and Female Gender in Diyarbakır” in 2020. This study interacted with 11 CSOs to look into the mechanisms and extent of the effects of the pandemic on women and CSOs. The study identified that CSOs had been contacted by members of their communities most commonly on matters relating to “in-kind support, food aid, and general violence.” Additionally, an increase was found in the rate of unemployment and violence against women and in the resulting demand for legal aid (DISA, 2020: 32).



The same report also researched into how 11 CSOs based in Diyarbakır had been affected by the pandemic and the solutions they had put in place in response. Among the responding CSOs, only 1 reported no significant effect arising from the pandemic owing to its members' familiarity with and aptitude in technology, while the remaining CSOs reported their experience with the negative effects of the pandemic in various aspects of their work. CSOs encountered difficulties mainly in "training/awareness-raising, in-house, and general meetings, solidarity visits, conventions, panels, summits, and projects, etc." (DISA, 2020: 40). The most common tool CSOs had employed to cope with these difficulties was their more frequent use of telephone interviews, online meetings, and smaller audiences (DISA, 2020: 41).

As the third leg in the studies on the impact of the pandemic on CSOs, the KAMER Foundation prepared an "Activity Report for Pandemic Period" covering the findings of a study implemented with women in 20 provinces in Turkey in the period between 01.04.2020 and 31.05.2020. The report indicates that 12.1% of the responding women had not enjoyed a regular flow of income before the pandemic and 61.8% of families living on minimum wage had lost their income in whole or in part along with the pandemic (KAMER, 2021).

Another consequence of the pandemic has come to the fore with the mounting visibility of violence against women with calls to "stay at home" causing wider possibilities of violence against women (Yaman, 2020: 296). In fact, UN Women's Report titled "COVID-19 and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls" shows that 243 million women and girls aged 15–49 have been exposed to physical and sexual violence in the last 12 months (UN Women, 2020). What is more, the summary report of the "Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 Implication in Turkey" conducted again by UN Women in 2020 offers an insight into important findings concerning the implications of the pandemic for women and men. This report established multiple striking findings, indicating that women's participation in the labor market is lower than men; surveyed women experience a higher level of job loss than men; women experience increased domestic work; more women have experienced the negative effects of COVID-19 on their mental/emotional health; women experience more difficulty in accessing basic supplies and services; and more women refer to their incidents of violence against women (UN Women, 2020: 6–9).

We Will Stop Femicide Platform published specific data to report that 300 women were murdered and 171 women were "found dead under suspicious circumstances" in 2020. According to the report, the cause of death could not be identified for 182 of the femicide victims, while 22 women were killed for economic reasons and 96 for asking for a divorce, refusing a marriage proposal, or refusing romantic advances. The report emphasizes a rise in domestic violence following the restrictions put in place in March 2020 (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu 2020 Raporu, 2021).

Consequently, COVID-19 is far from being a driver for gender equality and even gives way to rather distinct experiences of issues for women and men. The pandemic has affected women more negatively due to "unemployment, loss of income and impoverishment, increased care load, increased unpaid work, risk of COVID-19 transmission at work, and increased violence" (Petrol-İş Kadın Dergisi, 2020).

The aforementioned studies have painted a clear picture regarding the distinct nature of the effects of the pandemic on women and CSOs. With this perspective, interviews were

conducted with two CSOs actively involved in women's issues and gender in Agri under this study with the aim of identifying their experiences of the implications of the pandemic. The study is important for the identification of issues affecting CSOs in Agri based on the assumption that CSOs around Turkey have experienced the negative effects of the pandemic in their activities and performance. The study structured its sample with the two CSOs that were the most active in the field of women's needs among many CSOs operating in the province, which undoubtedly allowed it to reach significant conclusions.

CSOs in Agri and the Pandemic

CSOs have experienced individually varying sets of problems during the pandemic, but they appear to have created the same consequences for all of them. Some CSOs have come to the point of going out of operation, while others suspended their activities or tried carrying their events over to online platforms. CSOs have obviously experienced unprecedented difficulties in their operations and found it hard to secure the buy-in of their prospective participants in their attempts to maintain their level of activity online. Furthermore, another issue of importance emerged with CSOs suffering from insufficient resources already this time facing financial problems due to their increased need for technical infrastructure and equipment during the pandemic.

Some background on the general socio-economic structure in Agri will be useful before moving on to the content of the study. The Socio-Economic Development Ranking Survey of Provinces and Regions (SEGE-2011) had placed the province of Agri at the 79th rank in Turkey in terms of development in 2011, while the same survey, when repeated in 2017, saw Agri receding to the 80th rank for the same indicator. The survey assessed provinces against the criteria of demographics, employment, education, healthcare, competitive and innovative capacity, financial means, accessibility, and quality of life and found Agri among the provinces that had not secured any progress in the relevant rankings (SEGE 2011, SEGE 2017).

The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) conducted a "Gender Equality Scorecard of Turkey's 81 Provinces" to analyse the state of gender equality, political and economic representation, participation in production, and participation in education for women in every province in Turkey. Accordingly, Agri ranked 81st in the gender inequality index in 2012, while this ranking went up to 62nd in 2015. A similar study undertaken in 2017 saw Agri recede to the 81st rank. Finally, a study held in 2020 once again registered a rise to the 57th rank for Agri among 81 provinces in the same indicator (TEPAV, 2020).

Civil society organizations hold an important place in a society both as a guide and an engine for state-society-individual relations. Specifically, CSOs represent a significant force in the expression of and responses to local demands. CSOs must stay close to all segments of society by reason of their structure and areas of activity. An overview of the general structure shaping the CSOs active in Agri finds various activities undertaken and causes addressed by the relevant organizations. In Agri, there are CSOs active in the fields of youth, students, agriculture and livestock, education and training, poverty, culture, tourism, arts, and history (Çaha *et al.*, 2013: 47).

As stated above, the province of Agri is not at the desired level in terms of its economy and social development among the provinces of Turkey, making it even harder for the province to deal with the implications of the pandemic for its non-traditional security. However, this



study is considered to offer some preliminary insight into the activities undertaken by CSOs addressing the fields of women and gender during the pandemic, as well as their experience of the effects of the pandemic, such insight made possible through the consideration of two most active CSOs in the field of women in a province affected severely by the pandemic.

Methodology

This study considered two CSOs active in the field of women in Agri to determine their state of affairs, especially during the pandemic.

Two CSOs active in the central district of Agri were selected for the sample of the study. The sample size was kept limited due to the province's small stock of CSOs in general and the scarcity of any activities undertaken by women in the province. The research process examined the following aspects:

- Range of activities implemented during the pandemic
- Implications of pandemic restrictions
- Activities undertaken during the pandemic
- Need for additional financial support during the pandemic
- Observations on the workload of women during the pandemic
- Suggested solutions

For the purposes of the study, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the presidents of both CSOs, who were asked a set of questions through semi-structured interviews. The names of the CSOs were coded as S1 and S2. The responses of the presidents to the questions asked under the study were audio-recorded with their consent and analyzed after the fact. Before the interviews, the presidents of the selected CSOs were contacted on the phone and informed here on the aim and scope of the study. After the preliminary information call, the authors asked the presidents for interviews and their agreement to these requests was followed by appointment arrangements. The interviews were conducted face to face and in line with social distancing rules at the respective offices of the CSO presidents.

Findings

Study data were collected between 03.02.2021 and 19.02.2021. Table 1 shows the responses of the presidents to the questions posed in the interview that asked about their CSO's name, type, founding year, area of activity, and number of members/volunteers.

Table 1. General Information on CSOs

CSO Name	CSO Type	Founding Year	Area of Activity/Target Groups	Number of Members/Volunteers (persons)
S1	Foundation	2006	Women and girls	200
S2	Association	2013	Women and family	200

S1 was established in 1997 as a CSO organized in 20 provinces of Turkey and has been active in Agri since 2006. S1 stated that its status as a foundation meant that they operated with volunteers instead of members and was at that time worked with around 200 volunteers in and around Agri. S1 indicated that the focus of their main activities as women and girls, who also represented their target groups.

S2 was established as an organization active throughout Turkey in 2013 but started its activities in Agri in 2018. At the time of the interview, S2 had affiliated organizations in 50 provinces of Turkey and mainly focused on women and family.

It is, in fact, a common misconception that we only work to combat violence against women. This is not the case. We have local, national, and international activities... There are projects where we cooperate international organizations. We have our workshops. We implement symposiums held at the national level. Additionally, we have collaborations with other organizations at the local level to protect and strengthen the family (S2).

The study posed 6 open-ended questions classified into thematic groups.

Range of Activities during the Pandemic

The pandemic has affected the CSOs active in Agri negatively as it has those operating in and around Turkey. In response, CSOs have not only reduced the number of their activities but also tried various strategies in their event organization. S1 stated that they worked every day throughout this process. After indicating that they used to work every day between 8.30 am and 5 pm before the pandemic, S1 described the scope of their work for women as their target audience during the pandemic to cover home visits and interviews held in compliance with pandemic requirements, as well as telephone interviews they could conduct with the telephone numbers they had collected from data of previous years.

However, S2 expresses his experience as follows:

The range of activities changed, of course. The pandemic affected us greatly. All of our face-to-face work was left unfinished. We have postponed them for the time being. Our face-to-face activities may resume soon. What was Furthermore, we had to cancel our extensive face-to-face training. We just couldn't take the risk health-wise. We continue with our remaining activities online.

Implications of Pandemic Restrictions

The responding CSOs were affected by the restrictions at different levels.

Our efficiency in activities has surely suffered; we cannot work with great efficiency anymore. We used to try keeping our audience per meeting at or over 50 women, while this number is 15 at best now. We have had to curb the number of participants, and this means that we can reach fewer women now. We used to work with 1000 women on average every year, but this figure dropped rather significantly, down to 200, this year. But every province reached only 600–700 women due to the pandemic (S1).

S2 described how the restrictions had a major impact on their organization, stating that they had organized many events online because of the pandemic, making physical gatherings impossible and emphasized that they had changed their office hours due to the pandemic restrictions.



Activities Held during the Pandemic

The pandemic brought forward a distinct impact on the diversification of events organized by CSOs. CSOs are observed to have added to their routine work field activities to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic specifically following the outbreak. The responding CSOs appear to have maintained their level of pre-pandemic activities, while also adding to that specific activities for COVID-19.

During the pandemic, we tried meeting specific needs. Partly because of that and partly because the demands of women were more economic, we observed a higher incidence of economic violence, which, at times, manifested as physical violence because all men were at home and this restricted the area available to women. The only area where almost all the women felt comfortable was their home. I am saying this for those who have already been finding going out more difficult. Along with the pandemic, that space has been taken away from them because it, too, has been expropriated by men. Our routine activities mainly involve informing women about their rights. We refer women victims of violence to units where they can find support. We raise their awareness of violence; we tell them about the types of violence. These are our routine activities. Along with the pandemic, we called women on the phone to look into how we could meet their needs – it could be installing EBA TV² or if they needed a television at home, we tried and managed to find ways to cover that need. We also provided supplies to women who had run out of food or hygiene products at home. We offered women economic support. The pandemic has brought us an additional burden in terms of our activities. This process saw us interview 600 women. This is a study of their experiences during the pandemic. We started it last year. We interviewed 5 to 7 women per day. We contacted women who could not come to the interviews on the phone. We paid visits to women who did not own a phone, took the necessary measures. We listened to them to understand how their lives had changed with the pandemic and we offered them solutions and guidance. This was how we went on with our activities (S1).

S2, on the other hand, indicated that they gravitated more toward training events and meetings, avoiding physical field activities, and they opted to reach their members on WhatsApp groups.

Low-income families in Agri were faced with more immediate negative consequences in this process. The tendency of women to regard CSOs as sources of assistance became even more visible during this period. Specifically, CSOs that had already been in contact with families of lower socio-economic status notably for their needs in education, healthcare, and food supply received a higher incidence of requests for this assistance along with the pandemic. This increase in the requests from women are consistent with the results specified in the “Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19 Implication in Turkey” study by UN Women in 2020.

² t.n. A public broadcast channel has been established for remote formal education.

Need for Additional Financial Support during the Pandemic

The pandemic brought to the agenda the possible need of CSOs for additional financial resources due to their heightened operational burden. The presidents of the two CSOs shared their experiences concerning this matter as follows:

No, we did not need additional financial support. We get that from the foundation already. We don't get to hear about the details of funding sources very often; such information is not shared with us as we are a branch. But, Avon did provide some support. Headquarters set a specific figure for each province. The Foundation then divided Avon's financial support in proportion to the population of provinces and distributed it to all provinces. We used this support to provide women with hygiene products, foodstuffs, TVs, or any other items needed (S1).

We are not charity and so, not in a position to deliver aid to those in need. We received requests for aid from women whose spouses had been made redundant. We have them in contact with the relevant institutions. We were not supported by any party as we did not have any sponsors. During this period, the most common request we received from women was for employment, as most of their spouses had been made redundant... For food aid and any other needs... (S2).

As can be seen here, both CSOs had varying experiences with respect to their offers of financial support. S1 received support from their headquarters and sponsors and redirected it to those in need, while S2 took the route of receiving requests from those in need, forwarding them to the agencies or institutions of relevance and ensuring that the necessities were provided in good coordination.

Observations on the Workload of Women during the Pandemic

Women's workloads have seen an increased compared to the pre-pandemic period. In fact, ILO (2020) emphasizes that the pandemic has deepened gender inequalities and created global crises, especially with respect to the care burden. Accordingly, under normal circumstances, women perform a daily average of 4 h and 25 min of unpaid care work against the 1 h and 23 min of the same work done by men. The pandemic, along with the resulting closure of schools, childcare, and other care facilities, has significantly increased the time spent in unpaid care work at home.

Specifically, the pandemic has appeared as an additional factor deepening the social perception arising from gender roles that domestic work falls in the responsibility of women.

The domestic roles assumed by women in their private spaces as the only individuals deemed by gender roles to be responsible for domestic labor and childcare are observed to have increased significantly, with the new practices added to their day-to-day routine including taking care of their children's studies, homework, and activities in remote education; having to shoulder domestic labor alone while their normal routine had used to allowed them to be assisted by cleaners, babysitters, or family elders; and securing better hygiene more carefully around the house (Zeybekoğlu Akbaş & Dursun, 2020: 89).

What is more, the "Effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women's Working and Household Life (2020)" report prepared by the Istanbul Political Research Institute emphasizes that the



great majority of women who undertake care work are married women who depend on their spouse for household income.

In this context, this territory study asked the presidents of the CSOs their observations to whether the pandemic had brought any additional workload to women. In response, S1 confirmed, on the basis of their experience, that women were faced with a heavier workload. More specifically, S1 stated that school children needed help from their mothers for both their self-care and homework and underlined how this process narrowed down the space available to women. Accordingly, women had tended to work and engage in social interactions outside before the pandemic, whereas the pandemic had deprived them of these possibilities. Consequently, women became occupied with housework and care on one hand and with further efforts to find solutions to problems of livelihood on the other.

S2, in their response, related experiences similar to those of S1. Indicating how women assumed a heavier workload in the household, S2 emphasized that women always had household duties and responsibilities even during times of normality, but the pandemic saw them being left alone with the duty of providing all services required for the household, including cooking and cleaning. Essentially, this situation affected both working and unemployed women. Working women had already been known to experience limitations both in their working environments and at home. S2, describing how men did help women at home to a certain degree, stated that this process made it easier for men to empathize with women. S2 also added that children experienced the negative effects of the pandemic to the same extent as women and highlighted to the periodic increase in violence owing to the psychological pressures arising from families living in the same household day in and day out.

Discussions concerning the increased domestic workload of women were also tackled on the basis of specific differences in the experiences of women with distinct characteristics since there appear to be variations in the consequences associated with married women with children and single women without children. Women with children assume the primary responsibility for domestic labor, including care and cleaning in the household. Deniz Kandiyoti's interview on the subject offers more insight into the matter (Gazete Duvar, 2021). Kandiyoti describes the exorbitant increase in the responsibilities and roles assumed by women in this process and emphasizes that the role of women as coordinators was conjoined with another role for women, this time as the actor.

...Of course. Let's say you used to get help for household cleaning. That is not available anymore. You are the cleaner. There is no teacher? You are the teacher. Is a member of the household ill? You are their carer. Does your child does not have a friend? You are that friend. See, what was the reason why the modern woman enjoyed a lighter workload? It was their shift from execution to coordination. Yes, they had to plan many things at the same time – what to buy, when to cook what, and where to leave the child, etc. But, the modern woman could give themselves some room by making all of these easier through both paid services like catering and services available in the community. There is surely a difference here with women with children. Daily management is combined here with childcare, which the mother, again the woman, coordinates.

The pandemic surely had a negative impact on not only unemployed women, but also working women. Working women continue to undertake domestic labor and to provide for their

children's meals and care, as well as household cleaning. The "Research on the Effects of the COVID-19 Outbreak for Women Employees" was implemented with 339 private companies in cooperation between TUSIAD, TURKONFED, and the United Nations Women (UN Women) in Turkey between March and June 2020. According to this study, the most important problems women workers encounter includes mounting domestic labor and care responsibilities 99%; increased remote workload with 97%; and feelings of stress, anxiety, and burnout with 95% (TÜSIAD, 2020).

Calls to "Stay home" have become a part of, and a slogan for, our daily lives on grounds of health and safety; however, in a way, they have normalized women working double time and added further visibility to the psychosocial issues resulting from this new burden.

Suggested Solutions

Both the problems women encountered during the pandemic and the solutions suggested for the issues appear to vary among provinces and regions and around the country.

The solutions suggested by the CSOs interviewed for the territory study may be categorized under two headings. First, S1 suggested more economically oriented solutions, according to which women should be provided with support to achieve economic relief and such support should cover their needs for employment, education, food, and hygiene packages.

S2, on the other hand, suggests a solution whereby psychologists may volunteer to offer online psychological support or online therapy to women. Accordingly, CSOs should reorganize their main areas of activities to offer contemporary psycho-social support. Public institutions have started to establish relevant in-house units to cover such needs. More specifically, CSOs operating in the field of women should establish support mechanisms to secure their outreach to the target audience.

As can be seen, the pandemic allowed CSOs to identify their shortcomings and needs by breaking down their ranges of activities between pre- and post-pandemic periods in the assessment of their corporate identities.

Conclusion and Assessment

The pandemic brought along significant changes to everyone's life when considered with its local, national, and international impacts and resulted in a process of reconstruction of lifestyles for the sake of good health, while all possibilities and amenities on offer in the modern world turned out to fall short during the pandemic. At this point, the pandemic process may be considered an opportunity for CSOs to reflect on their current organizational capacity. In fact, their organizational capacities had been shaped to prepare for conditions as usual; however, the pandemic has made it clear that every organization must consider extraordinary conditions while building their capacity, as well. This, in turn, should lead CSOs to reflect on their activities and accessibility in terms of the technical equipment or financial capacity available to them, etc. and act more proactively in their service offer.

In Turkey, as has been the case around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has made an impact on the public and private sectors and civil society organizations and brought into play new models of working conditions and ways of doing business.



CSOs, as a sector bearing the negative consequences of this process, experienced a series of transformations in terms of both their methods of working and their range of activities. More specifically, the two CSOs active for women in Agri also appear to have encountered myriad problems, as observed during their interviews.

The study indicates that CSOs have encountered a larger number of problems arising from the pandemic restrictions, which are most visible in their outreach to their target audiences. Accordingly, the CSOs had to postpone or cancel some of their activities. However, while the individual CSOs report no issues with funding or no need for additional parts during this period, women, the main target audience of these CSOs, appear to have approached them with demands for support more commonly. A CSOs considered in the study tried covering these demands of women with the help of a sponsor and the other CSO offered them support with its referrals to relevant institutions. In their service delivery, CSOs appear to have opted for online activities during the pandemic, while lagging behind in their territory work, and in fact, only one CSO in the study has been able to conduct activities in the territory.

Both CSOs interviewed informed the study that women in Agri needed economic and psychological support particular. Women were primarily exposed to further exclusion from the labor force due to the rise in unemployment because of the pandemic. This exposure is much more visible in families of lower socioeconomic status. Unemployment in the household is observed to create a tense home environment, which is conducive to more acts of violence against women. Another problem woman encounter at home relates to their increased workload with cleaning, cooking, and care services. The information gathered from the CSOs in Agri shows that this increased workload invariably applies without exception to both working and unemployed women.

The most important solutions suggested to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 involve targeted measures to reduce unemployment and mechanisms to offer psychological support to women. At this point, CSOs must cooperate with the relevant institutions and implement strategic measures to meet the urgent needs of women, e.g., for food, employment, or accommodation, and such measures must be implemented in a good coordination. Strictly speaking, CSOs working on similar causes getting together to find solutions to emerging problems may be considered a way forward in the pandemic conditions, one that holds the potential to create positive externality.

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