



NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
ON GENDER EQUALITY



# COVID-19 IMPACT ON WOMEN & GIRLS IN MONGOLIA

March 2021



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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ADB</b>	Asian Development Bank
<b>COVID-19</b>	The SARS-CoV2 respiratory virus
<b>CWD</b>	Children with Disabilities
<b>DV</b>	Domestic Violence
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GOM</b>	Government of Mongolia
<b>HDC</b>	Health Development Centre
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization of Migration
<b>LEWIE</b>	Local Economy Wide Impact Evaluation Models
<b>LLC</b>	Limited Liability Company
<b>LPGE</b>	Law on Promoting Gender Equality
<b>MECS</b>	Ministry of Education and Science
<b>MNCCI</b>	Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>MLSP</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
<b>MNT</b>	Mongolian Tugrik (currency)
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
<b>MEM</b>	National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring
<b>NCCD</b>	National Centre for Communicable Disease
<b>NCGE</b>	National Committee on Gender Equality
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NSO</b>	National Statistics Office
<b>OSSC</b>	One-Stop Service Centre
<b>PCCE</b>	Philanthropy Centre for Children and the Elderly
<b>PWD</b>	Person with Disabilities
<b>RILSP</b>	Research Institute of Labour and Social Protection
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SEC</b>	State Emergency Committee
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

### Glossary

	<b>Aimag</b>	Province
	<b>Bagh</b>	The smallest administrative unit in a soum
	<b>Dzud</b>	Severe weather; disaster; heavy snowfall in winter or severe icy conditions
	<b>Ger</b>	The traditional Mongolian dwelling
	<b>Ger district</b>	Areas located on the outskirts of the city centres. Home to a significant part of the population. They have limited access to infrastructure and utilities.
	<b>Khashaa</b>	Fenced plot of land by an owner of ger district resident
	<b>Otor</b>	Long-distance migration of Mongolian herders to fatten livestock for the winter
	<b>Soum</b>	A territorial administrative unit which is subordinate to an aimag

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## Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has escalated into health and socio-economic crises in Mongolia and globally. These come with many negative implications for gender equality and could further exacerbate existing inequalities. Due to the rapid spread of the virus, many countries were forced to impose full or partial restrictions on the movement of people. Since the start of restrictions declared already in January 2020 in Mongolia, the government took a series of response actions including quarantines, isolations and the closure of schools and kindergartens and other public facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and well-being of its citizens as well as the stability of the economic and social systems.

A collective and comprehensive response is required to prevent the loss of lives and livelihoods, and to address the evolving humanitarian crisis in Mongolia. UNDP, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the National Committee on Gender Equality of Mongolia (NCGE), joined together to conduct this impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls in Mongolia. The assessment sheds light on the target group's specific needs and priorities for recovery measures and aims to assist the Government of Mongolia to mitigate the impacts and increase women's and girls' resilience. The assessment found that the COVID-19 pandemic is widening the socio-economic, educational and gender inequalities, while affecting equality in terms of human rights and livelihoods of the urban and rural communities in Mongolia. This assessment also provides findings on the various effects of the crisis and coping strategies with a particular focus on gendered socio-economic impacts, such as women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, domestic violence, access to essential social services and insights on the impacts of the all-out readiness strict lockdown measures imposed by the Government of Mongolia intermittently from 20 November 2020 through 22 February 2021.

The Government of the Mongolia has taken important steps to address the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 crisis but much more remains to be done. The response to and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis must be centred on the needs of the Mongolian people and should ensure the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing gender inequalities and promoting social inclusion. The Government should also consider further gender-responsive policy options to ensure human rights in public service delivery, improve prevention and the early identification of gender-based and domestic violence, continue the current social protection measures, strengthen the digital capacity and skills of women, foster women's entrepreneurship and engagement in decent work, and increase women's participation in the decision-making process related to the COVID-19 response and recovery.

We remain committed to support the Government of Mongolia and the people of Mongolia in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and leaving no one behind. We hope that the perspectives and recommendations of this assessment will support further actions from the Government for empowering all Mongolian women and girls and building forward better.

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COVID-19 has massively affected the livelihood of Mongolians, especially vulnerable women. COVID-19 has massively affected the livelihood of Mongolians, especially vulnerable women. This study captures the main trends and findings on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in Mongolia in four interlinked areas—social service, employment and income, government response measures and vulnerability—with the following threefold objectives:

- Identify the challenges faced by women and girls in their daily lives, livelihoods, autonomy and decision making.
- Assess the COVID-19 impacts on and the nature and extent of the health and socio-economic crisis on women and girls.
- Provide recommendations on targeted policy reform measures and identify gender gaps that address the challenges of increasing women’s and girls’ decision making and employment.

Moreover, the study intends to identify what support women and girls need from the community and government for responding to the current pandemic and preparation for possible future crises. The data for this assessment were collected between 20 November and 15 December 2020, remotely through desk reviews and in-depth telephone interviews due to the pandemic situation. A total of 100 respondents (68 females and 32 males) were interviewed, who live and work in Zavkhan, Khentii, Dundgovi aimags and Ulaanbaatar city.

The study results show that COVID-19 (the coronavirus) is increasing inequality in the economy, education, human rights and livelihoods of the community in urban and rural areas. These rising inequalities could threaten the successes and achievements made towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, the study’s findings help the related parties understand the potential impacts of COVID-19 on women’s and girls’ lives and livelihoods and provide a direction for action.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Social services



- Compared to men, more women are working on the front lines and fighting against the coronavirus pandemic. Women make up 81.9 percent of all health workers in Mongolia<sup>1</sup> and 70 percent globally.<sup>2</sup> Dependants of the front-line workers need explicit care and attention. The societal and parental roles of health care workers also need to be taken into account. Their dependants, especially children of all ages, elderly parents and disabled family members are spending the day without care and attention. As of 15 December 2020, 41 health workers in Mongolia have been infected with COVID-19.<sup>3</sup> While the data provided are not disaggregated by gender, given the high proportion of women in the sector it can be assumed that more women than men in this total have been infected.

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Health Development (HDC). 2019. Health indicators Mongolia.  
<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization (WHO). 2019. A Gender and Equity Analysis of the Global Health and Social Workforce.  
<sup>3</sup> Working group members online meeting about health workers on the front line and current situation. 15 Dec 2020. See: <http://parliament.mn/n/9rbyn>

- During the quarantine period, it was difficult for women, especially women with disabilities and pregnant women, to get urgent medical services. Some people with disabilities could not get their necessary medicine during the quarantine. Maternal mortality increased by 27.8 percent during the pandemic period comparing to the past three years. From March to October 2020, there were five registered cases of maternal mortality in Bayan-Ulgii aimag and the reasons were connected with the fear of spreading coronavirus from the hospital and primary health services.<sup>4</sup>
- Women have more mental health risks than men due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the women interviewed confirmed that, due to prevention measures and lockdowns, crowding indoors and the increased burden of unpaid work at home have negatively impacted women's mental health and increased their emotional distress.
- Increased work burdens in the home for girls and women have possibly impacted on girls' educational attainments. Girls living in ger district or remote areas tend to perform more care work, which in turn limits their quality of well-being and study time. Remote learning (by telephone or electronic devices) widens the educational gap and reduces interaction with teachers. Likewise, the lack of basic facilities is amplifying educational inequalities.
- Many teachers have inadequate or no previous online teaching experience, and don't have access to the necessary technological infrastructure and digital devices for working from home. So, teachers are facing many challenges that hinder their work effectiveness and efficiency and teaching productivity. They also have less interaction and communication with students and their parents. The majority of the teachers in Mongolia are women, and their increased household burdens also limit their professional performance when working online from home. An informant reported buying equipment so that they could continue teaching online and paying by themselves all the work-related expenditures such as phone bills and network coverage associated with remote teaching.
- Mental health challenges faced by parents during quarantine negatively impact children's behavioural, physical and emotional well-being.
- Domestic and gender-based violence is on the rise as the country put in place various levels of restrictions and lockdowns to tackle the coronavirus. Although helpline calls for domestic violence are decreasing, domestic violence crimes listed by the police are on the increase. The COVID-19 crisis has increased the risks for women and girls, the elderly and disabled, to experience violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse.

### Employment and income



- The economy of Mongolia has been severely hit by the measures to respond to COVID-19. As a result, most micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), a sector largely dominated by women, are facing challenges in terms of cash flow, reduced supply and demand, and disruption in the value chains. A large number of small enterprises are unable to pay rent and interest on bank loans. The

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Mongolia. November 2020. Situation report No. 5 on COVID-19 response.



sector is experiencing declines in revenue and is not confident of its economic resilience.

- According to the Law on Labour Code of Mongolia,<sup>5</sup> all enterprises should pay compensation to their employees for their idle time when the employees can't come to work due to a force majeure event. The COVID-19 pandemic invokes force majeure provisions. Thus, during the pandemic period, employers are obligated to pay such compensation to their employees. However, when asked about their pre-crisis financial situation and idle time compensation, many enterprises had financial difficulties even before the lockdown measures, and their employees didn't receive any such compensation.
- There are no available data on nor a legal definition of women-owned business. Officially defining women-owned business appropriately to the Mongolian context is crucial to create gender statistics for designing policies to support women-owned enterprises in accessing support programmes during emergencies and beyond. There is a lack or no availability of technical assistance and mentoring support to develop business continuity plans and business model adjustments for women-owned MSMEs.
- Freelance workers with less or no income are struggling with loan repayments, social insurance, taxes and rent. This is most commonly observable in the trade and service sectors, where most female informal workers are employed and that have closed due to government restriction and lockdown measures.
- Women and girls bear an unequal share of unpaid care and the domestic work burden. Due to the prevention measures and lockdowns, unpaid care and domestic work have increased significantly for women and girls, negatively impacting their education, self-care and development. Many older women mentioned that they needed to take care of their grandchildren due to the closure of kindergartens and schools. The unequal distribution of domestic work and responsibilities is linked to social norms and gender stereotypes.
- Support from family networks decreased during the pandemic and negatively impacted the income of families and their members. Also mostly reduced were emotional or non-physical support, help with household chores, and care for children, elderly and disabled dependants.

### Government responses to the COVID-19 crisis



- Government allowances supported the vulnerable during the COVID-19 crisis. Interviewees and the statistics confirmed that food stamps and pensions went to single-headed families with three or more children, and generally the poorest and most vulnerable women benefited. Household consumption increased in the 2nd and 3rd quarter, after a fall in the 1st quarter of 2020. Child money and subsidies of social insurance and tax redemptions were provided as direct income to households.
- Informants felt that there were conflicting messages from national and local decision makers and law enforcement activities and pointed to the lack of decisions on mitigation measures, including online lesson implementation and benefits to business entities. Informal workers or family-owned businesses, for which women mostly work voluntarily or are unpaid, complained that the stimulus

<sup>5</sup> Law on Labour Code, Article 56.

intervention measures were not accessible for them as they are not listed under the formal social insurance system—yet their businesses were suspended due to the Government’s decisions.

- There is a stark gender inequality in the decision-making processes. The Law on Promoting Gender Equality is poorly enforced. While a gender quota for decision-making bodies would improve the chances that women’s priorities and needs are addressed during emergencies, the State Emergency Commission currently has only 3 of 26 members, 11.5 percent, who are women.

### Vulnerable groups



- Pre-existing poverty and inequality are likely to increase with the impacts of COVID-19, with a significant negative impact on vulnerable women and girls including herders, people with disabilities, older women and migrants, especially those in rural areas. Many of them are at high risk of slipping into deeper poverty due to unemployment, underemployment and income loss.
- The pandemic has impacted the nutrition security of many poor households, including its members who are women and girls.
- The COVID-19 crisis has increased risks for young girls and women, the elderly and disabled to experience or witness violence, neglect, exploitation, or abuse. Also, the pandemic has contributed to increased anxiety, stress and depression among mothers of single-headed households due to the burden of household work and teleworking.
- The digital divide widens inequality in education for the most vulnerable groups, especially children and youth from rural areas with vulnerable backgrounds. Children from remote or rural areas, including ger district in Ulaanbaatar, have had challenges accessing remote schooling due to a lack of electronic devices or Internet access. So, students from rural areas could not attend lessons and had limited access to teachers and peers.
- Herder households and their female family members, especially those having fewer livestock, are the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the pandemic and dzud are negatively affecting the livelihood of many herders and their unpaid household work has increased along with children’s online education.
- COVID-19 border restriction measures have drastically changed the lives and livelihoods of the people living in towns near the borders. The closure of border travel may also have an impact on internal migration with gendered impacts, but this hard to assess as the data available is not segregated by gender.



## 2. INTRODUCTION

The first imported case of COVID-19 in Mongolia was confirmed on 10 March 2020, and the first locally transmitted case was reported on 10 November 2020. Due to the outbreak, the government of Mongolia (GOM) has taken strict actions to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and prevent the risk of community transmission. As of 23 December 2020, the pandemic has affected 1,063 people, out of which 541 have recovered, 513 cases are active, and 9 foreigners returned to their countries on their request. The confirmed local transmission of cases reached 671 and 452 of these total cases are among females, but there has been no registered COVID-19 death.

Since the end of January 2020, several preventative measures have been taken in Mongolia such as a partial lockdown, social distancing, border closures, temporary bans of travels between the provinces and the capital, temporary closure of shops, retail businesses, kindergartens, schools, universities and training centres, banning of public gatherings and enforcing the wearing of masks in public places. Even though the measures were taken for 10 months, the first cases of local transmission of COVID-19 were confirmed on 10 November 2020. Following the first case of local transmission, stringent lockdown measures<sup>6</sup> were then taken by the GOM to mitigate the local spread of COVID-19. All schools, universities, shopping malls, public places and gatherings were shut down, and quarantine requirements were put in place.

While the full effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have not yet manifested, the country has felt numerous economic and social effects. For instance, 1.6 million people, 40 percent of the population, live in the capital city, Ulaanbaatar (UB), producing 66.2 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).<sup>7</sup> Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, most businesses in UB completely stopped for the period described above. As of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2020, the economy of Mongolia had already contracted by 7.3 percent, driven by a 20.7 percent decline in output of the mining and quarrying sector which accounts for 19.7 percent of GDP. The service sector, which accounts for the largest share of GDP, 42.6 percent, declined by 7 percent due to COVID-19 containment measures. Other high contributions to the decline were from agriculture, 16.9 percent, and construction, 10.8 percent.<sup>8</sup>

While stimulus measures have helped, recent assessments have found that COVID-19 has harmed poor and vulnerable groups in Mongolia. For instance, according to a rapid survey conducted by UNDP Mongolia, the primary channel through which COVID-19 has negatively affected household economic conditions has been through unemployment, especially within the MSMEs, informal and self-employment sectors, areas where women are largely engaged.<sup>9</sup> Changes in employment and wages negatively affect household income, with 29 percent of female-headed households having experienced income reductions.<sup>10</sup>

It has been found that COVID-19 has had disproportionate impacts on women compared to men, both economically and socially. It has also resulted in setbacks of achievements made towards gender equality.

<sup>6</sup>Stringent lockdown refers to the second degree of the public emergency situation and restriction. State-heightened readiness is the lowest degree of lockdown measures.

<sup>7</sup>National Statistics Office of Mongolia (NSO). 2019. Gross domestic product. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL\\_ID=DT\\_NSO\\_0500\\_007V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL_ID=DT_NSO_0500_007V1)

<sup>8</sup>NSO. National GDP report Q3 2020.

<sup>9</sup>UNDP. May 2020. Rapid socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 prevention measures on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

As recorded by UNFPA,<sup>11</sup> domestic violence offences have increased by 47 percent, and as a result of it, shelters for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence have seen an increase in clients of 87 percent.

In many countries, including Mongolia, the government measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 have mostly affected the service sector such as retail, education, restaurants, bars, hospitality, tourism and entertainment. Women are a large proportion of these workers and so their income has decreased. Moreover, women's workload has increased, as it has mainly fallen to them to care for children, persons with disabilities and chronic disease, and the elderly, and domestic work and childcare has increased following closures of kindergarten, school and day-care centres. Due to socially assigned gender roles, women and girls are likely to be spending more time caring for and providing educational support to children. The national time-use study<sup>12</sup> shows that women in Mongolia spend 2.6 times more time per day on unpaid domestic work than men (273 minutes or nearly 4.5 hours).

The United Nations (UN) policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on women highlighted that the pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impact of the pandemic.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, UNDP noted that women and girls are the most vulnerable to emergencies as they experience discrimination which can affect them in various negative ways, for example, making them targets of violence and limiting their chance of finding jobs.<sup>14</sup> Hence, governments need to ensure that the response to the COVID-19 crisis will be gender-responsive. It is vital to guarantee that human rights and dignity are respected and monitored during this emergency.

## 2.1 Scope of work

This study's objective is to identify the socio-economic areas in which women and girls are most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic in Mongolia. To do this, the following questions were asked:

- In which area or sectors do Mongolian women work?
- Do the current COVID-19 conditions indicate that these areas or sectors create vulnerability for women and girls?
- Does COVID-19 have significant impacts on women's and girls' livelihoods and economic activity?

To answer these questions, relevant reports, documents, assessments of ongoing initiatives and policies, stakeholder's consultations and nationwide surveys were considered, as well as the Global and Country Gender Gap Index categories and indicators. Country-specific features were also considered, as well as the principle of leaving no one behind.

Finally, UNDP verification lists on the Social and Economic Impact Assessment and Response of COVID-19, and broader discussions with the UNDP Mongolia team, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) contributed to the interlinked areas selected for study (*Figure*

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<sup>11</sup> UNFPA Mongolia. July 2020. Situation report #1 on COVID-19 response

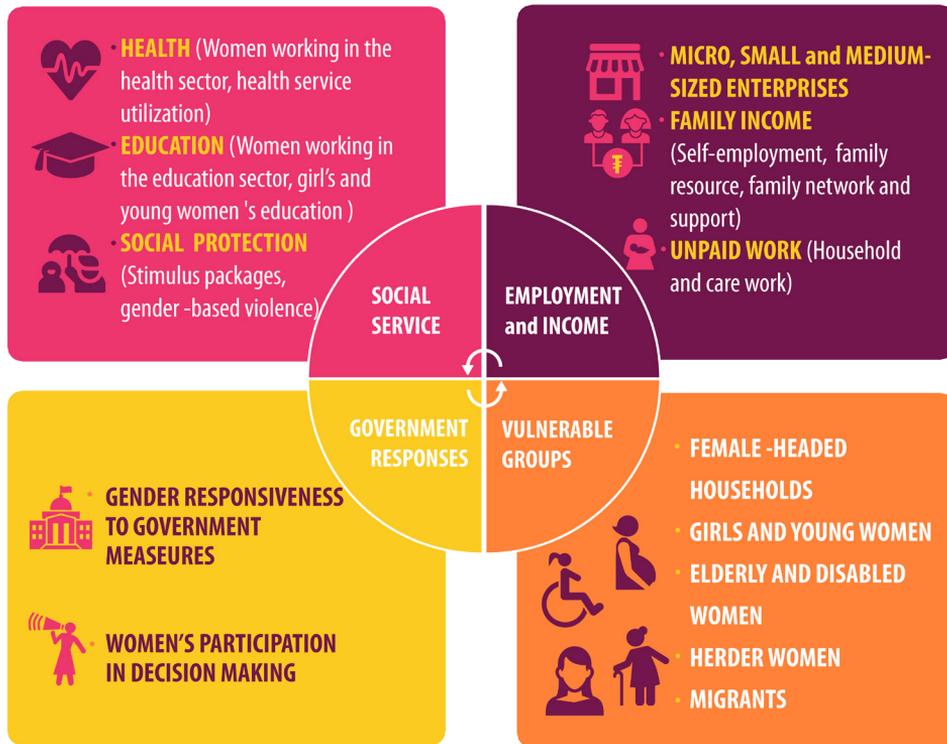
<sup>12</sup> NSO. 2019. Time use study

<sup>13</sup> United Nations (UN). April 2020. Policy brief: the impact of COVID-19 on women.

<sup>14</sup> UNDP. 2020. Briefing note: The economic impacts of COVID-19 and gender inequality. Recommendations for policymakers.

1) to assess how the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigation response measures have affected the lives and livelihoods of women and girls and their socio-economic situations.

Figure 1. Interlinked areas for analysis of COVID-19 impacts on women and girls



## SOCIAL SERVICES



The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges in social services across the nation. It has had a significant impact on education, health and social protection services for many Mongolians who benefit from such services on a day-to-day basis. Health, educational needs and social protection cannot be ignored, and if these services are left unaddressed, especially during this pandemic period, it will lead to detrimental impact.

In Mongolia, women have the highest share of employment in the education and health sectors, over 80.2 percent<sup>15</sup> of teachers and about 81.9 percent<sup>16</sup> of health care workers are women. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to the negative impact of social distancing and restrictions related to COVID-19. The restrictions may make it more challenging for women to access regular health check-ups and sexual and reproductive health services.

<sup>15</sup> NSO. 2019. Full-time teachers of educational institutions for all levels. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL\\_ID=DT\\_NS0\\_2002\\_067V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL_ID=DT_NS0_2002_067V1)

<sup>16</sup> HDC. 2019. Health indicators Mongolia

Social protection measures play a crucial role in the livelihoods of women and girls. Many countries are expanding their social protection coverage during this pandemic period. The GOM has announced social protection packages for families, including doubling food stamps and other welfare activities. Therefore, it is important to analyse whether these social measures, including social security services, have benefited women and girls.

## EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME



COVID-19 has already exacerbated the country's already weak macro-fiscal situation, including its high unemployment and poverty rate. The impact of social distancing, the border closures, and exporting and importing challenges have hit small businesses hard; many MSMEs are struggling to survive the effects of COVID-19.

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS



To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect citizens now and after, the GOM has instituted various laws, policies and measures. The Mongolian Parliament approved the Law on Pandemic Preparedness and Response on 29 April 2020. The Government of Mongolia and the State Emergency Committee have held more meetings than usual and have made various policy decisions and measures since January 2020.

## VULNERABLE GROUPS



It is likely that vulnerable groups have suffered more since the domestic outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was reported. For determining the vulnerable groups, the Social Welfare Law Mongolia<sup>17</sup> and Law on Pandemic Preparedness and Response<sup>18</sup> were considered as references. A vulnerable group is defined as one at greater risk of poor physical, social and health status and is typically excluded, disadvantaged or marginalized based on its economic, environmental, social or cultural characteristics compared with the dominant population. It is also important to know that these vulnerable groups are not homogeneous and not all individuals within these groups are considered a vulnerable person because of their individual and social context and status. The broader vulnerable groups have been narrowed down, and to this end, the following socially vulnerable groups are examined in detail:

### *Female-headed households*



Single mothers, who are widowed, divorced, separated or single by choice, face huge challenges daily during the COVID-19 pandemic due to job or income loss, and additional burdens of taking care of children. Their social support systems such as schools, kindergarten, day-care centres and community and family assistance have collapsed, and their work burden has increased.

### *Girls and young women*



The COVID-19 pandemic has affected girls and young women in terms of their safety, well-being, and access to education and health services. Adolescent girls and young women from

<sup>17</sup> Law on Social Welfare Mongolia. 2012. <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/393>

<sup>18</sup> Law on Pandemic Preparedness and Response Mongolia. 2020. <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15312?lawid=15312>



low-income families are especially at risk of psychological distress and increased risk of violence. This study defines girls and young women as being 15 to 24 years old.

### *Elderly and disabled persons*



People aged 55 and over, especially with pre-existing vulnerabilities, are at greater risk during the pandemic. They are at significant risk of increased domestic work burden, stress, loss of income, social isolation and loneliness, which are all linked with low physical and mental health status.

### *Herders*



The poverty rates in Mongolia are higher in rural areas at 30.8 percent, where nearly three in five poor people are herders.<sup>19</sup> The recent effects of climate change and severe winter conditions affect the livelihood of the herders.

### *Migrants*



Rural-to-urban migration and migration to mining areas have recently grown in Mongolia. The dramatic increases in migration have brought about various challenges for mobile populations, migrants and the government. All kind of migrants, seasonal, internal and international, are vulnerable, and their situation may exacerbate their vulnerabilities during the pandemic. Lockdowns, movement restrictions, travel bans and social distancing are already impacting their lives and livelihoods.

## 2.2 Methodology

The following methodology, approaches and techniques were designed in order to gain a better understanding of the broader impact of COVID-19 on women's and girls' lived experiences and meet the relevant study objectives. Country-specific socio-economic data were captured through various sources of country-level statistics. An initial understanding of the characteristics and impact of COVID-19 on women and girls before (from 10 March to 12 November 2020) and during (from 12 November to 23 December 2020) the stringent lockdown were observed throughout the study.

Approaches and analysis based on human rights and gender were used to ensure that human rights standards are integrated into community members' lives, livelihoods and policymaking. This helped to analyse policies, procedures and their implementation; women's level of participation; gender gaps during COVID-19; cultural norms and regional variability with regards to these socio-economic indicators and gender issues.

### Secondary data and literature review

Key literature and secondary data on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls and their families

<sup>19</sup> NSO. 2020. Mongolia poverty update: Main report of household socio-economic survey 2018.

in Mongolia were reviewed. The study draws on key evidence, parallel studies and policy frameworks reflected in resolutions and legislation regulating COVID-19 response measures and statistics provided by Mongolian government ministries and agencies. Secondary data were extracted and categorized into four interrelated areas: (i) social service, (ii) employment, labour and income, (iii) government responses to the COVID-19 crisis, and (vi) vulnerable groups. The available data, including qualitative data, were disaggregated by sex, age, geographical location, rural/urban location, disability, migrant status, level of education, household type and employment situation.

### A rapid qualitative assessment

In light of the social distancing measures that limited the use of face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions in Mongolia, the consultant launched a telephone interview survey to track responses and the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. Relevant ministries, agencies, government and non-governmental stakeholders, experts and community members at the national level were interviewed to better understand the initiatives and approaches to promote women's participation in decision making, access to information and critical public services in the above-mentioned interlinked areas (*Figure 1*).

To discern whether social services are provided without discrimination by gender, age, disability and any other basis, and how lockdown restrictions have impacted livelihoods and economic status, a total of 100 randomly selected respondents (68 female and 32 male respondents) were chosen for the in-depth interview (*Table 1*).

To compare the rural and urban area situation, the consultant purposely selected respondents from different geographic areas. For investigating more about the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls in urban and rural areas, the Zavkhan, Khentii and Dundgovi aimags and Ulaanbaatar city were selected based on the following criteria:

1. **Location-based criteria.** The aimags and Ulaanbaatar city were selected for representing the regions of Mongolia. Khentii aimag is located in the Eastern region and Dundgovi aimag belongs to the Central region. Zavkhan aimag is in the Western region and Ulaanbaatar is the capital of Mongolia.
2. **Poverty headcount rate.** Poverty outlook by regions shows that the poverty headcount of Khentii aimag was higher (38 percent) than the national average (28.4 percent) and Dundgovi aimag (21.7 percent) and Zavkhan aimag (25.7 percent) were slightly lower than the average. Although between 2016 and 2018, rural poverty fell slightly from 29.6 percent to 28.5 percent, the rural poverty percentages are still higher. Furthermore, 63.5 percent of the poor live in urban areas, and 40 percent of them live in Ulaanbaatar; thus, Ulaanbaatar city was purposely selected as one of the clusters.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> NSO. 2020. Mongolia poverty update: Main report of household socio-economic survey 2018.

3. For selecting the aimags, **droughts and dzud** (severe winter) risks were taken into account. Therefore, Delgertsogt soum of Dundgovi aimag was selected as heavily affected by dzud, Jargaltkhaan soum of Khentii aimag was chosen as an otor area, and Zavkhan aimag Yaruu soum was selected as not a dzud risk survey cluster. The climate and weather-related factors are forcing pastoralists to move to different land to overcome dzud risks. In the fall and winter of 2020, due to the severe winter in Dundgobi,<sup>21</sup> many herding communities moved to other aimags, such as Tuv and Khentii aimags.
4. **Employment and labour force participation rate** was also one of the important criteria of selecting the survey clusters. The female labour force participation rate, 81.9 percent, and employment rate, 81.1 percent, in Zavkhan aimag were the highest among the nation. The rates in Dundgovi (62 percent and 59 percent) and Khentii aimag (58.2 percent and 56.3 percent) were closer to the national average. The female labour force participation ratio, 45.8 percent, and employment rate, 43 percent, in Ulaanbaatar were slightly lower than in Dundgovi and Khentii aimags.<sup>22</sup>

The qualitative study was analysed based on content analysis techniques for **in-depth telephone interviews**. For the sampling size, snowballing and proportionate sampling methods were used.

*Table 1. Respondents for in-depth telephone interviews*

Respondents	Ulaanbaatar		Zavkhan		Khentii		Dundgovi		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Entrepreneurs in MSMEs in formal and informal sectors, self-employed	4	4	1	3	1	3	1	3	20
Herders/migrants	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	16
Elderly/people with disabilities	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	16
Single parents	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	16
Girls and young women	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	16
Teachers and health workers	2	2	1	3	1	3	1	3	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

### Study limitations

There are a number of limitations of this study regarding the accessibility of participants willing to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. Firstly, lockdown measures have limited the study methodology and population size. The small amount of the study population may lead to a potential selection bias and could affect the generalizability of research findings. For the qualitative study, the team used only a phone-based interview survey. It limited the length of interviews and did not replace face-to-face interaction which would have allowed for observation, and body language to assist the respondents. Furthermore, there was another limitation with insufficient gender segregated data and lack of a COVID-19–related national survey and information.

<sup>21</sup> Pasture capacity in Dundgovi aimag 2019–2020. 2020. <http://dundgovi.tsag-agaar.gov.mn/>

<sup>22</sup> NSO. Q3 2020. Employment to population ratio. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL\\_ID=DT\\_NS0\\_0400\\_035V3](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL_ID=DT_NS0_0400_035V3)

## Ethical considerations

The participants in this study were given a detailed explanation of the study's objectives and interview content. The participants were required to give verbal consent and were also informed about confidentiality procedures by the survey team.

The following standards and ethical considerations were also considered during the interview.

1. The respondents' safety and rights were ensured during telephone interviews. Women's and girls' safety were always prioritized over data collection.
2. The privacy and confidentiality of respondents were protected. Before the interview started, the purpose and ground rules were explained carefully.
3. The mental and health condition and stress level of participants were considered carefully when asking questions.



## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1 Social services

#### Health care services

Mongolia has a well-established health sector system covering soum, aimag and national levels to provide nationwide health services. However, the health workforce is gender-imbalanced. According to statistical data from the Health Development Centre, women play a dominant role in providing health services to the population in Mongolia: 81.9 percent of workers in the health sector are women,<sup>23</sup> a higher share than the global situation where women form 70 percent of the health workforce.<sup>24</sup>

Women are working on the front line to fight the coronavirus pandemic. As of 15 December, 41 health workers were infected with COVID-19<sup>25</sup> but the gender disaggregation is unavailable. During the COVID-19 pandemic, health workers carry more risks, with low salary and incentives and excessive workload. In addition, COVID-19 online training (after working hours) for health workers increased in both urban and rural areas. In rural areas, soum health centres and health workers are facing a shortage of medical supply equipment during the stringent lockdown because of budget constraints.

 *Due to COVID-19 regulations, the soum hospital administration set the new work schedule for all health workers, such as extra shift working hours. We didn't receive any personal protective equipment and food while we are on a 24-hour duty.*

*Female soum doctor, Dundgovi*

 *Personal protective equipment was so hard to wear for long hours. There is no air circulation in the personal protective equipment due to its material and it makes me sweat. It's size and quality are not good enough.*

*Female resident doctor, Ulaanbaatar*

Health workers, as essential service providers, have to perform their work in a timely manner regardless of the situation. Moreover, psychological and additional financial support needs to be provided for them. As the Ministry of Health (MOH) reported, health workers providing health services to COVID-19 patients received some additional compensation to their monthly salaries.

 *D. Nyamkhuu, director of the NCCD [National Centre for Communicable Diseases], highlighted that their employees are receiving approximately MNT 4.5 million as a monthly salary currently, which is at least two times as much compared to the pre-pandemic salary.<sup>26</sup> Now more than 800 doctors and nurses are providing professional care in the NCCD.*

<https://livetv.mn/p/164583>

The gender employment gap may also be a worsening issue in health and education services. Globally, women and children are losing access to 20 percent of their health and social services due to the pandemic.<sup>27</sup> In Mongolia, although essential health services are still available, the COVID-19 pandemic

<sup>23</sup>HDC. 2019. Health indicators Mongolia

<sup>24</sup>WHO. Mar 2019. Gender equity in the health workforce: Analysis of 104 countries

<sup>25</sup>Working group members online meeting about health workers on the front line and the current situation. 15 December 2020. <http://parliament.mn/n/9rbyn>

<sup>26</sup>Health workers salary in 2020. Cabinet resolution No. 472, on 25 December 2019, renewing public service employees' salary scale and net. <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/14892>

<sup>27</sup>UNICEF. GLOBAL COVID-19 Mid-Term Situation Report No. 9, Feb–July 2020.

and social distancing measures hindered the access of families, especially women and girls to routine health care services.<sup>28</sup> Qualitative interviews revealed that single mothers, pregnant women, persons with disabilities and elderly women and children living in remote areas are unable to gain health care services.

 *My daughter has leukaemia (a blood disease); she needs regular monitoring. But we couldn't go to UB for monthly check-ups due to the lockdown measure.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Khentii*

Even though there are no registered deaths from COVID-19 as of December 2020, several fatalities were recorded during the lockdown period. The fatalities were mainly rooted in controversial resolutions at the local and national level, fear of coronavirus transmission and lack of information sharing.

Mongolia became one of the nine countries that successfully accomplished Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 of reducing maternal mortality between 2000 and 2015.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, in the first 11 months of 2020, there were 23 cases reported of maternal mortality. It shows that maternal deaths increased by 27.8 percent during the COVID-19 restriction period compared to the previous three years. Of those 23 cases, 10 cases were registered in Ulaanbaatar and 5 of them registered in Bayan-Ulgii aimag. According to the UNFPA report in November 2020, the five maternal deaths in Bayan-Ulgii had several contributing factors including women's domestic work burden, the quarantine and hospital avoidance due to fear of coronavirus transmission, gross negligence and domestic violence.<sup>30</sup>

Table 2. Maternal mortality rate

Time period	2017	As of Nov 2017	As of Nov 2018	As of Nov 2019	As of Nov 2020
Maternal mortality		18	18	18	23

Source: 1212.mn, NSO, by December 2020.

In terms of health care service during the pandemic, there is a need to improve the quality of services and for women to access medical care and reproductive health care information.

There might be several health consequences for women due to domestic violence (an increase of domestic violence will further be described in the section on gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence (DV) of this report), including maternal mortality, low-birthweight babies and depression. In the 2013 WHO report, on the prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence,<sup>31</sup> the research findings report that women who have experienced partner violence have higher rates of several significant health problems and risk behaviours. Compared to women who have not experienced partner violence:

<sup>28</sup> UNFPA Mongolia. November 2020. Situation Report No. 5 on COVID-19 response.

<sup>29</sup> National Committee on Gender Equality (NCGE). 2019, Mongolia Gender Situational Analysis: Advances, Challenges and Lessons Learnt since 2006. UB.

<sup>30</sup> UNFPA Mongolia. November 2020. Situation Report No. 5 on COVID-19 response.

<sup>31</sup> WHO. 2013. Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.

- They have 16 percent greater odds of having a low-birthweight baby.
- They are more than twice as likely as others to have an induced abortion.
- They are more than twice as likely as others to experience depression.

During the lockdown, most family members have to stay together and are crowded in their homes. According to a survey,<sup>32</sup> women living in an overcrowded household may be more likely than men to suffer from associated mental health problems and the presence of pre-school children significantly increased the women's emotional distress. This kind of situation was also observed during the in-depth interviews. It was observed that many of the female respondents, who have very low earnings and living in crowded households were likely to be stressed. Table 3 shows the number of the families living in same dwelling.

 *It's tough on school-aged children, moving fast and tons of homework. I'm feeling so worried and stressed.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Dundgovi*

Table 3. Number of the families living in same dwelling in urban and rural areas

	Residential dwellings		Households	
Total numbers (thousand)	557.2	213.7	606.3	291.1
Number of the families living in same dwellings			<b>1.09</b>	<b>1.36</b>

Source: 2020 Population and housing census of Mongolia, NSO

## Education

The education sector has predominantly women workers, with 96.8 percent of teachers in pre-school education and 81.5 percent of teachers in general educational schools being female<sup>33</sup> (Table 4).

Table 4. Number of teachers in educational institutions

Educational institutions	Total number	# of female teachers	% of female teachers
Total	49,871	40,000	80.2%
Kindergartens	8,068	7,809	96.8%
General educational schools	32,085	26,149	81.5%
Technical and vocational educational institutions	2,388	1,551	64.9%
Universities, institutes and colleges	7,330	4,491	61.3%

Source: 1212.mn, NSO, by 2020

As a result of the government measures to close all levels of educational institutions, classroom-based learning has shifted to online learning. This kind of change in education services leads to significant psychological stress and an increased workload for all teachers. One of the surveys conducted in November 2020 noted that 79.2 percent of female teachers found their workload had increased due to online classes, higher than the 60 percent of male teachers who said the same.<sup>34</sup> Some of the teachers expressed that they worry about students' learning capabilities online due to the students' living conditions and parents' care. School closures combined with inexperience in learning and teaching at home have resulted in an increase in learning delays of students.

<sup>32</sup> Wendy C. Regoeczi. 2008. Crowding in Context: An Examination of the Differential Responses of Men and Women to High-Density Living Environments.

<sup>33</sup> See [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL\\_ID=DT\\_NSO\\_2002\\_067V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL_ID=DT_NSO_2002_067V1)

<sup>34</sup> Bat-Uyanga.Ch. 2020. COVID-19 impact on teaching and learning, forthcoming online micro survey, presented in Education Forum on 9-10 December 2020.

Since the stringent lockdown, a few different workshops were conducted online by government agencies to develop teachers' teaching and learning skills. In Mongolia, most teachers do not have online teaching experience and had never attended online classes before COVID-19. A lack of online experience and on-the-job training requirements have led to additional stress for them. During the in-depth phone interviews, most of the female teachers, especially older female teachers, mentioned they found this very stressful (Figure 2).

*I am experiencing a massive workload during these school closure days. I am an elementary school teacher, and I need to closely work with all my 48 students online. Every working day, I need to receive their homework and check them. Most of the elementary teachers are female, compared to some of the male teachers, such as [in] physical education and art, [we] work harder than them.*

*A female teacher, Ulaanbaatar*

*In the last school year, my son was in the third grade. It was so hard to him to do [his] tele-lesson on time. I was so stressed and worried about him. But my husband does not worry about his studies. He seems to me not supportive, which makes me more anxious.*

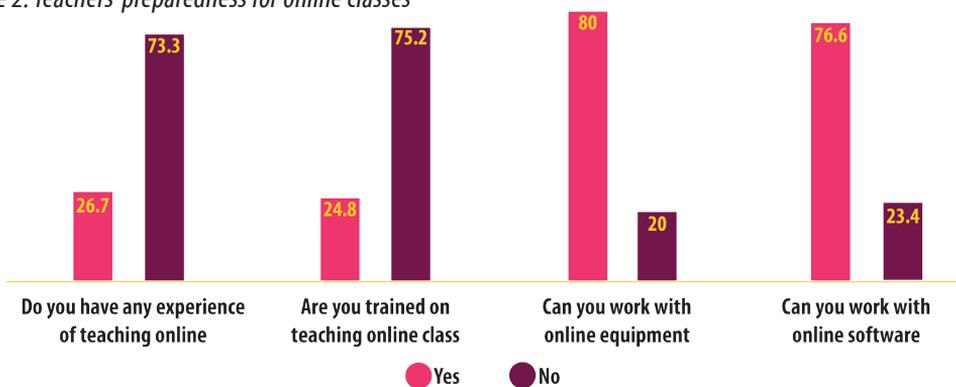
*A young woman, Khentii*

To meet the teleworking requirements, many teachers bought online equipment and developed their competence on technologies. All the telework-related expenditures such as phone bills and network coverage were paid by themselves. Unfortunately, public schools are not paying close attention to technological change. For example, the laptops provided by the Government five years ago are still in use. The burden of teleworking requirements worsens the livelihoods of female teachers and their family income.

*As an English teacher, I must work closely with the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, because they are going to finish high school soon. During school closure, they ought to learn online, and they need my support. I spent more on my Internet and phone bill. All this money comes out of my pocket. My salary is limited, and also, I have to spend on my family.*

*A female teacher with three children, Ulaanbaatar*

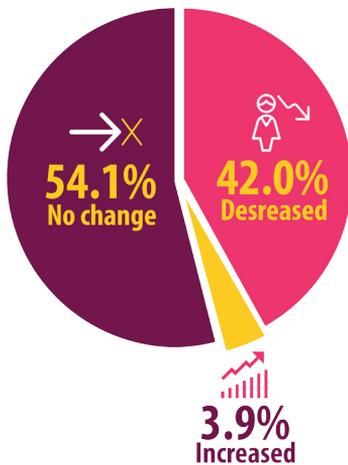
Figure 2. Teachers' preparedness for online classes



Source: COVID-19 impact on teaching and learning, forthcoming online micro survey, 2020

There is a need to review teachers' monthly income and workload. During the in-depth interviews, most of the teachers mentioned that their workload is dramatically increased; but their monthly wage has decreased. The decreasing wage has further exacerbated the negative socio-economic situation for women, given the already lower paid sector where women are predominant (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Teachers' salary change



Source: COVID-19 impact on teaching and learning, forthcoming online micro survey, 2020

According to the recent survey, teachers' monthly wages including their overtime payment and other bonuses have decreased due to reducing their working hours in the school facilities.<sup>35</sup>

*As a mother of a toddler, it is quite challenging teleworking from home. While teaching online, my child makes a big noise, and it is very distracting and reduces my teaching quality. Work-from-home setups for teachers, who have younger children like me, considerably increased the childcare work.*

*A female teacher, Ulaanbaatar*

During the lockdown, there were 640,449 students, 50 percent of them female, receiving tele-lessons through both TV broadcasts and online learning. Higher education is available only online and university students are facing challenges to access the Internet, which depends on their family income and living area to access faster Internet connections. A total of 148,400 students study in Mongolia, 61 percent of whom are female. Specifically, female students from low-income families are at risk of receiving equal educational opportunity.

*Due to a sudden dormitory quarantine, it was so stressful, including insufficient food and low access to Internet connectivity.*

*A female student, Zavkhan*

Less online access for students in rural or remote areas may deepen their overall vulnerability to crises, due to rural–urban digital divide. However, no study on this has been done in Mongolia. The phone interview participants frequently talked about the difficulties of accessing the Internet in rural areas.

<sup>35</sup> Bat-Uyanga.Ch. 2020. COVID-19 impact on teaching and learning, forthcoming online micro survey, presented in Education Forum on 9-10 December 2020.

 Whenever I conducted the online test, three students who live in rural areas were absent from online classes ... I contacted them on the phone ... they couldn't access the Internet.

*Female teacher, Khentii*

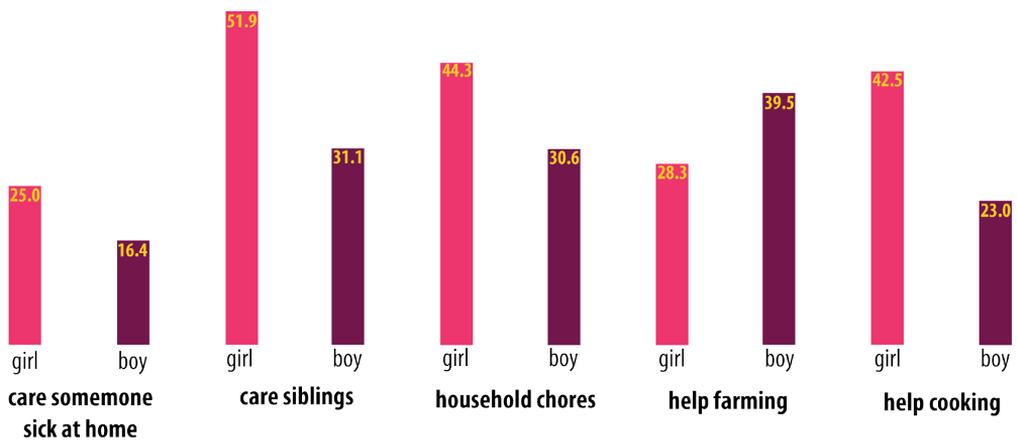
 I have tried my best to help my children cope with doing the online classes. But it's really tough and stressful for me. At home, we do not have the TV programs replay services and they want a computer but I cannot buy it for them.

*Female Head-of-Household, Dundgovi*

Another factor that is deepening the vulnerability of young Mongolians is overcrowding in their households, as many students stay at home and attend online classes due to lockdown. Several studies have been released that show that house crowding is strongly and independently associated with a child's socio-economic status, and children who live in a crowded household have lower educational attainment.<sup>36</sup>

According to an assessment conducted by Save the Children in Mongolia, children's household work has increased, with a marked difference between girls and boys. Arguably, girls' education is more affected by COVID-19 as they have more household responsibilities and spend more time to take care of household duties rather than focus on their studies (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percentage of children who state they have increased labour burdens



Source: Save the Children in Mongolia. 2020. COVID impact assessment.

 My 9-year-old daughter is taking care of her 4-year-old sibling during all days when my husband and I are on duty due to COVID-19 restrictions.

*Female health worker, Dundgovi*

During the school year 2019–2020, of the 119,080 herder family students, 35,757 children lived in dormitories of which 18,608 were female. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all the dormitory students returned to their homes. As the schools are shifting quickly to digital and remote learning, girls who live in rural or remote areas might be under more stress than ever, trying to adapt to the new norms while dealing with increased household or care work thus reducing their educational or self-care hours.

<sup>36</sup> Leonard M Lopoo and Andrew S. London. 2016. Household Crowding During Childhood and Long-Term Education Outcomes. Syracuse University.



*My daughter is a 10th grader. Since the school closed, she needs to study online and also, she has to help with household chores. During this quarantine, most of the time, she spends more time to help her siblings instead of doing her homework. Living far from the soum centre makes it hard to access Facebook and meet friends online. My girl is getting more introverted, which I also am worried about ... my 8th-grade son, he can hang out with people and friends, even at home in the countryside.*

*A female herder, Zavkhan*

## Social protection

### Stimulus package

The Government has implemented a robust package of measures to support the economy and livelihoods amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Two packages were provided for the half year between April and September 2020, the first package was announced at the end of March and the other at the beginning of May 2020.

Figure 5. Example of evaluation with LEWIE model



The Government of Mongolia estimated MNT93 billion to spend for first two packages. Those stimulation packages for support to livelihoods amid the COVID-19 pandemic can also support the economy.

FAO conducted a survey covering 7 developing countries to assess economic impact of child and household grants from 2008 to 2014. The survey applied Local Economy Wide Impact Evaluation Models (LEWIE) to define how to measure the local income multiplier of social cash transfers and it is found that:

- Every 1 dollar the Government transferred can generate from 1.5 to 2.5 dollar of income
- For every 1 dollar transferred to beneficiary households, the value of production earned by non-beneficiary households increases 1.03 dollar

If government spent MNT93 billion it might be added the GDP by MNT1,189.5 billion to MNT1,982.5 billion and up to 10 percent comprises all GDP income of second and third quarter of the year.

Source: FAO. September 2014. Local Economy Wide Impact Evaluation Models (LEWIE): how to measure the local income multiplier of social cash transfers. Presented to International Seminar and Policy Forum, Brasilia 10–11 September.

According to NSO statistics,<sup>37</sup> on average, parents of 1.1 million children, between May and October 2020, have received the child money allowance. As the interviewees referred to this assessment, all the money granted to their children are spent on buying food and hygiene products and a small amount goes to clothing and shelter. Over 52 percent of all households with three or more children are in poor condition according to Mongolia poverty update 2018;<sup>38</sup> it is mostly low-income families that are to benefit from the child money allowance, with an increase of MNT240,000 or more to the monthly family income. Food stamps and the child money allowance had a better impact on the poorest part of the population. All the single mothers and other family members also mentioned the importance of the government provided food vouchers during the interviews.



*I have four children. Before the COVID quarantine, I used to work at the food market and earn about MNT 800,000 per month. Now I do not work, but we receive MNT 400,000 every month for the child money allowance.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Zavkhan*

The monthly food allowance was scaled up to MNT 32,000 per adult and MNT 16,000 per child. The Government of Mongolia has granted food stamps in November 2020 to 241,962 people in the poorest

<sup>37</sup> NSO. October 2020. Persons involved in social welfare activities. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NS0\\_2200\\_016V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NS0_2200_016V1)

<sup>38</sup> NSO. 2020. Mongolia poverty update: Main report of household socio-economic survey 2018.

44,314 households (the poorest 5 percent of the total 897,427 households in Mongolia). As the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) reported, this aims to ensure that the poorest people do not become malnourished or hungry.<sup>39</sup> Women and girls comprise 53 percent of the recipients.<sup>40</sup>

Food stamps are cash-like benefits delivered as vouchers, allowing the purchase of 10 staple food items, including domestic meat products, domestic dairy products, flour, butter, sugar, fruit, vegetables, rice, vegetable oil and eggs. Food stamps are valid for government-contracted food stores near the beneficiaries and prices in that stores are comparable to other stores, as the interviewees confirmed.

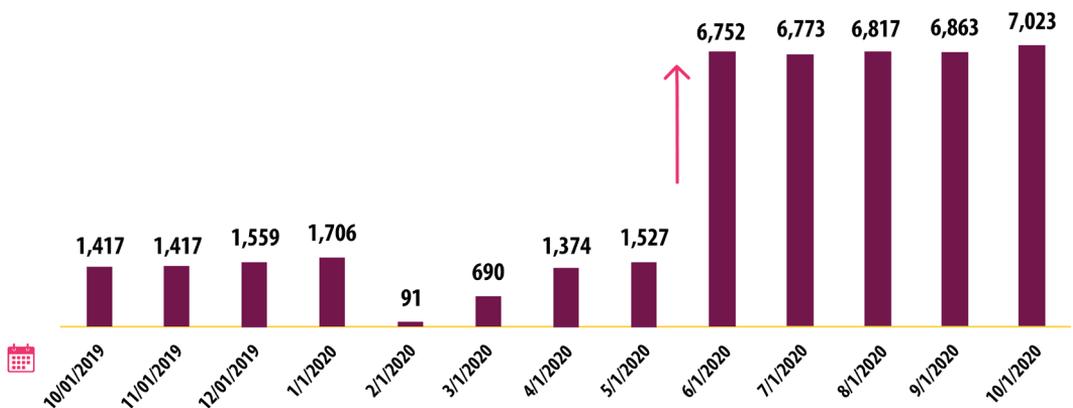
 *My family has a card for food stamps that we can buy our needed food stuff with. We go to the grocery store which our khoroo social welfare officer recommended ... the prices of food stuffs there are similar to other grocery stores.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Ulaanbaatar*

Beneficiaries of social welfare pensions<sup>41</sup> (persons with disabilities without social insurance, senior citizens who are not entitled to pension benefits from social insurance, orphaned or half-orphaned children and single parents with three or more children) had an increased monthly allowance of MNT 288,000, up from MNT 188,000 before the stimulus measures. A total of 62,600 beneficiaries received the benefits monthly from May to December 2020.

One of the targeted beneficiary groups is single-headed households with three or more children. According to the NSO reports, 80 percent of total single-headed households are single mothers; thus, it is correct that 80 percent of the benefits for single parents with three or more children is going to single mothers with three or more children. An average of 6,845 single parents benefited from this kind of support over the last 5 months (*Figure 6*).

*Figure 6. Number of single parents with three or more children who receive welfare pensions*



Source: 1212.mn 2020. NSO.

<sup>39</sup> MLSP. 14 November 2020. Monthly food stamps are distributed. <https://www.facebook.com/mlsp.gov.mn/posts/4642405795830825>

<sup>40</sup> ADB. June 2020. Project administration manual 54214-001, Mongolia: Shock-Responsive Social Protection Project.

<sup>41</sup> Law on social welfare 2012. <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/393>



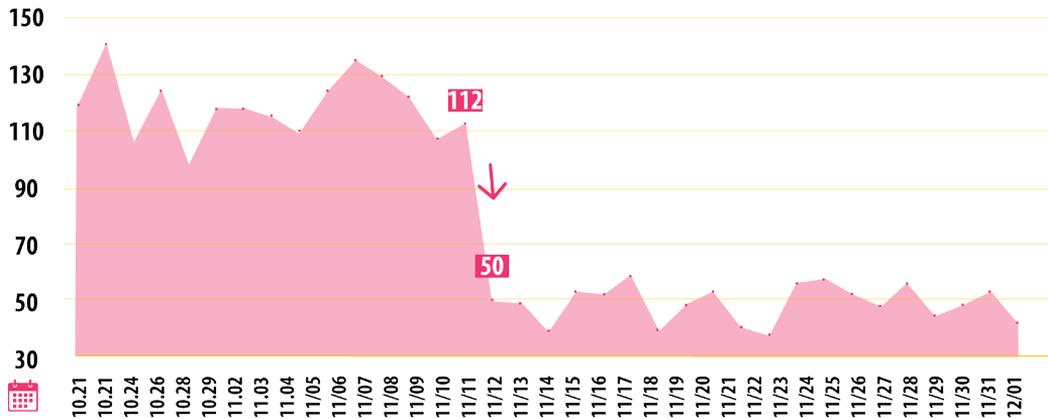
## Gender-based violence

The number of victims of total crimes registered in the first 11 months of 2020 decreased by 25 percent, and as a result, there was a 28 percent decrease in female victims.

A total of 1,044 crimes of domestic violence were recorded in the first 11 months of 2020 in Mongolia which was an increase of 7.6 percent compared with the same period of the previous year. Also, 9,786 misconducts of domestic violence were recorded in the first 11 months, 18.9 percent higher than the previous year.

The police emergency 102 phone number received 2.4 times fewer calls of domestic violence than the period before the stringent lockdown (*Figure 7*).

Figure 7. Number of received domestic violence calls by police emergency 102, October to December 2020



Source: Central Police, Communication and media centre

Although daily calls for domestic violence incidents decreased during the stringent lockdown period, the number of registered crimes of domestic violence increased by 42.7 percent, and misconducts increased by 0.7 percent from the previous month (*Figure 8*). The lockdown forced women to stay with perpetrators over more hours, and it is evident from the reduction in calls that it has become even more difficult for women to call for assistance and protection.<sup>42</sup> Violence against women and girls has been increasing under pandemic restriction and lockdown measures, making their homes increasingly unsafe.

Figure 8. Number of crimes of domestic violence crime, October vs November 2020



Source: Central Police. 2020. Monthly report on domestic violence.

<sup>42</sup> UNFPA. May 2020. Rapid assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on the GBV/DV situation and survivor protection services in Mongolia Report

The government publicly announced restriction measures from 11 November to 22 December, but specific industries were permitted to resume limited operations (essential services such as food manufacturers, media, banking and funeral services) and non-essential service sectors remained closed. The public not clear, that protection services for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence while open. This may impact the reduction of services for victims of gender-based and domestic violence and limit their access to protection services. Compounding this situation, awareness is low: most of the interviewees do not know about the 15 one-stop service centres (OSSCs) and 14 shelters designated to support victims of domestic violence.<sup>43</sup>

 *I never heard about one-stop services or shelters for the victims of domestic violence, but I heard a lot of information about domestic violence on social media.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Zavkhan*

According to a global brief from the ILO and UNICEF, millions of children risk being pushed into child labour as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>44</sup> A recovery assessment conducted by World Vision International Mongolia indicates that 63.3 percent of 658 respondents worry about their livelihoods for the next four to six months, in spite of the support offered by the Government such as child allowance. Among the 658 survey participants, the most common coping mechanisms or ways of dealing with finances in response to a lack of income are mostly related to reducing medical expenditure (39%), doing casual work (19%), reducing food consumption (11%) and borrowing money (5.4%). Several other coping strategies also mentioned affect children's well-being, such as child labour (10%), sending children to relatives (8%) and begging (1%).<sup>45</sup>

 *My work has just stopped. I am worried about how to feed my children. Sometimes, I am thinking of sending two of my children to my brother's family in the countryside, if life continues to get worse. The children will be fine there, helping their families look after their sheep and goats. If the schools reopen, they can come back.*

*A migrant woman, Ulaanbaatar*

## 3.2 Employment and income

### Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)

In Mongolia, MSMEs account for 17.8 percent of the GDP and comprise 72 percent of the total labour force of the country.<sup>46</sup> Women are overrepresented in the trade and service sector in MSMEs.<sup>47</sup> As of the first 11 months of 2020, 67 percent of the total number of 65,692 active business entities located in Ulaanbaatar produce 66.2 percent of the country's GDP.<sup>48</sup> The data, as mentioned above, show that MSMEs play a major role in creating jobs and productivity, income and economic growth.

There are no data on women-owned MSMEs in Mongolia, excluding a 2014 survey by the International Finance Corporation.<sup>49</sup> They estimated that at most, women-owned MSMEs comprise 60 percent of the

<sup>43</sup> ADB. 7 July 2020. ADB to help address and prevent domestic violence in Mongolia amid COVID-19.

<sup>44</sup> ILO and UNICEF. 2020. COVID-19 and child labour: A time of crisis, a time to act.

<sup>45</sup> World Vision Mongolia, 2020. COVID-19 Early Recovery Assessment (Page 17)

<sup>46</sup> ADB. COVID-19 impact and recovery options for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the informal sector in Mongolia.

<sup>47</sup> UN. April 2020. Policy brief: The impact of COVID-19 on women.

<sup>48</sup> NSO. Gross domestic product. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSO\\_0500\\_007V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSO_0500_007V1)

<sup>49</sup> IFC. 2014. MSMEs and Women-owned MSMEs in Mongolia. Washington, DC.

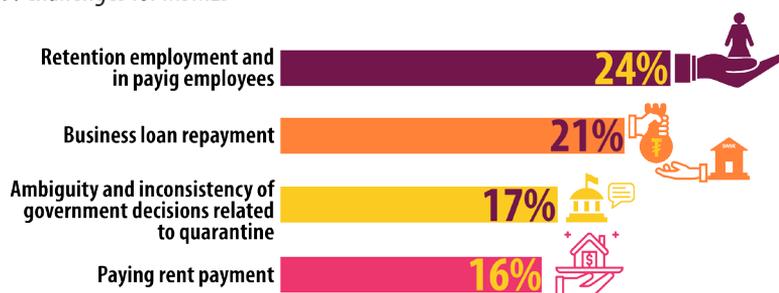
total of MSMEs in Mongolia. The definition of MSMEs in Mongolia is based on the number of employees and operations in the production, trade and service sector with an annual sales revenue of MNT 2.5 billion.<sup>50</sup> This includes all types of entrepreneurs, regardless of their legal forms such as sole proprietor or cooperative and family business. But there is also no definition of women-owned MSMEs in the law. Since Mongolia does not have an official legal definition of women-owned enterprises, the ADB definition is mainly used.<sup>51</sup> It should be noted that defining women-owned MSMEs is crucial to creating a gendered database to support women-owned enterprises accordingly. Women-owned MSMEs can benefit from laws and regulations that support women’s ability to engage in their own business and access financial services more widely.

*Our workplace is in the basement of the apartment, and we pay rent. Due to COVID-19 restrictions that closed international flights, we lost our potential customers (tourists), and income remains zero. Now we cannot pay rent and for essential services. Due to COVID-19, we need to think about an alternative collateral option. Additionally, when we need to apply for international grants purposed for women entrepreneurs, it needs to determine whether our company is eligible for their criteria or not. But in Mongolia, there is no legal definition of women-owned MSMEs.*

*A head of a cooperative union, Ulaanbaatar*

Since early 2020, internal and external socio-economic circumstances have changed, and the economy shrank by 7.3 percent in the first three quarters of 2020 due to COVID-19 containment measures.<sup>52</sup> To pay for employees and retain jobs, MSMEs need an urgent working capital/credit support because their cash flows have drastically been affected by the pandemic. Findings of a recent survey with 3,530 respondents have revealed that the crisis has posed common challenges to MSMEs. The most commonly faced challenges were named as: (i) retention of and paying employees (24%), (ii) business loan repayments (21%), (iii) ambiguity and inconsistency of government decisions related to the quarantine (17%), and (iv) rent payments (16%) (Figure 9).<sup>53</sup>

Figure 9. Challenges for MSMEs



Source: MNCCI. 2020. Mongolian business circumstances in the lockdown study report. UB.

A survey conducted by the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry during the stringent lockdown mentioned that 66 percent of the total 3,530 participants of the survey fully stopped their work, 22 percent are working in limited conditions and 10 percent of work from home, since 12 November 2020.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Government of Mongolia. The law on SME. <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/14525>

<sup>51</sup> ADB. 2014. Gender Toolkit for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Finance and Development. Manila: (i) at least 50 percent of ownership is controlled by women, (ii) at least senior managers are women, or (iii) at least 50 percent of the registered contractual employees are women.

<sup>52</sup> NSO. November 2020. Socio-economic situation of Mongolia, monthly bulletin. UB.

<sup>53</sup> MNCCI. November 2020. Mongolian business circumstance in lockdown study report. UB.

<sup>54</sup> MNCCI. November 2020. Mongolian business circumstance in lockdown study report. UB.

In November 2020, 6,400 new unemployed people were registered at labour agencies nationwide, of which 55.3 percent of the newly unemployed had been dismissed from their jobs, an increase by 16.7 percent from the previous month, and of those, 53.2 percent were women.<sup>55</sup> This survey shows that more women were losing the jobs than men during the pandemic, especially those who work at MSMEs.

Even before the pandemic, the number of employees had declined at all MSMEs.<sup>56</sup> The survey of a total of 4,074 entities showed that in the last three years, there had been a decline in employment rather than an increase. For instance, the number of small enterprises decreased by 18.5 percent, and the number of medium-sized enterprises contracted by 9.7 percent compared to 2018. The survey highlighted that in 2020, the number of employees had decreased by more than 50 percent in small, and medium businesses.

 *My company's total revenue has decreased by 80 percent due to the COVID situation. 90 percent of our employees are female and most of them are the single heads of families, mothers. Due to reducing the monthly wages, they left their jobs. There are half of them left out from a total of 20 employees.*

*A woman entrepreneur, Ulaanbaatar*

A survey conducted in September 2020 by NSO on the impact of COVID-19 responses on business entities found that 1,147 (47.8 percent of all survey respondents) had disrupted their activities due to the pandemic response measures.<sup>57</sup> Table 5 shows the comparative percentage of female employment and businesses interrupted due to COVID-19. According to this table, female-dominated businesses are more impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic compared to male-dominated businesses.

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<sup>55</sup> NSO. November 2020. Socio-economic situation of Mongolia, monthly bulletin. UB.

<sup>56</sup> MNCCI. 2020. Business environment of Mongolia study report. UB.

<sup>57</sup> NSO. September 2020. Survey on COVID-19 response measurement impact on business entities, second phase.



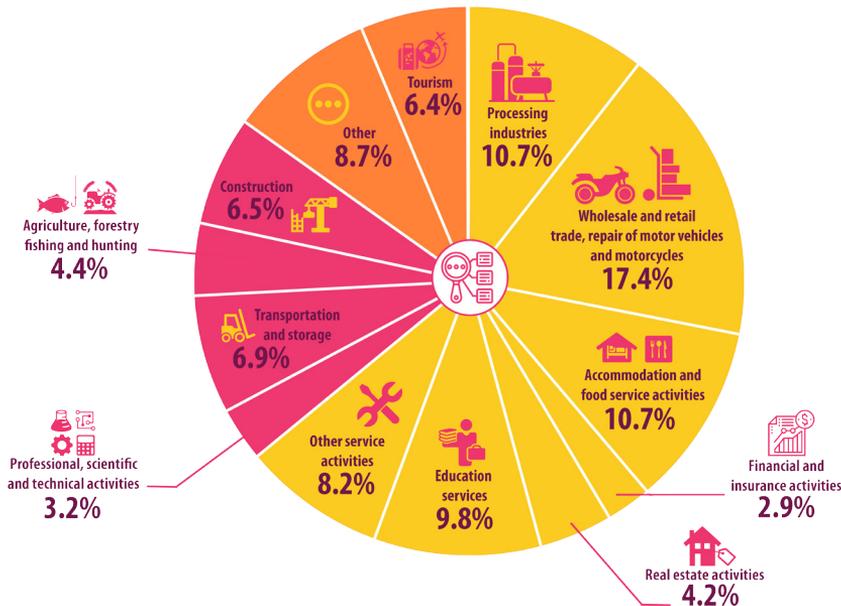
Table 5. Comparison of female employment and businesses malfunctioned due to COVID-19

Classifications economic activities	Total female employment percentage	Percentage of businesses interrupted due to COVID-19
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	44.3%	39.8%
Mining and quarrying	17.7%	48.4%
<b>Processing industries</b>	<b>52.1%</b>	<b>54.6%</b>
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	34.5%	33.3%
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	60.5%	22.2%
Construction	19.0%	40.9%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	51.5%	37.2%
Transportation and storage	22.2%	61.2%
<b>Accommodation and food service activities</b>	<b>79.9%</b>	<b>53.0%</b>
Information and communication	49.8%	44.8%
Financial and insurance activities	66.7%	40.2%
<b>Real estate activities</b>	<b>74.0%</b>	<b>57.1%</b>
Professional, scientific and technical activities	41.0%	51.4%
Administrative and support service activities	46.4%	37.5%
Public administration and defense; compulsory social insurance	49.8%	21.4%
<b>Education services</b>	<b>72.3%</b>	<b>56.1%</b>
Health and social welfare	80.8%	30.4%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	46.4%	59.0%
<b>Other service activities</b>	<b>56.3%</b>	<b>60.3%</b>

Note: Bold numbers indicates the female employment sector percent and businesses interrupted percent due to COVID-19 over 50 percent  
Source: NSO, September 2020. Survey on COVID-19 response measurement impact on business entities, second phase.

This survey also reported that 990 business entities, or 86.3 percent of all 1,147 business entities which were interrupted confirmed that their total revenue has decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At least 63.5 percent of the businesses that had less revenues are in female-dominated sectors, while the sex-disaggregated data are not available for tourism and other sectors (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Revenue has fallen due to COVID-19, by economic classification composition



Source: NSO. September 2020. Survey on COVID-19 response measurement impact on business entities, second phase.

MSMEs with a bank loan are a badly affected group. They are facing challenges in loan repayment, as even if the bank repayment is deferred for a few months, the interest rate is still calculated, so the financial burden remains.

*When making a decision on income-earning source and indebtedness, first it is necessary to study the situation of people with small and medium-sized businesses very carefully, otherwise, decisions will not be made right for them.*

*A woman entrepreneur, Dundgovi*

In general, many women are employed in the sewing industry in Mongolia. However, there is not sufficient data on female and male employment in this sector. The only detailed information found was not gender-disaggregated. According to the Professional Federation of the Sewing Industry of Mongolia, there are 15,530 workers, 1,531 limited liability companies (LLCs) and 3,230 self-employed people in the business.<sup>58</sup>

The restrictions on mobility due to quarantine and other social distancing measures have affected both women's and men's jobs severely and some are not making any income.

*My business stopped and I needed to move my sewing machine and other equipment into my home. I have some material borrowed from the suppliers and have rent debt. At home, I need to do household work in addition to childcare. It is impossible to work from home.*

*A self-employed woman, Zavkhan*

<sup>58</sup> Professional Federation of the Sewing Industry of Mongolia. <https://www.facebook.com/oyodol.mn/posts/1814209592061302>

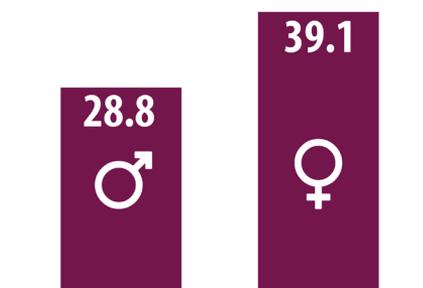


## Income

One of the critical ways of supporting household income is to provide credit or liquidity support to businesses to retain jobs and pay for their employees. But most MSMEs were not prepared to deal with the COVID-19 disruption, as it was found out from the interviews. Non-essential services especially experienced liquidity shortfalls to pay the wages of their workers.

In Mongolia, women are the most economically vulnerable: 39.1 percent of female workers are in low-wage occupations (with minimum wage or less), and this figure is 10 percentage points higher than male workers<sup>59</sup> (Figure 11). Low-wage workers, both male and female, are struggling to support themselves and their families during the pandemic. Many of the low-wage jobs are held predominantly by women. Women who have low waged jobs, such as child care workers, cleaners, and food preparation workers are at higher risk of losing their jobs and income because of their sectors. They have very little in the way of savings, which means it is much harder for them to cope with economic shocks, especially when they are likely to be supporting a number of dependents.

Figure 11. Share of Mongolian workers paid at minimum wage, by gender



Source: 1212.mn, NSO.

Due to limitations on border movements and trade, particularly with the People’s Republic of China, raw materials prices related to livestock such as cashmere, wool and animal skins have decreased. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2020, exports decreased by 14.4 percent,<sup>60</sup> driven by a 44.4 percent decrease of raw and processed hides, skins, fur and articles thereof and 39.8 percent decrease of live animals and animals’ origin products. The price fall impacted on the herders’ household incomes. As the 2018 herders’ livelihood survey described, herders’ average income was MNT 959,000 monthly or MNT 11.5 million annually. In 2018, the average cashmere price was MNT 99,550 per kilogram (kg), and herders earned an average MNT 4,431,000 annually from cashmere. This equates to 40 percent of the income of herders coming from cashmere.<sup>61</sup> In 2020, the cashmere price dropped to MNT 50,000 per kg,<sup>62</sup> and so the cashmere price might decrease herder families’ income by 20 percent. According to data from the NSO,<sup>63</sup> the composition of income of households from the rural area has changed compared to the previous year, with income from livestock products decreasing by 9 percentage points within the entire household income.

<sup>59</sup> NSO. 2019. Employees with low pay rate. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSO\\_0400\\_057V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSO_0400_057V1)

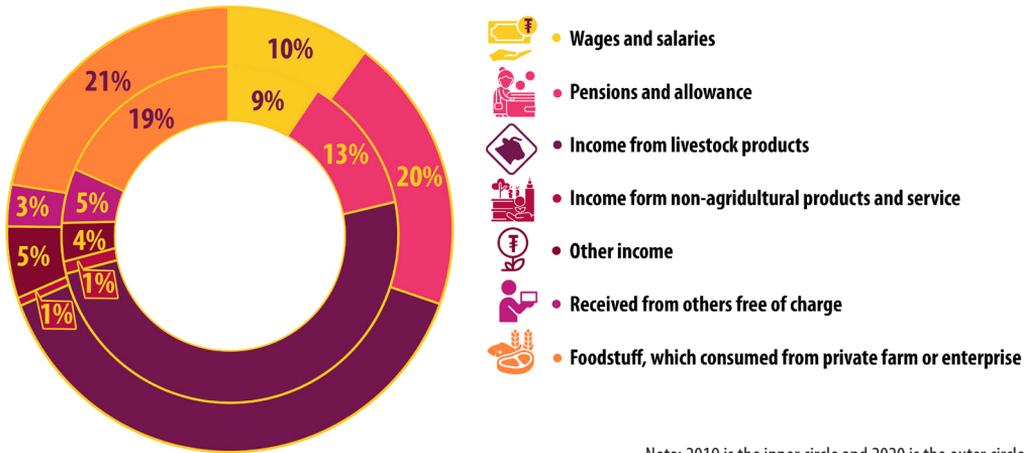
<sup>60</sup> NSO. 2020. Mongolia GDP report Quarter 3.

<sup>61</sup> MLSP. 2018. Herders livelihood survey.

<sup>62</sup> NSO. 2020. Prices of main products. [http://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSO\\_0600\\_001V6](http://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSO_0600_001V6)

<sup>63</sup> NSO. Q3 2020. Monthly average income per household. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSO\\_1900\\_018V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSO_1900_018V1)

Figure 12. Composition of income of households in rural areas, 2019 vs 2020



Note: 2019 is the inner circle and 2020 is the outer circle

Source: 1212.mn, NSO, Quarter 3, 2020

Informal workers make up a significant part of employment in Mongolia. One out of three workers, 31.5 percent, in the non-agriculture sectors are informal workers. And 36.2 percent of them are affiliated to the wholesale sector, which is severely affected by COVID-19. Female informal workers comprise 62.6 percent of the trade and service industry, many of them struggling with rental payments and bank loan repayments.<sup>64</sup> During the in-depth interviews, it was observed that most female informal workers worry about their family income, additional expenditure for children’s education, and loans.

*During the pandemic, my income dropped significantly. Numerous celebrations and national holidays had been suspended, and there was closure during the lockdown period. Regardless, bank loan and rental fees must be paid monthly with a constant amount.*

*A female, retail shop owner, Ulaanbaatar*

*Due to lockdown, household income decreased. I run a small photograph service, and it has been stopped during the lockdown.*

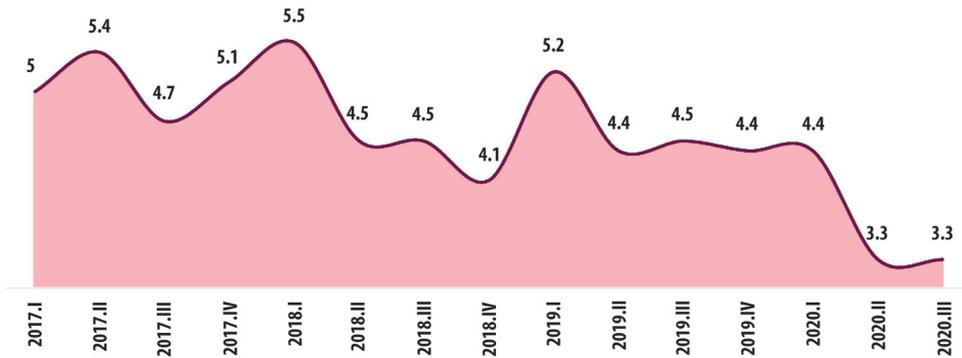
*A freelancer woman, Zavkhan*

During hardship, family network support plays a vital role in Mongolian culture, especially for some households. During the pandemic period, ‘income from others free of charge’ for households significantly decreased. It reduced to 3.3 percent of the total household income in Quarters 2 and 3 of 2020.<sup>65</sup> This kind of family network support has been very helpful for people’s well-being, especially those dependent on others, such as older women, people with disabilities and low-income families. But, as so many people around the world are affected by COVID-19, it would appear that family members, with lower incomes, cannot afford to contribute to their family networks in the same way as before.

<sup>64</sup> NSO. 2019. Labour force survey.

<sup>65</sup> NSO. Quarter 3, 2020. Composition of monthly average income per household. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NS0\\_1900\\_020V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NS0_1900_020V1)

Figure 13. Household income from others free of charge, by percentage



Source: 1212.mn NSO, Quarter 3, 2020.

*My son used to send money before the pandemic, but this year he transferred it only two times. His help was a lot for us. I understand that the situation in the [Republic of] Korea is very difficult now. I'm worried for him.*

*An older woman, Ulaanbaatar*

## Unpaid work

The COVID-19 lockdown increased demand for unpaid work; regardless of the household size, families had increased psychological stress and an increase in care work. The 2019 time-use study from the National Statistics Office of Mongolia reported that on average, women spend more time (2.6 times more or 273 minutes) in unpaid domestic work per day than men.<sup>66</sup> The interview participants observed that women's unpaid work is undervalued and the time spent on domestic chores limits their opportunities to participate in social activities and the labour force.

*I take care of my three grandchildren. We live in the ger district. Due to lacking cable TV coverage, my grandchildren sometimes miss their tele-lessons. When school was open, they went to school and I had time to spend for myself. Now I spend at least four hours [a day] on their tele-lessons.*

*An older woman, Ulaanbaatar*

*I have four children and it is hard to manage their study at home during these quarantine days. Helping children's education and daily household chores makes it hard to manage my business on time.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Zavkhan*

According to the Resolution of the State Emergency Committee<sup>67</sup>, women with children aged between 0 and 12 years old are provided with the opportunity to work remotely during the partial lockdown. However, this increased the workload for women as they have to manage their work responsibilities while also taking care of children and the daily functioning of their family. In addition to this, most of the women's working hours are shortened, and their available income decreased.

*I'm working online from home and my salary is reduced. However, my employer allowed me to work online; I had to telework three days each week with a 20 percent reduced salary.*

*Young woman, Ulaanbaatar*

<sup>66</sup> NSO. 2019. Time use study. UB

<sup>67</sup> SEC Resolution No. 6. March 10, 2020. Women who are pregnant or with children aged between 0 and 12 years old are provided the opportunity to work from home.

In general, grandparents, mostly older women, look after their grandchildren, particularly babies and toddlers, when their parents are in the workforce. This situation has increased due to COVID-19 restrictions.

 *To support my son's family, I look after his two children aged between 1.8 and 4 years old. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, their parents cannot visit the children for a while.*

*An older woman, Zavkhan*

Unpaid family work contributes significantly to the well-being of individuals, families and societies. However, the unequal distribution of caring and household chores is still hugely linked to stereotypes on gender roles and reveals gender gaps. Most of the interview participants agreed that unpaid domestic chores and care work are seen as female responsibilities. Unpaid work negatively influences policy effectiveness and attainment of the SDGs, notably because of gender inequalities, a lack of women empowerment and unequal employment opportunities. The government has to consider how to reduce unpaid care work for women by redistributing unpaid work. This should be promoted along with the implementation and initiation of family-friendly policies with community engagement to make it easier for women to work, and to lessen unpaid work for women.

### 3.3 Government responses to the COVID-19 crisis

The government measures and responses to COVID-19 impact women's socio-economic situation. This is analysed in this section according to interlinked areas, along with other analysis of the government's lockdown measures (*See Appendix 2: Highlighted government responses*).

Early in the global pandemic, the GOM immediately declared a state of high alert and took prompt actions to contain the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing and closing of the borders and international flights. A low number of COVID-19 cases have been sporadically reported from individuals repatriated from abroad from March to November 2020. Cases of domestic transmissions were reported for the first time from November 2020. Since then, the government has instituted strict measures, including a stringent nationwide lockdown from 12 November 2020.

#### *Restriction of movements*



A state of high readiness was declared first for 12 February to 2 March 2020 and further extended 10 times.<sup>68</sup> After the first local transmission was confirmed in November 2020, public emergency readiness was announced between 11 and 17 November and lockdown measures have been extended four times.<sup>69</sup> The latest measures were taken from 23 December 2020 to 6 January 2021. Nationwide lockdown and social distancing measures were extended month to month without consideration to the financial survival of retail businesses. It has become challenging for most businesses to manage and operate due to less revenue and economic uncertainty and they need to revisit business plans to prepare for different possible situations.

<sup>68</sup> Cabinet Resolution No. 63 February 2020; Cabinet Resolution No. 147 April 2020; Cabinet Resolution No. 188 May 2020; Cabinet Resolution No. 234 June 2020, Measure to extend heightened state of readiness.

<sup>69</sup> Cabinet Resolution No. 178 November 2020; Cabinet Resolution No. 181 November 2020; Cabinet Resolution No. 209 December 2020; Cabinet Resolution No. 226 December 2020, Measures to extend the stringent lockdown.



## Isolation



International flights and transportation across the borders are restricted.<sup>70</sup> Only limited charter flights to repatriate Mongolian citizens are available. Repatriates are isolated for 14 days in government quarantine centres followed by a week's home quarantine. Isolation at home is also mandatory for all family members. Charter flights for repatriation have prioritized certain vulnerable groups including pregnant women, the elderly, children and people who have severe health problems.



*According to the rule of COVID-19, my son should be self-quarantined straight after returning from Ulaanbaatar. Even when he tested negative, our soum decision-makers wanted him to stay at the soum hotel. But we could not pay MNT 900,000 for the hotel. So, we chose the last option to have my son quarantined with his younger siblings at home. As for me, I needed to live with my sister's family. Because if I was quarantined with my children, I could not go to work for two weeks. I need work, so I have decided to leave my children at home. Moreover, the officials posted a sticker outside our door, and it has caused stress and psychological pressure for us.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Zavkhan*

## Stimulus measures



The government announced stimulus measures to mitigate COVID-19 impacts on the national economy and provide social protection,<sup>71</sup> including increased child money allowance, pensions, food stamps, exemptions and redemptions of social insurance and income taxes, subsidies of coal briquettes and waivers of water, electricity and heating payments. The stimulus measures are provided equally, but the gendered impacts of these measures are not understood due to an absence of gendered impact assessments.

## Work from home arrangements



In March 2020, the GOM encouraged public agencies and private companies to allow female employees with children under 12 years of age to work from home or to provide them paid leave.<sup>72</sup> In November, when the stringent lockdown started, the GOM included fathers in this same decision. Encouraged to work from home, female employees tend to struggle more than men with the double burden of unpaid care and domestic work.

## Information on one-stop service centres and shelter houses for gender-based violence survivors



During the stringent lockdown declared by the GOM on 12 November 2020,<sup>73</sup> the State Emergency Committee officially announced that some services were allowed to stay open. Shelter houses and one-stop service centres (OSSCs) were not restricted during the lockdown, but people were not informed of this as they were initially not on the list of allowed activities. They were put on the list when the next stringent lockdown measurement was declared on 22 December 2020.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Cabinet Resolution No. 39 January 2020. Temporarily closing some borders and restriction of the movements.

<sup>71</sup> Cabinet Resolution No. 114. April 2020. Measures to support economy in stringent restriction; Cabinet Resolution No. 167. May 2020. Social protection measures to promote economy and to support people's livelihood during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19); Cabinet Resolution No. 200. December 2020. Measures to reduce the price of coal briquettes. Dec 2020; Cabinet Resolution No. 211, Measures to support households and entities during coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

<sup>72</sup> The State of Emergency Committee Resolution No. 6, March 2020.

<sup>73</sup> Cabinet Resolution No. 178, Public stringent lockdown measures. November 2020; City Mayor's Decree No. A/1242, Measures in stringent restriction. November 12, 2020.

<sup>74</sup> City Mayor's Decree No. 1320, Measures in partial lockdown restriction. December 2020

## Women's participation in decision making

Stimulus policy responses and laws are approved by the Parliament of Mongolia in close coordination with the Government of Mongolia. As of December 2020, women make up only 17 percent of the 75 parliament members, and 18 percent (3 members) of the Cabinet of Mongolia. This relatively low political participation of women does not provide the space for women to engage sufficiently to promote gender-responsive decisions that fully recognize and address women's needs and priorities.

State and local restriction measures on the border and local movements were taken by the State Emergency Commission of Mongolia (SEC) in close coordination with the respected ministries. The commission was re-established after the June 2020 parliamentary election, with 26 members, of which only 3 are women, or 11 percent. The share of women's participation in the committee does not conform to the Law on Promoting Gender Equality:<sup>75</sup>

 *10.2. Representation of any one sex in the composition of advisory or joint governance bodies such as committees, councils or commissions set up by public agencies or national level shall not be less than 40 percent.*

*Law on Promoting Gender Equality*

This kind of participation gap negatively affects the ability to make gender-sensitive decisions. By involving women, their self-help groups, organizations and networks in decision-making processes, it will help decision makers, development workers and community members to tackle the specific impact and challenges faced by women during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3.4 Vulnerable groups

### Female-headed households

The nationwide measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 put huge pressure on single parents, especially single mothers, who rely on one income and are responsible for all child care tasks. According to the National Statistics Office of Mongolia, there are 69,787 single-mother families and over 17,775 single-father families in Mongolia.<sup>76</sup> Of these, 43.1 percent (34,245) of the single mothers have children aged below 18 years<sup>77</sup> and most of them are struggling with the lockdown and income decline.<sup>78</sup> After divorce, women usually remain responsible for raising and caring for their children. Especially during this pandemic time, their vulnerability is increased as many face financial difficulty and psychological stress.

During the in-depth phone interviews, participants indicated there was a clear tendency for single-family households and in particular female-headed households to increase their unpaid workload in response to strict COVID-19 prevention measures.

 *I'm unable to work due to child care duties. One of my children has special needs, another one attends school online ... life has become worse.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Ulaanbaatar*

<sup>75</sup> Law on promoting gender equality, Mongolia 2011, Article 10.

<sup>76</sup> NSO. 2019. Head of household persons. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSQ\\_3300\\_044V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSQ_3300_044V1)

<sup>77</sup> NSO. 2019. Mothers who head household with children below 18 years old. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSQ\\_3300\\_045V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSQ_3300_045V1)

<sup>78</sup> UNDP. May 2020. Rapid socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 prevention measures on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia.

 *I have 4-year-old-twins and worked for the mining company as a cook. My boss laid me off because of the COVID-19 restriction based on the government resolution focused on mothers who have children aged 0 to 12. Only child money allowance is our living source these days.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Dundgovi*

Women's unpaid work increases with the number of children under 16 years old, but this burden is higher for single parents.<sup>79</sup> According to a recent UNDP survey, women are more likely to experience psychological stress related to COVID-19 compared to men, due to the additional burdens of taking care of children, income loss and worry about the risk of an outbreak.<sup>80</sup>

 *I am worried about being able to afford food for my children and fuel for the home ... I am not complaining about being single ... But it's just very stressful.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Ulaanbaatar*

 *Staying at home, I get angry quickly at my children. I blame them for even small things, and sometimes hit my boys, but of course not harshly.*

*Herder woman, Khentii*

According to the Asian Development Bank, inequality and poverty would have increased significantly in Mongolia without government measures, which have counteracted some of the adverse effects.<sup>81</sup> Interviewees mentioned that single mothers have benefited from child benefits.

 *It is hard being a single mother of three children ... Without child benefits, it would be difficult to survive.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Zavkhan*

Most of the single mothers and vulnerable groups live in large peri-urban ger districts without proper sanitation systems that have a pit latrine, poor quality water and waste management, public shower, scarcity of water resources. These kinds of poor sanitation and infrastructure issues impact on women and girls' health and create an unhealthy environment.

 *We live in the ger district. Hygiene is a big concern for us. Due to coronavirus infection, I prefer to use an eco-toilet. Unfortunately, there is no information on eco-friendly toilets and support from khoroo.*

*An older woman, Ulaanbaatar*

COVID-19 has negatively impacted household food consumption, especially among female headed households who reported that their food consumption decreased due to lower household income and increases in food prices.<sup>82</sup> A UNDP study found that as most children in Mongolia get meals during the day when in school, the closures of kindergartens and schools resulted in an 8.6 percent or MNT 5,400 increased spending on food in households with preschool or elementary school children.<sup>83</sup> Many children may missing out on essential nutrition due to the school closures; many families, in particular female-headed households, cannot afford sufficient nutritious food for their children as their income has been reduced.

79 NSO. 2019. Time use study. UB.

80 UNDP. May 2020. Rapid socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 prevention measures on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia.

81 ADB. October 2020. Mongolia: Building Capacity for an Effective Social Welfare System. Assessment of the social protection response to COVID-19 in Mongolia.

82 UNDP. May 2020. Rapid socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 prevention measures on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia.

83 Ibid.



*I would prefer my children to go to school. Two of them have a meal at school. They are young, all day they stay home and eating a lot. It is not their fault. But we have no income.*

*Female Head-of-Household, Ulaanbaatar*

## Girls and young women

Reports and surveys in many countries worldwide indicate significant increases in gender-based violence since the outbreak of COVID-19, especially for those already disadvantaged in their communities.<sup>84</sup>

Children stay at home for long periods, which impacts on children's behaviour and emotional health. Adolescents are not only worried about themselves, but also their family members, school exams and family income. Alongside the high level of their parents' stress, they experience fears, uncertainties, substantial changes to routines, and physical and social isolation.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, children from lower-income households are less likely to engage in distance learning due to not having mobile phones or computers and stable Internet connectivity.



*I am going to graduate high school in the coming year. But nowadays I do nothing ... I am just nervous... At home, I have no computer and Internet connection.*

*A female student, Dundgovi*

Another concerning issue is cyberbullying, which may increase during COVID-19 as most youth, including adolescents, are spending more time online than usual in this period of social distancing. However, socializing with others and peers, accessing information, and increased 'screen time' sometimes come with risks. According to the Ministry of Education in 2017, 13.5 percent of all children were cyberbullied and children's growing access to Internet increases risks of exposure to cyberbullying, emotional and sexual abuse, and exploitation.<sup>86</sup>



*I'm using more time on Facebook, since online lessons started. Even when I talk and chat with my friends, some of them use bad words, send unwanted texts and embarrassing photos ... kind of online violence.*

*A female student, Ulaanbaatar*

Teenage pregnancy has become a challenging issue in developing countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>87</sup> The teenage pregnancy rate in Mongolia has not fallen during the last years. The birth rate in 2019 was 31.7 per 1,000 adolescent girls aged 15 to 19<sup>88</sup> and the lockdown period increases the possibility that girls will be victims to various types of violence. Thus, for protecting girls from abuse and preventing teenage pregnancy, social protection measures and girls' empowerment programs need to be strengthened.

In 2018, 6.1 percent of adolescent girls in rural areas and 2.7 percent girls in urban areas gave birth under the age of 18.<sup>89</sup> This shows that adolescent girls in rural areas need more education and access to sexual

<sup>84</sup> UN Women. 2020. COVID-19: Ending violence against women and girls. Key priorities and interventions for effective response and recovery. UN Women East and Southern Africa.

<sup>85</sup> Laura Castañeda. 2020. Negative Impacts during a COVID-19 Pandemic on Children, Adolescents & Families. Health Science Journal 14, no. 6: 1-2.

<sup>86</sup> MECSS. July 2017. Cyber-bullying. A study of Mongolian adolescents. Mongolia.

<sup>87</sup> World Vision. 2020. COVID-19 Aftershocks: Access denied – Teenage pregnancy threatens to block a million girls across sub-Saharan Africa from returning to school.

<sup>88</sup> NSO. 2019. Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women in that age group. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NS0\\_2100\\_047V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NS0_2100_047V1)

<sup>89</sup> NSO. 2018. Social indicator sample survey.



and reproductive health education and services. Providing girls with more education and access, they can be empowered to make informed decisions about their own choices.

As households face huge economic challenges and increased psychological stress, the tension in family relations and household responsibilities grows heavier. Women's and girls' freedoms may be curtailed, and they cannot exercise their basic rights. To avoid intergenerational and gender inequalities it is important to involve young women and girls in all decision-making processes in addressing COVID-19.

## Elderly women

In Mongolia, there are 374,428 people over age 55 (of whom 215,799, or 57.6%, are women).<sup>90</sup> Social isolation and loneliness are likely to be among the most common health outcomes for the average single older person. Today in Mongolia, 29,080 women aged 55 and over and 10,421 men aged 60 and older are living alone.<sup>91</sup> Ulaanbaatar city is home to 50 percent of the older population aged 65 and above, of whom 6,985, or 7 percent, are considered to have poor health conditions.<sup>92</sup>

Older people are experiencing some aspects of the lockdown situation differently from younger people, worrying less about finances but worrying more about access to essential goods. According to the UNDP survey, for both sexes, the share of stress experienced due to COVID-19 increases with age until age 50. While the rate tends to decline among men aged 50 and above, the rate continues to increase until age 60 among women.<sup>93</sup>

 *I am not worried for myself, but my grandchildren. How they will survive in this difficult time? The only thing that I can do for them is to share my pension to buy them some food.*

*An older woman, Ulaanbaatar*

There are limited health services and institutional care centres in Mongolia, which worsen the situation for the elderly and increase their risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. Elderly persons who live alone face barriers to obtaining the newest information, medication, food and other necessary supplies during the quarantine. An older person who needs care cannot receive support during the lockdown through their informal (families and friends) and formal networks (family practitioners and social workers).

 *My TV and phone are my best friends. Nowadays, I am fine and able to live on my own. But I am worried that if my health worsens, who will take care of me during the quarantine.*

*An older woman, Ulaanbaatar*

During the pandemic, some of the elderly are also playing important roles for their family members and children. Some of them provide financial assistance and others look after their grandchildren. In particular older women act as important sources of childcare for working parents. On the other hand, the elderly are at risk of abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to physical,

<sup>90</sup> NSO. 2019. Population of Mongolia. [https://1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL\\_ID=DT\\_NSO\\_0300\\_003V1](https://1212.mn/tables.aspx?TBL_ID=DT_NSO_0300_003V1)

<sup>91</sup> NSO. 2019. Number of old aged living single-headed households. [http://1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSO\\_0300\\_014V1](http://1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSO_0300_014V1)

<sup>92</sup> World Health Organization. Mongolia. 17 August 2020. Reaching the most vulnerable older people. News release. <https://www.who.int/mongolia/news/detail/17-08-2020-reaching-the-most-vulnerable-older>

<sup>93</sup> UNDP, May 2020. Rapid socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 prevention measures on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia.

psychological, financial abuse, exploitation and neglect. Lacking personal competence in technology makes the elderly more dependent on someone, especially if their rights to control and access their own money are restricted.

It is also worth noting that there are very limited gender disaggregated data, statistics and surveys on elderly persons. Most of the available data do not pertain to the specific realities of women and gender issues, making it difficult to evaluate their livelihoods of older women in relation to the impacts of COVID-19.

## Women and girls with disabilities

As of 2019 in Mongolia, there are about 107,075 people with disabilities, representing about 3.3 percent of the total population; of that number 45,980 or 42.9% are women. The number of disabled persons living in Ulaanbaatar is 34,860, out of which 14,945 are female.<sup>94</sup>

The COVID-19 lockdown has placed additional pressure on family members living with a disability, including women and girls with disabilities. Many lack appropriate assisted-living, assistive equipment, Internet access and accessible materials, and the problem has become worse and more visible due to the pandemic.

 *My daughter studies in a special school. The school provides an individual learning plan for each student. Since quarantine, the programme has been cancelled.*

*Mother of a daughter with a disability, Ulaanbaatar*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, persons with disabilities, depending on support for their daily routines, may be more isolated and unable to access health and social services.

People with disabilities also continue to face discrimination and safety issues at home. They may encounter a barrier seeking protection from violence. They are less likely to access prevention and response services. The ADB survey shows that in some cases, people with disabilities are being confined for their safety, forced to forgo paid employment to work as unpaid child caregivers at home, and exposed to sexual violence.<sup>95</sup>

 *We do not let our clients go out during these quarantine days and we don't allow them to meet visitors. Obviously, it is very difficult for the clients.*

*Social worker, residential care centre*

<sup>94</sup> NSO. 2019. Number of persons with disability. [https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl\\_id=DT\\_NSQ\\_3900\\_002V1](https://www.1212.mn/tables.aspx?tbl_id=DT_NSQ_3900_002V1)

<sup>95</sup> ADB. December 2019. Living with Disability in Mongolia: Progress Toward Inclusion.



## Female Herders

The animal husbandry sector makes up 10.9 percent of Mongolia's GDP and 8.2 percent of export earnings, directly providing 25.3 percent or one-fourth of the working-age population with jobs. According to an NSO report, there are 171,605 herding families or 285,482 people, which accounts for approximately 19.5 percent of population, out of which 119,114, or 41.7%, are female.<sup>96</sup> Women are actively engaged in contributing to the livelihoods of herder households.

As of 2020, one in three herders is estimated to be poor.<sup>97</sup> Herders are highly dependent on weather and their livestock. Thus, they are extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, pastureland degradation and livestock price fluctuations. The recent drought condition and dzud, negatively affect their livelihood and welfare. The dzud risk map of 20 November 2020 shows that about 40 percent of the country is at dzud risk (6 percent at very high risk and 30.4 percent at high risk) and 28.2 percent of the country is at medium risk.<sup>98</sup> Herder households who are in the affected areas are in great need for cash, livestock medicines, and food and nutrition. In addition, the herders and their families have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19, and according to the World Bank survey 70 percent of farmer and herder households reported their agricultural income has declined compared to the same time last year.<sup>99</sup> Especially herder families with fewer livestock, up to 200 animals, have no alternative sources of income and are often dependent on state support; they are highly vulnerable to dzud and periods of financial crisis and the pandemic period.

 *Animal husbandry is the source of my family living. There is no other job I can do. Due to 'dzud' and high fodder prices, 100 out of 350 animals were sold. The prices of basic goods and commodities have risen. This kind of situation adversely affects families like us with low income and few number of livestock.*

*Herder woman, Dundgovi*

Besides natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, bank loans negatively affect the livelihoods of herders. As reported by the NSO, 40 percent of all the herders have taken out loans.<sup>100</sup> Many herders said that the bank's loans automatically come with insurance so they are forced to purchase livestock insurance and even though they do not have enough bank collateral, many of them have already received loans. Herder families with fewer animals may be at greater risk of droughts, dzud and losing their source of livelihood and staying in debt.

According to the NSO, as of 2019, only 27.4 percent of Mongolian herders were insured by national social insurance and 45.7 percent of female herders participated in social insurance. Also, 66 percent of herders have health insurance - 62 percent of the male herders and 71.7 percent of female herders.<sup>101</sup> During the in-depth phone interviews, most female herders mentioned that health insurance is only required when they need to get health services for hospitalization or medical check-ups. Otherwise, they do not benefit from health insurance. When they do not, they face challenges in getting access to health services due to poor road conditions, for example floods in summer and dzud in winter. Due to COVID-19 restriction

<sup>96</sup> NSO. 2020. Agriculture sector Mongolia 2019.

<sup>97</sup> NSO. 2020. Mongolia poverty update: Main report of household socio-economic survey 2018.

<sup>98</sup> National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring. November 2020. Dzud risk report. <http://tsagaar.gov.mn/>

<sup>99</sup> World Bank and NSO. 17 December 2020. Result of Mongolia COVID-19 household phone survey response (Round 2)

<sup>100</sup> NSO. 2020. Agriculture sector Mongolia 2019.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

measures, they are isolated together with their livestock making it too risky to get health service in another aimag.

 *My husband and I are doing 'otor'. I am pregnant, and needed to see the doctor a few weeks ago. But my family was isolated due to lockdown. We have no information and I am just wondering if I can go to the hospital.*

*Herder woman, Khentii*

Many female survey respondents mentioned that divorce and economic dependence bring negative economic impacts, especially for women. Furthermore, it can lead to increased levels of family violence. Living apart for a long time is becoming a common cause for divorce and domestic violence, including among herder families. During the school year, many herder families are split between countryside and town. However, the school closure has given the herder families a chance to reunite; some of the herders still cannot live with their families due to the current dzud situation. For those living in a split family, household costs double.

 *Before the COVID-19 measure on the closing of schools, I used to live at the soum centre with my school children. Now we are in the countryside, but my husband is doing 'otor' to Tuv aimag ... he is already about 200 kilometres far away from home.*

*Herder woman, Dundgovi*

The interviews with herders revealed that the dzud and COVID-19 pandemic has caused them much stress. Most of them were really worried about their family income. Moreover, many of them are under high pressure to support their children's learning at home.<sup>102</sup> Children from herding families and children from socio-economically disadvantaged families are at higher risk of being left behind in learning.<sup>103</sup> As work and services are moving to the Internet, herders, especially those living far away from aimag and soum centres, may be more isolated and not be able to access current information, and thus are at risk of falling behind. Parents do not want their children to fall behind in their education and are worried about supporting their children in their online learning process.

 *Using smartphone and Internet requires special ability. I feel as though I lack competence in using a smartphone and accessing the Internet and that it is so hard to learn.*

*Herder woman, Khentii*

## Female Migrants

Many people, including low-income family members often left their home places with few options for making their lives better. Rural poverty, unemployment, drought, dzud and climate change are the factors influencing internal migration. However, according to the 2020 Population and Housing Census, migration between aimags and Ulaanbaatar has declined by 49.1 percent over the past five years due to the decree of the Ulaanbaatar Mayor to suspend the migration from rural areas to Ulaanbaatar.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> UNICEF. June 2020. Mongolia Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report No. 2.

<sup>103</sup> UNICEF. August 2020. Mongolia Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Situation Report No. 4.

<sup>104</sup> The Governor of the Capital City and the Mayor of Ulaanbaatar issued a decree on 9 January 2017 and suspended domestic migration from rural areas to Ulaanbaatar for permanent residence until 1 January 2020.



Seeking employment is considered a main factor in the decision to migrate. Migrants are seeking better economic opportunities as well as the availability of public services such as health, education, social and public services.

According to a UNDP report, migrants are highly impacted by COVID-19. Migrant households are at risk of falling into poverty, due to their lack of social insurance and savings.<sup>105</sup> Migrants and their family members often do not have the same rights as other residents, and cannot access health and education, or participate in the formal economy and social events. International and internal migrants are at much higher risk of COVID19 from a higher incidence of overcrowded housing conditions (preventing physical distancing from family members), and having more jobs (which put them into contact with more people).

 *A year ago, we had come to Ulaanbaatar and settled in the ger district. We came here to look for a better life. But we are still living from loan to loan. The corona situation has made our life worse. Now I want to come back to my home soum, but my husband does not want to go with me.*

*Migrant woman, Ulaanbaatar*

Many migrants are exposed to loss of employment and wages during the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. Moreover, families depending on the remittances of migrants are also hit hard by migrant workers losing their wages. Many migrants are exposed to loss of employment and wages during the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. According to the UN Women, COVID-19 could cause 25 million job losses for migrant women<sup>106</sup>.

Due to border closures, people who live remotely in the border areas such as Zamiin-Uud (southern border) have not been able to continue their business. They mainly have very small, micro businesses in the restaurant, hospitality and transportation sectors. Some of them temporarily worked in the People's Republic of China for a while due to better economic and employment opportunities.

 *Living in the aimag centre with low income was so difficult. So, my friends and I found a job in Inner Mongolia [the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China] with a pretty good salary. We worked for a small agriculture company owned by an Inner Mongolian for three months. Since the COVID-19 restriction, we needed to get back to Mongolia. I went to Ulaanbaatar to find a job due to the availability of good education services for my son.*

*Migrant woman, Ulaanbaatar*

<sup>105</sup> UNDP. May 2020. Rapid socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 prevention measures on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia.

<sup>106</sup> UN Women. 2020. COVID-19: Ending violence against women and girls. Key priorities and interventions for effective response and recovery. UN Women East and Southern Africa.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected the lives of everyone, but it has also widened existing gender and economic inequalities. It has had a devastating impact on women, girls, in particular those that are poor, elderly, with disability, a migrant, or a herder. The pandemic is affecting the lives and livelihoods of women and girls in Mongolia as follows:

#### *Economic inequalities*



The pandemic impacts poverty in multiple ways. Although some people are more likely to keep working during the pandemic, for most of them, their income is declining. To recover from COVID-19, the country needs to support women and sectors they are engaged in that have been highly impacted, such as small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, freelancers and women in informal work.

#### *Health inequalities*



The pre-existing inequalities in the health sector and in health status have increased women's vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic. Health-related inequalities are linked to socio-economic status, geography, gender and ethnicity. Those who are in poverty, in particular women, have lower access to health services. There is a difference in access between rural and urban populations, with women in rural areas struggling more. Poorer geographical units will have poorer hygiene service and infrastructure and lower health system capacity which disproportionately affects women and girls. Disparities in health status and service are therefore encountered by those who are more socio-economically vulnerable, such as young girls and women, people with disabilities, and the elderly. The increasing inequality in health requires policies to reduce inequality between women and men and improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations, in particular for women and girls.

#### *Education inequalities*



The digital divide is widening inequality gaps, and for people living in poor and rural areas, the education disparities are deepening. Compared with boys and young men of the same age, girls and young women do not have enough time for their education due to having to do more unpaid work and domestic chores. This leads to educational disparities, especially for girls living in large families, poverty and rural areas/ger districts.

#### *Human rights and inequalities*



Women and girls are more vulnerable under COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns because of existing gender inequalities. The pandemic significantly increases the burden of unpaid work for women and girls, and their rights are denied, hindered and ignored, especially for those who are more vulnerable. Even before COVID-19, the status of women in Mongolia has been uneven, and today the gender gap is either widening or not improving in the economic, social



and political spheres. Women’s and girls’ voices, participation and engagement, especially from those who are poor and live in rural areas, should be strengthened to consider their specific needs in the decision making and implementation of the pandemic response and recovery.

### *Urban and rural inequalities*



Ger district and rural people are often at a disadvantage from protecting themselves from COVID-19 infection compared to people who live in apartment buildings, which are better connected to the main urban infrastructure service networks. Rural people and particularly girls and young women who live in poverty have dramatically less access to adequate sanitation, health services, education, social protection, Internet networks, information and public infrastructure. For improving their livelihoods during and after the pandemic, long-term empowerment measures are needed for vulnerable women and girls living in particular in peri-urban and rural areas.

The signs of rising inequality discussed above could threaten the successes of and achievements towards the SDGs. To mitigate the risks of COVID-19 and to achieve an effective and inclusive recovery, it is essential to strengthen society by empowering women and girls and promoting their active participation. To create a society that leaves no one behind and supports a more rapid recovery, women and girls should be put at the centre of social and economic policy measures to provide equal opportunities provided to all Mongolia’s citizens.

Country-specific cultural factors, such as the nomadic lifestyle of part of the population, where children from herder families stay in dormitories during schooling, the specific needs of those residing in ger districts, family and community networking support system, and family responsibilities may greatly complicate the lives of women and girls in tis COVID-19 situation. Thus, it is vital to consider these country-specific factors when factoring in the needs of women and girls in the COVID-19 recovery strategy, to build forward better and leave no one behind.

## 4.2 Recommendations

### Short term



Continue the existing national social protection programmes to support children and vulnerable families until the economy recovers from COVID-19.

Adopt innovative ways of early identification of gender-based and domestic violence during the COVID-19 restrictions to reduce the risk and prevalence of their incidence through routine GBV/DV screening by local multidisciplinary team members.

Ensure parents' participation in protecting their children, in particular girls, from cyberbullying and any other types of violence including GBV/DV during restriction and provide both children and their parents with online training and sensitization programmes.

Develop remote learning packages for children who are living in rural areas, as well as children with disabilities.

Develop individual learning plans for children with disabilities.

Rights-based and inclusive approaches for women and girls must be considered for all types of social services, especially during the emergency and stringent lockdown circumstances.

Gender-responsive decisions, sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators should be further developed and made publicly available.

Idle time compensation in the law in

### Mid-term



Develop child-care support for working parents, especially for front-line workers, the majority of whom are women, such as essential services in health, emergencies, food, public sector, transportation, communication, energy and water management to encourage their psychosocial and family well-being.

Reduce and redistribute unpaid work roles by increasing public awareness and community care services, family-friendly working policies, increasing male involvement in domestic chores and home-based care, investing in time-saving technology and infrastructure, and design suitable fiscal policies, such as tax-friendly procedures for women and family members.

Provide a mobile lab phone-based system so that reproductive-age females, people with disabilities, the elderly, migrants, herders, and those living in ger districts and in rural and remote areas can consult with General Practitioners and receive medications as prescribed by them.

Strengthen the health and social care services through technologies, which can also largely benefit women, such as health monitoring systems and health wearable devices to protect public service workers, e.g. health care and educators, from the risk of infection by COVID-19.

Provide basic technological support and facilities for teachers, who are largely women, at general secondary schools and high schools.

Develop MSMEs' digital capacity with business development online services through extending online platforms operations, supply chains, capacity-building

### Long term



Ensure herder communities' access, in particular for women and girls to health (e.g., pregnancy monitoring) and social services (e.g., social protection), and regulations to meet the needs of herders and their families during the pandemic and oton period.

Further the economic empowerment of women and girls essential for achieving gender equality and sustainable development.

Continuously strengthen young girls' and women's capacity to prevent and protect themselves from risks of violence in both public and private spaces.

The cost of unpaid and caregiving work should be officially calculated and defined in monetary value, which can be used to influence behavioural trends and challenge existing gender norms.

Retraining programmes and new skills development activities that support getting unpaid women caregivers into the labour force need to be developed nationwide, especially after the pandemic. Promoting women's labour participation programmes like these should be included in relevant laws and regulations.

Develop a training manual on rights-based, gender-responsive and socially inclusive public services for both multidisciplinary service providers and service users for use during emergencies.



the Labour Code of Mongolia must be monitored and audited during COVID-19 measures. If the restriction measures are considered a force majeure event, then the compensation should be stipulated in the Cabinet resolution and Law on Pandemic Preparedness and Response. Employees who are temporary laid off due to the COVID-19 restrictions or lockdowns must get salary subsidies.

The monthly social insurance premium shall be exempted for persons unemployed due to the COVID-19, at least until normal times or two years. This will help them to avoid the social insurance premium gap for further benefits, such as retirement, bank loan.

Include non-profit and humanitarian organizations who work with vulnerable people and are located in the ger districts or in rural or remote areas into the Cabinet resolution on reducing the briquette cost at a discount to support their daily activities without interruption. Improve easy access to and ways to access information on social services, including employment, for all ages of people with different literacy levels and make it publicly available.

Develop a community-based welfare programme to support female-headed households who are in or near the poverty line, older women and young women who are unemployed or self-employed to protect them from any discrimination and violence during this emergency.

and counselling on setting up their post COVID-19 business model and helping them improve their technology and management, regardless of the type and size of their business.

A legal definition for women-owned MSME needs to be clearly described in the Law on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises for strengthening access to finance for women-owned MSMEs. Entrepreneurs of MSMEs and the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, National Committee on Gender Equality and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection should take initiatives to make accurate and clear legal definitions in relevant laws and regulations.

Make gender-responsive decisions on socio-economic policies by encouraging civil society organizations' participation in decision making, especially involving gender specialists or specialized organizations that can be appointed as members of the State Emergency Commission.

Promote the participation of civil organizations in political decision making to develop the post- COVID-19 socio-economic recovery programme.

Develop online and face-to-face psychosocial counselling and protection services for vulnerable groups, including adolescent girls and young women.

Ensure access to sufficient and affordable water, sanitation, latrine situation and hygiene services for vulnerable groups of girls and women in ger districts and in rural areas, through e.g. "eco-toilets", to protect them from diseases including COVID-19.

Gender quotas should be strictly obeyed by decision makers through enforcing laws and regulations, including the Law on Promoting Gender Equality.

The mechanism of accountability of the law shall be followed and monitored.

A gender sensitive long-term strategy and plan for mitigating impacts after the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be developed based on recommendations of international and national NGOs, and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant government strategies. The development of the strategy should include women's participation and have a focus on the particular needs of women and girls.

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## Key legal documents related to COVID-19 measures in Mongolia

### 1. Laws (in chronological order)

- 1998, Law on Health
- 1999, Law on Labour Code
- 1999, Law on Family
- 2002, Law on Education
- 2011, Law on Promoting Gender Equality
- 2012, Law on Social Welfare
- 2017, Law on Disaster Preparedness
- 2019, Law on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
- 2020, Law on Pandemic Preparedness and Response (COVID-19)

### 2. State Cabinet Resolutions (in chronological order)

- Cabinet Resolution No. 472, Renewing public service employees' salary scale and net. Dec 2019.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 30, Measures to prevent from the new coronavirus risks. Jan 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 39, Temporarily closing some borders and restriction of the movements. Jan 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 62, Declaring national emergency. Feb 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 63, Measures in heightened state of readiness, Feb 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 68, Measures in finance and budget in the stringent restriction. Feb 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 101, Measures to support cashmere sector. Apr 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 114, Measures to support economy in stringent restriction. Apr 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 127, Amendments to the regulation. Sep 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 139, Infection prevention (COVID-19) measures in education sector. Apr 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 140, Approval of social insurance exemption for employers and employees. Apr 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 147, Extend heightened state of readiness. Apr 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 167, Social protection measures to promote economy and to support people's livelihood during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). May 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 168, Measures in budget regulation in the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). May 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 178, Measures to promote livestock products, economic turnover. May 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 188, Approval of regulation and extend the heightened state of readiness. May 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 234, Measure to extend stringent restriction. Jun 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 32, Measure to implement in education sector. Jul 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 178, Public stringent lockdown measures. Nov 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 181, Measure to extend stringent lockdown. Nov 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 183, Measures to support economy in lockdown. Nov 2020.
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- Cabinet Resolution No. 211, Measures to support households and entities during coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). Dec 2020.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 226, Reinforce stringent lockdown measures. Dec 2020.

### 3. State Emergency Committee Resolutions and Minutes and Deputy Minister Decree (in chronological order)

- Committee Resolution No. 01, Closing the borders, all level of educational institutions and facilities, and banning all public gatherings. Jan 24, 2020.

- Committee Resolution No. 05, Measures to religious gatherings and ban regional travels. Feb 20, 2020.
- Committee Resolution No. 06, Measure to restrict movement of people and transportation. Mar 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 12, Measures to support for vulnerable groups' livelihood through social security, prevent from the infection. Mar 17, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 17, Cancelling state exam on Mongolian language. Apr 14, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 20, Extend the restriction measures. Apr 28, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 22, Extend the restriction measures. May 25, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 25, Extend the restriction measures. Jul 01, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 26, Extend the restriction measures. Jul 09, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 29, Extend the restriction measures. Sep 14, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 30, Extend the restriction measures. Oct 26, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 33, Close down Ulaanbaatar. Nov 10, 2020.
- Committee Resolution No. 12, Measure to restrict movement of people and transportation, closure of all level of educational institutions. Nov 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 35, Suspension secondary school replaced with distance learning and stringent restriction. Nov 14, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 37, Extend the stringent lockdown. Nov 29, 2020.
- Committee minutes No. 38, Extend the stringent lockdown. Dec 8, 2020.
- Deputy Minister Decree No. 153, Approval of Business Counselling Board members. Dec 2020.

#### **4. The Municipal Emergency Committee City Mayor's Decrees (in chronological order)**

- City Mayor's Decree No. A/346, Measures to protect residents' health. Mar 30, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/521, Measures in public health. Apr 16, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/590, Amendment to the order. Apr 30, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/616, Measures to protect residents' health. May 06, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/930, Measures to support the economy. Jun 30, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/1241, Measures to strengthen the prevention activities from coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Nov 11, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/1242, Measures in stringent restriction. Nov 12, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/1248, Amendment to the order. Nov 18, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/1251, Measures in stringent restriction. Nov 20, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/1250, Measures in stringent restriction. Nov 20, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. A/1308, Renewing the municipal emergency committee members. Dec 21, 2020.
- City Mayor's Decree No. 1320, Measures in partial lockdown restriction. Dec 2020.

## APPENDIX 1. KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS

### Social services

Have the immediate needs of women working in education sectors been met? Have they had access to reliable and timely information, online equipment, and personal competence on technologies? How are their working loads when class starts after online lessons?

What has been the impact on girls, boys and adolescent's education regarding absenteeism, dropouts, and performance after the COVID-19 crisis? How has the closure of schools affected girls' and boys' nutrition during and after the confinement? Has their access to Internet connectivity reliable?

Have the immediate needs of women working in health sectors been met? Have they had access to reliable information, personal protective equipment and other needs?

Has access to reproductive health services or perinatal maternal mortality been impacted by COVID-19 (health care resources reallocation, mobility limitations for pregnant women, etc.)?

What government stimulus packages are being provided to households for helping their resilience? Have these helped women's and girls' situation improve?

Has gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls increased during the COVID-19 crisis (GBV reports, reports attended by the support systems, calls to GBV hotlines, GBV victims attended at shelters)?

### Employment and income

Which sectors and jobs do women and men work in? How has COVID-19 impacted on these sectors? How have the restrictions on mobility due to quarantine and other social distancing measures affected both women's and men's jobs and income?

What is the distribution of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) and women-owned businesses by sector and how have those sectors been affected by COVID-19?

What has been the impact in terms of turnover, revenue and survival of formal and informal MSMEs due to the COVID-19 emergency? What are the differential impacts for women-owned businesses?

What changes have the enterprises put in place in response to the COVID-19 emergency? For businesses that have been forced to close (during lockdown), what measures have the owners taken?

Have women-owned enterprises, particularly MSMEs, been able to access COVID-19 programmes (e.g., tax exemptions, advice, finance, guarantees, etc.)? Do government programmes address the specific challenges of women entrepreneurs and self-employed women?

Is the government deliberately addressing gender gaps and promoting women's empowerment in policies and initiatives supporting businesses (e.g., financial stimulus measures, fiscal relief measures, etc.)?

What has been the effect on the unpaid caregiving burden in households? How is unpaid household labour distributed among family members?

### Government responses to the COVID-19 crisis

Are there any accountability mechanisms for the security/police/military when implementing emergency measures? Do they take into consideration the different impacts of COVID-19 on women and men?

Have the emergency strategies considered the key gender issues in each sector of intervention? Is information about government response measures accessible and available to all household members?

Are women and girls being included in decision-making processes and governance structures that shape COVID-19 response strategies? What is the sex distribution among COVID-19 decision-making bodies at the different levels? Are gender experts involved in decision making in COVID-19 emergency and post-emergency strategies?

### Vulnerable groups

Are herders being affected by the COVID-19 emergency? Are the crisis and post-crisis policies and programmes affecting the use and income of animal genetic resources for women and men? Do rural communities have access to adequate health services? Has the government put in place specific measures to address COVID-19 impacts in herder families?

How have quarantine measures affected female and male migrants and their ability to sustain their jobs and incomes? Does their housing situation afford reasonable protection against COVID-19? Are they being threatened by any discrimination linked to the crisis? Are their main income sources affected by government decisions and restriction measures?

Do persons with disabilities have equal access to social services and health care given the reallocation of health resources to COVID-19? Are there differences between disabled women and men with regard to the crisis? Has their vulnerability to gender-based violence increased due to social isolation measures? Have emergency policies and plans considered the specific needs of people with disabilities, particularly women and girls? Has the government put in place measures to address these impacts?

Has the care of the elderly at home been affected? How do elderly women look after children at their home? What are the impacts on their unpaid or paid working burdens?

How has income been affected for low- and medium-income female-headed households because of the COVID-19 crisis? How are the living conditions affecting the households' ability to prevent COVID-19 infections and comply with the quarantine?



## APPENDIX 2. HIGHLIGHTS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Related documents	Government response measure
<b>JANUARY</b>	
<p><b>26 Jan 2020 Resolution No30 GOM, SEC meeting No1</b></p> 	<p>Closed borders with the People’s Republic of China to pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Prohibited public events including conferences, sports and entertainment events. Education entities have been shut until 2 March, as well as public places such as gaming centres.</p>
<p><b>31 Jan 2020 Resolution No39 GOM</b></p> 	<p>Closed Mongolia’s borders to all Chinese citizens and foreigners traveling from the People’s Republic of China from 1 February to 2 March. The travel restrictions applied to individuals traveling via air, rail and road. Mongolians were also prohibited to travel to the People’s Republic of China from February 1 to March 2; however, Mongolians who were in the People’s Republic of China were allowed to return to Mongolia by normal routes until 6 February, afterwards, Mongolians in the People’s Republic of China were only allowed to return via airport or the railroad border.</p>
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	
<p><b>12 Feb 2020 Resolution No62 GOM</b></p> 	<p>Education entities were to remain closed until at least 30 March. The Tsagaan sar national holiday was prohibited to be celebrated widely, with a travel ban.</p>
<p><b>13 Feb 2020 Resolution No63 GOM, GES meeting No5</b></p> 	<p>Foreign nationals who travelled from or transited through the People’s Republic of China in the last 14 days were denied entry to Mongolia until 2 March, road travels between provinces prohibited until 26 February, and public gatherings banned including religious activities until 30 March.</p>
<p><b>19 Feb 2020 Resolution No68 GOM,</b></p> 	<p>Exemption of customs duty and VAT on certain imported goods, including wheats, sugar, and eggs. Further draft law to be proposed to the Parliament.</p>
<b>MARCH</b>	
<p><b>GES meeting No10 and No11, 10 Mar 2020 Resolution No6 GES</b></p> 	<p>First case detected from a foreign national on 10 March 2020. Public businesses except grocery shops and domestic travel between provinces closed. All international flights, rail, and land travel banned. Government encouraged agencies and companies to allow female employees with children under 12 years of age to work from home or provide paid leave.</p>

<p><b>GES meeting No12</b></p> 	<p>Recommendations are given to the ministries to take stimulus measures in order to support vulnerabilities mitigating the pandemic.</p>
<p><b>19 Mar 2020 Resolution No101 GOM</b></p> 	<p>GOM recommended development bank, increase in credit guarantees to MSMEs and soft loans to finance cashmere purchase from herders at a 3 percent interest rate.</p>
<p><b>27 Mar 2020 Resolution No114 GOM, 17 Apr 2020 Resolution No140 GOM, the laws on exemptions of taxes approved on 09 April 2020</b></p> 	<p>First set of packages introduced by the GOM and further approved by the Parliament. These include: exemption of social insurance taxes for employers, employees and people who voluntary pay social insurance; exemption of personal income tax; companies with an income lower than MNT 1.5 billion are exempted from corporate income tax; entities that have retained their employees on payroll despite their weakening operations, to receive MNT 200,000 per employee per month; increased child money allowance to MNT 30,000.</p>
<b>APRIL</b>	
<p><b>14 Apr 2020 Resolution No139 GOM, GES meeting No17</b></p> 	<p>Education entities were to remain closed until 1 September. State exams on graduation were not to be conducted for general education.</p>
<p><b>16 Apr 2020 Mayor's Decree A/521</b></p> 	<p>Tourist camps, fitness and yoga centres were allowed to start their activities in UB.</p>
<p><b>29 Apr 2020 Resolution No147 GOM, GES meeting No20</b></p> 	<p>Suspension of activities for public and international flights would be extended through 31 May, cargo and medical flights continue to operate, and the government organized several chartered flights to repatriate Mongolian citizens from abroad. Evacuation flights for foreign nationals in Mongolia also continued.</p>
<p><b>The Law on 29 Apr 2020</b></p> 	<p>The Parliament approved Law on Pandemic Preparedness and Response.</p>
<p><b>30 Apr 2020 Mayor's Decree A/590</b></p> 	<p>In Ulaanbaatar, sports-related centres, clubs and bars were allowed to operate, religious activities allowed with limited access of gathering.</p>
<b>MAY</b>	
<p><b>04 May 2020 Mayor's decree A/616</b></p> 	<p>All types of bars are banned due to the risks of virus transmission in Ulaanbaatar.</p>



**Parliament resolution No32 Apr 29 2020, 06 May 2020 Resolution No167 GOM**



Second stimulus packages announced by the GOM mitigating socio-economic impact of COVID-19. These include a further increase in child money allowance of MNT 100,000; double the food stamp allowance; an increase in social welfare pensions for the elderly and single parents with three or more children; and a subsidy of MNT 20,000 for each kilogram of cashmere for herders.

**27 May 2020 Resolution No188 GOM, GES meeting No22**



The extension of bans also applied until 30 June. Travel remains strictly regulated country-wide, and foreign nationals remain prohibited from entering the country.

### JUNE TO OCTOBER

**30 Jun 2020 Resolution No234 GOM, Regulation for Parliament election 2020, GES meeting No25**



Parliament election campaign and polls are processed under restrictions, services of entertainment centres are allowed to be opened, but activities for public attendance are not included.

**GES meeting No26**



Suspension of all international civil transport has been extended until at least 31 July. The traditional Naadam festival is held without audience.

**29 Jul 2020 Resolution No32 GOM, 06 Aug 2020 Minister of Education and Science A/17**



School and kindergartens started with restrictions: no more than 20 to 25 students in a class, 3 times classroom work a week with constant use of wearing face masks and 2-year-old children are not able to enrol in kindergarten.

**GES meeting No29**



All education entities started working regularly from 15 September, but students and teachers' use of face masks were mandatory. Two-year-olds are allowed to be enrolled in kindergarten.

**30 Sep 2020 Resolution No127 GOM**



The GOM announced amendments and extensions for previous stimulus packages, including an extension to the end of 2020 with increased amounts of child money allowance, food stamp allowance and social welfare pensions, a redemption of 5 percent social insurance tax and an exemption of rent income. These were later approved by Parliament.

**GES meeting No30**



National heightened state of readiness extended again until 31 December.

### NOVEMBER

**11 Nov 2020 Resolution No178 GOM, SEC meeting No33**



First locally transmitted coronavirus disease (COVID-19) case reported on 11 November. Government announced five-day stringent lockdown (public emergency readiness) until 17 November. Under the lockdown measures, 11 services were permitted to continue operating, including grocery stores, markets, petrol stations, pharmacies, hospitals, power plants and funeral

		services. Residents were only able to leave home to purchase essential goods or attend work if their work is allowed. The wearing of face masks remained mandatory and large gatherings were banned. Repatriation flights were delayed until further notice.
<b>12 Nov 2020 Mayor's Decree A/1242</b>		In Ulaanbaatar, public transportation and grocery stores' operating hours were limited to a certain time-frame. Alcoholic products were prohibited. Movements of vehicles also were restricted for a limited time period.
<b>15 Nov 2020 Resolution No181 GOM, GES meeting No35</b>		Extended the stringent lockdown until 1 December, with service limitations from the previous restrictions. Food support recommended to provide to students in the dormitories.
<b>18 Nov 2020 Resolution No183 GOM</b>		Extension of selected fiscal measures to the end of June 2021 with another stimulus measurement, including exemption of fines related to late payment of taxes and payment delays for civil loans and mortgages. Government tries to deliver all pensions and allowances through online transfers with bank cards.
<b>18 Nov 2020 Mayor's Decree A/1248</b>		In Ulaanbaatar, public transportation is limited in time. Food and medical supply transportation allowed from 22h to 6h.
<b>21 Nov 2020 Mayor's Decree A/1251</b>		In Ulaanbaatar, QR permission codes were to be used for vehicles of non-limited services. Food supply transportation is allowed between 7h and 17h.
<b>29 Nov 2020 Resolution No194 GOM, GES meeting No37,</b>		Stringent lockdown in place in Ulaanbaatar and Selenge and Arkhangai provinces will be extended until 11 December. Under the lockdown measures, 18 services were permitted to continue operating, including grocery stores, markets, petrol stations, pharmacies, hospitals, power plants, funeral services and some additional processing industries. Residents were only able to leave home to purchase essential goods or attend work if their work is allowed. QR code scanning used for monitoring people's movement.
<b>DECEMBER</b>		
<b>02 Dec 2020 Resolution No200 GOM</b>		Coal briquette price subsidy to ger districts in Ulaanbaatar City, 50 percent discount.
<b>GES Meeting No38</b>		Isolation period is reduced to 14 days at isolation centre and 7 days at home, if a person doesn't show any COVID-19 symptoms.



**09 Dec 2020 Resolution No209 GOM,**



Stringent lockdown measurements lowering to state-heightened readiness from 14 December, movements to or from UB still limited. In addition to grocery stores, fuel stations, pharmacies, the services of restaurants, cafes, markets, essential retail and repair services are allowed. However, high-risk services, such as hotels, fitness centres, saunas and bars are still prohibited. In Ulaanbaatar, the government ordered its agencies and private companies to allow female employees or single fathers with children under 12 years old to work from home or provide paid leave. Residents were encouraged to stay at home except to obtain essential goods and services or attend work.

**13 Dec 2020 Resolution No211 GOM**

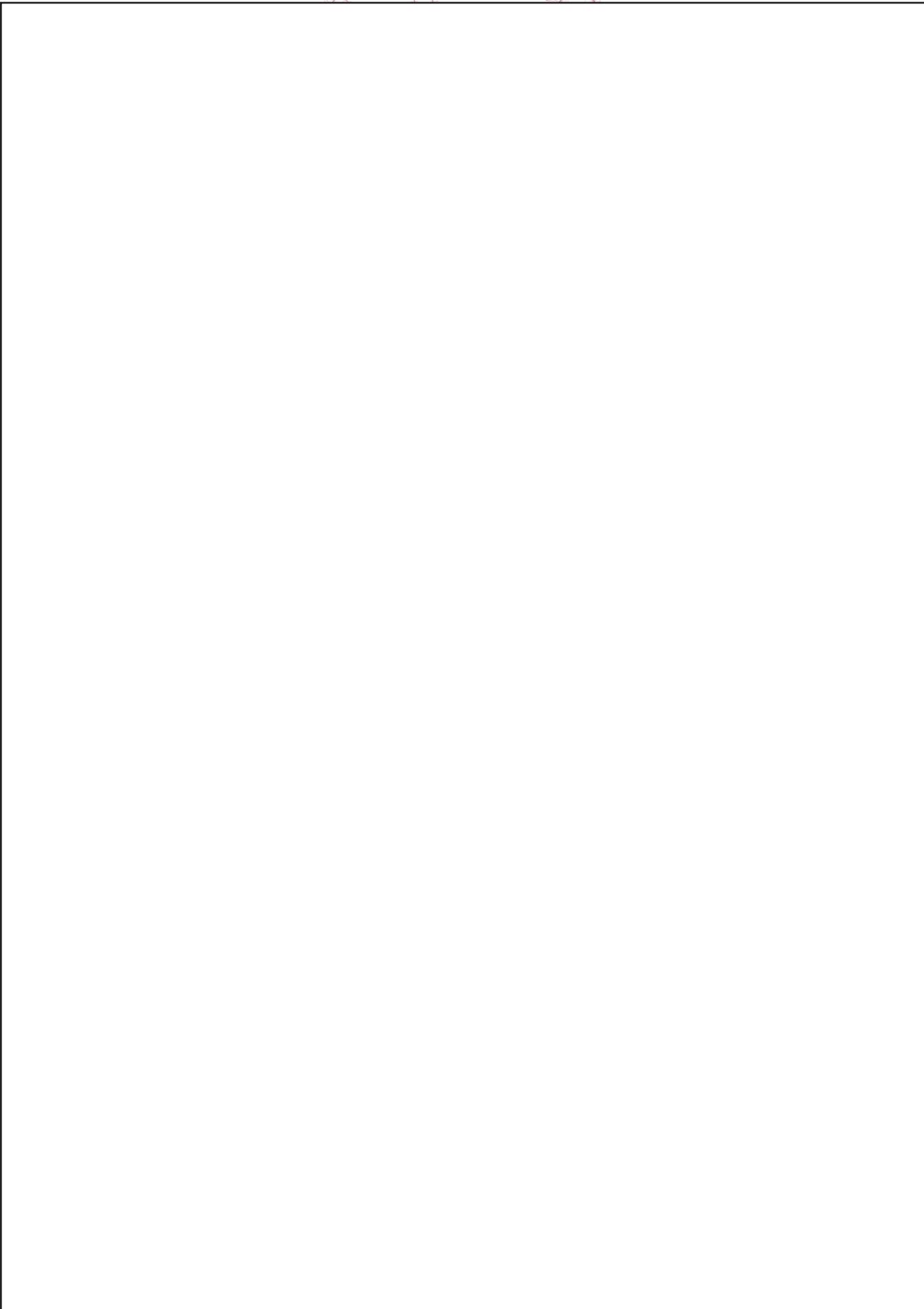


The GOM announced stimulus measures including waiving utility (electricity, heating, water and waste disposal) payments to business entities and households and reducing the price of coal briquettes by 75 percent.

**21 Dec 2020 Resolution No226 GOM,  
22 Dec 2020 Mayor's Decree NoA/1320**



New local transmission cluster confirmed and the GOM called for a stringent lockdown again in Ulaanbaatar from 23 December 2020 to 6 January 2021. Most non-essential businesses will close, though essential services, such as grocery stores, fuel stations, pharmacies, banks, media outlets and family and child protection services can continue to operate. Public transport and official taxi services will continue and all the food deliveries as well. Charter and repatriation flights are halted indefinitely.



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