

Economic Impact of the Pandemic on Women Living in Nevşehir

The Cappadocia Women's Solidarity Association (Kapadokya Kadın Dayanışma Derneği), which was established in 2006, observed the effects of the pandemic, especially on refugee women, in its studies during the COVID-19 outbreak. The possible economic effects of this period, especially on women, were discussed at a meeting attended by the volunteers of the Association, and it was revealed that there was a need for an evidence-based and rights-based monitoring study. The study "Monitoring the Economic Impact of the Pandemic on Women Living in Nevşehir" has been prepared with the aim of making an assessment of situation and recommendations regarding the discrimination and violations of rights experienced by women in this period, and creating a pressure factor for the implementation of international human rights standards. In the study, the effects of COVID-19 on the prohibition of discrimination, gender equality, the right to work, the right to social security, the right to health and treatment at appropriate standards were tried to be determined.

The study was carried out in three periods as preparation, data collection (field work) and reporting period. During the preparation period, a monitoring team consisting of volunteers of the Association was formed. Survey questions were prepared based on the relevant areas of rights. Questionnaires and focus group interviews were conducted during the implementation and data collection period. The survey was conducted with 171 participants and 162 participants accepted the interview and filled out the survey. 42 people out of 162 people consist of Afghan, Iranian and Syrian women.

In the second field study of the study, focus group interviews were conducted with women. In the focus group interviews, in which the questions in the survey were discussed in depth, it was aimed to collect information about the economic problems women experienced during the pandemic, from which people or institutions they received support, changes in domestic labor and the effects of the pandemic. Focus group discussions were held at the Cappadocia Women's Solidarity Association. In the interviews held with four separate groups, 5 Syrian women participated in the first group, 5 women from Afghanistan participated in the second group, and 12 women from Turkey participated in the third and fourth groups. The interviews lasted approximately 2 hours each. In the reporting period, a monitoring report was written analyzing the collected information.

The fieldwork carried out showed that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities. Women and girls were exposed to the most severe effects of this inequality. Pandemic has increased women's inequalities in working life, their care work and domestic workload. These inequalities affected different states of femininity in different ways. Refugee women's already inadequate job opportunities, informal work and financial difficulties have further deepened. The main findings of the research are as follows:

- The most affected monthly payments during the epidemic are food (including grocery payments) needs. More than half of the women stated that bill and rent payments were also affected.
- The rate of those who changed their housing conditions due to the Covid-19 epidemic is 37 percent. Of those who had to change their housing conditions, 67 percent moved to a house with lower rent, and 17 percent moved to a relative's house. Women living

in rented houses stated that their rents increased nearly twice during the epidemic period.

- After the Covid-19 epidemic started, 25 percent of women benefited from social assistance. The institutions that they received the most social assistance from are associations and foundations. They stated that they were not aware of the social assistance provided by the municipalities.
- Women's housework and care work increased more during the pandemic period. Cleaning, dishwashing and laundry, cooking, and grocery shopping were stated as the jobs that increased the most. 58 percent of the women stated that no one could support them with their housework.
- What happened during the COVID-19 outbreak also negatively affected women's psychological and physical health. It has been stated that women are frequently exposed to feelings of helplessness-hopelessness, irritability, tension and pessimistic-negative thoughts during the pandemic period. The women, who stated that the decrease in the income entering the house and the situation of not being able to pay the bills and rent caused stress, stated that their headaches and back pains increased and they got sick from thinking. 78 percent of women stated that they do not have a time of their own. The women who describe their time as sleeping, expressed that they are happy if they can create time for a coffee.

The recommendations of the Cappadocia Women's Solidarity Association on what should be done to eliminate the negative effects of the pandemic on women are as follows:

- In all measures to be taken regarding the COVID-19 epidemic, different femininity states should be considered. All institutions and organizations that regulate response plans should create plans according to differences over the city information system, as well as data disaggregated by gender. Especially for refugee women, programs should be developed for access to basic needs.
- Women's representation in the decision-making mechanisms at the provincial level should be ensured. Non-governmental organizations representing women should participate in the Provincial Pandemic Coordination Boards established under the Governorships.
- Social support programs should be established for those who have lost their jobs in times of crisis and financial support should be provided for women. In order to prevent job losses of those working in daily and irregular jobs, employment offices should be opened within the municipalities at the provincial level. Special precautionary strategies should be developed for women who could not participate in the working life before the pandemic or became unemployed during the pandemic period.
- Rights-based housing strategies should be developed locally regarding the increasing housing problems during the pandemic period. The issues of no rent increase and rent regulations should also be addressed at the provincial level. Temporary accommodation centers should be established by local governments for people who have lost their homes during the pandemic period or who are at risk of losing their homes.

- Social support mechanisms evaluation criteria should be rearranged at the provincial level in accordance with the pandemic period, and neighborhood-based studies should be carried out for the support provided by public institutions and municipalities. Multilingual information on social support should be provided for refugees.
- Training programs should be organized on the participation of men to ensure gender equality. Nursery and day care services of local governments should be increased and women who fell into deep poverty during the pandemic period should be prioritized to benefit from services.
- Psychosocial support services provided by public institutions and local governments should also be accessible to refugee women.