



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS
IN SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

ISOLATION AND COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES



SOCIETIES

SUPPORT OF SSIS IN ENHANCING TECHNICAL SKILLS
AND KNOWLEDGE OF EMPLOYABLE SKILLS AND STANDARDS
IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE



consorzio communitas



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SOCIAL DISTANCES AND COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES

The impact of COVID-19 crisis
on Civil Society Organizations
in South-East Europe



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------------|---|
| AL | Republic of Albania |
| APP | Application |
| BIH | Bosnia and Herzegovina |
| BLG | Republic of Bulgaria |
| CAF | Charities Aid Foundation |
| COVID-19 | Corona Virus Disease 2019 |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| EC | European Commission |
| ELBA | Emergenza Lavoro Balcani project |
| EU | European Union |
| EUR | Euro |
| EUROSTAT | European Statistical Office |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GR | Republic of Greece |
| ICMC | International Catholic Migration Commission |
| ISTAT | Italian National Institute of Statistics |
| KS | Kosovo* |
| MNE | Republic of Montenegro |
| N. MK | Republic of North Macedonia |
| NGO | Non - Governmental Organization |
| PWD | Persons with Disability (including people with mental diseases) |
| SEE | South East Europe |
| SME | Small and Medium Enterprise |
| SOCIETIES | Support Of CSOs In Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of people with disabilities and EU standards in South east Europe |
| SR | Republic of Serbia |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| USA | United State of America |
| WB | Western Balkans |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Kosovo*: This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

section I
INTRODUCTION

THE PROJECT SOCIETIES 2

Ettore Fusaro

Scientific coordinator and Senior Expert for South East Europe, Consorzio Communitas Milano, Italy.

The project “SOCIETIES 2 – Support Of CSOs In Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of people with disabilities and EU Standards in South East Europe, 2nd phase” is a multiannual project financed by European Commission and co-financed by Caritas organizations. It represents the 2nd phase of the project SOCIETIES¹. The project is financed within the EU program *Support to regional thematic networks of civil society organisations, support to a regional network for women's rights and gender equality and support to small scale projects promoting cooperation between communities and citizens from Serbia and Kosovo**.

The SOCIETIES 2 project has its “core business” in empowering civil society to actively take part in decision making and stimulating an enabling legal and financial environment for civil society and pluralistic media.

The project is proposed by an **alliance for social inclusion**, composed of 10 CSOs in the Western Balkan region: Caritas Serbia and Civic Initiatives (Serbia), Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina and Association of Parents and Children with Special Needs “Vedri Osmijeh” (Bosnia and Heregovina), Caritas Albania and Project Hope (Albania), Caritas Kosova and Support Centre for Persons with Mental Disabilities “Centre for Independent living” (Kosovo*), Caritas Montenegro and Association of Paraplegic of Montenegro (Montenegro), with the external support of Caritas Italiana (Italy) and Caritas Bulgaria (Bulgaria).

These partners have worked together on different projects, sharing common values, joint mission and strategies; they are active in the field of social inclusion of disadvantaged groups, experienced in implementing actions for PWDs by promoting social economy and empowerment of CSOs.

The consortium created the Action on the capitalization of past and ongoing activities in similar fields of work. In fact, it is called “SOCIETIES 2” as it represents the continuation, extension and upgrade of the regional project SOCIETIES, implemented in the same 5 countries, with the involvement of the majority of the Co-Applicants.

¹ Project “SOCIETIES - Support Of CSOs In Empowering Technical skills, Inclusion of PWDs and EU standards in South East Europe” (2016-2019, contract nr. 2015/370-229), granted through Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2014-2015 - Support to regional thematic networks of CSOs

In details, the project SOCIETIES 2 aims at:

Overall objective: To strengthen the CSOs' participation in public dialogue with the Public Authorities and influence the decision-making processes, by increasing their expertise and capacities in the fields of social inclusion for PWDs and de-institutionalization policies.

Specific Objective 1: To increase CSOs' capacities, accountability and effectiveness in managing social inclusion and de-institutionalization initiatives as well as in promoting and advocating for social inclusion of PWDs, in line with the EU accession standards.

Specific Objective 2: To foster a conducive environment for civil society activities by establishing permanent structures and mechanisms for the cooperation and dialogue between CSOs and Public Authorities.

The cluster of activities related to Specific Objective 1 includes: a regional Capacity Building Program for CSOs; Study visits; a Sub-granting Scheme for CSOs; Monitoring and Mentoring activities; and a Regional Fair.

The cluster of activities related to Specific Objective 1 includes: a regional Kick-off Conference and 5 local informative sessions; regional Research and Mapping; the Task Forces on Advocacy; a Network creation; Awareness campaigns; and a Regional Forum together with local Final Conferences.

The project started on 1st April 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerned about the impact of this crisis on the already fragile CSOs of people with disabilities in the region, the Project management proposed this Research about the impact of the pandemic on civil society organisations and social enterprises in South East Europe.

THE SURVEY RESEARCH TEAM

Andrea Barachino

President of Consorzio Communitas Milano, Italy.

WHO WE ARE?

Founded in 2009, the Communitas Consortium aims to create a flexible, but permanent form of collaboration between the member bodies (cooperatives, foundations, associations) to develop, coordinate and implement initiatives aimed at studying and developing knowledge of coordinated initiatives for the accompaniment and assistance of people at risk of social exclusion and in conditions of poverty, as well as to develop and coordinate initiatives for a better knowledge of migratory movements and integration of migrants themselves (in particular asylum seekers and groups entitled to international protection). Communitas Consortium aims also at promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue between people of different cultures and religions and European and Italian citizens, with special regards to the youths.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Consorzio Communitas carries out research and studies on its own, and/or in collaboration with its consortium members. The most relevant recent publications are:

- “Fostering Community Sponsorship in Europe”, ICMC e Caritas Europa, 2019
- “Family first: In Italy together with your family; Report on the family reunification of refugees in Italy”, UNHCR Italia, Caritas Italiana and Communitas, 2019 – “Maximizing Migrants' Contribution to Society: 1) Immigration and culture, 2) Migration and social change, 3) Migration and public opinion, 4) Report on the sphere of economy”, MAX Project 2019
- “Presidio in no-man’s land”, First Report on labour market exploitation in agriculture, 2015 - “Life under cost”, Second Report on labour market exploitation in agriculture, 2017

SURVEY RESEARCH TEAM

To accomplish the requirements of the project SOCIETIES 2, the Consorzio Communitas, thanks to its network of partnership and associated members, avail itself of the collaboration of a multidisciplinary team of 7 experts, plus specific contribution of different authors. **Researchers (corresponding authors):** Andrea Barachino, Daniele Bombardi, Tiziana Ciampolini, Roberta Del Prete, Alberto Fabbiani, Ettore Fusaro, Lorenzo Leonardi, Federico Marchetti, Shkelzen Marku, Andrea Piscopo, Sonia Sdrubolini, Andrea Tondi, Gianluca Tornese, Anxhela Zeneli.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Ettore Fusaro

Scientific coordinator and Senior Expert for South East Europe, Consorzio Communitas Milano, Italy.

Consorzio Communitas has conducted this survey titled “**Social distances and community boundaries - The impact of COVID-19 crisis on Civil Society Organizations in South East Europe**” in order to analyze the COVID-19 pandemic impact on more than 250 Civil Society Organizations in the South East European region.

It was not a mere exercise of data analysis, but also a careful work of listening to the organizations involved. In these “**strange times**”, more than numbers, data and information emerged from the questionnaires, it was the comments, dialogues and in some cases “the outbursts” of anger of the various representatives of the associations and social enterprises that was more important.

From this “box” full of information and emotions, two fundamental dimensions of the concept of “Time” were clearly emerging:

- an “**Economic–Social Time**” that requires quick responses to the operational needs of associations and their beneficiaries;
- a “**Reflective–Social Time**” that requires patience, listening, and learning new languages, communications, messages, organizational and programmatic skills in mid-term perspective.

The balance between the need to start immediately and the need to do it properly is the key to understanding the analysis and the recommendations produced with this document. In this perspective, and starting from the analysis of CSOs operating in the field of disability and social enterprise, the survey analyzes different levels of impact and consequences of COVID-19 outbreak:

- Economic and Financial level
- Organizational and Managerial level
- Health and well-being of operators and communities
- Donors’ responses

Methodology adopted

Consorzio Communitas drafted a Survey Questionnaire with more than 40 questions, and developed a related specific COVID-19 page within the SOCIETIES 2 database. Meanwhile, as

required by SOCIETIES 2 project partners, a Business Intelligent App has been developed for creation of dashboard and online daily updates.

The Survey Questionnaire has been translated into different languages (Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, English, Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian) and later on, with the contribution of Local Coordinators of project “SOCIETIES” and in synergy with the Coordinators of “Employ Yourself” and “Elba” projects, it has been spread all over the region.

The respondents to the Survey were the leaders of 266 CSOs: 114 of them are registered as Associations, 83 as National NGOs/not for profit organizations, 38 Social Enterprises, 18 Faith-based Organizations, 4 Foundations, and 9 “others” (such as informal groups). They are located in Albania (58 of them), Bosnia and Herzegovina (58), Bulgaria (2), Greece (11), Kosovo* (22), North Macedonia (9), Montenegro (52), Serbia (54). Their macro-areas of work are: disabilities (150 of them); social development and care (116).

With the data available every week, Consorzio Communitas produced Flash Report Updates with the most relevant information for SOCIETIES 2 project partners. Moreover, on weekly basis, a graphic designer was developing web and social media banners, to inform and update all the networks and communities involved by the project.

The results of the Survey presented in this Research will be used for the following purposes:

- to re-modulate the multiannual project SOCIETIES 2 activities and actions, taking into consideration the new needs emerged after COVID-19 outbreak;
- to transfer to the members of the CSOs network involved in SOCIETIES 2 the most relevant key findings and recommendations;
- to assess the current challenges that civil society organizations and social service providers are facing whilst working with PWDs and other beneficiaries, as well as and map the assistance models;
- to lobby and advocate for policies and measures of the local/national/regional/EU Institutions which focus on CSOs service providers during and after the crisis.

Survey Data Collection Mode: via Web and email + Phone or web Interviews

Time frame of implementation: data collection 28th April 2020 – 31st May 2020, then Analysis and Elaboration.

SCIENTIFIC FOCUS

COVID-19 AND FRAGILITY

Sonia Sdrubolini

Pedagogue and Educationalist, President of Noa Pet Therapy – Association, Macerata, Italy.

“A time of new words”

We have read a lot during this time of crowded hospitals, slowed down work, and closed schools and daily centers. This is also evident from the results of this research. Many have written comparing the emergency of the pandemic to a war or an emergency caused by events such as earthquakes or floods. These comparisons, in my opinion, help us to understand some fundamental issues of this time. Nevertheless, we must be careful not to simplify, but to remain in the complexity that this time brings with it. Comparing the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic to other past experiences can help us to understand, but it is not enough. We need to give a new meaning contextualized to today's reality to what is happening in the world.

The following contribution of reflection takes into consideration the phenomenon following the flow of the seasons that characterize periods, starting from autumn as the time of the crisis, winter as the time of reflection, spring as the time to give meaning to places and actions and summer to see the fruits of the change that is taking place.

Autumn

Let's start from what we felt, emotions unite us to all living beings and in particular to all human beings. We felt lost and frightened, we felt pain for the illness and death in solitude of loved ones. We felt anger at the limitations of freedom and at having to change our routine. We also felt joy in spending more time together with our children and loved ones. Recognizing all these emotions can be the first step in dealing with the situation, recovering from the initial bewilderment and starting to deal with what will be our future and the future of the community.

Some of these emotions are included in the relationship between communities, one of them is the fear of the other as a possible vehicle of illness. This aspect opens up a very wide and important conflict in the relationship, because the other is not only the person I meet on the street, at the supermarket or at work but the other is also my brother, my son, my nephew, my family. The face of the other is a fundamental mirror in the development of the relationship, of one's own identity and in the development of empathy, of that capacity to feel inside the other, intended as comprehension of the person I am close to and recognition of parts of him/herself in my being.

This time has been - and still is - very complex for fragile people such as the disabled, the sick, people with mental health imbalances or people that our society has made fragile such as children and the elderly.

The plastic surgeon Maxwell Maltz in 1950 observed that it took 21 days for patients to get used to the new post-operative condition. Today scientific studies tell us that it takes about 60 days and even longer to consolidate a behavior to become a habit. We can, therefore, think that for some people like the elderly and children, and especially children with disabilities, this lockdown condition is becoming part of daily life. This leads me to think that the impossibility of this period of confrontation with peers is an issue to be taken into account for the reopening of schools, daily centres and community centres, and all those institutions and informal places that deal with minors promoted by the numerous NGOs, associations of the SOCIETIES 2 project in the countries under investigation.

Children are learning to be alone and to refer to the world of trusted adults. Moreover, the messages conveyed by the media have indirectly developed feelings of guilt towards their grandparents, as children have been defined as potential healthy carriers of viruses, which are therefore dangerous for the elderly. To this condition must be added the difficulty of explaining to a child why they are forced to stay at home and the reasons why they cannot meet their friends or grandparents. People who live in frailty also breathe the climate of their family or community where they are placed and are often dependent on other people. For this reason, they also suffer a lot from the emotions of those close to them.

In Italy it is not yet clear how the schools and centres for minors that will reopen during the summer can organize themselves. They will not guarantee the activities previously carried out. Also, in many European countries, the situation is similar. Centres and schools have reopened, but only by ensuring the distances and all the modalities foreseen to face the contagion. Regulating physicality for children and for people who have contact as a communicative style, reduces the possibility to tell without words their feelings, to express their doubts and desires. Relating to others through a mask involves for some people an additional difficulty in understanding the real nature of the other, for others represent an insurmountable obstacle.

Winter

The process we are preparing to live through is therefore very complex, even more for children and people with fragility of various kinds such as disability and mental health disorders, especially if the magnifying lens with which we see everything is always that of a society we call

normal which tends to activate processes of adaptation to this norm of people who are distant from that line.

After more than two months of global emergency, the profound reflection we are entitled to is to understand what this time teaches us. What meaning can we give to this painful and precious suspended time? It is our task to look inside ourselves and first of all give meaning to our sense of bewilderment and then try to give back to the community what we can most positively rework this experience to build a better time that can heal the wounds of many individuals and communities. Stop on the threshold of what they call the second phase, phase two or the restart and remain in contact with that experience creating new awareness and growth.

Spring

So, look inside and then act in the community. Give a deep meaning with people-centred objectives to all the services that are put in action. Ask if what is proposed still responds to the needs expressed and to the reflections shared. Give a voice to those who have no voice by supporting the participation of people and family aggregations in decision-making processes. The damage caused by the prolonged closure of schools and educational centres, for example, is very great. But it would be equally damaging to think of reopening everything by chasing after the time lost in these months.

We could, however, ask ourselves what this time may have generated again, what awareness and what change in approach to life and fragility it has produced. Starting from that, we can build a new experience for all and in particular for those sections of the population considered most at risk and forgotten. We could ask ourselves how we can help to ensure that the remaining months of the year are full of beauty and wonder for all children and people with disabilities and mental health difficulties who have been deprived for several months of that sociality that is fundamental to their wellbeing.

Summer

We must think about a qualitative change, not demanding solutions to problems, especially social ones, but thinking about spaces and places of debate, exchange and participation, leaving the “leadership” to fragile people and children. Think about raising children not in the image of an adult society that struggles to recognize their desires but supporting them in their abilities and desires by recognizing their child dimension as precious and important. A society that is in a

hurry to start again like before is a sign of a community that does not learn from its moments of crisis.

We must listen to ourselves and the community. Giving a meaning to what has happened and cultivating a future where the person with their desires is placed at the centre of our work can represent a path traced towards a society that is not afraid of crises but faces them, thanks to the networks built, where everyone is important in the community system, because we are interdependent on each other. Fragility becomes the strength to rebuild something more important and beautiful in the face of break-ups and crises.

This time of restart becomes a unique opportunity to change the lens through which we look at the people who at this time are more exposed to the difficulties due to the pandemic: the elderly, the disabled, people with mental health problems, children, the poor. Changing point of view means having the opportunity to build a society that puts in the center are those who are considered waste: all the unproductive, all the inefficient. Changing lenses means introducing new words to describe humanity that have nothing to do with the economy and that can enter fully into our working language: words like dignity, kindness, beauty, humility, interdependence, well-being and community.

So why to start again as before if we have the possibility to introduce changes that are beneficial and that make our communities feel good by making them balanced and inclusive like all the natural systems around us?

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COVID-19 CRISIS

Anxhela Zeneli¹, Lorenzo Leonardi²

¹ *Bachelor's degree in economics for International Markets - Civil Servant in Albania.*

² *Master's degree in international relations, peace, war and security - Civil Servant in Albania.*

The following paragraph refers to the measures taken by the Governments of the countries of South-Eastern Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic, in relation to their general and economic aspects. The list of measures is updated to May 31st, 2020.

Albania

General measures adopted

On 24 March, the Prime Minister declared a “state of natural disaster” across the country. With the restraint measures only food stores, pharmacies and stores allowing sufficient physical distance remained open, punishing the other categories with very harsh penalties in case of disobedience. Due to the closure of kindergartens and educational institutions, the Council of Ministers has directly called on all private employers to find opportunities to give their employees who have children in custody, paid leaves.

Economic impact

Real GDP growth is expected to decline by 5% in 2020 from the estimated 2.2% growth in 2019. Within the domestic market, SMEs, manufacturing and tourism sectors will be among the most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. On 19 March, the government amended the 2020 budget through a normative act announcing a package of support measures (1.3% of GDP) to support affected businesses. Also, the payment of rent will be postponed for the months of April and May for small businesses, families that have stopped working due to the COVID-19 situation, and students that moved back home during the pandemic.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

General measures adopted

The Council of Ministers declared a State of Emergency in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 17 March. Both entities, the Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska, have adopted the same containment measures in terms of the closure of kindergartens, schools and universities, introducing a curfew from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. and denying free movement to the over 65s. During

the emergency period, only food stores, pharmacies, gas stations, post offices and banks remained open, even though with reduced working hours.

Economic impact

The President of the Republika Srpska, with the adoption of the Decree-Law on Tax Measures for Mitigation of Economic Consequences of COVID-19, reconciles taxes and duties for March 2020, for all employees of business entities whose performance of business activities has been directly affected by Government decisions and assures a minimum wage with taxes and mandatory contributions for April 2020. Similarly, even the Government of Brcko District will entitle a refund of minimal gross salary for March 2020 to all hit businesses. Whereas the Government of BIH proposed the Draft Law on Mitigation of Negative Economic Consequences introducing 10 measures concerning subsidies, suspension or cessation of payment of default interest, interruption of all administrative procedures, establishment of a guarantee fund.

Bulgaria

General measures adopted

The COVID-19 measures in Bulgaria were set out in the Measures and Actions during a State of Emergency Act, that came into force with retroactive effect as of 13th March, 2020. The possibility of distance learning education and the possibility for the courts to hold online sessions during the emergency are included among these measures. the extension of general statutory and administrative terms were also provided.

Economic impact

During the state of emergency, but for a period of no longer than three months, the National Social Security Institute will pay 60% of employees 'remunerations to employers whose businesses are critically affected by the epidemic measures and meet certain requirements determined in a decree of the Council of Ministers. Moreover, several commercial banks were willing to participate in the Bulgarian Development Bank guarantee program for providing non-interest loans to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, self-employed, municipalities and public-private partnerships affected by the crisis.

Greece

General measures adopted

Following the confirmation of the first three cases in Greece, health and state authorities issued precautionary guidelines and recommendations. On 10 March the government decided to suspend the operations of educational institutions at all levels nationwide and then, on 13 March, to close down all cafes, bars, museums, shopping centers, sports facilities and restaurants in the country. By the end of March, the Greek authorities announced restrictions on all non-essential movements throughout the country.

Economic impact

On 18 March, in a joint news conference, Finance Minister and Development & Investments Minister announced a series of measures of more than 10 billion euros to support the economy, businesses and employees. This measure covers about 220.000 businesses and 600.000 employees and includes the suspension, for four months, of tax and social security obligations of corporations that were ordered to close by the state decree, on the sole condition that they do not dismiss any workers.

Kosovo*

General measures adopted

The containment and crisis management measures in Kosovo* have been influenced by the dissolution of the government coalition and a parliamentary vote of no confidence against the Prime Minister. On 31 March, the Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional some of the containment measures imposed by the government. These included travel restrictions and a national curfew, which were invalidated with effect from 13 April 2020, claiming that they violated citizens' right to freedom of movement, privacy and freedom of assembly in an unconstitutional way.

Economic impact

The emergency fiscal package adopted aims to provide financial support for business organizations, employees and individuals in financial difficulties due to the public health emergency. The government will subsidize up to 50% of rent costs for SMEs during April and May and has allocated EUR 20 million to public enterprises with access to interest free loans until December 2020. Moreover, micro-enterprises and self-employed workers can apply to receive credit guarantees valued up to EUR 10 000.

Montenegro

General measures adopted

On 25 April 2020, the National Coordination Body of Montenegro announced the plan to mitigate measures in four phases. Under the first phase covering the lockdown measures, gatherings of citizens in indoor and outdoor public places has been prohibited, together with sports and recreational activities in all public areas. In addition, during the closure of schools and kindergartens, one parent of a child not older than 11 years of age is entitled to a paid leave from work, with the exception of healthcare employees, and employees in certain state institutions.

Economic impact

In 2019, Montenegro's GDP growth was estimated at 3.1%, but due to the COVID-19 emergency, the economy may precipitate into recession. On 24 April 2020, the Ministry of Economy announced a business and employee support program to mitigate negative effects of the coronavirus outbreak. The proposed measures include subsidies between 50%, 70% and even 100% of the gross minimum wage for: businesses whose work is prohibited, endangered industries, earnings of employees on paid leave, earnings of employees in quarantine or isolation.

North Macedonia

General measures adopted

At the beginning of the outbreak, the Government has closed all schools, educational institutions, cultural premises, restaurants and non-critical stores. Only food stores, pharmacies and stores allowing sufficient physical distance remained open. Schools and Universities were closed and the lectures continued via electronic means. Starting from 8 of May, some shops were authorized to open business, provided they had the infrastructure to maintain sufficient physical distance between customers.

Economic impact

On 6 April 2020, the Minister of Finance announced revenue performance in March, as well as perspectives for 2020. North Macedonia is facing a decline of 40% to 65% as compared to 2019. Measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have slowed down economic activity, which in turn has begun to negatively impact the budget. As of 20 March, a sharp decline of tax revenues by around 25% per day was observed. This translated into a decline of total tax revenues by 11% in March as compared to the previous year.

Serbia

General measures adopted

On 15 March, the President of the Republic of Serbia, declared the state of emergency. The containment measures have been extended to kindergartens, schools and universities which have been closed; to all public transportation which has been suspended, to general closure of farmer's markets, cafes, restaurants, shopping malls and all sports-related facilities. All service providers reduced their working hours during the lockdown, based on the Decree on Measures during the State of Emergency.

Economic impact

In 2019, Serbia's economy experienced a real GDP growth of 3.2%, but with the COVID-19 emergency, it is expected to enter into a recession with a 3% drop in GDP in 2020, followed by a 7.5% in 2021. For these reasons, the Minister of Finance announced a EUR 5.1 billion financial package as a support. Within the domestic market's around 85% of SMEs are expected to be negatively affected, therefore they became the short-term priorities for the Government. Thanks to the Decree on Adoption of Financial Support Program to Business Entities for Maintenance of Liquidity and Current Assets, EUR 204 million are intended to be allocated for eligible entrepreneurs, co-operatives, micro and SMEs companies.

section II
RESULTS OF THE
RESEARCH

PROFILE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

Ettore Fusaro¹, Alberto Fabbiani²

¹ *Scientific coordinator and Senior Expert for South East Europe, Consorzio Comunitas Milano, Italy.*

² *Researcher and Statistical Computing, & Digital Publishing Web Specialist – con2b Senigallia, Italy.*

General Overview

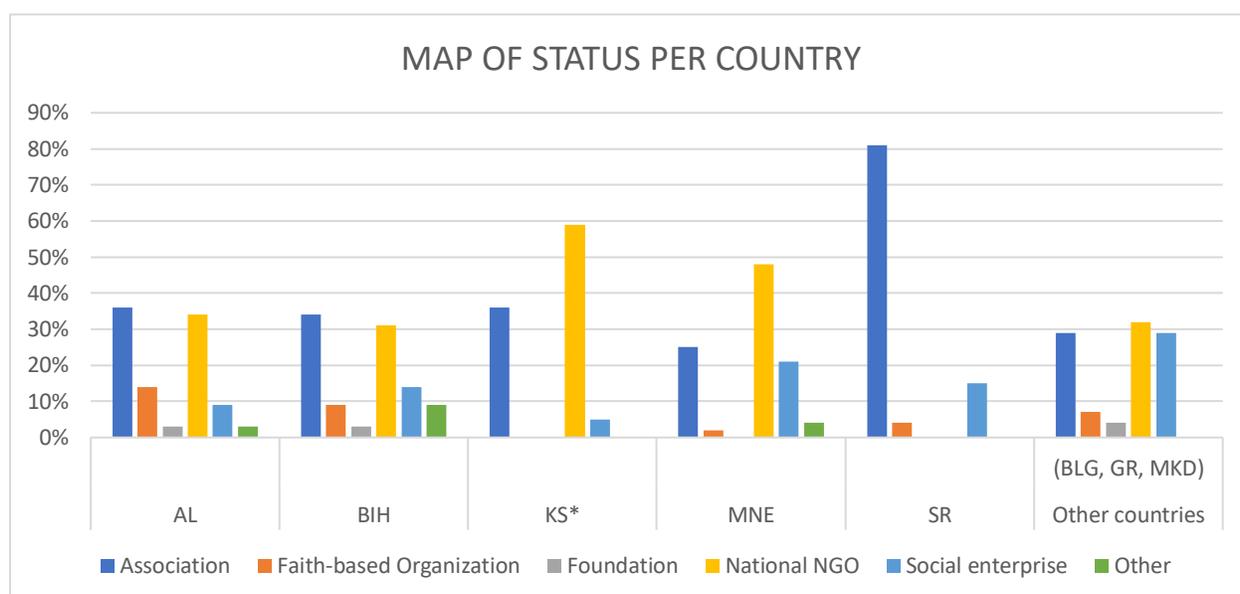
The following section focuses on the CSOs' dimension and structureⁱ. It describes the main findings in several South East European countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia are the 5 target countries of project "SOCIETIES 2"; while 3 other countries of the region (Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia) has been included to allow a comparison of results at regional level, and because they are involved in the other projects "Employ Yourself" and "Elba".

The analysis has been organized thematically, along with the dimensional aspects of Civil Society Organization involved by the SOCIETIES 2 project and by Employ Yourself/Elba: CSOs operating in the field of Disability and in the field of Social Development and Social Care.

Globally the COVID-19 impact Survey has reached 266 Civil Society Organizations. The CSOs interviewed described themselves as Associations (114), while 83 as national NGOs, 38 as social enterprises, 18 as faith-based organizations, 4 as foundations and 9 under other forms. They are located in Albania (58), Bosnia and Herzegovina (58), Bulgaria (2), Greece (11) Kosovo* (22), North Macedonia (9), Montenegro (52), and Serbia (54).

TABLE 1: MAP OF STATUS per COUNTRY

| STATUS | AL | BIH | KS* | MNE | SR | Other countries (BLG, GR, MKD) |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------------|
| Association | 36% | 34% | 36% | 25% | 81% | 29% |
| Faith-based Organization | 14% | 9% | 0% | 2% | 4% | 7% |
| Foundation | 3% | 3% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 4% |
| National NGO | 34% | 31% | 59% | 48% | 0% | 32% |
| Social enterprise | 9% | 14% | 5% | 21% | 15% | 29% |
| Other | 3% | 9% | 0% | 4% | 0% | 0% |

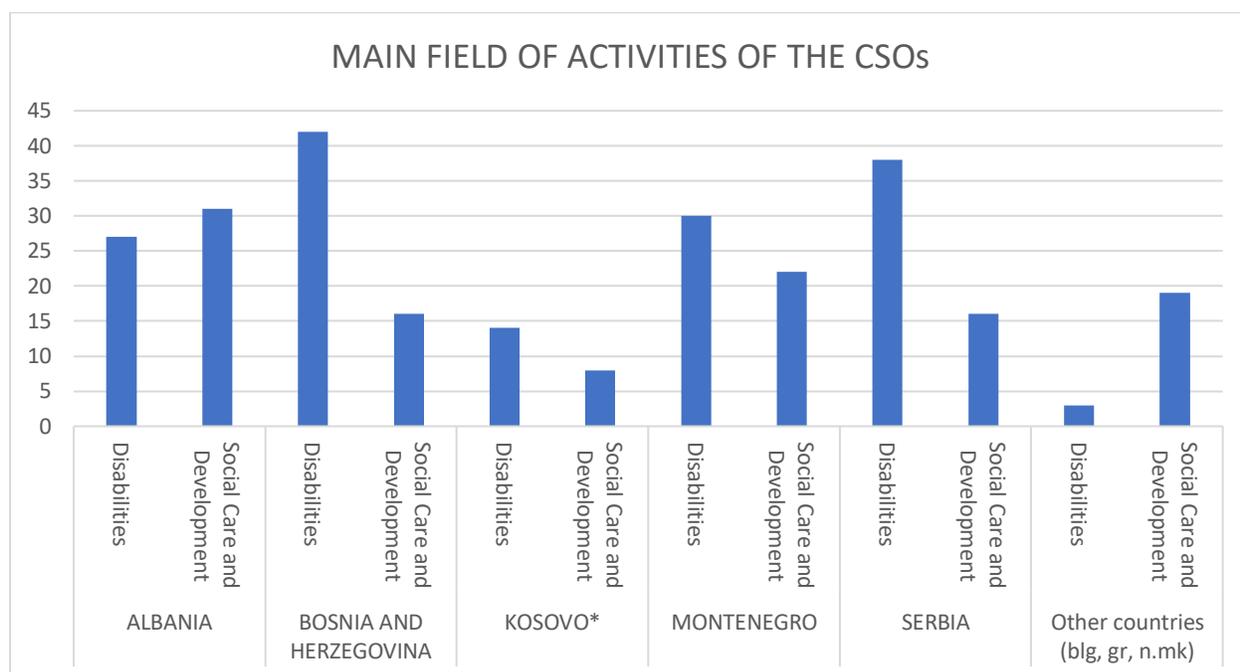


The majority of CSOs are registered as non-profit organizations. The steps to register as non-profits in all countries and reporting requirements to maintain this status are not particularly difficult.

150 Organizations are operating in activities supporting PWDs as primary field, while 116 organizations are operating primarily in the field of Social Care and Development. Generally, all of them have developed different services in favor of different target groups of beneficiaries and communities.

TABLE 2 – Main field of activity of the CSOs

| COUNTRY | MAIN FIELD OF ACTIVITY | NR. |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| ALBANIA | Disabilities | 27 |
| | Social Care and Development | 31 |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | Disabilities | 42 |
| | Social Care and Development | 16 |
| KOSOVO* | Disabilities | 14 |
| | Social Care and Development | 8 |
| MONTENEGRO | Disabilities | 30 |
| | Social Care and Development | 22 |
| SERBIA | Disabilities | 38 |
| | Social Care and Development | 16 |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GR, N.MK) | Disabilities | 3 |
| | Social Care and Development | 19 |

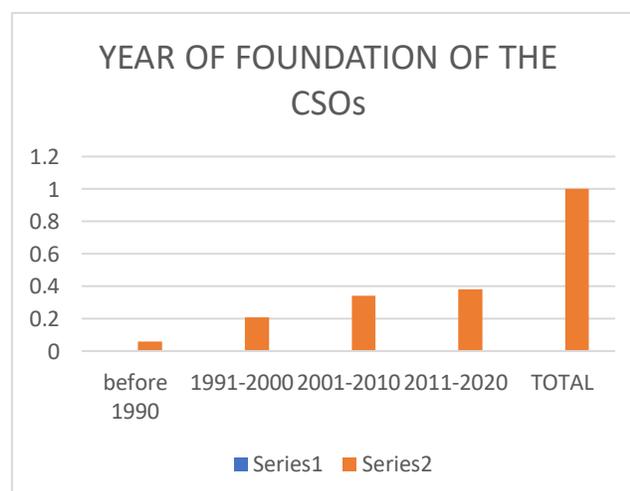


The main target group of the project SOCIETIES 2 are the grass-root organizations operating in the field of disability and mental health. Most of the CSOs are developing different actions in favor of multiple categories of beneficiaries, even if the core target remains PWDs and the most disadvantaged people.

The history of the CSOs in South East European countries is relatively new. The 94% of the organizations have been created after 1990, when the different communist regimes of the region collapsed. The 72% of the organizations have been created after the year 2000. We can see how the number of CSOs in the region increased during the last 3 decades, as a consequence of an increasingly greater recognition of the importance of their role in society.

TABLE 3 - Year of foundation of the CSOs

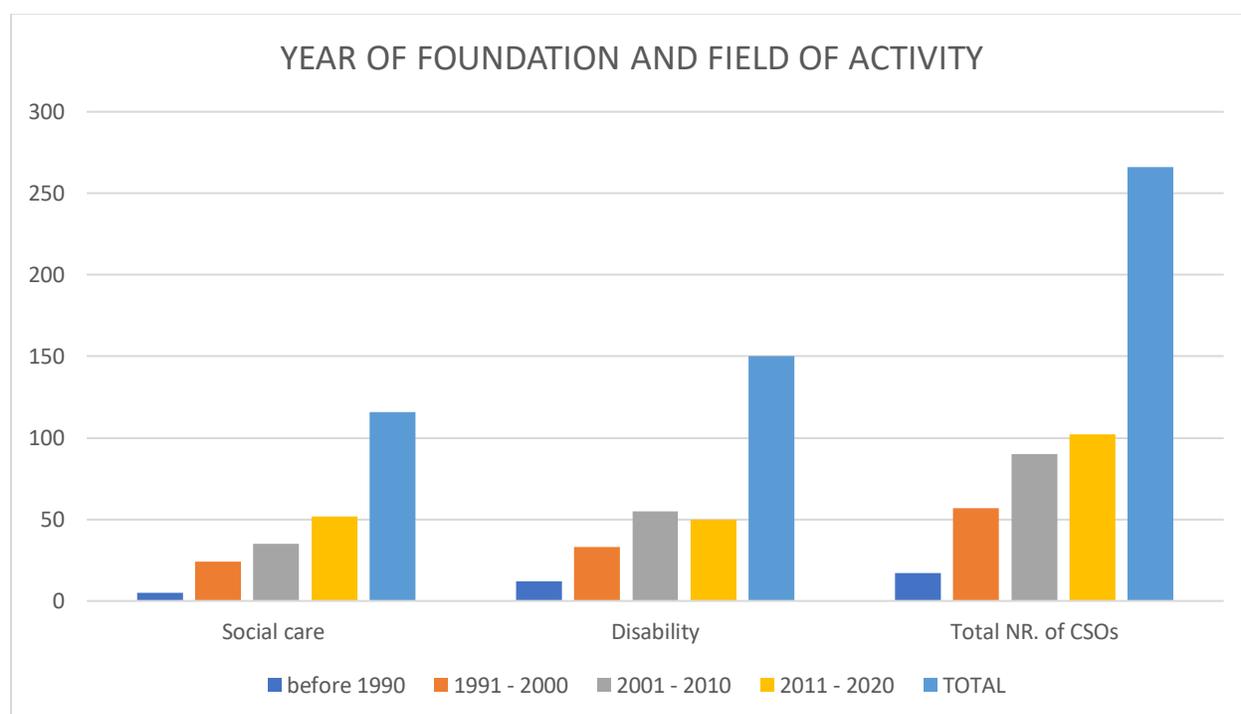
| YEAR OF FOUNDATION | NR. | % |
|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| BEFORE 1990 | 17 | 6% |
| 1991-2000 | 57 | 21% |
| 2001-2010 | 90 | 34% |
| 2011-2020 | 102 | 38% |
| TOTAL | 266 | 100% |



It is useful to locate the Civil Society Organizations that has been mapped, in order to understand how the geographical position is strictly linked with the existence of CSOs themselves: 90% of them are operating in the main cities of their countries, while only the 10% of them are in rural areas.

TABLE 4 - Year of foundation and Field of activity

| Year of Foundation | Nr | FIELD OF ACTIVITY | Nr | FIELD OF ACTIVITY | Total NR. of CSOs |
|--------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-------------------|-------------------|
| before 1990 | 5 | Social care and development | 12 | Disability | 17 |
| 1991 - 2000 | 24 | Social care and development | 33 | Disability | 57 |
| 2001 - 2010 | 35 | Social care and development | 55 | Disability | 90 |
| 2011 - 2020 | 52 | Social care and development | 50 | Disability | 102 |
| TOTAL | 116 | | 150 | | 266 |



The CSO sector throughout the South East Europe is vast and highly differentiated, and it is almost impossible to summarize it in a few words. The mapped CSOs are covering a broad spectrum of organizations - from huge national NGOs such as Caritas Kosova (which employs hundreds of people and have high budgets) to small, local-based grassroots organizations.

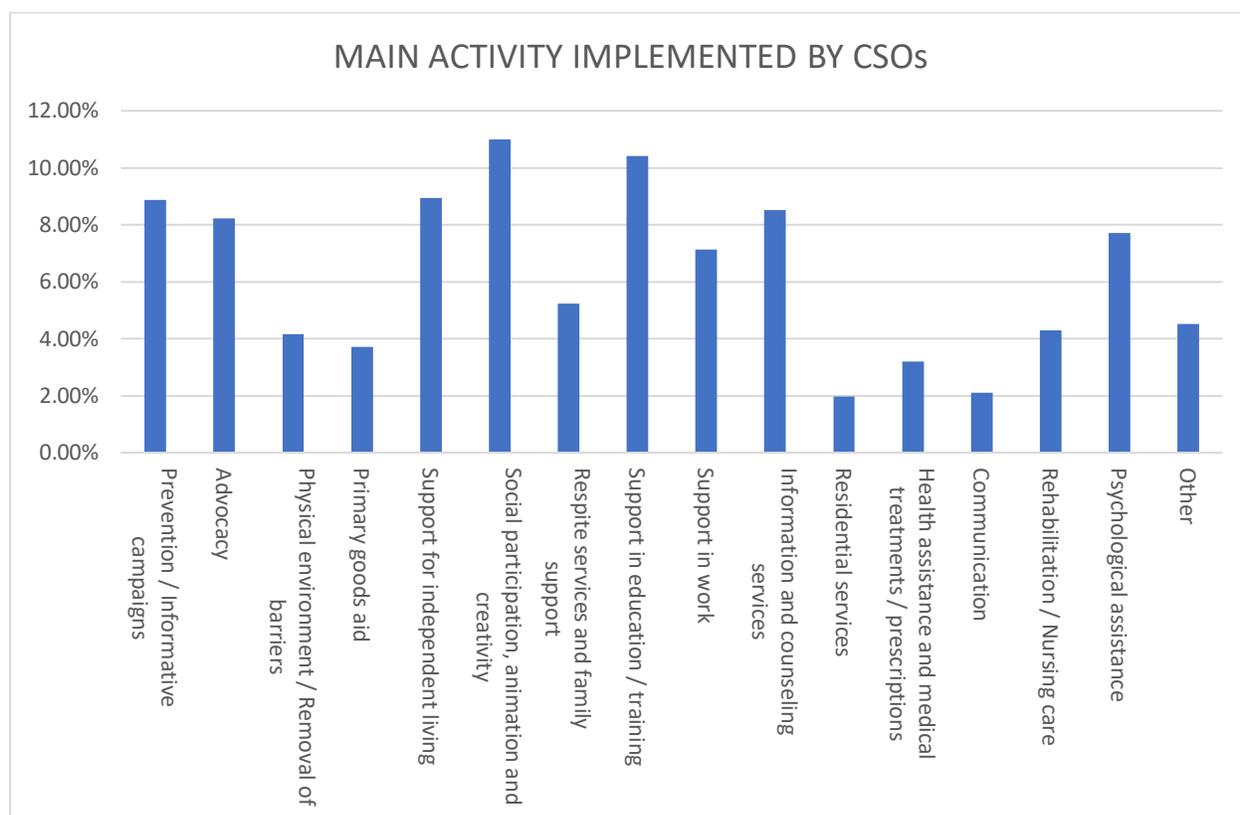
CSOs are engaged in an equally wide range of activities. Providing social services has been a critical role that CSOs have traditionally played, both in industrialized and developing countries. However, the key change that has taken place in recent years is that CSOs are no longer just providing services to people that the States failed to reach, but they are now far more in the mainstream of development activities. Both the scale and the profile of CSOs' activities have largely increased in the last 2 decades. Both Governments and international donors gave them much more recognition than what has been the case in the past.

For all these reasons, it could be state that CSOs are now among the major players in bringing social and economic changes in many of the South East European countries.

The panorama of activities done by the CSOs in very wide and most of the CSOs are working in several different directions:

TABLE 5 - Main activities implemented by CSOs

| Main activities implemented by CSOs | % |
|--|----------|
| Prevention / Informative campaigns | 8.88% |
| Advocacy | 8.22% |
| Physical environment / Removal of barriers | 4.15% |
| Primary goods aid | 3.71% |
| Support for independent living | 8.95% |
| Social participation, animation and creativity | 10.99% |
| Respite services and family support | 5.24% |
| Support in education / training | 10.41% |
| Support in work | 7.13% |
| Information and counseling services | 8.52% |
| Residential services | 1.97% |
| Health assistance and medical treatments / prescriptions | 3.20% |
| Communication | 2.11% |
| Rehabilitation / Nursing care | 4.29% |
| Psychological assistance | 7.71% |
| Other | 4.51% |

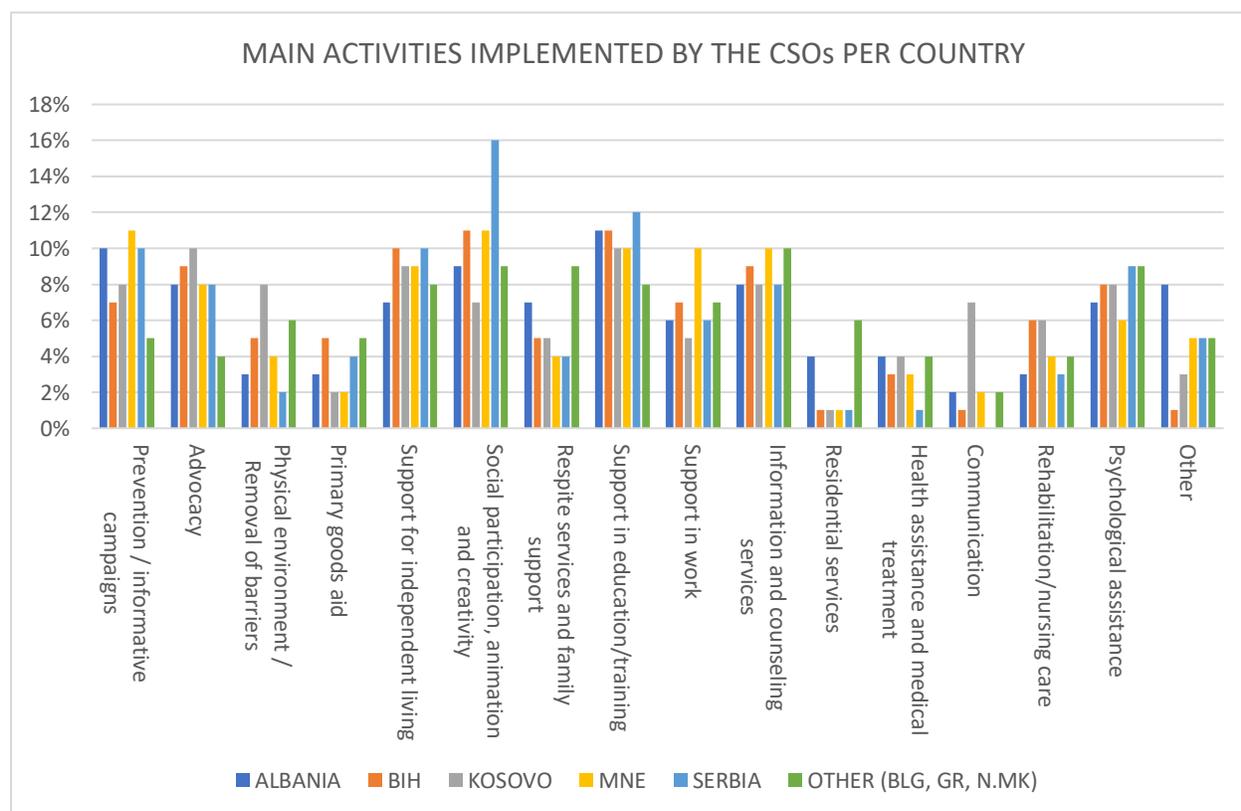


Since the year 2000, the European Commission has supported the civil society in the Western Balkans, dedicating a lot of investments through the Civil Society Facility (CSF) program aiming to “*support CSOs networks to give citizens a voice and influence reform processes through analysis, monitoring and advocacy*”. In this framework, the networks and the thematic areas promoted by the project SOCIETIES 2 mostly correspond to the EU enlargement strategy priorities – such as strengthening the rule of law, the public administration reform, the regional cooperation, but also the civic and capacity building initiatives, improving the position of vulnerable groups.

The mapped CSOs are showing similar trends in all the countries involved in project SOCIETIES 2: they are mainly grass-root CSOs; most of them are led or managed by volunteers. Just few of them are implementing more structured services, such as: Rehabilitation/nursing care (4%), Income maintenance and primary goods aid (5%), Health assistance and medical treatment/prescriptions (4%). But it’s really significant to underline that – especially during this COVID-19 outbreak – only 2% of the CSOs was able to work on communication and only the 4% was strongly involved in Advocacy actions.

TABLE 6 - Main activities implemented by the CSOs per country

| | AL | | BIH | | KS | | MNE | | SR | | OTHER (BLG, GR, N.MK) | |
|--|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|--------------------------|-----|
| Prevention / informative campaigns | 30 | 10% | 23 | 7% | 11 | 8% | 30 | 11% | 23 | 10% | 5 | 5% |
| Advocacy | 23 | 8% | 33 | 9% | 13 | 10% | 23 | 8% | 17 | 8% | 4 | 4% |
| Physical environment / Removal of barriers | 9 | 3% | 16 | 5% | 10 | 8% | 12 | 4% | 4 | 2% | 6 | 6% |
| Primary goods aid | 8 | 3% | 18 | 5% | 3 | 2% | 7 | 2% | 10 | 4% | 5 | 5% |
| Support for independent living | 21 | 7% | 36 | 10% | 12 | 9% | 24 | 9% | 22 | 10% | 8 | 8% |
| Social participation, animation and creativity | 27 | 9% | 38 | 11% | 9 | 7% | 32 | 11% | 36 | 16% | 9 | 9% |
| Respite services and family support | 20 | 7% | 18 | 5% | 6 | 5% | 10 | 4% | 9 | 4% | 9 | 9% |
| Support in education/training | 32 | 11% | 37 | 11% | 13 | 10% | 27 | 10% | 26 | 12% | 8 | 8% |
| Support in work | 18 | 6% | 26 | 7% | 6 | 5% | 27 | 10% | 14 | 6% | 7 | 7% |
| Information and counseling services | 22 | 8% | 30 | 9% | 10 | 8% | 27 | 10% | 18 | 8% | 10 | 10% |
| Residential services | 11 | 4% | 3 | 1% | 1 | 1% | 4 | 1% | 2 | 1% | 6 | 6% |
| Health assistance and medical treatment | 12 | 4% | 12 | 3% | 5 | 4% | 8 | 3% | 3 | 1% | 4 | 4% |
| Communication | 6 | 2% | 5 | 1% | 9 | 7% | 6 | 2% | 1 | 0% | 2 | 2% |
| Rehabilitation/nursing care | 8 | 3% | 22 | 6% | 8 | 6% | 11 | 4% | 6 | 3% | 4 | 4% |
| Psychological assistance | 20 | 7% | 28 | 8% | 10 | 8% | 18 | 6% | 21 | 9% | 9 | 9% |
| Other | 23 | 8% | 4 | 1% | 4 | 3% | 15 | 5% | 11 | 5% | 5 | 5% |



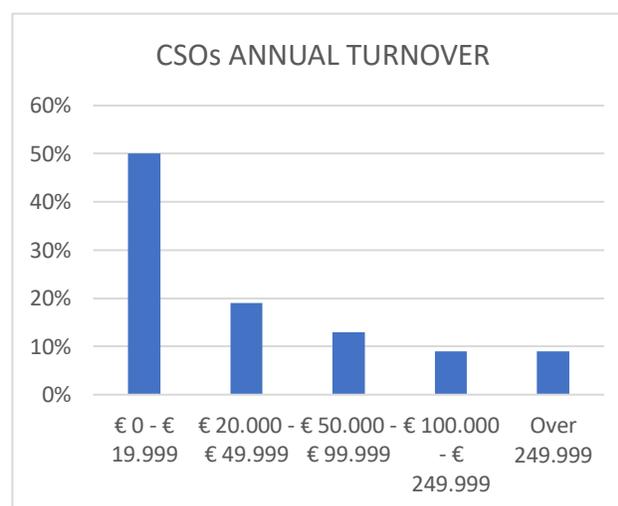
If we compare the information gathered in these 2 months through this Survey, together with the information collected by the project SOCIETIES with the mapping activity implemented in the last 4 years, the result is a very significant number of organizations that were entering in contact with the project (globally around 400 CSOs). This number highlights the big potential of the SOCIETIES 2 project, but at the same time it shows the difficulties that can be encountered in terms of strengthening the capacities of the CSOs during this COVID-19 time as many different needs are emerging. Working on such large networks composed by many local-scaled CSOs requires a huge communication and monitoring effort.

The dimension of the CSOs

Most of the organizations mapped by the project SOCIETIES 2 are grass-root CSOs, such as small organizations and social enterprises: the 50% of them (133) have an annual turnover of less than 20.000 Euro. But the panorama of the CSOs includes also other organizations of medium size dimension: 19% of them has an annual turnover up to 50.000 euro, and another 13% has an annual turnover up to 100.000 euro.

TABLE 7 - The dimension of the CSOs

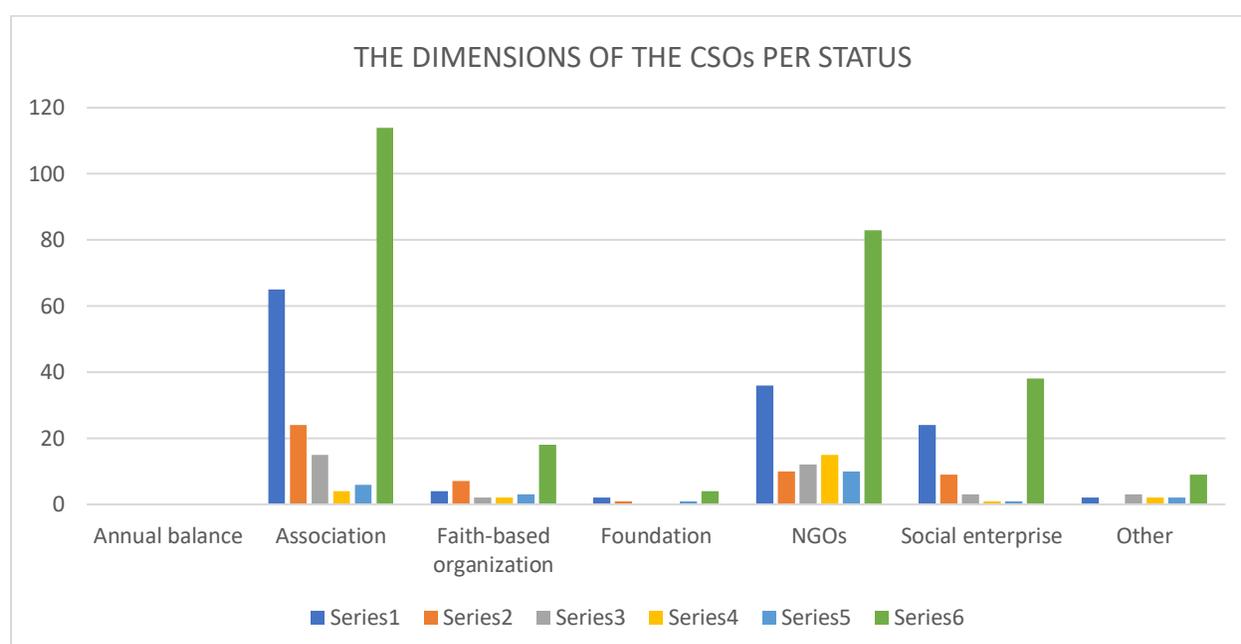
| CSOS ANNUAL TURNOVER | NR. OF CSOS | % |
|-----------------------|-------------|-----|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 133 | 50% |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 51 | 19% |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 35 | 13% |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 24 | 9% |
| OVER 249.999 | 23 | 9% |



The presence of CSOs with a large economic and operational capacity (such as the large NGOs operating on a national level) is important. However, we can find that only 9% of the CSOs have an annual turnover between 100.000 and 250.000 Euro, and another 9% with a turnover of over 250.000 Euro per year. The National Caritas of 6 countries of the region belongs to this last group.

TABLE 8 – The dimension of the CSOs per status

| Annual balance | Association | Faith-based organization | Foundation | NGOs | Social enterprise | Other |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 65 | 4 | 2 | 36 | 24 | 2 |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 24 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 9 | 0 |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 15 | 2 | | 12 | 3 | 3 |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 4 | 2 | | 15 | 1 | 2 |
| OVER 249.999 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| | 114 | 18 | 4 | 83 | 38 | 9 |

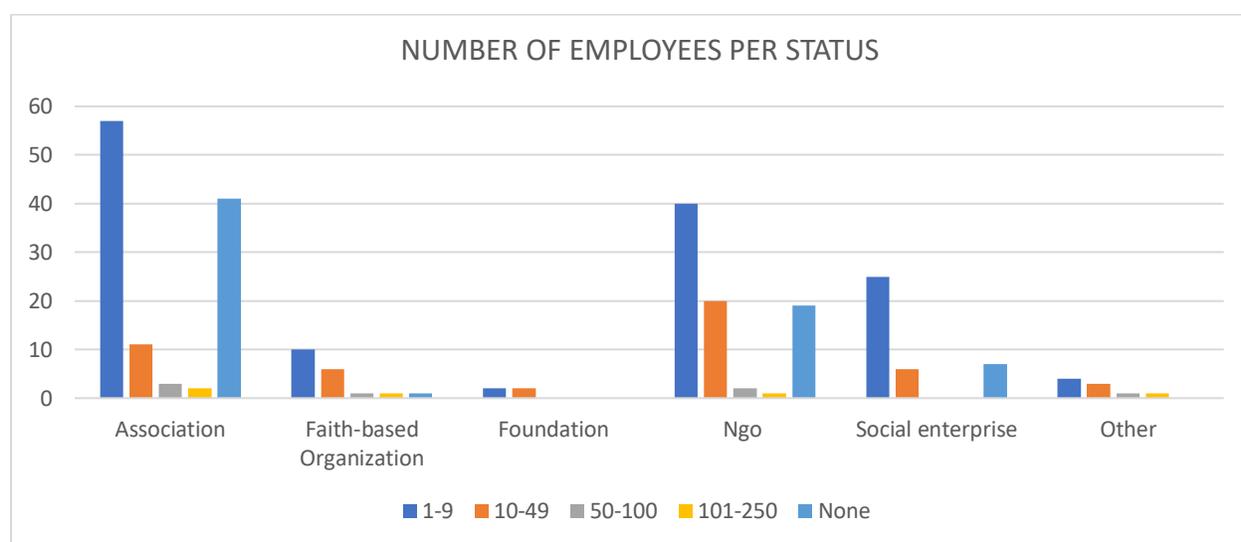


Within the area of social economy and welfare in the SEE countries, the professionals, social workers, CSO leaders and volunteers are an inherent part of the civil society, contributing to its development and prosperity. The value of these human capitals could be measured in terms of both social and economic capitals. International bodies (such as United Nations General Assembly, European Parliament or Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe) are encouraging the SEE governments to recognize the value of social economy and volunteering, and to promote civic activism. In response to these requests, several countries in the region started to develop new legal frameworks, anyway new models of welfare, voluntarism and persons engaged in favor of their communities still need to be fully implemented. Today, as the data of SOCIETIES 2 project are indicating, these human capitals are becoming more and more a pillar in SEE societies and CSOs' life due to an increasing number of projects, organizations and networks.

The following tables are intended to give a short panorama of the Human Capital resources that the network related to the project SOCIETIES 2 can mobilize.

TABLE 9 - Number of employees per status

| STATUS | NR OF EMPLOYEES | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-------|--------|---------|------|
| | 1-9 | 10-49 | 50-100 | 101-250 | None |
| ASSOCIATION | 57 | 11 | 3 | 2 | 41 |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 10 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| FOUNDATION | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NGO | 40 | 20 | 2 | 1 | 19 |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 25 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| OTHER | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |

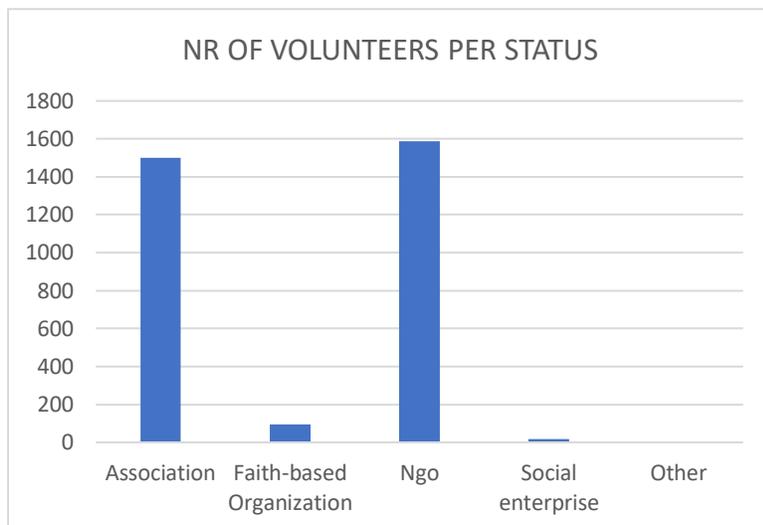


The total number of people hired and working in the various types of organizations mapped by the research is 3707.

Together with the 3707 people working within the organizations, we found also 3206 volunteers. Volunteers operate mainly inside the Associations (1501) and within NGOs (1588). 80% of them works in services and activities for disabled people (family volunteering).

Table 10 - Number of volunteers per status

| STATUS | NR OF VOLUNTEERS |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 1501 |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 93 |
| NGO | 1588 |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 18 |
| OTHER | 0 |



Please take into consideration that the data related to the table 10 are referred only to the 50% of the total respondents to the survey - so, we can presume that probably the number of volunteers is double. Anyway, from the results of the Survey, the Human Resource capital - and in particular the voluntary sector - turns out to be

quite rich, varied and complex in the 5 targeted countries.

Evaluating the profiles of the CSOs, we can state that as a consequence of the growing difficulties of public authorities to respond to the needs of the society (together with a general crisis of the welfare state system), a “new wave” of CSOs was appearing on the scene in the last years. These organizations operate mainly at a micro-level, attempting to resolve very concrete and tangible problems, even if with limited financial resources and ambitions. For this reason, in the field of disability and mental health, the analyzed CSOs are involving 3 types of volunteering:

1. skills-based volunteering,
2. employer-supported volunteering,
3. family volunteering

These typologies of voluntarism are helping the CSOs to diversify their recruitment and programs for engaging volunteers from various demographic groups and skill levels. As shown in the table 10, the Human capital involved in the life of the CSOs contacted with project SOCIETIES 2 includes almost 3200 people as volunteers.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN SEE COUNTRIES – A GENERAL OVERVIEW

Ettore Fusaro¹, Alberto Fabbiani²

¹ *Scientific coordinator and Senior Expert for South East Europe, Consorzio Comunitas Milano, Italy.*

² *Researcher and Statistical Computing, & Digital Publishing Web Specialist – con2b Senigallia, Italy*

A CSO interviewed in Bosnia and Herzegovina started our conversation with the following words: *“in Bosnia and Herzegovina the marginalization of persons with disabilities and organizations has shown that the trend of society does not change even in emergencies”*.

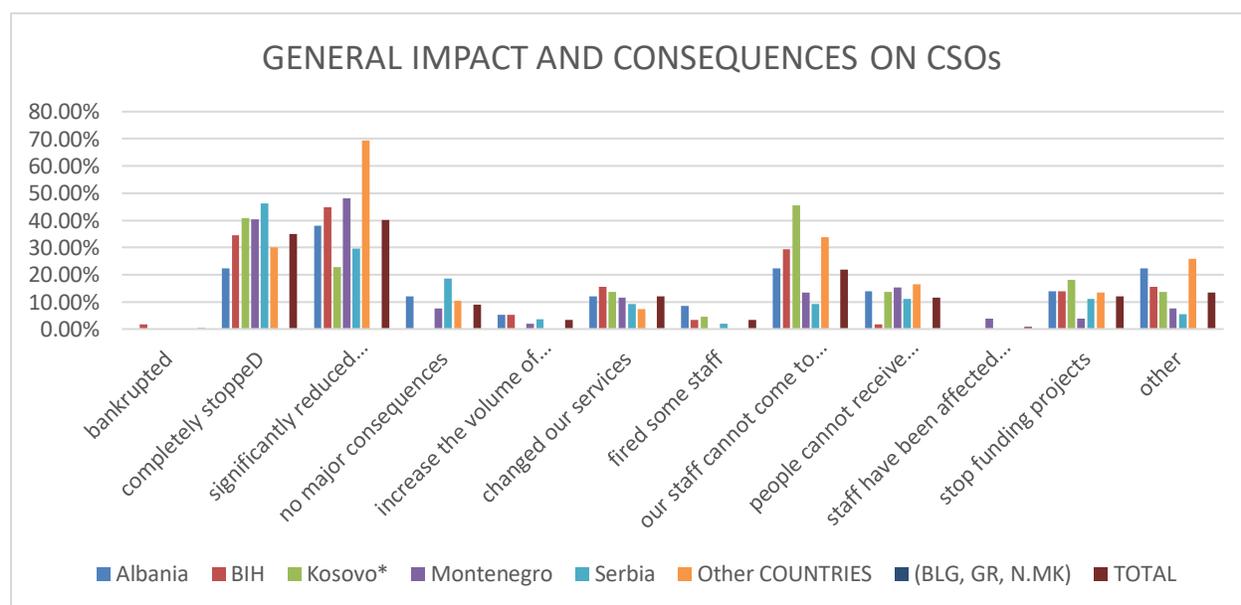
Like in Europe and in the rest of the world, during 2020 the South East European countries are projected to endure recessions, which extent depends on the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis is an unprecedented shock that has taken the world and its economy by surprise. Things that were previously unimaginable are now a reality: the mandatory shutdowns of non-essential businesses and the confinement of millions of people to their homes, are reshaping societies and economies.

As many countries were shifting to “stay-at-home” and “lockdown” models to stop the spread of the virus, the Governments and the civil societies are now more and more dealing with the high human, social, and economic costs of this model. With the spread of COVID-19, its economic and social impacts, the SEE region is facing a time of unprecedented uncertainty.

All the 266 CSOs surveyed have been negatively affected by COVID-19, in terms of changing their funding levels, their way of delivering services, and/or their internal operations. Their workers are often not receiving regular salaries, and the communities where they are based are also heavily impacted: most of the services are suspended, albeit asymmetrically depending on the sectors and the stage of the spread of the virus in their region or country. Most of the CSOs projects are shelved or postponed, very few CSOs have been included in financial support measures, and the strong limitation of movement blocked the markets and the services promoted. The economic impact of the pandemic is visible and requires immediate and rapid responses.

Table 11 - GENERAL IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCES ON CSOs

| COUNTRY | BANKRUPTED | COMPLETELY STOPPED | SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED SERVICE | NO MAJOR CONSEQUENCES | INCREASE THE VOLUME OF THE SERVICES | CHANGED OUR SERVICES | FIRED SOME STAFF | OUR STAFF CANNOT COME TO WORK | PEOPLE CANNOT RECEIVE ANYMORE OUR SERVICE | STAFF HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE DISEASE | STOP FUNDING PROJECTS | OTHER |
|---------------------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|--------|
| ALBANIA | 0.00% | 22.41% | 37.93% | 12.07% | 5.17% | 12.07% | 8.62% | 22.41% | 13.79% | 0.00% | 13.79% | 22.41% |
| BIH | 1.72% | 34.48% | 44.83% | 0.00% | 5.17% | 15.52% | 3.45% | 29.31% | 1.72% | 0.00% | 13.79% | 15.52% |
| KOSOVO* | 0.00% | 40.91% | 22.73% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 13.64% | 4.55% | 45.45% | 13.64% | 0.00% | 18.18% | 13.64% |
| MONTENEGRO | 0.00% | 40.38% | 48.08% | 7.69% | 1.92% | 11.54% | 0.00% | 13.46% | 15.38% | 3.85% | 3.85% | 7.69% |
| SERBIA | 0.00% | 46.30% | 29.63% | 18.52% | 3.70% | 9.26% | 1.85% | 9.26% | 11.11% | 0.00% | 11.11% | 5.56% |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GR, N.MK) | 0.00% | 30.13% | 69.36% | 10.44% | 0.00% | 7.41% | 0.00% | 33.84% | 16.50% | 0.00% | 13.47% | 25.76% |
| TOTAL | 0.38% | 34.96% | 40.23% | 9.02% | 3.38% | 12.03% | 3.38% | 21.80% | 11.65% | 0.75% | 12.03% | 13.53% |



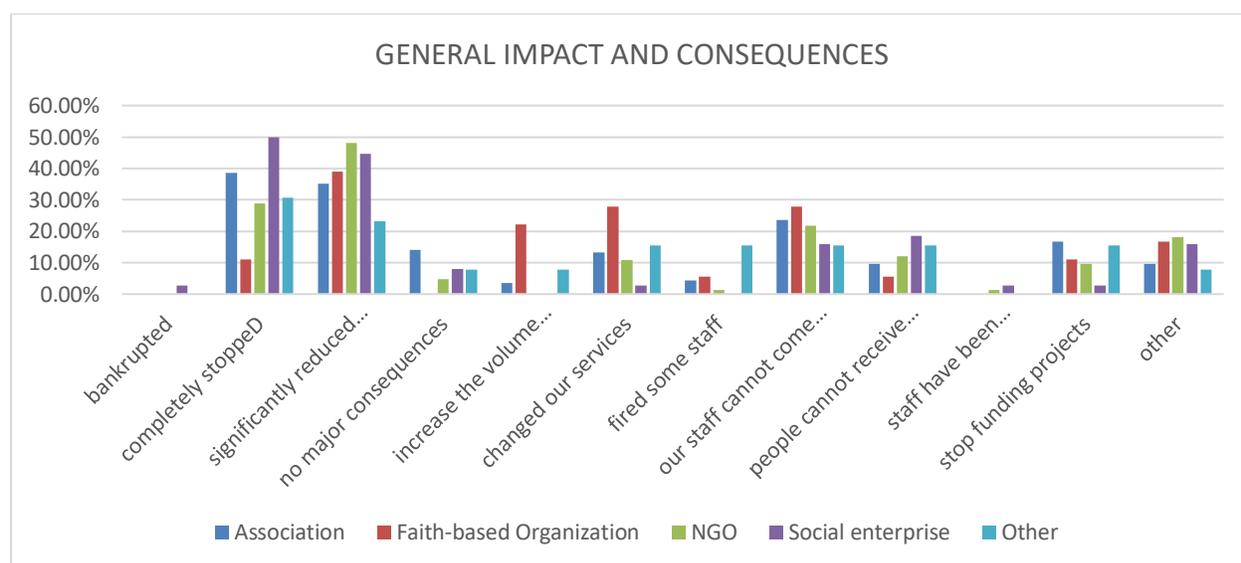
When asked about the consequences of the COVID-19 epidemic for the work of the CSO so far, 40,2% of CSOs reported that they had significantly reduced their services, and 34,9% of them had completely stopped their activities.

21,8% of the CSOs declared that their staff couldn't come to work for the restrictions and measures adopted by local authorities.

A CSO from Serbia stated: “We have stopped all the activities, except for psychological support over the telephone for our users. We are waiting for call for proposals from local authorities, and therefore we do not have any income”.

Table 12 - GENERAL IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCES ON CSO per STATUS

| STATUS | BANKRUPTED | COMPLETELY STOPPED | SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED SERVICE | NO MAJOR CONSEQUENCES | INCREASE THE VOLUME OF THE SERVICES | CHANGED OUR SERVICES | FIRE SOME STAFF | OUR STAFF CANNOT COME TO WORK | PEOPLE CANNOT RECEIVE ANYMORE OUR SERVICE | STAFF HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE DESEASE | STOP FUNDING PROJECTS | OTHER |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---------|
| ASSOCIATION | 0.00 % | 38.60% | 35.09% | 14.04 % | 3.51% | 13.16 % | 4.39 % | 23.68 % | 9.65 % | 0.00 % | 16.67 % | 9.65 % |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 0.00 % | 11.11% | 38.89% | 0.00 % | 22.22% | 27.78 % | 5.56 % | 27.78 % | 5.56 % | 0.00 % | 11.11 % | 16.67 % |
| NGO | 0.00 % | 28.92% | 48.19% | 4.82 % | 0.00% | 10.84 % | 1.20 % | 21.69 % | 12.05 % | 1.20 % | 9.64 % | 18.07 % |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 2.63 % | 50.00% | 44.74% | 7.89 % | 0.00% | 2.63 % | 0.00 % | 15.79 % | 18.42 % | 2.63 % | 2.63 % | 15.79 % |
| OTHER | 0.00 % | 30.77% | 23.08% | 7.69 % | 7.69% | 15.38 % | 15.38 % | 15.38 % | 15.38 % | 0.00 % | 15.38 % | 7.69 % |



The organizational and operational consequences are in general very serious, anyway we can see some differences among the answers based on the analysis of the profile of the CSOs. The majority of smaller, locally-oriented CSOs, either limited or stopped their activities, or decided to engage their resources and activism in local humanitarian activities and solidarity initiatives.

The 94,7% of the social enterprises were forced to completely stop (50% of them), or significantly reduce their services (the other 44,7%). NGOs and Associations significantly stopped their services (respectively in 28,5% and 38,6%) of the cases, or reduce their volume of activities (48,2% and 35,1%). In Albania, Kosovo* and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the impossibility of operators to come to work, due to strong containment measures, is added to these elements of closure or reduction of services.

Only the Faith-based organizations seem to have had a lower operational impact, and they are trying to manage their services. This is probably due to their wider organizational structure and because they operate across multiple sectors. The Faith-based organizations (most of them are related to Caritas Network in the region) seem to be more resilient: only the 11,1% of them stopped their activities and at the same time, they have the highest percentage (27,7%) in to the capacity to change their services.

Social protection of PWDs

The lockdown and the institutional measures adopted by the Governments is having an immediate negative impact on the activities in favor of the PWDs: around 78% of the CSOs operating within SOCIETIES 2 project declared to have been forced to close their services and/or reduced them.

The lockdown and the social distancing measures have produced a lot of consequences also on the clinical conditions of the PWDs and other vulnerable groups. Where lockdowns were in place, social protection mechanisms in favor of PWDs are in need to support.

As stated by a CSO from Serbia: *“The epidemic is having a very large impact on social protection services, especially those provided by civil society organizations. I know that 11 daily centers were left without funding for April. Many did not even know it until the first days of May, when they invoiced services for April. Workers cannot be laid off after a month, so all those organizations will have to go bankrupt because they do not have the funds to pay arrears of taxes and contributions. The fact is that the services could not be provided as defined in the contracts, but many providers focused on home help, online support, but it is obvious that very little or no thought was given to us in this situation”*.

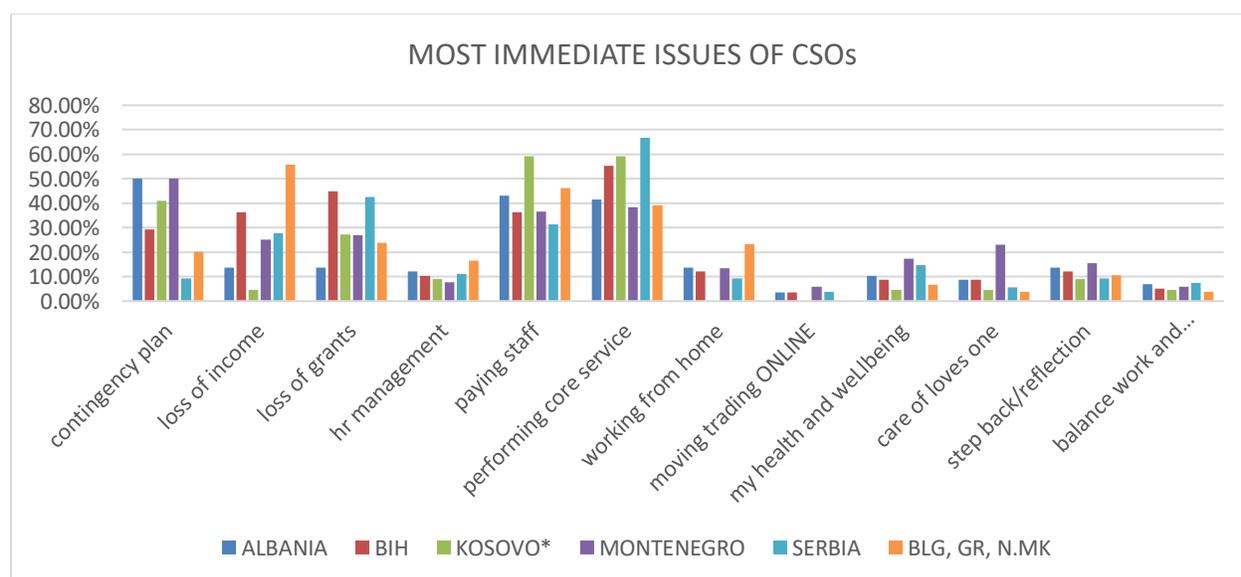
What are the most urgent issues the CSOs are facing right now?

Civil Society Organizations are vital in providing services to communities and advocating for change toward influential decision makers. As they primary target local people, it is essential that

CSOs are not overlooked in the understandable rush to address pressing health and economic issues closer to home. Many are facing existential threats right now. If they do not adjust and receive the necessary support to maintain themselves as organizations, they could soon collapse.

TABLE 13 - Most immediate issues of CSO

| COUNTRY | CONTINGENCY PLAN | LOSS OF INCOME | LOSS OF GRANTS | HR MANAGEMENT | PAYING STAFF | PERFORMING CORE SERVICE | WORKING FROM HOME | MOVING TRADING ONLINE | MY HEALTH AND WELLBEING | CARE OF LOVES ONE | STEP BACK/REFLECTION | BALANCE WORK AND RESPONSABILITIES |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ALBANIA | 50.00% | 13.79% | 13.79% | 12.07% | 43.10% | 41.38% | 13.79% | 3.45% | 10.34% | 8.62% | 13.79% | 6.90% |
| BIH | 29.31% | 36.21% | 44.83% | 10.34% | 36.21% | 55.17% | 12.07% | 3.45% | 8.62% | 8.62% | 12.07% | 5.17% |
| KOSOVO* | 40.91% | 4.55% | 27.27% | 9.09% | 59.09% | 59.09% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 4.55% | 4.55% | 9.09% | 4.55% |
| MONTENEGRO | 50.00% | 25.00% | 26.92% | 7.69% | 36.54% | 38.46% | 13.46% | 5.77% | 17.31% | 23.08% | 15.38% | 5.77% |
| SERBIA | 9.26% | 27.78% | 42.59% | 11.11% | 31.48% | 66.67% | 9.26% | 3.70% | 14.81% | 5.56% | 9.26% | 7.41% |
| BLG, GR, N.MK | 20.20% | 55.89% | 23.91% | 16.50% | 46.13% | 39.23% | 23.40% | 0.00% | 6.73% | 3.70% | 10.44% | 3.70% |
| TOTAL | 34.59% | 25.19% | 31.58% | 11.28% | 37.97% | 50.00% | 11.28% | 3.38% | 11.65% | 10.15% | 12.41% | 6.02% |

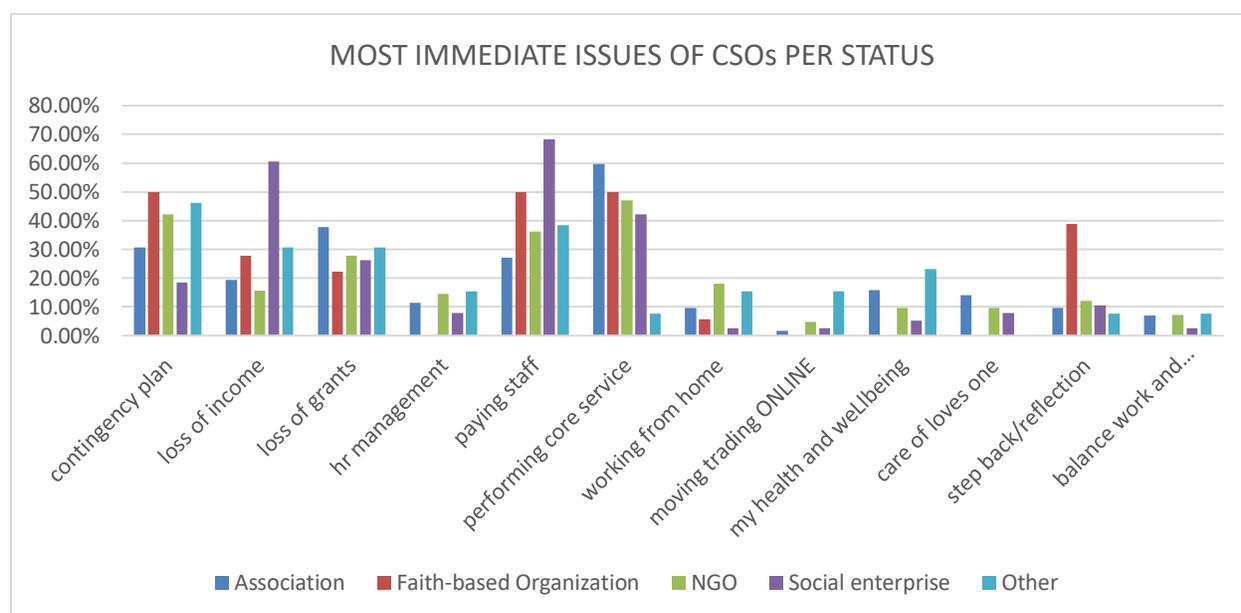


The table above shows that 50% of the surveyed CSOs had difficulties to perform their core services. The other main issues presented by the leaders interviewed are related to the economic dimension of the management of CSOs – such as difficulties in paying the staff (37,6% of the CSOs), loss of grants (31,6%) and loss of incomes (25,2%). Another issue related to the

management of the CSOs is the need to define a correct contingency plan (34,5%) to properly face this phase of pandemic outbreak.

TABLE 14 - Most immediate issues of CSO per status

| STATUS | CONTINGENCY PLAN | LOSS OF INCOME | LOSS OF GRANTS | HR MANAGEMENT | PAYING STAFF | PERFORMING CORE SERVICE | WORKING FROM HOME | MOVING TRADING ONLINE | MY HEALTH AND WELLBEING | CARE OF LOVES ONE | STEP BACK/REFLECTION | BALANCE WORK AND RESPONSABILITIES |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 30.70% | 19.30% | 37.72% | 11.40% | 27.19% | 59.65% | 9.65% | 1.75% | 15.79% | 14.04% | 9.65% | 7.02% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 50.00% | 27.78% | 22.22% | 0.00% | 50.00% | 50.00% | 5.56% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 38.89% | 0.00% |
| NGO | 42.17% | 15.66% | 27.71% | 14.46% | 36.14% | 46.99% | 18.07% | 4.82% | 9.64% | 9.64% | 12.05% | 7.23% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 18.42% | 60.53% | 26.32% | 7.89% | 68.42% | 42.11% | 2.63% | 2.63% | 5.26% | 7.89% | 10.53% | 2.63% |
| OTHER | 46.15% | 30.77% | 30.77% | 15.38% | 38.46% | 7.69% | 15.38% | 15.38% | 23.08% | 0.00% | 7.69% | 7.69% |



All the typologies of the surveyed CSOs are having similar difficulties in terms of operations, funding and activities.

The Associations - that are usually of smaller dimensions – are facing difficulties to perform their core services (59,6%), they lost grants (37,7%), and they need contingency plans (30,7%).

The Faith-based organizations (usually medium-large dimension) have in equal manner the issues of performing their core service, paying staff and contingency plan (50%). In parallel, due to their more resilient capacity to re-adapt their services, they are also showing the issue to “step back” and reflect about the new way of intervention during the pandemic (38,9%).

A CSO from BIH stated: *“The impact of the situation on the non-governmental sector will only be seen later. It is our fear that in the future we may have serious problems implementing all the activities prepared and developed over the years, and that we will have to reduce the volume and quality of work with these vulnerable groups, although this is the last we would like”*.

The NGOs of the region have expressed the need to perform their core services (47%) and to define correct contingency plans to face this phase of COVID-19 outbreak (42,2%). Like all the other CSOs, also NGOs faced difficulties to paying their staff (36,1%).

An NGO from Montenegro stated: *“We do not yet know how much this situation will affect the work of our NGO, but we are sure that it will be difficult to continue working because we have always brought together groups of young people and promoted various group activities where we fostered contact among our peers, which will affect the future work of the NGO - and donor revenues themselves are likely to be significantly reduced”*.

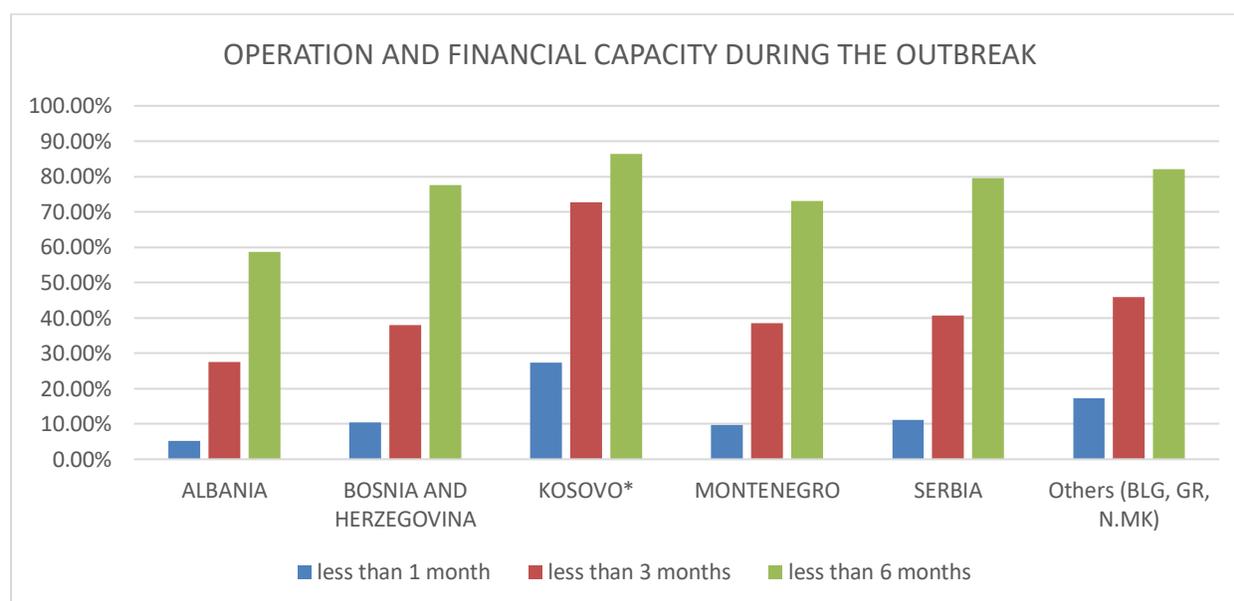
An NGO from Bosnia and Herzegovina stated: *“Emerging costs have popped up as a result of crisis response and management, such as the costs of protecting customers and employees, healthy food, increased expertise to support people with disabilities in isolation, mobile teams and emergency facilities, plan B and preparation for more severe crisis, etc”*.

In case the current restrictions continue (or they will be repeated in the next future), how long the CSOs in SEE countries can continue to operate? A Social Enterprise and CSO from BIH declared: *“The consequences for social enterprises and CSO can be truly devastating if no immediate action is taken. We have lost market and income that had been building for a long time. PWDs we trained and mediated in their employment also lost their jobs overnight. We need urgent and effective measures by the government and partners”*.

TABLE 15 - Operational and financial capacity of CSO during the pandemic outbreak

| COUNTRY | LESS THAN 1 MONTH | LESS THAN 3 MONTHS | LESS THAN 6 MONTHS |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ALBANIA | 5.17% | 27.59% | 58.62% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 10.34% | 37.93% | 77.59% |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| KOSOVO* | 27.27% | 72.73% | 86.36% |
| MONTENEGRO | 9.62% | 38.46% | 73.08% |
| SERBIA | 11.11% | 40.74% | 79.63% |
| OTHERS (BLG, GR, N.MK) | 17.17% | 45.96% | 82.15% |
| TOTAL | 11.65% | 39.85% | 73.68% |



Looking at the table 15, and considering that this Survey has been developed during the period April-May 2020, it can be expected that during the summer time the 11,6% of the surveyed CSOs in the region (that means around 25-27 CSOs), if not supported in the meanwhile, may have permanently closed their services and activities - due to the heavy impact of COVID-19 crisis on their Operational and Financial capacities and resilience.

When asked about the operational and financial resilience, the 39,8% of the CSOs reported that they would have to close within 3 months without additional funding. This group includes also well-established CSOs with decades of service to their communities. So, as mentioned in the table 15, the 73.68% of the organizations risks to close their activities within six months.

Only the 18% of the CSOs reported being able to continue between 7 and 12 months, and another 15,8% able to continue operations for more than 12 months.

During COVID-19 pandemic, 160 out of 266 CSOs and Social Enterprises continued to operate, most of them re-modulating the services and projects, and in most of the cases reducing the volume of their activities. On the other side, different organizations have completely stopped and/or already closed the centers and services (106).

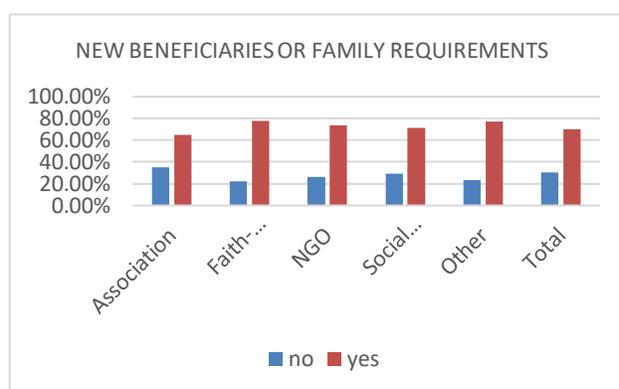
Time is running out, and if the situation persists many organizations are under the risk to close their presence and activities in favor of most disadvantaged categories.

During these months of the pandemic outbreak, the COVID-19 is hitting also the emergency responses in vulnerable communities across the region – from PWDs to homeless, from asylum seeker on the Balkan route to the people affected by disasters.

A Faith-based organization from Albania stated: *“Our area has a high rate of domestic violence, on women and children, that greatly exacerbated in this period because of COVID-19 and the fact that you have to stay in the house. I think about anything that can be of help and support to the volunteers working in this area”*. A CSO from Serbia stated: *“A period that is ahead of us is the period in which we will have to deal with poverty, and work on poverty reduction”*.

TABLE 16 - New beneficiaries or family requirements to the CSOs x status

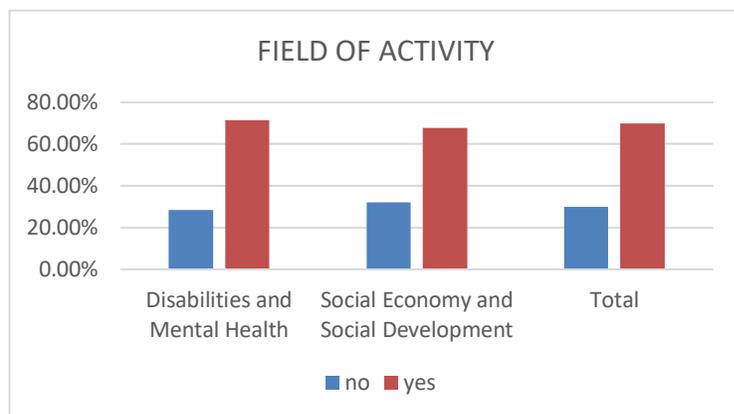
| STATUS | NO | YES |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 35.09% | 64.91% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 22.22% | 77.78% |
| NGO | 26.51% | 73.49% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 28.95% | 71.05% |
| OTHER | 23.08% | 76.92% |
| TOTAL | 30.08% | 69.92% |



According to table 16, the 70% of the CSOs met new beneficiaries or family requirements during the COVID-19 emergency. In particular, the CSOs operating in the field of disability and mental health were the ones facing new additional beneficiaries and family requirements (71,4%).

TABLE 17 - New beneficiaries or family requirements to the CSOs x Field of activity

| FIELD OF ACTIVITIES | NO | YES |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| DISABILITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH | 28.57% | 71.43% |
| SOCIAL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT | 32.14% | 67.86% |
| TOTAL | 30.08% | 69.92% |



According to the reports of international organizations, disabled people have an increased risk of contracting coronavirus due to many barriers that they face in their daily lives. Difficulties for disabled people may arise due to the physical inaccessibility of the basic

infrastructure, necessary means for hand hygiene, such as washbasins, sinks, as well as the physical difficulties of thorough hand washing. Moreover, these people constantly need to touch their assistive devices (wheelchairs, white walking canes for the blind, crutches, hearing aids, etc.), which involves the necessity of disinfecting not only their hands but also assistive devices. Children and adults with disabilities, people with mental disabilities who need the daily support of relatives and social workers, for example, deafblind or residents of institutions cannot isolate themselves and enact social distancing. As a result, they are at higher risk of contracting coronavirus infection.

“Our organization needs access to information about COVID-19 in sign language, how to protect the health and how to resume the activities of the organization after the pandemic and protect its members from this pandemic” (CSOs from Kosovo).*

The most vulnerable to the consequences of an outbreak of coronavirus may be disabled children and adults who need the constant support of their loved ones and the help of social workers. The majority of CSOs (60%) operating in the framework of project SOCIETIES 2 have children and adolescents with disability as primary beneficiaries. An NGO from Albania declares: *“During this COVID-19 outbreak we claim different requests in addition to therapeutic services for children, to offer training for parents and mental health professionals on how to behave with rules and measures adopted by authorities to face the pandemic”.*

Frances Ryan, a Guardian columnist and author of the book *“Crippled: Austerity and the Demonization of Disabled People”*, noted in her recent article that the spread of coronavirus has the greatest impact on people with chronic illnesses and disabilities. She was puzzled by the question of why British society is writing disabled people off. In her piece, she emphasizes that a public health crisis is not an event of equal opportunity. The poorest, the most marginalized and

those with disabilities tend to suffer the most, while wealthy, non-disabled people with connections can mitigate the consequences.

According to a recent World Health Organization report, if impairments are associated with respiratory functions, the immune system, heart disease, or diabetes, people with these forms of health conditions may be at greater risk of developing more severe cases of coronavirus if they become infected. At the same time, with the increasing burden on the health care system, disabled people may experience difficulties in accessing necessary medical services.

An NGO from BIH stated: *“After the loosening of measures in the fight against corona, greater psychosocial support and material assistance to the beneficiaries will be required, due to the worsening economic situation, which is an inevitable consequence”*.

Interviewing the regional Advocacy Officer of the project SOCIETIES 2, Mr. Stefan Paloka (Caritas Albania), it emerges clearly what the main consequences for PWDs in SEE caused by the COVID-19 emergency are:

1. the disability-related specificities, which make difficult for PWD to properly access online services;
2. the low-income level most PWD and their family members live on, which bars them from having quality online connection and devices;
3. the vulnerability that some disabilities bring in health terms, which prevents respective PWD from attending service providers' facilities, such as chronic diseases accompanied by an immunity deficit.

SCIENTIFIC FOCUS

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Gianluca Tornese¹, Federico Marchetti²

¹ *Department of Pediatrics, Institute for Maternal and Child Health IRCCS “Burlo Garofolo”, Trieste, Italy.*

² *Department of Pediatrics, Santa Maria delle Croci Hospital, Azienda Unità Sanitaria Locale della Romagna, Ravenna, Italy.*

Until now, pediatricians have paid close attention to what could have been the impact of the COVID-19 infection in terms of physical health. Now the available data, even if partial, tells us that the pediatric age is spared in the severity of the infection. It is now a matter of shifting attention towards the impact of the health crisis on families and on children and adolescents.

Quarantine is often an unpleasant experience for those who undergo it. Separation from loved ones, the loss of freedom, uncertainty over disease status, and boredom can, on occasion, create dramatic effects. Studies conducted during past quarantine periods suggest that the effects may be troublesome. **Post-traumatic stress** is estimated to be four times higher in children who have been in quarantine compared to those who have not, and their likelihood of presenting acute stress disorder, adjustment disorder, and grief is also higher.

The **most frequent symptoms** in children during COVID-19 are reported to be: difficulty to concentrate, boredom, irritability, restlessness, nervousness, feelings of loneliness, uneasiness and worries. As expected, during quarantine, children use monitors more frequently, spend less time doing physical activity, and sleep more hours. Furthermore, when family coexistence during quarantine becomes more difficult, the situation is more serious, and the level of stress is higher, parents tend to report more emotional problems in their children.

For children who are **quarantined at home with their parents or relatives**, the stress caused by such a sharp change in their environment might be eased to some degree. However, children who are **separated from their caregivers** require special attention, because they are more vulnerable to psychological problems (30% meet the clinical criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder).

Many countries have decided to **close schools** during COVID-19 pandemics. This is apparently a commonsense measure as part of a social distancing policy to lower the transmission rate of the virus. UNESCO estimates that at least 138 countries have instituted school closures at national level and several other countries have established closings at regional or local level. With over 90% of students worldwide (more than 1.5 billion young people) currently out of the educational context, it is clear that the greatest threat from COVID-19 to children and adolescents is certainly

not strictly clinical. Although the scientific debate is still ongoing regarding the real effectiveness of the closure of schools on the transmission of virus, the fact that schools remain closed for a long period of time can have harmful social and health consequences for those children living in poverty. Furthermore, it is to be considered that the existing social inequalities are destined to increase.

There are two ways by which school closures will affect poor children in Europe:

- The first is the impact of school closures causing **less food for poor children**. For many students living in poverty, schools are not only a place to learn, but also a place to eat healthily. Plenty of evidence shows how school lunch is associated with better academic performance, while food insecurity (irregular or unhealthy diet) can lead to low school performance and substantial risks to physical health and mental well-being. The number of children who may have this possible food shortage is considerable. EUROSTAT data tell us that 6.6% of families with children in Europe (5.5% in the UK) cannot afford a meal with meat, fish or vegetables every day. Comparable estimates in the US suggest that 14% of families with children had food insecurity in 2018.

- The second mechanism of the impact of school closures on poor children concerns non-school factors, considered as the primary source of **inequality in educational objectives**. The gap in mathematical and literary skills between children of families with low or high socio-economic backgrounds is often accentuated during school holidays. Summer vacations in many American schools contribute to a loss in academic goals equivalent to one month of education for children with low socioeconomic status; this effect is not observed in children with high socio-economic status. Summer holidays are also associated with mental regression and well-being in children and adolescents.

Although the current closure of schools differs from summer holidays in that training should continue digitally, this will widen the learning distances between children with lower class families and the others. Children who live in poor families are often in **conditions that make schooling at home difficult**. Online learning environments typically require **computers** and a **reliable internet connection**, which poorer families often don't have. In Europe, 5% live in houses where there is no suitable place to do their homework and 6.9% do not have internet access. In addition, 10.2% of children live in homes not adequately heated and 5% do not have access to books appropriate for their age. In Italy, the latest ISTAT data available report 42% of minors living in an **overcrowded condition** in their homes and 7% of children and adolescents who are victims of serious **housing problems**. It is in these houses, with families in further

economic conditions made worse, that children and adolescents seek a space to study and concentrate. In the USA, an estimated 2.5% of public-school students do not live in permanent residences. In New York, the epicenter of the COVID-19 epidemic in America, one in 10 students are homeless or have serious housing instabilities. Contrary to what will happen for children from wealthy families, where learning will continue without major impediments, children from lower social classes are likely to find it difficult to be able to carry out the required tasks and follow the online courses precisely because of their poor domestic conditions.

In Italy, 9 million children and teenagers, and more than 1 million children in kindergartens and early childhood education services, have dropped out of school, and distance learning is not reaching everyone. According to the Ministry of Education, in fact, more than 500.000 students (6% of the school population) are missing: they are mainly students who live in families with greater socio-economic and cultural difficulties.

When considering **South East European countries**, already often characterized by obsolete education systems and inadequately computerized teachers, with COVID-19 pandemic, schools suddenly found themselves undertaking an e-learning experiment which revealed huge disparities between and within countries. This inequality, in terms of knowledge and resources, has become more evident between private and public schools and even between urban centers and villages.

Disparities in opportunity and outcomes still persist across several population groups in South East Europe.

Albania has one of the highest rates of dropout in the Eastern Europe, facing significant challenges in providing quality education for students in low-density rural and mountainous areas where 40% of the population live. Educational outcomes tend to be lower in rural compared to urban areas and many schools in rural regions lack instructional materials and struggle to meet their basic infrastructure needs (e.g. heating). Moreover, participation and outcomes also vary by ethnic background and are particularly low for Roma and for Balkan Egyptians.

In line with this trend, there are geographic, social and ethnic disparities within *Serbia* too: the drop-out rate is 14% in rural areas vs. 1% in urban areas; only 7% of students from the poorest families were enrolled in pre-primary education in 2008, compared to 64% of those from the wealthier households; only 37% of Roma students complete compulsory education and around

one in five Roma students is enrolled in upper secondary education, compared to 89% of Serbian students.

In *North Macedonia*, student learning outcomes are lower than international and regional averages, and show no sign of improvement: half of 15-year-olds do not demonstrate basic proficiency in all the main subjects; while participation in upper secondary has improved, gross enrolment at this level remains more than 10 percentage points lower than other countries in the region, and significantly below the EU average. As in previous cases mentioned above, enrolment is lowest among students from a lower socio-economic background and in rural areas. Reasons for not attending school at this level relate to poor learning conditions and families' and students' low expectations.

Sadly, during this COVID-19 emergency, in South East European countries, as well as in the other countries of the Western Balkans, many teachers, pupils and parents have been left grappling with unfamiliar software, outdated or non-existent hardware and, in many cases, unreliable Internet connections. Some children, like those living in rural areas, find themselves even more or entirely excluded. Thus, the digital divide in education has widened further during school closures, leading to an inevitable increase in inequalities and learning poverty. Continuity of learning in the Eastern Europe, as well as in those of the more developed European countries, has been guaranteed for some, but totally denied to others.

In addition to the educational challenges, however, the most disadvantaged families will have an additional threat, the economic recession that will follow this pandemic and which will increase the level of poverty in the most disadvantaged children, with harmful long-term consequences on health, well-being and learning objectives.

Lawmakers, administrators and school leaders face two challenges:

1. The first is current and concerns the **supply of food to poor children** and the **response to their educational needs in recent months**. On one hand, continuing to provide school meals is essential to prevent this type of social inequality. Moreover, teachers should also consider how to adapt their teaching materials and tools for students without internet access, without a computer or without a suitable place to study.
2. The second is immediately following and is the one that will have to **face the end of the acute phase of the pandemic** in view of the return to school. On one hand, targeted education and support materials for children of poor families should be guaranteed to start reducing the learning gap that has probably occurred. On the other hand, support for poor families should be guaranteed to prevent worsening economic situation. Without these actions, the current health

crisis will become a social crisis that will have long-term consequences, especially in those children from poor families.

During the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, for example, with the school closings there have been peaks in **youth labor rates, neglect, sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies**, and many children have **never returned to school**. Many children, as a consequence of the closure of schools, will suffer from the **lack of social assistance** provided by the school context, such as free meals or clean water, and will not be able to use the **vaccination** and **mental health services** made available by the schools.

Home-bound children are unlikely to reach 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, recommended by the WHO. All this puts at risk not only the physical and mental well-being of children and adolescents, but increases the risk of consolidating dangerous habits, such as **increasing the time in front of the screen and eating unhealthily**, with the known negative consequences that could derive from it.

For teenagers, school closures and social distancing can have particularly important consequences. During **adolescence**, young people begin to prioritize other ties besides that of their parents. The interruption of these relationships can test their well-being. Teenagers and older children may suffer from anxiety more frequently when they try to understand the pandemic and the consequences for them, their family and friends.

It is very important to identify childhood mental health problems as soon as possible, differentiating normal and pathological reactions through the use of **screening tools** that may indicate the need for intervention. **Post-pandemic surveillance** of mental disorders among children should be considered, since it has been shown that effect of quarantine can be evident years after restrictions. People working with children and adolescents should receive **formal training to facilitate the early identification of children's mental health problems**, learning to discern children's normal and abnormal behaviors, recognize red flags indicating further intervention or referral are needed, and standardize the use of rapid screening tools for mental health.

A final critical point concerns specific sections of the population of **children with learning and/or disability problems** that have interrupted in the vast majority of cases any form of support. Particular attention should be given to children with disabilities and special educational

needs who have had to suspend support and rehabilitation activities: these interventions have always been of great importance, but at this moment are even more a priority.

The pandemic offers an opportunity for young people to develop and hone their **resilience and adaptability** and appreciate the value of social responsibility and their sacrifices for the protection of the most vulnerable people. It is essential to enhance the experiences of young people during this global crisis, communicate and listen to their **creative solutions** to face the problem and encourage them to use their skills to create a more robust society, interested in problems and united when the pandemic ends.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 CRISIS ON COMMUNITIES AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Ettore Fusaro¹, Daniele Bombardi²

¹ Scientific coordinator and Senior Expert for South East Europe, Consorzio Communitas Milano, Italy.

² Manager of the project "ELBA - Development of Social Economy in South East Europe" Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mrs. Jelena Ankić (Caritas Serbia), Project Manager of "SOCIETIES 2", stated: *"During the state of emergency caused by the COVID-19, an extremely vulnerable population was put at high risk. Not just due to the virus itself, but because of indirect consequences that followed. Almost all community services were reduced or suspended, and often it was not possible to organize any kind of alternative support. Many people with disabilities depend on that human and professional contact that now was missing.*

The introduction of the state of emergency in Serbia, as well as all subsequent measures, had a significant impact on the work of civil society organizations. The announced national and provincial authorities' public calls, which were opened or planned, were suspended till the end of the emergency situation. Local self-governments have largely stopped allocation and public calls and will do it in even greater extent in the coming period, which will have a very unfavorable effect on local CSOs and will threaten their financial sustainability. This brings to light the problem of fragility of CSOs that have the provisional source of funding".

The COVID-19 crisis exacerbated the impact of poverty and deprivation in a large number of vulnerable children and families, many of which are already experiencing hunger. There are severe limitations or complete social deprivation in the access to basic services (such as care and assistance, education, psychological support, therapy, counseling and rehabilitation) for a significant number of PWDs, minorities, and other vulnerable categories – such as homeless, asylum seekers, children with special needs and children without parental care.

The COVID-19 crisis significantly increased the exposure of women and children to domestic violence, due to extended lockdown and/or improper living conditions, and also online violence due to increased access to internet and limited supervision.

There is also an increasing gap in the access to education for children with disabilities, children from vulnerable families, children without parental care or children in rural and marginalized urban areas - due to limited access to internet and availability of adequate devices.

A CSO from Albania declares: “We have seen a change in demand coming mostly from Roma people, who have elderly people living with them, and families with disabled people at home, whose parents cannot go to work. Our income has been affected because due to the extreme uncertainty caused by the Corona Virus pandemic, financial aid, previously provided by projects with foreign partners, has been suspended”.

The exclusion of CSOs from governmental plans for mitigating the economic impact of the current pandemic, is exposing the employees of CSOs to a diminishment or complete loss of income, and the beneficiaries to deprivation of support and services provided by CSOs. Moreover, the Civil Society Organizations cannot work properly even in awareness raising activities, such as the informative messages to the more remote communities and for most vulnerable categories in SEE countries about how to avoid the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

When we have asked if the demand for services and information to the CSOs has decreased or increased during the pandemic, we have found different scenarios.

TABLE 18 - Demand for services and information to the CSOs has decreased or increased? per Country

| COUNTRY | DECREASE SIGNIFICANTLY | DECREASE SLIGHTLY | INCREASE SLIGHTLY | INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY | NO CHANGE |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| ALBANIA | 20,34% | 20,34% | 13,56% | 13,56% | 32,30% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 44,83% | 12,07% | 13,79% | 15,52% | 13,79% |
| KOSOVO* | 36,00% | 32,00% | 4,00% | 8,00% | 20,00% |
| MONTENEGRO | 38,46% | 19,23% | 21,15% | 9,62% | 11,54% |
| SERBIA | 16,67% | 11,11% | 42,59% | 12,96% | 16,67% |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GRE, N.MKD) | 39,29% | 17,86% | 10,71% | 14,29% | 17,86% |
| TOTAL | 31.95% | 16.17% | 13.16% | 19.55% | 19.17% |

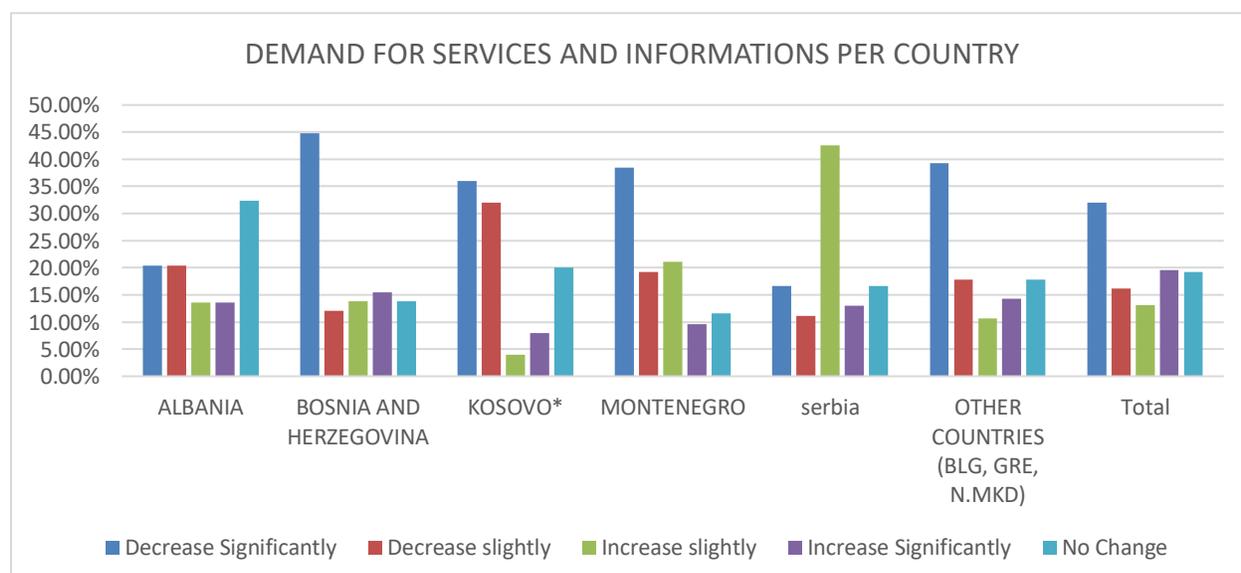
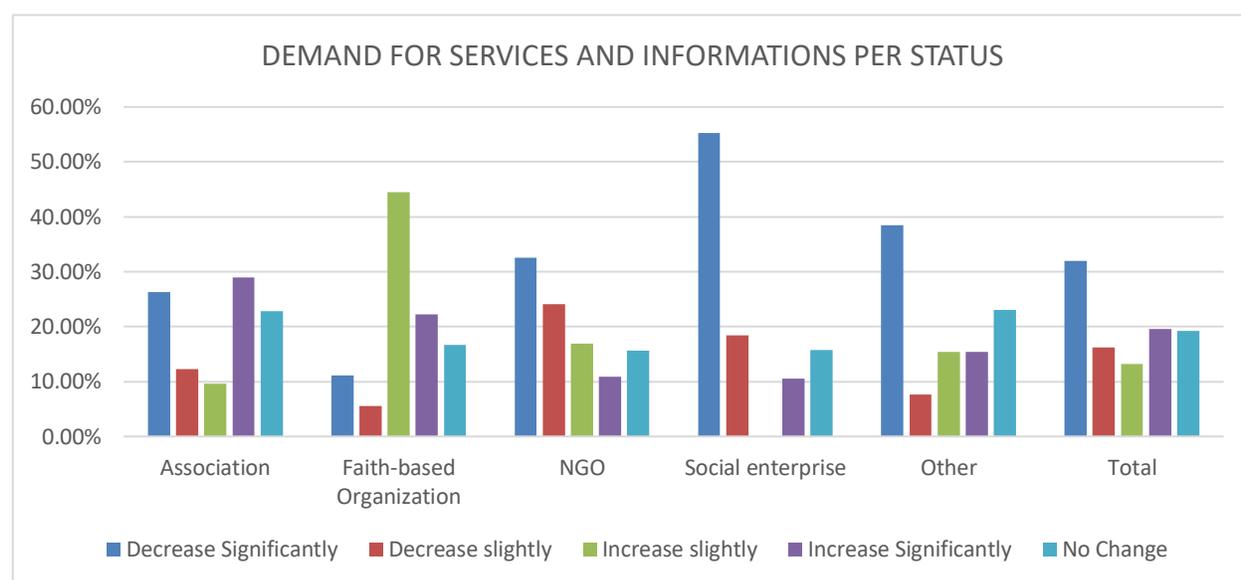


TABLE 19 - Demand for services and information to the CSOs has decreased or increased? per Status

| STATUS | DECREASE SIGNIFICANTLY | DECREASE SLIGHTLY | INCREASE SLIGHTLY | INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY | NO CHANGE |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| ASSOCIATION | 26.32% | 12.28% | 9.65% | 28.95% | 22.81% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 11.11% | 5.56% | 44.44% | 22.22% | 16.67% |
| NGO | 32.53% | 24.10% | 16.87% | 10.84% | 15.66% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 55.26% | 18.42% | 0.00% | 10.53% | 15.79% |
| OTHER | 38.46% | 7.69% | 15.38% | 15.38% | 23.08% |
| TOTAL | 31.95% | 16.17% | 13.16% | 19.55% | 19.17% |



The involvement of Civil Society Organizations in building resilient communities during COVID-19 has been more important than ever. The wider society has been called for a greater civil engagement, but the majority of the COVID-19 preventive measures have been imposed by the Governments. The key element is then building the resilience of the communities, with or without COVID-19, and in order to achieve that, every State needs to provide the CSOs with their legitimate space and let them do their part.

Health, social and economic impact on the communities in South East Europe

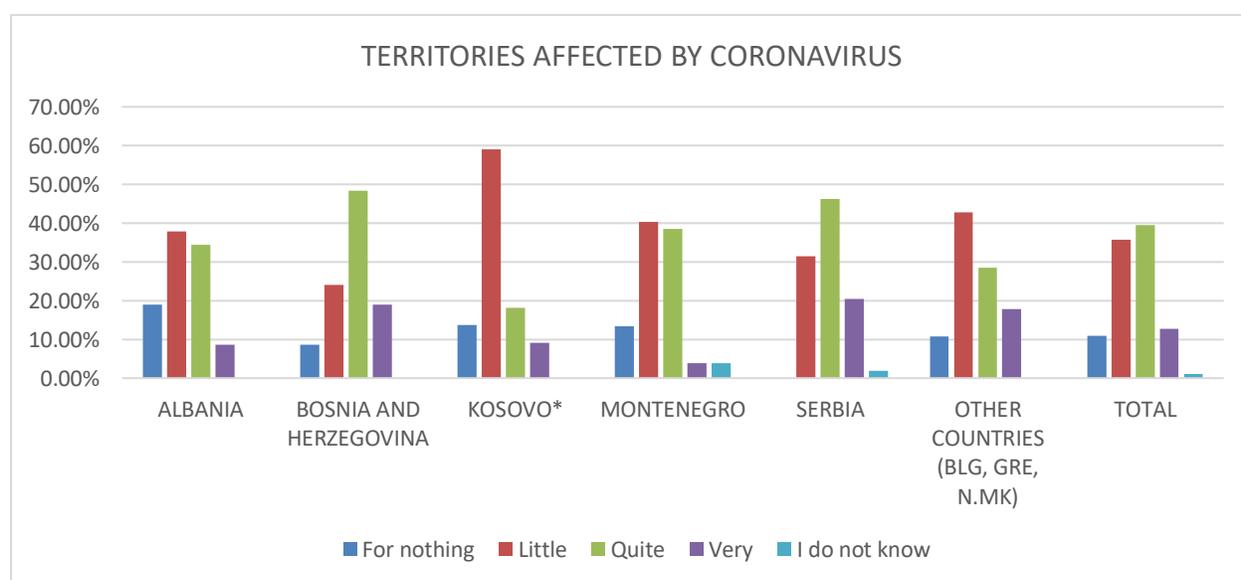
The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has been first a health and sanitarian crisis, affecting with different degrees the countries in South East Europe. As in the majority of the countries worldwide, since early March 2020 the Governments of the region put in place strong preventive measures, in order to reduce the social connections and consequently the spread of the virus. Schools and workplaces have been closed, people were forced to stay as much as possible in

their own houses, transports between and within the countries have been stopped. The lockdown lasted 2-3 months in all the countries, and even if the measures have now been scaled down, there are still large limitations in travelling and gathering.

The CSOs have described the health and sanitarian crisis in their territories as intense: around 40% of them stated the COVID-19 affected ‘quite a lot’ the community, and another 12.8% stated that the impact was heavy.

Table 20 – How much was your territory affected by Coronavirus?

| Country | For nothing | Little | Quite | Very | I do not know |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| ALBANIA | 18.97% | 37.93% | 34.48% | 8.62% | 0.00% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 8.62% | 24.14% | 48.28% | 18.97% | 0.00% |
| KOSOVO* | 13.64% | 59.09% | 18.18% | 9.09% | 0.00% |
| MONTENEGRO | 13.46% | 40.38% | 38.46% | 3.85% | 3.85% |
| SERBIA | 0.00% | 31.48% | 46.30% | 20.37% | 1.85% |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GRE, N.MK) | 10.71% | 42.86% | 28.57% | 17.86% | 0.00% |
| TOTAL | 10.90% | 35.71% | 39.47% | 12.78% | 1.13% |



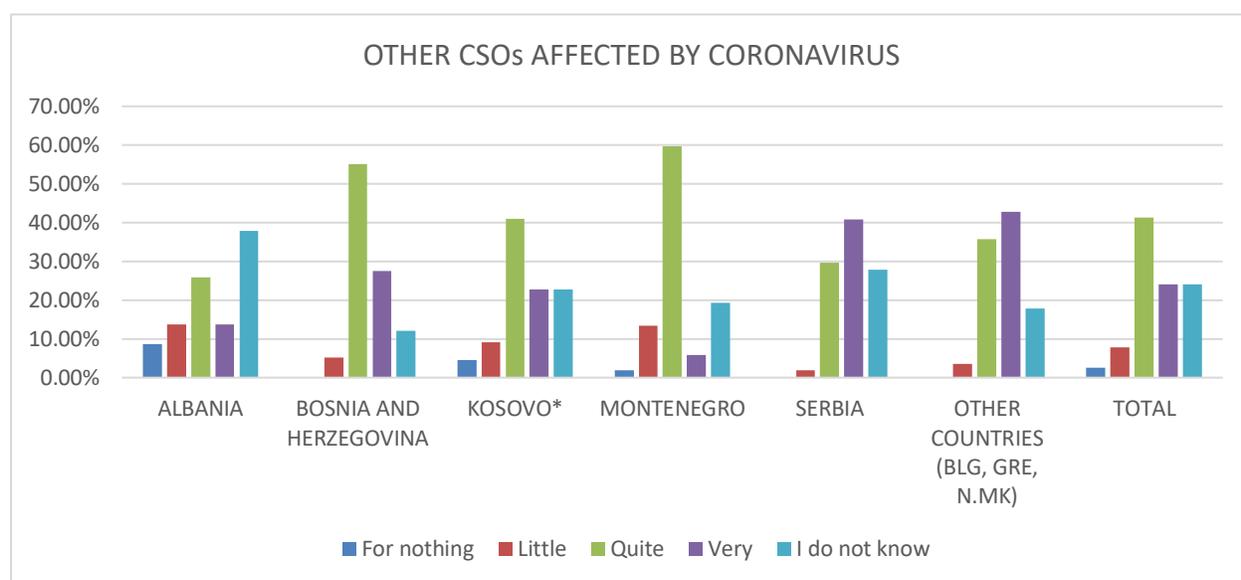
As well as in the rest of the world, the lockdown measures provoked an immediate social and economic crisis all over the South East Europe region. Though the effects of this crisis are already evident, there are realistic estimations of an even larger and deeper impact on the long-term: the economic and social systems in South East Europe are going to face a very problematic period in the following months, maybe years.

The social and economic effects of the lockdown on the same CSOs are having an even stronger and deeper impact than the health consequences: an average of 2 out of 3 CSOs (65,4%) have stated that the civil societies in their communities have been ‘quite’ or ‘very’ affected by the social and economic consequences.

It is also to be noticed that very rarely (only 2.63% of the cases) the CSOs stated that the lockdown did not have an impact at all in their communities: it means that the COVID-19 crisis hit almost all the communities in South East Europe, even if with different degrees.

TABLE 21 - How much were other CSOs of your territory affected by Coronavirus?

| Country | For nothing | Little | Quite | Very | I do not know |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| ALBANIA | 8.62% | 13.79% | 25.86% | 13.79% | 37.93% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 0.00% | 5.17% | 55.17% | 27.59% | 12.07% |
| KOSOVO* | 4.55% | 9.09% | 40.91% | 22.73% | 22.73% |
| MONTENEGRO | 1.92% | 13.46% | 59.62% | 5.77% | 19.23% |
| SERBIA | 0.00% | 1.85% | 29.63% | 40.74% | 27.78% |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GRE, N.MK) | 0.00% | 3.57% | 35.71% | 42.86% | 17.86% |
| TOTAL | 2.63% | 7.89% | 41.35% | 24.06% | 24.06% |



The people most affected by the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis are the already vulnerable persons: the ones who were already facing poverty, social exclusion and discrimination are the ones that are suffering the most the long isolation provoked by the lockdown. The 39,8% of the CSOs in South East Europe clearly noticed an increase of request of support especially from those vulnerable people during these last months.

TABLE 22 - Have you seen any change in demand for your organization's services? per Country

| Country | Demand has decreased | Demand is the same | Increase of the requests by the general public | Increase of the requests by vulnerable populations |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--|--|
| ALBANIA | 10.34% | 43.10% | 10.34% | 36.21% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 39.66% | 18.97% | 5.17% | 36.21% |
| KOSOVO* | 18.18% | 31.82% | 0.00% | 50.00% |
| MONTENEGRO | 40.38% | 15.38% | 3.85% | 40.38% |
| SERBIA | 27.78% | 16.67% | 12.96% | 42.59% |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GRE, N.MK) | 28.57% | 21.43% | 10.71% | 39.29% |
| TOTAL | 28.57% | 24.44% | 7.14% | 39.85% |

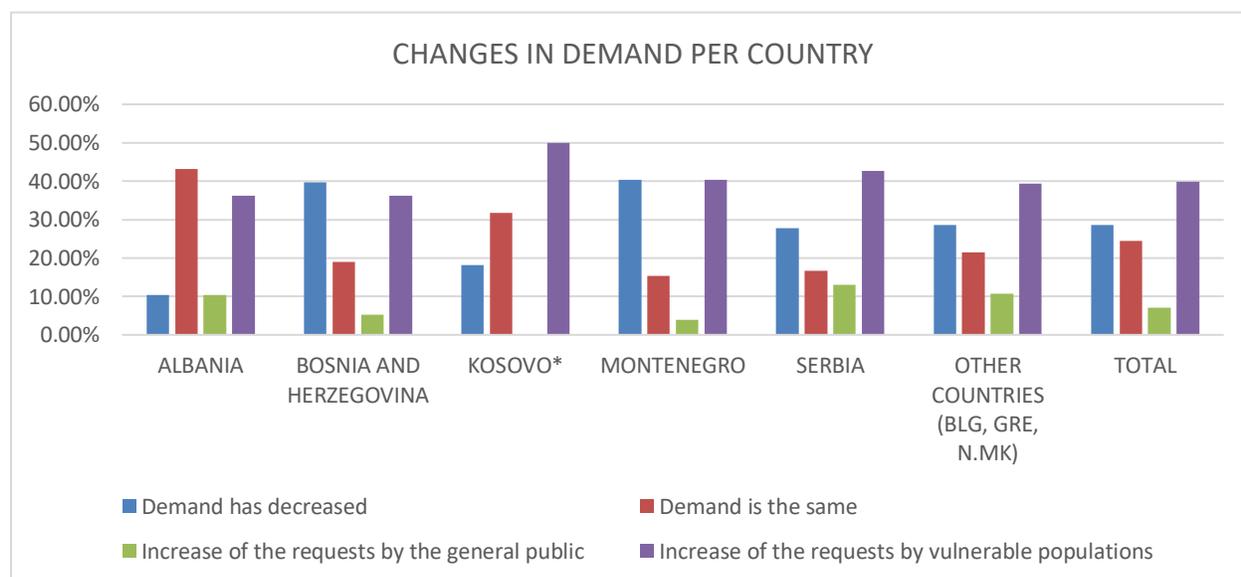
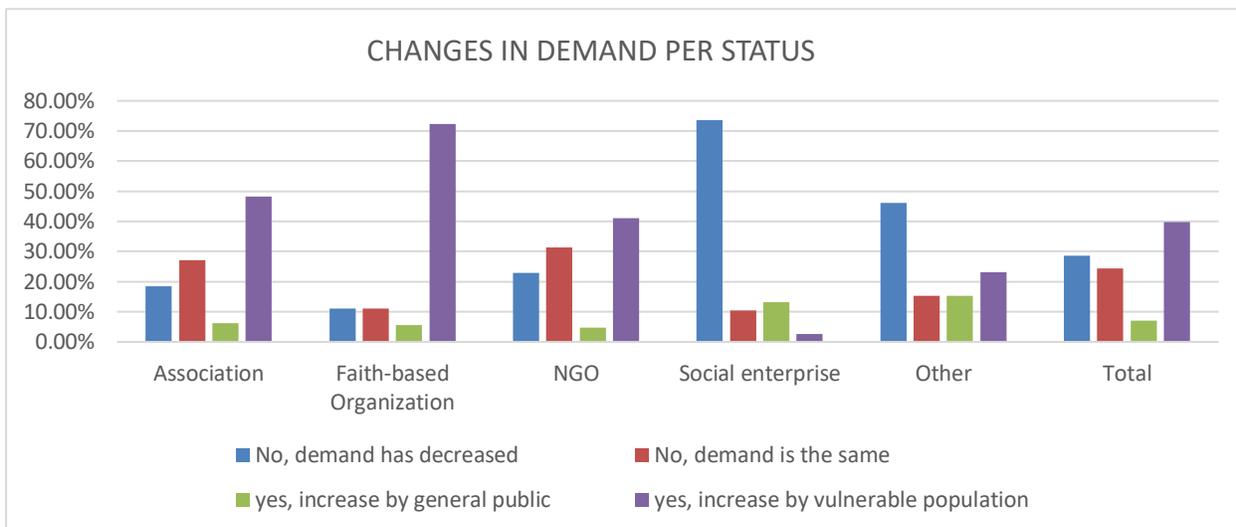


TABLE 23 – Have you seen any change in demand for your organization's services? per Status

| STATUS | NO, DEMAND HAS DECREASED | NO, DEMAND IS THE SAME | YES, INCREASE BY GENERAL PUBLIC | YES, INCREASE BY VULNERABLE POPULATION |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| ASSOCIATION | 18.42% | 27.19% | 6.14% | 48.25% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 11.11% | 11.11% | 5.56% | 72.22% |
| NGO | 22.89% | 31.33% | 4.82% | 40.96% |

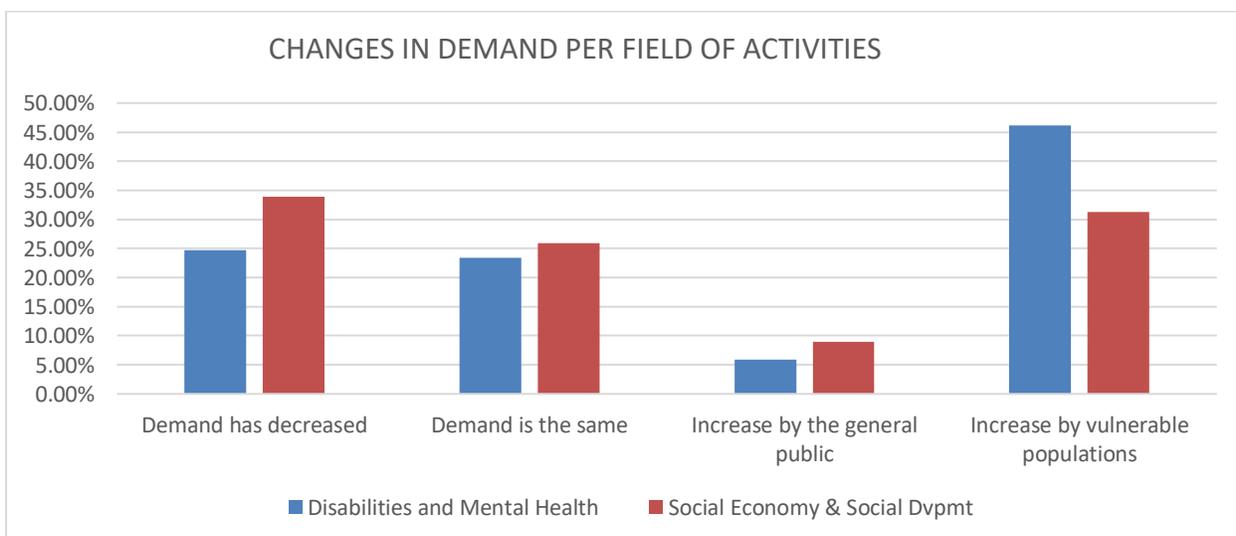
| | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 73.68% | 10.53% | 13.16% | 2.63% |
| OTHER | 46.15% | 15.38% | 15.38% | 23.08% |
| TOTAL | 28.57% | 24.44% | 7.14% | 39.85% |



In particular, among the vulnerable people, persons with disabilities and with mental health problems are suffering more than others. In fact, the CSOs dealing with Disabilities and Mental Health noticed an increase of request from their beneficiaries in the 46,1% of the cases - much higher than the requests from the beneficiaries of the CSOs dealing with other topics (31,2%).

TABLE 24 - Have you seen any change in demand for your organization's services? per Field of activities

| Field of action of the CSOs | Demand has decreased | Demand is the same | Increase by the general public | Increase by vulnerable populations |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Disabilities and Mental Health | 24.68% | 23.38% | 5.84% | 46.10% |
| Social Economy & Social Dvpmt | 33.93% | 25.89% | 8.93% | 31.25% |



The CSOs in South East Europe played an important role in mitigating and reducing the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis in their communities. Moreover, civil society proves to be highly valuable in the process of monitoring and reporting on actions at the local level, as well as community education. Influencing the delivery space within the government is highly relevant in this situation, in addition to raising the profile of sensitive issues affecting equity, inclusion and citizen participation. During the lockdown period, CSOs tried to remain active and to offer services and support as much as possible. The support was targeting not only their usual beneficiaries or users, as very often the CSOs were engaged in larger community support actions.

A total number of 144 CSOs (around 60% of the total) concretely offered support and organized actions, in particular: donations of food to vulnerable people; distribution of health items (masks, disinfectants); psychological support to isolated people (especially with phone calls or online methods); information sharing to beneficiaries and people in need; activation of volunteers; and, in some cases, even money distribution and financial support.

Here are some answers given by the CSOs:

- *“During the lockdown period, while the whole nation was at a standstill, our help did not stop, but intensified with the distribution of food and hygiene items”* (CSO from Albania)
- *“We made cotton masks for the hemodialysis and nephrology department of the General Hospital in our city. Volunteers and employees made and handed over 350 masks”* (CSO from Serbia)
- *“Despite the situation, our CSO, without receiving any compensation, voluntarily offered some of the basic services for its beneficiaries. This was done by providing services with auxiliary equipment - wheelchairs, stretchers, sanitary and hygienic equipment and material donated by people of benevolence”* (CSO from Kosovo*)
- *“We have donated 100 kg of our homemade products to households in need”* (CSO from Serbia)
- *“I have hired community residents to perform various services on my farm, serving as support for them at this difficult time”* (CSO from Albania)
- *“Our volunteers regularly visited the beneficiaries who were most affected by this emergency situation, mostly the elderly, the disabled, people with mental and intellectual disabilities. They helped with humanitarian aid, food delivery from the national kitchen for the most endangered, etc.”* (CSO from Serbia)

Another interesting support offered by the CSOs is the peer-to-peer support (to other CSOs in need) during the crisis. A total number of 96 CSOs in the Region has been supportive to their peers:

- through the donation of different items: *“At the beginning of the pandemic, we provided protective equipment to other organizations”* (CSO from Serbia), *“We donated computer equipment, masks, gloves etc.”* (CSO from BIH), *“We distributed for free protective masks to organizations, persons with disabilities and representatives of relevant institutions and CSOs”* (CSO from Serbia);
- through the offer of services at a very low price: *“We made discounts for services up to 50%”* (CSO from Montenegro), *“If they needed to rent a cleaning machine, with support with extremely low prices”* (CSO from BIH);
- through the expertise sharing with other CSOs: *“We donated our expertise; it does not require financial costs and additional burden on the technical resources of the organization”* (CSO from Serbia). *“Our organization provided legal advice and volunteer assistance in organizing project activities”* (CSO from Montenegro). *“We’re trying to help in project writing in order to find financial support”* (CSO from Albania). *“We provide advice and dissemination of information to all social enterprises with which we are in contact”* (CSO from Serbia). *“Our organization engaged in interpretation service provision, by collaborating with other NGOs”* (CSO from Albania).

Finally, the CSOs have been engaged in the support to their beneficiaries. During the COVID-19 crisis, there was an increase in the number of beneficiaries: 85% of the CSOs stated that they were serving a larger number of beneficiaries than usual. Moreover, there was also a qualitative change in the demand: the beneficiaries were experimenting new needs and new forms of poverty created by the COVID-19 crisis, and the CSOs tried to face also these different needs. The 45,5% of the CSOs stated that they were able to face this new demand.

TABLE 25 - If you have seen an increased demand, do you feel able to meet the demand? Per country

| COUNTRY | NO | YES |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| ALBANIA | 55.56% | 44.44% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 58.33% | 41.67% |
| KOSOVO** | 81.82% | 18.18% |
| MONTENEGRO | 43.48% | 56.52% |
| SERBIA | 46.67% | 53.33% |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GRE, N.MK) | 71.43% | 28.57% |
| TOTAL | 54.50% | 45.50% |

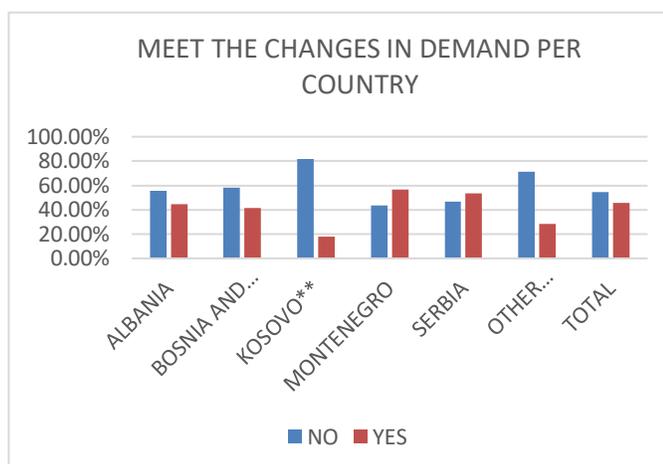
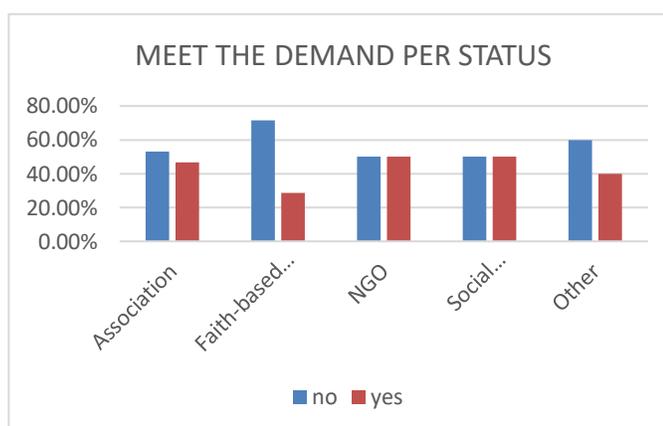


TABLE 26 - If you have seen an increased demand, do you feel able to meet the demand? Per Status

| STATUS | NO | YES |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|
| ASSOCIATION | 53.23% | 46.77% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 71.43% | 28.57% |
| NGO | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| OTHER | 60.00% | 40.00% |

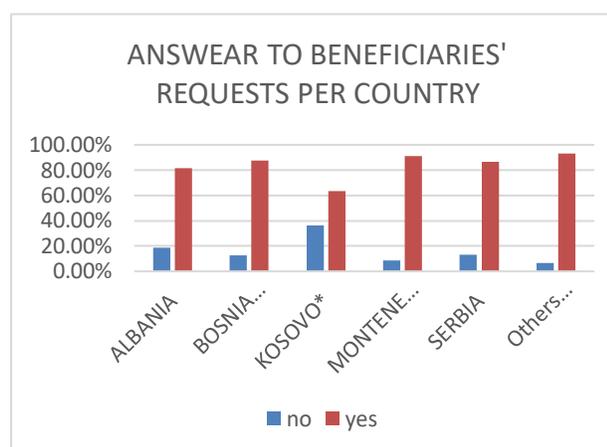


Based on the status of the CSOs interviewed, we can see how the Faith-based organizations are the ones that are most in difficulty in responding to new requests (71,4%). This is due to their activity in favor of many categories of vulnerable people and the huge explosion in demand. As a Faith-based Organization from Albania stated: *“During the lockdown, while the whole nation was at a standstill, our help did not stop, but intensified with the distribution of food and hygiene items”*.

CSOs received in general several, new requests; and the 45,5% of them were able to respond to these new requests. This type of response must certainly be compared with the economic possibilities that CSOs had during this pandemic. This must also be compared with requests from new beneficiaries who turned to these organizations during this COVID-19 emergency.

TABLE 27 – Was your CSOs able to answer to the new beneficiaries' requests? per Country

| COUNTRY | NO | YES |
|------------------------|--------|--------|
| ALBANIA | 18.52% | 81.48% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 12.50% | 87.50% |
| KOSOVO* | 36.36% | 63.64% |
| MONTENEGRO | 8.70% | 91.30% |
| SERBIA | 13.33% | 86.67% |
| OTHERS (BLG, GR, N.MK) | 6.67% | 93.33% |

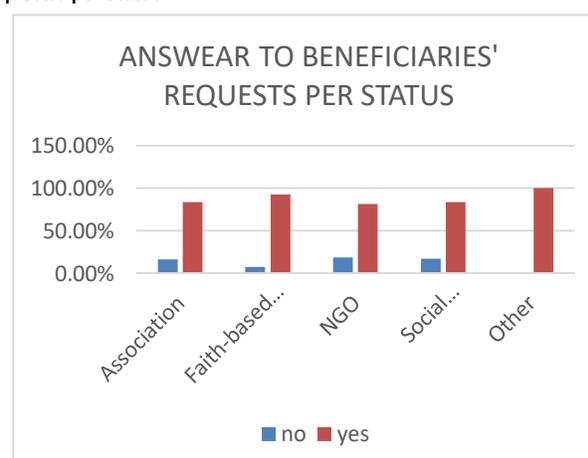


In general, the CSOs of the SEE countries have not been able to satisfy new requests from new beneficiaries. There are many elements to consider:

- 1) strong growth of the demand;
- 2) the structure of the CSOs themselves, which are mainly grass-root associations;
- 3) the blocking of funding by authorities and especially by donors;
- 4) the lockdown and containment measures implemented by local governments and authorities;
- 5) the difficulties of re-organizing their services and the impossibility of reaching the workplace and the different areas where beneficiaries live.

TABLE 28 - Was your CSOs able to answer to the new beneficiaries' requests? per Status

| STATUS | NO | YES |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|
| ASSOCIATION | 16.13% | 83.87% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 7.14% | 92.86% |
| NGO | 18.42% | 81.58% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 16.67% | 83.33% |
| OTHER | 0.00% | 100.00% |



A CSO from Serbia told us: *“We are very worried about our beneficiary families (families with a member with a disability) who are always living a kind of quarantine. They are living now*

double quarantine and the anxiety is growing. We thought that support them would be necessary. The support that is given to any CSO should be personalized and with long term consequences”.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN SEE COUNTRIES

Ettore Fusaro

Scientific coordinator and Senior Expert for South East Europe, Consorzio Communitas Milano, Italy.

“We really need help to pay the salaries of our employees and continue to guarantee the services we offer with health care. Following COVID-19 many specialists (coming also from abroad) had to give up their services at our facility and in those ones in our area, cancelling their commitment for the year 2020. This will have further and considerable repercussions on our support and aid activities. We risk, within a few months, to close our facilities or to reduce access to our services to very few” (CSO from Albania)

By studying and carefully reading the data emerged from the questionnaires, at least a third of CSOs is facing a great risk of closing in the short term or to face during the next months a deep financial crisis: 31,5% of the CSOs interviewed estimated a yearly balance reduction up of 50%, and among 47% of them are social enterprises.

Mr. Marko Djelovic, director of Caritas Montenegro and manager for Monitoring of Sub-granted CSOs in the project SOCIETIES 2, stated: *“The new situation with COVID-19 emergencies affected mainly negatively CSOs and social enterprises in the area. The main challenges CSOs are facing are planning and working in crisis, performing core services, and financial costs (expenses for staff, rents and running costs). NGOs feel pressure from beneficiaries from vulnerable groups, many of whom are new ones. Only about 50% of organizations feel capable of responding to these new demands. The local Government, with its three sets of measures to help recover from the pandemic, did not envisage support for NGOs”.*

And he added: *“Actions to be taken in favor of CSOs are in the domain of capacity building (such as planning in crises situations, development of sustainable social services...) and financial support through grants (staff costs, running costs, funds for services, connection with potential funders). Actions to be taken in favor of authorities should be: Advocacy activities - provide the same rights for workers employed in NGOs as for other sectors, faster decision-making on ongoing tenders of Ministries for NGO projects, introduce operational grants for NGOs, involving representatives of human rights NGOs in the work of the National Coordination Body for Monitoring the Consequences of the Pandemic”.*

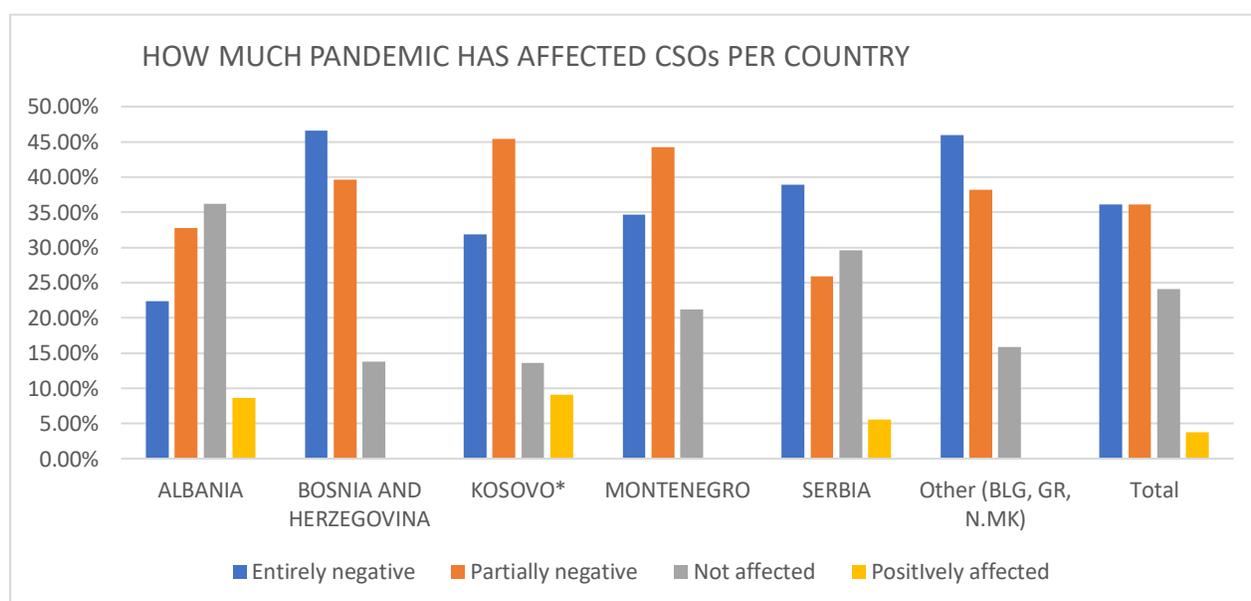
The 266 CSOs mapped, their workers and communities are being heavily impacted by the COVID-19. Most of the projects are shelved or postponed, no one of those categories have been included in financial support measures, and the strong limitation of movement stuck the markets and the services promoted. The economic impact of the pandemic is the visible and requires immediate and rapid responses.

The entire world is facing a global challenge, as all societal and economic processes are undergoing deep changes. Looking for new operational formats has become an urgent task for the civil society sector: the coronavirus pandemic may cause unpredictable consequences for many non-profits, endangering the lives and well-being of thousands of people in the region.

A first clear picture emerges: among the CSOs in SEE countries, 36,1% of them had a ‘partially negative’ economic impact and another 36,1% ‘entirely negative’. It means that in total, out of 266 civil society organizations, the 72,2% had negative economic impact from the pandemic.

TABLE 29 – How much was your CSOs affected by the pandemic in terms of income? per Country

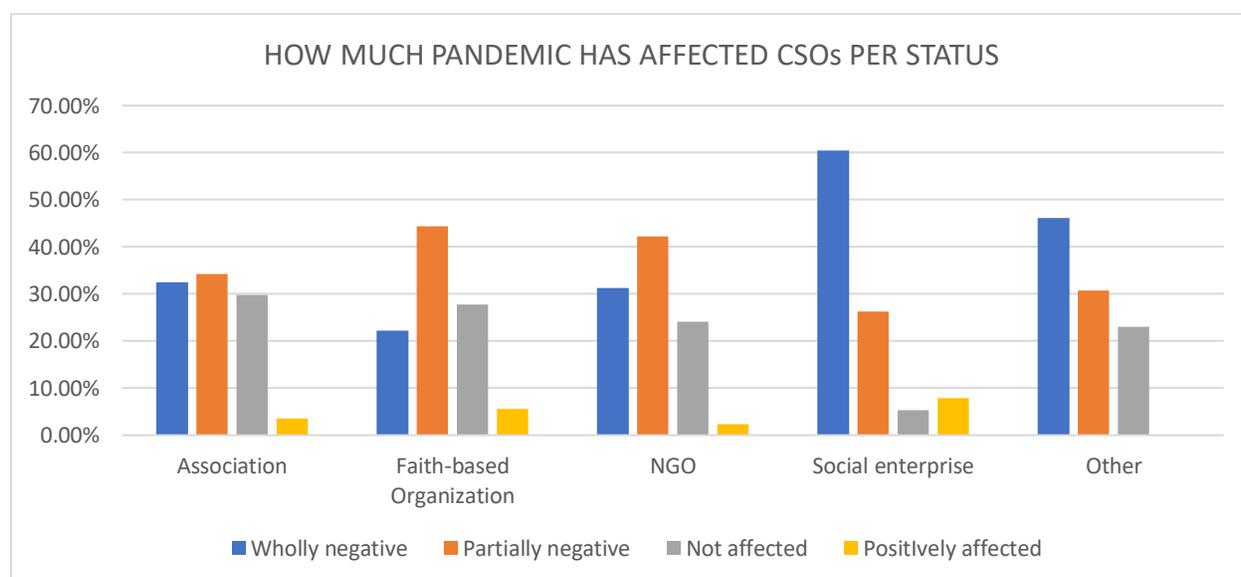
| COUNTRY | ENTIRELY NEGATIVE | PARTIALLY NEGATIVE | NOT AFFECTED | POSITIVELY AFFECTED |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| ALBANIA | 22.41% | 32.76% | 36.21% | 8.62% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 46.55% | 39.66% | 13.79% | 0.00% |
| KOSOVO* | 31.82% | 45.45% | 13.64% | 9.09% |
| MONTENEGRO | 34.62% | 44.23% | 21.15% | 0.00% |
| SERBIA | 38.89% | 25.93% | 29.63% | 5.56% |
| OTHER (BLG, GR, N.MK) | 45.96% | 38.22% | 15.82% | 0.00% |
| TOTAL | 36.09% | 36.09% | 24.06% | 3.76% |



A CSO from Bosnia and Herzegovina stated: *“I think that we should act as urgently as possible to provide financial support to the Associations, because most of them will probably be shut down because of the inability to provide the basic means for the work of the Association”.*

TABLE 30 - How much was your CSOs affected by the pandemic in terms of income? per Status

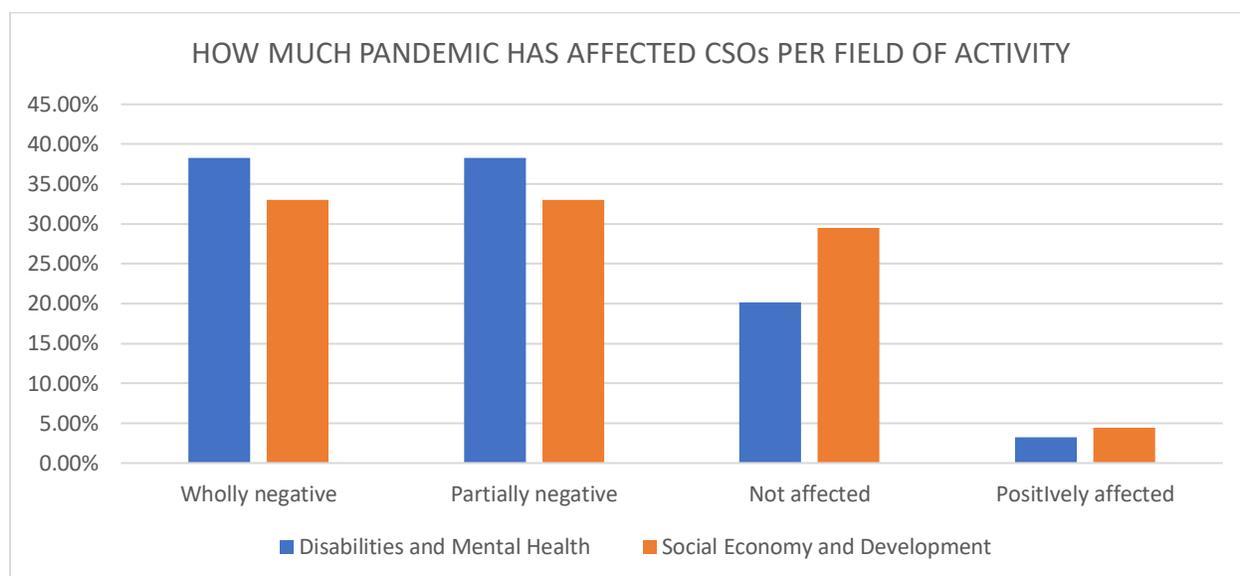
| STATUS | WHOLLY NEGATIVE | PARTIALLY NEGATIVE | NOT AFFECTED | POSITIVELY AFFECTED |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 32.46% | 34.21% | 29.82% | 3.51% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 22.22% | 44.44% | 27.78% | 5.56% |
| NGO | 31.33% | 42.17% | 24.10% | 2.41% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 60.53% | 26.32% | 5.26% | 7.89% |
| OTHER | 46.15% | 30.77% | 23.08% | 0.00% |



Among the various types of CSOs, those that have had the heaviest economic impact since the COVID-19 outbreak were social enterprises (for further details see the Social Economy impact paragraph). Anyway, all the other types of organizations have a negative economic impact that goes over 60%.

TABLE 31 - How much was your CSOs affected by the pandemic in terms of income? per Field of activities

| FIELD OF ACTIVITY | WHOLLY NEGATIVE | PARTIALLY NEGATIVE | NOT AFFECTED | POSITIVELY AFFECTED |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| DISABILITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH | 38.31% | 38.31% | 20.13% | 3.25% |
| SOCIAL ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT | 33.04% | 33.04% | 29.46% | 4.46% |

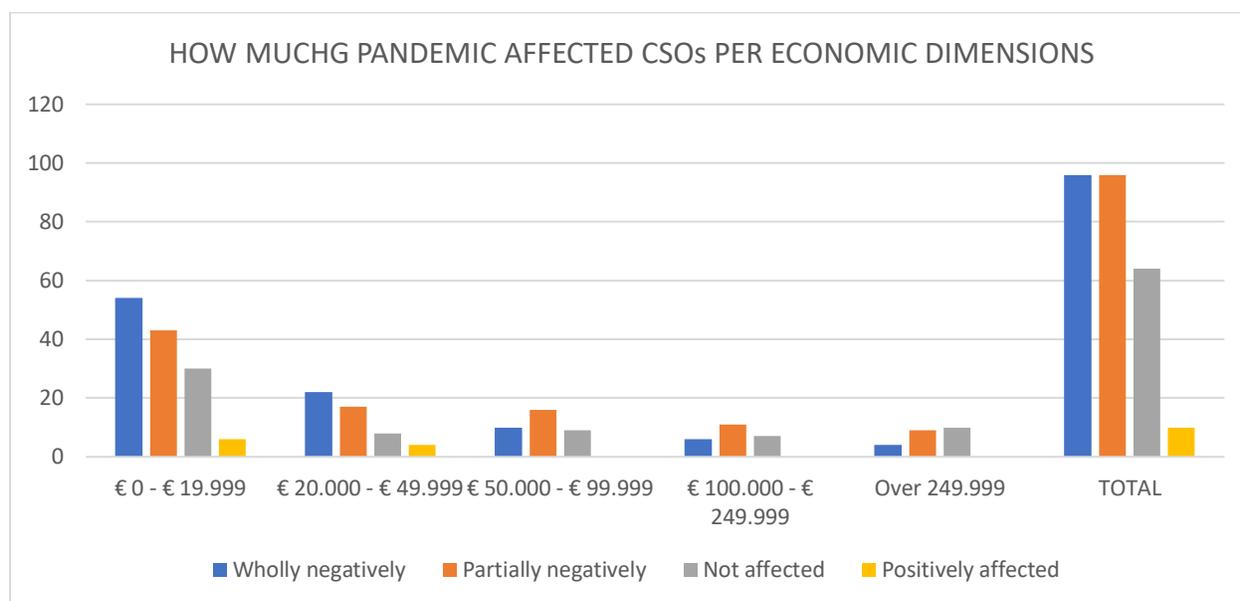


If we analyze the data based on the field of activity of the CSOs, we can see how the CSOs operating with PWDs are suffering more than others: the 76,6% of them had partially negative or wholly negative impact.

An NGO from Kosovo*, operating in the field of disability, stated: *“Our organization is an NGO and its functioning is based only on projects and grants from the local government. Our request is that the Municipality announces as soon as possible the support to NGOs so that we can continue to provide our social services”*.

TABLE 32 - How much was your CSOs affected by the pandemic in terms of income? per economic dimension of the CSOs

| ANNUAL BALANCE | WHOLLY NEGATIVELY | PARTIALLY NEGATIVELY | NOT AFFECTED | POSITIVELY AFFECTED |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 54 | 43 | 30 | 6 |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 22 | 17 | 8 | 4 |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 10 | 16 | 9 | 0 |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 0 |
| OVER 249.999 | 4 | 9 | 10 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 96 | 96 | 64 | 10 |

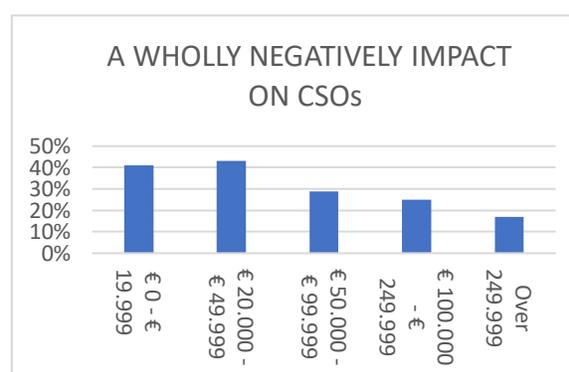


Reading the last 3 tables, it is clear that:

- 1 out of 4 CSOs was not having any economic impact since the pandemic started. The majority of them are small associations and in many cases are led and guided only by volunteers;
- less than 5% of CSOs had a positive impact on balance sheets. Generally, they are small CSOs that were able to diversify their services;
- all the CSOs with a small-sized to medium-sized turnover (up to € 100.000 per year) had a negative economic impact estimated in over 75%;
- CSOs with an annual turnover up to € 250.000 were affected in 71% of the cases;
- the biggest NGOs, Faith-Based organizations and CSOs with a very large turnover seem to have suffered the less from the negative economic impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic (57%).

Table 33 – “Wholly negative” impact on incomes per economic dimension of CSOs

| ANNUAL BALANCE | WHOLLY NEGATIVELY |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 41% |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 43% |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 29% |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 25% |
| OVER 249.999 | 17% |

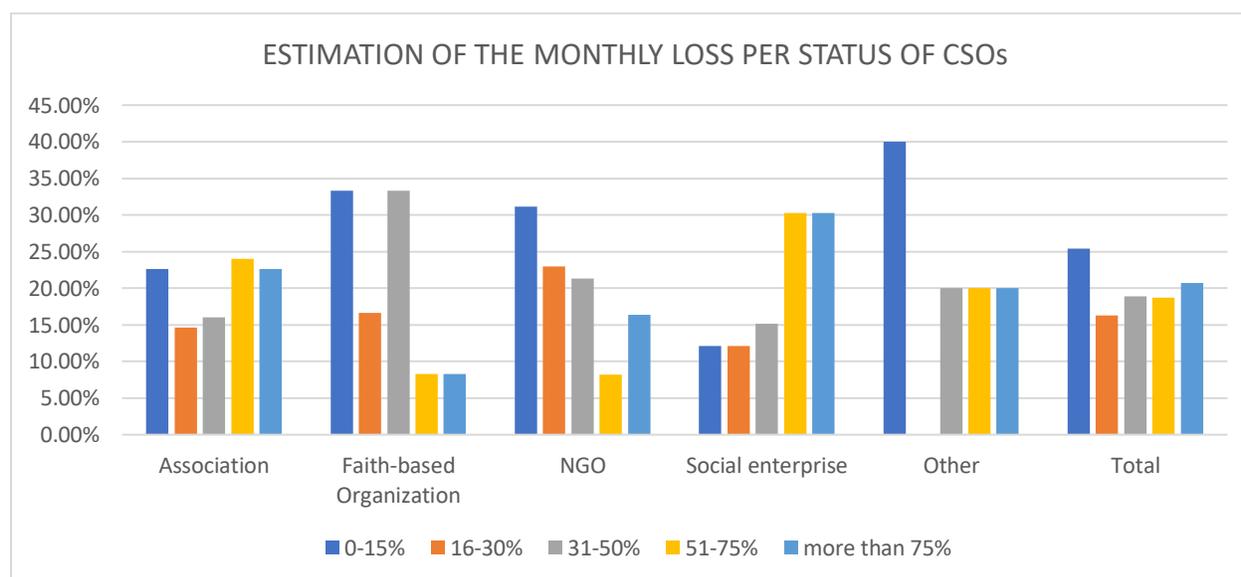


Analyzing the CSOs answering ‘Wholly negative impact’ on their incomes (table 33), we see how the percentage of economic impact decreases with the growth of the economic dimension of the organizations themselves. We can state, in brief, that the largest organizations had more resources to deal with the economic impact of the pandemic.

It should be noted that even among the 10 partners of the SOCIETIES 2 project, 7 of them had no negative impact while 3 of them stated a partially negative economic impact.

TABLE 34 – Estimation of the monthly loss, per Status

| STATUS | 0-15% | 16-30% | 31-50% | 51-75% | MORE THAN 75% |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 22.67% | 14.67% | 16.00% | 24.00% | 22.67% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 33.33% | 16.67% | 33.33% | 8.33% | 8.33% |
| NGO | 31.15% | 22.95% | 21.31% | 8.20% | 16.39% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 12.12% | 12.12% | 15.15% | 30.30% | 30.30% |
| OTHER | 40.00% | 0.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% | 20.00% |
| TOTAL | 25.38% | 16.31% | 18.90% | 18.71% | 20.70% |



Going deeper into the economic impact dimension on CSOs, we see how the monthly impact during these first period of the pandemic is particularly high for social enterprises: 60% of them report losses between 50% and 100% per month.

Even among the Associations, in the 24% of the cases, there is an overall reduction in monthly revenues between 51 and 75%. Another 22,7% of them estimated monthly reductions of over 75%, it means that almost half of the Associations are having very serious losses.

TABLE 35 - Estimation of the monthly loss, per year of foundation

| LOSS PER MONTH | YEAR OF FOUNDATION | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
| | Less than 1 year | 1-2 years | 3-4 years | 5-7 years | More than 7 years |
| 0-15% | 2 | 5 | 8 | 16 | 81 |
| 16-30% | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 25 |
| 31-50% | 1 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 30 |
| 51-75% | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 27 |
| MORE THAN 75% | 0 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 21 |

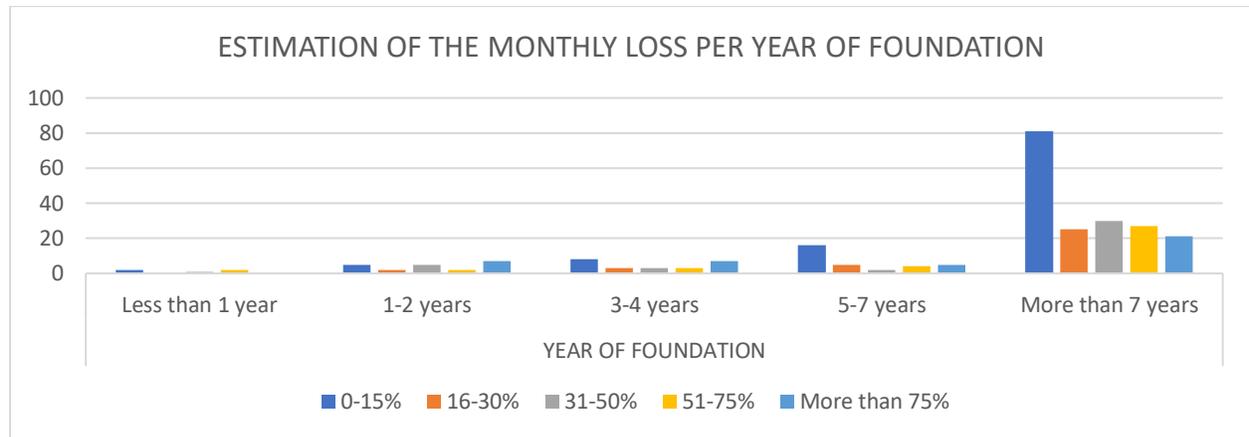
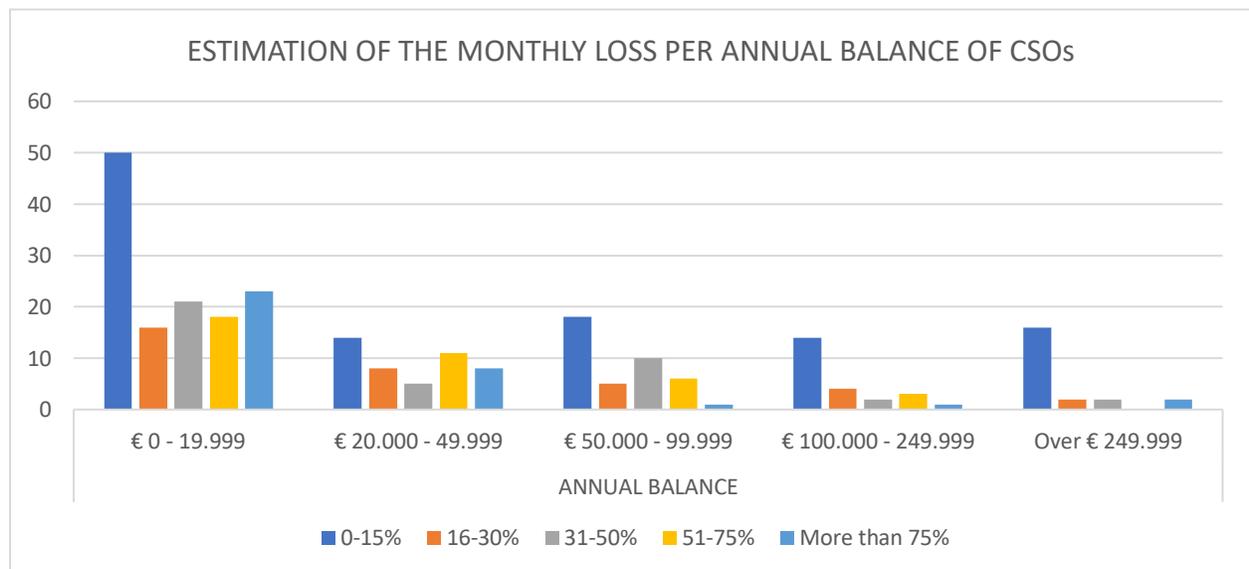


TABLE 36 - Estimation of the monthly loss, per annual balance of the CSOs

| LOSS PER MONTH | ANNUAL BALANCE | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | € 0 - 19.999 | € 20.000 - 49.999 | € 50.000 - 99.999 | € 100.000 - 249.999 | Over € 249.999 |
| 0-15% | 50 | 14 | 18 | 14 | 16 |
| 16-30% | 16 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| 31-50% | 21 | 5 | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| 51-75% | 18 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| MORE THAN 75% | 23 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2 |



Matching these data with the year of foundation of the associations we note that:

- 5 CSOs of those who have suffered **monthly losses between 51 and 75%** are between 1 and 4 years of life; 6 are between 6 and 1 years; and 27 are over 7 years of life;
- 14 CSOs of those who have suffered **monthly losses over 75%** are between 1 and 4 years of life; 12 are between 1 and 6 years; and 21 are over 7 years of life.

A CSO operating in the field of disability from Montenegro stated: *“Any financial support would be welcome, whether it is the employment of persons with disabilities or the increase of the number of support services for persons with disabilities”*.

Another CSO from Montenegro added: *“As long as there is a risk or pandemic, our association cannot continue with the realization of the projects”*.

Furthermore, if we compare this data with the economic dimension (annual balance) of the CSOs we see that:

- 18 CSOs of those who have suffered **monthly losses between 51 and 75%** have an annual turnover up to € 20.000; 11 have it between € 20.000-50.000; 6 have it between € 50.000-100.000; 3 have it between € 100.000-250.000; and none over € 250.000;
- 23 CSOs of those who have suffered **monthly losses over 75%** have an annual turnover up to € 20.000; 8 have it between € 20.000-50.000; 1 have it between € 50.000-100.000; 1 has it between € 100.000-250.000; and 2 over 250.000 euros.

A CSO from Serbia: *“Without basic conditions such as space, ensuring the sustainability of a CSO is very difficult. Users of psychiatric services at the state level do not have a systematically organized plan or psychosocial and economic support when there is no state of emergency and now they are more exposed to mental health problems”*.

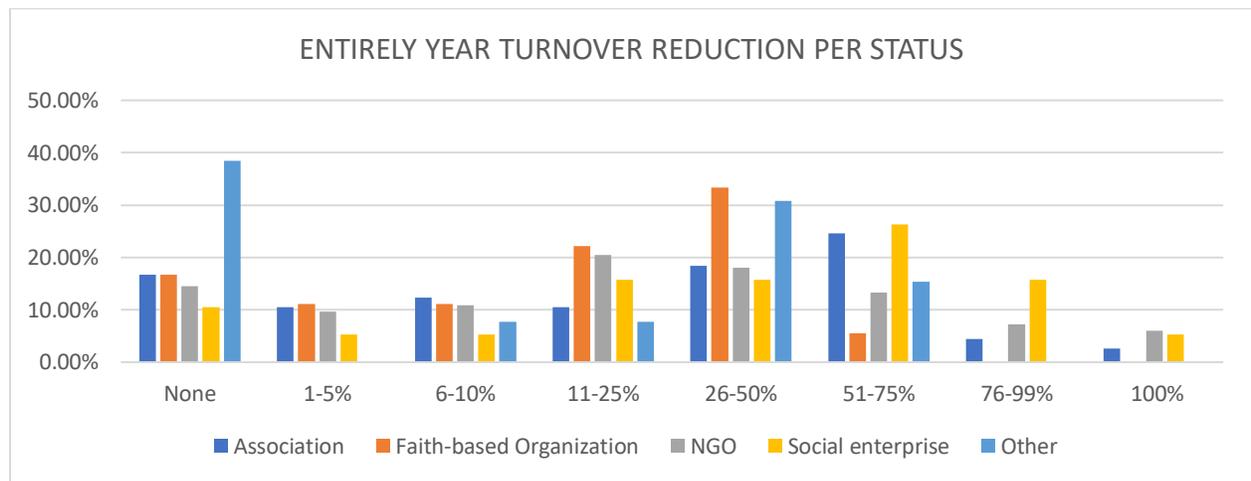
The economic impact in these emergency months, when the COVID-19 pandemic spread in the region, mainly affected small and medium-sized CSOs that have been operating for several years. This profile meets perfectly the main target of the SOCIETIES 2 project: CSOs often led by family members volunteering, having PWDs as primary target beneficiaries, and having been active in local contexts for several years. COVID-19 outbreak has put this type of CSOs into a serious operational, organizational, and economic crisis.

The consequences and risks are especially high for unprotected and under-protected groups: senior citizens, people with disabilities and health conditions, children left without parents,

families with many children, and all those individuals in difficult life situations whom non-profits strive to protect.

TABLE 37 – Estimated yearly turnover reduction, per status

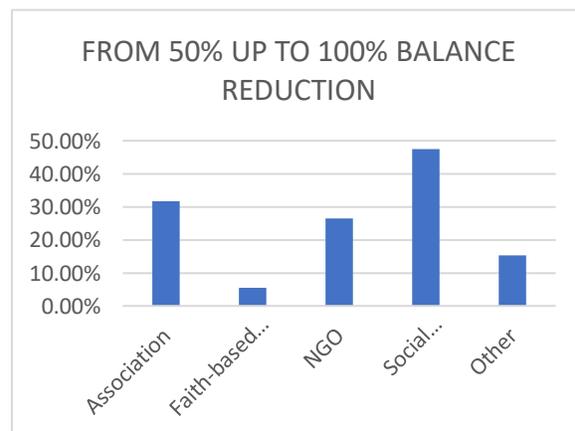
| STATUS | NONE | 1-5% | 6-10% | 11-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | 76-99% | 100% |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| ASSOCIATION | 16.67% | 10.53% | 12.28% | 10.53% | 18.42% | 24.56% | 4.39% | 2.63% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 16.67% | 11.11% | 11.11% | 22.22% | 33.33% | 5.56% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| NGO | 14.46% | 9.64% | 10.84% | 20.48% | 18.07% | 13.25% | 7.23% | 6.02% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 10.53% | 5.26% | 5.26% | 15.79% | 15.79% | 26.32% | 15.79% | 5.26% |
| OTHER | 38.46% | 0.00% | 7.69% | 7.69% | 30.77% | 15.38% | 0.00% | 0.00% |



A Social Enterprise from Greece declares: *“given that the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in Greece are mainly to do with challenges we are facing in terms of financial support, we need funding to help us answer with specific programs / actions to these economic consequences and the new poverty that results from the prolonged imposition of professional / financial activities cessation measures of the population”*.

TABLE 38 - CSOs with estimated yearly turnover reduction from 50-100%

| STATUS | FROM 50% UP TO 100% BALANCE REDUCTION |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 31.58% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 5.56% |
| NGO | 26.51% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 47.37% |
| OTHER | 15.38% |



Most of the civil society organizations foresee a budget reduction from 25% up to 75%.

Social enterprises have encountered the most serious economic difficulties: 60,5% of them declare their income from trading have been affected in a ‘wholly negative’ way.

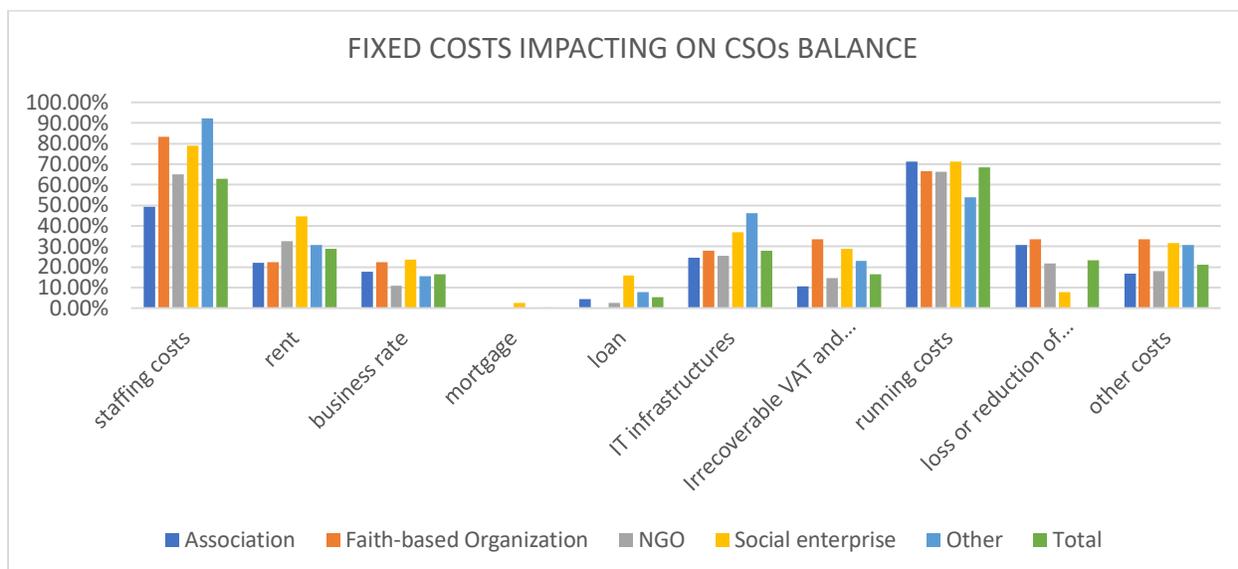
The CSOs operating in the field of Disability have more than 75% ‘negative’ impact on their income from projects and services; while Faith-based organizations seem to be more “resistant” to the economic impact of COVID-19 outbreak in comparison with other categories of CSOs.

Within the target countries of project SOCIETIES, the 46,3% of the CSOs estimates an yearly turnover reduction of more than 50%. Taking into consideration that they are operating in the field of Disability, this reduction will affect the daily life of thousands of beneficiaries.

Among the elements having the greatest impact on costs and on the management of CSOs, there are traditional costs such as: staffing costs (62,7%); running costs (68,4%); rent costs (28,9%). Anyway, even “new” costs emerged, due to the pandemic outbreak and due to the remodeling of services and activities by CSOs: such as IT infrastructures costs (27,8%); costs for the loss or reductions of volunteers input (23,3%).

TABLE 39 - Fixed costs impacting on CSOs balance

| STATUS | STAFFING COSTS | RENT | BUSINESS RATE | MORTGAGE | LOAN | IT INFRASTRUCTURES | IRRECOVERABLE VAT AND TAXATION | RUNNING COSTS | LOSS OR REDUCTION OF VOLUNTEERS INPUT | OTHER COSTS |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 49.12% | 21.93% | 17.54% | 0.00% | 4.39% | 24.56% | 10.53% | 71.05% | 30.70% | 16.67% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 83.33% | 22.22% | 22.22% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 27.78% | 33.33% | 66.67% | 33.33% | 33.33% |
| NGO | 65.06% | 32.53% | 10.84% | 0.00% | 2.41% | 25.30% | 14.46% | 66.27% | 21.69% | 18.07% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 78.95% | 44.74% | 23.68% | 2.63% | 15.79% | 36.84% | 28.95% | 71.05% | 7.89% | 31.58% |
| OTHER | 92.31% | 30.77% | 15.38% | 0.00% | 7.69% | 46.15% | 23.08% | 53.85% | 0.00% | 30.77% |
| TOTAL | 62.78% | 28.95% | 16.54% | 0.38% | 5.26% | 27.82% | 16.54% | 68.42% | 23.31% | 21.05% |



Interviewing Mr. Zlatko Malic (Caritas Bosnia and Herzegovina), regional Officer for Capacity building and training for CSOs of the project SOCIETIES 2, we had a clear picture of the situation about the Human Resources of the CSOs. When asked his opinion about the main consequences for CSOs caused by the COVID-19 emergency, he stated: *“Organizations are facing two key problems: the first and immediate is the lack of financial resources mainly for staff, running costs, services, projects, etc... caused by reduced income from various sources. The second one is the increased number of different requests from their members and beneficiaries, to which they cannot adequately respond due to all restrictive measures, lack of funds and lack of competencies”*.

TABLE 40 - Staff costs problem and Human resources of the CSOs

| | NO OF EMPLOYEES | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| | None | 1-9 | 10-49 | 50-100 | 101-250 |
| NO. OF CSO WITH STAFF COSTS AT RISK | 12 out of 69 | 104 out of 138 | 41 out 48 | 6 out of 6 | 4 out 5 |
| % OF CSO WITH STAFF COSTS AT RISK | 17% | 75% | 85% | 100% | 80% |



If we take into account the CSOs having staffing costs at risk to not be paid, the result is that the 62,8% of the CSOs suffer this kind of trouble. Anyway in reality the percentage is much higher, as in the calculation are included 69 CSOs that has not staff and are operating only with volunteers – so they do not have staff expenses or they have only staff expenses related only to specific consultancies or temporary services.

Both for small and medium-large CSOs dimension, the impact of personnel costs is very high and remains a major concern. The bigger is the CSO, the bigger is the demand for personnel costs coverage risks.

Nevertheless, as described in the previous paragraphs, the CSOs of the region continued to carry out their activities, albeit in a reduced way. In the same way, the CSOs tried to respond to new requests from their beneficiaries, as well as to the additional requests coming from new groups of people in need.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON CSOs ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITIES

Ettore Fusaro

Scientific coordinator and Senior Expert for South East Europe, Consorzio Communitas Milano, Italy.

Two keywords turn out from this Survey: **Time** and **Balance**. It is clear that there is:

- a **Socio-Economic and Financial Time** that requires quick and precise answers to protect the civil society organizations from the danger of financial problems;
- a **Reflective-Social Time** related to the organizational component of the CSOs, that requires patience, mediation, listening, and learning new languages, new relationships, communications, messages, new organizational skills in a medium-long term perspective.

The exercise of balance between these two components of *time* within a *space* (of territories and behaviors) that have been modified by the events of these “strange times”, becomes the work, the *key to read* analysis, and to rebirth, recovery, plan, resilience and change.

CSOs are going to face several challenges affecting both the operational component of their services; the managerial component; and the planning-financial component. The mismanagement of these components by the CSOs can create internal conflicts, general management problems, and leadership issues (at organizational, operational, and financial level). Last but not least, it can lead also to problems on strategic and project planning.

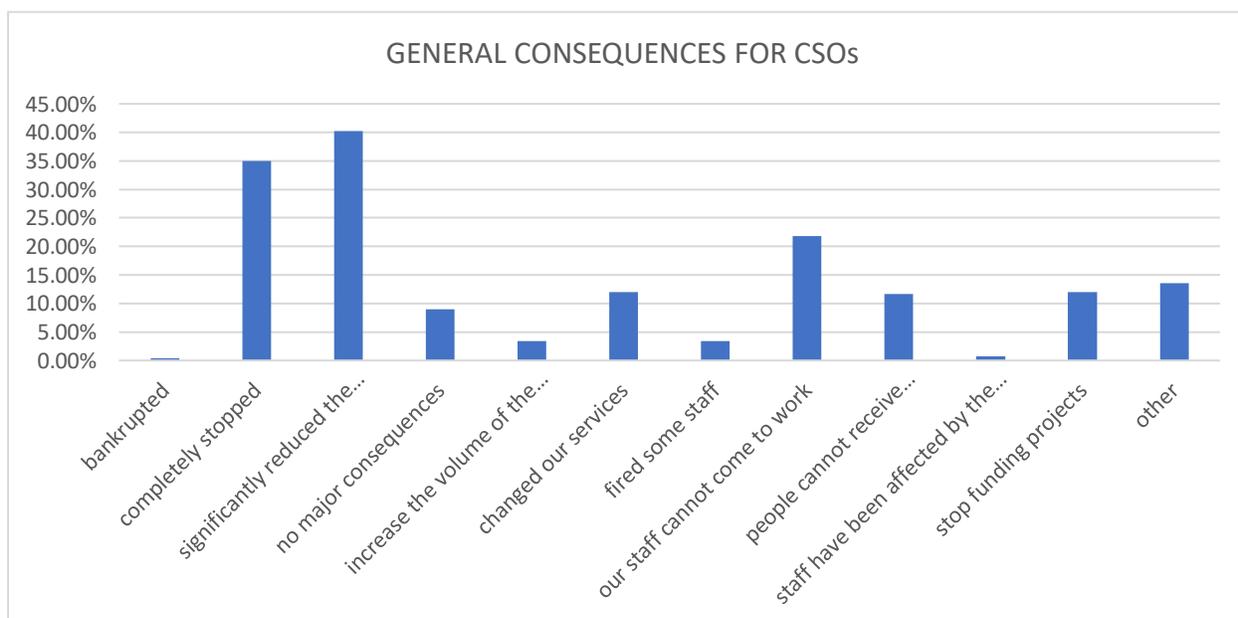
We have already highlighted in the former chapter how many CSOs have completely stopped or completely reduced services and activities. In around 35% of cases, CSOs have completely stopped their services; in 40% of cases, CSOs have significantly reduced their services; in 22% of cases, the staff of CSOs couldn't come to work. In 12% of cases, the stop funding of the projects prevented the CSOs from carrying out the activities; in 11.6% of cases, the beneficiaries of CSO's services could not receive the services.

- *“In one of our projects we had to stop animation services, but in the other hand we added on-line activities such as live-streaming, quiz or educational videos. In other cases, we changed the way of offering services, for example the psychological help is now provided on-line/via mobile services”* (CSO from Albania);

- “Since our members are young people with disabilities and students who need to be constantly animated in order to be more active, our activities now are kept to a minimum, as our ability to meet is completely denied” (CSOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- “Members of our association are involved in the work of the local community office, in providing psycho-social and humanitarian assistance” (CSOs from Serbia);
- “Grant award procedures are more uncertain, there have been changes in activities in line with the situation” (CSO from Kosovo*);
- “The work is organized from home. Some activities are not implemented” (CSO from Montenegro)

TABLE 41 - Major consequences for CSOs in SEE countries

| | BANKRUPTED | COMPLETELY STOPPED | SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED THE ACTIVITIES | NO MAJOR CONSEQUENCES | INCREASE THE VOLUME OF THE SERVICES | CHANGED OUR SERVICES | FIRED SOME STAFF | OUR STAFF CANNOT COME TO WORK | PEOPLE CANNOT RECEIVE ANYMORE OUR SERVICE | STAFF HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY THE DESEASE | STOP FUNDING PROJECTS | OTHER |
|-------------------------------------|------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---------|
| GENERAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COS | 0.38 % | 34.96 % | 40.23 % | 9.02 % | 3.38 % | 12.03 % | 3.38 % | 21.80 % | 11.65 % | 0.75 % | 12.03 % | 13.5 3% |



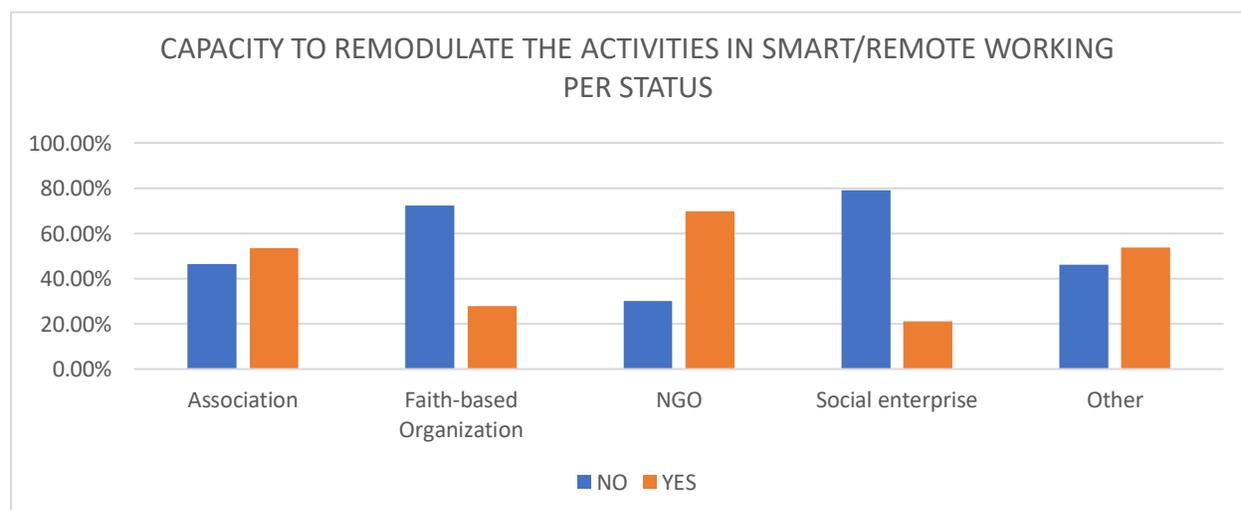
Most of the CSOs has then stopped or significantly reduced their services and activities: the situation is very similar in all countries of the Region and the percentages go from the 40% of Kosovo*, to the 60% for Albania, 75% for Serbia, 79% for Bosnia and Herzegovina, up to the 88% for Montenegro.

These changes encountered by the 266 CSOs of the South-East European Countries can create multiple challenges for the civil society. For many of them the future is unclear. This uncertainty has even been worsened as the global fight against the pandemic is adding troubles on running programs, coordinating staff, financial systems, planning, security, and communication. The CSOs are challenged today - probably more than ever - to remain able to deliver services in their communities; and at the same time, they are required to innovate, in order to ensure that the interventions can be executed effectively and timely in the face of unprecedented disruption.

We asked the CSOs whether they were able to carry out their main activities from home (via smart or remote working) during the last months. The 52,3% of them declared that they were able to re-modulate their services from home or via smart working. Anyway, this capacity and possibility to implement the services from home is not referred to the entire panorama of services offered by the CSOs, but only to some activities.

TABLE 42 - capacity to re-modulate the activities in smart/remote working per status

| STATUS | NO | YES |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|
| ASSOCIATION | 46.49% | 53.51% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 72.22% | 27.78% |
| NGO | 30.12% | 69.88% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 78.95% | 21.05% |
| OTHER | 46.15% | 53.85% |

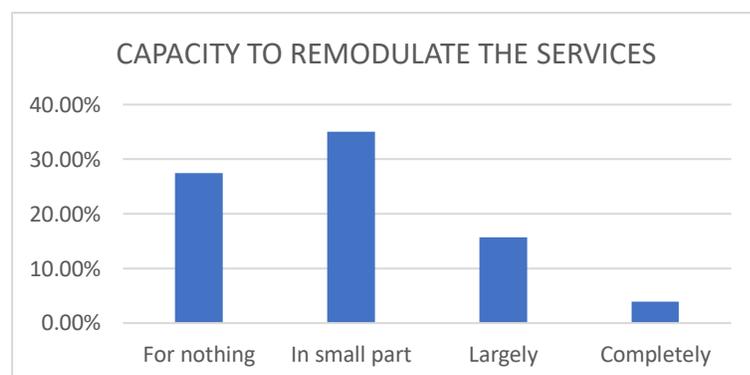


If we investigate the answer by the status of the CSOs, we can see how Social Enterprises are less able than others to re-modulate their services via smart/remote working (78,9% of the cases). This fact is probably due to the nature and the typologies of products they make.

At the same time, we noticed how the Faith-based organizations were not able to setup a remote or smart working setting (72,2%). Most of them are implementing interventions directly on the field, and they tried to operate by remodeling their field activities – such as primary goods distribution or health kit distribution to different vulnerable categories.

TABLE 43 - Capacity to re-modulate the services among the CSOs

| | FOR NOTHING | IN SMALL PART | LARGELY | COMPLETELY |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|---------|------------|
| ALL THE CSOS | 27.51% | 35.03% | 15.67% | 3.92% |



A CSO from Serbia stated: *“We have stopped with all activities, except for psychological support over the telephone for our users. We are waiting for calls from local authorities and therefore we do not have any income”.*

TABLE 44 - Capacity to re-modulate the activities per Status

| STATUS | FOR NOTHING | IN SMALL PART | LARGELY | COMPLETELY |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------|------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 28.18% | 42.73% | 8.18% | 6.36% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 41.18% | 17.65% | 11.76% | 0.00% |
| NGO | 15.00% | 36.25% | 30.00% | 3.75% |
| OTHER | 15.38% | 38.46% | 23.08% | 0.00% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 51.35% | 16.22% | 5.41% | 0.00% |

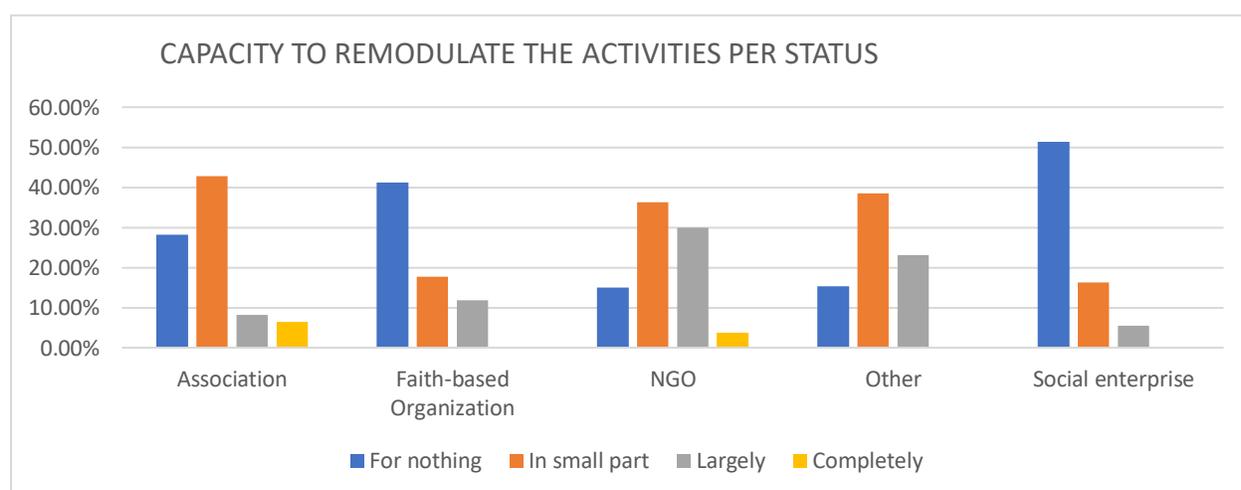
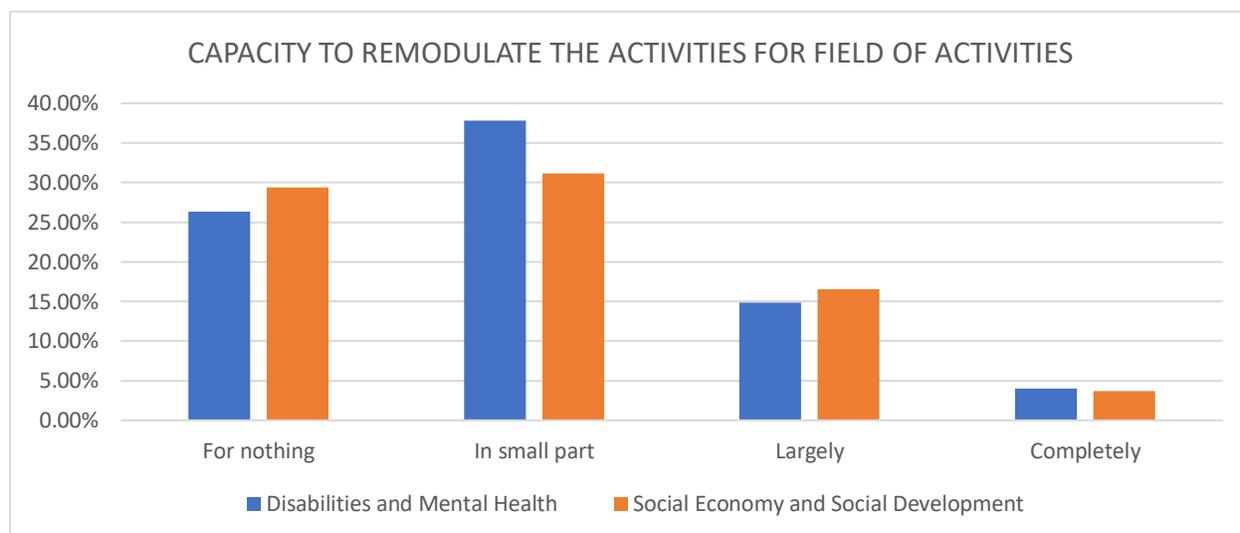


TABLE 45 - Capacity to re-modulate the activities per Field of activities

| FIELD | FOR NOTHING | IN SMALL PART | LARGELY | COMPLETELY |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------|------------|
| DISABILITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH | 26.35% | 37.84% | 14.86% | 4.05% |
| SOCIAL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT | 29.36% | 31.19% | 16.51% | 3.67% |



From the two tables above, we can see how the CSOs have re-modeled their services to a minimal extent: 42,7% for Associations; 36,2% for NGOs; 38,4% for other categories such as informal groups, foundations.

The majority of CSOs Working in close contact with persons with disabilities were also unable or cannot carry out activities in smart or remote working (62%).

During the COVID-19 crisis, around 12% of the 266 interviewed CSOs were at high risk of closure, as they stated to be able to resist less than 2 months in that conditions. Another 40% of them stated they can continue to operate only for few months more. For few of them re-modulating the services and projects, in most of the cases the volume of their activities was reduced, and only the 15% of those activities can be carried out from home with telework/smart working/remote working.

The operational challenges that CSOs will face due to the COVID-19 outbreak include:

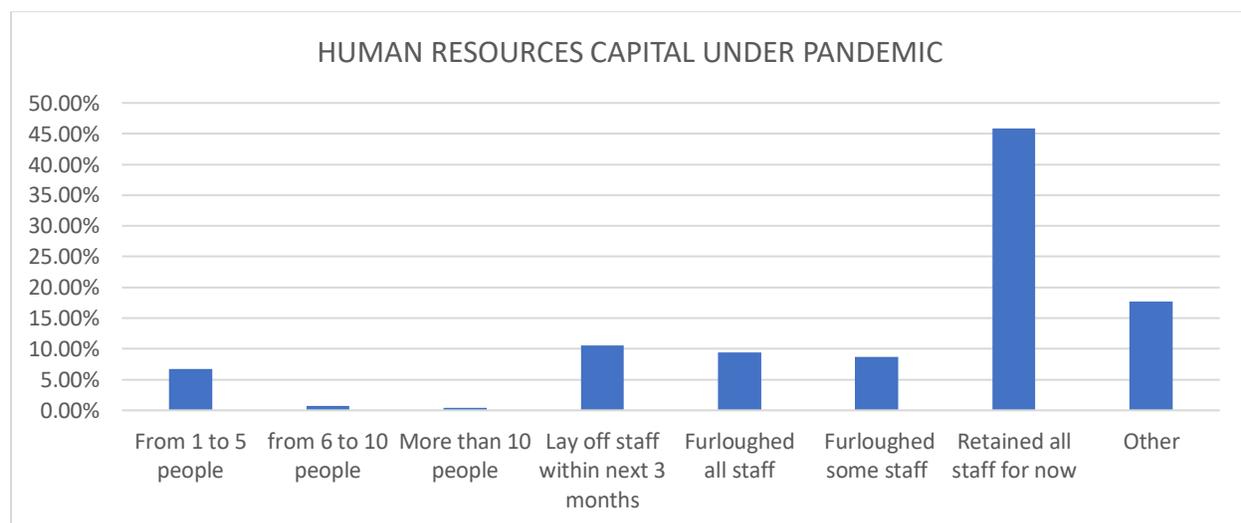
- the strain on the traditional ways of working and service delivery;
- disruption to resource streams, financial systems, and planning;
- health and availability of staff;
- communication and workflow challenges between staff members who are now all working remotely;

- challenges with implementing programs in communities in an environment of physical distancing particularly all the organizations that work in health, education, and social protection with PWDs.

Among all the CSOs that have tried to intervene during the pandemic, very often filling the gaps of the authorities, many of them have tried also to safeguard their operational capabilities while maintaining Human resources. Human capital remains a fundamental element of the work of CSOs in the area, especially during the pandemic. Uncertainty in recovering adequate economic resources for the future and the enormous impact that the pandemic had on CSOs – those elements can put at risk hundreds of jobs and acquired skills, creating tensions within the organizations themselves (both at personal level, at the working group, and even towards the beneficiaries and the local community).

TABLE 46 – Human resources capital, Did you fire staff during the COVID-19 crisis?

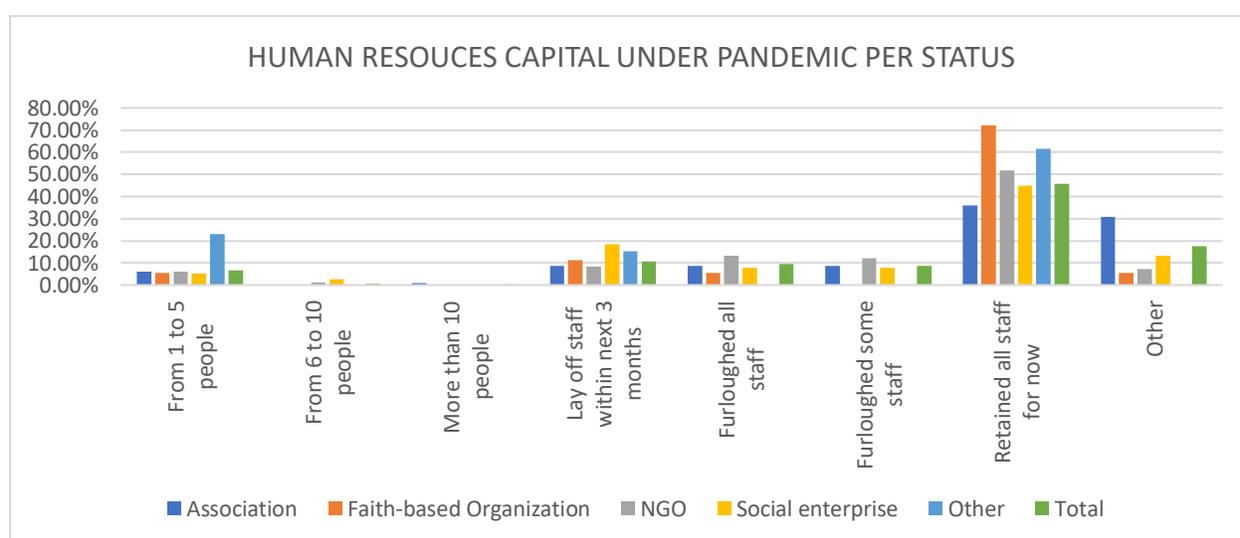
| | FROM 1 TO 5 PEOPLE | FROM 6 TO 10 PEOPLE | MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE | LAY OFF STAFF WITHIN NEXT 3 MONTHS | WE HAVE FURLOUGHED ALL STAFF | WE HAVE FURLOUGHED SOME STAFF | WE HAVE RETAINED ALL STAFF FOR NOW | OTHER |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| ALL COUNTRIES | 6.77% | 0.75% | 0.38% | 10.53% | 9.40% | 8.65% | 45.86% | 17.67% |



A CSO from Serbia stated: *“We did not have support to continue to work, being a small association without community support or management that could manage to find funds or motivate stakeholders”*.

TABLE 47 – Human resources capital, Did you fire staff during the COVID-19 crisis? Per status

| STATUS | FROM 1 TO 5 PEOPLE | FROM 6 TO 10 PEOPLE | MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE | LAY OFF STAFF WITHIN NEXT 3 MONTHS | WE HAVE FURLOUGHED ALL STAFF | WE HAVE FURLOUGHED SOME STAFF | WE HAVE RETAINED ALL STAFF FOR NOW | OTHER |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| ASSOCIATION | 6.14% | 0.00% | 0.88% | 8.77% | 8.77% | 8.77% | 35.96% | 30.70% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 5.56% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 11.11% | 5.56% | 0.00% | 72.22% | 5.56% |
| NGO | 6.02% | 1.20% | 0.00% | 8.43% | 13.25% | 12.05% | 51.81% | 7.23% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 5.26% | 2.63% | 0.00% | 18.42% | 7.89% | 7.89% | 44.74% | 13.16% |
| OTHER | 23.08% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 15.38% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 61.54% | 0.00% |
| TOTAL | 6.77% | 0.75% | 0.38% | 10.53% | 9.40% | 8.65% | 45.86% | 17.67% |



Certainly, the impact on the human resources of the CSOs is strictly connected to the impossibility for the CSOs to be able to receive aid from the local authorities. In all the countries analyzed by the research, the vast majority of CSOs could not apply for the local economic recovery measures.

TABLE 48 - Profile of the CSOs that furloughed all staff per dimension

"WE HAVE FURLOUGHED ALL STAFF"

| ANNUAL TURNOVER | No |
|-----------------------|----|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 18 |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 2 |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 1 |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 2 |
| OVER 249.999 | 0 |

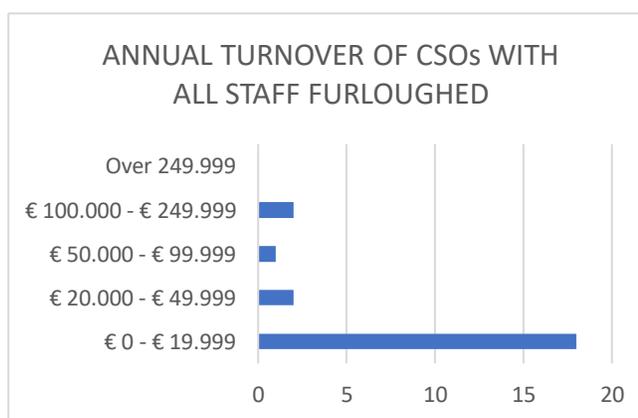


TABLE 49 - profile of the CSOs that furloughed all staff per number of Employees

"WE HAVE FURLOUGHED ALL STAFF"

| NR. EMPLOYEES | No |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1-9 | 13 |
| 10-49 | 2 |
| 50-100 | 1 |
| NONE (EXTERNAL STAFF) | 7 |

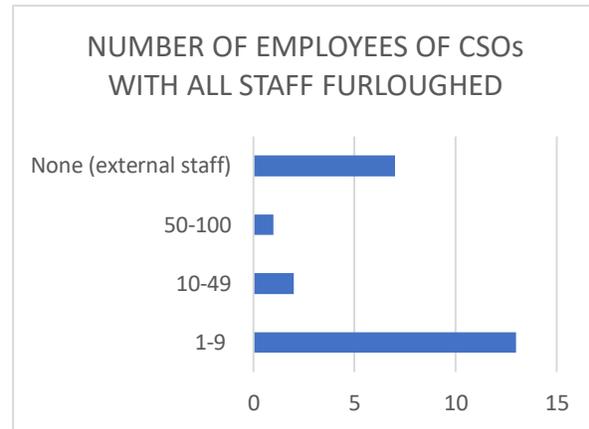


TABLE 50 - profile of the CSOs that furloughed some staff per dimension

"WE HAVE FURLOUGHED SOME STAFF"

| ANNUAL TURNOVER | No |
|------------------------|-----------|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 6 |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 7 |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 6 |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 3 |
| OVER 249.999 | 1 |



TABLE 51 - profile of the CSOs that furloughed some staff per number of Employees

"WE HAVE FURLOUGHED SOME STAFF"

| NR. EMPLOYEES | No |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1-9 | 15 |
| 10-49 | 5 |
| 50-100 | 1 |
| NONE (EXTERNAL STAFF) | 2 |

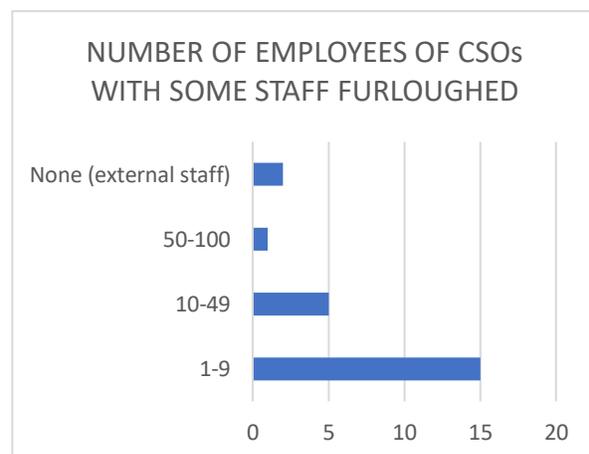


TABLE 52 - profile of the CSOs that laid off staff per Dimension

“WE WILL LAY OFF STAFF PERMANENTLY IN THE NEXT 3 MONTHS”

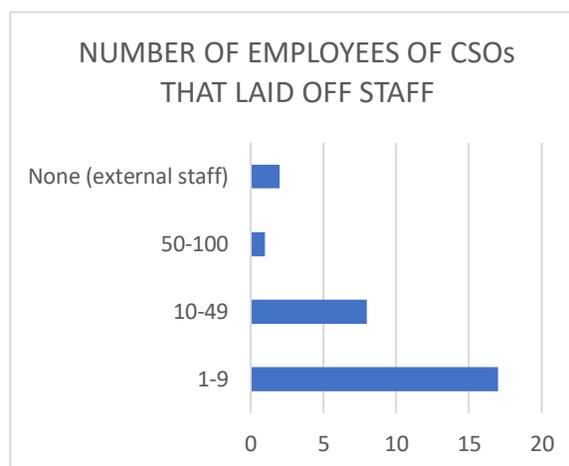
| ANNUAL TURNOVER | No |
|------------------------|-----------|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 11 |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 5 |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 7 |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 0 |
| OVER 249.999 | 5 |



TABLE 53 - profile of the CSOs that laid off staff per number of Employees

“WE WILL LAY OFF STAFF PERMANENTLY IN THE NEXT 3 MONTHS”

| NO. EMPLOYEES | No |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 1-9 | 17 |
| 10-49 | 8 |
| 50-100 | 1 |
| NONE (EXTERNAL STAFF) | 2 |



Analyzing the tables above, we can see how the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has already caused several dozens of lost jobs. This situation has as a direct consequence in the short term:

- the loss of jobs by qualified personnel;
- the decrease in services in favor of disadvantaged and most vulnerable categories;
- the closure of the CSOs.

As indirect consequences, we can highlight how this situation will:

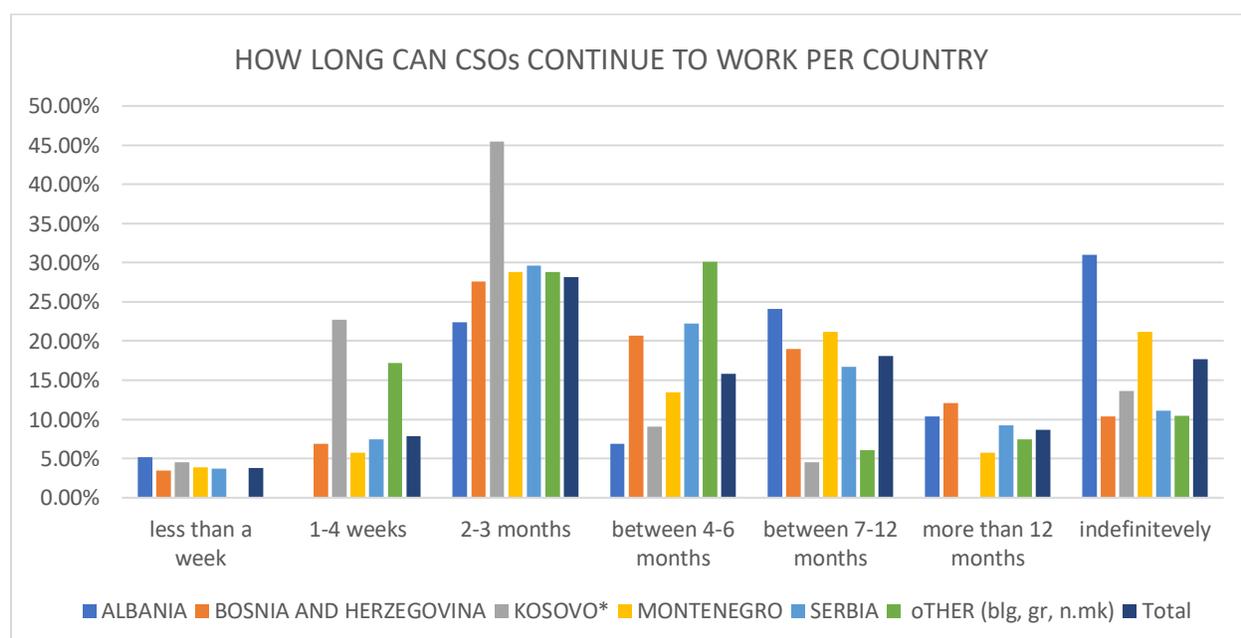
- impact the social, health and welfare systems of the countries and communities where the CSOs are operating;
- put people in troubles, especially families with PWDs;
- lead to loss of skills, knowledge, and good practices developed in the territories;
- weaken the social protection networks in the communities.

There is an urgent need for civil society to review their structures, roles and responsibilities with communities, Governments, international and domestic funders to ensure their long-term sustainability. This will help civil society entities (especially community-based organizations, grassroots associations and less-resourced CSOs) to carry out crucial activities such as supporting PWDs, the poorest, the most excluded and marginalized, enabling collective action and holding to account decision-makers and the private sector.

“Uncertain perspectives in a period of uncertain times”

TABLE 54 – How long can your CSOs continue to work in this condition? per Country

| COUNTRY | LESS THAN A WEEK | 1-4 WEEKS | 2-3 MONTHS | BETWEEN 4-6 MONTHS | BETWEEN 7-12 MONTHS | MORE THAN 12 MONTHS | INDEFINITEV ELY |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| ALBANIA | 5.17% | 0.00% | 22.41% | 6.90% | 24.14% | 10.34% | 31.03% |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 3.45% | 6.90% | 27.59% | 20.69% | 18.97% | 12.07% | 10.34% |
| KOSOVO* | 4.55% | 22.73% | 45.45% | 9.09% | 4.55% | 0.00% | 13.64% |
| MONTENEGRO | 3.85% | 5.77% | 28.85% | 13.46% | 21.15% | 5.77% | 21.15% |
| SERBIA | 3.70% | 7.41% | 29.63% | 22.22% | 16.67% | 9.26% | 11.11% |
| OTHER (BLG, GR, N.MK) | 0.00% | 17.17% | 28.79% | 30.13% | 6.06% | 7.41% | 10.44% |
| TOTAL | 3.76% | 7.89% | 28.20% | 15.79% | 18.05% | 8.65% | 17.67% |



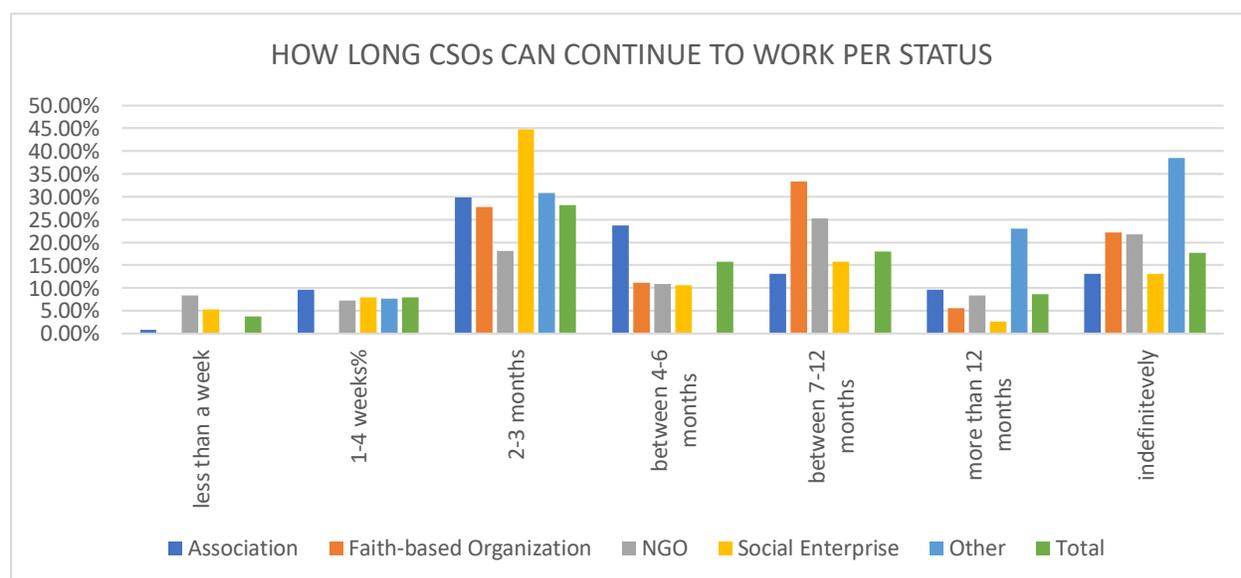
Looking at the table relating to the operational capacity of the CSOs, we see how:

- 3,8% practically closed their businesses;

- 7,9% are likely to close their services within 4 weeks from the moment in which the interview was submitted. In this period, the figure of the CSOs of Kosovo* is particularly significant, where 22.7% is at risk of closure and mainly refers to a national support network for people with physical disabilities;
- 28,2% of the total CSOs have a short-term operational perspective if there will be no external interventions, risking to terminate their operations within the next 2-3 months;
- only 17,7% of CSOs (47 of them) has a longer-lasting operational capacity. This category includes the very small informal associations that carry out voluntary micro-interventions in the cultural field and the large faith-based organizations.

TABLE 55 - How long can your CSOs continue to work in this condition? per Status

| STATUS | LESS THAN A WEEK | 1-4 WEEKS % | 2-3 MONT HS | BETWEEN 4-6 MONTHS | BETWEEN 7-12 MONTHS | MORE THAN 12 MONTHS | INDEFIN ITEVELY |
|--------------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 0.88% | 9.65% | 29.82% | 23.68% | 13.16% | 9.65% | 13.16% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 0.00% | 0.00% | 27.78% | 11.11% | 33.33% | 5.56% | 22.22% |
| NGO | 8.43% | 7.23% | 18.07% | 10.84% | 25.30% | 8.43% | 21.69% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 5.26% | 7.89% | 44.74% | 10.53% | 15.79% | 2.63% | 13.16% |
| OTHER | 0.00% | 7.69% | 30.77% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 23.08% | 38.46% |
| TOTAL | 3.76% | 7.89% | 28.20% | 15.79% | 18.05% | 8.65% | 17.67% |



A CSO operating with PWDs in BIH stated: *“I think that we should act as urgently as possible to provide financial support to the Associations, as most of them will probably be shut down because of the inability to provide the basic means for the work of the Association”*.

A CSO from Montenegro stated: *“Everyone in the association is particularly concerned when the situation will be normalized so that they can start working normally. It is especially difficult*

that the provision of support services is not working during the pandemic for health security reasons, as these services are necessary for children and young people, and for PWDs and their families”.

Based on the CSOs declarations and the data emerged, it is a logical consequence that in the short-term perspective, the CSOs of the area must increase their informative actions towards their donor partners, and obtaining immediate consent to reschedule activities or revise aspects of project delivery. Anyway this process is not so simple, as the pandemic has also affected the main areas and the operational capacities of the same donors.

It would be advisable for the CSOs of the region, to send formal notices to various donor partners supporting several projects, asking for the activities to be rescheduled, and in the meanwhile continuing to implement at least the activities that do not require face-to-face engagements. In some cases, organizations could propose new delivery modalities including virtual and digital platforms. Anyway it is clear that the CSOs targeted by the project SOCIETIES 2 are having the most vulnerable categories as primary target group of beneficiaries, and in those cases providing the service and, at the same time, keeping “social distancing” remains very difficult.

Donor partners have to show a stronger commitment, by being supportive to CSOs with extraordinary measures to manage the complex situation.

In middle-term perspectives, CSOs have to re-define their organization structures to facilitate the implementation of projects in alignment with rescheduled timelines, and continue to engage with partners on virtual environments if the COVID-19 situation persists.

However, the biggest challenge CSOs will face is financial sustainability. The project planning with the donors – including the possibility of obtaining new funds – must become an urgent issue for CSOs; in the same way (and with the same intensity) the CSOs will have to look at their governance structure and staff requirements.

Considering the huge number of grass-root associations or small CSOs in contact with project SOCIETIES 2, the CSOs must elaborate adequate measures for transition to digital formats, which implies new staff skills and competencies. These measures may potentially become not

only a tool for overcoming the crisis but, in the long run, a platform for attracting new audiences and expanding CSOs' fields of activities.

By introducing a risk reduction approach, CSOs will have to consider a larger engagement of their constituencies and board members, and may consider reinforcing their boards with additional experts to respond to this challenge. CSOs may have to consider revising their organigrams and streamlining staff numbers and responsibilities to adapt to the current challenges. Strategic partnerships are also key to a CSO's survival.

New strategies are of vital importance for social CSOs' beneficiaries: many Associations, NGOs, foundations, Faith-based organizations, are now concerned with the identification of innovative ways to provide their services. Because of the recent constraints, many had to forego their traditional methods, such as fundraisers, volunteers' activities. In response to these changes, many Foundations began to work online, creating video opportunities for volunteers, organizing online campaigns – such as the ones to purchase sanitizing materials, food and medications online.

Time, Balance, Leadership and conflict management skills within the CSOs will become two priority elements of work to guide the CSOs in this period of “social distances”, as the title of the research points out. In the following paragraphs, we want to give some further food for thought on these key elements.

SCIENTIFIC FOCUS

LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL SECTOR: NAVIGATING NEW REALITIES IN TIMES OF COVID-19 CRISIS, SOCIAL DISTANCE AND COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES

Shkelzen Marku

Co-founder and Managing Director, Yunus Social Business Balkans – Tirana, Albania.

Crisis is the constant truth of today's fast changing world. Rapid changing social and economic conditions, problems of personnel, unexpected technological changes and political effects cause instability on today's organizations and business world. CSOs and social enterprises work in constantly changing, complex and dynamic situations and challenging circumstances. Social sector leaders often face extraordinary challenges – both at a personal and organizational level. They work long hours with limited resources in uncertain and volatile political and economic circumstances to help the most marginalized and disadvantaged members of their communities. While they have to be on toes all the time to adapt to the rapidly changing environment, they are often isolated and insufficiently supported. Working in this sector demands leadership qualities, management aptitude and skills and dynamic personalities.

Various studies have often mentioned the worries about the lack of leadership talent to be found within the context of the non-profit and social sector as a whole. This “leadership deficit” will become a matter of urgency as the sector in the coming years as the impact of COVID-19 crisis. During this COVID-19 (humanitarian and economic) crisis, the social sector leaders are being challenged and tested almost more than never before. Some say a crisis brings out the best in leaders. They are expected to set aside trivial grievances, band together for a shared purpose, and focus on helping others. However, the results of the study clearly show that beneath the strategic choices and genuine care is fear, uncertainty, and exhaustion. Leaders are faced with the need to reorganize disrupted supply chains and service delivery (about 48% of interviewed CSOs have seen reduced demand and/or service delivery, and about 35.3% having completely stopped their activities), enable a remote workforce (52%), safeguard essential employees and break bad news to employees (about 26% being obliged to lay off staff permanently or furlough some of their staff and about 10.6% expecting to need to lay off more staff in the next 3 months), as well as maintain their own energy so that they can continue to inspire and motivate.

Responsiveness to crisis: “Leadership” comes the first among the achievements in crisis management. Typical of the competencies commonly associated with leadership are the ability

of a leader to communicate vision or strategy, inspire teams, motivate individuals, and identify opportunities and initiate transformation. While most of the interviewed CSOs are faced with significant survival challenges, about one third of them (32.7% of CSOs) declare to have seen increased demand for their existing services and/or new types of services during the last months. While most of the CSOs have had a rather easy start, the COVID-19 crisis has brought to light the unpreparedness to crisis and the now requiring them to quickly get reorganized in order to survive and capture these new opportunities. As many of the common solutions become invalid in crisis situations, the social sector leaders need now to rearrange their resources, adapt and transform their internal organization in order to respond to the new needs and make the difference.

Crisis is an unpredictable state that disrupts normal operations of the organization and requires immediate action to be taken. While crisis cannot be predicted beforehand and they deactivate normal processes, CSOs leaders should plan for an efficient crisis management (pre-crisis, crisis and post crisis management) including building sound crisis management skills within their organizations. The study shows that most of the CSOs were not prepared enough to face such a crisis and, if the COVID-19 crisis continues the large majority of them (about 72.8%) are expected to close their operation within the next six months, with 56.9% of them declaring to not be able to survive for more than 3 months.

About 58.3% of the interviewed CSOs have declared to have faced a more than 30% reduction in revenues, with 39% facing more than 50% reduction in revenues. Under these conditions, CSOs leaders need to act quickly and build contingency and crisis management plan in order to minimize damages of the crisis and ensure preparedness for recovery. While small organizations with lighter and flexible structures and less fixed costs are usually more agile and can adapt and recover more quickly, the large ones with more fixed costs and complex decision-making processes incur higher risks. The study shows, once more, that just as it is wrong to see crisis as a destiny of the organization and thus cede it to its fate, it is also wrong to take no precautions and not set up a contingency/crisis action plan, by assuming that the organization is enough strong to survive. If these CSOs are to attain their objectives, they should react quickly to identify potential adaptations and transformations to be made and set up necessary strategies, structural system changes, operational processes, and practical action plans.

Responding to culture and context: Most CSOs are usually led by “leader managers”. They shall be able to take immediate decisions when needed, as crisis environments require immediate decision-making and implementation. Consequently, crisis management requires leader managers with a vision, skills and competences, including foresight for the future, identification of realistic vision and objectives for the future of organization, and ability to assess the potential of their staff well, persuade them that they can do better than they did and motivate them quickly for realization of these objectives. However, very often one of the most significant burdens regarding crisis management is the fact that many of the CSOs’ leader managers are not willing enough to take risks, cannot take immediate decisions in unexpected events and rather stick to regulation. The large majority of interviewed CSOs have declared to be waiting for their donors to give them guidance or instructions, with about 59% of them not having yet received any information from their donors on how to proceed with their projects. Consequently, this affects the management and survival of organization adversely.

Trusted leadership by donors and funders: CSOs are meeting extraordinary challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. They are challenged today, probably more than ever, to ensure that they survive and remain able to stay and deliver the much-needed support across various vulnerable communities. While with a close dialogue, in a spirit of trust, CSOs and social enterprises aim at keeping donors and funders updated on how the operations are impacted and where reallocations are most needed, a quicker decision-making and higher operational flexibility should be ensured in such crisis situations. On their side of the table, donors, funders and government institutions have to consider themselves and partners of the supported CSOs/social enterprises, and thus have to show increased leadership by being supportive and dialoguing with CSOs/social enterprises on extraordinary measures to manage the complex situations. As this is an exceptional crisis, they should have a “real risk-sharing attitude” and thus put in place exceptional measures for quick and flexible decision-making processes.

Balancing leadership and management roles: There is an ongoing debate among scholars as to the influence of management culture and leadership styles. Both “paternalistic” leaders (strong charismatic leaders deciding for almost everything without sufficient involvement of lower management levels) and “absenteeist” leaders (being loosely present and leaving the management and staff without clear vision and directions) seem to be of some concerns in the region. In practice leadership and management are integral parts of the same job. Both these

activities need to be balanced and matched to the demands of the situation. Leadership is not just restricted to top management. Leadership skills are needed at a departmental and team level. Middle managers are commonly team or project leaders, and as such are crucial to the successful implementation of new strategies. However, there are good signs that traditionally dominant leaders are increasingly sharing decision-making with their staff and encouraging a more participatory culture in their organizations. Some of the social sector leaders in the region are more and more embracing collective decision-making and participatory management, yet have clear hierarchies and accept strong leadership. Although the concepts of leadership and participation seem incompatible to some, yet strong leadership and participatory management can be complementary.

This pandemic has shown us that there is need for more collaborative leadership. Various studies have shown that such “collaborative leadership” and “participatory management” needs a particular mind-set and specific management competencies. First and foremost, it means that successful leaders must be able to listen and must be able to respond to what is being said. They have to be proactive and adept at managing cross-functional teams and a range of decentralized operations. Their ability to lead such teams depends on their willingness and ability to listen, show empathy, enter into meaningful dialogue, inspire and convince the skeptical, as well as share experiences and accelerate teams’ collective learning.

Some insight emerging from the expanding research on CSOs and social enterprises on internal tensions within these organizations. While these tensions existed before, they have become even stronger in this period of crisis and urgent to be considered for various organizations.

Managing performing tensions: CSOs and social enterprises seek to solve social problems through innovative and entrepreneurial interventions. They combine the efficiency, innovation, and resources of a traditional for-profit firm with the passion, values, and mission of a not-for-profit organization. As a result, they embed within the boundaries of one organization multiple and inconsistent goals, norms, and values, creating contradictory prescriptions for action and generating ethical dilemmas for their leaders. Effectively understanding social enterprises depends on insight into the nature and management of these tensions. Despite the variety of types, a unifying characteristic of these organizations is the multiple and often conflicting demands that surface through their commitments to both social missions and business ventures.

These commitments juxtapose divergent identities, goals, logics, and practices, which creates tensions for leaders and their organizations.

Many of the CSOs and social enterprises, aiming to expand their activities and/or ensure their sustainability, seek varied and conflicting goals or strive to address inconsistent demands across multiple stakeholders. These divergent goals, metrics, and stakeholders create several conflicting demands and performing tensions in social enterprises. One critical challenge involves how to define success across contradictory goals. This question becomes particularly complex when success in one domain is considered failure in another domains (i.e. restructuring operations to ensure financial sustainability of the organization, securing staff jobs and expanding social impact). Performing tensions surface in questions about how to sustain commitments to conflicting goals over time. Research suggests that in the context of competing metrics, one tends to dominate. In particular, as behavioral decision-making theory demonstrates, we tend to emphasize metrics that are more quantifiable, clear, and short-term oriented over those that are more qualitative, ambiguous, uncertain, and long-term oriented. In the context of social enterprises, a preference for quantifiable metrics can lead business objectives to become dominant. At the same time, the passion and commitment of CSO managers can lead to dominance of the social mission in detriment of the sustainability of the organization.

Managing organizing tensions: Organizing tensions emerge through commitments to contradictory organizational structures, cultures, practices, and processes. Social missions and organizational sustainability or profitability frequently involve different, and inconsistent, cultures and human resource practices. They often require different employee profiles, for example, raising tensions about who to hire and how to build consolidated teams. Effectively selling specific products/services to previously disenfranchised people requires interpersonal skills to help clients address emotional, social, and psychological barriers. These skills often are associated with people trained in social work and psychology backgrounds. In contrast, developing and managing the financial nature of these products depends on quantitative analysis skills traditionally developed in business schools. As a result, microfinance organizations grapple with who to hire. Work integration CSOs and social enterprises also face organizing tensions in hiring. These organizations create businesses that provide training and work experience to disadvantaged people, enabling them to gain or improve employment opportunities. This creates tensions about who to hire – people who are severely disadvantaged or people with skills that are needed for the success of the business.

Managing belonging tensions which involve questions of identity. Attending to both a social mission and a profitability objectives raises belonging tensions with CSOs and social enterprises, as leaders struggle to articulate “who we are” and “what we do” both individually and collectively. For example, leaders face questions from employees about whether the organization is more aligned with its profit motive or its social mission. Moreover, when leaders or members experience a sense of belonging or identification with different organizational goals and values, this can create subgroups and generate internal conflict. Belonging tensions also surface as social enterprises manage relationships with stakeholders. Stakeholders aligned with the social mission, such as foundations, donors, and non- profit organizations, often have identities that diverge from those aligned with the business venture, including customers, investors, suppliers. While all these stakeholders may value the combined social and business purposes of a social enterprise, they also seek to connect with the organization through their particular identities. How then, can social enterprises position themselves vis-à-vis their divergent stakeholders? They must decide whether and when to emphasize their social mission, their sustainability/business venture, or both simultaneously.

Managing learning tensions: Tensions of learning emerge from the juxtaposition of multiple time horizons, as organizations in these times of crisis strive for surviving growth, and flexibility over the long term, while also seeking stability and certainty in the short term, with these tensions surfacing in several domains. First, financial outcomes such as managing costs and increasing revenues and profits, can easily be measured in the short term, whereas team capacity building and social mission outcomes requires a long-time horizon. These different time horizons can drive conflicting prescriptions for strategic action. CSOs and social enterprises further face learning tensions around restructuring, growth and scalability. They want to restructure to be able to survive and expand in order to increase the impact of their mission. However, both restructuring and growth may simultaneously threaten the mission’s impact, as factors that facilitate the social mission in various organizations change with size due to various factors (i.e, local ties, communal trust-building, imprinting of the founder’s values and morals, etc.).

As concluding words of go-about steps, building on the Egon Zehnder’s experience, I would suggest leaders to start with their own behavioral shifts, such as:

Choose vulnerability over invincibility: Vulnerability is a word that has struck fear into the hearts of many leaders, but in a crisis, we need leaders who are brave enough to show their own vulnerability in order to show care for others. This is not a time for invincibility adventuring. In the face of COVID-19, none of us is invincible – reassembling forces and rebuilding resilient organizations and teams requires trusting leaders who will dare to be vulnerable, open up in front of their teams and stakeholders and show just how much they care – with individual care and collective care at scale.

From simply flying or doing to also being: The second behavioral shift, recommended by Zehnder, is shifting from simply flying or doing or knowing to being. In the face of a crisis, the reaction from leaders seem to be either flying from the situation as nothing has happened or plying as if they are in control. But they don't have to do either of them. Ironically, in moments of crisis, what organizations and their teams need most is to feel the presence and very essence of their trusting leaders. COVID-19 crisis demands you to be a leader to your team, so let your team feel, really feel your leadership! Legacies will be made or lost over the coming months: how show-up during this period would be critical to the survival of the organizations.

Embracing purpose: The third behavior shift, Zehnder says, is engaging purpose. In the past, purpose was seen as a lofty, impractical idea, even as a sideshow to everyday business. Today, so many of us are seeing the energy, vitality, and ingenuity that comes from being purpose-led. We are seeing leaders and whole organizations embracing the challenge to meet society's needs right now on the frontline of battling COVID-19. Leaders need to own purpose, during and long after the crisis. It's also the best way to attract, motivate and retain rare talents, and it can no longer be neglected by leaders. In fact, purpose helps leaders both to manage in the here and now and to stay true to playing the long game. Shareholder primacy was already under threat. COVID-19 proves it is now time to serve stakeholders, not just stockholders. The world needs its leaders to serve its communities, employees, and the planet - not just the organization. COVID-19 has been the catalyst for that shift.

SCIENTIFIC FOCUS

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONS (DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

Andrea Piscopo

Consultant - Maieutic management of conflict at Counseling School, Centro Psico-pedagogico per l'educazione e la gestione dei conflitti, Piacenza – Italy

Which capacities are important or necessary to improve our long-term resilience in the face of events such as the COVID-19 pandemic? How can we continue to support our CSOs and their human resources while working remotely?

Conflicts are an ordinary part of people, groups' and organizations' lives. Still they represent a tricky issue when it comes to managing them. In emergency contexts they may become even more challenging and require using and/or developing a real competence. This would increase the chance of getting through difficult times with the least damage possible, if not even with some kind of positive outcomes.

On the contrary, a lack of conflictive competence usually puts people in the impossibility of making something out of the several everyday challenges they face. For groups and organizations this would mean the risks of weakness and ineffectiveness, especially when the internal resources are not SUFFICIENT to carry out the usual compensation mechanisms.

Serious consequences of such a lack are usually emotional compression, dysfunctional social behavior, stuck relationships and processes, and sometimes even violence.

What is a conflictive approach?

We are often far from being competent in conflicts for three main reasons:

- 1.** Many social structures are built on the ideal of harmony and/or a strong culture of belonging. It may appear reassuring and convey a sense of protection, but differences and their effects would be difficult to be integrated. This often originates by and/or results in rigid and conflict-avoiding cultural models. They tend to remove the value of differences, to assume the logic of 'guilt' and 'punishment', to look for simplification and instant solutions instead of generative processes of learning and empowerment for both individuals and the community.
- 2.** We often do not have positive memories and experiences about conflicts due to our educational background. During childhood we often learn that quarrels (conflicts) are wrong, even a guilt. Quarrelsome children are a problem to adults whose intervention may result in the

detection of guilt, the assignment of punishment and the restoration of an 'adequate' situation. Hence the belief that conflict implies injustice, the appeal to a higher authority and sometimes violence.

3. The stress, the frustration, even the pain we could feel in adversities make us react instantly and look for the simplest and quickest solution possible. It often gives rise to a vicious circle. But conflicts are processes and may present complex structures. IT takes time and instruments to understand them and to identify what sustainable changes (not solutions) we can try to undertake.

Society is often unprepared. In spite of the above-mentioned obstacles, significant results come when we accept conflicts as a human, relational quality rather than a threat. Conflicts do not represent a pathological condition of relationships. They are the relationship in itself. This change in perception decreases the sense of fear and anxiety and opens up the possibility to become operational. People and groups can learn to treat conflicts as objective conditions occurring when something changes in their relationships and contexts.

Conflicts are full of information. A maieutical approach can turn them into opportunities for learning about ourselves and others, increasing social and professional skills and improving the quality of our life. We need to learn how to reduce unnecessary conflicts and recognize the necessary ones.

A change in the cultural and practical approach to managing critical situations is needed both for people and organizations.

At individual level

As for people, competences in conflicts can be developed by practically learning how to:

- recognize a conflictive situation;
- manage the effect of overwhelming emotions;
- create a distance to cool down the conflictive situation and gain useful points of view;
- read the explicit elements it contains (personal emotional experience, one's own position in that conflict, the explicit needs, the possible need of keeping the conflict alive for any advantages it could bring);
- take care of one's own sore topics;
- bring the conflict to an explicit level;
- keep relations functional;

- acknowledge one's own and others' needs;
- transform needs into interests;
- evaluate what part of interests is most important and how much it is shared;
- identify if there is a sustainable task to achieve the desired change;
- verify its sustainability and accept the possibility of changing it.

These are key-skills to improve one's own competences. They become a self-empowerment means if routinely adopted.

At group/organizational level

The above summarized approach is also valid for groups and organizations, as:

- they are made up of people;
- the contribution of each individual affects the performance of the whole group;
- organizations usually turn their activities towards people.

A further element has to be considered for groups and organizations, anyway. According to Enzo Spaltro every organization is a way to administer and manage one or more conflicts. In other words, organizations are the conflict themselves, for they work by maximizing the usefulness of conflicts and of interpersonal, social and collective relationships. So, organizations achieve goals by integrating and exploiting different skills and resources. Besides, their purpose is to manage the changes that occur in their contexts. According to this view, the organizational culture (therefore competence) perfectly matches with a specific conflictive competence.

In a group/organization, being aware that the conflict is legitimate makes possible cooperation dynamics between different points of view and the needs-related requests. This is at the basis of cohesion: a procedure that takes into account the views of all the players involved and transforms them into shared decisions. It is a way to maintain a balance between the two coordinates that make an organization work: relations and shared goals.

Such a cooperative model would allow both organizations and grassroots groups to:

- interact in the respect of the internal roles;
- use conflict as information, not as a threat;
- create communication spaces (to decide on the necessary rules, procedures and changes);
- strengthen an authentic sense of belonging;
- strengthen the development of responsibilities throughout the organizational process;
- facilitate the assumption and supervision of specific areas of responsibility.

Investing resources in the adoption and/or consolidation of the cooperative model is worthwhile because:

- it protects organizations from the risks associated to a hierarchical style (excess of authority, unclear and not shared rules, lack of motivation and belonging);
- it protects informal and grassroots groups from the risks associated to a confidential/informal style (excess of informality, implicit and unclear rules, undefined roles, difficult definition of responsibilities and objectives, lack of effectiveness);
- it creates the most suitable operational space to manage both ordinary objectives and extraordinary problems.

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on groups and organizations – A global overview

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a global health crisis. UN DESA qualifies it a “human, economic and social crisis. It affects all segments of the population and is particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations, such as people living in poverty, older persons, persons with disabilities, youth”.

The World Health Organization (WHO) takes over that the current pandemic both occurs differently for different groups and produces transversal aftermaths for the whole population. “The health risk from COVID-19 to older adults and people with certain pre-existing conditions is considered to be greater than that of the general population. [...] People of all ages [...] may have greater vulnerabilities to COVID-19 depending on their living arrangements, financial instability and lack of specific safeguards impacting their risk of infection, such as persons with disabilities, people who are homeless, refugees, migrants, and prisoners. COVID-19 has revealed a unique ecology of sickness based on social determinants of health, which requires attention”. It also states that “public health emergencies often lead to stigma and discrimination towards certain communities and groups or affected persons. Within the context of COVID-19, this has already manifested with the disease being associated with a specific population or nationality.

“Too many children with disabilities across the Western Balkans and Turkey are completely invisible and excluded from society,” says Genoveva Ruiz Calavera, Director for the Western Balkans in the European Commission. The SOCIETIES 2 project mainly works with organizations that deal with disabilities. They regularly report that stigma and discrimination are among the most serious problems that occur daily in the SEE countries. In this context, the social distancing rules actually increase the social distance. This could even exacerbate the stigma towards children with disabilities.

Stigma and discrimination have also been directed at persons diagnosed with COVID-19 [...] Even emergency responders and healthcare professionals have been targeted. Stigma and discrimination are known to negatively influence health behaviors, and to have a range of physical and mental health consequences for stigmatized groups and the communities around them.”.

The Organization also notes that some issues are subject to particular tightening during the current pandemic, in particular concerning women (gender equality and violence), mental health, disability, youth. This brief overview confirms that the COVID-19 pandemic puts the general population in a very difficult situation with no distinctions. Moreover, it shows that many pre-existing social, health and humanitarian problems are worsening. All this represents a first order of problems (conflict situations) for groups and organizations, for the pandemic effects:

- primarily affect those who are directly responsible of and involved in the projects’ activities (project managers, supervisors, coordinators, operators, team and group leaders, volunteers, active citizens) as well as their families;
- make intervention contexts drastically more complex (by worsening the issues organizations and groups normally deal with)
- increase the opportunities for social injustice and conflicts among the population.

A CAF America global survey about CAF Organizations

In order to understand the global impact of the pandemic on organizations we have taken into consideration a survey conducted by CAF America from 24 to 26 March 2020. It seems interesting to us because it involves 544 organizations worldwide (in 93 countries, 6 continents). Its purpose is to learn how the threat of the coronavirus global pandemic affects their organizations. “Most respondents’ work pertains to healthcare (89), education (73), and arts & culture (73). Organizations providing support to children and youth (72), along with those helping economically disadvantaged populations (31) and people living with disabilities (29) are also well represented”.

Here are some relevant data:

- 94.84% of the respondents’ state countries have imposed coronavirus related restrictions that had an immediate impact on the respondents’ organizations.
- 96.50% of the organizations surveyed are experiencing a negative impact of the pandemic and have taken steps to address the coronavirus-related challenges.

- Among those not yet impacted and those anticipating the brunt of the impact during the course of the coming year, the majority of the respondents (73.33%) foresee experiencing a negative impact within the following three months and approximately one-third in 3 months or later (34.44%).
 - 67.93% of the respondents have seen a decrease in funding and reported difficulties in reaching donors, while 33.97% indicated an increase in operational costs
 - More than half are unable to fully meet the expectations of those they serve due to staffing limitations (48.58%) and system-challenges (37.57%). Restrictions on travel, a key programmatic element for many organizations, have affected 63% of the respondents' operations.
 - Impact of the global pandemic on the organizations by areas: 67.93% contributions reduced, 63.00% travel restricted, 56.36% client reactions, 48.58% staffing disruption, 37.57% operations, 33.97% increased costs, 31.12% supply chain broken.
 - Almost two thirds of the organizations surveyed (61.87%) continue their operations remotely. The main difficulty organizations face in adapting their operations to the current conditions is the lack of infrastructure and access to systems that allow moving their work online.
 - Over 65% of respondents had to shift short-term goals to adjust operations during the pandemic.
 - 64.09% of the respondents engaged in researching ways to innovate and adapt their operations to the current reality shaped by the coronavirus pandemic.
- This survey clearly highlights the emergence of unexpected organizational problems which are a further type of conflictual situations that organizations and groups have to face.

The Consorzio Communitas survey about CSOs in South East European countries

Consorzio Communitas has conducted a survey (April –May 2020) to analyze the COVID-19 pandemic impact on 266 Civil Society Organizations in the South East European region. The respondents are 116 associations, 83 national NGOs/Not For Profit organizations, 38 social enterprises, 18 faith-based organizations, 4 foundations, 9 other, that are located in Albania (58), Bosnia and Herzegovina (58), Bulgaria (2), Greece (11), Kosovo**(22), Montenegro (52), North Macedonia (9) and Serbia (54).

Their activity areas are: disabilities and mental health (150), social development and care (116), that include activities in the area of social care, environment and tourism, sustainable development, education and skills development, extreme poverty and social exclusion, peace and development, child care, financial support and services, gender issues and advancement of women, conflict resolution, culture and leisure, migration and refugees, other.

The general impact is severe for the most part of the surveyed CSOs:

- 34.96% have completely stopped their activities
- 40.23% have significantly reduced services
- 62.54% have not been able or cannot carry out activities through smart/remote working
- 39.80% in recent months have noticed a significant increase in the request for support, especially by vulnerable people
- 73.68% have operational capacity for less than 6 months
- 39.85% have operational capacity for less than 3 months
- 85.00% stated they served more beneficiaries than usual
- 54.50% stated they were not able to face this new demand
- 54.14% stated their balance reduced up to 50%
- 25.94% stated their balance decreased up to 75 %
- 72.18% have seen partially or wholly negative income contribution reduced
- 62.78% have difficulty paying staff salaries
- 68.42% have problems covering running costs

Possible working paths

Both the CAF and the Consorzio Communitas survey show that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about a series of critical changes that represent a conflictive challenge (according to the proposed approach) at different levels in the medium-long term.

The conflictive competence is, now more than ever, a key-element for people and organizations to face in the present period and the future.

This working path tip intends to provide useful actions in the current context which will prove to be a valid investment for the ordinary activity to come.

1. Theoretical / practical trainings (workshops) on how to manage conflicts with / among people (individual level)

Who

- key roles in organizations and groups (project managers, supervisors, coordinators, team leaders, grassroots group leaders)
- operational and frontline roles (operators, volunteers, active citizens)

Goals

- to provide general skills about the maieutic management of conflicts in relationships
- to support the management of relations within the organization and with the beneficiaries
- Self-empowerment

General contents

See above: section What is conflicting approach > At individual level

2. Theoretical / practical seminars and workshops about the conflictive competence in organizational culture

Who

- Key roles in organizations and groups (project managers, supervisors, coordinators, team leaders, grassroots group leaders)

Goals

- to provide general skills about the maieutic management of conflicts in organizations
- to support the reading of the context and the management of choices and strategic changes during COVID-19 pandemic
- to implement cohesion procedures and a conflictive cooperative model

General contents

See above: section What is conflicting approach > At group / organization level

Follow-up actions

- super-vision actions for workgroups
- periodic consultancies for key-roles

COVID-19 IMPACT ON AUTHORITIES AND DONORS SUPPORT

Daniele Bombardi

Manager of the project "ELBA - Development of Social Economy in South East Europe" Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The consequences of the COVID-19 crisis were not easy to face for the CSOs, as the lockdown blocked for months all their activities (projects implementation, provision of services, selling of products) while the costs were continuing to be present (staff salaries, running costs, and other). These elements provoked soon an emergency for the proper management of the organizations, and the CSOs started to look for financial and material support from the local authorities in their countries and communities, as well as from the national and international donors and social investors.

The Governments in South East Europe put in place support measures for the immediate recover of economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, even if they were targeting mainly health institution and economic actors, excluding or taking into poor consideration the needs of the CSOs.

As stated by many CSOs involved in the survey:

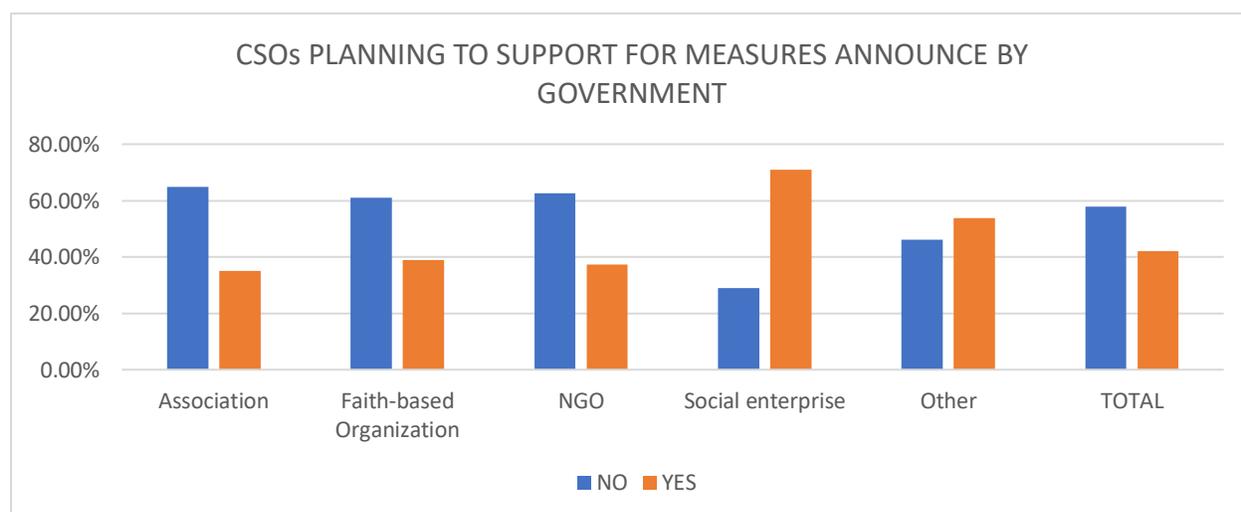
- *"We can't use the governments' measures because they are created for private sector companies only". (CSO from Serbia);*
- *"In this challenging situation caused by the COVID-19, the State has chosen to allocate all its economic resources to health care and, moreover, it is not in the culture of our State to provide aid to organizations dealing with civil society "(CSO from Albania);*
- *"We did not receive now, and we did not have any support even before COVID-19". (CSO from BiH);*
- *"The government measures do not include the NGO sector, despite the fact that 110 NGOs sent a letter to the government to support the sector" (CSO from Albania);*
- *"Support measures are not prescribed for our services" (CSO from Montenegro);*
- *"Associations do not belong to any group of measures prepared and implemented by governments and authorities at all levels of government. People with disabilities are completely discriminated in these measures" (CSO from BiH);*
- *"There have been no measures announced by our government in support of social enterprises" (CSO from Bulgaria).*

It is interesting to notice that the Social Enterprises are the only category of CSOs trying regularly to apply for the Governmental support (71% of them stated they are applying). This fact is probably linked to the recognition of their legal status as economic person, so they are eligible for the measures supporting the enterprises.

The other CSOs with a different legal status (such as Associations, NGOs, Faith-based organizations) are in general poorly involved in the support measures: only 35-38% of them are applying.

TABLE 55 - ARE YOU PLANNING TO APPLY FOR THE SUPPORT MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF YOUR COUNTRY?

| CSOs legal status | NO | YES |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Association | 64.91% | 35.09% |
| Faith-based Organization | 61.11% | 38.89% |
| NGO | 62.65% | 37.35% |
| Social enterprise | 28.95% | 71.05% |
| Other | 46.15% | 53.85% |
| TOTAL | 57.89% | 42.11% |



As a consequence, the CSOs are mainly looking to non-governmental sources in order to receive the financial and material support needed in this emergency phase: almost 2 out of 3 (65,3% of the CSOs) are contacting social investors, donors and foundations, they are organizing their own fundraising campaigns, and they are applying to different calls for proposals for the CSO sector.

TABLE 56 - Are you seeking funding or finance from non-government sources?

| | No. of CSOs | % |
|-----|-------------|--------|
| NO | 68 | 34.69% |
| YES | 128 | 65.31% |



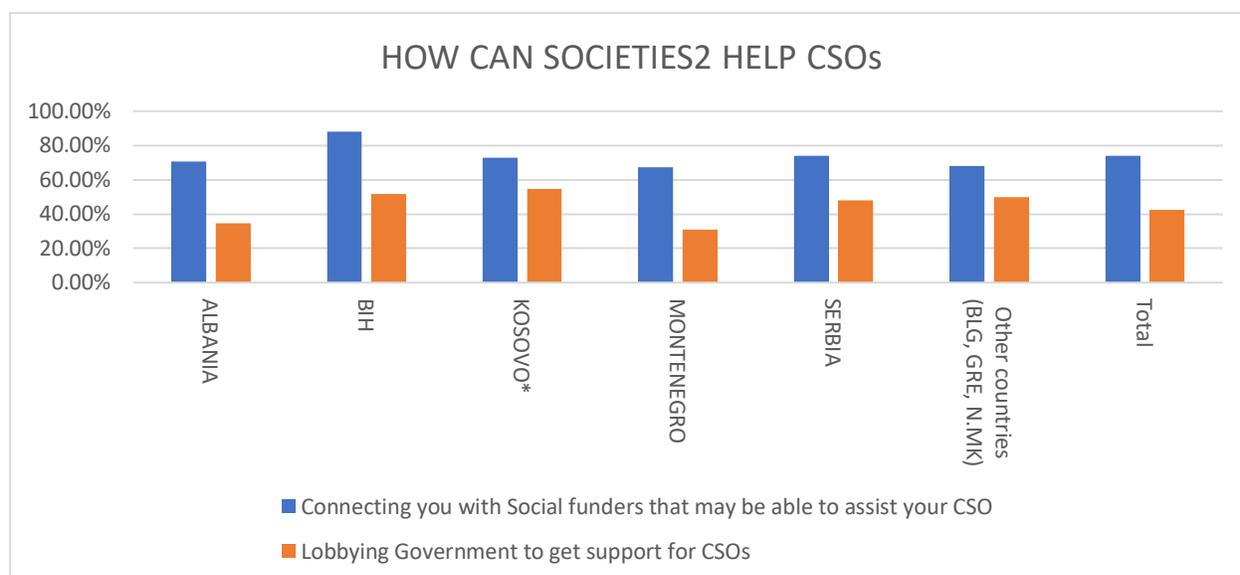
However, this request for non-governmental funds has not produced results and effects yet. The CSOs stated that it is not easy to find social investors already available to grant funds for COVID-19 recovery. At the same time, there are very few open calls for proposals in this sense. Therefore, the vast majority of CSOs is still waiting either for the answers of the donors, or the evaluation of the project proposals, or the finalization of the fundraising campaigns:

- *“It is difficult: it seems that social investors are also panicking about what tomorrow will lead to”* (CSO from Albania);
- *“We apply on open calls for civil society organizations, but there aren't any recently”* (CSO from Serbia);
- *“We are trying to present our association, its goals and objectives, our program and our emergency needs to different donors. However, COVID-19 restrictions have greatly barred us from creating contacts and stipulating agreements”* (CSO from Albania);
- *“We are making efforts to find resources from private sponsors and institutions, in addition we are trying to raise the awareness of the local population to make even a small one donation”* (CSO from Greece).

The CSOs from the South East Europe are anyway looking with more hope to the non-governmental social investors rather than to the Governmental support mechanisms. This is evident also in the CSOs requests to project SOCIETIES 2, where the answer ‘connecting with social funders (74,1%) is much more required in all the countries than ‘lobbying Government to get support’ (42,5%).

TABLE 57 - HOW CAN SOCIETIES 2 PROJECT HELP YOU THE MOST IN THIS SITUATION?

| COUNTRY | Connecting you with Social funders that may be able to assist your CSO | Lobbying Government to get support for CSOs |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| ALBANIA | 70.69% | 34.48% |
| BIH | 87.93% | 51.72% |
| KOSOVO* | 72.73% | 54.55% |
| MONTENEGRO | 67.31% | 30.77% |
| SERBIA | 74.07% | 48.15% |
| Other countries (BLG, GRE, N.MK) | 67.86% | 50.00% |
| Total | 74.06% | 42.48% |

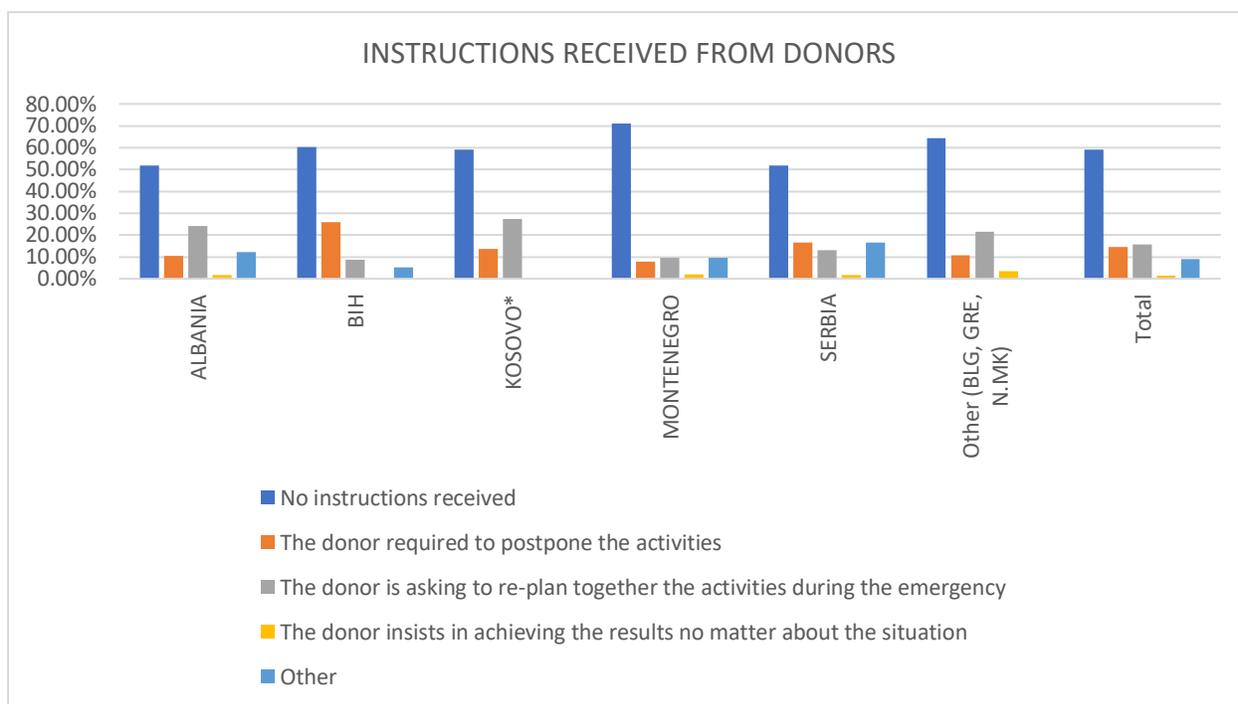


Finally, it is important to underline that the CSOs have been generally supported by their back donors when it comes to the implementation of already existing projects or services, as it was impossible during the COVID-19 to organize the activities as originally planned.

The donors rarely insisted on achieving the projects results even during the pandemic (only 1,5% of the cases) while they were available in postponing the activities or re-planning the project structures (30,5% of the cases).

TABLE 58 - DID YOU RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DONORS ABOUT HOW TO RE-ORGANIZE THE PROJECTS IN THIS PHASE?

| COUNTRY | No instructions received | The donor required to postpone the activities | The donor is asking to re-plan together the activities during the emergency | The donor insists in achieving the results no matter about the situation | Other |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|--|--------------|
| ALBANIA | 51.72% | 10.34% | 24.14% | 1.72% | 12.07% |
| BIH | 60.34% | 25.86% | 8.62% | 0.00% | 5.17% |
| KOSOVO* | 59.09% | 13.64% | 27.27% | 0.00% | 0.00% |
| MONTENEGRO | 71.15% | 7.69% | 9.62% | 1.92% | 9.62% |
| SERBIA | 51.85% | 16.67% | 12.96% | 1.85% | 16.67% |
| Other (BLG, GRE, N.MK) | 64.29% | 10.71% | 21.43% | 3.57% | 0.00% |
| Total | 59.02% | 14.66% | 15.79% | 1.50% | 9.02% |



The creation of new relationships between CSOs and their stakeholders (donors, institutions)

As a conclusion, taking into consideration the findings related to the needs of the CSOs from the South East Europe on one hand, and the findings related to the relationship with donors and authorities on the other, it is clear that a new relationship is needed in the post-COVID phase between CSOs and their stakeholders.

So far, the pro-active approach of the CSOs in the region toward their donors was poorly developed: for many reasons, the CSOs were used to have mainly a “passive” approach toward the donors or the institutions. The donor (public or private) was usually the one defining the “rules of the game” during call for proposals or tenders: topics, priorities, eligibility of applicants and costs, timeframe, methodologies are given by the donor, and the CSOs could simply decide if those rules are worthwhile to apply or not.

The crisis provoked by the COVID-19 makes these instruments inadequate for overcoming the consequences on the CSOs. In a very limited time, and in an unpredictable way, the crisis affected so many aspects of the social and economic life in South East Europe – at personal, community, economic and institutional level. It is impossible for anyone to understand the variety and the severity of all these aspects, as the ramification of the consequences is too large and still ongoing.

In this framework, it is extremely difficult that a donor (especially a foreign donor) can deeply understand the new scenario at social, economic and political level in each country. Consequently, the launch of call for proposals or tenders in this phase includes a high risk of “missing the target”, as the granted actions cannot fully take into consideration the new reality and cannot respond to the new needs and challenges.

Taking into consideration these elements, the CSOs in South East Europe should quickly make a step forward and become more pro-active in the relationship with their donors. Their territory has changed so deeply and so quickly, as has probably never happened before in the last 25 years – maybe the only similar situation is the collapse of the communist regimes in early Nineties, when all the social and economic rules in the region were modified in few months. In this scenario, the CSOs are anyway grass-root actors that are able to better highlight the new gaps of the territory, the new poverties and social exclusion mechanisms that have been created by the COVID-19 crisis.

Their voice is extremely important in this phase, and the CSOs can fully claim the right of being involved in the process of definition of rules, topics, priorities, eligibility of costs when it comes to donors’ investments. The CSOs can no longer accept passively any kind of rules or conditions for the use of the donors’ funds: the situation is fully new, and more adequate instruments are needed.

The CSOs sector sometimes believes that this pro-active approach is “bothering” the donors, so they feel “ashamed” in asking for different conditions. On the contrary, in this phase the CSOs should play two important cards:

- it is in the interest of the donor to invest properly its own money, by producing the highest possible impact: the pro-active requests of the CSOs will not “disturb”, but rather “help” the donor in using its money in the best way;
- the CSOs in the region showed in the last 10-15 years a very high level of accountability, professionalism, transparency and commitment (e.g. many CSOs have become able to manage different EU funds), so they should understand the potential they have in influencing decisions, managing social process, fighting exclusion and poverty. Often the donors in the region trust the CSOs’ sector even more than the public institutions, and they are opened to suggestion on how to boost the development of civil society.

This process should be immediately activated, and it is extremely important to make it through networks: a single CSO is too little to significantly influence the decisions of a donor, while the network of CSOs (e.g. the network of all the CSOs working in disability and mental health, as it is the case of the project “SOCIETIES 2”) has the proper power to address joint requests, suggestions and proposals to the (public and private) donors on how to join the forces and overcome the COVID-19 consequences in the region.

REQUESTS TO PROJECT SOCIETIES 2

Andrea Barachino

President of Consorzio Communitas - Milano, Italy.

The CSOs involved in the survey were asked how the SOCIETIES 2 project can help right now. The purpose of the question is twofold: on one hand, to allow the project to re-calibrate some actions in order to better respond to the emerging needs of CSOs; on the other hand, to stimulate the organizations to think about the project as a resource that can be activated in a network perspective, in this changed, post COVID-19 context.

As for the previous questions, the answers were divided by country, status, and area of intervention. In all countries the main help required by the project is of two types:

- a) connection and lobby work;
- b) allocation of funds.

The first type includes connections with funders and donors and this is a need in all countries; while the lobby work with the institutions highlights the exception of Albania and Montenegro for which the need for help by the project is less felt on this issue. These responses can be influenced by the already existing internal lobbying capacity of organizations and their national networks, as well as by the methods of consultation envisaged in their respective countries.

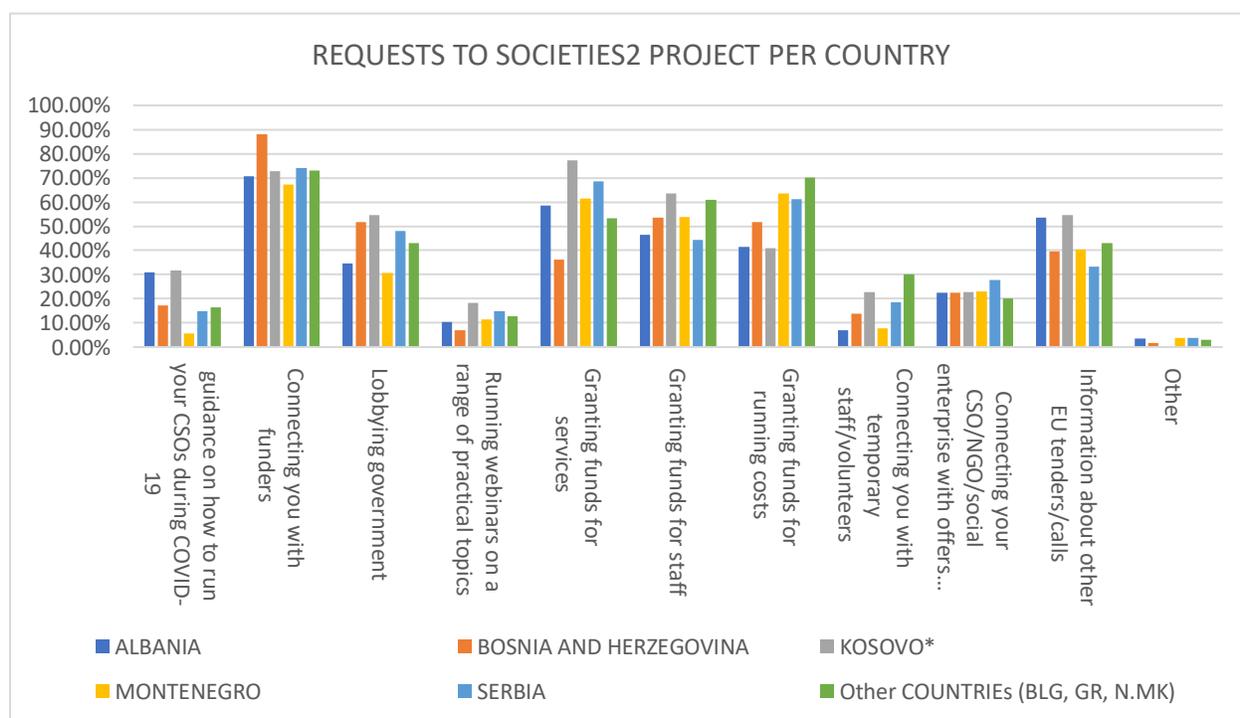
The second type of requested aid focuses on the economic aspects and the guarantee of funds. The variability of responses and requests (costs for services, staff costs, operating costs) is probably influenced by the type of charges that can be financed by organizations within their usual funding channels and, partially, by the classification of costs themselves in the accounting systems. The request for help to cover costs, in the various types described above, reaches peaks of 70% (in the case of Kosovo*, financing for services reaches even values close to 80%). Lower values, but still significant, are present in the responses of the organizations of Albania and BiH for this type of question.

Finally, another request that is present in all the countries concerns the help that the project could provide regarding the information on tenders and calls for proposals from the European Union (in this case the values oscillate between 40 and 50% except for the organizations in Serbia for whom this need is felt by just over 30% of organizations).

Other requests related to training aspects regarding COVID-19 or other specific topics are less highlighted or, maybe, the SOCIETIES 2 project is not seen as the main stakeholder for them.

TABLE 59 - Request to project SOCIETIES 2 per country

| COUNTRY | GUIDANCE ON HOW TO RUN YOUR CSOS DURING COVID-19 | CONNECTING YOU WITH FUNDERS | LOBBYING GOVERNMENT | RUNNING WEBINARS ON A RANGE OF PRACTICAL TOPICS | GRANTING FUNDS FOR SERVICES | GRANTING FUNDS FOR STAFF | GRANTING FUNDS FOR RUNNING COSTS | CONNECTING YOU WITH TEMPORARY STAFF/VOLUNTEERS | CONNECTING YOUR CSO/NGO/SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WITH OFFERS OF IN-KIND SUPPORT | INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER EU TENDERS/CALLS | OTHER |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--------|
| ALBANIA | 31.03 % | 70.69 % | 34.48 % | 10.34 % | 58.62 % | 46.55 % | 41.38 % | 6.90 % | 22.41 % | 53.45 % | 3.45 % |
| BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA | 17.24 % | 87.93 % | 51.72 % | 6.90% | 36.21 % | 53.45 % | 51.72 % | 13.79 % | 22.41 % | 39.66 % | 1.72 % |
| KOSOVO* | 31.82 % | 72.73 % | 54.55 % | 18.18 % | 77.27 % | 63.64 % | 40.91 % | 22.73 % | 22.73 % | 54.55 % | 0.00 % |
| MONTENEGRO | 5.77% | 67.31 % | 30.77 % | 11.54 % | 61.54 % | 53.85 % | 63.46 % | 7.69 % | 23.08 % | 40.38 % | 3.85 % |
| SERBIA | 14.81 % | 74.07 % | 48.15 % | 14.81 % | 68.52 % | 44.44 % | 61.11 % | 18.52 % | 27.78 % | 33.33 % | 3.70 % |
| OTHER COUNTRIES (BLG, GR, N.MK) | 16.50 % | 73.06 % | 42.93 % | 12.79 % | 53.37 % | 60.94 % | 70.03 % | 30.13 % | 20.20 % | 42.93 % | 3.03 % |

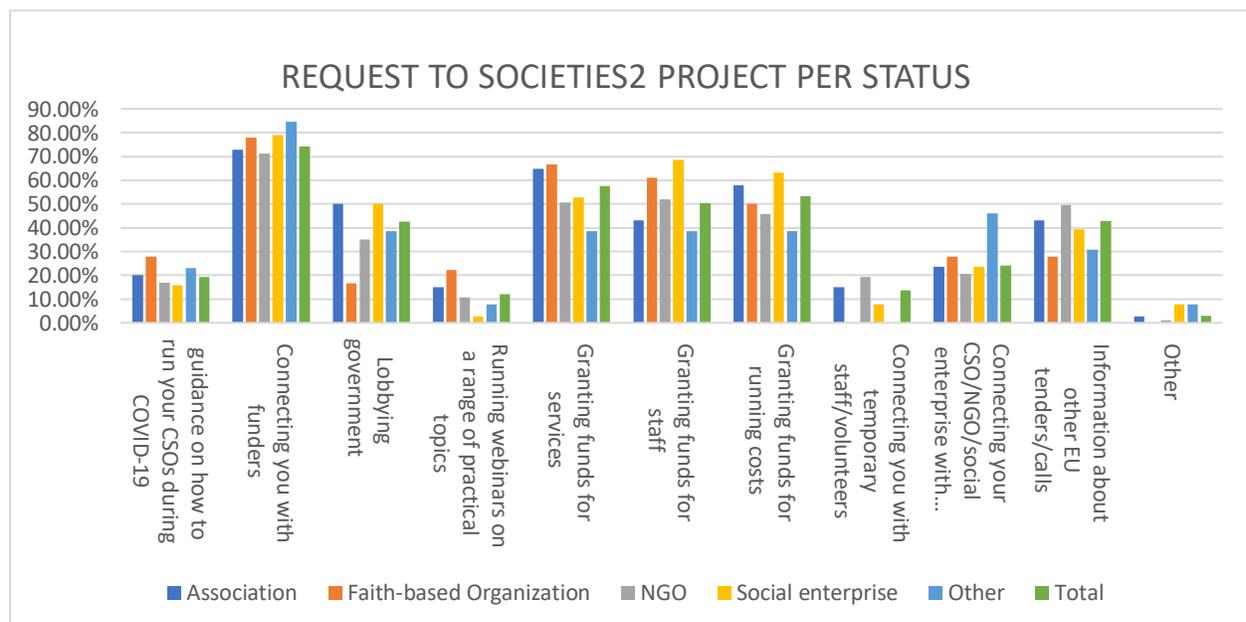


If the answers are analyzed by type of CSOs, the priorities of the requests do not change. However, it should be noted that, while the contact work with the social funders is required in a transversal way, the request for support in lobbying activities by Faith-based organizations is not very present (especially when compared to Associations and Social Enterprises). An explanation for this could be related to the general mission of the different kind of CSOs.

The request for support in the procurement of funds is instead transversely felt among all organizations with different declinations between the various areas.

TABLE 60 - Request to project SOCIETIES 2 per status

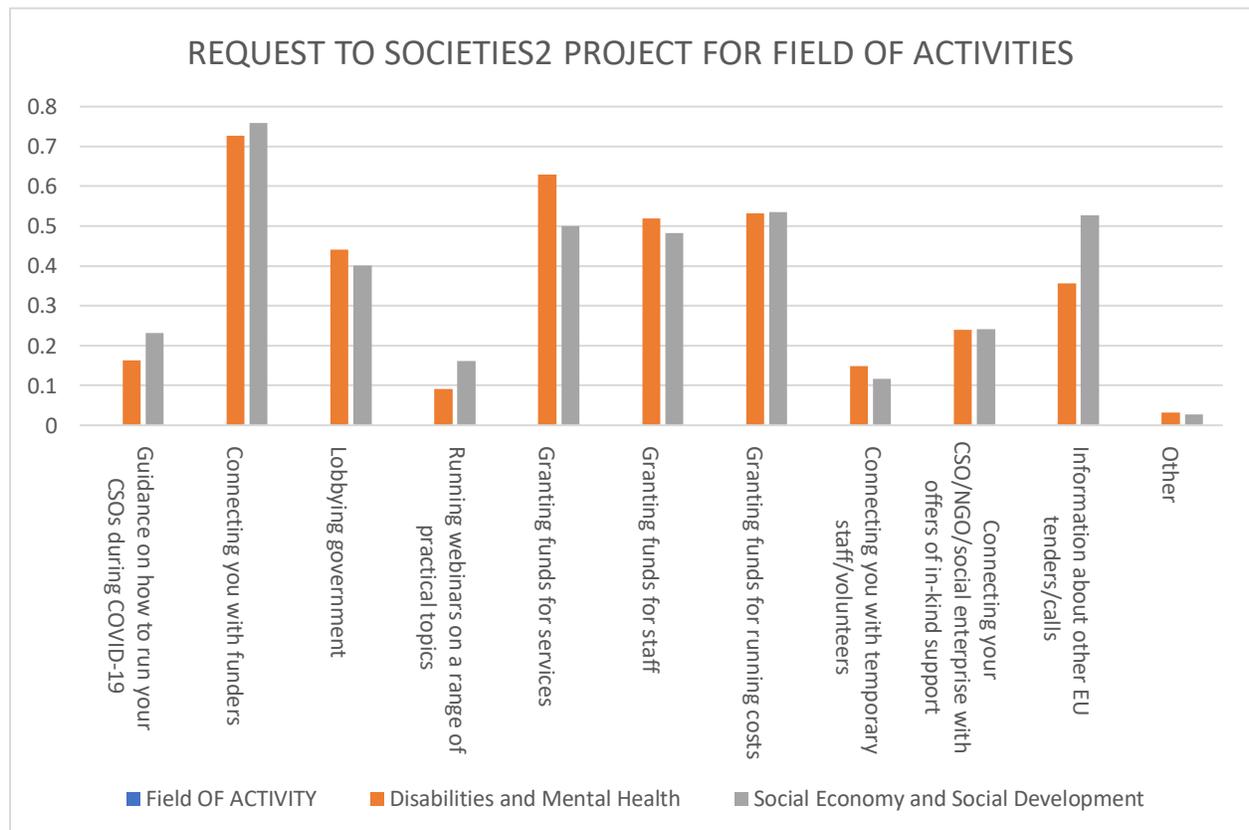
| STATUS | GUIDANCE ON HOW TO RUN YOUR CSOS DURING COVID-19 | CONNECTING YOU WITH FUNDERS | LOBBYING GOVERNMENT | RUNNING WEBINARS ON A RANGE OF PRACTICAL TOPICS | GRANTING FUNDS FOR SERVICES | GRANTING FUNDS FOR STAFF | GRANTING FUNDS FOR RUNNING COSTS | CONNECTING YOU WITH TEMPORARY STAFF/VOI UNTEFFRS | CONNECTING YOUR CSO/NGO/SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WITH OFFERS OF IN-KIND | INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER EU TENDERS/CALLS | OTHER |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|------------------|
| ASSOCIATION | 20.18 % | 72.81 % | 50.00 % | 14.91 % | 64.91 % | 42.98 % | 57.89 % | 14.91 % | 23.68 % | 42.98 % | 2.6 3% |
| FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION | 27.78 % | 77.78 % | 16.67 % | 22.22 % | 66.67 % | 61.11 % | 50.00 % | 0.00 % | 27.78 % | 27.78 % | 0.0 0% |
| NGO | 16.87 % | 71.08 % | 34.94 % | 10.84 % | 50.60 % | 51.81 % | 45.78 % | 19.28 % | 20.48 % | 49.40 % | 1.2 0% |
| SOCIAL ENTERPRISE | 15.79 % | 78.95 % | 50.00 % | 2.63 % | 52.63 % | 68.42 % | 63.16 % | 7.89 % | 23.68 % | 39.47 % | 7.8 9% |
| OTHER | 23.08 % | 84.62 % | 38.46 % | 7.69 % | 38.46 % | 38.46 % | 38.46 % | 0.00 % | 46.15 % | 30.77 % | 7.6 9% |
| TOTAL | 19.17 % | 74.06 % | 42.48 % | 12.03 % | 57.52 % | 50.38 % | 53.38 % | 13.53 % | 24.06 % | 42.86 % | 3.0 1% |



Finally, the classification with regards to the field of activity of the organizations does not highlight particular differences between the two areas in which the data were classified.

TABLE 61 - Request to project SOCIETIES 2 per field of activities

| FIELD OF ACTIVITY | GUIDANCE ON HOW TO RUN YOUR CSOS DURING COVID-19 | CONNECTING YOU WITH FUNDERS | LOBBYING GOVERNMENT | RUNNING WEBINARS ON A RANGE OF PRACTICAL TOPICS | GRANTING FUNDS FOR SERVICES | GRANTING FUNDS FOR STAFF | GRANTING FUNDS FOR RUNNING COSTS | CONNECTING YOU WITH TEMPORARY STAFF/VOLUNTEERS | CONNECTING YOUR CSO/NGO/SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WITH OFFERS OF IN-KIND SUPPORT | INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER EU TENDERS/CALLS | OTHER |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--------|
| DISABILITIES AND MENTAL HEALTH | 16.23 % | 72.73% | 44.16% | 9.09 % | 62.9 % | 51.9 % | 53.2 % | 14.94% | 24.03% | 35.71% | 3.25 % |
| SOCIAL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT | 23.21 % | 75.89% | 40.18% | 16.07 % | 50.0 % | 48.2 % | 53.5 % | 11.61% | 24.11% | 52.68% | 2.68 % |



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 OUTBREAK ON SOCIAL ECONOMY IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Tiziana Ciampolini¹, Daniele Bombardi²

¹ CEO S-nodi, Innovation against inequalities, BCorp and association, PhD in Politics and Economics, Torino, Italy.

² Manager of the project "ELBA - Development of Social Economy in South East Europe" Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

INTRODUCTION

Social Economy, a new tool for the CSOs

In the last years, the CSOs in South East Europe were involved in a complex development process, related to their work and methodologies, in order to face the new challenges of the modern times.

From one side, the CSOs have been required to strengthen their mechanisms of self-sustainability: it was clear that, after the post-war time and the transition period in the Balkans, the CSOs of the region could not benefit anymore of the large financial and technical support from many donors from abroad. Their survival was then strictly related to the capacity of diversifying their financial incomes, by accessing more and more to the local resources, both public and private.

From the other side, the CSOs were also required to innovate their services and activities, as the social situation in the region was evolving, and the needs of the most vulnerable categories were changing. The activities of the CSOs as done in the post-war time were not anymore relevant, as the institutional framework had changed and new issues were emerging in the communities.

For these reasons, many CSOs started to explore the Social Economy sector, as one of the possible response to the new challenges: Social Economy allows the CSOs to create benefit and profit through market-based activities, and at the same time stimulates the innovation and the new practices in order to satisfy the needs of the clients and the customers. Moreover, Social Economy experiences can produce changes within the local communities, by introducing a more fair and sustainable way of doing business.

Synergies between the project “SOCIETIES 2” and other Social Economy related projects

In this framework, it is important to underline as many of the partners involved in the project “SOCIETIES 2” are already cooperating in the Social Economy sector for more than 5 years.

In particular, they are jointly developing 2 main projects in this sector: the project “ELBA - Development of Social Economy in South East Europe” started in 2014 and still ongoing (mainly supported with funds from the Caritas network all over Europe and involving 8 countries), and the recently approved project “Employ Yourself - Employment opportunities for youth in social economy” (Erasmus Plus Programme, Key Action 2, Western Balkans Window - involving 8 countries too). The same experience of the project “SOCIETIES” (first phase, 2016-2019) was composed by an important component of Social Economy experiences for the CSOs working in Mental health and Disabilities. There are also other bilateral projects, especially in the cross-border cooperation (IPA funds), that were focusing on Social Economy experiences - such as the recent cross-border projects “Option” and “Power” between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro.

Among the different activities proposed by these projects (education, study visits, monitoring, lobbying), one of the main outcomes produced by this joint effort is the growth of new Social Enterprises in the region. The project partners were able to launch different Sub-Granting schemes in the last 5 years, to allow the CSOs from the region to start-up their own new Social Enterprises or to strengthen their already existing Social Enterprises. More than 80 Social Enterprises all over the region received a financial contribution in the last 5 years through these projects, with an overall financial commitment of around 1 million Euro.

The impact of COVID-19 outbreak on Social Economy in South East Europe

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on this scenario starting from March 2020.

The CSOs are social service providers and they represent an important part of the Social Economy, as they provide essential services for many vulnerable South East European citizens, such as employing people with a distance to the labor market. Although the value of these contributions to our society goes beyond monetary value only, accurate data should be collected to fairly represent the value of these services in the GDP.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted once again the vital role that CSOs and social service providers are playing to keep our societies running. However, the measures taken by the Government in the region for reducing the spreading of the diseases obliged the Social Enterprises in stopping or drastically reducing their activities: the majority of them were forced to close their business for 2-3 months, the workers and the management could not even move from their houses, very often the Social Enterprises lost their markets and could not sell the

products or the services for many weeks. Moreover, there are reasonable worries that many negative effects of the crisis will last even longer.

In this scenario, this Research proposed by the project “SOCIETIES 2” for analyzing the impact of COVID-19 outbreak on CSOs in South East Europe was considered of extremely high interest also by the management of the projects “Elba” and “Employ Yourself”. The staff of these 2 projects joined the efforts of the Consorzio Communitas and of the SOCIETIES 2 staff during the process of contacting the local CSOs and Social Enterprises, submitting questionnaires and collecting data.

As the COVID-19 crisis is heavily impacting the Social Economy experiences promoted by the CSOs in South East Europe, this chapter is trying to describe more in detail the consequences of this situation.

FINDINGS

(1) The Social Enterprises are recently born and are very fragile to face such a crisis

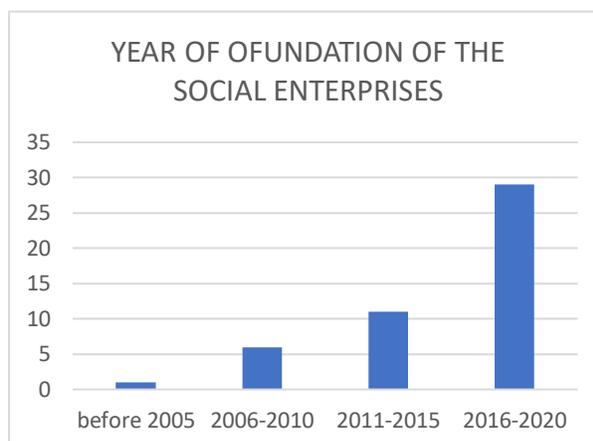
The analysis has involved 47 Social Enterprises coming from 8 countries in South East Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Serbia. The analysis includes both the CSOs registered as ‘social enterprises’ in the countries where there is a Law on social economy; but also CSOs registered under other forms, but *de facto* acting and working fully as social enterprises.

These Social Enterprises are working in the following sectors: Agriculture and food production (16 of them), Craft (10), Graphic and printing services (8), Social and educational services (4), Cleaning services (3), Counselling to other enterprises (3), Tourism (2), Cultural services (1).

Out of these 47 social enterprises, 29 of them have been founded between 2016 and 2020. It means that the large majority of social enterprises are very young, between 0 and 4 years old. This means a high risk of being also very fragile: such a heavy crisis can impact in a dangerous way on this kind of enterprises.

TABLE 62 - Year of foundation of the Social Enterprises

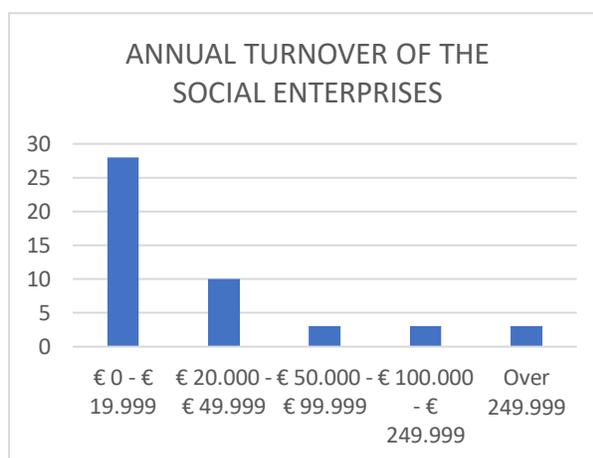
| Year of foundation | No. Social Enterprises |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| before 2005 | 1 |
| 2006-2010 | 6 |
| 2011-2015 | 11 |
| 2016-2020 | 29 |



The fragile and small-scale dimension of the social enterprises is confirmed also by other significant data: out of 47, 41 of them are micro and small enterprises having an annual turnover under 50.000 euro; and 39 social enterprises are employing less than 10 people.

TABLE 63 - Annual turnover of the Social Enterprises

| Annual turnover | Nr. Social Enterprises |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| € 0 - € 19.999 | 28 |
| € 20.000 - € 49.999 | 10 |
| € 50.000 - € 99.999 | 3 |
| € 100.000 - € 249.999 | 3 |
| Over 249.999 | 3 |

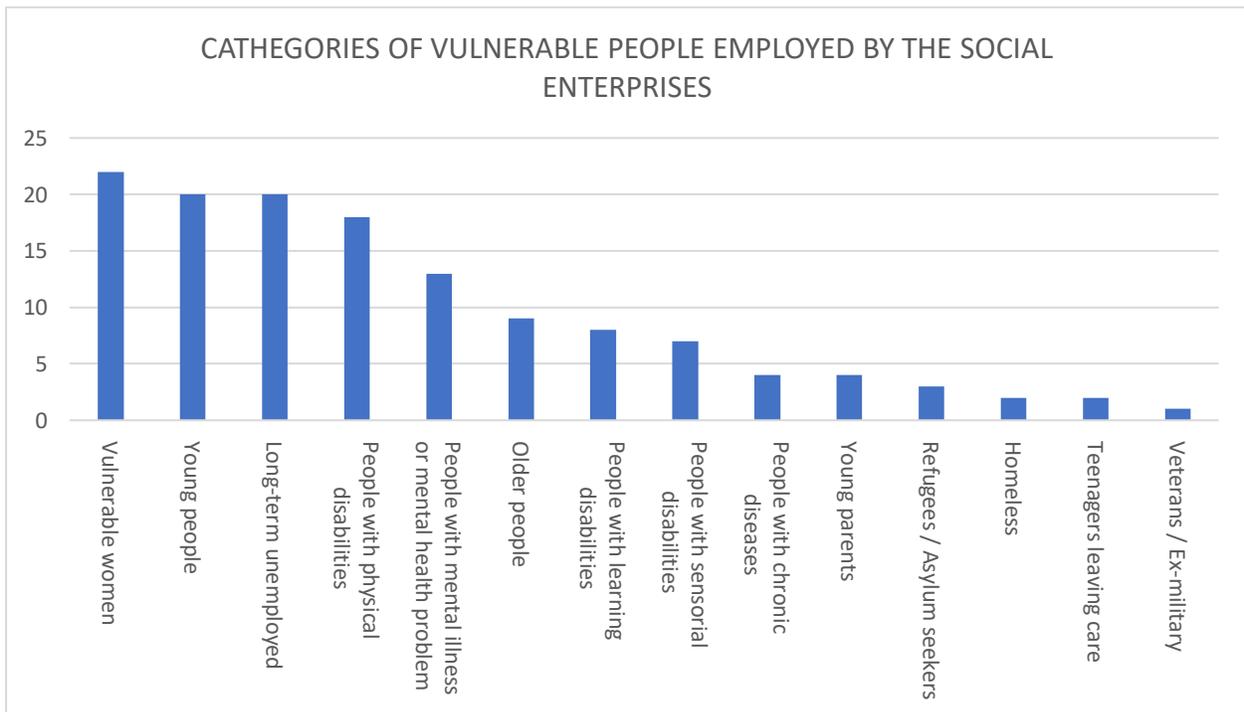


(2) The main added value of the Social Enterprises is the work and social inclusion of vulnerable people

Even if the Social Enterprises are quite young and fragile, and their economic and monetary value is not so developed, anyway all of them are producing a very high social value: the work and social inclusion of vulnerable people. It is noticeable that also the smallest or the youngest social enterprises are giving work opportunities to people in social exclusion: the majority of social enterprises are employing vulnerable women, youngsters (the youth are a very fragile group in South East Europe, very often forced to migrate), long-term unemployed, and to people with different kind of disabilities (physical, psychic, intellectual or sensorial).

TABLE 64 - Categories of vulnerable people employed by the Social Enterprises

| Vulnerable people employed | No. Social enterprises |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Vulnerable women | 22 |
| Young people | 20 |
| Long-term unemployed | 20 |
| People with physical disabilities | 18 |
| People with mental illness or mental health problem | 13 |
| Older people | 9 |
| People with learning disabilities | 8 |
| People with sensorial disabilities | 7 |
| People with chronic diseases | 4 |
| Young parents | 4 |
| Refugees / Asylum seekers | 3 |
| Homeless | 2 |
| Teenagers leaving care | 2 |
| Veterans / Ex-military | 1 |



The social value of these social enterprises is often considered even most important than the economic aspect: people (and especially vulnerable people) are at the center of the life and mission of the enterprise.

A Social enterprise from Bulgaria stated: *“Our most urgent need at the moment is to receive financial support to keep our social enterprise going. If supported, we could pay small but critically important amount of money to vulnerable people we work with, for the production of souvenirs and accessories they keep making. In this way disabled children and their families, unemployed asylum seeking and refugee women and children at risk, will continue working in their social integration.”*

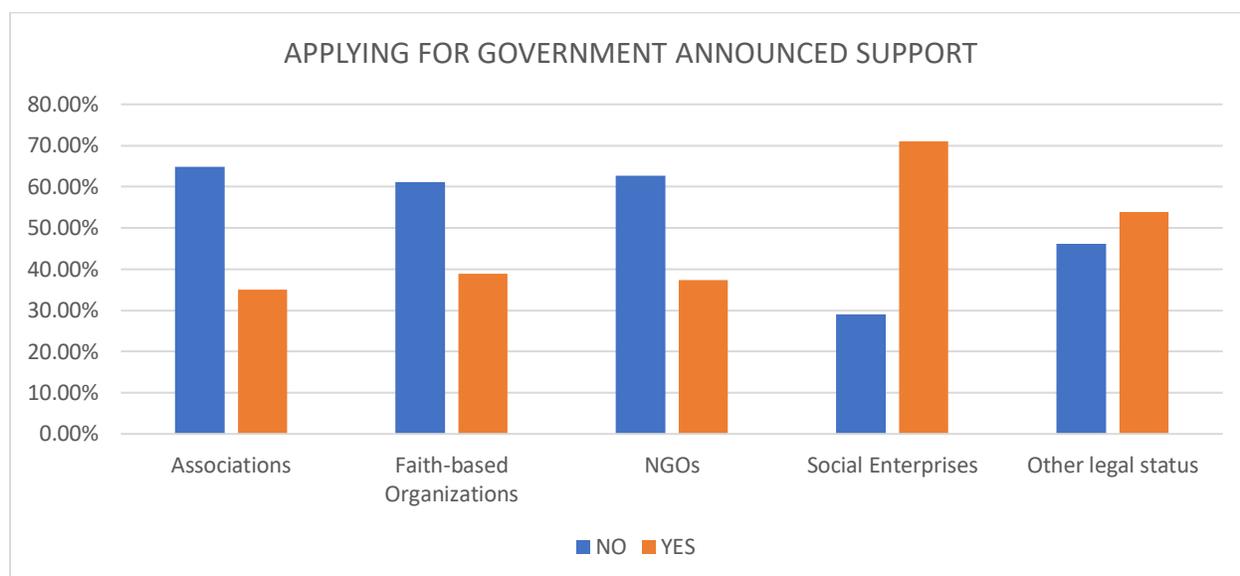
(3) In the CSOs sector, the legal form “Social Enterprise” in the one giving more protection to workers

Out of the 47 Social Enterprises in analysis, the COVID-19 outbreak obliged 23 of them in fully stopping their production for a certain period of time and imposed to other 20 to drastically reduce their activities. Nevertheless, it is extremely important to underline that no Social Enterprises have fired their workers in this period.

One of the reasons for the maintenance of the staff, is probably the fact that the Social enterprises are applying to public support measures much more than the other kind of CSOs. Even in countries without a specific Law on Social Enterprises, anyway the legal form “Enterprise” is more recognized by the local Governments than other CSOs forms and can access to more support programs.

TABLE 65 - Are you applying to the support measures announced by the Government of your country?

| Legal form of the CSOs | NO | YES |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Associations | 64.91% | 35.09% |
| Faith-based Organizations | 61.11% | 38.89% |
| NGOs | 62.65% | 37.35% |
| Social Enterprises | 28.95% | 71.05% |
| Other legal status | 46.15% | 53.85% |



Anyway, the limited dimension of the Social Enterprises (see Finding 1) cannot guarantee a long-term protection of the workers. If the crisis will persist and the support mechanisms remain weak, the Social Enterprises are risking to fail (and the workers to lose their job) or they need to drastically re-organize the production (by putting the workers under heavy work conditions and/or with very low salaries).

RECOMMENDATIONS

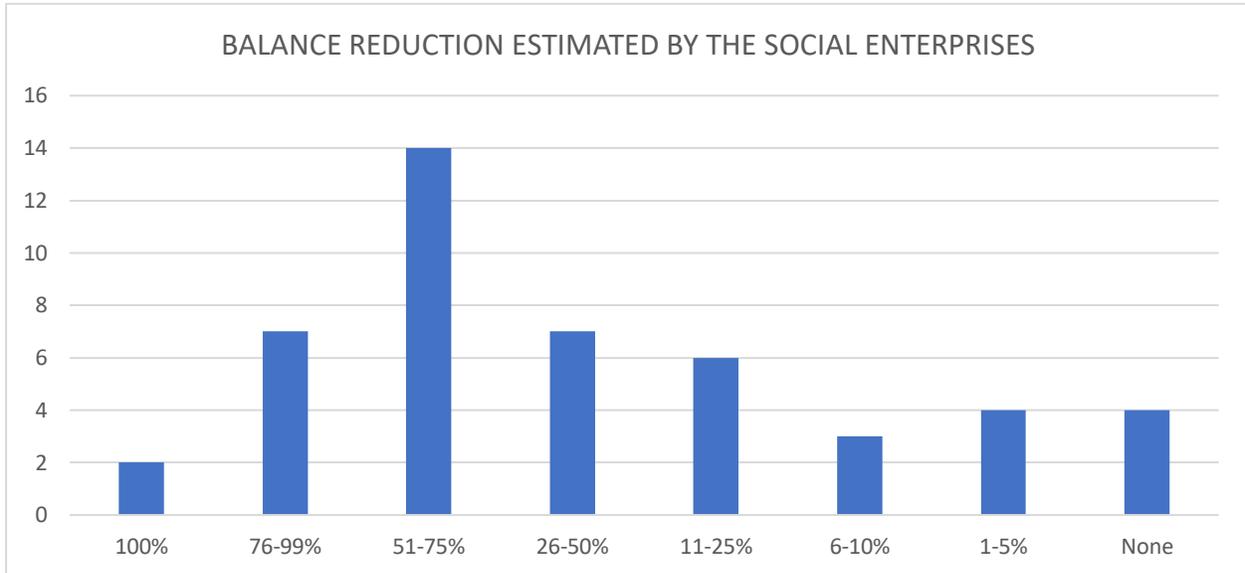
(1) The time is limited, the support is urgent. Many Social Enterprises will fail after the summer if not properly supported.

The COVID-19 crisis produced very critical balance reductions for the Social Enterprises. Half of them (23 out of 47) estimated an economic damage of more than 50% of their balance.

TABLE 66 - Balance reduction estimated by the Social Enterprises because of the COVID-19 crisis

| % of balance reduction | No. social enterprises |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 100% | 2 |
| 76-99% | 7 |
| 51-75% | 14 |
| 26-50% | 7 |
| 11-25% | 6 |

| | |
|-------|---|
| 6-10% | 3 |
| 1-5% | 4 |
| None | 4 |

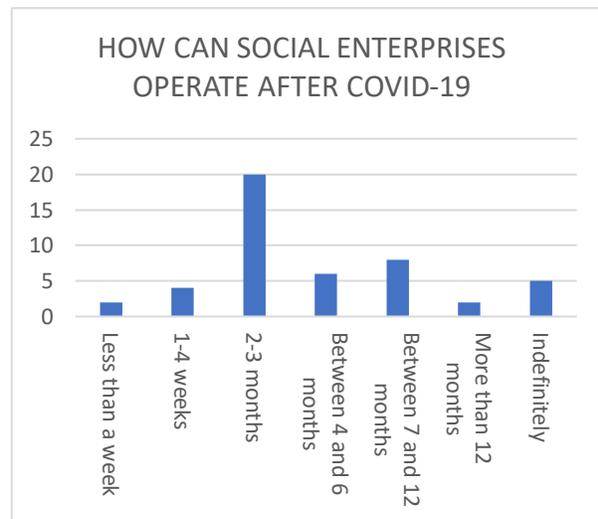


In these dramatic conditions, the Social Enterprises cannot resist for a long time. Out of 47, 26 Social Enterprises can survive still maximum 2 to 3 months, while the remaining 21 social enterprises can survive even longer. If not adequately supported, many social enterprises will not be able to overcome the summer period.

TABLE 67 - How long the Social Enterprise can continue to operate in these conditions

| Survival time | No. Social Enterprises |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Less than a week | 2 |
| 1-4 weeks | 4 |
| 2-3 months | 20 |
| Between 4 and 6 months | 6 |
| Between 7 and 12 months | 8 |
| More than 12 months | 2 |
| Indefinitely | 5 |

A



Social Enterprise from Bosnia and Herzegovina stated: *“We are a small agricultural cooperative founded 2 years ago, in order to give a real work opportunity for people with disabilities and other vulnerable people. We are producing aromatic herbs and micro-vegetables. We were*

having very good results: our main clients were the hotels and restaurants of the capital city, Sarajevo, and we were also placing our products in the main supermarket chain in the country. With the COVID-19 outbreak, the measures introduced by the Government literally cancelled our market in one night: from March 1st it is forbidden for hotels and restaurants to work, and in the supermarket the customers are buying many essential goods, avoiding our products. We can estimate our balance reduction in 1 month of around 75%. If the situation continues in this way, our cooperative cannot survive more than a month”.

(2) The private market looks as a good option to give more strength to Social Enterprises.

The Social Enterprises are mainly selling their products and services to private customers, rather than to public clients. Out of 47, 20 Social Enterprises are having other businesses/organizations as main clients, while other 14 Social Enterprises are selling their products and services in the general market to individuals and citizens. Only 10 Social Enterprises are selling their products and services to public clients (local municipalities, government, health or social services).

Many economic analysts stated that the COVID-19 crisis will heavily impact on the public budgets of Governments and local institutions in the following months, maybe years: so, a drastic reduction of public funds is also to be expected in the countries of South East Europe. There is a real risk of cuts in the budget available for social and health services, and by consequence the CSOs and the Social Enterprise can benefit of much less support for managing their services with public funds (e.g. Daily centers actually financed by the Municipality budgets).

On the other hand, the COVID-19 crisis is modifying the requests of the private customers, as people and private enterprises are having new needs and priorities, so it is important for the Social Enterprises to explore the new sectors required by the private market.

(3) The keywords for the Social Enterprises in the future will be: creativity, flexibility, essential goods.

So far, the Social Enterprises were poorly able to meet the new opportunities created by the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis: 37 Social Enterprises out of 47 stated that they were not able to meet the new demand.

If the Social Enterprises will continue to offer the same products and services, the risk is that they will lose their “traditional” markets in the post-COVID scenario (as the needs are changing) and, at the same time, they will not be able to access the new market possibilities. In this sense, a

much higher degree of creativity and flexibility is required: all the Social Enterprises need to think about the possibility of enlarge, modify, adapt their offer of products and services.

The South East European region, in the last years, has been more and more affected by different kinds of crisis: natural disasters (floods, earthquakes), humanitarian crisis (migration), political instability, and now the pandemic outbreak. The South East European region was already a fragile ecosystem, and the post-COVID scenario will probably make it even more fragile. For this reason, it can be extremely important for the Social Enterprises to focus on producing essential, primary goods (such as agricultural and food production, craft, services to basic needs), as the demand of these goods is less affected during crisis periods.

The production of non-essential goods and services, even if it sometimes looks more profitable in the short-term, can be extremely risky in South East Europe, because of the repeated crisis in the region.

(4) Digitalization is an opportunity for their Social Enterprises to access new markets, even outside the region

Only 14 Social Enterprises out of 47 stated that they were able to modify their services and their way of working, by using digital tools, smart-working, and online placement of the products. All the other Social Enterprises were not able to use this crisis in order to boost the digital development of their work.

The COVID-19 crisis should become a lesson learned for the Social Enterprises in the region: as new crisis can happen (see Recommendation 3), the Social Enterprises should become more and more able to offer their services online, to continue their production in smart-working, or to reach the market through the internet.

There are few, positive experiences of Social Enterprises in the region that tried to exploit the digital possibilities during the crisis, and the results are encouraging:

- *During the state of emergency, a Facebook page of the local market was created in our city. There, our citizens could ask for what they needed, and whenever someone asked for bicycle service, we offered our services. Positive feedback arrived” (Social Enterprise from Serbia);*

- *“From March 11th we were forced to close everything: the daily center, the rehabilitation workshops, the agricultural activities. Everyone was forced to stay at home: both us as workers, and the people with disabilities - the users of our center. So, we had the idea to start at least something online: our workers invented activities that are accessible to people with disabilities from home. We asked their families to support their children with disabilities to follow the activities online. It’s not easy, but we are trying”* (Social Enterprise from Northern Macedonia);
- *“We, as a group of youngsters, have understood how much social media can be used as education and awareness raising tools. Maybe a good support for the future, in case of similar situations, is to train the CSOs in using social media in different ways: to keep on their work of networking and information”* (Social Enterprise from Albania).

The digital development can offer the possibility to access new markets at local level, but the perspective is also the possibility to access larger European or worldwide markets.

(5) The requests to the project SOCIETIES 2 for supporting the Social Enterprises

The Social Enterprises in the region are addressing very clear requests to the project SOCIETIES

2. The project should help in:

- Connecting the Social Enterprises with social investors and donors (stated by 37 Social Enterprises out of 47), but also in informing about Call for Proposals at local and EU level for the Social Enterprises (21);
- Urgent financial support to pay the running costs (29), the salaries (28) and the services (25), to avoid the financial bankrupt of the Social Enterprise;
- Lobbying toward the public institutions (25) for better protection and stronger support to the Social Enterprises.

As stated by a Social Enterprise from Bosnia and Herzegovina: *“To avoid that our efforts and achieved results are cancelled, to avoid that we need to close up our Social Enterprise, very urgent and very efficient measures are needed. Measures taken by the Governments, but also by our partners, and by our back-donors. An extraordinary support is required in this period, as the same survival of the Social Enterprises is at risk. We need to remedy very soon the losses of this period, we need to re-activate immediately the production, we need to re-start soon the processes*

of rehabilitation, social and work inclusion of people with disabilities that are employed in our enterprise”.

(6) The new alliance between Civil Society and Public institutions, for stronger social protection and sustainable development.

The COVID-19 crisis is offering an opportunity to highlight, on a large scale, some topics and issues that the CSOs sector was already claiming in the last years: the dramatic ecological crisis and its connections with non-sustainable social and economic models, the critical expansion of cities and the consequent abandonment of rural areas, the reduction of the bio-diversity in the local environments, the explosion of trans-national mobility and migrations, the weakened role of the international cooperation.

The unequal policies of the last years largely increased the territorial inequalities. The COVID-19 is showing these inequalities to all European communities (both in Western and Eastern Europe): the growing number of unemployed people or with precarious and irregular jobs, the presence of a large part of population without any savings (unable to survive even few weeks without any income), the uncompleted digital coverage for many people that cannot now access basic services such as schooling, health care, mobility.

If those tendencies are not changed, in a few months the COVID-19 crisis will produce an even higher number of vulnerable territories in Europe, with extremely vulnerable people (women, people with disabilities, long term unemployed, ethnic minorities). The local welfare systems and the community networks, at the moment, are not able to offer an adequate protection to these vulnerable categories.

For these reasons, new community structures are needed, and new public policies are required, in order to develop a new alliance between Civil Society and Public Institutions, oriented toward a more sustainable development. The Social Enterprises can be an important player in the creation and development of this new alliance.

section III

**MAIN FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

General findings about the CSOs mapped by the Research

1. This Research involved 266 CSOs from the region, but the project SOCIETIES was already in contact with many other CSOs. At this stage, the database of the project now includes more than 400 CSOs.
2. The history of the CSOs in SEE countries is relatively new. Among the 266 CSOs interviewed for this Survey, the 94% of them have been created after 1990, when the different communist regimes of the region collapsed. The 72% of the organizations have been created after the year 2000.
3. The existence of the Civil Society Organizations in SEE is strictly related to geographical reasons: 90% of the surveyed CSOs are operating in the capital cities or in other main cities of their countries, while only the 10% of them are in rural areas.
4. Most of the CSOs involved in the Research are small, grass-root CSOs: the 50% of them have an annual turnover of less than 20.000 Euro. Anyway, there is also a significant number of medium-sized CSOs: 32% of them has an annual turnover between 20.000 and 100.000 euro.
5. The human capital of the surveyed CSOs is very relevant. The total number of people hired and working in the various types of CSOs mapped by the research is 3.707, and the CSOs are involving also 3.206 volunteers.
6. The CSOs, and in particular the Social Enterprises, are producing a very high social value: the work and social inclusion of vulnerable people. They are giving work opportunities to people in social exclusion: vulnerable women, youngsters (the youth are a very fragile group in South East Europe, very often forced to migrate), long-term unemployed, and to people with different kind of disabilities (physical, psychic, intellectual or sensorial).

Findings about the operational impact of COVID-19 crisis on the CSOs

7. All the 266 CSOs surveyed have been negatively affected by COVID-19, in terms of changing their funding levels, their way of delivering services, and/or their internal operations. Most of their services have been suspended, most of the CSOs projects

shelved or postponed, and the strong limitation of movement blocked the markets and the services provided.

8. The 40,2% of the CSOs reported that they significantly reduced their services during the pandemic, while the 34,9% of them completely stopped their activities. The 21,8% of the CSOs declared that their staff couldn't come to work for the restrictions and measures adopted by local authorities.
9. The 94,7% of the Social Enterprises were forced to completely stop (50% of them), or significantly reduce their services (the other 44,7%).
10. The Faith-based organizations seem to be the most resilient CSOs: only the 11,1% of them stopped their activities and, at the same time, they have the highest percentage (27,7%) in the capacity to change their services.
11. During COVID-19 pandemic, 160 out of 266 CSOs continued to operate, most of them re-modulating the services and projects, and in most of the cases reducing the volume of their activities. On the other side, 106 CSOs have completely stopped and/or already closed the centers and services.
12. The management of the CSOs experienced heavy troubles during the pandemic: they could not manage their usual services (50% of the CSOs), they had difficulties in paying the staff (37,6%), they have lost grants (31,6%) and incomes (25,2%). The CSOs management feel the urgent need to define contingency plans to properly face this phase of pandemic outbreak (34,5%).
13. About the operational and financial resilience of the CSOs: the 11,6% of them stated they cannot survive more than 1 month in these conditions; the 39,8% reported that they would have to close within 3 months without additional funding; the 73,68% risks to close their activities within six months.
14. The 52,3% of the CSOs declared that they were able to re-modulate their services from home or via smart working. Anyway, this capacity and possibility to implement the services from home is not referred to the entire panorama of services offered by the CSOs, but only to some activities.
15. Social Enterprises are less able than others to re-modulate their services via smart/remote working (78,9% of the cases) - this fact is probably due to the nature and the typologies of products they make. The Faith-based organizations were also poorly able to setup a remote or smart working setting (72,2% did not).

Findings about the economic impact of COVID-19 crisis on the CSOs

16. The 72,2% of the CSOs had negative a economic impact from the pandemic; among them, the CSOs operating with PWDs are suffering more than others (76,6%).
17. All the CSOs with a small-sized to medium-sized turnover (between 20.000-100.000 Euro per year) had a negative economic impact estimated in over 75% of the balance.
18. The monthly impact during the first period of the pandemic was particularly high for Social Enterprises: 60% of them report losses between 50% and 100% of their monthly turnover.
19. Even among the Associations the economic effects were heavy: in the 24% of the cases, there is an overall reduction in monthly revenues between 51 and 75%; and another 22,7% of them estimated monthly reductions of over 75%.
20. 1 out of 4 CSOs was not having any negative economic impact since the pandemic started. The majority of them are small associations and in many cases are led and guided only by volunteers
21. The most problematic costs to cover for the CSOs in this period are 'traditional' costs such as: staffing costs (62,7%); running costs (68,4%); rent costs (28,9%). Anyway, 'new' costs emerged due to the pandemic outbreak such as: IT infrastructures costs (27,8%); costs for the loss or reductions of volunteers input (23,3%).
22. The COVID-19 pandemic has already caused dozens of lost jobs within the CSOs, and this fact is having several consequences: the loss of qualified personnel; the decrease in services in favor of disadvantaged and most vulnerable categories; the loss of skills, knowledge, and good practices developed in the territories; the reduction of the social protection networks in the communities.
23. The Governments in South East Europe put in place support measures for the immediate recover of economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, but they were excluding or taking into poor consideration the needs of the CSOs.
24. The Social Enterprises are the only category of CSOs trying regularly to apply for the Governmental support (71% of them stated they are applying), probably because of their recognition as economic person. The other CSOs with a different legal status are in general poorly involved in the support measures: only 35-38% of them are applying to Governmental support.
25. The CSOs are mainly looking to non-governmental sources in order to receive the financial and material support needed in this emergency phase (65,3% of the CSOs).

However, this request for non-governmental funds has not produced results and effects: it is not easy to find social investors already available to grant funds for COVID-19 recovery, there are very few open calls for proposals, the fundraising campaigns are not yet finalized.

Findings about the impact of COVID-19 crisis on communities and vulnerable people

26. The CSOs have described the health and sanitarian crisis in their territories as intense: around 40% of them stated the COVID-19 affected 'quite a lot' the community, and another 12.8% stated that the impact was 'heavy'.
27. The social and economic effects of the lockdown on the same CSOs are having an even stronger and deeper impact than the health consequences: 65,4% of the CSOs stated that the civil societies in their communities have been 'quite' or 'very' affected by the social and economic consequences.
28. The CSOs in South East Europe played an important role in mitigating and reducing the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis in their communities. A total number of 144 CSOs (around 60% of the total) concretely offered support and organized actions, in particular: donations of food to vulnerable people; distribution of health items (masks, disinfectants); psychological support to isolated people (especially with phone calls or online methods); information sharing to beneficiaries and people in need; activation of volunteers; and, in some cases, even money distribution and financial support.
29. The people most affected by the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis are the already vulnerable persons, which were facing poverty, social exclusion and discrimination even before the pandemic. The 39,8% of the CSOs clearly noticed an increase of request for support especially from those vulnerable people during the last months.
30. Among the vulnerable people, persons with disabilities and with mental health problems are suffering more than others. In fact, the CSOs dealing with Disability and Mental Health noticed an increase of request from their beneficiaries in the 46,1% of the cases - much higher than the requests from the beneficiaries of the CSOs dealing with other topics (31,2%).
31. There was an increase in the number of beneficiaries and in the variety of their needs: 85% of the CSOs stated that they were serving a larger number of people than usual; those people were experiencing new needs and new forms of poverty created by the COVID-19 crisis. The CSOs tried to face also these new demand.

32. The 70% of the CSOs met new beneficiaries or family requirements during the COVID-19 emergency. In particular, the CSOs operating in the field of disability and mental health were the ones facing new additional beneficiaries and family requirements (71,4%).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HELPING THE CSOs IN FACING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Recommendations for the CSOs

1. CSOs and Social Enterprises in South East Europe have to diversify their funding, looking for sources from multiple donors, in order to avoid one donor dependency. Because of the economic impact of the crisis worldwide, significant reduction of funding is to be expected in all the sectors in the next period. For this reason, local CSOs must seek additional funding opportunities - not only from the traditional donor communities, but exploring also new and emerging donor communities (such as Private Corporation companies).
2. In the following period, a re-organization of the funding opportunities is expected: more and more programs for CSOs will deal with the COVID-19 consequences (at health and socio-economic level). The CSOs should review their strategies and increase their capacities in working for those sectors affected by the COVID-19 crisis, if they want to access the new funding opportunities.
3. The local CSOs are more and more required to strategically think about contingency plans and risk reduction policies. They can eventually establish an 'emergency fund' that can serve for 2 purposes: a) for supporting them to deal with emergencies, as usual their budgets are project-oriented, not flexible to accommodate the emergency needs; b) to support for a certain period of time its members continue operating in case of limited or zero external funding.
4. The local CSOs are advised to remain focused and become more specialized on their strategic and primary goals, in order to become relevant actors in their communities, rather than 'running after' each funding opportunity or trying to apply even for those not matching their missions. The CSOs must become more selective and should invest more to become expert, advanced, and innovative in the sectors in which they decide to operate. It is not sustainable nor competitive to do 'everything a little bit' without specializing in anything, especially when applying for funding.
5. The leadership of the local CSOs needs to strengthen the communication with their donors, in order to keep them informed about the evolution of context. They have to share with them the challenges they are facing and the mitigation plans, seeking advice from them and where possible planning with them special measures to undertake.

6. CSOs must be clear in explaining to public and private stakeholders about how the programs and projects, beneficiaries, staff and stakeholders are being affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Where possible, they have to demonstrate quantifiable implications of COVID-19 on their programming and organizations' health. They should not be shy in requesting flexibility or budget re-allocations to meet emerging needs.
7. The Social Enterprises should explore the new possibilities offered by the digitalization, as well they must innovate their products and services in order to better satisfy the new demand and needs in the communities. Creativity and flexibility are required, and the advice is to invest in the delivery of essential services and the production primary goods, as those items are less affected by the market crisis.

Recommendations for the public authorities, the EU institutions and the social investors

8. The public institutions in South East Europe (including the EU institutions working in the region) are required to urgently put in place proper financial measures and programs of support for the CSOs' sector, as there is a high risk of the breakdown for many CSOs in the following months due to the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis.
9. The public institutions in South East Europe should introduce specific measures of support related to persons with disabilities and mental health problems (as well as their families and CSOs). Those measures should not be only economic, but also social and health related, in order to recover from all the damages created by the COVID-19 crisis to these vulnerable categories of citizens.
10. The funds for social and health sector in the Government budgets should be increased in all the countries, as there is (and there will be) a strong increase both in numbers of vulnerable cases and in severity of their social-health problems.
11. Even if many countries in South East Europe do not have a Law on Social Economy, the Governments in the region should allow all the CSOs that are already acting as Social Enterprises to be included and benefit from the existing instruments and measures for support to the business sector.
12. The social investors and donors in South East Europe should quickly put at disposal of the CSOs new instruments and resources for overcoming the most critical period. Those instruments should also include a financial support for paying the basic costs of the CSOs (salaries, running costs, rents), that are usually non-eligible costs in traditional call for proposals;

13. The CSOs must be involved in the public recovery programs for the communities affected by COVID-19 crisis, as they can play an important role in supporting people at risk and in re-launching territories. The CSOs can often act faster and more flexible than the public institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT “SOCIETIES 2”

14. The partners of the project SOCIETIES 2 should carefully re-plan the project goals and activities upon the findings and recommendations of this survey. The project has been written in a pre-COVID situation, where the main target groups (CSOs working in disability and mental health sectors) were having very different characteristics and needs than the actual, post-COVID ones. The implementation of the project as it is actually written risks to not target properly the real needs of the CSOs. The survival of the CSOs should become one of the goals of the action.

15. A very urgent financial mechanism to support the CSOs needs to be put in place, otherwise many CSOs risks to close. It is extremely recommended to anticipate as soon as possible the Sub-granting scheme, and to adapt it to the new needs of the CSOs. The ideal scenario is to allocate the Sub-granting funds to CSOs already in late summer/early autumn 2020.

16. Basic costs of the CSOs (such as: running costs, salaries, rent, services) should be considered as eligible costs in the Sub-granting scheme, as many CSOs are not able to cover them in this post-COVID phase. The management of the project should identify the proper percentage of funds of the Sub-granting for the basic costs and/or should define a time limit for these costs (e.g. these costs are eligible for maximum 6 months).

17. The Sub-granting scheme should not be based on competitive mechanisms (e.g. call for proposals, tenders) as there is a risk of excluding the weakest CSOs from the support, instead of including them. There are many CSOs in the region that are not able yet to fully restart their activities because of the COVID-19 consequences, and this can hamper them in writing project proposals or in qualitative applying. For this reason, other mechanisms of selections should be taken into consideration (e.g. cherry picking, country plans). As there are some CSOs not affected by the crisis, these ones should be limited in participating to the sub-granting schemes.

18. The management of the project SOCIETIES 2 should urgently address to the EU Commission the request of increasing the funds for the Sub-granting scheme on the base of the findings of this research, as the actual overall amount does not look adequate to compensate the dimension and the severity of the crisis. Moreover, the management of the project should contact other donors and social investors, trying to convince them to increase the funds available for the CSOs recovery process.
19. The Advocacy component of the project SOCIETIES 2 should be maintained and, when possible, even strengthened as the CSOs should become more visible and included in the public support mechanisms – not only the ones for COVID-19 recovery, but more in general for the full inclusion of CSOs in the social public policies.
20. The Training scheme of the project, as well as the Mentoring support, should be strongly focused on developing the resilience mechanisms for the CSOs. It is important to focus on topics such as: Leadership and guidance of a CSO during and post pandemic, Conflict management at organizational - personal - community level, Fundraising for CSOs and diversification of funds; Contingency planning; Innovation of activities, services and products; Digital development of the CSOs.
21. The management of the project SOCIETIES 2, as well as the management of the CSOs, should become more familiar with similar programs and projects in the territory – even the ones promoted by other organizations, or supported by other donors. The synergies with other programs are essential in this phase, in order to join the resources and minimize the negative consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak for the CSOs.

section IV
ANNEXES AND
REFERENCES

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ANNEX I – LIST OF CSOs PARTECIPATING IN THE SURVEY

| ID | CSO |
|-------|---|
| 26888 | (SHKNMGV) Shoqata Kombetare ne mbeshtetje te grupeve vulnerabel, dega M. Madhe |
| 27028 | Act Now |
| 1927 | Adria NGO |
| 27072 | AgroID SCE |
| 26958 | AISEC Montenegro |
| 27047 | Albanian Foundation for Human Rights |
| 27053 | Albanian National Association of the Deaf |
| 26988 | Ambasadoret e Paqes |
| 27070 | Antigone – Center for information and documentation about racism, ecology, peace and non-violence |
| 27004 | Ararat non-profit organization |
| 27018 | Armenian Catholic Church of Athens |
| 27030 | Association for Mental Handicaps |
| 1855 | Association for help of mentally underdeveloped people BISER |
| 1948 | Association for help Persons with Psychophysical disabilities Niksic |
| 26947 | Association for helping persons with disabilities Bijelo Polje |
| 19376 | Association for mentally challenged persons PLAVA PTICA |
| 1744 | Association for support to people of development disorders NASA KUCA |
| 27034 | Association of Albanian Labor Invalids |
| 26963 | ASSOCIATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE SRCE |
| 1963 | Association of disabled women of Montenegro |
| 1930 | Association of nurses and technicians |
| 1791 | Association of paraplegic and paralysees of children from Gjilan-Handikos |
| 1938 | Association of paraplegic for Bijelo Polje and Mojkovac |
| 27032 | Association of paraplegics and tetraplegics |
| 26952 | Association of paraplegics Bar |
| 26959 | ASSOCIATION OF PARAPLEGICS KOTOR |
| 26986 | Association of Paraplegics Rožaje |
| 1929 | Association of parents of children with special needs Bar |
| 26909 | Association of People with Disabilities |
| | - Handikos Drenas |
| 26965 | Association of People with Disabilities - Handikos Vushtrri |
| 1925 | Association of the Blind of Montenegro |
| 26905 | Association of the paralegic and paralysis of children from Gjakova - HANDIKOS GJAKOVË |
| 1735 | Association of users for mental health SUNCE |
| 1928 | Association Right to life |
| 26966 | Associazione Filizati |
| 26993 | Avlija održivog razvoja |
| 26950 | Biznis Start Centar Bar |
| 26997 | Boroume SAVING FOOD SAVING LIVES |
| 26945 | Braille Printing House |
| 1985 | Caritas Albania |
| 26994 | Caritas Aleksinac |
| 1786 | Caritas Apostolskog Egzarhata - Caritas Apostolic Exarchate |
| 1922 | Caritas Barske nadbiskupije |
| 26987 | Caritas Beograd |
| 26934 | Caritas biskupije Banja Luka |
| 26907 | CARITAS BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE |
| 26837 | Caritas Dioqezan Lezhë |
| 26835 | Caritas Dioqezan Rrëshen |
| 26859 | Caritas Dioqezan Sapa |
| 26833 | Caritas Dioqezan Shkodër-Pult |
| 26830 | Caritas Dioqezan Tiranë Durrës |
| 26998 | Caritas Hellas |
| 1769 | CARITAS KOSOVA |
| 1923 | Caritas Kotorske biskupije |
| 1924 | Caritas Montenegro |
| 1787 | Caritas Novi Sad |
| 1784 | Caritas Šabac |
| 27011 | Caritas Saint Anastasia |
| 27036 | CARITAS SERBIA |
| 26995 | Caritas Srem |
| 1788 | Caritas Subotica |
| 1742 | Caritas Valjevo |
| 27025 | Caritas Vitania |
| 26974 | Caritas Vrhbosanske nadbiskupije |
| 26899 | Caritasi i Shqiperisë së Jugut |
| 1895 | Centar za radno osposobljavanje osoba s razvojnim poteškoćama NAZARET |

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| 1790 | Centar za razvoj inkluzivnog društva CRID - Center for development of inclusive society | | Mostar |
| 26954 | Center for Democracy and Human Rights CEDEM | 26929 | Gradska organizacija saveza slijepih Zvornik |
| 26962 | Center for Environmental Initiatives | 26926 | Gradska organizacija slijepih i slabovidnih Istočno Sarajevo |
| 1951 | Center For Family counseling NARATIV | 26915 | Greens d.o.o. |
| 1953 | Center for support and assistance to children and youth with disabilities | 26903 | Handikos Mitrovica |
| 27046 | Center Red House | 1822 | Handikos-Peje |
| 19377 | Cep za hendikep | 26897 | Healthy Bakery "Te mullini" |
| 27005 | Citizens in Action | 26985 | Help Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe |
| 26944 | Coffee roaster S | 2001 | Help the Life |
| 1920 | Daughters of Divine Zeal | 27071 | HIGGS - Higher Incubator Giving Growth and Sustainability |
| 1801 | Deaf Association Anamorava - Gjilan | 27002 | Hostel Teresijanum |
| 27073 | D-Exodos SCE | 27052 | Humanitarna udruga Caritas biskupija Mostar-Duvno i Trebinje-Mrkan |
| 1781 | Diocesan Caritas Zrenjanin | 1730 | Humanitarni centar Duga - Humanitarian centre DUGA |
| 26977 | Dječji vrtić Anđeli čuvari | 26981 | Inkluzioni NGO |
| 27012 | Dnevni center Becej - Daily center Becej | 27017 | lotel SCE |
| 26904 | Dobri ljudi | 27020 | Ippokratia Diaviosi SCE |
| 1897 | Dom za djecu ometenu u tjelesnom i/ili psihičkom razvoju MARIJA - NAŠA NADA | 26922 | J.U. Centar za djecu i omladinu sa posebnim potrebama Los Rosales |
| 26975 | Dom za socijalno i zdravstveno zbrinjavanje osoba s invaliditetom i drugih osoba | 26885 | Jehona e Kelmendit |
| 26932 | Dom za stare i iznemogle osobe s hospicijem Betanija | 26949 | Jugopapir doo |
| 27038 | Domovik | 1866 | Kantonalno udruženje roditelja osoba oboljelih od cerebralne paralize i drugih onesposobljenja |
| 26956 | Don Bosco Center | 1852 | Kantonalno udruženje za uzajamnu pomoć u duševnoj nevolji Apel |
| 26955 | Don Bosco Education and Training Center | 27019 | Karitas Naxos Tinos Andros and Mykonos |
| 1917 | Down Syndrome Albania Foundation and Achievement and Development Center | 26902 | Klubi Basketbollit në Karoca Trepça |
| 26900 | Duart Plote Meshire | 27058 | Klubi Kombetar i Prinderve me Femije me CSA dhe PAK |
| 26831 | ENGIM Albania | 26898 | Kolping |
| 26991 | Etno udruzenje KORMAN | 27050 | Kooperativa Bujqësore EVA Kooperativë |
| 19375 | EVO RUKA | 27037 | Kosovar Centre for Self-Help |
| 1795 | Fjala e Jetes - Word of Life | 27000 | Kucursko udruzenje mladih KUM |
| 19416 | Fondacija Zajednički put | 26940 | Laundry Mondo Bianco |
| 27060 | Forum mladih sa invaliditetom Kragujevac | 26999 | Lavanda Lux |
| 1916 | Global Care Albania Foundation | 26953 | Legal center |
| 26942 | Golden hands | 26982 | LIM Berane |
| 1893 | Gospodarsko društvo za upošljavanje osoba s invaliditetom RAD-DAR d.o.o. | 19379 | Luznicke rukotvorine |
| | | 26896 | Madonnina del Grappa |
| | | 27027 | Makedonski Karitas |
| | | 26834 | Mary Ward of Loreto Foundation |

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| 26931 | Međuopštinska organizacija saveza slijepih MOSS Prijedor | 26895 | Qendra e Artizanatit Lezhe |
| 26964 | Missionaries of Contemplative Charity – Brothers of Mother Teresa | 27015 | Qendra e Kujdesit Ditor – PEMA |
| 26941 | MIT-BERANE DOO | 27064 | Qendra e Shendetit Mendor “DREJT ZHVILLIMIT” |
| 26943 | MLADIINFO MONTENEGRO | 27035 | Qendra e Zhvillimit per persona me Aftesi te kufizuar |
| 26930 | Muzej ratnog djetinjstva | 1967 | Qendra per Jete te Pavarur / Center for Living Independent |
| 27009 | Nacionalna Alijansa za lica so posebni potrebi | 27031 | Qendra Rinore Venerini (Shtepia Rozalba) |
| 26976 | Nadbiskupijski centar za pastoral mladih Ivan Pavao II | 27016 | Qendra Sole |
| 1950 | Nepsis NGO | 26912 | Radin doo |
| 19413 | New chance in Herceg Novi | 26946 | Radio Feniks |
| 27039 | NGO Lighthouse | 26983 | Regional Business Center Berane |
| 1939 | NGO Oaza Association of parents of children and youth with special needs Bijelo Polje | 27063 | Regionalna alijansa za cerebralnu paralizu |
| 26960 | NVO ADAMAS | 1863 | Rehabilitacijski centar za osobe s posebnim potrebama Sveta Obitelj |
| 26984 | NVO Lim Consulting | 1794 | Rreze Shprese - Ray of hope |
| 26901 | Organizata e prindërve të fëmijeve me aftësi të kufizuar | 26889 | Salvia Nord |
| 26980 | Organization for Education, Culture and Democratization Plus | 27022 | Savez paraplegičara, oboljelih od dječije paralize i ostalih tjelesnih invalida Republike Srpske, Bi |
| 1933 | Organization of Blind for Berane, Andrijevica, Plav and Gusinje | 26923 | Savez slijepih Republike Srpske |
| 1926 | Organization of Civilian War Disabled Person for Bar and Ulcinj | 26910 | Savez SUMERO |
| 1931 | Organization of the Blind for Bar and Ulcinj | 26935 | Savez udruženja za pomoć mentalno nedovoljno razvijenim licima Republike Srpske |
| 26951 | OUR ID CARD | 26917 | Savez za sport i rekreaciju invalida općine Breza |
| 27074 | Pammakaristos Childrens Foundation | 26961 | SCRIPT BAR |
| 1949 | Paraplegyc Association Podgorica | 26939 | SCRIPT Berane |
| 27006 | Pelion Oros | 27013 | Servis za bicikle |
| 26884 | Perdoruesit e Gjeoparkut Kelmend (Enhancement of forests and pastures) | 26880 | SFYN MALESI E MADHE (Slow Food Youth Network Malesi e Madhe) |
| 27043 | Pomoc porodici | 26891 | SH.B.R Agro-Reçi |
| 26924 | Privredno društvo Naša Vizija | 26881 | SH.B.R Reçi Prodhimtar (Shoqeri bashkepunimi reciprok Reçi Prodhimtar) |
| 26948 | PROFI OSI | 27069 | Shedia Social enterprise |
| 19392 | ProReha Association - Center for professional rehabilitation, retraining and training of persons wit | 26894 | Shoqata Bjeshka |
| 26989 | Prostor | 26890 | Shoqata “Blini” |
| 27021 | Psichiatric center of Elbasan | 26886 | Shoqata “Pajtimi i Gjaqeve” |
| 1840 | PSIHOZON Center for Individual Development and Social Improvement | 26883 | Shoqata “Te verberit” Dega Malesi e Madhe |
| 26978 | PU Dječji vrtić Sveta Obitelj | 27067 | Shoqata Bletare Melissa |
| 1803 | Qendra Drita e Shpreses- Light of Hope Center | 26970 | Shoqata e të Shurdhërve në Gjakovë |
| | | 26887 | Shoqata e tetraplegjikve dhe |

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| | paraplegjikke | | DUSA |
| 26968 | Shoqata këshillimore për Njerëzit me Aftësi të Kufizuar Shkodër | 1883 | Udruženje građana za podršku osobama u duševnoj nevolji Most |
| 27048 | Shoqata Kombëtare Shpresë për të Verbërit | 1734 | Udruženje građana MIR - Association of citizens MIR |
| 26933 | Shoqata Kombëtare Shqiptare e njerëzve që nuk dëgjojnë | 1785 | Udruženje građana RIME - Citizens association RIME |
| 1833 | Shoqata Projekti Shpresa- Association The project HOPE | 1732 | Udruženje građana VALENCA - Citizens association VALENCA |
| 26969 | Shoqata Rajonale e të Shurdhërve në Prizren | 1731 | Udruženje građana VIDEA - Association of citizens VIDEA |
| 26892 | Shoqeri bashkëpunimi reciprok "Fryma e Kelmendit" | 1736 | Udruženje građana Zrak nade - Citizens association Zrak nade |
| 27024 | Social Enterprise CaritArt | 1867 | Udruženje H.O. Lotosice |
| 27014 | Social enterprise Printica | 1782 | Udruženje korisnika servisa za mentalno zdravlje i članova njihovih porodica Nova Vizija |
| 26990 | Social enterprises Radanska Ruza | 1910 | Udruženje mladih Ružičnjaka - Los Rosalesa |
| 27001 | Socijalna sinergija | 26913 | Udruženje omladine sa invaliditetom Infopart Banja Luka |
| 26937 | Socijalno-edukativni centar | 1878 | Udruženje paraplegičara i oboljelih od dječje paralize Zenica |
| 26957 | SOS phone for women and children victims of violence Niksic | 26928 | Udruženje paraplegičara oboljelih od dječje paralize i ostalih tjelesnih invalida Prijedor |
| 1934 | Step Hope NGO | 26927 | Udruženje slijepih i slabovidnih Istočne Hercegovine Bileća |
| 26992 | Suncev zrak | 1909 | Udruženje za podršku osobama sa intelektualnim i kombinovanim teškoćama Sunce |
| 27007 | Suore Francescane Alcantarine Babice | 1738 | Udruženje za podršku osobama sa neurozom HERC - Association for support of people with neurosis HERC |
| 26836 | Tartan Onlus | 1935 | Udruženje za podršku osobama sa psihofizičkim smetnjama "Zajedno" |
| 27003 | ThessPro SCE | 1837 | Udruženje za pomoć MNOO Trstenik - Association for Assistance to Persons with Mental Disabilities |
| 27065 | THY NGO | 1789 | Udruženje za pomoć osobama sa smetnjama u razvoju Stari Grad ŽIVIMO ZAJEDNO |
| 26996 | TRISKEFTIKI KINOTITA PAPA IOANNI 23 | 27061 | Udruženje za reviziju pristupacnosti |
| 26925 | Udruga građana roditelji djece s posebnim potrebama Djeca nade | 1783 | Udruženje za unapredjenje mentalnog zdravlja DUŠEVNA OAZA - Association for mental health promotion |
| 26971 | Udruga osoba s posebnim potrebama PUT U ŽIVOT | 26911 | Udruženje za uzajamnu pomoć u duševnoj nevolji TK Feniks |
| 1872 | Udruga roditelja i djece s posebnim potrebama Vedri osmijeh | 26914 | Udruženje žena Podstrek |
| 1861 | Udruga Susret | | |
| 1869 | Udruga za Down sindrom | | |
| 1898 | Udruga za zaštitu i unaprjeđenje mentalnog zdravlja In Spe | | |
| 27059 | Udruženja za pomoć MNOO Čačak | | |
| 26920 | Udruženje amputiraca Istočno Sarajevo | | |
| 26918 | Udruženje distrofičara Bužim | | |
| 26916 | Udruženje distrofičara Cazin | | |
| 26919 | Udruženje djece i omladine oboljele od dijabetesa USK | | |
| 26921 | Udruženje djece i omladine sa posebnim potrebama Zagrljaj | | |
| 1733 | Udruženje Dusa - Association of psychiatric users and their families | | |

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| 27010 | Udruzenje žena Ruza - Association of women Rose | 26938 | Youth for Peace |
| 26908 | Udruženje žena sa invaliditetom NIKA | 27029 | Za deciji osmeh |
| 26936 | Udruženje Život sa Down sindromom FBiH | 27041 | Zadream |
| 1737 | Udruzenje Zracak - Association Zracak | 27008 | Zdrozenie Sonce |
| 26972 | Ustanova za stručno obrazovanje odraslih WMTA | 27042 | Združenie na građani za pomoš i podrška na lica so daun sindrom Vera |
| 26906 | VedriMo d.o.o. | 27023 | Zdruzenie na slepi lica Strumica |
| 26882 | Veleciku | 27033 | Združenie za lokalna demokratija CENTAR NA ZAEDNICATA NA OPŠTINA STRUMICA |
| 26893 | VIS Albania (Volontariato Internazionale alla Sviluppo) | 27062 | Združenie za turizam i ugostitelstvo Krusevo |
| 27049 | Vita Honesta | 26973 | Zemljoradnička zadruga Livač |
| 27068 | We do it 4you | 27026 | Zerlpr Ednakvost Strumica |
| 1962 | Women`s safe house | | |

ⁱ Profile of the organizations: The Profile of each Civil Society Organization listed in this research document was based on information provided by the organization through the questionnaire IMPACT of COVID-19 developed by Consorzio Communitas for project SOCIETIES 2. This information was neither created nor modified by the Consorzio Communitas. The profiles are only provided for information purpose.