

SOCIAL PROTECTION DURING COVID-19 IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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Maja Gerovska Mitev
Institute of Social Work and Social Policy
Faculty of Philosophy
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje
North Macedonia

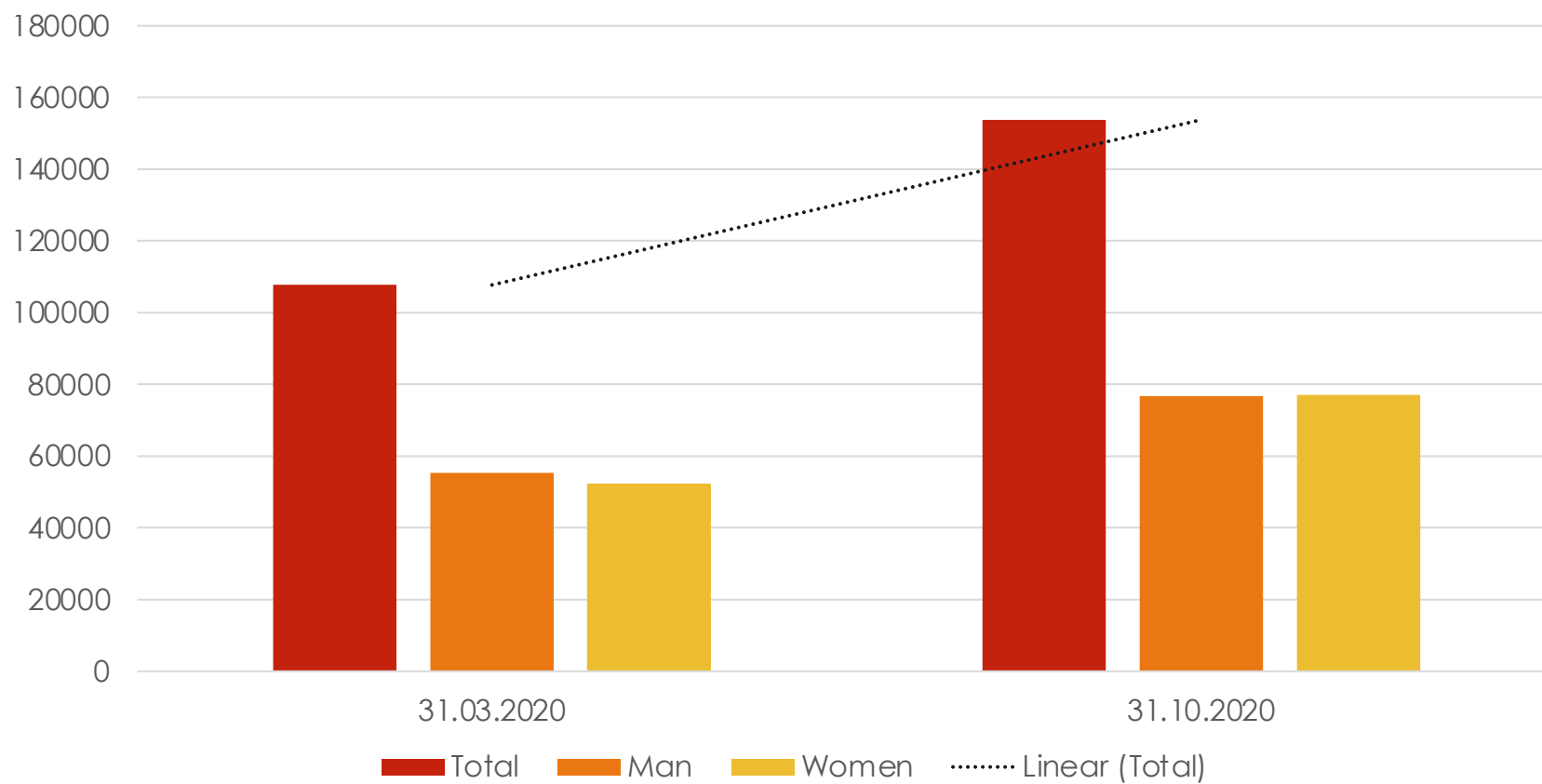
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EMERGENCY MEASURES DURING MARCH-DECEMBER 2020

- First wave of measures (March-June 2020): comprehensive set of social protection measures, including: change of accessibility criteria, change of duration criteria indirectly leading to increase in amount of social protection benefits. Challenges: lack of implementation among all Centers of Social Work, focus only on cash transfers.
- Second wave of measures (September-December 2020): lack of continuity of measures, targeting of measures, scaled support.

EMERGENCY AND SHORT-TERM MEASURES TO PRESERVE JOBS AND INCOME

- Wage subsidy for all employed for the months of April - June 2020 (first wave) in the amount of 14.500 MKD (€ 235) or 50% waiver of social security contributions; and September-December 2020 (albeit only for the employed in the companies that have not significantly reduced the number of workers since July 2020), as a scaled support ranging from 14.500 MKD (€ 235) to 21.776 MKD (€ 353), depending on the size of the company losses.
- Modification of the unemployment insurance compensation, according to which all workers who have lost job during the 'state of emergency' period i.e. March to end of April 2020, are entitled to unemployment compensation in amount of 50% of their net wage.
- One-off domestic payment cards - (i) for tourism and (ii) for buying domestic products and services. Target groups: people on low incomes, single parents, low-income pensioners, registered unemployed persons (not actively looking for job).

NUMBER OF REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED PERSONS

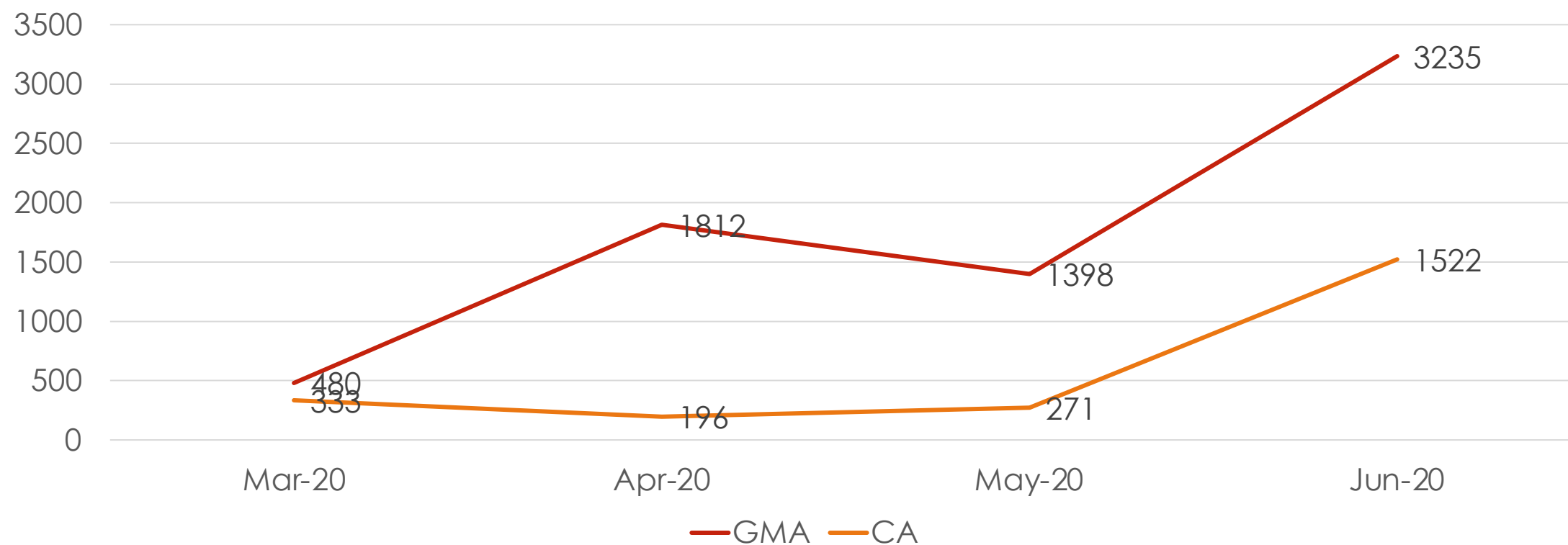


Source: Agency for Employment, 2020

EMERGENCY AND SHORT-TERM MEASURES TO EXTEND SOCIAL PROTECTION COVERAGE

- Decree implementing the Law on Social Protection during a state of emergency (Official Gazette No. 89/03.04.2020), modified:
 - means testing criteria (income and property)
 - activation requirement
 - extended duration of energy subsidy
- Decree implementing the Child Protection Law during a state of emergency (Official Gazette No. 88/03.04.2020):
 - Extension of the duration of expired child protection benefits (i.e. the new-born allowance, parental allowance for the third and fourth child) up to three months after the end of the state of emergency.
 - Waving of regular school attendance criteria for receipt of the educational allowance

NEW APPLICANTS FOR THE GUARANTEED MINIMUM ASSISTANCE AND CHILD ALLOWANCE, MARCH- JUNE 2020



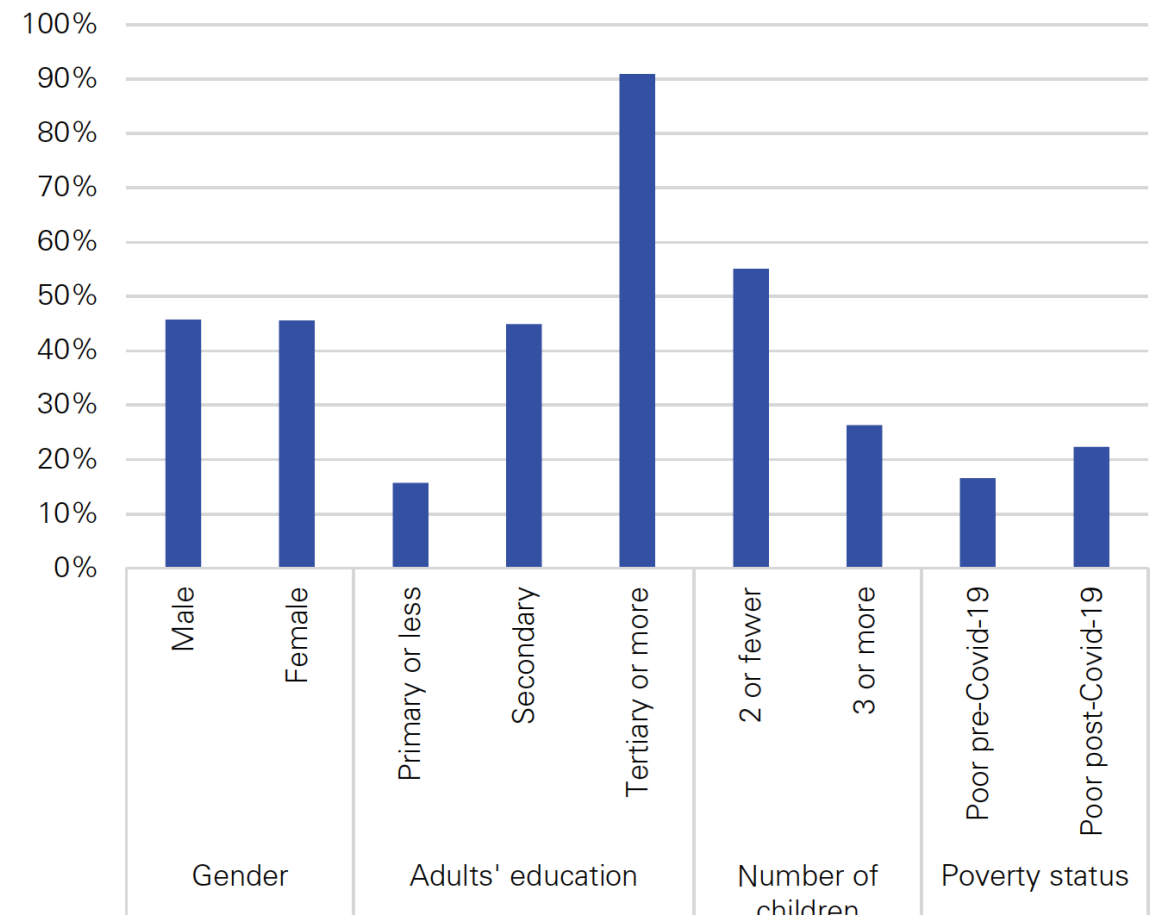
Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Cash Benefit Information System, July 2020

COVID-19 IMPACT ON VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

IMPACT ON CHILD POVERTY

	Number of children in household		Average education of adult members		
	2 or fewer	3 or more	Primary or less	Secondary	Tertiary or more
Pre-Covid-19					
Relative poverty (below 60% of the equiv. income median)	23.9%	42.0%	64.1%	28.7%	1.1%
Absolute poverty, below extreme low income threshold	2.8%	3.2%	8.0%	2.7%	0.0%
Absolute poverty, below upper middle income threshold	8.5%	17.0%	28.7%	10.4%	0.0%
Post-Covid-19					
Relative poverty (below 60% of the equiv. income median)	24.9%	50.3%	70.1%	32.2%	0.9%
Absolute poverty, below extreme low income threshold	1.1%	4.7%	7.0%	2.0%	0.0%
Absolute poverty, below upper middle income threshold	8.5%	17.5%	30.3%	10.4%	0.0%
<i>Source: Authors' calculations based on SILC 2018 and MK-MOD.</i>					

SHARE OF CHILDREN WITH INTERNET AT HOME



SOURCE: UNICEF, 2020

SOCIAL SERVICES

- *Shelters for family violence*: increased demand due to increase in the reported cases of family violence (increase of 44.6% compared to 2019, children represented 9.57% of the cases/victims), lack of cooperation with the health authorities, identified issue of not accepted family violence victims for psychological or medical treatment, without a court order.
- *Centers of Social Work*: work in shifts and reduced human resources, most of the appeals during the pandemic were related to inability of realization of parenting time among divorced parents, phone calls replaced regular home visits, cases of peer-violence were reported among the fostered children, burnout of foster parents.
- *Day-care centres for disabled*: deterioration of quality of care for persons with disabilities due to closure of day care centres and limitations in movement of care providers; phone consultations, limitations of movement among personal assistants.

SOCIAL SERVICES

- *Early-childhood education:* reduction in early childhood education attendance due to health concerns and limited pre-school infrastructure possibilities, stagnation of ongoing or planned constructions for new pre-school facilities, increase in food insecurity/food poverty among pre-school children, beneficiaries of free meals in the kindergartens.
- *Long-term care facilities:* did not experience big outbreak of covid-19 positive among residents (at least in the first wave), mainly because of rigid protocols of no-new entrants (March-May 2020), then allowing admission only for covid-19 tested, preventive protocols and equipment in place, lack or reduction of in-house social support (group therapies, psycho-social counselling, etc.).