



Women, Families, Careers – Effects of the Pandemic on Work/Life Balance in the Visegrad Countries

www.visegradwomen.net

- supported by
- Visegrad Fund
-

RESEARCH ON

WOMEN, FAMILIES, CAREERS – EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON WORK/LIFE BALANCE IN THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES

Ildikó Modláné Görgényi
Head of research

**WOMEN, FAMILIES, CAREERS – EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON WORK/LIFE BALANCE
IN THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES**

International Conference

Date and Time: 8 March 2022, from 12:30 pm. to 18:00 pm

Venue: Rubin Wellness & Conference Hotel in Budapest

*The Project is co- financed by the Governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia
through Visegrad Grants from International Visegrad Fund*



CONTENT

I. Secondary research

II. Primary research

III. Main features of the questionnaire survey and focus group interviews (quantitative and qualitative research)

IV. Result of quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 1.

V. Result of quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 2.

VI. Result of quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 3.

VII. Result of quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 4.

VIII. Results of qualitative research (focus group interviews) 1.

IX. Results of qualitative research (focus group interviews) 2.

X. Results of qualitative research (focus group interviews) 3.

XI. Fulfillment of hypotheses

XII. Recommendations for decision makers 1

XIII. Recommendations for decision makers 2

XIV. Some interesting correlations in the research



I. Secondary research

Since the onset of the pandemic, the situation of countries, economies and individuals has changed. There have been carried out a wide range of research:

- International and domestic analyzes draw attention to the increased challenges facing women as a result of the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis which can contribute to increasing gender inequalities (EUROFOUND analysis 2020-21)
- The situation of women in the labor market (European Parliament 2021)
- Women at the core of the fight against the COVID-19 crisis (OECD 2020)
- Teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, (ILO 2020)
- V4 countries are the most family-centric nations the Maria Kopp Institute and Századvég Alapítvány
- COVID-19 has driven millions of women out of the workforce. Here's how to help them come back (McKinsey and Oxford Economics 2021)

A family-friendly coalition was formed between the countries participating in the Visegrad cooperation in 2021



II. Primary research

- Survey of the effects of the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Subject: examination of women's employment, family, work balance
- Questionnaire survey and focus group interviews
- Four distant locations in the V4 countries:
Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia
- There are also different locations within the countries
- Representative survey



III. Main features of the questionnaire survey and focus group interviews (quantitative and qualitative research)

- Can we form the same opinion?
- Will there be information for decision makers?
- The aim is to examine women's employment, the family and work balance and expectations in relation of the impact of the pandemic.
- The questionnaire consisted of 12 closed questions, with 9-17 optional statements to one question.
- Focus group interviews which are suitable for an in-depth understanding of the project topic and the questionnaire survey. The focus group enables people to express their experience and opinion in their own words.
- Four focus groups, with members in each of the four countries according to the four target groups:
 - o Mothers with children
 - o Women planning a family
 - o Women over 50
 - o Rural women
- Focus group members: 5-8 people



IV. Result of the quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 1.

- 913 people from four countries completed the questionnaire
- 70% of respondents live in a marriage or relationship.
- The idea of family planning did not change, only postponed (34%).
- 63% of respondents worked in person at the workplace and 37% worked from home office
- **Solutions of the employers after the third wave**
 - 35% of respondents were able to work safely in a home office, in telework and in the usual working method.
 - There is a need for more detailed description of atypical working methods and work organization.
 - The home office was more typical in the case of more highly qualified persons (68%).
 - Those with a secondary or lower education (32%), attended the workplace.



V. Result of quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 2.

- **As a result of COVID-19, new working models have been developed:**
Demand for digital literacy increased further in 47% of respondents of all ages.
- **The COVID 19 pandemic has changed the atmosphere in families:**
Being locked up together brought the families together and they could share many nice experiences.
Panic (2%) and criticising each other (3%) were minimal.
- **COVID 19 pandemic changed the daily routine of families:**
The change in daily schedule affected all age groups, but mostly the 41-50 year old ones.
In families with children, the women were learning with the children in addition to the “home office”.

VI. Result of quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 3.

- **Hygienic methods used by families in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:**

In addition to the selection and continued use of sanitizers (23%), provision of sterile masks is essential (20%).

37% of the respondents worked at the workplace but only a few (11%) indicated that they had stricter hygiene rules.

- **COVID-19 pandemic and family planning:**

The idea of family planning did not change, only postponed (34%).

- **COVID-19 has changed the situation of women:**

The work, the household, and teaching the children were done by women in parallel (33%).

In addition, women played a coordinating role (18%).



VII. Result of quantitative survey (questionnaire survey) 4.

- **TV channels have helped society adapt to the pandemic:**

Hygiene rules were presented.

At the same time, the presentation of good practices about organizing the family, the work and teaching the children was minimal (3%).

- **Government measures for families and jobs in connection of COVID 19:**

Health measures.

Introduction of a moratorium on loan repayment.

Support for atypical (part-time, home office, etc.) work.



VIII. Results of qualitative research (focus group interviews) 1.

- In the analysis of 29 interviews in the four focus groups (one per country), 105 text sequences were selected and grouped into 8 thematic groups.
- The four focus groups:
 - 6 people of Czech nationality
 - 8 people of Polish nationality
 - 8 people of Hungarian nationality
 - 7 people of Slovak nationality



IX. Results of qualitative research (focus group interviews) 2.

1. The impact of the pandemic on the family organization and the functioning of the family:

- Signs of experiencing a pandemic situation in the family
- Balance between family and work
- Methods used to relieve stress
- Signs of the psychological impact of the pandemic

2. Impact of the epidemic on day-to-day work and cooperation with the employer:

- The role of the employer, form of work, job opportunities
- The impact of the pandemic on online work and on teaching
- Reconciling work and the teaching of children



X. Results of qualitative research (focus group interviews) 3.

3. Post-pandemic lifestyle changes, future expectations and visions:

- They started new activities, they started to develop their talents and passions, which have been neglected earlier.
- They started to consider learning is important.
- They plan to continue to spend as much time with the family as they did during the pandemic.
- They continued to decorate their houses.
- Hygiene has been built into everyday life.

XI. Fulfillment of hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1: COVID-19 has an impact on the slow population growth in the V4 countries. The family is the key to tackle demographic challenges on the one hand, and to the stability of economic growth on the other. (This hypotheses was similarly set in our research in 2020).
 - Hypothesis 1.1: Under COVID-19, the four identified women's target groups (detailed in para 14) work on family unity, fulfilling their tasks, good hygiene.
 - Hypothesis 1.2: Under COVID-19, the four identified target groups of women living in the family harmonize social support (e.g. deliver food to old people, phoning lonely relatives, etc.), family life, and work.
 - Hypothesis 1.3: Under COVID-19, employers did not take into account that women had to learn with their children in addition to working in home office.
- Hypothesis 2: Under COVID-19, the structure of the family, and the atmosphere in the family, had an effect on the physical and mental state of the family members, the performance of tasks at the work, and the desire to have children. Government measures have an impact on employment-coordinated family policies.



XII. Recommendations for decision makers 1.

- The world can be subjected to a new pandemic at any time. So, it is better to prepare for it systematically.
- In education, there were problems with the internet connection and the use of the software. It is important to develop the digital background of education more vigorously, at all levels from the lower age groups to the secondary school.
- Atypical working methods and work organization (part-time, home office, etc.) need to be developed. It has to be solved that in daily practice the right ratio of work tasks to wages should prevail.
- The importance of IT at work continued to grow, leading to the need for continuous learning and further studies. Attention needs to be paid to maintenance and improvement.
- After the third wave of COVID-19, the fear vanished, but the stress remained, which many tried to resolve by various methods. The media did not play a role in this area. There may be something that can be done with government support and the involvement of experts in order to provide advice to people who need how to cope with stress.



XIII. Recommendations for decision makers 2.

- The opinion about the media was controversial. Information on the pandemic was provided on an ongoing basis, which was considered a high priority by respondents in all four countries. Many people said, that after a while, they decided not to let in the news about the pandemic flood into their lives. The media pressure was too big. But the media did not show good practices on how family organization should be changed, or what solutions can be recommended in the home-office, what methods to use in home teaching.
- Hygiene, which is important for health, was not important for everyone. In addition to using the mask, hand disinfection or disinfection of grocery and items was used only where it was mandatory. The isolation of the Covid infected family members was not common either. This raises the question whether it was not considered important or there was no proper circumstance for isolation. Help is needed in this area, as well. No one received advice from anywhere.
- In the pandemic the “home office” and the learning at home generated new problems. In many cases, it was necessary to buy digital devices, but also occurred that people had to buy new furniture, or some people had to rent a computer for work. In this aspect also labor law questions are raised why the employer does not provide the computer for the home office. Legislative settlement in this area would be needed.

XIV. Some interesting correlations in the research

- The questionnaire survey included some questions where the respondents selected the same options in all four countries with small differences. This can be found in questions 4 and 6 of the questionnaire.

The focus group interviews confirmed the answers to these questions and presented them even more deeply.

- In the case of the 4 countries, the data made available weighting the answers to the questions 10, 11 and 12.

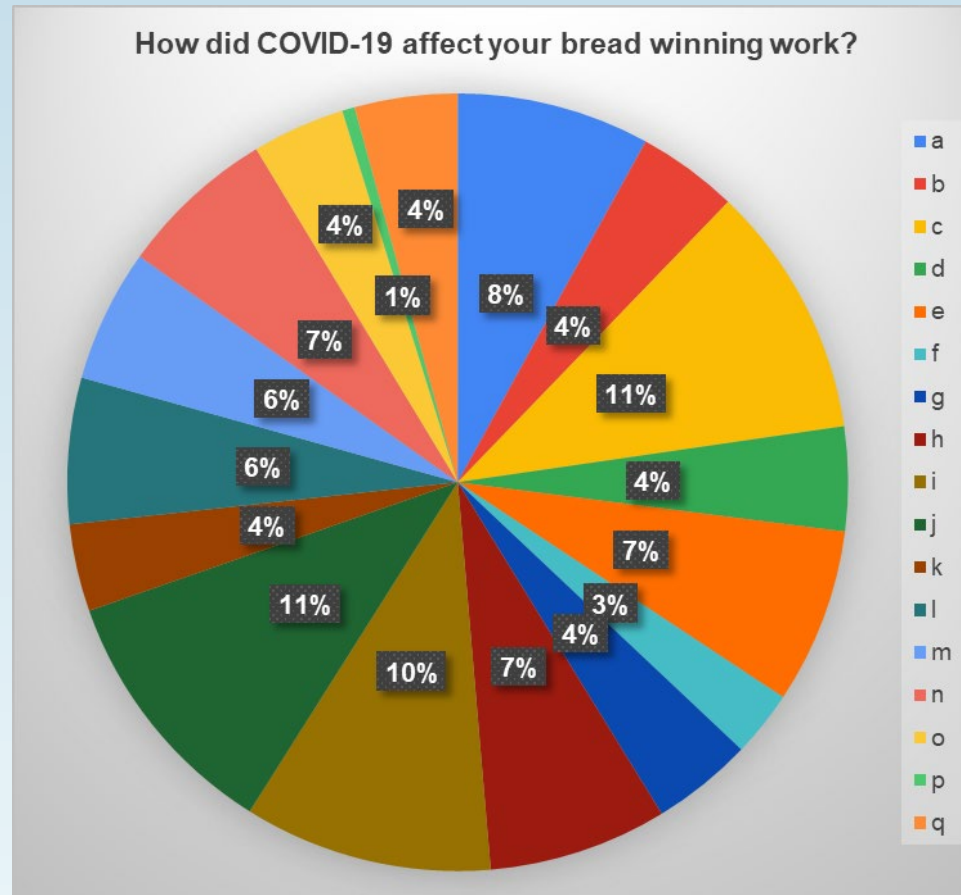
The weighting meant which country's respondents chose which answer option (s) most often.

The order of the answers varies from country to country, but they are almost the same. (There are only a few exceptions).



4th Question: How did COVID-19 affect your bread winning work?

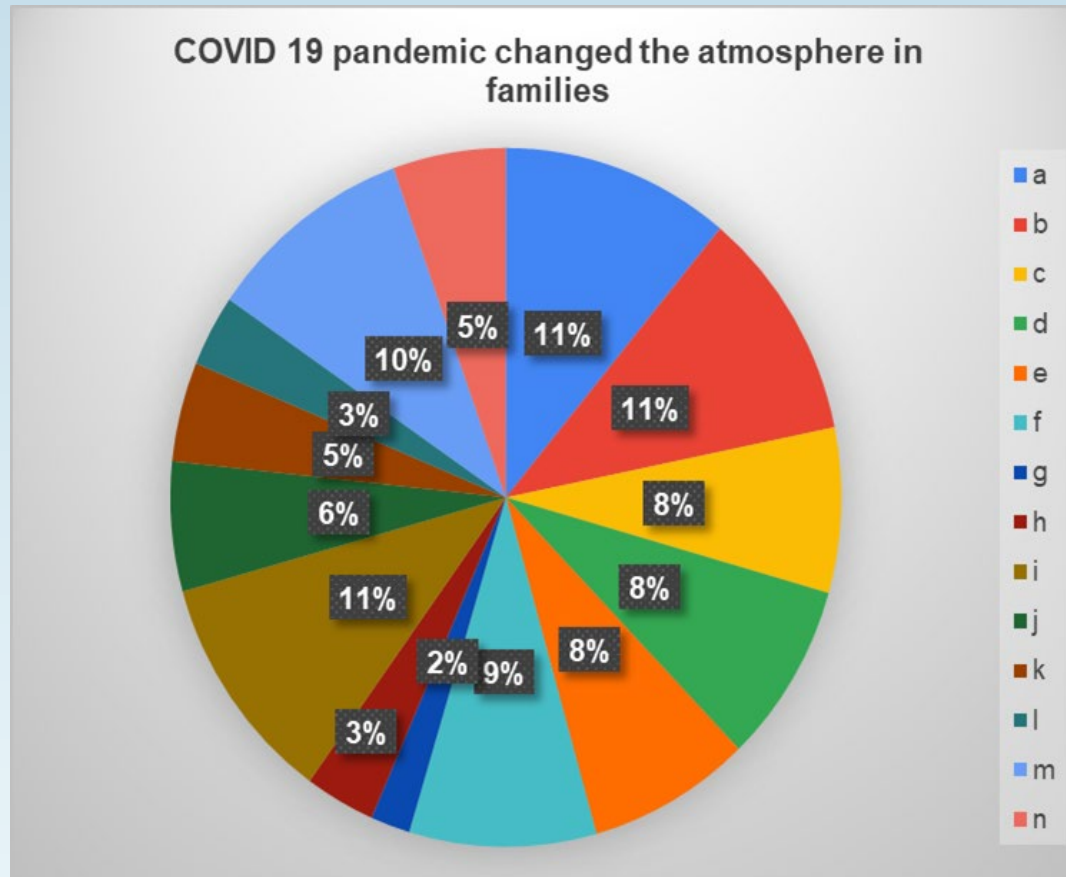
- a. Private life has blurred with the breadwinning work.
- b. Prior to COVID-19, the employer did not allow the atypical form of employment (part time job, home office, etc.)
- c. Your work can be done in a home office with digital devices.
- d. It was necessary to prepare for the transition to the home office.
- e. No preparation was required to move to the home office.
- f. The employer completely switched to telework.
- g. In teleworking, working hours have increased and the employer 'expectations have risen.
- h. Your work cannot be done in home-office.
- i. The place of work has not changed.
- j. The work schedule has not changed.
- k. The allocation of tasks, the formulation of needs and expectations by the employer were clear.
- l. Virtual connection is not enough to do the job properly.
- m. Due to teleworking, employee relations have decreased, and isolation has increased.
- n. Family responsibilities, teaching children, hindered work from home.
- o. Family responsibilities can be well coordinated with working from home.
- p. The employer offered to work in home office, but was not accepted
- q. Other



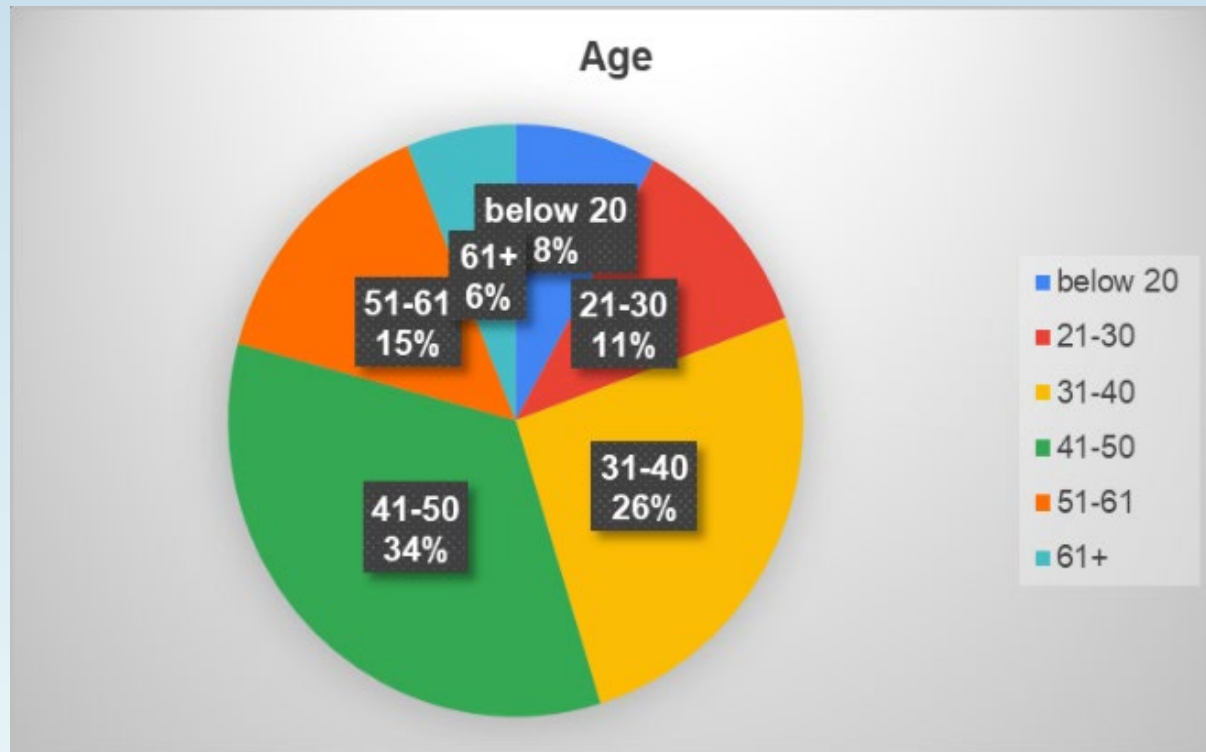


6th Question: How do you see, whether the COVID 19 pandemic changed the atmosphere in families?

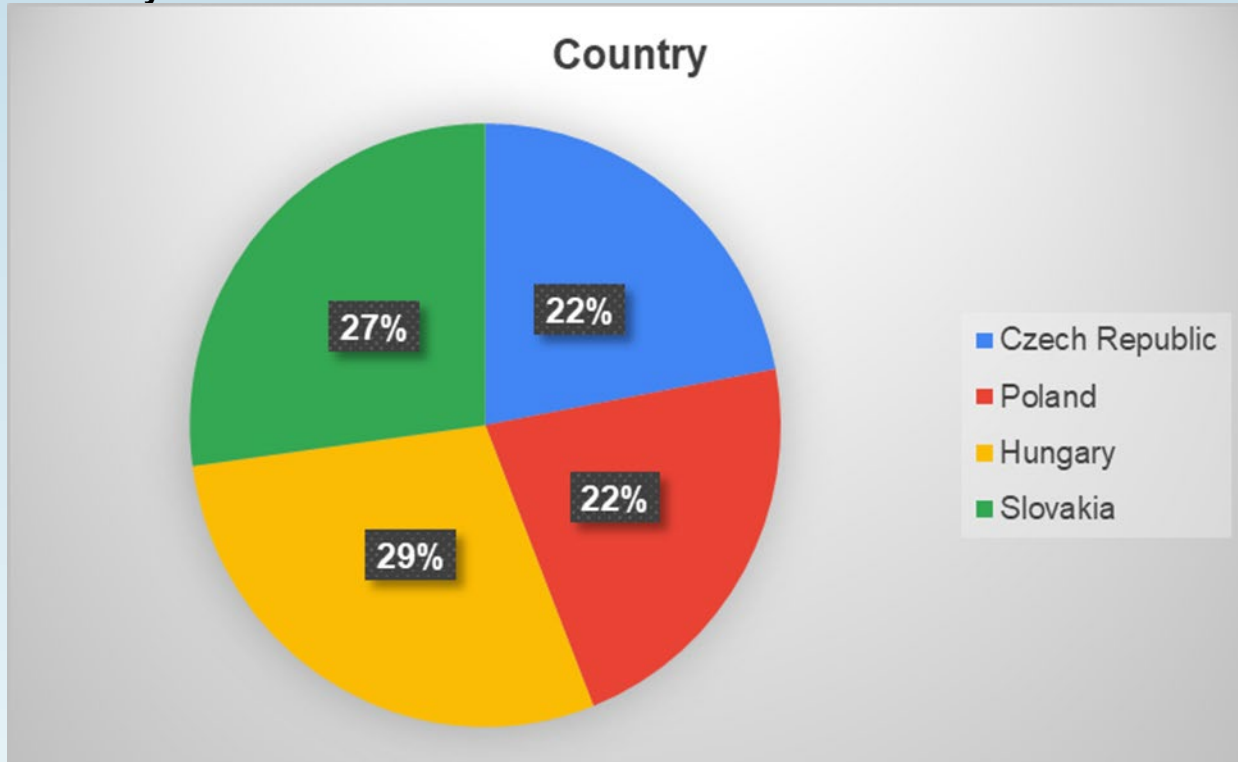
- a. Being locked up together made everyone more stressed.
- b. Being locked up together strengthened family relations.
- c. Many nice experiences took place in the home quarantine.
- d. We cleared the things backlogged at home.
- e. We made our environment nicer.
- f. We adapted quickly, we were ready to redesign.
- g. We panicked and were almost paralyzed.
- h. Everyone criticized each other.
- i. After the first despair, we developed new habits.
- j. We got to know each other and ourselves better.
- k. The cooperation between the generations has become closer.
- l. Generations have neglected each other.
- m. The rural environment allowed for more freedom.
- n. Other



Age of respondents in the questionnaire survey



Respondents per country





10th Question: How do you see COVID-19 changing the situation of women in your country?

Most respondents from the Czech Republic chose:

“Work, housekeeping, and child education were done by women in parallel”

“Women played a coordinating role in families”

“Women had to catch up in the online world”

Most respondents from Poland chose:

“Work, housekeeping, and child education were done by women in parallel”

“Woman thanks to remote work could save time”

“Women played a coordinating role in families”

Most respondents from Hungary chose:

“Work, housekeeping, and child education were done by women in parallel”

“Women played a coordinating role in families”

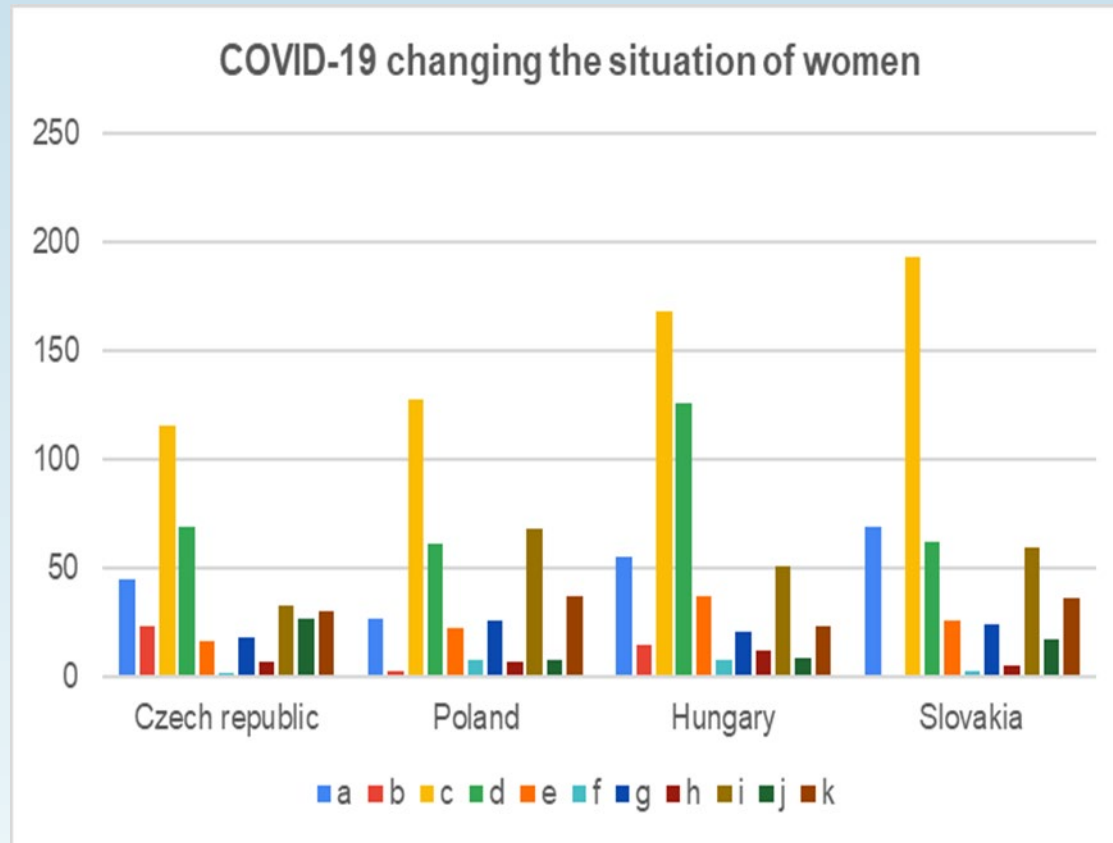
“Women had to catch up in the online world”

Most respondents from Slovakia chose:

“Work, housekeeping, and child education were done by women in parallel”

“Women had to catch up in the online world”

“Women played a coordinating role in families”





11th Question: How do you see TV programmes helping the society to adapt to the pandemic in your country?

Most respondents from the Czech Republic chose:

“Education programs for children of different grades were presented”

“They started IT education”

Most respondents from Poland chose:

“ Hygiene rules were presented”

“ Online interviews were broadcast about the pandemic from the TV studio”

Most respondents from Hungary chose:

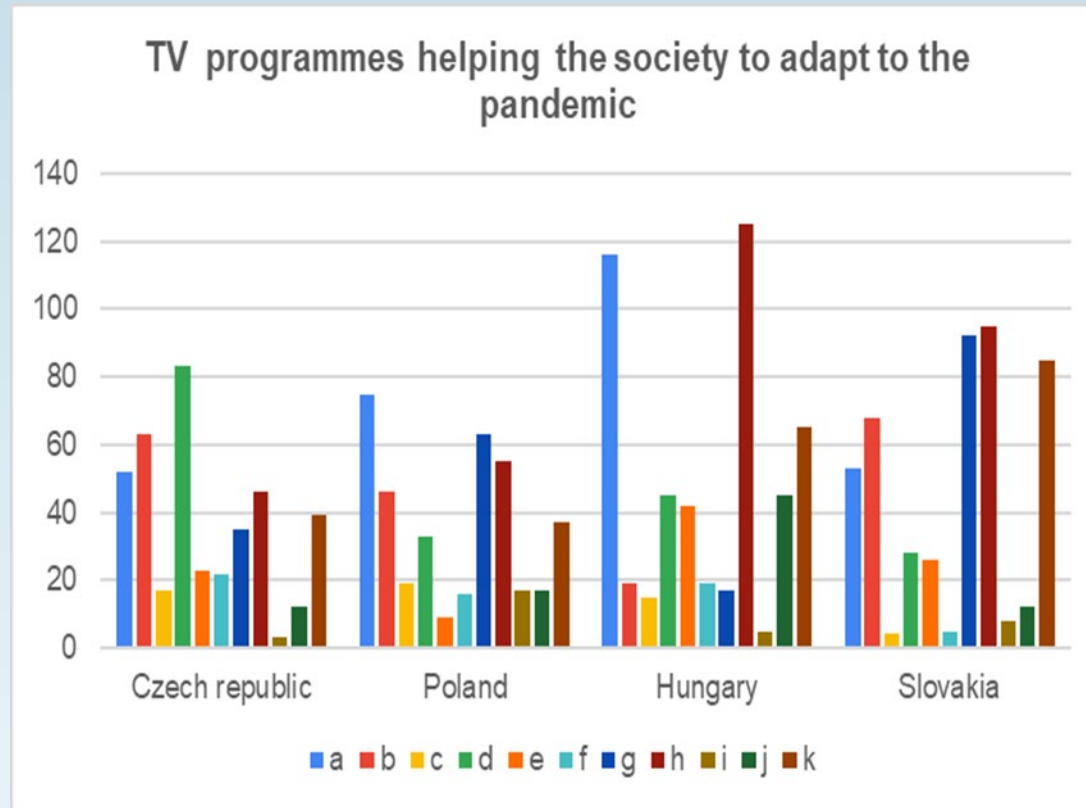
“ Social advertisements related to the pandemic were broadcast”

“ Hygiene rules were presented”

Most respondents from Slovakia chose:

“ Online interviews were broadcast about the pandemic from the TV studio”

“ Social advertisements related to the pandemic were broadcast”





12th Question: What measures has the government taken as a result of COVID 19 for the benefit of families and jobs?

Most respondents from the Czech Republic chose:

“Other”

“Financial support for entrepreneurs”

“Health measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic”

Most respondents from Poland chose:

“Providing continuous information (TV, internet, radio)”

“Health measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic”

“Financial support for entrepreneurs”

Most respondents from Hungary chose:

“Introduction of a moratorium on loan repayment”

“Health measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic”

“Support for atypical work. (Part time job, home office, etc.)”

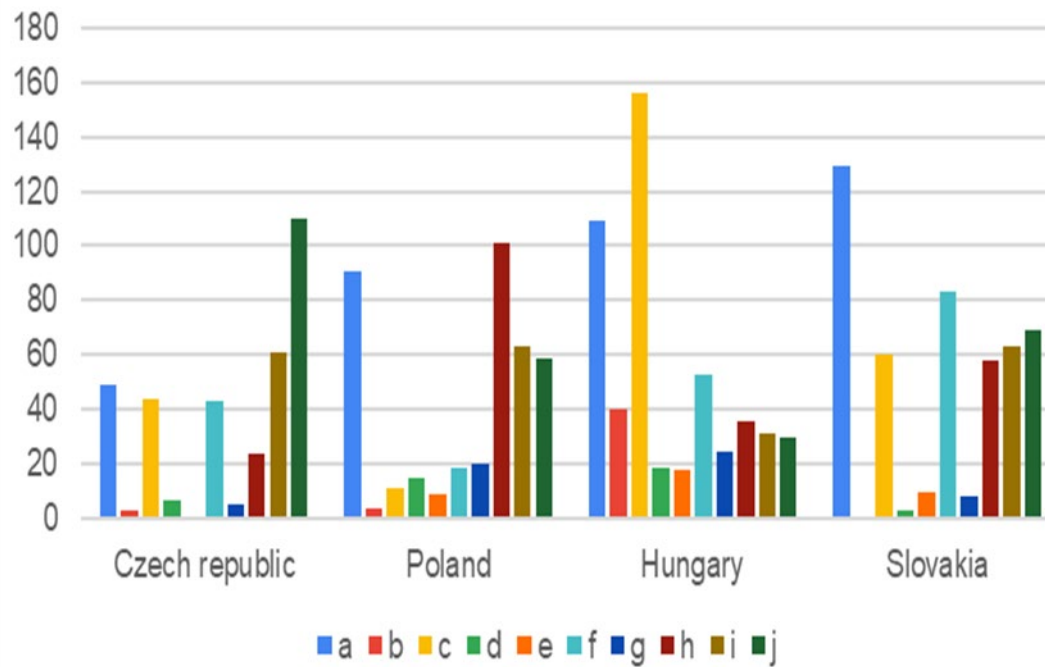
Szlovákia válaszadói közül legtöbben választották:

“Health measures to prevent the spread of the epidemic”

“Support for atypical work. (Part time job, home office, etc.)”

“Financial support for entrepreneurs”

Measures of the government has taken as a result of COVID 19 for the benefit of families and jobs





Women, Families, Careers – Effects of the Pandemic on Work/Life Balance in the Visegrad Countries

supported by
• Visegrad Fund
• •

Thank you for your attention!

More information:

www.visegradwomen.net