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**In-class Exercise (Individual task)**

From the World Bank VDO Expert - Discuss the issues females face during the COVID-19 crisis.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2020/05/22/why-are-women-and-girls-threatenedby-coronavirus>

(1) Do you agree that “This pandemic will reverse the progress toward gender equality”? Why?

Yes, I agree that it may happen. As referred in the video, school closures and economic necessities lead both boys and girls to leave school, either to the labour market or to comply with caregiving responsibilities. What distinguishes them is that boys return quicker than girls. Moreover, the fact that boys are more likely to know how to manage technologies, such as computers, etc, leads to a prioritization of their return to school, over girls’ return, since they can easily access learning materials. Also, the fact that the jobs and sectors where women predominate are the ones that were first and hardest hit, leading to higher unemployment, lack of income and ability to cope. More, the fact that informal employment is also predominated by women, not having rights to social protection, health insurance and unemployment compensation. Also, the increase in the demand for caregiving, since many people were sick and schools were closed.

Concluding, we see that all these factors affected more women/ girls than men/boys, so “This pandemic will reverse the progress toward gender equality”.

(2) Using a country as an example, explain what policies the government of that country has implemented to address this problem.

In my country, Portugal, some measures were implemented in order to face this problem:

- Government transfers to face the income reductions;
- Schools were closed but kept open for those kids which parents worked in crucial sectors, such as healthcare, so that parents could keep working;
- Providing of computers, in order to ensure that every kid had access to learning materials and online classes;
- Classes through an open TV channel: every grade, and every course had classes that were recorded and thought by a professor and since the channel were open and public, no one could be left out;
- Parents whose children were less than 12 years old had the right to stay at home with them and still keep their income, with the government compensating companies through transfers.