

Regional project
**Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 to support vulnerable groups as
low-wage, informal and gig workers**

Online event – Vulnerable groups in agriculture
March 17, 2021 from 11:00 – 12:30

Introduction: Open Society Foundations (OSF) is supporting \$0.7 million responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 to support vulnerable groups as low-wage, informal and gig workers in Western Balkans. The project is part of a [\\$133.7 million investment](#) from OSF to combat the ravages of COVID-19 around the globe, with a focus on providing immediate relief for vulnerable communities. The regional project is implemented by the [Open Society Foundation Albania \(OSFA\)](#), [Open Society Fund Bosnia & Herzegovina \(OSFBiH\)](#), [Kosovo Foundation for Open Society \(KFOS\)](#), [Foundation Open Society-Macedonia \(FOSM\)](#), [Open Society Foundation Serbia \(OSFS\)](#) with the majority of the support will consist in direct financial support to low-wage, informal and gig workers, giving priority to women and other vulnerable groups. The project will help to build a regional platform of shared understanding among affected small business, self-employed and informal workers on the government role in managing the economic crisis.

It's a fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has surfaced and exacerbated inequalities, including those based on gender, that shape COVID-19's social and economic fallouts. Women have been in the spotlight for carrying a disproportionate burden as caregivers, workers in precarious jobs lacking basic protections, and victims of violence within their own households. Additionally, women who lost jobs due to the pandemic COVID-19, employed primarily in the informal sector as agriculture, didn't get any help from the government's emergency package.

As part of the regional project, a series of events will be organized at regional level to build the regional platform organized by OSFA, OSFBiH, KFOS, FOSM and OSFS. The first event, 'Vulnerable groups in agriculture sector', will invite representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) from the Western Balkan countries: Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia to discuss how can we stand with vulnerable groups, in particular rural women in building resilience toward the road to COVID-19 recovery and other future shocks.

11:00 – 11:45, First session:

- **Ms. Marina Toseska**, Representative of the Association for Rural Development Local Action Group AGRO LEADER, implementing the project 'Responding to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 to support vulnerable groups of low-income, informal and gig workers'
- **Mr. Fetah Elezi**, Executive Director, Association for Plant Genetic Resources, implementing the project 'Strengthening capacities and involvement of vulnerable groups in agriculture sector'
- **Ms. Linda Baleta**, Communications and Public Relations Manager, Promoting Private Sector Employment (PPSE)
- **Ms. Olivera Vuković**, Director, SeCONS, implementing the project 'Socioeconomic impact of COVID – Special Issue of the Monitoring the Social Situation in Serbia'

11.45 – 12.30 Questions and Answers Session

Moderator: OSF Albania