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FIGHT FOR FOOD STRONGER THAN THE FEAR OF COVID-19

She is not in possession of a TV set and has never heard of COVID-19. Roza from Shuto Orizari is not afraid of the treacherous novel virus that has been spreading uncontrollably round the globe. Her daughter is the source of every piece of information she receives.

Roza:

I haven't heard of any virus.

Do you have a TV set?

No, I don't have a TV set.

Information seems delayed in the case of Arif, too. He is familiar with the infection but he is not aware of the ease measures regarding the imposed quarantine.

Arif:

I know there is a curfew.

Do you know when it starts?

At four!

Government officials have been reporting on the latest statistics with reference to COVID-19 on a daily basis. They have been emphasizing and repeating the compulsory protection measures in the fight against the disease. It is not to be forgotten that the reporters' post in center of the city is exactly five kilometers away from Shuto Orizari. Nonetheless, somewhere along the road such information is lost and never reaches these people living on the brink of poverty. Shuto Orizari is a housing estate in the capital city, but, nonetheless, the marginalized groups do not have the possibility to hear the recommendations so that they may adhere to them.

The representatives from the NGO entitled *Initiative of Women from Shuto Orizari* state that most of these people do not even know who to address in the event of any symptoms.

Statement by Ms. Salija Bekjir Halim, *Initiative of Women from Shuto Orizari*

Following the onset of the pandemics in our state, we conducted a survey among circa 195 Roma women from Shuto Orizari. Only 14% of them know who to contact in case they develop any symptoms and are familiar with the procedure of any further treatment. The Municipality officials state that they do everything within their power and that they have distributed face masks and gloves and informative flyers.

Statement by Ms. Fatima Osmanovska, President of the Council of the Municipality of Shuto Orizari

We have hired additional volunteers, attendants operating within the municipality and working in the field. They are in charge of distributing the informative flyers, and the protective masks as well, which means we are working preventively as well.

Nevertheless, the most pressing problem for the local authorities is not to have any starving people. Fatima, together with several other women, has set up a soup kitchen within the premises of the municipal kindergarten where they cook meals for the children on the streets on a daily basis. The groceries needed for the meals are procured by the Municipality together with some volunteers residing in the municipality.

A Dialogue between the Journalist and Shukrija and Sanela:

‘What is that tasty meal you prepared today?’

‘It’s called moussaka, it’s still hot and we prepared it for the children on the streets.’

‘How many packed lunches are there in total?’

‘About 60.’

‘Is this hot bread?’

‘Yes, it is. It’s still hot.’

‘How many pieces are there?’

‘Well, about 70.’

‘That means hot bread is very popular.’

Twelve-year-old Almir will be the first one to try the tasty meal.

A Dialogue between the Journalist and Almir:

‘Do you know what’s inside?’

‘Musseka!’

‘Have you eaten such a meal?’

‘Yes!’

The other packed lunches will be delivered to the nearby alleys where a bunch of hungry children are eagerly waiting to hear the honking of the horn coming from Fatima’s car.

Distance here is measured at arm’s length. It is enough to reach the tasty meal without using any gloves or face masks, which seem to be obsolete when people are hungry and there is food to eat.

Stand Up:

The number of residents in Shuto Orizari is approximately 40,000. Some 2000 families here are in desperate need of help. There is no COVID-19 testing site set up in Shuto Orizari. The nearest testing site is in Cair but this site seems to be difficult to access according to the information we received from the Municipality authorities. Twelve people have tested positive to the virus. There is no information on the number of deceased persons or currently active cases.