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# Vulnerable groups in the front line: Challenges and impacts – Croatia

Society for Sustainable Development Design /  
Društvo za oblikovanje održivog razvoja (DOOR)  
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# Who are vulnerable citizens?



- In the context of (energy) poverty different groups of citizens can be identified as vulnerable:
  - People with disabilities
  - Single parent household
  - Children
  - Elderly citizens
  - Women
  - Unemployed...



# Reasons contributing to the vulnerability in the context of energy poverty



- Availability of energy: households that are considered vulnerable are those with high energy costs and / or difficulties in meeting ends meet,
- Beneficiaries of welfare system and unemployment benefits,
- Disability / ruined health: health characteristics determine vulnerability
- Social and economic characteristics. of the households such ad age, income, education level and similar

# Some national data for HR

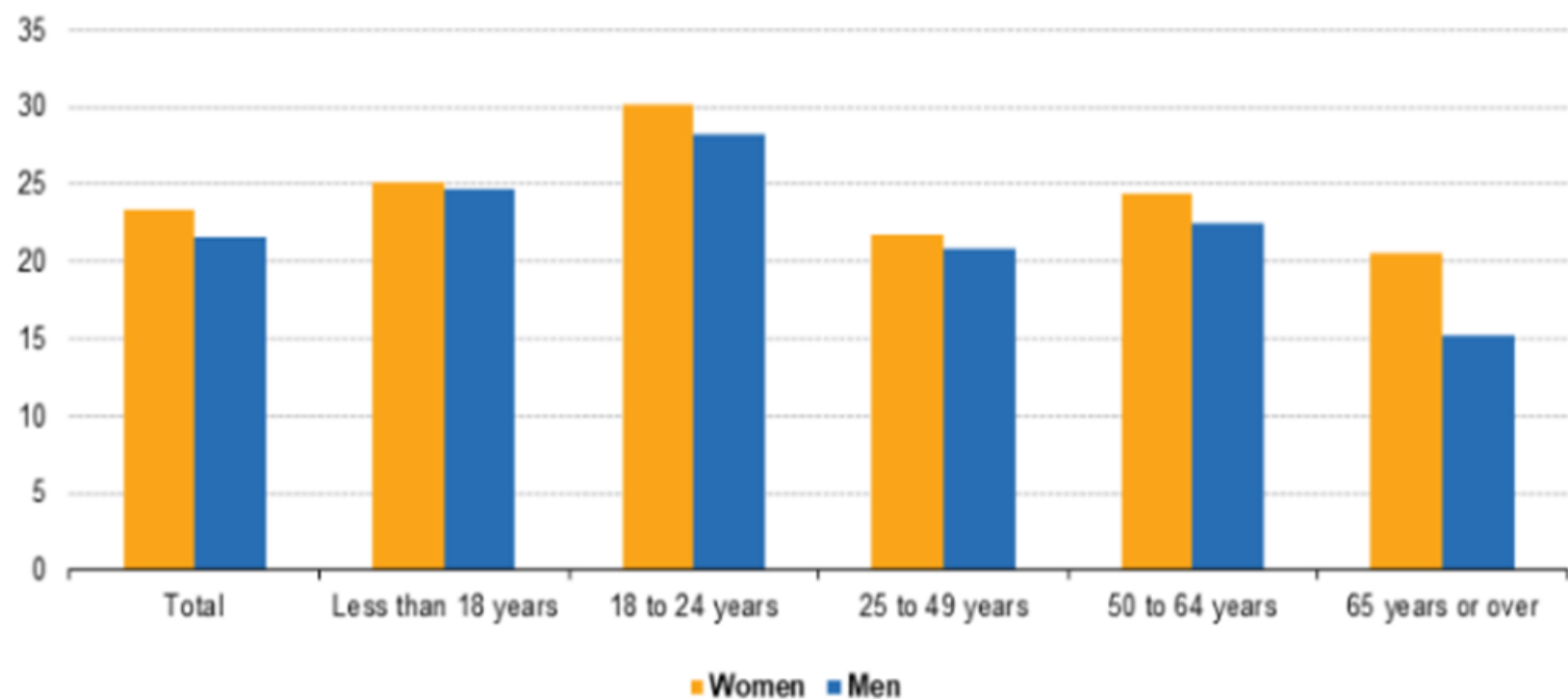


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- According to the Central Bureau of Statistics data in 2019 the at-risk-of-poverty rate was 18.3 percent
- 23.3% of people lived at risk of poverty or social exclusion
- **at-risk-of-poverty rate for women aged 65 or over was 33.6%**
- **at-risk-of-poverty rate for the unemployed was 45.3%**
- **4,2% of unemployed are people with disabilities**
- 6.6% of people were living in households that cannot afford adequate heating in the coldest months
- 11.9% of people were living in households that find it very difficult to make ends meet
- 15.7% of persons were living in households that have been late in paying payments (housing loan, rent, utility bills or consumer credit) in the last 12 months due to financial difficulties

### People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by sex and age group, EU-28, 2017

(% of population)





- Age: higher share of women among elderly due to longer life expectancy (2015; 83.3 years for women and 77.9 years for men);
- elderly women more likely to be poor than men if living alone (23% women, 17% man)
- Single-parent households: 48 % of lone mothers and 32 % of lone fathers are at risk of poverty or social exclusion;
- women make up almost 85 % of all one-parent families in the EU; employment rate is 78 % for lone fathers and 69% for lone mothers

# Energy poverty and gender



- Women and women-led households are disproportionately affected by energy poverty.
- 4 different dimensions:
- **Physiological dimension:** Women are more heat and cold sensitive than men due to their physiology, which may place women and girls suffering energy poverty at a greater risk.
- **Economic dimension:** Women face a disproportionate share in unpaid care work. They also face a gender pay gap and gender pension gap - women have lower wages and pensions than men...
- **Health dimension:** Living in inadequately heated/cooled homes has adverse impacts on respiratory and cardiovascular systems, as well as on mental health due to increased stress.
- **Social/cultural dimension:** Responsibilities and household roles are important social/cultural factors. Women are often responsible for household energy consumption, but often do not have an equal voice in decisions about energy.

# Projects focusing on vulnerable citizens led by DOOR



- FER rješenja – project focused on elderly with additional focus on elderly women (102 household visits in City of Zagreb – 39% older than 64 (in total 70% older than 55))
- Together for comfortable housing projects – focus on families with disabilities
- Empowermed project – focus on women and women lead households in Mediterranean area ([www.empowermed.eu](http://www.empowermed.eu))



# Empowermed – project



- Overall objective of EmpowerMed is to contribute to energy poverty alleviation and health improvement of citizens affected by energy poverty in Mediterranean countries, with a particular focus on women, through:
- implementing practical solutions to empower over 10,000 people affected by energy poverty in the Mediterranean
- assessing the impacts of those measures to formulate local, national and EU policy recommendations
- promoting policy solutions for tackling energy poverty at local, national and EU level among 220 decision-makers, 560 social actors, 100 utilities, 180 health experts and 100 energy poverty experts.

# Gender justice in campaign



- Raising awareness that women are disproportionately affected by energy poverty, but are at the same time a strong agent to fight against energy poverty – at least collection of sex-disaggregated data in the energy poverty field, engendering energy poverty indicators and energy poverty definition that takes gender and intersectional aspects into account
- Prioritising women, especially the ones affected by energy poverty, in training and jobs related to renovation and renewables efforts of the European Green Deal

# Structural changes to tackle energy poverty



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- We need to recognise that energy poverty causes go far beyond the triad of "low income - poor energy efficiency - high expenditure", which is traditionally considered to set the context to addressing energy poverty
- Drivers of energy poverty are more structural - they span, at least, across our current economic, social, employment, energy, climate, taxation, welfare, housing and health policies.
- Tackling energy poverty can mean questioning our housing policies to ensure that tourism expansion and energy efficiency upgrades to the buildings do not increase the structural injustices, which can lead to unaffordable housing, gentrification and segregation.
- Tackling energy poverty also means rethinking our labour policies in way that low-quality and precarious jobs are put lower in the list of priorities, while focus is given to the quality employment with decent earning.



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