



Ukraine. National Report on the results of a  
comprehensive review at the national level on  
the implementation of the Beijing Declaration  
and Platform for Action (1995) in 2020-2024

Thirtieth anniversary

The fourth World Conference on the Status of Women and the adoption of the Beijing  
Declaration and Platform for Action

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## Section One: Highlights

### **Core elements of the country-level review process**

The country-level review process for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) in Ukraine involved a comprehensive and participatory approach. The Ministry of Social Policy, with support from UN Women, played a central role in coordinating this process. The steps included developing a detailed questionnaire to gather information from various stakeholders, including central and regional government bodies, NGOs, and international organizations. A series of strategic sessions and consultations were held to discuss and analyse the data, ensuring that the views of women and girls from marginalized groups were considered. The process also involved an extensive review of statistical data, legal frameworks, and policy measures to assess progress and identify gaps.

### **Progress in the implementation of the BPfA**

Ukraine has made significant progress in implementing the BPfA, despite the severe challenges posed by the full-scale war and the COVID-19 pandemic. Key achievements include:

- 1) **Protection of women's rights during war:** The government has taken robust measures to protect the rights of women and girls affected by the war, notably through cooperation with women's organizations and international organisations, promoting gender equality and responding to humanitarian crises and providing support to women and girls affected by the war, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.
- 2) **Preservation and strengthening of institutional gender mechanism:** The development and strengthening of the institutional gender mechanism, including the appointment of gender coordinators and the establishment of gender equality units within government bodies, as well as gender mainstreaming tools, helped ensure substantial progress in multiple areas, such as post-war recovery, education, healthcare, foreign affairs, public administration, among others.
- 3) **Women's economic opportunities:** Efforts to expand women's economic opportunities through policies aimed at reducing the gender pay gap, promoting women's entrepreneurship, and (re)training for new professions, including in response to the challenges of war, have shown positive results. The Ministry of Economy's initiatives, such as targeted grants for female entrepreneurs, have been particularly impactful.
- 4) **Gender-based violence response:** Ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the implementation of legal and institutional frameworks to prevent and respond to GBV have been critical in addressing violence against women and girls.
- 5) **Women, Peace, and Security agenda:** increasing female participation in the security and defense sectors, implementing policies for gender equality, combating discrimination, and enhancing collaboration between NGOs and security institutions, thereby ensuring women's meaningful roles in national security and future peacebuilding efforts.

### **Challenges include:**

- 1) **Impact of the war:** The full-scale war has exacerbated existing gender inequalities and created new challenges, such as increased unemployment and economic instability, which disproportionately affect women.
- 2) **Resource constraints:** Limited financial resources and the destruction of infrastructure due to the war have hindered the effective implementation of gender equality initiatives.

- 3) **Stereotypes and discrimination:** Persistent gender stereotypes and discrimination, particularly in the labour market and education, continue to impede progress.

### **Addressing the needs of marginalized women and girls**

The Government of Ukraine has taken substantial measures to address the specific needs of women and girls from marginalized groups, aligning with the principle of leaving no one behind. This includes the implementation of the National Strategy for the Creation of a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine and other high-profile measures that aim to ensure accessibility and inclusion for all, particularly women with disabilities, IDPs, and those living in remote areas. Specific programs and policies have been developed to support Roma women, elderly women, female veterans and women affected by HIV/AIDS, ensuring they have access to essential services and opportunities.

### **Good practices and lessons learned**

- 1) **Inclusive policy development:** The participatory approach in policy development, involving a wide range of stakeholders, has been crucial. This inclusive process ensures that policies are responsive to the diverse needs of women and girls, making them more effective.
- 2) **Comprehensive training programs:** The implementation of extensive training programs for law enforcement and other officials on gender equality and CRSV has not only built capacity but also fostered a culture of accountability and sensitivity towards gender issues.
- 3) **Strategic use of international support:** Leveraging support from international organizations and development partners has been key to sustaining gender equality initiatives. The collaboration with entities like UN Women, UNDP, UNFPA, the EU and bilateral partners has provided necessary resources and expertise.

### **Areas needing support**

To accelerate progress towards gender equality, Ukraine requires support in several areas:

- 1) **Financial resources:** Increased funding is essential to rebuild infrastructure, support economic recovery, and sustain gender equality programs.
- 2) **Capacity building:** Ongoing training and capacity-building initiatives for policymakers, civil servants, and local authorities are crucial to enhance the implementation of gender-sensitive policies.
- 3) **Policy advice and technical assistance:** Expert advice and technical assistance are needed to develop and implement effective gender policies, particularly in post-war reconstruction, as well as in the context of European integration processes, including the approximation of gender-related acquis.
- 4) **Data gathering and analysis:** Improved data collection and analysis capabilities are necessary to monitor progress accurately and make informed policy decisions.
- 5) **Technology and partnerships:** Enhanced use of technology and stronger partnerships with international and local organizations can facilitate better coordination and implementation of gender equality initiatives.

In summary, Ukraine has demonstrated resilience and commitment to advancing gender equality despite facing significant challenges. By focusing on the outlined priorities and leveraging international support, Ukraine aims to build on its achievements and address ongoing challenges to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all women and girls.

## Section Two: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

### 1. Over the past five years, what have been the most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women?

Over the past five years, Ukraine has faced significant challenges due to the full-scale war caused by Russian aggression. Despite these difficulties, the country has made notable progress in promoting gender equality and empowering women. By addressing these issues comprehensively, Ukraine aims to continue its progress toward gender equality and the empowerment of women, ensuring that all citizens can contribute to and benefit from the nation's development.

#### **Most important achievements**

##### 1) Protection of the rights and addressing the needs of women and girls affected by the full-scale war

The full-scale war initiated by Russia in 2022 has had a devastating impact on the rights and situation of women and girls in Ukraine. The Government of Ukraine has prioritized addressing these impacts through various measures. Key initiatives include providing emergency humanitarian assistance, creating safe spaces, and offering psychological support for women and girls affected by the conflict. Specific programs have been implemented to support internally displaced persons (IDPs), with a focus on women and children, who represent a significant portion of the displaced population. These efforts are crucial for maintaining the well-being and safety of vulnerable groups and ensuring their access to essential services and support.

##### 2) Preservation and development of the institutional gender mechanism

Despite the ongoing conflict, Ukraine has managed to preserve and further develop its institutional framework for gender equality. This includes the continued operation and strengthening of bodies such as the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy and the Ministry of Social Policy. The strategic roles played by these institutions in coordinating gender equality policies have been vital. For example, the implementation of the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period until 2030 has provided a robust framework for gender equality initiatives across various sectors. The commitment to gender equality at the highest levels of government underscores the importance of maintaining a cohesive and integrated approach to gender policy, even in times of crisis.

##### 3) Expanding women's economic opportunities

Economic empowerment of women has been a key focus area, with significant progress made in reducing the gender wage gap and promoting women's entrepreneurship. The adoption of the National Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap until 2030 and the accompanying action plans have been pivotal. Initiatives such as government grants for women entrepreneurs and retraining programs for new professions, particularly those in high demand due to the war, have helped women to enter and thrive in the workforce. These measures are essential for achieving economic equality and ensuring that women can contribute fully to the country's economic recovery and growth.

##### 4) Development of the system of response to gender-based violence

Ukraine has made considerable strides in addressing gender-based violence, particularly through the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2022. This has strengthened the legal and institutional framework for combating GBV and expanded services for survivors. The establishment of support centres and shelters, along with training programs for law enforcement and judicial personnel, has improved the response to GBV cases. Additionally, public awareness campaigns have been launched to educate citizens

about GBV and available support services. These efforts are crucial for protecting the rights of women and girls and ensuring that they have access to justice and support.

#### 5) Gender mainstreaming in post-war reconstruction

Gender considerations have been integrated into the strategies and programs for post-war reconstruction. The involvement of women in decision-making processes related to reconstruction and recovery has been promoted to ensure that their perspectives and needs are addressed. The Government's commitment to "building back better" includes prioritizing gender equality in all reconstruction efforts. This approach not only helps to address immediate needs but also lays the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable society in the long term.

#### 6) Promotion of the Women, Peace, Security agenda

Ukraine has actively promoted the Women, Peace, Security agenda by increasing the participation of women in the security and defense sectors. The number of female military personnel has risen significantly, facilitated by policies that allow women to access all professions and positions in these sectors. Efforts to combat discrimination and sexism, improve infrastructural conditions, and provide gender-sensitive training have been crucial. Additionally, the interaction between NGOs and security institutions has been strengthened, promoting a more inclusive approach to national security. These measures are vital for ensuring that women can play a meaningful role in security and defence efforts, and will be better represented in peacebuilding when the aggressor is repelled and preconditions for peace process are available.

#### 7) Promotion of gender equality in education

Gender equality in education has been advanced through the implementation of the Strategy for Gender Equality in Education until 2030. This includes anti-discrimination examinations of educational materials, courses on gender issues, and the establishment of gender research centres. These initiatives aim to eliminate gender stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for all students. By fostering an inclusive educational environment, Ukraine is working to ensure that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to support gender equality.

### **Main challenges**

#### 1) Impact of the full-scale war on the situation of women and girls

The full-scale war has been the most significant challenge, exacerbating the vulnerability of many groups of women and girls and creating new vulnerable populations. Women and girls have faced increased risks of violence, displacement, and economic hardship. The Government has implemented various measures to address these challenges, such as providing targeted support for IDPs and survivors of violence. However, the ongoing conflict continues to pose severe obstacles to the protection and empowerment of women and girls, making it difficult to achieve sustained progress in gender equality.

#### 2) Inconsistent application of gender equality tools

While there has been progress in developing gender equality tools and policies, their practical application across all areas of state policy remains inconsistent. The integration of gender perspectives is not yet systematic, resulting in uneven implementation and varying levels of success. To address this and to enhance the systematic application of gender equality tools, Ukraine has focused on enhancing the capacity of policymakers and civil servants through training and education. For example, the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period until 2030 provides a comprehensive framework for integrating gender perspectives into various sectors. Additionally, training programs for law enforcement and judicial personnel on handling GBV cases, as seen

in the collaboration with UN Women, have been crucial in improving the practical application of gender equality tools.

### 3) Lack of financial resources

The war has strained Ukraine's financial resources, limiting the availability of funds for gender policy implementation. This has affected the ability to provide necessary services and support, particularly at the local level where communities are responsible for delivering many gender-related services without adequate budgets. To address funding gaps, Ukraine has leveraged international aid and partnerships. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention has facilitated the establishment of support centres and shelters for GBV survivors, supported by international partners. The Government has also developed comprehensive plans, such as the Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap, to ensure targeted use of available resources for high-impact initiatives. Furthermore, the Government has sought to prioritize funding for essential services and programs, ensuring that critical needs are met even with limited resources.

### 4) Insufficient skills of policymakers on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming

The skills and knowledge of policymakers regarding the application of gender equality tools, such as gender analysis, gender legal expertise, and gender budgeting, are often insufficient. High staff turnover and the increased burden on civil servants due to the war exacerbate this issue. To address this challenge, the Government, civil society and international partners has implemented extensive training programs and capacity-building initiatives to enhance the skills of policymakers. Additionally, the Ministry of Social Policy has been providing the guidelines for implementing a gender approach at the community level, ensuring that local authorities are equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to apply gender-sensitive policies effectively.

### 5) Persistent gender stereotypes in society

Gender stereotypes remain deeply ingrained in Ukrainian society, affecting various sectors such as education and media. These stereotypes hinder progress towards gender equality by perpetuating discriminatory attitudes and limiting opportunities for women and girls. The Government has undertaken public awareness campaigns and educational programs to challenge and change these stereotypes. While some progress has been made, overcoming deeply rooted social norms requires sustained effort and a multi-pronged approach through education system at all levels, as well as through the promotion of gender sensitivity through communication and awareness-raising campaigns vis-à-vis wider public.

Over 2020-2024, no major setbacks in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women have been observed in Ukraine, even in the context of full-scale war. However, further continuation of aggressive war as well as humanitarian and economic crises caused by it may strengthen tensions in the society that can potentially manifest in such setbacks. The Government will continue to closely monitor the situation and take necessary action to preserve the substantial progress made in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment in the past decades.

## **2. Over the past five years, what have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programs?**

From the perspective of women's and girls' situation, since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, the ultimate priority of Ukraine was to protect the rights and address the needs of the population affected by war, including women and girls.

To accelerate progress for women and girls in 2020-2024, Ukraine prioritized:

- 1) quality education, training and life-long learning for women and girls,
- 2) eliminating violence against women and girls,
- 3) ensuring the right to work and rights at work,
- 4) promoting gender-responsive social protection, and
- 5) implementing the WPS agenda.

1) Quality education is foundational for empowering women and girls, providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in society and the economy. Ensuring quality education and training is crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and discrimination, fostering gender equality, and promoting economic development. Ukraine has implemented several strategies and programs to promote quality education for women and girls. One notable initiative is the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education for the period until 2030, adopted in December 2022. This strategy includes measures to address gender-based choices of specialties in vocational and technical educational institutions, which contribute to horizontal gender segregation in the labour market and the gender pay gap. The Ministry of Education has also promoted gender equality in educational programs and policies. Anti-discrimination examinations of educational materials, courses on gender issues, and the establishment of gender research centres have been key actions in this area. These efforts aim to eliminate gender stereotypes in education, encourage girls to pursue STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) fields, and ensure equal opportunities for boys and girls.

2) Eliminating violence against women and girls is a pervasive violation of human rights that undermines their health, dignity, security, and autonomy. It also poses significant barriers to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Ukraine has made substantial progress in addressing violence against women and girls by strengthening its legal and institutional framework. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2022 marked a significant milestone in this regard. This convention provides a comprehensive legal framework for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The government has also expanded services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). This includes the establishment of crisis centres, hotlines, and shelters, as well as providing psychological, legal, and medical support to survivors. Additionally, Ukraine has implemented programs for the training and capacity building of law enforcement officers, social workers, and healthcare providers to improve their response to GBV cases.

3) Ensuring the right to work and rights at work is fundamental for achieving gender equality and empowering women economically. This includes addressing issues such as the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression, and job creation. Ukraine has taken several measures to enhance women's economic opportunities and address gender disparities in the labour market. The Strategy to Reduce the Gender Pay Gap, developed in collaboration with UN Women and the ILO, focuses on addressing the root causes of the pay gap, including horizontal and vertical gender segregation and the unequal distribution of domestic work. Additionally, the government has promoted women's entrepreneurship through grants and training programs. These initiatives aim to support women in starting and growing their businesses, thereby increasing their economic independence and contribution to the economy.

4) Gender-responsive social protection ensures that women and girls have access to essential services and support, such as healthcare, education, and social security. It is crucial for addressing gender disparities and promoting the well-being of women and girls, particularly those from vulnerable groups. Ukraine has made efforts to implement gender-responsive social protection policies and programs. This includes providing universal health coverage, cash transfers, and pensions that consider the specific needs of women and girls. The Ministry of Social Policy has developed guidelines for implementing a gender



approach in social protection programs, ensuring that these programs address the unique challenges faced by women and girls.

5) The WPS agenda is crucial for ensuring the participation of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction processes. It promotes the protection of women and girls in conflict situations and their involvement in decision-making at all levels. Ukraine has been actively promoting the WPS agenda, particularly in the context of the ongoing conflict. The National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” for the period until 2025 has been updated to address the new realities caused by the full-scale war. This plan includes measures to support the participation of women in peacebuilding and reconstruction processes, as well as providing assistance to victims of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

Other important priorities in 2020-2024 included:

- political participation and representation,
- women’s entrepreneurship and women’s enterprises, and
- addressing unpaid care and domestic work and work-family conciliation, such as paid maternity, paternity, or parental leave, and care services.

Ensuring women’s political participation and representation is essential for achieving gender equality and empowering women. Ukraine has made efforts to promote gender equality in political processes and decision-making bodies. This includes implementing gender quotas for political parties and providing training and support for women candidates.

Supporting women’s entrepreneurship is crucial for promoting economic independence and empowerment. Ukraine is currently implementing programs to provide financial support, training, and mentorship for women entrepreneurs. These initiatives aim to increase the number of women-owned businesses and their contribution to the economy, including in terms of women’s economic empowerment for recovery from the consequences of war.

Addressing unpaid care and domestic work is essential for promoting work-family conciliation and ensuring that women have equal opportunities in the labour market. Ukraine has introduced certain legal changes to provide paid maternity, paternity, and parental leave, as well as expanding access to childcare services. These measures aim to support families and promote gender equality in caregiving responsibilities. Also, Ukraine jointly UNFPA is promoting responsible fathering as a tool to transform cultural norms and ensure fairer distribution of unpaid care and domestic work between women and men.

These priorities also contributed to addressing gender disparities and improving women’s and girls’ access to services, self-fulfilment, and decision-making.

To support the implementation of these priorities, in 2020-2024 Ukraine continued to develop a comprehensive legal, policy, and institutional framework for gender mainstreaming across all sectors. One notable example is the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in June 2022. By ratifying the convention, Ukraine committed to aligning its national laws with international standards, thereby strengthening legal protections for women and girls and ensuring a more robust response to gender-based violence. This commitment is further reinforced by amendments to national legislation that enhance legal protections and provide better support for survivors of violence.

In addition to legal reforms, Ukraine has made significant strides in developing policies that promote gender equality. The adoption of the Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the Period Until 2030 and its accompanying Action Plan for 2022-2024 underscores the government’s long-term commitment to gender equality. This strategy outlines concrete measures to address gender disparities in various sectors, including education, healthcare, and the labour market. For

instance, the strategy includes initiatives to reduce the gender pay gap, promote women's entrepreneurship, and improve access to quality education for girls and women.

Institutionally, Ukraine has strengthened its national gender mechanism to support the implementation of gender equality policies. The establishment of gender units within various government departments and the appointment of gender coordinators and commissioners at both national and regional levels have been pivotal. These institutional developments ensure that gender considerations are systematically incorporated into the decision-making processes of government bodies. For example, the Ministry of Social Policy's role in coordinating gender policy across different sectors has been crucial in maintaining a cohesive approach to gender mainstreaming. The creation of advisory councils and working groups further supports this framework by providing platforms for stakeholder engagement and collaborative policy development.

Moreover, Ukraine has introduced practical tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming in policy implementation. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is one such tool that has been institutionalized to ensure that budget allocations address gender inequalities. The Ministry of Finance has issued the Guidelines for integrating gender perspectives into the budgeting process. These recommendations guide government bodies in allocating resources in a way that promotes gender equality. Additionally, gender audits have been conducted in 2022 across all central executive agencies to assess the effectiveness of gender policies and identify areas for improvement.

Through these legal, policy, and institutional advancements, Ukraine has demonstrated a commitment to gender mainstreaming across all sectors. By embedding gender equality into the legal framework, developing comprehensive policies, and establishing robust institutional mechanisms, Ukraine is making significant progress in addressing gender disparities and empowering women and girls. These efforts are essential for creating a more inclusive and equitable society, particularly in the context of the ongoing challenges posed by the full-scale war and its impact on women, girls and vulnerable populations.

### **3. Over the past five years, what specific actions have you taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls?**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has undertaken significant actions to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls. These actions are particularly critical given the ongoing conflict and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations.

According to most demographic indicators, indicators related to poverty, and indicators related to access to services, imbalances in Ukrainian society are not so much related to gender as such, but to the combination (intersectionality) of gender with other factors, such as age, income level, place of residence (rural/urban), sexual orientation, and the presence of a disability, which further exacerbate gender inequality in Ukraine. This trend was observed even before the start of a full-scale war, and it persists in 2022-2024.

During the reporting period, Ukraine has focused on the following groups that are marginalised or are at risk of marginalisation:

- Women and girls living in remote and rural areas
- Women and girls with disabilities
- Women and girls living with HIV/AIDS
- Younger women
- Older women
- Migrant women and girls

- Refugee and internally displaced women and girls
- Women and girls in humanitarian settings – notably women and girls residing in the proximity to the frontline
- Female veterans
- Members of the families of the deceased combatants, prisoners of war, missing combatants,
- Women and girls from the de-occupied territories,
- Women and girls who returned from captivity

Ukraine faces significant obstacles that affect women’s realization of equal opportunities and rights, especially women who face multiple forms of discrimination. Such difficulties are associated with the deterioration of the economic situation of vulnerable groups of women due to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, a sharp increase in the number of vulnerable groups (IDPs, those who returned from captivity, deportations, people with disabilities, families of the dead and prisoners), who in need of assistance, limited funding from the state budget, which led to a sharp reduction in the number of civil servants and workers who provide assistance stereotypes that still persist in society, insufficient practical application of legislation and a lack of relevant knowledge.

To promote the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls and groups at risk of marginalization, the following measures have been taken over 2020-2024:

1) Gender-responsive policies and programs. One of the most critical steps Ukraine has taken is the implementation of comprehensive legal frameworks and policies aimed at protecting the rights of marginalized groups of women and girls. In response to the intersectionality of gender with other factors such as age, income level, place of residence, sexual orientation, and disability, Ukraine has prioritized the development of gender-responsive policies and programs. The National Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the period until 2030 and its accompanying action plan emphasize the need to address the compounded discrimination faced by marginalized groups. This strategy includes measures to improve the economic situation of vulnerable women, support for IDPs, and initiatives to combat stereotypes and promote gender equality.

2) Specific measures for marginalized groups. The key measure during 2020-2024 was addressing the needs of women and girls affected by war. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has disproportionately affected women and girls, particularly those who are internally displaced, living in conflict zones, or have returned from captivity. The government has implemented several measures to support these groups. For example, the state has prioritized the provision of social services and assistance, ensuring a client-oriented approach that considers the best interests of recipients and adheres to gender equality principles. Training programs for local executive bodies and local self-government officials have been conducted to enhance their capacity to combat gender-based discrimination, human trafficking, and domestic violence.

3) Promoting the rights of Roma women and girls. The implementation of the Strategy and Plan of Measures for the Protection and Integration of the Roma National Minority into Ukrainian Society until 2020 has been a significant step towards addressing the specific needs of Roma women and girls. This strategy facilitated cooperation between state authorities and Roma civil society, leading to increased issuance of personal documents, better social assistance coverage, and improved access to education for Roma children. Despite these achievements, the measures remained gender-neutral, necessitating further actions to specifically address the educational needs of Roma girls and boys under the State Social Program for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men.

4) The National Strategy for the Creation of a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine until 2030, initiated by the First Lady of Ukraine, Olena Zelenska, is a cornerstone of these efforts. This strategy aims to create an inclusive environment by eliminating barriers that hinder the full participation of people with disabilities

and other vulnerable groups in society. The strategy's implementation plans for 2021 and 2022 included specific measures to ensure accessibility in infrastructure, education, employment, and public services.

To support this strategy, several legal acts have been enacted. The Decree of the President of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Creation of a Barrier-Free Space in Ukraine" and the Law "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Education Regarding the Organization of Inclusive Education" are pivotal in promoting accessibility and inclusion. Additionally, the Cabinet of Ministers' resolutions have established criteria and plans for creating accessible environments in public spaces and services.

5) Barrier-free guide and educational series. The "Handbook of Barrier-Free Accessibility," developed on the initiative of Olena Zelenska, is a practical tool designed to foster inclusive communication and awareness.<sup>1</sup> This guide offers clear definitions and explanations of key concepts such as barriers, stereotypes, inclusion, non-discrimination, and gender equality. It provides language rules to avoid prejudiced or discriminatory terms and includes a dictionary with correct terminology. This initiative is complemented by the Barrier-Free Literacy educational series, which educates the public on the importance of barrier-free environments and aims to change societal attitudes towards inclusivity.<sup>2</sup>

6) Combatting human trafficking and gender-based violence. The State Targeted Social Program for Combating Human Trafficking for the period until 2025 and the National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace, and Security" for the period until 2025 have been instrumental in addressing gender-based violence and human trafficking. These programs include training for specialists in local executive bodies and self-government on ensuring gender equality, with a focus on vulnerable groups. The client-oriented approach ensures that services are tailored to meet the specific needs of survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking.

7) Intersectionality and vulnerability studies. To better understand and address the complex needs of various vulnerable groups, Ukraine has conducted studies on the impact of security challenges on different demographics. These studies, supported by various international partners, have examined the experiences of girls and boys, women and men, considering factors such as age, place of residence, and social characteristics. The findings from these studies have informed the development of targeted measures in national strategies and action plans, ensuring that the unique needs of marginalized groups are met, and will be further used in the development of the Operation Plan for 2025-2027 under the Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030.

Also, during the provision of social services and assistance, a client-oriented approach to recipients is ensured, taking into account their best interests and observing the principle of ensuring gender equality.

#### **4. Over the past five years, how has the confluence of different crises affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what measures have you taken to prevent their negative impact on progress for women and girls?**

Ukraine has faced two major crises over the past five years: the full-scale war caused by Russian aggression and the COVID-19 pandemic. Both crises have had profound impacts on gender equality, affecting women and girls in unique and significant ways. Despite these challenges, Ukraine has taken numerous measures to mitigate their negative impacts and ensure progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The **full-scale war**, which began with Russia's aggression in 2014 and escalated in February 2022, caused

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<sup>1</sup> Barrier-Free Guide. <https://bf.in.ua/>

<sup>2</sup> Diia.Education Portal. Barrier-Free Literacy. <https://osvita.diia.gov.ua/courses/barrier-free-literacy>

the crisis in care services, destruction of education, healthcare, energy and other critical infrastructure, displacement a large number of the women and girls both within the country and abroad, humanitarian crisis, information war affecting mental health of women and girls. The war has exacerbated existing inequalities and barriers and created new challenges for gender equality and women's rights. However, it has also led to stronger initiatives and a heightened awareness of the need to involve everyone, regardless of gender, in responding to the crisis and overcoming its consequences.

The war has severely disrupted the labour market in Ukraine. In the spring of 2022, the unemployment rate surged to 30%. Although the economy is gradually recovering, gender inequality persists. Women face significant challenges in accessing entrepreneurship, employment, income, and career growth. Occupational gender segregation is evident, with women often occupying lower-paid positions and men dominating higher-risk, lower-skilled manual labour sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and construction. Gender imbalances in educational specializations continue to contribute to occupational segregation and the concentration of women in low-wage sectors. The war has highlighted the need for gender-sensitive educational policies to address the shortage of skilled workers in essential industries like energy, agriculture, and IT.

Measures taken to mitigate the impact of the war included:

- 1) Women's economic empowerment initiatives. The Ministry of Economy has implemented various initiatives to promote women's economic opportunities, including the Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap and government grants for women entrepreneurs. These efforts aim to address systemic barriers, support women's entry into traditionally male-dominated fields, and reduce occupational segregation.
- 2) Educational policies. The national policy on gender equality in education aims to overcome gender divides in fields of study. The government is investing in initiatives to encourage young women to choose industrial professions and men to pursue careers in social work, education, and healthcare. Reducing gender stereotypes in textbooks and promoting gender equality in education are key components of these efforts.
- 3) WPS agenda. Progress in the WPS agenda includes increasing numbers of women in the Armed Forces and law enforcement agencies. The updated National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, reflecting the context of the full-scale war, emphasizes the importance of the WPS agenda and supports women's participation in peacebuilding and reconstruction processes.
- 4) GBV response. The government and humanitarian partners are implementing special programs for GBV victims. Although coverage is limited, state services are gradually improving. The Implementation Plan for the Framework Program of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations to Prevent and Combat CRSV, approved in 2022, aims to build a coordinated, transparent, and effective system for combating sexual violence.

**The COVID-19 pandemic** has further strained Ukraine's efforts towards gender equality. The pandemic intensified existing gender disparities and created new challenges, particularly in healthcare, economic opportunities, and education. The pandemic put immense pressure on healthcare and social services, disproportionately affecting women, who are the majority in these sectors. Women faced increased risks of infection and burnout, while also bearing the brunt of unpaid caregiving responsibilities at home. The pandemic highlighted the need for a robust healthcare system and better support for healthcare workers. Women's economic opportunities were severely impacted by the pandemic. Many women lost their jobs or faced reduced working hours, particularly in sectors like retail, hospitality, and personal services, which were hardest hit by lockdowns and restrictions. The unequal division of care work between women and men worsened, exacerbating economic inequalities. The shift to remote learning during the pandemic posed significant challenges, particularly for girls in rural and low-income households. Limited access to

digital devices and the internet hindered their ability to participate in online education. The increased burden of domestic chores and caregiving responsibilities further impacted girls' education.

Measures taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic included:

- 1) Economic support initiatives. The government implemented economic support measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. These included financial assistance programs for affected workers, small business grants, and support for entrepreneurs. Specific efforts were made to ensure that women had access to these support measures.
- 2) Support for healthcare workers. To support healthcare workers, the government provided additional resources, personal protective equipment (PPE), and mental health support. Efforts were made to ensure that healthcare workers, particularly women, received the necessary support to continue their vital work.
- 3) Education support. The government and international partners worked to provide digital devices and internet access to students in need. Special programs were implemented to support girls' education and ensure they did not fall behind. Efforts were also made to reduce the burden of domestic chores and caregiving responsibilities on girls.
- 4) Social protection measures. The government expanded social protection measures to support vulnerable groups, including women and girls. This included cash transfers, food assistance, and access to healthcare services. Specific programs were designed to support women affected by violence and those in need of reproductive health services.

## **5. Over the next five years, what are the priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country through laws, policies and/or programs?**

Over the next five years, Ukraine has identified several priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls through laws, policies, and programs. These priorities are based on the lessons learned from past successes and setbacks and are deeply influenced by the ongoing war and its impact on gender equality.

1) Further development of the institutional gender mechanism and tools for ensuring gender equality: the development of institutional gender mechanisms and tools is crucial for addressing gender imbalances and improving the situation of women and girls in Ukraine. This involves strengthening the roles and capacities of various gender equality bodies and ensuring they are well-equipped to handle gender issues effectively. Over the past five years, Ukraine has seen significant progress in this area, with enhancement of key bodies such as the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, and gender champions within the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which have been instrumental in advancing gender equality initiatives.

The Government Commissioner for Gender Policy, together with international partners and women's organizations, has been pivotal in advocating for the inclusion of gender perspectives in national recovery plans and other strategic documents. The focus will be on ensuring these mechanisms are robust and capable of driving gender equality across all sectors, including education, healthcare, and employment. The institutional framework must be resilient to the challenges posed by the ongoing war, ensuring that gender equality remains a priority even in crisis situations.

2) Continuation of advanced training for civil servants and local self-government officials: To effectively implement gender equality policies, it is essential to enhance the capacity of policymakers at all levels. This includes advanced training for civil servants and local self-government officials on gender equality issues and the use of gender equality tools. Training programs need to cover gender analysis, gender

budgeting, gender impact assessments, and the integration of gender perspectives into policy-making processes.

The Ministry of Social Policy, with support from international organizations such as UN Women, EU, UNFPA, bilateral partners and others has been conducting regular training sessions for government officials. These programs aim to increase awareness and understanding of gender issues, enabling policymakers to design and implement more effective gender-responsive policies. Moving forward, it will be crucial to expand these training programs, ensuring that they reach all relevant stakeholders and are tailored to address the specific challenges posed by the ongoing war.

3) Mainstreaming gender into post-war recovery programs at all levels: The full-scale war in Ukraine has necessitated comprehensive recovery efforts that incorporate gender perspectives. Integrating gender approaches into recovery programs is essential to ensure that women and girls benefit equally from reconstruction efforts. This involves conducting gender analyses of recovery plans, identifying the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls, and ensuring that these are addressed in all aspects of recovery, from infrastructure development to social services.

The Government of Ukraine, in collaboration with international partners, has been working on the national recovery plans and strategies, notably Ukraine Facility Plan, which includes gender-sensitive provisions in several key sections. For example, chapters on agrarian policy, digitalization, energy security, social protection, child protection, and the protection of war veterans have been developed with significant support from international donors to ensure they address gender-specific needs. In the coming years, the focus will be on ensuring that all sections of the recovery plan are gender-sensitive and that gender perspectives are systematically integrated into all recovery efforts.

4) Exchange of experience and coordination between champion agencies: To achieve meaningful progress in gender equality, it is vital to promote the exchange of experience and coordination between champion agencies at both strategic and practical levels. This includes facilitating dialogue and collaboration between government bodies, international organizations, and civil society groups that are leading gender equality efforts.

The Ministry of Social Policy and the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy have been instrumental in coordinating efforts and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Regular strategic sessions, working groups, and joint initiatives have been organized to share best practices, address challenges, and develop coordinated responses to gender issues. Moving forward, these efforts will be intensified to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned and working towards common goals in promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls.

5) Empowering women in senior government positions and ensuring equal participation in decision-making: Ensuring that women are equally represented in decision-making positions is critical for achieving gender equality. Over the past five years, Ukraine has made strides in increasing the number of women in senior government positions and promoting their participation in decision-making processes. However, challenges remain, particularly in overcoming gender stereotypes and biases that hinder women's advancement.

The Government has implemented several initiatives to address these challenges, including the adoption of policies aimed at promoting women's leadership and providing support for women aspiring to senior positions. In the coming years, efforts will be focused on strengthening these initiatives, providing mentorship and support for women leaders, and ensuring that women's voices are heard in all areas of decision-making.

6) Expanding women's economic opportunities: Expanding economic opportunities for women is a key priority, particularly in the context of the ongoing war, which has significantly impacted women's employment and economic security. The Government is committed to addressing barriers to women's economic participation, including gender discrimination in hiring, occupational segregation, and the gender pay gap.

Several measures have been implemented to support women's economic empowerment, including vocational training and retraining programs, support for women entrepreneurs, and the development of gender-sensitive workplaces. The Ministry of Economy's efforts to ensure gender balance among grant recipients and the promotion of women in STEM fields are notable examples. Moving forward, these initiatives will be expanded to provide more comprehensive support for women, including access to non-traditional professions, childcare services, and flexible work arrangements.

7) Promotion of gender transformations in education: Promoting gender equality in education is essential for eliminating gender stereotypes and fostering a culture of equality and non-discrimination. The Government of Ukraine has made significant strides in this area, including the adoption of the Strategy for Gender Equality in Education and efforts to integrate gender perspectives into educational materials and curricula.

Initiatives aimed at encouraging girls to pursue education in STEM fields and reducing gender stereotypes in textbooks have been implemented with support from international partners. The focus will be on expanding these efforts, ensuring that educational institutions at all levels promote gender equality and provide equal opportunities for boys and girls.

8) Strengthening the system of prevention and response to GBV and CRSV: Gender-based violence remains a critical issue in Ukraine, exacerbated by the full-scale war. The Government has taken significant steps to address GBV, including the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and the implementation of policies and programs aimed at preventing violence and supporting survivors.

Efforts to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for responding to GBV have included training for law enforcement and judicial officials, the establishment of specialized services for survivors, and public awareness campaigns. Moving forward, the focus will be on enhancing these measures, ensuring that survivors have access to comprehensive support services and that perpetrators are held accountable.

9) Supporting mental and physical health of women and girls: The ongoing war has had a profound impact on the mental and physical health of women and girls in Ukraine. Addressing these health needs is a priority, with efforts focused on providing psychological support, healthcare services, and self-help programs.

The Government, in collaboration with international organizations, has implemented various initiatives to support the mental health of those affected by the war, including training for healthcare providers and the establishment of mental health support services. These efforts will be expanded to ensure that all women and girls have access to the care and support they need to cope with the impacts of the war.

10) Provision of social services for different groups of women and girls: Ensuring that all women and girls, particularly those from vulnerable groups, have access to social services is essential for promoting social inclusion and equality. The Government has implemented measures to provide targeted support for various groups, including IDPs, women with disabilities, and victims of violence.

Programs aimed at providing social services tailored to the specific needs of different groups have been developed, with a focus on ensuring that these services are accessible and effective. Moving forward, these efforts will be strengthened to ensure that all women and girls can access the support they need to lead fulfilling lives.



11) Advancing Women, Peace and Security agenda: Promoting the WPS agenda is crucial for ensuring that women are actively involved in peacebuilding and security efforts. Ukraine has made significant progress in this area, with increasing numbers of women joining the Armed Forces and law enforcement agencies.

Efforts to support women in the security and defense sector have included providing gender-sensitive training, improving infrastructure conditions, and addressing issues of discrimination and harassment. Moving forward, the focus will be on building on these achievements, ensuring that women have equal opportunities to contribute to peace and security efforts at all levels.

12) Gender mainstreaming in EU integration process: In the context of European integration processes, Ukraine is committed to the approximation of gender-related acquis. Gender mainstreaming in EU integration can serve as a leverage to support gender equality in various sectors of governance. Ukraine would benefit from technical and expert support and learn from the experiences of other countries that recently joined the EU, particularly those that had armed conflicts in recent history, such as Croatia. This includes integrating gender perspectives into all areas of governance and ensuring that gender equality principles are embedded in all EU-related policies and programs.

In summary, over the next five years, Ukraine is committed to accelerating progress for women and girls through comprehensive and targeted laws, policies, and programs. These priorities build on past successes, ongoing challenges and address the lessons learned from previous experience. By focusing on developing institutional mechanisms, enhancing training for policymakers, integrating gender approaches into recovery plans, promoting women's economic opportunities, and addressing gender-based violence, Ukraine aims to create a more equal and inclusive society for all. The impact of the ongoing war underscores the importance of these efforts, highlighting the need for resilient and gender-responsive policies that can adapt to changing circumstances and ensure that progress for women and girls continues despite the challenges.

## Section Three: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

### Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

#### 6. Over the past five years, what actions has your country taken to advance gender equality in the world of work (including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship)?

Over the past five years, Ukraine has implemented several measures to advance gender equality in the world of work, including informal and non-standard employment as well as entrepreneurship. Key actions taken by Ukraine over 2020-2024 to advance gender equality in the world of work include:

- 1) State strategies and action plans to address key root causes of gender inequalities at the labour market,
- 2) Guidelines on gender mainstreaming in collective agreements,
- 3) Entrepreneurship support programs for women.

1) In September 2023, the National Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap for the period until 2030 and the Action Plan for its implementation,<sup>3</sup> prepared by the Ministry of Economy together with UN Women and the ILO, were approved. The strategy was developed as a result of a series of multi-stakeholder consultations between the government, employers, trade unions, civil society and gender experts to address the root causes of the gender pay gap, including horizontal and vertical gender segregation, the unequal distribution of domestic work between men and women, and as well as gaps in legislation regarding equal pay for work of equal value. It is expected that the National Strategy for overcoming the gender pay gap for the period until 2030 will contribute to the elimination of the main causes of the gender pay gap, in particular, horizontal and vertical gender segregation, as well as the uneven distribution of care work between men and women. campaigns aimed at boys, girls and teachers, combined with career guidance work and encouraging employers to implement equal pay policies. In addition, the Ministry of Economy is working on the modernization of labour legislation, which will ensure the expansion of opportunities for women in the labour market.

The Strategy targets all working women in Ukraine, with specific measures for sectors with significant gender pay gaps and for women in informal or non-standard employment. The specific budget allocations are not detailed, but the strategy involves collaboration with various stakeholders, including government agencies, employers, and international organizations, implying shared funding responsibilities.

Also, in December 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education for the Period Until 2030 and approved the Operational Plan for its implementation for 2022-2024,<sup>4</sup> which is aimed, in particular, at overcoming the gender-based choice of specialties in vocational and technical educational institutions and institutions of higher education, which is the basis of horizontal gender segregation in the labour market and the gender pay gap labour.

Since the Strategy was adopted only recently, impact evaluations are not possible so far. Also, because of

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<sup>3</sup> Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Resolution on the Approval of the National Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap for the period until 2030 and the Action Plan for its implementation of 15 September 2023, No. 815-p.  
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/815-2023-%D1%80#Text>

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education for the Period Until 2030.  
<https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/news/2023/03/16/Strateh.vprovadzh.hendern.rivn.u.sferi.osvity.do.2030.roku.16.03.2023.pdf>

the full-scale war, the State Statistics Service is not able to conduct major household surveys measuring the gender pay gap. Therefore, the latest available data is for 2021, when Ukraine's gender pay gap was 18.6%, down from 26% in 2015, according to the State Statistics Service. The largest gaps were in arts, sports, entertainment, financial activities, postal services, and air transport, where women earned 30% less than men. Minimal gaps were seen in education, water transport, and administrative services.<sup>5</sup> Post-2021, official data is unavailable, but a 2023 IT Salary Study showed women earned 10-30% less than men in IT. The wage gap is due to occupational segregation, with women in lower-paid public sector roles.<sup>6</sup> Data limitations include a lack of representative data on segregation and an informal economy that obscures real wage differences. Finally, a 2023 Razumkov Centre survey reported a 33% wage gap, with women earning UAH 10,312 versus UAH 15,377 for men. This gap negatively impacts women's labour market participation, with 50.4% citing low wages as a significant barrier.<sup>7</sup>

The full-scale war severely impacted employment in Ukraine, drastically reducing employment rates in both private and public sectors since February 2022. SMEs were particularly affected, with 42% ceasing operations and 31% suspending activities by March 2022, leading to widespread job and income losses.<sup>8</sup> An analysis by UN Women and CARE indicated significant job losses and income reductions for many families, with internally displaced persons suffering the most. The labour market was limited, exacerbating the situation for displaced persons, especially women. Unemployment began to improve from mid-2022, with the rate dropping to 18.3% by the end of 2023. However, current gender-specific unemployment data is unavailable.

A key lesson learned from the implementation of the National Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap is the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration. The involvement of government agencies, employers, trade unions, civil society, and gender experts has been crucial in addressing the root causes of the gender pay gap, including gender segregation in the labour market and unequal domestic work distribution. Another lesson is the necessity of continuous modernization of labour legislation to expand opportunities for women in the workforce. This approach ensures that policies remain relevant and effective in promoting gender equality.

2) To ensure a unified approach to defining working conditions in collective agreements, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine issued Order No. 56 on 29 January 2020. This order approved Guidelines for including provisions aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in labour relations. These guidelines are intended for use by parties involved in social dialogue when concluding collective agreements.<sup>9</sup> They recommend that issues of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, as well as non-discrimination, be included in a separate section titled "Equality and Non-Discrimination" in collective agreements. This approach aims to ensure actual equality of men and women in the workplace and prevent gender-based discrimination.

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<sup>5</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine, "Average monthly wages by gender and types of economic activity for the quarter," 2021. [https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2021/gdn/smzp\\_zs/smzp\\_zs\\_ek/smzp\\_zs\\_ek\\_21\\_ue.xlsx](https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2021/gdn/smzp_zs/smzp_zs_ek/smzp_zs_ek_21_ue.xlsx).

<sup>6</sup> Sabadyshina, Y. "When looking for a job in IT, women report 10-30% lower salary than men on resumes – Djinni analytics," *DOU*, 20 Feb 2023. <https://dou.ua/lenta/news/male-and-female-salaries-in-it/>.

<sup>7</sup> Dzerkalo Tyzhnia. "How the labour market changed during the war: present and prospects." October 2023. <https://zn.ua/ukr/ECONOMICS/jak-zminivsja-rinok-pratsi-u-vojennij-chas-sohodennja-ta-perspektivi.html>

<sup>8</sup> "In Ukraine, 42% of small enterprises stopped working", *Ukrinform*, 15 March 2022. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/3429854-v-ukraini-pripinili-robotu-42-malih-pidприємstv.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Order of the Ministry of Social Policy on the Approval of Guidelines for the inclusion of provisions aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men in labor relations in collective agreements of 29 January 2020, No. 56. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/v0056739-20#Text>

The target groups for these guidelines are employers, employees, and trade unions engaged in collective bargaining processes. While specific budget allocations for implementing these guidelines are not detailed, the responsibility for funding likely involves collaboration between government agencies and the parties involved in the collective agreements.

Lessons learned from implementing these guidelines include the recognition that collective agreements can be powerful tools for promoting gender equality when they include clear and enforceable provisions. However, their effectiveness depends on proper implementation and monitoring. Additionally, creating awareness and understanding of these guidelines among all stakeholders is crucial for achieving the desired outcomes. The war's impact on employment also underscores the need for flexible and adaptive strategies to ensure gender equality, even in times of crisis.

3) The Ministry of Economy launched a number of grant support programs to boost entrepreneurship and job creation, and many of them are targeted at women or vulnerable groups.

In 2022, the Ministry of Economy launched a program of small grants for entrepreneurs with the aim of restoring the economy. As of May 2023, 8,900 women applied for grants (women made up 46% of all applicants), and 1,840 female entrepreneurs received grants (51% of all recipients).<sup>10</sup>

Since April 2023, a grant program for the creation or development of business has been introduced for participants in hostilities, persons with disabilities as a result of the war, and their family members. As of April 2024, since the beginning of the program, positive decisions have been made to provide grants to 327 recipients in the amount of UAH 140 million, which are expected to create 688 new jobs. Among grant recipients, 150 people (46%) were women.

In 2024, the Ministry of Economy has launched the "Create!" grant program. It gives grants in the amount of USD15,000 equivalent to support small and medium-sized businesses of Ukrainian women in the field of production and processing. Total grant program budget is USD 1,000,000. As of 24 May, 161 applications were received. They concern the production of aluminium trusses, podiums and other stage structures, production of furniture, essential oils and clothes for pregnant women.

In 2024, more than 43,000 individual entrepreneurs in Ukraine were registered by women, which is 59% of the total number of newly created individual entrepreneurs in the first quarter of 2024. In 2023, women made 57% of newly-registered individual entrepreneurs.<sup>11</sup>

Lessons learned from these initiatives highlight the significant impact of targeted financial support in promoting women's entrepreneurship and economic participation. The high application and success rates among women indicate a strong demand for such programs and their effectiveness in fostering female entrepreneurship. The creation of new jobs through these grants underscores their role in economic recovery and job creation. However, it is essential to ensure continuous support and capacity-building for grant recipients to sustain and grow their businesses. Additionally, adapting grant programs to address the unique challenges faced by different groups, such as participants in hostilities and persons with disabilities, is crucial for inclusive economic development. The success of these programs also emphasizes the need for ongoing investment in and support for women entrepreneurs to maintain the momentum of economic growth and gender equality in the business sector.

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<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, "Tendency to reduce the wage gap between women and men in Ukraine should become stable and irreversible, Yulia Svyrydenko says," 12 May 2023. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/tendentsiia-do-skorochnennia-rozryvu-v-oplati-pratsi-zhinok-ta-cholovikiv-v-ukraini-maie-staty-stiikoiu-ta-nezvorotnoiu-iuliia-svyrydenko>.

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. Create! Grant Program. <https://vlasnaspravagrant.com.ua/create/>

## **7. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, promote work-life and family balance and strengthen the rights of paid care workers?**

The gender imbalance in combining family and professional responsibilities is a critical factor that prevents women from entering the labour market, building a career and occupying leadership positions in all sectors of the economy. Key action to recognize and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work in 2020-2024 included:

- 1) Legal developments – extending men’s access to leave after the childbirth and enabling women to independently decide on the start of their leave related to pregnancy and childbirth,
- 2) Programmatic developments, including the component of redistribution of unpaid care between women and men in national key strategies and programs,
- 3) Promoting responsible fathering.

1) One of the recent legislative changes to ensure gender equality is a package of amendments expanding fathers’ rights to parental leave, adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in April 2021. The new law grants fathers a 14-day leave during the first month after a child’s birth and introduces equal rights for both men and women to take leave to care for a child until the age of three.<sup>12</sup> Previously, these rights were only granted to working women and did not extend to female entrepreneurs and their partners. Now, a working father has a leave entitlement that is independent of his wife/partner’s leave entitlement.

Another legislative change, introduced in July 2023, allows a working woman, in the absence of medical contraindications and if she wishes, to start her maternity leave later than 70 days before the expected date of childbirth and proportionally increase the postpartum part of the leave.<sup>13</sup> The total duration of leave provided by law remains unchanged. This approach accommodates the needs and interests of women with uncomplicated pregnancies who wish to continue working and focus on their professional development before childbirth.

Target audiences are working fathers and mothers, including female entrepreneurs and their partners.

2) Redistributing unpaid care and domestic work, promoting the combination of work and family responsibilities, and strengthening the rights of paid care workers is a key component both to the Concept of Communication in the Field of Gender Equality and the National Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted an order on January 27, 2023, approving a plan of measures for implementing the Concept of Communication in the Field of Gender Equality. Strategic goal 5 of this Concept focuses on the combination of professional and family life and the formation of responsible motherhood and parenthood.<sup>14</sup> This strategic goal is implemented in cooperation with international organizations and NGOs.

One of the three strategic goals of the National Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap is to create favourable conditions for combining family and professional responsibilities. This goal includes measures such as encouraging employers to implement family-friendly policies, developing preschool education infrastructure and alternative forms of childcare, and optimizing policies to support the combination of

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<sup>12</sup> Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Fathers and Mothers to Care for a Child.” <https://portal.rada.gov.ua/news/Povidomlennya/206881.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Law of Ukraine “On amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine regarding the specifics of the use of leave in connection with pregnancy and childbirth.” <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3238-IX#Text>

<sup>14</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the approval of the plan of measures for the implementation of the Concept of communication in the field of gender equality of 27 January 2023 No. 79-p. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/79-2023-%D1%80#Text>

professional and family responsibilities. Targets include the number of training materials for employers, the number of employers reached by training activities, and the number of employers who have implemented practices to support employees in balancing work and family life. The strategy also includes information campaigns to overcome stereotypes and reduce the gender pay gap. The implementation of the strategy aims to bring about not only legal changes but also fundamental shifts in social attitudes, supporting equality in remuneration and equal opportunities for combining work and family responsibilities.

Target audiences are all working women and men in Ukraine, with specific measures for parents and caregivers.

3) Promoting responsible fathering practices. To develop the skills and habits of responsible fatherhood in men, the United Nations Population Fund in Ukraine (UNFPA Ukraine), together with civil society partners and local authorities, established the Tathubs – spaces/centres for fathers and men preparing for fatherhood. The first Tathubs were established in 2020, and by 2023, their number increased to 12. Three of them were relocated because of the full-scale war from areas close to the frontline. These centres provide educational components and activities for fathers and children to spend time together, including classes on child psychology, partnership relations, stress management, non-violent communication, and overcoming gender stereotypes. Over 1,000 fathers and children in 12 cities across Ukraine participated in Tathub activities from September 2023 to May 2024.<sup>15</sup> Strengthening cooperation with local authorities to ensure the financial and programmatic sustainability of the Tathub network remains an important task.

Impact evaluations of the efforts to redistribute care functions in Ukraine reveal significant progress in the involvement of fathers in childcare. According to a 2023 survey on the role of men in fatherhood during the full-scale war, there has been a marked increase in the equal distribution of parental responsibilities. In 2023, 20% of respondents reported an equal distribution of responsibilities in their families, compared to only 10% in 2020.<sup>16</sup>

The survey indicates that the participation of fathers in caring for children up to three years of age has significantly increased. The proportion of fathers who equally share food preparation with mothers rose from 3% in 2020 to 15% in 2023. Similarly, the percentage of fathers who bathe their children increased from 11% to 37%, and those who change diapers increased from 8% to 31%. Additionally, fathers' involvement in daily care activities for children of all ages, including taking care of sick children, purchasing goods for children, transporting them to kindergarten and school, studying, walking, and communicating, has also increased.

Despite the increase in the time fathers spend with their children, their satisfaction with this time has decreased. In 2023, 63% of fathers believed they did not spend enough time with their children, compared to 45% in 2020. Most men cited being too busy as the primary reason for insufficient time spent with their children, with only 2% attributing it to gender stereotypes, a significant drop from 18% in 2020.<sup>17</sup>

Awareness and attitudes towards paternal leave have also improved. By 2023, 90% of women and 80% of men were aware that fathers have the right to take leave to care for children up to three years old. Half of the men expressed a desire to take such leave, up from 20% in 2020. Additionally, only 6% of the

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<sup>15</sup> UNFPA. Springboard to Equality Project Digest. April-June 2023. [https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/newsletter\\_q223\\_ukr.pdf](https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/newsletter_q223_ukr.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Volosevych I., Maksymenko O. Role of men in parenting during the war. May 2023. [https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ukr\\_rol\\_cholovikiv\\_u\\_batkivstvi\\_u\\_chas\\_povnomashtabnoi\\_vivny.pdf](https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ukr_rol_cholovikiv_u_batkivstvi_u_chas_povnomashtabnoi_vivny.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

population had a negative attitude towards men taking leave to care for children, compared to 18% in 2020.

Objective data supports the subjective assessments of increased time spent with children. Parents overall reported spending 42% more time with their children, with men specifically spending 67% more time. However, many men felt they were spending less time, likely due to increased demands for their presence at home. The primary reasons for the increased time spent with children include the unavailability of kindergartens and schools for face-to-face attendance, job loss or partial job loss, and the poor psychological condition of children due to the ongoing war.<sup>18</sup>

Ukraine's experience in this field in the past five years underscores the importance of legislative support, strategic planning, and dedicated programs in promoting gender equality in care responsibilities and fostering a more balanced and inclusive approach to parenting.

## **8. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce the gender digital divide?**

The gender digital divide is a significant issue impacting the ability of women to access, use, and benefit from digital technologies. Ukraine has implemented several measures over the past five years to address this divide, focusing on increasing digital literacy, promoting female participation in IT, and supporting women's entrepreneurship in the digital space. The most prominent examples are:

- 1) Expanding access to digital public services,
- 2) Developing digital skills in women and girls,
- 3) Supporting women's entrepreneurship and careers in the digital space.

1) The primary aim of expanding access to digital public services in Ukraine is to provide equitable access to essential government services for all citizens, including women, men, internally displaced persons (IDPs), people with disabilities, and the elderly. The Diia portal<sup>19</sup> and its mobile application, Diia 2.0, have been central to these efforts, offering more than 50 government services online. This includes services such as business registration, permits, and licenses, as well as access to digital documents.

Access to digital public services has been crucial for vulnerable groups during the full-scale war in Ukraine. Notably, the sustainability of electronic services allowed internally displaced persons and refugees to access health, administrative, and banking services, as well as personal documents, without physical presence. For example, IDPs could apply for status, change their registered address, and apply for state support online. These digital solutions ensured continuity in accessing essential services, significantly easing the burden on vulnerable populations during a time of crisis.

The target population includes the general public, with a specific focus on vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons, people with disabilities, and the elderly. While specific budget details are not provided, funding is implied to come from government budgets and international cooperation.

The level of use of state electronic services in Ukraine increased from 53% in 2020 to 63% in 2022. Usage rates are nearly equal among women (63.8%) and men (63%), though significant differences exist between population groups. For instance, 75.7% of internally displaced persons use these services compared to

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<sup>18</sup> Volosevych I., Maksymenko O. Role of men in parenting during the war. May 2023.

[https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ukr\\_rol\\_cholovikiv\\_u\\_batkivstvi\\_u\\_chas\\_povnomashtabnoi\\_vivny.pdf](https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/ukr_rol_cholovikiv_u_batkivstvi_u_chas_povnomashtabnoi_vivny.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Diia Portal. <https://diia.gov.ua/>



49% of people with disabilities and 33.5% of the elderly.<sup>20</sup> The Diia portal facilitates rapid business registrations, with 250,000 private entrepreneurs and over 2,500 companies having used the service.<sup>21</sup> The YeMaliatko (eBaby) service for parents of newborns simplifies access to up to nine related services, significantly benefiting mothers.

2) The aim of raising digital skills among women and girls is to ensure they have the necessary competencies to participate fully in the digital economy and access digital services effectively. This includes providing educational resources, career guidance, and addressing gender stereotypes that may deter women from pursuing digital skills and careers in IT.

To disseminate information about gender equality through digital channels, the Ministry of Digital Transformations created and posted two educational series on the Unified State Digital Education Web Diia.Education Portal. The first series, *Basic Knowledge About Gender*, explains the influence of gender stereotypes on the lives of citizens, including their choice of profession, career, and professional development.<sup>22</sup> The second series, *Personal Safety of Teenagers*, addresses the issue of online and offline gender-based violence among teenagers and young people. This series covers various forms of abuse, such as shaming, bullying, image-based abuse, hate speech, cyberbullying, and cyberstalking, and offers strategies for countering these issues.<sup>23</sup>

Target populations are women and girls across various age groups, with particular attention to teenagers.

Research conducted during 2021-2023 shows no significant differences in digital skills between young men and women. However, among those aged 40 and above, 32% of women report a lack of digital skills needed to use digital services compared to 19% of men. Additionally, the results of a 2024 study indicate that digital skills are on the same level among men and women in younger populations, with equal registration on Diia (54.3% women, 45.6% men) and similar usage rates of various online services.

3) The aim of empowering women in IT careers and business is to increase female participation in the IT sector and support women entrepreneurs in the digital economy. This involves targeted programs to address gender stereotypes, provide career guidance, and offer financial support for women-led businesses.

Target populations are women and girls interested in pursuing careers in IT and women entrepreneurs

As of the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year, women accounted for 18.2% of students and 18.9% of graduates in higher education institutions in the field of IT.<sup>24</sup> Despite little change in these numbers over the past decade, women make up 30.8% of IT employees and almost a third of individual entrepreneurs in IT as of 2023.<sup>25</sup> To address the underrepresentation of women in IT, the Ministry of Digital

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations Development Programme and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, *Opinions and views of the population of Ukraine regarding public electronic services: Analytical report*, UNDP, Kyiv, September 2022. <https://www.undp.org/ukraine/publications/analytical-report-opinions-and-views-ukrainian-population-regarding-state-electronic-services>

<sup>21</sup> Communications team of the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, "Transition to digital technologies as new black for Ukraine," *Ukraine Now*. <https://ukraine.ua/stories/digitalization/>

<sup>22</sup> Diia.Education Portal. Basic Knowledge about Gender course. <https://osvita.diia.gov.ua/courses/basic-knowledge-about-gender>

<sup>23</sup> Diia.Education Portal. Personal Safety for Teenagers Course. <https://osvita.diia.gov.ua/courses/teenagers-personal-safety>

<sup>24</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Higher and professional (professional and technical) pre-higher education in Ukraine in 2021: Table 2.3. Training of specialists with higher education for the beginning of the 2021/22 academic year in fields of knowledge according to the list of 2015, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Ivanova, K., Gogilashvili E. and Kalinichenko M., "Women in Ukrainian IT. What has changed in 10 years: Management positions, salaries, global trends," *Speka Media*, February 14, 2023. <https://speka.media/zinki-v-ukrayinskomu-it-shho->



Transformation launched the “Brave” women’s accelerator in March 2023, designed for Ukrainian women who founded a micro or small business or aspired to start their own business.<sup>26</sup> By March 2024, 5,000 Ukrainian women had completed the program, with 137 participating offline in Diia.Business centres across Ukraine. Six winners received 1.3 million hryvnias for business development. Additionally, since November 2023, the Diia.Business network has implemented the “Start” educational grant program, providing 200 participants with grants of up to USD 3,000 for business development.

Therefore, the imbalance in access to digital services is not solely attributed to gender. Instead, gender intersects with other factors such as age, income level, and living in rural or remote areas, which themselves have gender dimensions. Regarding the representation of both sexes in sectors that support and drive digital transformation, there is a distinct division between women and men in both the workforce and decision-making roles. The government, especially the Ministry of Digital Transformation, places significant emphasis on supporting gender equality and developing digital skills among the Ukrainian population. Initiatives like the creation of educational series and the launch of women’s accelerators highlight the importance of fostering inclusive digital environments for all. In the IT sector, women remain underrepresented, both in education and in the workforce, partly due to persistent gender stereotypes. Efforts such as targeted career guidance and financial support programs are crucial to overcoming these barriers. Nonetheless, studies indicate that further measures are necessary to ensure equal opportunities in accessing digital resources and services across all population categories, particularly between men and women.

#### **9. In the past five years, how has the macroeconomic and fiscal policy environment affected the implementation of the BPfA in your country, and what macroeconomic policies has your country implemented in support of a more gender-equal economy?**

Before the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation, Ukraine’s macroeconomic and fiscal policies were mostly gender-neutral, lacking a specific focus on the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA). While these policies did not actively create discrimination, they also did not address or eliminate the root causes of existing gender-based disparities. During the implementation of austerity and fiscal consolidation measures from 2020 to 2024, including reductions in public expenditures and the public sector, there was no assessment of the differential impact of these measures on women and men, boys and girls.

However, the situation began to change with the development of strategies and programs for Ukraine’s post-war recovery. Gender considerations started to be integrated into macroeconomic policy as a key aspect of these recovery plans. In April 2022, the National Council for the Reconstruction of Ukraine was established, organizing recovery planning through 24 thematic working groups. Gender approaches were incorporated in approximately seven of these thematic plans with the support of international advocacy and expertise. Although these recovery plans were not officially adopted, they were partially integrated into other strategic documents and government measures.

In the summer of 2023, the European Commission initiated the Ukraine Facility Plan, aimed at supporting Ukraine’s recovery with €50 billion in financial assistance from 2024 to 2027. As of November 2023, detailed gender approaches were included in the Human Capital Plan section of the Ukraine Facility Plan. This section identified gender barriers to human capital recovery and outlined steps to overcome them,

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<sup>26</sup> Diia.Business. Women’s Business Accelerator “Brave.” <https://business.diia.gov.ua/cases/iniciativi/final-zinocogo-biznes-akseleratora-vidvazna>

proposing solutions to more fully involve women in the recovery process. Gender issues were also mentioned in sections on business development, the agri-food sector, and the energy sector, though more limitedly.

Two high-level conferences on Ukraine's reconstruction highlighted the evolving focus on gender equality. The Lugano Conference in July 2022 declared gender equality and inclusion as one of seven principles of recovery. Although gender issues were not extensively discussed, a side event on gender approaches had limited impact. The London Conference in June 2023 continued this trend, but the upcoming Berlin Conference in June 2024 will have both a separate session on women's leadership and gender mainstreaming in recovery and integrating gender aspects into many other sessions. Notably, the attention is paid to identifying and proposing solutions to gender barriers in various recovery areas, from agriculture to transport, with the goal to ensure contribution of different groups of women and men to post-war recovery processes and utilization of the benefits created by these processes. Also, the Berlin Conference will aim for gender-balanced representation of speakers at all its thematic panels.

In September 2023, the Platform for Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion in Recovery was created to coordinate efforts among ministries, central executive bodies, parliamentarians, civil society, businesses, development partners, and international organizations. This platform aims to ensure the inclusion of gender equality principles in Ukraine's recovery process.

The chapter on human capital in the Ukraine Facility Plan outlines that supporting recovery and fostering growth will require incorporating gender equality into key reform areas. Key priorities include promoting a balanced distribution of unpaid care work, increasing the availability of quality childcare and eldercare services, and challenging gender stereotypes in professions and business. Additionally, the plan emphasizes preventing and combating discrimination and harassment, increasing women's participation in STEAM fields and traditionally male-dominated sectors, and closing the gender pay gap. These measures aim to improve the quality of life, increase labour supply, and attract those currently outside Ukraine to return.

To enhance labour market participation and mitigate the social and economic impacts of the war, the Government of Ukraine will supplement these initiatives with a balanced demographic and migration policy, and a Population Employment Strategy adapted to recovery needs. These efforts will include promoting employment through entrepreneurship, creating favourable employment conditions, simplifying labour market access, retraining programs, expanding women's economic opportunities, and ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities and low-mobility groups in labour activities. Social protection programs and services will be reviewed for better targeting and effectiveness. The development of social services, especially for care provision, will facilitate women's re-entry into the labour market. Efforts to improve employment prospects, housing conditions through affordable housing programs, and further digitization of social benefits will also be priorities.

Special attention will be paid to supporting women's businesses, with a focus on integrating gender equality and empowering women within the business environment. A 2024 study showed that women are starting businesses nearly as often as men, but their businesses tend to be smaller, with women being almost three times less likely to register their business as a legal entity. Women business owners face significant gender discrimination, including questioning of qualifications and authority, belittling, sexist jokes, and inappropriate comments. These experiences are reported by 57% of women in general, and 66% of women in male-dominated sectors. Gender stereotypes and difficulties in balancing business and family responsibilities are major barriers preventing women from starting businesses, while men are less affected by these factors.

The integration of gender perspectives into Ukraine's macroeconomic and fiscal policies during the post-

war recovery planning has underscored the importance of proactive gender mainstreaming in policy development. The experience revealed that gender-neutral policies are insufficient to address existing disparities and that targeted efforts are essential for meaningful progress. The establishment of dedicated platforms and working groups facilitated the inclusion of gender considerations, but the heterogeneous results highlighted the need for consistent advocacy and expert support. Additionally, the creation of specific initiatives to support women's entrepreneurship and participation in traditionally male-dominated sectors demonstrated that addressing gender stereotypes and providing financial support can significantly enhance women's economic involvement. The necessity of continuous monitoring and adaptation of policies to include gender perspectives across all sectors was evident, as was the need for robust international cooperation and support to sustain these efforts.

Also, see details on gender budgeting activities in question 34 below.

## Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

### 10. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?

The latest official data on the level of poverty in Ukraine are available for 2021. As of 2021, the poverty rate among women in Ukraine was 10.8% compared to 7.9% among men. The largest share of the poor population (whose expenses are below the actual living wage) lived in small cities (32.4%) and rural areas (31.5%), while in large cities the share of the population below the poverty line was much lower (20.8%).<sup>27</sup>

Poverty in Ukraine was not distinctly feminized, with similar rates among men and women. However, women are more likely to experience multidimensional poverty. Female-headed households, particularly those with children, and older women are at higher risk of poverty due to lower lifetime earnings and smaller pensions. Rural women are especially vulnerable, facing monetary poverty, multiple deprivations, and social isolation. In 2021, only 36% of those below the poverty line received social benefits.<sup>28</sup>

The full-scale war significantly undermined Ukraine's progress in the fight against poverty, making it impossible to collect reliable data on poverty levels in 2022-2023. According to the World Bank, Ukraine's poverty rate increased from 5.5% in 2021 to 24.2% in 2022, pushing an additional 7.1 million people below the poverty line, especially in rural areas.<sup>29</sup> The Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3) conducted from February 2022 to December 2023 indicates that poverty and food insecurity have escalated. A monthly phone survey by the World Bank since April 2023 revealed that 9% of households reported running out of food at some point in a 30-day period in November 2023. The impacts of the war are uneven, with the greatest effects felt by women, persons with disabilities, children and youth, IDPs, and the elderly.<sup>30</sup> The war has caused significant loss of jobs and income in the private sector, loss of purchasing power, and loss of assets among Ukrainians, particularly the most vulnerable. The estimated gross domestic product (GDP) for 2023 is 74% of the 2021 GDP in real terms.

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<sup>27</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine and UN Women, *Indicators for Monitoring Gender Equality in Ukraine: Monitoring Report 2021*, UN Women, Kyiv, 2022. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat\\_e/2021/2021\\_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor\\_ENG.pdf](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_e/2021/2021_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor_ENG.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Beaumont, P., "Pawn shops and bread lines: Poverty grips Ukraine and war drags on," *The Guardian*, 30 April 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/30/ukraine-war-poverty-irpin-pawn-shops-bread-queues>

<sup>30</sup> Ukraine. Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3). February 2022 – December 2023. <https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/UA%20RDNA3%20report%20EN.pdf>

Considering the deterioration of poverty situation because of the full-scale war, the Government expanded its social assistance programs, especially covering vulnerable groups.

As of spring 2022, many Ukrainians relied solely on social support, including pensions, child benefits, and disability benefits. This was particularly true for households headed by women, families with persons with disabilities, and families with elderly persons. Women, who made up 72% of recipients of social benefits, as well as the majority of elderly people and caregivers, were especially dependent on these supports.<sup>31</sup> During 2022-2023, humanitarian organizations also provided significant aid, including financial assistance (cash and voucher assistance or multi-purpose cash assistance).

In March 2022, the Government of Ukraine launched two key initiatives to improve financial support for the population. The first initiative provided a one-time payment of 6,500 hryvnias (approximately USD 220 at the time) to individual entrepreneurs and employees who lost their income due to the war. Eligibility required registration as a single social contribution payer in one of the 14 specified regions. About 5 million people received this assistance in 2022.

The second initiative involved monthly social assistance payments to forcibly displaced persons in 14 regions (later reduced to 11). Most recipients were women and children, with adults receiving UAH 2,000 and children and persons with disabilities receiving UAH 3,000 monthly. Eligibility required a certificate of registration as an internally displaced person. Almost all 4.9 million officially registered IDPs received this support from March 2022 to March 2024. Since 1 April, 2024, this assistance has been limited to IDPs who cannot work, take care of children, are seriously ill, have disabilities, or have no or low income, with 181,000 people continuing to receive this aid.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the difficult economic situation and the ongoing war, citizens continue to receive their social benefits (pensions, social benefits, etc.) in full. The majority of old-age pension recipients are women. Over the past five years, the average pension has doubled from UAH 2,645.66 on 1 January 2019 to UAH 5,385.25 on 1 January 2024. This increase outpaced both wage growth and inflation. The proportion of pensioners receiving more than UAH 4,000 (equivalent to USD 100 as of May 2024) increased nearly threefold from 16.6% to 48.3%, while those receiving pensions at or below the subsistence minimum decreased more than sixfold, from 16.5% to 2.6%. This has helped halt the long-term decline in pension provision levels and even improve this indicator despite the war.

According to the Humanitarian Needs Survey 2024, due to the full-scale invasion, an estimated 14.6 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection as of January 2024. Of these, 56% are women and girls, and 15% are people with disabilities, most of whom are women. Women constitute 58% of displaced persons and 60% of those aged 65 and over.<sup>33</sup> More women than men are likely to face unemployment and depend on humanitarian aid across all age groups. The lack of employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, puts significant pressure on women to meet their basic needs. Female-headed households are more likely to encounter barriers in accessing humanitarian assistance and report a higher need for information than male-headed households, especially regarding aid

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<sup>31</sup> UN Women and CARE, Rapid gender analysis of the situation in Ukraine, UN Women, Kyiv, 4 May 2022. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/rapid-gender-analysis-of-ukraine>

<sup>32</sup> NV.ua. IDP payment in 2024: which of the displaced persons in April will receive assistance immediately in two months. 19 April 2024. <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/viplati-vpo-2024-hto-u-kvitni-otrimaye-dopomogu-odrazu-za-dva-misyaci-novini-ukrajini-50411393.html>

<sup>33</sup> UN OCHA. Ukraine: Summary of the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan and the Regional Refugee Response Plan (January 2024). <https://www.unhcr.org/ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2024/01/Ukraine-HNRP-2024-Humanitarian-Needs-and-Response-Plan-EN-20240110.pdf>

registration (24% vs. 18%).<sup>34</sup>

Families headed by women report a lower average monthly income (UAH 9,872) compared to those headed by men (UAH 12,819) and are more dependent on less stable income sources (58% vs. 45%). About 23% of female-headed households report extreme livelihood needs, compared to 14% of male-headed households. Female heads of households are also more likely to be single, divorced, or widowed, further impacting their household income and the time available for family care.<sup>35</sup>

See also the answer to question 11 on women's and girls' access to social protection services.

### **11. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

Ensuring equal access to social protection services for all population categories is a crucial priority for the Ukrainian government. To achieve this, the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere was created in 2023. Its purpose is to automate social processes, enhance transparency, digitalize the social support market, and improve accessibility for those in need, particularly women and girls. This system also improves the Unified Information Database on Internally Displaced Persons, facilitating the recognition of IDP status and the realization of the right to various types of social support for women and girls.<sup>36</sup>

During the reporting period, new types of state support for families with children were implemented:

- Assistance for children raised in large families (families with 3+ children),
- Child support for individual entrepreneurs on a simplified taxation system affected by COVID-19 quarantine measures,
- One-time cash assistance for low-income families with 3+ children to prepare for the school year,
- Assistance to promote the economic independence of low-income families,
- A unified targeted approach to providing state social assistance to low-income families and child support to single parents.

Additionally, social guarantees were increased:

- For children suffering from serious diseases, from one subsistence minimum for those who have lost working capacity to two subsistence minimums for children of the appropriate age,
- For children whose parents avoid paying alimony, from 50% to 100% of the subsistence minimum for a child of the appropriate age, with a guaranteed minimum of 50%,
- For children under guardianship, from 2 times the subsistence minimum to 2.5 times, and for children with disabilities, up to 3.5 times the subsistence minimum,
- For students in vocational pre-university and higher education institutions, the social stipend was set at 150% of the subsistence minimum, increasing by another 50% for those receiving the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine social stipend,
- for persons from low-income families, the amount of the social stipend was increased to UAH 1,335 and UAH 1,770 (before the increase, the amount was UAH 750 and UAH 900).

The care allowance was increased for:

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> REACH. 2022 MSNA Gender Focus Snapshot, February 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Social Policy. Digital development of the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere: what changes have the Government adopted. 31 October 2023. <https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/23150.html>

- Persons with disabilities since childhood, assigned to subgroup A of group I, from 150% to 200% of the subsistence minimum for those who have lost working capacity,
- Children with disabilities in subgroup A, from 150% to 200% of the subsistence minimum for children of the corresponding age.

The procedure for applying for child birth assistance was regulated to include citizens who had children while temporarily outside Ukraine during martial law and continue to stay abroad.

It is now possible to apply for various types of assistance through the Unified State Web Portal of Electronic Services (Diia Portal), including:

- Child support for single mothers,
- Assistance in adopting a child,
- Assistance for children with serious illnesses,
- State social assistance to persons with disabilities since childhood and children with disabilities.

A mechanism was introduced for a simplified procedure for considering and providing benefits for housing and communal services payments to war veterans and their families during martial law and within three months after its termination or cancellation (Resolution No. 1395, 27 December 2023). This allows submission of a single application with a minimal set of data, with additional information obtained through the interaction of departmental systems and service providers.

Resolution No. 1351, adopted on 22 December 2023, defines the process for social protection officials to access the structural subsystems of the Unified Social Register, including the Register of Housing Subsidy Recipients and the Register of Persons Entitled to Benefits. This enables beneficiaries to generate necessary documents confirming their status via the Diia Portal, its mobile application, and the web portal of electronic services of the Pension Fund of Ukraine. It is also possible for the social protection authorities and administrative service centres to generate an extract from the Register of persons entitled to benefits at the request of the beneficiary.

A lesson learnt is that the implementation of digital platforms like the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere and the Diia Portal has shown the critical importance of leveraging technology to enhance transparency and accessibility in social protection services. This approach has been particularly effective in reaching vulnerable populations. The need for continuous monitoring and flexibility in social assistance programs has become evident, especially in adapting to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing war. Simplified application procedures and improved data integration across social services have significantly reduced barriers to access, particularly for marginalized groups. Additionally, the experience underscores the necessity of comprehensive and inclusive policy planning that addresses the specific needs of various demographic groups, which is essential for creating equitable and effective social protection systems. These insights should guide future efforts to ensure that social protection measures are resilient, adaptable, and inclusive.

## **12. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in your country?**

In the past five years, Ukraine has made significant strides in improving health outcomes for women and girls through a variety of measures aimed at ensuring equal access to healthcare services and addressing specific health needs. The most important achievement has been the implementation of the Medical Guarantee Program, which ensures that all citizens, regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, or other characteristics, have the right to receive necessary medical services. This Program started in April 2020. It aims to achieve universal health coverage, providing free access to services through primary care doctors

who can issue electronic referrals for specialist consultations and treatments as needed.<sup>37</sup> This system ensures that patients, including women and girls, can choose the healthcare facility they prefer without requiring a referral for emergency care or certain specialist consultations.

During 2020-2024, several significant steps were taken to enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of healthcare services for women and girls, particularly those with disabilities:

1) Review of healthcare equipment: A comprehensive review of the equipment in healthcare institutions was conducted to ensure the availability of medical services, especially in the field of sexual and reproductive health. A new equipment list was approved, mandating the inclusion of gynaecological chairs adapted for women with disabilities in healthcare facilities that provide obstetric and gynaecological assistance. Regional healthcare facilities were informed about the need for additional staffing to meet these new requirements.

2) Revised specifications for medical services: The specifications and conditions for purchasing medical services under the Medical Guarantee Program for 2023 and 2024 were revised. These revisions included requirements for healthcare facilities to ensure the availability of medical furniture and equipment for individuals with limited mobility, thereby ensuring that girls and women with disabilities have access to sexual and reproductive health services.

3) Barrier-free and inclusive healthcare: Principles of barrier-free and inclusive medical care, including telemedicine methods and tools, were introduced to healthcare institutions during the conclusion of contracts with the National Health Service. This initiative aims to enhance the accessibility of medical services for all population groups, including women and girls with disabilities.

4) Non-discriminatory policies in higher education institutions: Institutions of higher education under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health approved policies on the prevention of discrimination. Commissions for ensuring gender equality and combating discrimination and sexual harassment were established and are now operational. These provisions were incorporated into the new editions of the statutes of departmental higher education institutions to foster an inclusive educational environment.

5) Gynaecological chairs for women with disabilities: To ensure accessibility for women and girls with disabilities to gynaecological services, the Ministry of Health issued an order on 16 May 2023 (No. 904) mandating the inclusion of gynaecological chairs for persons with disabilities in healthcare facilities. This requirement was included in the specifications for the purchase of medical services under the Medical Guarantee Program. The Ministry of Health and the National Health Service revised the conditions and specifications, determining additional requirements for the list of equipment for “Medical assistance during childbirth” and “Pregnancy management in laboratory” packages.

6) Accessibility for low-mobility groups: The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine passed resolutions (No. 1245 on 24 November 2023 and No. 1393 on 27 December 2023) to amend licensing conditions for medical practices and banks of umbilical cord blood, other tissues, and human cells. These changes require business entities to declare information about the available conditions of free access for low-mobility population groups to obtain licenses.

7) HEAL Ukraine Project: The Ministry of Health issued an order on 16 May 2023 (No. 911) approving the Operational Manual for the “Strengthening the Health Care and Life Preservation System” (HEAL Ukraine) project. The manual stipulates that infrastructure projects must ensure unimpeded access for persons

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<sup>37</sup> National Health Service of Ukraine. The first Medical Guarantee Program in Ukraine has started in full. 1 April 2020. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/persha-v-ukrayini-programa-medichnih-garantij-startuvala-u-povnomu-obsyazi-nszu>



with disabilities and other groups with reduced mobility. It also mandates the implementation of measures specified in the Action Plan for 2023-2024 to create a barrier-free space in Ukraine by 2030.<sup>38</sup>

The target audiences for these initiatives include the general population in need of inclusive healthcare services, with particular focus on women and girls with disabilities, as well as healthcare providers.

During 2020-2024, several information campaigns were carried out in the field of health care, incorporating gender aspects to enhance awareness and promote equality. These campaigns targeted different groups, including women, men, parents, and health professionals, and utilized various communication channels to ensure broad outreach.

- The different social roles of women and men were highlighted and disseminated through mass media, aiming to increase society's understanding of state policy tasks regarding equal rights and opportunities. This initiative also worked to form a positive image of women leaders, free from stereotypes. Six thematic materials were prepared and published on the internet resources of the Public Health Centre of the Ministry of Health, reaching an audience of 38,500 people.
- Awareness of the need for both parents to be involved in planning pregnancy, childbirth, and maternity leave was promoted through multiple communication channels. This campaign aimed to highlight the equality of women's and men's rights in combining professional and family life. Twelve thematic materials were published, and three webinars and one offline event were organized, reaching a total audience of 109,290 people.
- The benefits of a healthy lifestyle were promoted, particularly as social advertising in educational institutions, to encourage different groups of women and men to take care of their own health. Eighteen thematic materials were developed, and nine webinars, along with an online educational course titled "Mental health and post-covid syndrome. Psychological and spiritual support during the war," were conducted. The total audience coverage for this initiative was 134,976 people.
- Information on diseases characteristic of each gender and age group was disseminated through healthcare and education institutions. This campaign ensured that different groups of women and men took care of their own health. Twenty thematic materials were published, three thematic events were organized, and a video titled "Hear Your Heart" was produced and distributed, reaching a total audience of 441,286 people.
- Information about family and specialized doctors, as well as healthcare institutions providing various types of medical care, was disseminated to ensure that various groups of women and men received proper health care. Eleven thematic materials were published, and one thematic event was organized, with a total audience coverage of 83,202 people.
- The advantages of undergoing preventive medical examinations were promoted through healthcare institutions, encouraging different groups of women and men to prioritize their health. Nine thematic materials were published, and four thematic events were held, reaching a total audience of 97,223 people.
- Reproductive health and family planning information was disseminated through healthcare and education institutions to reduce maternal mortality rates, birth rates among teenage girls, abortion rates, and the spread of sexually transmitted infections among adolescents. Nine

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<sup>38</sup> Information from the Ministry of Health of Ukraine prepared for the National Beijing+30 Review.



thematic materials were published, and three thematic events were organized, reaching a total audience of 60,421 people.<sup>39</sup>

Also, recommendations have been prepared to include issues related to gender and age risk factors in the educational programs of postgraduate education institutions, ensuring that medical and pedagogical workers acquire relevant competencies. This initiative led to the development and publication of two thematic materials, which reached an audience of 6,637 people. Additionally, five thematic events were organized, reaching an audience of 45,394 people, with a total audience coverage of 52,031 people.

National policy in the field of health care prioritizes the protection and promotion of motherhood, fatherhood, and the health of mothers and children, as well as the development of reproductive technologies. In 2024, the Program of Medical Guarantees will, for the first time, include the direction “Treatment of infertility with the help of assisted reproductive technologies (fertilization in vitro)” with a total budget of UAH 1,870,526.6 thousand. This funding will enable the state to finance 30,400 cycles of assisted reproductive technologies, which, according to expert estimates, will result in 10,700 births. Additionally, in 2024, there will be a shift towards fairer payment approaches for medical care in complex neonatal cases.<sup>40</sup>

Lessons learnt from the past five years of health initiatives in Ukraine reveal the importance of inclusive and accessible healthcare policies and infrastructure. The implementation of the Medical Guarantee Program demonstrated the critical role of universal health coverage in ensuring equitable access to medical services, irrespective of gender, disability, or socio-economic status. The introduction of specialized equipment, such as gynaecological chairs for women with disabilities, and the revision of medical service specifications highlighted the need for tailored healthcare solutions. Furthermore, the integration of barrier-free and inclusive care principles, along with telemedicine, underscored the necessity of adaptive healthcare methods to reach diverse population groups. The successful execution of information campaigns emphasized the value of targeted communication in raising awareness about health issues and promoting gender equality. However, these experiences also underscored that continuous efforts are required to address persistent gaps in healthcare access and quality, especially for vulnerable groups such as women with disabilities and those in remote areas.

### **13. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, including in sectors where they are underrepresented?**

In the past five years, Ukraine has taken several significant actions to improve education outcomes and skills for women and girls, particularly in sectors where they are underrepresented. These actions focused on reinforcing institutional capabilities, developing gender competencies among educators, and implementing gender-sensitive approaches in education.

1) At the programmatic level, the most important development is the adoption of the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education for the Period Until 2030 and the Operational Plan for its implementation for 2022-2024. This Strategy specifically aims to address the gender-based choice of specialties in vocational and technical educational institutions and higher education institutions.

2) The Ministry of Education and Science reinforced its institutional capabilities in gender equality. This included appointing a gender equality advisor to the Minister of Education and Science (Order No. 117-a,

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<sup>39</sup> Information from the Ministry of Health of Ukraine prepared for the National Beijing+30 Review.

<sup>40</sup> Information from the Ministry of Health of Ukraine prepared for the National Beijing+30 Review.

25 April 2023) and revitalizing the Working Group on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men in Education. These initiatives aimed to integrate gender equality into national educational policies and practices.

3) Practical measures were taken to develop gender competencies among public employees and educators. A practical roadmap for gender equality and non-discrimination was created for the educational year with the support of the UN Population Fund. Continuous training sessions for Ministry employees on gender equality in daily work were conducted by the Ministry's Reform Support Team, in collaboration with the UN Population Fund and NGO EdCamp Ukraine, starting in April 2023.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the Ministry launched the national online course #EducationWithoutDiscrimination to provide comprehensive resources on gender equality. Furthermore, the guide *Non-discriminatory Teaching* was developed in partnership with EdCamp Ukraine in 2021,<sup>42</sup> offering practical advice on creating an inclusive educational environment.

4) The Ministry strengthened the organizational capacity of educational institutions to conduct gender audits. Pilot gender audit projects were implemented in various educational institutions based on methodologies and criteria approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. Technical support was provided through a study guide on conducting comprehensive gender audits for professional education institutions.<sup>43</sup> An online training course on gender audits was also launched on the "Profosvita" platform, which can be accessed here.

5) The Ministry intensified efforts to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into the training of specialists combating gender-based violence. The Working Group on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men at the Ministry prepared draft changes to higher education standards in Law, Law Enforcement, and Social Work, incorporating gender competencies and results. These proposals are currently under consideration by the Ministry's scientific and technical commissions.

6) The operational capabilities of the Ministry in combating gender inequality and discrimination were supported. All textbooks submitted for competition in the State Scientific Institution undergo anti-discrimination examination. However, this examination does not extend to all educational content such as workbooks and didactic materials. There is a need to improve the interaction process between anti-discrimination experts and publishers to ensure the quality of educational materials.

The government also implemented initiatives to raise awareness of gender equality, non-discrimination, and combating gender-based violence among educational stakeholders. This included creating a dedicated page on gender equality on the Ministry's website, hosting practical conferences on gender equality strategies in education, and developing a methodological manual on gender-sensitive teaching in STEAM subjects as part of the *Ambassadors of Science* project, supported by the UN Population Fund. Additionally, an online course on workplace equality, *Guidelines for Employers in Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination*, was developed with the Confederation of Employers of Ukraine and the International Labour Organization.

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<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Training reports. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y1qPMjrx7vh9opl-t0EWcaMHIUOhoxD0>

<sup>42</sup> EdCamp Ukraine. Non-Discriminatory Teaching Guide. 2021. <https://www.edcamp.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Nediskriminacijne-vchitelyuvannya.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on the approval of the Methodology and criteria for gender audits of education facilities of 5 November 2021, No.1182. <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/pro-zatverdzhennya-metodologiyi-ta-kriteriyiv-provedennya-gendernogo-audituzakladiv-osviti>

The network of gender education centres in Ukraine, operating in 40 higher educational institutions, aims to promote gender equality in education. However, this network needs further strengthening and resources to be fully effective.

According to the Gender Inequality Development Index 2021, Ukraine ranks high in gender parity in education, with almost equal literacy rates and educational attainment for boys and girls. Almost 100% of boys and girls are literate, their involvement in education is equally balanced and high. Thus, 92.7% of girls and 90.7% of boys receive basic secondary education, 86.1% of girls and 85.3% of boys receive secondary education, 88.8% of girls and 76.8% of boys receive higher education. From the point of view of the law, all subjects in Ukrainian higher education institutions and vocational and technical educational institutions are equally open to women, men, girls and boys.

However, significant gender disparities exist in specific fields of study, such as STEAM, where women remain underrepresented. Initiatives to encourage young women to pursue careers in industrial sectors and STEAM-related fields are critical for increasing women's participation in these areas.

Although progress has been made in increasing the share of textbooks with an anti-discrimination approach, gender discrimination persists in certain subjects, and the overall level of gender sensitivity among educators remains low.

Also, access to education remains a challenge for various groups, including those in rural areas, Roma children, people with disabilities, and pre-retirement individuals needing retraining. The full-scale war and the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues, particularly affecting vulnerable populations. Limited access to distance education – which in areas closer to frontline continues for 4 years since spring 2020 – remains a significant barrier for low-income families, large families, rural children, and children with disabilities.<sup>44</sup>

Lessons learned over the past five years highlight the critical importance of addressing gender disparities in education to improve outcomes for women and girls. The adoption of the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education for the Period Until 2030 and its Operational Plan for 2022-2024 has been essential in addressing gender-based choices in vocational and higher education. Reinforcing institutional capabilities, such as appointing a gender equality advisor and revitalizing the Working Group on Equal Rights and Opportunities, has integrated gender equality into educational policies. Developing gender competencies among educators through continuous training and resources like the national online course #EducationWithoutDiscrimination and the Non-discriminatory Teaching guide has been effective. Conducting gender audits in educational institutions has also improved the capacity to address gender inequalities. Despite advancements, challenges remain, including the need to extend anti-discrimination examinations to all educational content and improve interactions between experts and publishers. Significant progress has been made in gender parity in education, with high literacy rates and educational attainment for both boys and girls. However, women remain underrepresented in STEAM fields. Initiatives to encourage women to pursue careers in industrial sectors and STEAM are crucial. Access to education for vulnerable groups, such as those in rural areas, Roma children, people with disabilities, and pre-retirement individuals, remains a challenge, exacerbated by the full-scale war and the COVID-19 pandemic. Limited access to distance education needs to be addressed to ensure equitable education opportunities for all.

#### **14. What actions has your country taken to ensure that economic recovery from the COVID-**

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<sup>44</sup> UN Women and CARE, *Rapid gender analysis of the situation in Ukraine*, UN Women, Kyiv, 4 May 2022. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/rapid-gender-analysis-of-ukraine>.

## 19 pandemic closes gender gaps in poverty, employment, social protection, education, and/or health that the pandemic has exacerbated?

During the COVID-19 pandemic and the quarantine measures implemented by the government and local authorities in 2020-2021, Ukraine faced significant challenges in addressing the gendered impact of the crisis. While the government did not specific gender analysis of the impact of these measures on women, it was evident from other surveys that women were disproportionately affected by the economic downturn. This was primarily because women in Ukraine are overrepresented in low-paid sectors (up to 70%) and in informal employment, such as small businesses, handicrafts, and market selling, which were severely impacted by quarantine closures.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, women faced a higher risk of losing their businesses, jobs, and experiencing increased poverty.

The pandemic also intensified the burden on women as caregivers, both in professional sectors (health, social care, education, retail) and within their families. This further entrenched social stereotypes about women's roles as primary caregivers and increased their vulnerability to domestic violence, thus undermining gender equality and the progress made in women's empowerment in recent years. The COVID-19 crisis highlighted additional vulnerabilities among specific groups of women, including those living in rural or remote areas with limited access to digital economy skills, homeless women, women caring for elderly or chronically ill family members, women from sexual minorities facing legal uncertainties, and Roma women.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, these gendered vulnerabilities were not adequately addressed in the government's macroeconomic and fiscal policies.

To mitigate these impacts and support economic recovery, the Ukrainian government implemented several measures.

As part of the implementation of the program of state guarantees of medical care for the population in 2023, approved by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 27 December 2022 No. 1464, payment conditions for the provided medical services were determined in accordance with tariffs and coefficients. Once every three months, the National Health Service evaluated the achievement of the indicators of the fulfilment of the terms of the contract by the providers of medical services, specifically in terms of vaccination. The calculation of the amount of the supplement based on the results of this assessment was carried out for the level of vaccination against COVID-19. The amount of the surcharge was calculated as the product of the sum of the cost of medical services for the two months preceding the assessment period, the month in which the assessment was carried out, and the corrective factor for achieving the indicators of the fulfilment of the terms of the contract in terms of vaccination for the relevant period, which was 0.025 for the assessment period during the term of the contract.

The government introduced child support for natural persons-entrepreneurs who chose a simplified taxation system and belong to the first and second groups of single tax payers, in connection with the establishment of quarantine and the introduction of strengthened anti-epidemic measures in territories with a significant spread of COVID-19. Women predominate among individual entrepreneurs.

During 2021-2023, the National Social Service, in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, ensured the stable work of the body and the fulfilment of assigned tasks in the field of gender equality. Together with partner organizations, it provided specialist training and monitored the implementation of the Operational Plan for the State Strategy for Ensuring

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> UN Women Ukraine. *Rapid gender assessment of the situation and needs of women in the context of COVID-19 in Ukraine*, May 2020, <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/05/rapid-gender-assessment-of-the-situation-and-needs-of-women>

Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the period until 2030, as well as the National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” for the period until 2025.

## Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

### 15. Over the past five years, which forms of gender-based violence, and in which specific contexts or settings, has your country prioritized for action?

Over the past five years, Ukraine has prioritized the prevention and countering of several forms of gender-based violence (GBV). These include:

- intimate partner violence,
- domestic violence by other family or household members,
- sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings, and workplaces,
- violence against women and girls facilitated by technology,
- gender-based violence against women in politics,
- gender-based violence in the media,
- and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

These areas were prioritized due to their prevalence and severe impact on women and girls, exacerbated by the ongoing full-scale war.

Gender-based violence has been a critical problem in Ukraine, with the full-scale war significantly worsening the situation. According to a UNDP survey, two out of three women in Ukraine have experienced psychological, physical, or sexual violence in their lifetime. Approximately 26% of women aged 15 and over have faced violence from an intimate partner, and 5% from another man. By February 2022, controlling behaviour (55%), abusive behaviour (53%), economic violence (20%), and using children to blackmail the victim (12%) were the most common forms of intimate partner violence. Additionally, half of the women aged 15+ experienced at least one form of sexual harassment.<sup>47</sup>

The Women’s Well-being and Security study conducted by the OSCE and the UN Population Fund in 2019 revealed that 67% of Ukrainian women who suffered from GBV experienced physical, psychological, or sexual violence starting from age 15. The National Hotline for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, and Gender Discrimination, supported by La Strada-Ukraine, received almost 30,000 calls in 2020, with more than 96% related to domestic violence and gender discrimination. The vast majority (84%) of these calls came from women.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there has been a notable increase in GBV cases, often linked to high stress levels and proximity to combat zones. By February 2022, 13% of women living near the “contact line” had been robbed, assaulted, or extorted, 22% had been injured in accidents, and 24% had their homes or property damaged.<sup>48</sup>

The full-scale war has further exacerbated these issues, with increased stress and post-traumatic stress disorder contributing to higher rates of intimate partner violence and CRSV. The number of requests for services related to GBV registered by the National Social Service increased from 154,605 in 2022 to

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<sup>47</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Gender Profile of Ukraine*, 2020. <https://www.undp.org/ukraine/gender-profile-ukraine>

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

174,495 in 2023. The number of services provided to GBV victims rose from 220,000 to 240,000 in just the first half of 2023.<sup>49</sup>

The ratification of the Istanbul Convention in June 2022 contributes to strengthening the legal framework, policies, and practices for preventing GBV, supporting victims, and bringing perpetrators to justice. However, significant challenges remain, such as staff shortages in specialized services, with a 23% overall staff shortfall, including 20% of service managers, 26% of psychologists, 41% of social workers, and 19% of social work specialists. In 2023, 19% of households reported no emergency response services in their area, and 56% did not know if such services were available. The confidence in police protection among women fell from 28% in 2021 to 13% in 2023, highlighting the need for more effective GBV interventions.

Violence against LGBTQI individuals is also a serious concern, with high levels of physical, sexual, and psychological violence driven by social prejudice and discrimination. Despite some progress in combating violence against women, services for LGBTQI victims remain limited, necessitating more inclusive support systems. Research on violence against men and boys is also scarce, indicating a gap in understanding and addressing their specific needs.<sup>50</sup>

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is a distinct crime employed by the Russian Federation as a method of warfare. As of March 2024, the Prosecutor General's Office is investigating 274 criminal proceedings for sexual violence during the war.<sup>51</sup> In 2023, the number of CRSV cases reported to the authorities was twice higher compared to 2022. It is considered a positive development however, because it attests to increased trust in the capacity of the authorities to investigate cases, provide support to survivors and bring perpetrators to justice. Given the extreme sensitivity of this crime and the lack of access to occupied territories, the actual number of CRSV victims is likely much higher. The consequences of sexual violence in armed conflict include long-term psychological trauma, physical harm, sexually transmitted diseases, loss of housing, opportunities, and livelihoods, and the breakdown of families and social structures. The negative impacts of CRSV affect not only those who have experienced violence but also their family members (including child witnesses of CRSV and children born as a result of CRSV) and witnesses of the violence.

Women in Ukraine also experience harassment and violence online, facilitated by digital technologies. Online harassment, including cyberbullying and threats, poses significant challenges for human rights and women's rights activists. Such harassment undermines their work and affects their safety and well-being. A study conducted in 2022 by the organization "Women in the Media" in cooperation with the Ukrainian Women's Fund showed that 53% of women in media experienced sexual harassment at their workplace. Additionally, 33% reported witnessing sexual harassment of their colleagues, but only 9% identified themselves as direct victims.<sup>52</sup>

Another significant issue is online violence against women during the election process in Ukraine. According to a 2019 IFES study, online harassment and violence against women in Ukraine are widespread and damaging barriers to their political participation, perpetuating male dominance in politics.

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<sup>49</sup> Ukraine. Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3). February 2022 – December 2023.

<https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/UA%20RDNA3%20report%20EN.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Tekat S. "Hate crimes against LGBT people in Ukraine: Attacks are becoming more organized", *Genderized*,

<https://genderz.org.ua/hate-crimes-against-lgbt-people-in-ukraine-the-attacks-have-become-more-and-more-organized>.

<sup>51</sup> Ukrinform. Ukraine is investigating 274 cases of sexual violence during the war, Zelenska. 4 March 2024.

<https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3835374-v-ukraini-rozsliduut-274-vipadki-seksualnogo-nasilstva-pid-cas-vijni-zelenska.html>

<sup>52</sup> Women in Media. The situation of female journalists and others media workers in Ukraine, including after 24 February 2022. November 2022. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dhfWfHbKtkdAJV\\_GsQTfk7kueikKxuh7/view?pli=1](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dhfWfHbKtkdAJV_GsQTfk7kueikKxuh7/view?pli=1)



Discriminatory content seen online reflects deep-rooted social and cultural stereotypes, as well as prejudices and misconceptions about women's social roles and their participation in civic and political affairs.<sup>53</sup>

In conclusion, Ukraine has recognized the severity of various forms of gender-based violence and has taken steps to address them. However, the ongoing war and existing social issues continue to exacerbate these challenges, requiring sustained and enhanced efforts to protect and support victims of GBV.

## **16. In the past five years, what actions has your country prioritized to address gender-based violence?**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has made huge progress in addressing GBV through a multi-faceted approach. Considering the significant amount of effort taken by Ukraine in 2020-2024, all the relevant actions analysed below are grouped in three domains: legal developments, institutional developments and service provision, and capacity building.

### **Legal developments**

In June 2022, Ukraine ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This significant step brought amendments to various legal acts to address new challenges associated with the ongoing war.

Ukraine is implementing the State Social Program for the Prevention and Counteraction of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence until 2025, approved in 2021. The program set the groundwork for numerous legislative measures aimed at reinforcing support for victims and enhancing accountability for perpetrators.

A series of legislative acts were adopted to bolster these efforts. On 16 December 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine issued Act No. 1369, establishing procedures for processing appeals and reports from victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, gender-based violence, and violence against children. This act was followed by the approval of the State Social Program through Act No. 145 on 24 February 2021, which outlined the strategic framework for combating GBV until 2025. To support the implementation of this program, Act No. 398 was adopted on 21 April 2021, detailing the conditions for granting subventions from the state budget to local budgets for creating specialized support services for GBV victims.

Recognizing the urgency of addressing GBV, the government also adopted Act No. 361 on 21 April 2021, which outlined emergency measures to prevent and counter domestic and gender-based violence and protect the rights of affected individuals. Further amendments to existing procedures were made through Act No. 129 on 16 February 2022, which included hotline 1547 as an entity responsible for implementing measures to prevent and counter domestic and gender-based violence.

In response to the war, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Act No. 1372 on 9 December 2022, which expanded the powers of specialized services to include social and psychological support for victims of war-related violence, including sexual violence. This legislative framework was further strengthened by Act No. 559 on 2 June 2023, providing conditions for granting subventions from the state budget to local budgets for creating a network of specialized support services. To ensure the effective distribution of

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<sup>53</sup> IFES Ukraine. Online Violence Against Women in Politics in Ukraine.  
<https://uam.in.ua/upload/medialibrary/fe3/fe394ac7aac5a5b23efae7682f010c8b.pdf>

these subventions, Act No. 1011-r was adopted on 7 November 2023, redistributing funds for creating specialized support services.

The Ministry of Social Policy played a crucial role in enhancing offender accountability and victim support. The Ministry approved the Model Program for Offenders (Order No. 1434, 1 October 2018) and the Model Program for Victims (Order No. 587, 13 October 2021). These programs provided structured interventions aimed at rehabilitating offenders and supporting victims.

In alignment with international commitments, the President of Ukraine issued a decree in 2019 on the Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine until 2030, which includes the prevention of gender-based violence within Goal 5 on gender equality. The Cabinet of Ministers approved a list of indicators for monitoring the implementation of these goals on 21 August 2019 (Order No. 686), including Indicator 5.2 on reducing GBV and ensuring timely assistance to victims. Permanent monitoring of these indicators began in 2021.

To further support these initiatives, the Ministry of Social Policy approved methodologies for determining community needs for creating specialized support services for GBV victims (Order No. 36/35658, 12 January 2021) and for conducting gender audits (Order No. 448, 8 September 2021). Additionally, the Ministry of Social Policy and the Ministry of Internal Affairs improved the procedure for assessing domestic violence risks (Order No. 434-H/917, 13 November 2023), allowing for electronic risk assessments and incorporating gender analysis.

The National Social Service, established by the Cabinet of Ministers' resolution on 26 August 2020 (No. 783), began fulfilling its functions in 2020, focusing on ensuring equal rights and combating human trafficking, domestic violence, and GBV. This service played a central role in implementing GBV policies across Ukraine.

To address GBV comprehensively, a draft law (No. 8329, 2 January 2023) was developed to amend the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses in connection with the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This law introduces separate articles on "gender-based violence" and "sexual harassment," improves the mechanism for offender programs, and strengthens accountability for domestic violence. This law was adopted on 29 May 2024.

Despite the ongoing war, the state remains committed to supporting the development of a network of specialized services for victims of violence. In December 2022, the Ministry of Social Policy amended several legal acts to expand the powers of specialized support services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence. These services now provide support to victims of violence related to armed conflict.

To respond comprehensively to CRSV, the Government and the UN Special Representative for the Prevention of Sexual Violence in Conflicts signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2022, setting out memorandum to prevent and respond to sexual violence. These include, in particular, support for developing and strengthening national policies and programs to prevent and respond to sexual violence; strengthening the national health and social services' systems for survivors; and strengthening the rule of law and accountability for crimes of sexual violence.<sup>54</sup> The Implementation Plan of the Framework Program of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations on the Prevention and Countering of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence<sup>55</sup> was approved in 2022. It serves as a basis for

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<sup>54</sup> Jurfem, "Current Directions of Ukraine's Work in the Field of Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Providing Reparations to Victims," 6 March 2023. <https://jurfem.com.ua/aktualni-napryamky-roboty-reahuvannya-na-snpk-reparatsii>.

<sup>55</sup> Implementation Plan of the Framework Program of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations on the Prevention and Countering of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/18%20-%20Department/18%20->



coordination between public authorities, international and non-governmental organisations for building a coordinated, transparent and effective system for combating sexual violence, including by providing reparations to victims of sexual violence.

To ensure comprehensive assistance for victims, the Ministry of Health plans to amend Order No. 278 (2019) to improve the documentation of bodily injuries and provide medical assistance to human trafficking victims. Additionally, a draft law (No. 10420, 22 January 2024) was developed to amend the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine regarding investigation and expertise, aligning it with the Istanbul Convention standards.

The implementation of the Istanbul Protocol procedures will enhance the provision of medical care to victims of human trafficking who have suffered physical injuries, ensuring comprehensive documentation of bodily and psychological harm. This will contribute to proving illegal activities in criminal proceedings related to human trafficking and GBV.

Ukraine's comprehensive legal developments over the past five years demonstrate a robust commitment to preventing and countering gender-based violence. By ratifying the Istanbul Convention, amending existing laws, expanding support services, and improving procedural protocols, Ukraine has significantly strengthened its legal framework to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable.

### **Institutional developments and service provision**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has significantly enhanced its institutional framework and service provision to address gender-based violence (GBV). These developments include expanding specialized support services, establishing comprehensive assistance mechanisms, and enhancing healthcare responses.

Ukraine has greatly expanded its network of specialized support services for GBV victims, increasing from 553 services in 2019 to 917 by January 2024. These services encompass shelters, day centres, counselling services, and mobile brigades. To support this expansion, the government directed a subvention from the state budget to local budgets in 2021 and 2023, totalling UAH 449.6 million. Nearly 200 territorial communities utilized this subvention to create 39 shelters, 69 day centres, 83 counselling services, purchase 41 vehicles for mobile teams, repair one day centre damaged by shelling, create additional shelter capacity in four shelters and two day centres, and increase the number of places in 19 shelters and three crisis rooms.

In 2024, an additional subvention from the state budget will be provided for the purchase of vehicles for newly formed and existing mobile brigades, equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities and other groups with reduced mobility. The State Budget of Ukraine has allocated UAH 200.2 million for this purpose, and the Ministry of Social Policy is currently developing the procedure and conditions for using these funds.

Survivors of war-related sexual violence can receive help from Survivors' Help Centres. Initiated by the Vice-Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Olga Stefanishyna and financially supported by the UN Population Fund, these centres have been established in 12 cities, including Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Mukachevo, Kherson, Kharkiv, Poltava, Odessa, Kropyvnytskyi, and Sumy. The Ministry of Social Policy is developing a Model Regulation for these centres to standardize their operations and provide tools for creating additional centres where needed. These centres offer comprehensive assistance, including psychological, legal, informational, counselling, humanitarian aid,

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[%20PDF/2023/01.01.2023/%D0%86%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%96%D0%B9%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B9%20%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD%2031.01.2023\\_doc.pdf.](#)

and help with overcoming difficult life circumstances such as obtaining temporary housing, employment, education, and professional training.

The Ministry of Social Policy is also working on a mechanism for providing comprehensive assistance to GBV victims using case management. This model, based on international and national legislation and the practical expertise of the UNFPA, involves a full cycle of case management regardless of where the victim first seeks help and the duration of the assistance.

Territorial bodies of the National Social Service were established to ensure compliance with GBV legislation. However, a significant challenge remains the lack of budget programs to implement measures by the National Social Service. Despite this, the Centre for Disaster Medicine, in partnership with the UN Population Fund, provides essential assistance in sexual and reproductive health through a mobile maternity hospital. This specially equipped vehicle has autonomous electricity and water systems, enabling it to perform all necessary medical procedures, including caesarean sections, in difficult conditions.

The Ministry of Health has launched hotlines to support GBV victims. Hotline 1547 offers informational, psychological, and legal consultations to victims of domestic violence, gender-based violence, and violence against children. Another telephone line, 3033, provides initial consultations on sexual and reproductive health issues. The Ministry of Health also systematically participates in training programs to strengthen the healthcare system's response to GBV and has developed the course "Provision of reproductive health services in case of gender-based violence" for general practitioners, obstetrician-gynaecologists, psychologists, and social workers. This course aims to enhance medical assistance skills for GBV victims and provide up-to-date information on the medical, social, and psychological aspects of GBV.

Access to assistance for conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) victims is integrated into national systems, including public health services, legal aid, and healthcare. The Government Platform for Helping Survivors ([help-platform.in.ua](http://help-platform.in.ua)) provides key support service contacts, including a network of 12 centres for survivors, Aurora online psychotherapeutic support platform,<sup>56</sup> and 142 gynaecological offices with barrier-free access.

In November 2023, a survey titled *Access to services and assistance for victims of domestic violence and/or gender-based violence* was conducted with 1,048 respondents across Ukraine.<sup>57</sup> This survey aimed to collect data on the availability and effectiveness of support services and identify gaps in the interaction mechanisms of entities implementing GBV prevention and response measures. The results will inform the organization of social services for GBV victims.

Mechanisms for responding to GBV cases have been developed and disseminated through guidance letters to local executive bodies, local self-government bodies, and territorial units of the National Social Service.

### **Capacity building**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has prioritized capacity building as a crucial component in addressing gender-based violence (GBV). The focus has been on training professionals across various sectors to effectively respond to and prevent GBV, thereby enhancing the overall support system for victims.

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<sup>56</sup> Aurora. Psychotherapeutic Support and Assistance Space. <https://avrora-help.org.ua/home>

<sup>57</sup> National Social Service of Ukraine. Assistance to survivors of violence. <https://nssu.gov.ua/analitichni-doslidzhennia/dopomoha-postrazhdalym-vid-nasylstva>

During 2022-2023, in collaboration with partner organizations such as the Representation of the Council of Europe in Ukraine and the Information and Consultative Women's Centre NGO, a series of training sessions were conducted for specialists in local state administrations. These sessions focused on working with individuals who have suffered from sexual violence related to the conflict. The training aimed to increase awareness and understanding of the specific nature of this crime and the necessary approaches to support victims. Notably, these initiatives were carried out without allocations from the state budget, relying instead on the resources and expertise of partner organizations.

In 2023, efforts to enhance the capacity of social service providers continued, particularly through training programs for employees of institutions and organizations that assist victims of domestic and gender-based violence, including sexual violence and human trafficking. These trainings were conducted in cooperation with the Council of Europe Representation in Ukraine, the Jurfem NGO, the Higher School of Public Administration of the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service, and the International Organization for Migration. Similar to the previous year, these training programs were not funded by the state budget but were supported by international and non-governmental organizations.

Additionally, in 2023, the Higher School of Public Administration of the National Civil Service Agency of Ukraine developed and approved a typical general short-term training program titled "Prevention and Counteraction of Gender-Based Violence, Particularly Domestic Violence."<sup>58</sup> The objective of this educational project is to raise awareness among civil servants and local self-government officials about the prevention, detection, response, and counteraction of domestic violence. It aims to equip them with the skills needed to apply a comprehensive integrated approach in responding to such cases. Another program, "Mechanisms and Tools for Countering Human Trafficking," was also developed and approved to address related issues.

The Ministry of Health has been actively involved in capacity-building efforts within the healthcare system. The Ministry systematically participates in training programs aimed at healthcare managers to enhance the system's response to violence against women. These programs focus on increasing knowledge and skills to support the fight against sexual violence and strengthen healthcare responses. They also aim to align Ukraine's healthcare policies and strategies with international standards, such as those set by the World Health Organization. This includes the development and implementation of Ukrainian tools for healthcare management, as well as fostering international cooperation.<sup>59</sup>

A notable initiative by the State University "Centre for Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine" is the development of the course "Providing Reproductive Health Services in Case of Gender Violence." This course is designed for general practitioners, family doctors, obstetrician-gynaecologists, psychologists, and social workers. Its purpose is to enhance the skills needed to provide medical assistance to women who have suffered from gender-based violence and to offer relevant information on the medical, social, and psychological aspects of GBV. The course was developed within the framework of the joint project "Comprehensive Approach to Solving the Problem of Violence against Women and Girls in Ukraine," supported by the Charitable Foundation "Women's Health and Family Planning" and UNFPA, with financial backing from the Government of the United Kingdom.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, healthcare institutions regularly conduct professional thematic training for medical workers on how to conduct and document medical examinations of injured persons and provide them with medical

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<sup>58</sup> National Social Service of Ukraine. Informational materials on gender equality. <https://nssu.gov.ua/genderna-rivnist/informatsiini-materialy>

<sup>59</sup> Centre of Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. Training courses. <https://courses.phc.org.ua/>

<sup>60</sup> Ministry of Health of Ukraine. Prevention and response to gender-based violence. <https://moz.gov.ua/protidija-ta-zapobigannja-domashnomu-nasilstvu>

assistance. In 2023 alone, 22,546 medical workers received such training, facilitated by the health care structural units of the regional and Kyiv city military administrations. These training sessions are part of ongoing efforts to ensure that medical professionals are well-equipped to handle cases of domestic and GBV effectively.

The experience of 2020-2024 has shown that a multi-faceted approach is essential in effectively addressing gender-based violence (GBV). Legal reforms, such as the ratification of the Istanbul Convention and subsequent amendments, have underscored the need for strong legislative frameworks that align with international standards. Institutional developments, including the expansion of specialized support services and the establishment of Survivors' Help Centres, have demonstrated the importance of accessible, comprehensive support systems for survivors. Additionally, capacity-building initiatives have highlighted the critical role of continuous training for healthcare professionals and social service providers in improving the quality of support offered. These lessons underline that a coordinated response involving law enforcement, human rights advocacy, and healthcare services is vital for both preventing GBV and providing effective assistance to survivors.

### **17. In the past five years, what strategies has your country used to prevent gender-based violence?**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has prioritized the prevention of GBV through comprehensive strategies targeting public awareness, capacity building for policy and health practitioners, and extensive awareness-raising and communication campaigns. These measures aimed to address the widespread issue of GBV, especially in conflict conditions, ensuring support for survivors and enhancing the effectiveness of response mechanisms.

Key strategies to prevent GBV includes guides and visibility materials, communication and awareness raising materials, and capacity building for police officers and health practitioners.

Development and distribution of guides and visibility materials focused on creating and disseminating educational materials to raise awareness about GBV and sexual violence in conflict settings. The goal was to provide practical information and resources to survivors, communities, and activists.

Specific measures taken by the Government in cooperation with NGOs and international partners are:

- Developed the leaflet “Sexual Violence During the War” with UN Women support.
- Created the information leaflet “What You Need to Know and How to Act if You Have Suffered or Witnessed a War Crime” with UNFPA support.
- Published a guide for communities on changing social norms to prevent domestic violence, supported by UNFPA.
- Introduced the board game “Icebreakers” and accompanying guidelines for community activists.
- Developed training workbooks and manuals for NGOs, activists, and opinion leaders on countering and preventing domestic violence.
- Released reports on psychological first aid relevance for men and studies on relationships in Ukrainian married couples, with UNFPA support.

Target populations included survivors of GBV, community activists, NGOs, youth workers, and the general public.

Capacity building for police officers and health practitioners aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of police and health practitioners in detecting, responding to, and assisting GBV victims, especially in the war settings.

Specific measures included:

- Developed a general short-term program on detecting and responding to conflict-related sexual violence in cooperation with National Agency for Civil Service and state bodies.
- Created the memo “Peculiarities of Investigation of Facts of Sexual Violence in Conditions of Armed Conflict” with PGO cooperation.
- Produced guidelines for integrating a victim-oriented approach in pre-trial investigations.
- Developed an educational film on investigating crimes against children’s sexual freedom, included in the educational program of the National Academy of Sciences.
- Established a single action algorithm for police officers, prosecutors, healthcare workers, and social services in de-occupied territories.
- Launched an online course on managing cases of sexual and domestic violence for primary care physicians, supported by the Ukrainian Catholic University, World Bank, and the Embassy of Switzerland.

Target population included were police officers, prosecutors, healthcare workers, social service providers, and primary care physicians. These training programs improved practitioners’ ability to provide victim-centred support and conduct thorough investigations. The integration of international best practices into local training curricula was a significant success, emphasizing the need for continuous education and updates on evolving GBV response strategies.

Awareness raising and communication campaigns focused on increasing public awareness about domestic violence and expanding communication channels to support GBV victims, particularly during the war.

Specific measures included:

- Launched a large-scale information campaign “Strengthening and Expanding Communication Channels with Victims of Domestic Violence” with international partner support.
- Introduced #ActAgainstViolence and Stay Safe chatbots on Telegram and Viber to provide immediate support and information.
- Conducted the annual All-Ukrainian action “16 Days Against Violence,” including the “It’s Not OK” campaign with widespread media coverage and community events.
- Published 686 informational materials on the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ official website and social media.
- Organized 25,300 information and educational events, including street actions, seminars, quests, coordination meetings, round tables, conferences, classes, and lectures.

The campaigns targeted the general public, GBV survivors, and specific groups such as children, youth, and community leaders.

Impact evaluation. According to a public opinion study conducted at the end of 2023, two-thirds of respondents reported encountering domestic violence either personally or within their environment. Notably, 68.7% of respondents (71.8% of women and 65.3% of men) consider any form of domestic violence unacceptable, indicating a widespread recognition of the issue. A significant 75.6% of surveyed citizens believe it is crucial to seek help in cases of domestic violence, reflecting an increased awareness of available support mechanisms. The study also demonstrated that Ukrainians are capable of identifying various types of domestic violence, including physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence, with 65.3% attributing sole responsibility for such violence to the offender.

However, the study highlighted nuances in perceptions. For economic violence, half of the respondents believed both parties were responsible, while 47.4% had similar views on psychological violence. This indicates a need for continued education on the dynamics of violence and responsibility.

Differences in perceptions between genders were notable, with women generally showing greater intolerance towards violence. A higher percentage of women recognized violence in specific situations and identified the offender as responsible. This was reflected in the higher overall intolerance of violence among women (71.8%) compared to men (65.3%). Age also influenced attitudes, with younger respondents (18-24 years old) demonstrating lower tolerance for violence and more consistently blaming the offender. In contrast, older respondents (55-60 years old) showed greater tolerance and were more likely to attribute some responsibility to the victims or believe both parties were responsible.

Moreover, 46.5% of respondents expressed a desire to learn more about domestic violence and prevention strategies. Despite this interest, many participants felt unsure about the steps to avoid violent situations; 60.7% admitted to having only an approximate idea of necessary actions, and 19% reported having no understanding at all.<sup>61</sup>

These findings underline the importance of continued public education and awareness campaigns to reinforce the unacceptability of all forms of violence and to clarify the responsibilities of offenders and victims. The differences in perception among various demographics also suggest targeted interventions may be beneficial in addressing these nuances.

### **18. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence (e.g. online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has taken certain steps to prevent and respond to technology-facilitated gender-based violence, especially intensified after the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. However, these measures are only a starting point in addressing the increasing prevalence of online harassment, online stalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, particularly during the conflict conditions exacerbated by the ongoing war.

Ukraine has individual tools but lacks a comprehensive mechanism to protect against or prosecute violence online and/or through technology. This issue is relatively new, and the general framework of online security is determined by several laws, including “On information,” “On the basic principles of ensuring cybersecurity of Ukraine,” “On national security,” “On cloud services,” “On electronic communications,” “On the protection of personal data,” and “On the protection of information in information and communication systems.” The problem of cyberviolence is recognized by the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030. The Action Plan for 2022-2024 under this Strategy includes steps to overcome the problem and support victims, such as providing psychological assistance through hotlines, conducting research, and preparing informational and analytical reports.

The Istanbul Convention, ratified by Ukraine, obliges the country to criminalize various crimes against women and combat gender discrimination and domestic violence. Although GREVIO has extended the Istanbul Convention’s norms to the digital dimension, Ukraine’s legislation currently lacks direct legal norms addressing cyberviolence. Instead, relevant offenses are addressed through separate norms of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (Articles 120, 126-1, 129, 153, 161, 163, 182, 189, 301-2), the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses (Articles 173-2, 173-4, 173-5) and some of the above-mentioned laws may be applied to relevant offenses. However, these tools face obstacles such as insufficient legislative regulation

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<sup>61</sup> UNFPA. Findings of the study on attitudes of Ukraine towards violence. 20 November 2023. <https://ukraine.unfpa.org/uk/news/gbv-perception-survey-results>

and the absence of specific terms related to digital violence. Therefore, relevant bodies have limited to no legal authority to take necessary action.

Moreover, there is a significant lack of statistical data on cyberviolence, hindering comprehensive analysis and effective policy-making.<sup>62</sup>

In 2023, the UN Women Regional Office for Central Asia and Eastern Europe conducted a study titled “The Dark Side of Digitalization: Violence Against Women Using Technology.” This study, conducted in 13 countries including Ukraine, involved over 12,000 women and girls and highlighted that 76.8% of Ukrainian women had experienced technology-facilitated violence. Common forms included receiving unwanted or offensive content (39.7%), inappropriate sexual messages on social networks (30%), and hacking of accounts (25.4%).<sup>63</sup> The study revealed that a significant portion of this violence was perpetrated by unknown individuals or those known only online, although nearly one-third involved socially close individuals like partners or family members. The findings emphasized the need for specific legal provisions addressing technology-facilitated GBV and the importance of integrating gender aspects into such laws.

Also, the government is using technology to address gender-based violence committed offline. Notably, in 2022, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, in collaboration with the National Police of Ukraine and UNFPA, launched a mobile application designed to assist women who have suffered from domestic or gender-based violence or are at risk. This application is particularly aimed at women who cannot call the police due to physical disabilities, complete control of their personal lives by abusers, or lack of phone credit. The app features an SOS button for direct police communication, automatic location detection via geolocation, and a hidden interface to disguise it from potential abusers. Since its launch, the application has been downloaded by over 42,000 people, indicating its significant reach and utility.

The experience of Ukraine over the past five years highlights several critical lessons in combating technology-facilitated GBV. Firstly, comprehensive legal frameworks specifically addressing online violence are essential. The current reliance on general cybersecurity laws and the Istanbul Convention, while helpful, is insufficient without specific provisions targeting online GBV. Secondly, continuous public education and capacity-building initiatives are vital in changing social norms and improving the response to GBV. Finally, leveraging technology, such as mobile applications for GBV victims, can significantly enhance support mechanisms and provide critical assistance to those in need.

## **19. In the past five years, what measures has your country taken to resource women’s organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV?**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has made significant efforts to resource support services and enhance their network for individuals affected by domestic and gender-based violence. These measures have been implemented through various channels, combining state budget allocations, international partnerships, and the involvement of NGOs.

To address the increasing demand for support services, the Ukrainian government has significantly expanded its network of specialized support services for victims of domestic and gender-based violence.

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<sup>62</sup> VoxUkraine. Gender inequality in the "black mirror": how to overcome violence in the digital space? 22 April 2024. <https://voxukraine.org/gender-na-nerivnist-u-chornomu-dzerkali-yak-dolaty-nasylstvo-u-tsyfrovomu-vymiri>

<sup>63</sup> UN Women. The dark side of digitalization: Technology-facilitated violence against women in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. 2023. <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/11/the-dark-side-of-digitalization-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-in-eastern-europe-and-central-asia>



This expansion has been funded through a subvention from the state budget, which enabled the growth of services from 553 in 2019 to 917 by 1 February 2024. These services include shelters, crisis rooms, day care centres, counselling services, mobile teams, and hotlines. Target population are women, children, men, and people with disabilities affected by domestic and gender-based violence.

The expansion has increased the availability and accessibility of support services, ensuring comprehensive care for victims.

In collaboration with state authorities, international organizations, and NGOs, Ukraine has focused on expanding the network of mobile teams providing social and psychological assistance to victims of violence. These mobile brigades are crucial for offering support to individuals in de-occupied territories and other hard-to-reach areas.

A total of 601 mobile teams currently operate in Ukraine, with 58 funded by NGOs and international charitable funds. In 2023, these mobile brigades assisted over 50,000 victims of domestic and gender-based violence: 71% women, 18% children, 11% men, and nearly 2,000 individuals with disabilities. In 2024, additional funding from the state budget is allocated for the purchase of vehicles for these mobile teams, ensuring they are equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities and other groups with reduced mobility.

Budget includes state budget allocations and contributions from NGOs and international funds. It increased reach and effectiveness of mobile support teams, providing essential services to a wider range of victims. In 2021, for the first time, the state budget allocated a subvention of approximately UAH 274 million hryvnias to support and create new services for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence. Although a subvention was also planned for 2022, it was not implemented as all funds were redirected to the Armed Forces due to the ongoing conflict. However, for 2023, a subvention was allocated again for the development of these essential services – it amounted to UAH 174 million.<sup>64</sup> For 2024, the subvention is still pending.

The Ministry of Social Policy with international partners and NGOs, has been working on creating an electronic case management system to optimize the work of social workers and ensure a systematic approach to organizing social services for vulnerable populations, including victims of violence and human trafficking. The Register of Providers and Recipients of Social Services under the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere was developed and adopted by Resolution of the CMU of 27 January 2021 No. 99. This system is designed to collect, register, accumulate, store, use, and manage data on providers and recipients of social services. The electronic case management functionality involves computer processes at all stages, from needs analysis to the assessment of results, in a secure electronic format. The system was put into industrial operation for the registration of social service providers on 16 February 2023, and into experimental operation for the registration of recipients of social services.

The system targets vulnerable populations, including victims of domestic and gender-based violence and human trafficking.

Over the past five years, Ukraine's approach to resourcing support centres and expanding support services for GBV victims has highlighted several critical lessons. The integration of state budget allocations with international partnerships has proven effective in broadening the reach and capacity of support services. The expansion of mobile teams and the development of electronic case management systems have improved access to and coordination of care, particularly in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas.

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<sup>64</sup> Government Portal. The government to allocate subventions to create a network of specialized support services for victims of domestic violence. 13 June 2023. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/uriad-vydilyt-subventsii-dlia-stvorennia-merezhi-sptializovanykh-sluzhb-pidtrymky-osib-iaki-postrazhdaly-vid-domashnoho-nasylstva>



However, the need for continuous investment in infrastructure, training, and technology remains essential to maintain and enhance these support networks.

## **20. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media, including social media?**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has taken significant actions to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination, and gender bias in the media, including social media. Key efforts encompass legislative changes, strategic communication initiatives, and targeted educational campaigns.

The Parliament of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Advertising” on Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender” on 10 September 2021 (No. 1750-IX). Effective from 8 January 2022, this law introduces legislative definitions of “discriminatory advertising” and “discriminatory advertising on the basis of gender,” and establishes penalties for such advertising.

Additionally, the government approved the Concept of Communication in the Field of Gender Equality (2020) and its Action Plan (2023). The goal is to enhance understanding of gender equality, dismantle gender role stereotypes, and promote zero tolerance for gender-based discrimination.

Draft laws, such as “On Media” (No. 2693) and “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Advertising” Regarding Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender” (No. 3427), were developed to further strengthen accountability for gender-based discrimination in media and advertising. These draft laws have been adopted in first reading in 2023, and will be further considered in the Parliament.

To address gender stereotypes and the stereotypical portrayal of women in mass media, the Ministry of Information Policy and the State Television and Radio Committee undertook several communication campaigns and events:

- “Your Profession is Your Choice” Campaign (2019): This initiative produced eight videos shown on national and regional TV channels, cinemas, and the Internet, promoting gender equality in career choices.
- TV and radio programs: Three programs focused on equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the security and defense sector. A video clip titled “Gender Equality in the Army” was also produced.
- Thematic communication events: Eight events aimed at combating discriminatory stereotypes were organized during 2020-2024.

In addition, the Ministry of Social Policy, in collaboration with UNFPA, conducted the “Happiness in 4 Hands” information campaign (2017-2020). Furthermore, the President of Ukraine established Father’s Day (2019), celebrated on the third Sunday of June, to promote positive male role models.

To build capacity of the media and regulatory bodies in this field, a series of seminars were conducted for 200 journalism students, and the gender component was incorporated into the training programs of the Ukrainian Institute for Advanced Training of Television, Radio Broadcasting and Press Workers. Also, training sessions were held for 105 employees of the State Television and Radio Committee and 150 regional journalists. A guide for journalists and media workers, “Media without Prejudice: Words Matter,” was published in late 2019.

Women in Ukraine continue to face significant obstacles due to pervasive gender stereotypes, which have been both reinforced and challenged by the full-scale war. Traditional roles of men as protectors and women as caregivers are prevalent, but women’s roles have evolved, especially in the Armed Forces,

volunteering, and the workplace. Women are actively involved in the war effort, serving in the military, raising funds, providing humanitarian aid, participating in diplomacy, and working across various sectors. Recognizing and maintaining opportunities for women's contributions is crucial.

Despite concerns that war might amplify patriarchal attitudes, a survey in November 2022 among people aged 15-34 showed no increase in gender stereotypes. Younger women are less likely than men to hold stereotypical views, such as the belief that men should be sole providers or that men make better leaders. Notably, only 15% of young women (compared to 24% of young men) think a man should fully provide for the family, and 31% of young men (versus 17% of young women) believe men are better business leaders. Over 50% of young people disagree with such stereotypes, indicating progress.<sup>65</sup>

Most young people support further advancements in gender equality, including legal and institutional reforms in employment, education, and measures to combat gender-based violence. They advocate for national information campaigns to promote tolerance and increase accountability for discrimination. The prevalence of gender stereotypes is lower among youth than older generations, highlighting a generational shift towards greater gender sensitivity and equality.

The past five years have provided several key lessons in Ukraine's efforts to address gender bias and discrimination in the media. Legislative measures, such as the amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On Advertising," demonstrated that clear legal definitions and penalties are essential for combating discriminatory practices. The Concept of Communication in the Field of Gender Equality showed that strategic, government-led initiatives can effectively promote understanding and challenge stereotypes. However, the persistence of traditional gender roles, especially during the full-scale war, highlighted the need for continuous and adaptive strategies. Campaigns like "Your Profession is Your Choice" and educational efforts targeting journalists underscored the importance of consistent public engagement and education in changing social norms. The active participation of women in various sectors, particularly in the Armed Forces and humanitarian efforts, revealed the critical need to recognize and support women's evolving roles. Lastly, the generational shift towards greater gender sensitivity among younger people suggested that long-term change is possible but requires ongoing commitment to education and legal reforms.

## **21. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken specifically tailored to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls?**

In 2020-2024, Ukraine has prioritised actions to address violence against marginalized groups of women and girls. These actions are part of broader strategies outlined in the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030, the State Targeted Social Program for Combating Human Trafficking until 2025, and the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace, Security" until 2025. Specific measures include:

- 1) Training and capacity building for local authorities to identify, prevent and counter violence against marginalized groups of women and girls,
- 2) Development of gender profiles in communities, reflective of the needs of marginalized groups,
- 3) Online courses and public awareness campaigns on preventing and countering violence against marginalized groups, as well as on available services for survivors.

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<sup>65</sup> Insight Ukraine, *Gender stereotypes and roles through the eyes of young people: Before and after the start of full-scale Russian aggression. Report on the results of the study*, Insight Ukraine, Kyiv, 2023. [https://www.insight-ukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/GS\\_2.pdf](https://www.insight-ukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/GS_2.pdf)

1) To enhance the capacity of specialists in local executive bodies and local self-government, Ukraine has conducted extensive training on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men. This includes combating gender-based discrimination, human trafficking, domestic violence, and gender-based violence with a focus on vulnerable population groups and preventing multiple discrimination on several grounds. To equip local authorities with the knowledge and skills needed to address and prevent GBV among marginalized groups, ensuring a comprehensive and rights-based approach. Target groups are local executive bodies, local self-government bodies, and specialists working in these areas. These activities are funded through state and international sources, with support from UN Women and other international partners.

2) The Ministry of Social Policy approved Guidelines (Guidelines) for implementing a gender approach at the territorial community level (Order of the Ministry of Social Policy of 27 December 2022 No. 359). These recommendations include collecting quantitative and qualitative data on target groups, disaggregated by gender and other characteristics, to compile gender profiles for developing recovery and development programs. Detailed gender profiles inform community-specific programs addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. In 2023, with the support of UN Women, 83 NGOs and interest groups in 17 communities of Sumy, Chernihiv, Zaporizhzhia, and Kirovohrad regions developed and regularly updated community gender profiles. The gender profile focuses on vulnerable groups of women and men. Target populations are women and men in vulnerable groups within territorial communities. Budget-wise, this activity is supported by UN Women and other international partners.

3) To increase gender sensitivity among the population and medical workers, and to combat stigmatization and discrimination, several online courses and public awareness campaigns have been conducted. These initiatives focus on issues such as HIV, reproductive health services in cases of gender violence, and the rights of marginalized groups. The aim was to educate and raise awareness about GBV and related issues among healthcare providers and the general public, with a specific focus on marginalized groups. Target populations are healthcare workers, women living with HIV, women of Roma nationality, and other marginalized groups. The activities are funded through international partnerships and state resources.

The number of registrations and successful course completions are tracked to measure reach and effectiveness. For the course “HIV: Tolerance and Hope,” there were 2,329 registrations and 1,418 completions. The course on “Diagnosis and Prevention of HIV Infection and Viral Hepatitis” had 295 registrations and 13 completions. The course on “Provision of Reproductive Health Services in Case of Gender Violence” recorded 1,543 registrations and 657 completions.

Information and educational activities were conducted among the population regarding access to services of the free legal aid system for key groups affected by HIV infection and STDs. A standard operating procedure for HIV index testing (partner testing) was developed, including an algorithm to monitor situations of negative consequences for the index client and actions to minimize risks if such negative consequences occur. These consequences may include physical, economic, emotional, or psychosocial trauma or harm inflicted by one person on another, by a person on themselves, or by an institution on another person, occurring before, during, or after the provision of index testing services.

Information about the Day of Zero Discrimination (1 March) and the All-Ukrainian campaign “16 Days Against Violence” (from 25 November to 10 December annually) was disseminated through official websites. These initiatives contribute to increasing public awareness of issues related to combating violence. Additionally, official letters of appeal were sent to sub-departmental institutions and organizations, as well as to health care departments of regional and Kyiv city state administrations

The comprehensive approach to addressing violence against marginalized groups of women and girls in

Ukraine highlights the importance of combining legislative measures, capacity building, and public awareness campaigns. Training local authorities and healthcare providers, developing gender-sensitive community profiles, and leveraging online education have proven effective in enhancing the response to GBV. These efforts demonstrate the necessity of continuous support, data-driven approaches, and active involvement of NGOs and international partners to address the unique needs of marginalized groups.

## Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

### 22. In the past five years, what actions and measures has your country to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?

During the reporting period, Ukraine implemented several measures to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making processes. Despite these efforts, women leaders in Ukraine continue to face obstacles and remain underrepresented, particularly at the national level in government, political parties, and parliament. In the current 9<sup>th</sup> convocation of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 79% of Members of Parliament are men, and only 21% are women.

Introduction of gender quotas in electoral lists. Introduction of mandatory gender quota became the most prominent development aimed at addressing this imbalance. First, a quota system was introduced in 2013 to ensure the representation of at least 30% of candidates for Members of Parliament of the same sex. However, this did not significantly impact the representation of women among elected members on the lists of political parties, as no sanctions were introduced for non-compliance with the quota. At the local level, the 30/70 quota system has been in effect since 2015 for electoral lists of candidates for local council members in multi-mandate constituencies. At the same time, parties with 40% of women in the parliament receive funding from the state budget.

The new Electoral Code, adopted in 2019 and effective from 1 January 2020, establishes a 40/60 gender quota for the electoral lists of political parties. Parties cannot register their electoral lists with electoral commissions unless they have at least two candidates of the same gender for every five candidates on the list. Although the next national elections are scheduled for 2024, due to the continuation of martial law because of the full-scale war, the elections have been postponed.

Increased representation of women in local councils. To further enhance women's representation, the 40% gender quota was applied in the October 2020 local elections. As a result, the number of women elected to local councils increased. Women now constitute 27.8% of members in regional councils, 34.3% in district councils, 32.6% in councils of settlements with more than 10,000 voters, and 41.3% in councils of settlements with fewer than 10,000 voters. Despite this progress, women's representation in the positions of heads of territorial communities remains low, with only 16.6% of such positions held by women after the 2020 elections.<sup>66</sup>

Women in the civil service and judicial system. In the civil service system, measures were taken to address the low representation of women among decision-makers in executive bodies. As of May 2024, there are four women among the 22 members of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, including three deputy prime ministers. Also, women make 31 of approximately 105 deputy ministers.<sup>67</sup> In 2020, women accounted for only 33.3% of civil servants in category "A" positions, while holding 78.3% of category "C" positions and

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<sup>66</sup> Central Election Commission, "Gender monitoring of local elections," 2020. <https://www.cvk.gov.ua/actualna-informaciya/187243.html>

<sup>67</sup> Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Composition. <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/en/team>

68.6% of category “B” positions.<sup>68</sup> In the judicial system, the representation of women was also a focus. By 2020, women made up 53.6% of all judges, with higher representation in local and appellate courts but lower representation in higher specialized courts and the Supreme Court. In the Supreme Court, women constituted 41% of judges by the end of 2020.<sup>69</sup>

Efforts to increase women’s representation in the diplomatic service were made as a priority of the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, resulting in the number of women heading foreign diplomatic institutions of Ukraine increasing from 3 to 17 between 2019 and 2024.

Promoting women’s leadership through training and information campaigns. Significant efforts were also made to promote women’s leadership through training and information campaigns. Notably, in September 2023, a major international workshop titled “Transformation of Women’s Leadership in Conditions of War: New Challenges and Prospects” was organized. This workshop involving international partners like UN Women, the National Democratic Institute, and the Association of Women Lawyers Jurfem, focused on mentoring as a tool for fostering female leadership in public administration. Participants included officials responsible for ensuring gender equality, local self-government officials, educators, and experts.

UN Women in Ukraine supported at least 20 informational events to promote gender balance in decision-making and share best practices. In cooperation with the Office of the Vice-Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the Empowering Women in Business initiative was launched. Through at least 10 trainings, 494 representatives of the private sector and state companies increased their awareness of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Additionally, over 2,000 participants engaged in discussions on women’s roles in politics, entrepreneurship, security processes, migration, and veterans’ reintegration at the 7th Ukrainian Women’s Congress “Women’s Leadership. Recovery Time. Time to Rebuild” in November 2023. This event also presented a sociological study on the prerequisites for Ukrainian women who found temporary shelter abroad to return and participate in the Ukraine’s recovery efforts.

The full-scale war has had a detrimental impact on women’s political participation. In 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers imposed restrictions on the travel abroad of female deputies of local councils. This government decision led some female deputies to resign their mandates due to the necessity of traveling abroad to visit their children or for volunteer work. The extent of this phenomenon is challenging to assess, as data is only available from territorial election commissions, and the Central Election Commission (CEC) does not have aggregated information.

Additionally, issues may arise for women in post-war elections. According to current law, women who have been abroad for more than 90 days in forced movement abroad due to the Russian-Ukrainian war will be ineligible to run for office. Legislative changes to address this post-war challenge and remove restrictions on women were proposed to Parliament by the CEC in September 2022, but they have not yet been adopted.

After the full-scale invasion, authority was delegated to regional military administrations at the oblast, district and municipal levels. While no official statistics are currently available, experts note trends such as the further shrinking of women’s representation in such military administrations, since these bodies are largely composed of the representatives of security and defence institutions which continue to be male-dominated.

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<sup>68</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine and UN Women, *Indicators for Monitoring Gender Equality in Ukraine: Monitoring Report 2021*, UN Women, Kyiv, 2022. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat\\_e/2021/2021\\_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor\\_ENG.pdf](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_e/2021/2021_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor_ENG.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

Lessons learned from the efforts to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making in Ukraine over the past five years highlight the importance of targeted actions and policies. The introduction of gender quotas has shown positive results, particularly at the local level, where a notable increase in women's representation in local councils was observed following the implementation of a 40% gender quota. However, the limited impact of earlier quota systems without enforcement mechanisms underscores the necessity of accompanying such policies with strict compliance measures. Additionally, the representation of women in leadership positions remains low, indicating that while quotas can enhance female participation, additional strategies are needed to support women in attaining and retaining these roles. The progress in the civil service, judicial system, and diplomatic service demonstrates that focused efforts, such as capacity-building workshops and training initiatives, are effective in advancing gender equality.

However, the persistence of underrepresentation, particularly in higher-level positions, suggests that continuous and specific actions are required to sustain and build on these gains. The success of training and information campaigns further emphasizes that raising awareness and providing mentorship are crucial for empowering women and fostering their leadership in public administration and beyond. Also, the full-scale war has highlighted the vulnerability of women's political participation in times of crisis. Restrictive policies, even when intended for security, can disproportionately affect women and their ability to engage in political processes. Ensuring legislative flexibility and providing support for female politicians during and after crises is crucial. This experience underscores the importance of adopting measures that safeguard women's rights and political participation, even in challenging circumstances, to prevent setbacks in gender equality and representation.

### **23. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

Over 2020-2024, Ukraine has undertaken several initiatives to enhance women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT). Despite ongoing challenges, these actions have aimed to create a more inclusive and equitable media landscape, fostering greater gender balance and amplifying women's voices in public discourse.

The practical implementation of tools to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men requires a comprehensive approach, including measures to overcome stereotypical ideas about gender roles, training programs, and the use of effective communication channels. In 2020, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the Concept of Communication in the Field of Gender Equality, followed by the approval of its Action Plan in 2023. These initiatives aim to support and honour women in Ukraine, expanding their access to expression and participation in decision-making processes in the media sphere.

During the reporting period, the Government launched the video project "Women Who Died for Ukraine," focusing on women who gave their lives defending the country, thereby deepening society's understanding of their heroism. Publications such as the book "Girls Cut Their Braids" and the album of Liubov Panchenko's work highlight the personal stories of women who became war heroes. Exhibitions like "The Unknown Lesya Ukrainka: The Return" offer new perspectives on women's contributions to cultural and historical legacies.

Efforts to encourage women in the scientific field have also been significant, with the publication of books exploring women's experiences during the war, such as Olena Styazhkina's book and a collection about

Ukrainian prisoners in the Mauthausen concentration camp. These initiatives contribute to a broader understanding and public appreciation of women’s contributions to important historical events.

A significant amount of work to increase women’s access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media is carried out by Ukrainian women’s NGOs, media sector NGOs, and international partners.

One of the prominent initiatives is the platform “Women are 50% of Ukraine’s success,” a media project aimed at activating and supporting women in public and political life.<sup>70</sup> This platform seeks to balance the representation of women and men in key positions to expedite the creation of a truly European model of society. Established in the mid-2010s and actively operating and expanding from 2020 to 2024, the platform is based on the premise that women, on an equal footing with men, suffer from war, economic crises, and corruption, and thus have the potential to contribute significantly to peace, reconstruction, and reform processes in Ukraine.

Another significant initiative is the “Povaha” (*Respect*) campaign, a media initiative against sexism in politics and mass media.<sup>71</sup> Supported by the Institute for the Development of the Regional Press and funded by the governments of Sweden and the UK, the campaign includes the “Ask a Woman” database, which has been running since 2017 and features over 300 female experts across various fields. The campaign also produced a series of videos on gender and journalism, aimed at challenging gender stereotypes and promoting women’s participation in the media. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, initiated both platforms. The funding for these initiatives comes from the UK FCDO’s Good Governance Development Fund.

“Women’s Faces of Leadership” is another media project that aims to introduce Ukrainians to leading women leaders from public, civic, and media sectors.<sup>72</sup> The project features female deputies, public activists, journalists, and experts from international organizations and state structures who share their experiences in reforming the country and promoting gender equality. The project highlights successful local initiatives and information campaigns aimed at combating sexism and negative gender stereotypes in the media and politics, demonstrating the crucial role of women in initiating and leading changes in Ukraine.

“She Does It” is a unique series of video stories about women from across Ukraine who are actively involved in public and political life.<sup>73</sup> Implemented by the NDI in cooperation with the online platform “Women are 50% of Ukraine’s success” and *Vydavnytstvo* publishing house with the support of Sweden, this campaign promotes equality in politics by sharing success stories of Ukrainian women and their role models. The inspiration for the campaign came from the success of the two-volume book “She Did It” and “She Did It Too,” the largest project about famous women in Ukraine.

Monitoring by the Institute of Mass Information NGO and Media Detector in October 2020 showed that mentions of heroines in online materials were less frequent than those of men (29% of mentions involved women). However, the percentage of female experts commenting on political topics and mentions of Ukrainian female politicians increased to 27% during the 2020 local elections.

Lessons learned from the efforts to enhance women’s access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media over 2020-2024 highlight the importance of comprehensive and multi-faceted

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<sup>70</sup> Women are 50% of Ukraine’s success platform. <https://50vidsotkiv.org.ua/about/>

<sup>71</sup> Povaha platform. <https://povaha.org.ua/>

<sup>72</sup> Women’s Faces of Leadership project. <https://faces.50vidsotkiv.org.ua/>

<sup>73</sup> She Does It project. <https://shedoesit.50vidsotkiv.org.ua/>



approaches. Key initiatives of the Government, NGOs and international partners demonstrate the potential of targeted programs to amplify women’s voices and challenge gender stereotypes. However, despite significant progress, the continued underrepresentation of women in media and decision-making roles underscores the need for sustained efforts and supportive policies. The experiences show that combining legislative actions, strategic communication, and the active involvement of NGOs and international partners can effectively promote gender equality in media representation and participation. Moreover, the success of these initiatives relies heavily on broad-based support and the recognition of women’s contributions across various fields, emphasizing the necessity of ongoing education and awareness campaigns to shift social attitudes and ensure lasting change.

**24. Please describe your country’s current national women’s machinery (government entity exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women) and describe the measures that your country taken over the past five years to establish and/or strengthen it.**

The national institutional mechanism for gender equality in Ukraine comprises a dedicated governmental structure focused on ensuring gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as numerous institutions across the government board. Maintaining such a structure is essential for real gender mainstreaming across the government, as it provides a cohesive approach to addressing gender disparities in society.

Full composition of national institutional mechanism – including key bodies, institutions, and organizations empowered to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men – includes:

- Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine: The Subcommittee on Ukraine’s Compliance with International Obligations in the Field of Human Rights Protection and Gender Policy of the VRU Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation, chaired by Maryna Bardina.
- Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights: An independent body overseeing human rights and gender equality.
- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: Olha Stefanishyna, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, oversees the development and implementation of gender policy. She heads the Commission on Coordination of the Interaction of Executive Authorities to Ensure Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, which includes Deputy Ministers and other deputy heads responsible for gender equality.
- Government Commissioner for Gender Policy: Kateryna Levchenko, in office since 2017, ensures the implementation of unified national policies aimed at achieving gender equality.
- Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine: The central body responsible for developing national policy on gender equality, headed by Minister Oksana Zholnovych.
- National Social Service: The central body implementing national policy in the field of gender equality, headed by Vasyl Lutsyk.
- Executive and local government bodies: 56 coordinators, typically deputy heads of state authorities, are responsible for coordinating gender policies within their departments.

Additional components include:

- Over 30 structural divisions focused on gender equality within state authorities.
- More than 200 advisers on gender issues, including about 150 in the Ministry of Defense.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Horokhovska A., “The Armed Forces of Ukraine revealed its team of advisers on gender issues,” *UNN*, May 4, 2023. <https://www.unn.com.ua/uk/news/2026003-zsu-pokazalo-svoyu-komandu-radnikiv-z-gendernikh-pitan>



- Around 10 advisory councils and working groups under state authorities.
- 25 authorized officials (deputy heads of regional/Kyiv city state administrations) in each oblast of Ukraine.
- 25 structural subdivisions of regional/Kyiv city state administrations responsible for gender policy, typically within the Department of Social Protection of the Population.
- About 10 advisers on gender issues under the heads of regional state administrations.
- 25 regional consultative councils on issues of family, gender policy, prevention of gender-based violence, and human trafficking.

The Government Commissioner for Gender Policy continues to play a critical role in championing gender equality across the government, although her decisions are not binding on other government institutions. Her mandate involves a multifaceted array of tasks aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men across various sectors.

Firstly, the Commissioner is tasked with coordinating governmental efforts to advance gender equality, working closely with ministries, central and local executive bodies, and local self-government entities. She actively participate in formulating and implementing policies that support gender equality, contributing to the development of a unified state policy in this regard.

Furthermore, the Commissioner monitors the integration of gender equality principles into legislative processes, ensuring that the consideration of gender perspectives is inherent in the development and adoption of normative legal acts by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. This involves not only proposing amendments to existing laws but also actively engaging in the drafting of new legislation on issues within their purview.

In the international arena, the Commissioner represents Ukraine in various high-level *fora* and meetings related to gender equality. This includes engagements with international bodies such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women and participation in sessions of the UN Security Council. Additionally, the Commissioner fosters collaboration and interaction with civil society organisations, leveraging their expertise and advocacy efforts to further gender equality initiatives. This partnership extends to the development of state programs specifically aimed at promoting gender equality and the monitoring of their implementation.

Moreover, the Commissioner plays a vital role in preparing state reports on Ukraine's adherence to international conventions and agreements related to gender equality, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

She has a Secretariat that employs up to 6 staff members, and the international development partners support their activity with expert support, including external and embedded experts who work on thematic areas, such as gender in recovery, prevention and combating GBV and CRSV, promoting WPS and other topics.

Lastly, the Commissioner ensures transparency and public awareness regarding government decisions and actions related to gender equality by providing information through various media channels. This includes disseminating updates on policy developments, decisions made by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and progress in achieving gender equality goals across governmental bodies.

Also, an inter-factional association on equal opportunities (Equal Opportunities Caucus, EOC) has been established in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, with several deputies actively promoting equal opportunities and combating discrimination and sexism. With 95 MPs (53 women and 42 men), the EOC actively engages in social initiatives to raise awareness about gender discrimination issues. The Caucus operates on self-government principles, is open to new members, and collaborates with the leadership of

the Parliament, parliamentary factions and committees, the Office of the President, the Cabinet of Ministers, other state authorities, NGOs, and associations.

Positive examples of gender policy champions during 2020-2024 include, among others:

- Ministry of Economy: Developed and promoted the Strategy for reducing the gender pay gap and ensured gender equality among small grant recipients, offering dedicated grants to women entrepreneurs.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Promoted women in diplomatic careers, including ambassadorial appointments.
- National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service: Integrated gender approaches into civil servant training programs.
- Ministry of Health: Promoted gender-sensitive healthcare policies and build capacity of health practitioners to respond and counter GBV.
- Ministry of Education: Adopted the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education and promoted gender equality in educational programs and policies.

Over 2020-2024, the national institutional mechanism for gender equality has expanded, with more structural divisions on gender equality established in state and local authorities. Representatives of most institutions within this mechanism receive extensive training provided by the National Agency for Civil Service and international partners/NGOs, enhancing their capacity to implement gender-sensitive policies effectively.

Despite the full-scale war, Ukraine has preserved its national institutional mechanism for gender equality. The various bodies, institutions, and organizations dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women continued to function and adapt to the challenging circumstances.

The expansion and strengthening of the national institutional mechanism for gender equality have highlighted the importance of a dedicated and cohesive structure for achieving real gender mainstreaming across the government. Key lessons include the necessity of comprehensive training programs for officials, the critical role of committed leadership in promoting gender equality, and the need for robust mechanisms to ensure the enforcement of gender policies. Despite significant progress, ongoing challenges emphasize the importance of continuous efforts and the integration of gender perspectives in all areas of governance to ensure sustainable and impactful change.

**25. In the past five years, what other mechanisms and tools has your country used to mainstream gender equality across sectors? (e.g. gender focal points in the Executive, Legislature or Judiciary; inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; gender audits, consultations with women's organizations)**

Information about the institutions responsible for the comprehensive integration of gender equality across all sectors is provided in the response to question 24, as these mechanisms are part of Ukraine's institutional gender framework. In addition to these institutions, Ukraine has implemented various mechanisms and tools to mainstream gender equality across all sectors, enhancing the institutional framework during the reporting period.

1) Regulatory integration of gender approaches: The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine issued an order on 7 February 2020 to approve of the Guidelines on the Integration of Gender Approaches in the Development of Regulations (No. 86). This directive mandates that all central executive authorities incorporate gender approaches when developing national action plans (NAPs).

2) Sectoral gender impact assessment: Another significant directive by the Ministry of Social Policy, “On Approval of Guidelines for Assessing the Gender Impact of Sectoral Reforms” (Order No. 257, 14 April 2020), provides guidelines for evaluating the gender implications of reforms across different sectors.

3) Gender budgeting: The Ministry of Finance issued guidelines on 2 January 2019, “On Approval of Guidelines for the Implementation and Application of a Gender-Oriented Approach in the Budget Process” (Order No. 1). This order ensures that gender perspectives are included in the budgeting process, promoting financial equity. Also, see more information about gender budgeting in the response to question 34.

4) Labour relations and gender equality: To address gender equality in labour relations, the Ministry of Social Policy issued guidelines on 29 January 2020, “On the Inclusion of Provisions in Collective Agreements and Agreements to Ensure Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men in Labour Relations” (Order No. 56).

5) Institutionalization of Gender Equality Units: The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted a model regulation on 9 October 2020 “On the Responsible Unit for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men and the Advisor for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, Preventing and Countering Gender-Based Violence” (CMU Resolution No. 930). This regulation outlines the responsibilities and institutional framework for gender equality units within government bodies.

6) Gender audits: Detailed guidelines for conducting gender audits by enterprises, institutions, and organizations were provided in an order by the Ministry of Social Policy (Order No. 448, 9 August 2021). In 2022, with support from the EU and UN Women, a series of gender audits were conducted across all central executive bodies.<sup>75</sup> The audits included a survey of civil servants on gender equality in the public sector. A total of 21,148 officials from 79 central executive bodies participated in the study, with 71.3% women and 28.7% men. The audits revealed significant insights, including that while 82.5% of respondents believed men and women have equal opportunities to balance work and family responsibilities, significantly more men (52.9%) than women (38.2%) agreed with this statement. The study also highlighted that women are more likely to experience comments about their appearance, personal and family life, humiliation, disparaging comments due to their gender, and sexual harassment. Despite these challenges, the willingness to seek help remains low among both men and women, with only 0.7% of the 12% of respondents who reported facing discrimination and harassment seeking assistance.<sup>76</sup>

7) Training and capacity building: Regular training on gender issues and development of certified online courses for civil servants has been another crucial tool for mainstreaming gender equality. The National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service (NAUCS) has been actively involved in conducting these trainings. In 2020, 643 civil servants (530 women, 113 men) received gender equality training funded by the state budget.<sup>77</sup> The number of trained officials increased in subsequent years, indicating the institutionalization of gender training in public administration. For instance, in 2021-2022, the number of officials who received training increased even more, showcasing a growing commitment to integrating gender perspectives in governance. Support from the EU, UN Women, and other partners in 2020-2024 has been instrumental in updating educational programs and incorporating gender approaches. These training

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<sup>75</sup> National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service. Findings of a survey of public officials on ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men. 2023. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h4ypRPlmX\\_fsM5N8AgJtJzGhzu4qzZJG/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h4ypRPlmX_fsM5N8AgJtJzGhzu4qzZJG/view).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine and UN Women, *Indicators for Monitoring Gender Equality in Ukraine: Monitoring Report 2021*, UN Women, Kyiv, 2022. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat\\_e/2021/2021\\_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor\\_ENG.pdf](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_e/2021/2021_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor_ENG.pdf).

programs are designed to provide civil servants with a progressive understanding of gender equality and practical skills to implement gender-sensitive policies and actions effectively.

The experience of the past five years underscores the importance of a robust institutional framework and comprehensive tools for gender mainstreaming. Regular training and the integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of governance are essential. The audits and surveys highlight persistent challenges, such as workplace discrimination and harassment, indicating the need for ongoing efforts. Collaboration with international partners has proven effective, suggesting that continued support and partnership are crucial for sustaining and advancing gender equality initiatives. These efforts collectively demonstrate that a multi-faceted approach is vital for achieving meaningful progress in gender equality.

## **26. If there is a national human rights institution in your country, what measures has it taken to address violations of women’s rights and promote gender equality?**

The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (hereinafter – the Commissioner)<sup>78</sup> is integral to the institutional mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men. As a national human rights institution, the Commissioner, within the framework of parliamentary control over the observance of constitutional rights and freedoms, supervises the observance of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The Commissioner addresses appeals on cases of gender-based discrimination and violence and highlights these issues in annual reports.

This list of powers is supplemented by the rights and responsibilities of the Commissioner, as outlined in Article 10 of the Law of Ukraine “On Principles of Prevention and Counteraction of Discrimination in Ukraine.” These include applying to the court to address discrimination and protect public interests, participating in court proceedings, monitoring compliance with non-discrimination principles, summarizing cases of discrimination, proposing legislative improvements, and providing court-requested conclusions in discrimination cases.

Every year, the Commissioner presents an annual report to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the state of observance and protection of human and citizen rights and freedoms in Ukraine.<sup>79</sup> This report contains a separate section on ensuring equal rights and freedoms, which includes references to cases of rights violations and the necessary measures taken by the Commissioner. These findings are based on monitoring visits, on-site inspections, and subsequent recommendations aimed at improving the situation for various groups of women and men.

Between 2020 and 2024, the Commissioner received 112 reports of violations of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Additionally, women reported violations related to social and economic rights, pension provision, healthcare, housing and communal services, rights of appeal and access to public information, personal data protection, procedural rights, legal assistance, and property rights. Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the Commissioner has also received appeals from women regarding the rights of their family members, particularly in the Armed Forces and other military formations, social protection of combatants, rights of refugee children, and assistance for families with children.

The Commissioner cooperates with international organizations and relevant bodies of foreign countries on issues of compliance with international standards of non-discrimination. For instance, in 2022, at the

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<sup>78</sup> It is a national human rights institution with “A” status. It was founded in 1998, and in 2009 it received GANHRI accreditation for the first time.

<sup>79</sup> See the Commissioner’s reports: <https://ombudsman.gov.ua/uk/shchorichni-ta-specialni-dopovidi>.

request of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Commissioner prepared information on Ukraine's implementation of CEDAW and presented it at the 83rd session. This information covered the implementation of certain CEDAW articles, the Committee's Concluding Observations to Ukraine's 8th Periodic Report, and included recommendations to Ukrainian state authorities, which were reflected in the Committee's Concluding Observations to the 9th Periodic Report of Ukraine.

Monitoring is an integral part of the Commissioner's activities. To ensure a unified approach to monitoring visits and compliance by local executive authorities and local self-government bodies with human and citizen rights, the Commissioner developed and approved the Guidelines with UN Women's expert support.<sup>80</sup> In 2023-2024, 26 monitoring visits and inspections were conducted, revealing systemic barriers such as outdated gender profiles, insufficient practical skills of specialists in assessing the needs of different groups of women and men, and insufficient communication with local NGOs and women's groups.

Based on the monitoring results, information booklets were developed to address the needs of women and men with disabilities during humanitarian responses. These booklets target local executive bodies, local self-government bodies, and NGOs of people with disabilities, offering recommendations to prevent exclusion and discrimination.

On 1 September 2023, the Commissioner's order No. 97.15/23 approved the Strategy of the National Human Rights Institution for the period until 2027. Based on the analysis of the current situation and considering the challenges facing Ukraine with the onset of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation, the national institution has outlined several strategic goals for the period until 2027. These goals are comprehensive and impact the fulfilment of the entire thematic mandate of the Commissioner. Within the framework of Strategic Goal 3, "The Secretariat of the Commissioner is an accessible and inclusive institution for everyone," the following tasks are emphasized:

- Integration of inclusive and non-discriminatory principles and approaches in working with applicants,
- Implementation and promotion of the principles of gender equality in the work of the Commissioner.

To fulfil the tasks of Strategic Goal 3, as well as to systematically ensure the implementation and promotion of inclusive and non-discriminatory principles and gender equality, ensuring balanced representation of genders in the civil service and other positions in the Commissioner's Secretariat, an authorized person (coordinator) has been appointed to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men and to prevent and counter gender-based violence.<sup>81</sup>

To support the work of the Commissioner in systematically analysing the state of observance of equal rights and freedoms for individuals and implementing relevant powers, an Expert Council on the Observance of Equal Rights, Prevention of Discrimination, Domestic Violence, and Human Trafficking was established. This council includes representatives from civil society, international organizations, and specialists in relevant fields.

Additionally, the Commissioner and his representatives, along with employees of the Commissioner's Secretariat, are members of various working groups and formations aimed at promoting the development

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<sup>80</sup> Order of the Commissioner of 13 April 2023 No. 40.15/23. <http://surl.li/typki>.

<sup>81</sup> Order of the Commissioner of 17 April 2024 No. 54.15/24 "On the appointment of an authorized person (coordinator) in matters of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, prevention and counteraction of gender-based violence in the Secretariat of the Commissioner". <https://ombudsman.gov.ua/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/54.1524.pdf>.

of an equal and inclusive environment in Ukraine. These include the Barrier-free Councils, the Commission on Coordination of Interaction of Executive Authorities on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, and the Council on Human Rights, Gender Equality, and Diversity at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. They also participate in the working group “The Platform on Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion during Recovery,” working groups on achieving Goal 5 (Gender Equality) and Goal 10 (Reducing Inequalities) of the Sustainable Development Goals under the interdepartmental working group on ensuring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the working group on preparing amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men.” Furthermore, they are involved in the interagency working group on combating sexual violence related to Russia’s armed aggression against Ukraine and providing assistance to victims, as well as the Supervisory Board of the pilot project to provide emergency reparations to victims of sexual violence related to the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

The Commissioner also collaborates with the civic sector, offering internships to participants of the leadership school for political participation of women and girls with disabilities. This school aims to teach women and girls to defend their rights and motivate them to engage in the political and public life of Ukraine. Graduates of the school have the opportunity to undergo internships in state authorities or companies.

The role of the Commissioner highlights the importance of comprehensive monitoring and active international cooperation in promoting gender equality. Effective communication and collaboration with local organizations and public bodies are essential to address systemic barriers and ensure the practical implementation of gender equality principles. Developing comprehensive strategies and including diverse perspectives are key to advancing gender equality and protecting women’s rights in various sectors. These measures are crucial in creating an inclusive environment that supports and empowers all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable groups.

## **Peaceful and inclusive societies**

### **27. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?**

Since Russia’s full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, Ukraine’s priority has been to stop and repel the aggressor. The impact of the full-scale war has been devastating for the country, including the rights and situation of women and girls. Therefore, the WPS (Women, Peace, and Security) agenda in Ukraine is now focused on empowering women in the security and defense sector and addressing the security-related needs of women and girls rather than on building and sustaining peace.

Seeking peace in these conditions – until the aggressor is deprived of the opportunity to attack – would merely mean stopping the deterrence and surrender, which would jeopardize the nation’s very existence. Also, as evidenced by the tremendous amount of evidence from the de-occupied territories, this will create direct threats to the life, health, and rights of Ukrainian women and girls on the part of the Russian occupying forces.

At the same time, Ukraine firmly believes that women’s empowerment in the security and defense sector is directly associated with repelling the aggressor, thus ending the war and building and sustaining peace.

In 2016, Ukraine adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325, developed by the Ministry of Social Policy in cooperation with state authorities, international and non-governmental organizations. This plan was valid until 2020. Since then, Ukraine has taken measures to improve women's participation in peace processes and the security and defense sector, including decision-making, as well as protecting women's rights related to conflicts and post-conflict situations.

During the period 2016-2020, significant results were achieved. First, various stakeholders, including authorities, law enforcement agencies, armed forces, NGOs, mass media, academia, civil society representatives, and the general population, promoted the importance of recognizing and meeting the different needs of women, men, girls, and boys in security and defense processes to strengthen the rule of law, democratic governance, and gender equality.

Secondly, the representation of women in the security and defense sector increased. In 2018, dozens of positions in the law enforcement sector were opened to women, which previously were not accessible to them. Since early 2018, the Ministry of Internal Affairs integrated a gender approach into collecting personnel statistics. There are now data on 17 indicators related to personnel, with a corresponding breakdown by gender.

The share of women among law enforcement officers increased. By the end of 2020, women made up 46% of the Ministry of Internal Affairs employees. By May 2023, the proportion of female police officers had risen to 29%, up from 25% in 2020.<sup>82</sup> At the end of 2020, women constituted 34.7% of National Guard employees, though only 8.4% of National Guard servicemen. Women also accounted for 38.4% of State Emergency Service employees, including 11% of rescuers, and 51% of State Border Guard Service (BPSU) employees, including 23% of its military personnel. Additionally, 79.2% of State Migration Service (SMS) employees were women, where participation of women is traditionally high, and 32.7% of Security Service of Ukraine employees.<sup>83</sup>

Positive dynamics were also observed in decision-making roles. From 2017 to 2020, the number of women in leadership positions increased by 4% in the National Police, reaching 17.7%, by 2% in the State Migration Service, reaching 61.0%, and by 1.5% in the National Guard, reaching 6.6%. The representation of women at decision-making levels also increased by 3% in the State Border Service and the State Migration Service, reaching 12.9% and 20.5%, respectively.

Other achievements at the national level include the development and implementation of sectoral action plans for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Guard, as well as integrating gender issues into higher education institutions' training programs. Women and men now have equal access to service conditions and positions in the state, military service, civil protection service, and police in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, National State University, and Centre of Internal Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, career growth for women remains problematic, evidenced by the absence of women with senior officer military or special ranks in these structures.

In 2020, Ukraine adopted its second National Action Plan for implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for the next strategic period (2021-2025). In December 2022, it was thoroughly analysed and upgraded to meet the challenges posed by the full-scale war. This review was organized through multi-

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<sup>82</sup>According to the presentation of the head of the Department of Human Rights of the National Police of Ukraine during the Strategic Consultation on the Development of the Roadmap for the Promotion of Gender Equality on 25 February 2023.

<sup>83</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine and UN Women, *Indicators for Monitoring Gender Equality in Ukraine: Monitoring Report 2021*, UN Women, Kyiv, 2022. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat\\_e/2021/2021\\_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor\\_ENG.pdf](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_e/2021/2021_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor_ENG.pdf).



stakeholder consultations, which included analysing the war's impact on the WPS sector and identifying critical gaps and solutions needed to address the effects of the full-scale war. The updated NAP expanded the list of measures to provide effective and timely assistance to victims of conflict-related sexual violence.

The National Action Plan also calls for communication campaigns to overcome gender stereotypes, promote public perceptions and attitudes that enable women to participate fully in peace and security issues, prevent domestic violence and human trafficking, and raise awareness for victims of gender violence.

As of January 2024, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine reported a significant increase in the number of female military personnel in the Armed Forces, with 40% more than in 2021, or 12,000 women over the past two years. The total number of female military personnel was 47,200, compared to 16,500 in 2014. The total number of women (military and non-military) in the Armed Forces has increased to 66,900. About 4,000 female military personnel perform tasks in the combat zone, and 13,487 female military personnel have been granted combatant status. As of November 2023, there were approximately 6,500 servicewomen in managerial positions, including 2,890 officers and 2,270 sergeants (NCO).<sup>84</sup>

The Government attributes this growth to several key initiatives aimed at strengthening gender equality and integrating NATO standards. These measures include removing job restrictions for women, allowing them to serve in various positions such as drivers, grenade launchers, and deputy commanders. Additionally, the age limit for entering into a contract has been increased to 60, and women now have equal opportunities for military education at all levels and specialties.

In March 2024, the law on strengthening social guarantees for military personnel was adopted (law No. 3621-IX, draft law No. 10313). It introduced three amendments related to gender issues in the military:

- The right to a one-time leave for servicemen when they become fathers (a right civilian men have had since 2020).
- The right of military personnel to be released from service during their child's illness.
- Prohibition of gender discrimination, combating sexism, and harassment in the armed forces.

The latest amendment is critical as it paves the way for the military's anti-discrimination and harassment mechanism. A draft mechanism that was developed in 2021, and it is extremely critical now that it is finally approved and enforced.

Lessons learnt from the recent experiences in Ukraine emphasize the critical importance of empowering women in the security and defense sector as a way to repel the aggressor and thus to achieve and sustain peace. The inclusion of women in these sectors has shown significant positive dynamics, such as increased representation in various roles and decision-making positions. These efforts not only strengthen the country's defense capabilities but also promote gender equality and the protection of women's rights in conflict situations. The development and implementation of two cycles of the National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 have been pivotal in this progress. Moreover, legislative amendments and the removal of job restrictions for women have further enabled their active participation in the military.

## **28. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in**

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<sup>84</sup> Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. Natalia Kalmykova: The number of women in the army at the beginning of January 2024 was almost 70 thousand. 1 May 2024. <https://www.mil.gov.ua/news/2024/05/01/kilkist-zhinok-v-armii/>



## **situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

In the context of full-scale war, over 2020-2024 Ukraine has implemented numerous measures to empower women in conflict prevention, resolution, humanitarian action and crisis response. The measures included legal changes to remove restrictions, institutional support, provision of infrastructure needs of women in security and defence sectors, mainstreaming gender in military education. Also, women's organisations expanded their leadership, potential and support provided to groups of women and girls affected by the war.

1) Removal of restrictions and institutional support. The Ministry of Internal Affairs removed restrictions on the participation of women in peacekeeping operations with the Order of 31 July 2019, No. 369 "On the Participation of National Personnel in International Operations to Maintain Peace and Security," registered on 8 October 2019, No. 1088/34059. This order mandates the selection of candidates for peacekeeping operations to be conducted with full compliance with the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. However, due to the armed aggression by the Russian Federation, the President of Ukraine issued Decree No. 114/2022 on 7 March 2022, recalling national personnel, including those in international peacekeeping operations, to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

In addition, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has created effective mechanisms for studying problems and obstacles in the promotion of women and men, as well as timely elimination of existing gaps that may be the cause of imperfect provision of gender equality. These mechanisms include an annual analysis of the career growth of employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which allows tracking the movement of personnel resources and identifying possible cases of discrimination or real and existing obstacles to the advancement of women in the service. The Ministry has also introduced annual monitoring of the level of satisfaction with the conditions of service through an anonymous survey of employees. This survey helps identify gender gaps among men and women in various areas, from material and technical support to the possibility of combining family and professional responsibilities. Additionally, there is a constant analysis of national legislation in the field of ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and the development of relevant legislative and regulatory acts to bring legislation in line with European Union standards on women in security sector.

2) Covering infrastructure-related needs of women in the military. In 2020-2024, significant strides have been made to accommodate the needs of female military personnel. During 2023, an analysis of the available material and technical conditions for military service was conducted, and funds were allocated for the equipment of infrastructural facilities. These included barracks, toilets, showers, dormitory rooms, baths, educational buildings, medical centres, and canteens. These facilities were provided in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of female military personnel.

The Command of the Logistics Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine formed and submitted a request to the State Enterprise of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine "Defense Procurement Agency" for the purchase in 2024 of 65,000 sets of summer field suits (type 2) for women and 100,000 sets of women's underwear. Tenders for these goods were announced in February 2024.

At the end of December 2023, the issuance of new samples of women's clothing, developed considering anthropometric data, began with the distribution of 50,000 sets. In May 2024, the Ministry of Defense concluded contracts for the provision of women's summer field suits for servicewomen for nearly 130 million hryvnias. According to the agency's forecasts, this will cover existing needs until the end of the

year. The kits that servicewomen receive include a jacket, pants, and two armbands with special symbols.<sup>85</sup>

Additionally, throughout 2023, work continued on the introduction of women's body armour. Tests of two models of modular body armour with a structurally curved plate were conducted, considering the peculiarities of the body structure of female military personnel. Personal protective equipment was tested during training and combat tasks, allowing the conditions of use of the new armour to be as close as possible to combat situations. The weight of a women's bulletproof vest ranges from 10.5 kg or more, depending on the configuration. By the end of 2023, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine had certified the first body armour designed specifically for female military personnel.

3) Gender equality in military education and training. Issues of gender equality and WPS agenda are addressed in higher military educational institutions, military educational units, institutions of higher education, and institutions of professional pre-higher military education during lectures and seminar classes included in the training programs for military specialists. Additionally, a leadership component is actively integrated into the educational and professional programs and curricula of higher military educational institutions, military educational units in institutions of higher education, and institutions of professional advanced military education. This ensures the formation of cadets with both scientific and professional knowledge in the field of effective military leadership.

Since 2016, the Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces have adapted about 300 military facilities to the needs of women.<sup>86</sup> In 2020, girls/women accounted for 13% of students in military higher education institutions, a figure that continues to grow annually. Military educational institutions have also begun to integrate a gender component into their curricula.

The role of women's organizations. Women's organizations in Ukraine have been crucial in defending women's rights and promoting gender transformations. However, since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, these organizations have faced significant challenges, including burnout and a lack of financial resources. Despite these challenges, Ukrainian NGOs and volunteers have continued to provide humanitarian support, often with financial backing from international agencies, NGOs, and bilateral donors.

Women's organizations are involved in coordination efforts for humanitarian response and the WPS agenda, but their participation in peace and security processes remains limited. They are often excluded from policy development and decision-making at the national level. Coordination between the government and women's organizations on WPS and humanitarian aid is gradually improving at the national level but remains problematic at regional and local levels.<sup>87</sup>

In summary, women's organizations have become stronger and more influential during 2022-2024. However, this comes at the expense of being extremely overworked and exhausted. They need resources and partnerships to fully return to their strategic activities of advocacy, protection and promotion of women's rights.

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<sup>85</sup> Ukrainian Pravda. "The need will be covered by the end of the year: the Ministry of Defence purchased women's summer uniforms for UAH 130 million hryvnia." 25 May 2024. <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/minoboroni-zakupili-zhinochu-viyskovu-formu-na-130-mln-bilshist-komplektiv-dostavili-u-chastini-301736/>

<sup>86</sup> "A woman in the army is not something strange, but a skilled professional", *Army Inform*, 21 January 2021. <https://armyinform.com.ua/2021/01/zhinka-v-armiyi-ne-fenomen-a-fahova-profesionalka>.

<sup>87</sup> Ukrainian Women's Fund, *Read between the Lines: Ukraine women's rights organisations' response to the full-scale war, approaches and threats*, 2023.

Regional coalitions for implementing UNSCR 1325. Regional coalitions, initiated by the Ukrainian Women's Fund, have been influential in decision-making processes that consider the interests of women affected by the war. These coalitions include representatives from local state authorities, self-government bodies, NGOs, educational institutions, enterprises, and target groups related to UNSCR 1325. As of May 2024, 21 such coalitions operate across Ukraine, three more will be established later in 2024.

One key lesson learned from Ukraine's experience over the past five years is the crucial importance of integrating gender perspectives across all sectors, particularly in conflict prevention, resolution, and humanitarian action. Empowering women in the security and defense sectors has proven essential for both immediate conflict response and long-term development of security and defence sectors. Institutional support, such as removing legal barriers and enhancing infrastructure for female military personnel, has significantly improved gender equality in these areas. However, the war has underscored the need for more robust mechanisms to involve women's organizations in policy development and decision-making processes. Despite their critical role in providing humanitarian aid and advocating for women's rights, these organizations face challenges due to limited resources and exclusion from strategic discussions. This highlights the necessity for stronger partnerships and more flexible support systems to empower women's organizations fully. Overall, the experiences emphasize that comprehensive gender mainstreaming is vital for effective conflict response and sustainable development of Ukraine's security and defense sectors.

**29. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to enhance judicial and nonjudicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

This question has become extremely relevant to Ukraine since Russia's aggression in 2014, and especially since the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022. Addressing violations of international humanitarian law in relation to women and girls includes the violation of the rules and customs of warfare (Article 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). This list encompasses all victims of war crimes, not only those affected by conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

As of end of July 2023, investigators of the National Police of Ukraine have initiated more than 96,000 criminal proceedings based on crimes committed by servicemen of the armed forces of the Russian Federation and their aides since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. Over 80% of these proceedings fall under Article 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (Violation of laws and customs of war). 673 persons were charged with suspicion, including representatives of the military and political leadership of the Russian Federation.<sup>88</sup>

In the Prosecutor General's Office, a Department of Investigation of War Crimes has been established. Prosecutors in this department regularly receive training on handling violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations of women and girls during armed conflicts, including CRSV and other crimes.

The right to free secondary legal aid for victims has been reinforced. Amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On Free Legal Aid," which came into force in August 2023, expanded the list of individuals eligible for free secondary legal aid to include victims of human trafficking. Affected individuals are entitled to free

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<sup>88</sup> Supreme Court of Ukraine. War Crimes (Article 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). July 2023. [https://supreme.court.gov.ua/userfiles/media/new\\_folder\\_for\\_uploads/supreme/2023\\_prezent/Prezent\\_voen\\_zloch.pdf](https://supreme.court.gov.ua/userfiles/media/new_folder_for_uploads/supreme/2023_prezent/Prezent_voen_zloch.pdf)

secondary legal aid, which includes representation in courts, other state bodies, local self-government bodies, and before other entities, as well as the preparation of procedural documents.

In 2022, the Implementation Plan of the Framework Program of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations on the Prevention and Countering of CRSV, was approved. It facilitates coordination between public authorities, international, and non-governmental organizations to build an effective system for combating sexual violence and providing reparations to victims

Under the Implementation Plan, training and advanced training for law enforcement officers, investigators, prosecutors, security service specialists, lawyers, and judges regarding cases related to CRSV have been a priority. For instance, 160 investigators, police officers of preventive activities, juvenile prevention, and patrol police from central command units and 24 Kyiv main departments of the National Police of Ukraine were trained on international law, protocols, and national legislation amendments regarding proper response to CRSV cases. These officers participated in five two-day trainings on “Identification, response, and documentation of cases of conflict-related sexual violence,” which included enhancing interaction and coordination between different departments of the National Police of Ukraine involved in CRSV response.

Additionally, UN Women conducted two two-day dialogues on gender-based violence and CRSV in Dnipro and Poltava, involving 46 representatives from the police, courts, and prosecutor’s offices of Poltava and Dnipropetrovsk regions. These dialogues focused on strengthening cooperation, raising awareness, and building the capacity of participants. Regular training events like these are crucial for enhancing cooperation and coordination on the ground between law enforcement agencies and the justice sector.

### **30. In the last five years, what actions has your country taken to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls?**

Over the past five years, Ukraine has taken numerous measures to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child, including adolescent girls. These actions span various sectors, including policy development, education, sports, and support for victims of violence.

1) The Ministry of Social Policy, in implementing the Human Development Strategy for 2021-2023 approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 9 December 2021 (Order No. 1617), developed a draft Procedure for responding to cases of discrimination based on gender and other characteristics. This document outlines general approaches for considering applications and complaints regarding gender-based discrimination, including gender-based violence and sexual harassment. It establishes procedures for submission and consideration of appeals, informing about appeals and their outcomes, and ways to prevent gender-based discrimination and violence. Additionally, the Ministry developed a draft form for recording appeals regarding discrimination based on gender, with distribution by age group, which includes complaints about gender-based violence, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, stalking, sexism, and their outcomes. The National Social Service will annually collect this information using an intersectional approach, facilitating the formation of non-discriminatory policies both at the state level and within individual enterprises, institutions, or organizations.

2) The STEM Girls initiative, founded by the CSR Development Centre in 2016, aims to overcome gender stereotypes in career choices and increase girls’ confidence in pursuing STEM careers in Ukraine. The initiative unites girls and women passionate about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) from all over Ukraine. The primary goal is to increase the number of girls in STEM fields by eradicating gender stereotypes, attracting talented girls to STEM disciplines, and raising awareness of STEM as a leading approach to education in Ukraine. The initiative also strives to integrate a gender-

sensitive approach to education and science, including through the Competition for the Best Gender-Sensitive STEM Lesson and the L’Oreal-UNESCO Award For Women in Science.

The initiative has 118 branches, including schools, libraries, and cultural centres across Ukraine. Since its inception, 17 projects have been implemented, including days dedicated to women and girls in science, conferences, competitions, hackathons, and mentoring programs, involving over 10,000 girls.<sup>89</sup>

The key impact is increased self-confidence in girls to pursue STEM fields of study and careers. For example, in a STEM training centre in Ivano-Frankivsk, 16% of the participants in STEM classes were girls in 2020 before they started cooperation with STEM girls. Since then, the centre started to use gender-sensitive communication, paid attention in announcements to invite both boys and girls, and posted pictures featuring both girls and boys in the announcements. Currently, the share of girls joining the class has increased to 22%.<sup>90</sup>

3) The Ministry of Youth and Sports continues to promote healthy lifestyles among women, men, girls and boys through targeted communication campaigns and the school network. The percentage of women and girls engaged in physical activities has increased from 38.6% in 2021 to 50% in 2022, despite an overall decrease in the population’s engagement due to the war. This shift is attributed to more men being involved in the defense of the country.

4) The State Targeted Social Program “Youth of Ukraine” for 2021-2025, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 2 June 2021 (Resolution No. 579), incorporates the principle of gender equality. The program includes expert-analytical, organizational, implementation, and evaluation measures based on data structured by gender, age, place of residence, and other characteristics. It ensures that both girls and boys are invited to participate in international and national youth events. During youth project contests, the Ministry of Youth and Sports prioritizes projects involving youth from various groups, including those with special educational needs, in difficult life circumstances, from national minorities, low-income families, with disabilities, incurable diseases, or living in high mountains or remote rural areas.

5) To protect girls from discrimination and violence, the Government, in collaboration with UNICEF, is developing a network of Barnahus centres. The Barnahus model involves interdisciplinary work by specialists from various fields to protect the rights of children who have witnessed or suffered from violence, creating a safe environment, and providing necessary psychological, medical, legal, and social support.

As of May 2024, there are 12 Centres for protection and socio-psychological support for children who have suffered violence or witnessed violence (the Barnahus model).<sup>91</sup> The first Barnahus centre opened in June 2021 in Vinnytsia. These centres were created within the framework of a pilot project implemented with the assistance of the Interagency Coordination Council for Juvenile Justice, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF in Ukraine, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and other bodies and organizations. Due to the full-scale war, Barnahus centres have also begun addressing cases of CRSV involving minors.

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<sup>89</sup> Girls Stem initiative. <https://divchata-stem.org/proiekti/>

<sup>90</sup> Rubryka. Girls STEM: Ukrainian initiative overcomes gender stereotypes in science and technology studies specialties. 4 August 2023. <https://rubryka.com/en/article/divchata-stem/>

<sup>91</sup> VIKKA Information Agency. A center to help children affected by violence is opened in Cherkasy. 7 May 2024. <https://www.vikka.ua/novini/u-cherkasah-vidkryly-czentr-dopomogy-dityam-postrazhdalym-vid-nasyllya-video/>

In addition to these initiatives, it is important to mention the previous efforts detailed in earlier responses, such as the development of educational programs to combat gender stereotypes, protection of health of the girls, including the reproductive health, and the inclusion of gender equality principles in various sectors, which further support the rights of girls and adolescent girls in Ukraine.

## Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation

### **31. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and land degradation?**

Gender aspects in environmental policy remain a topic on which little data and statistics are available, particularly regarding the gendered consequences of full-scale war on environment. Although it is generally recognized that these influences are gender-specific, there is a lack of concrete data, especially statistical data, which in turn affects the development of relevant programs.<sup>92</sup>

The problem of integrating gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, is mentioned in the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men up to 2030. In particular, Operational Goal 4.3 of the Strategy provides for creating conditions for equal participation of women and men in decision-making in the field of environmental policy and equal access to natural resources. The tasks for implementing this goal include ensuring the possibility of equal participation of women and men in decision-making regarding environmental protection and climate change response and ensuring equal access to natural resources. The expected results include an increase in the number of women participating in environmental protection decision-making and ensuring that women and men have equal protection from climate change effects, considering the needs of different groups.

Gender issues related to the green transition in Ukraine, which were relevant from 2020 to 2024, include the insufficient representation of women in decision-making processes, the lack of gender sensitivity in green transition policies, particularly those focused on post-war reconstruction, limited access for women to education, professions, and entrepreneurship related to the green transition, and possible restrictions on women's access to natural resources and electricity, especially during blackouts caused by the full-scale war.

The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine poses serious environmental threats, including contamination of atmospheric air and soil with chemical products from ammunition explosions, territory contamination with waste and scrap metal, termination of treatment facilities, destruction of landscapes and vegetation due to military activities, and destruction of large forest areas from fires and uncontrolled logging. These threats disproportionately affect populations most dependent on natural resources and with fewer means to respond to and adapt to environmental changes, particularly the poor and rural residents.

Women's contributions to finding long-term climate change solutions often go unrecognized because women tend to be underrepresented in national-level decision-making processes. The gender balance in Ukraine's energy sector is insufficient, with women making up less than a quarter of employees (24%)<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> UNFPA. Gender perspective of the field of environmental protection in Ukraine. May 2022. [https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2022/07/15/we\\_act\\_ecology\\_ukr\\_report.pdf](https://razumkov.org.ua/images/2022/07/15/we_act_ecology_ukr_report.pdf)

<sup>93</sup> Dyachuk O., Galustyan Yu., Bliznyuk V., Podolets R. and Trypolska G., *Women and men in the energy sector of Ukraine*, Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Kyiv, 2019. <https://ua.boell.org/uk/2019/06/13/zhinki-ta-choloviki-v-energetichnomu-sektori-ukrayini-0>.



despite constituting about half of the employed in the economy (54%). Women in the energy sector typically handle administrative matters, and this imbalance begins with education. For instance, in the 2021-22 academic year, women comprised only 9.6% of students and 11.5% of graduates in electrical engineering.<sup>94</sup> Gender stereotypes contribute to this imbalance, with 31% of Ukrainians viewing biotechnology, engineering, and robotics as male fields.<sup>95</sup> Special information and career guidance are needed to encourage more women to pursue energy-related professions.

National policy in the environmental sector aims to benefit the entire population of Ukraine without any elements of gender discrimination, ensuring equal access to services and opportunities for both women and men.

During 2020-2024, units on gender equality were established within the responsible central executive bodies. For example, the Ministry of Energy created a sector for social dialogue, gender equality, and anti-discrimination within its department of social and labour relations and gender equality. In cooperation with the USAID Energy Security Project, a comprehensive modular training program on “Gender equality in the workplace” was implemented for five months in 2023, with 34 employees of the Ministry of Energy participating and receiving certificates.

The Order of the Ministry of Energy of 14 December 2023, No. 383, established the Gender Committee on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, preventing and countering discrimination, and approved its composition. The first meeting of the Gender Committee was held on 4 March 2024. In March-April 2024, gender sensitivity training for members of the Committee was provided.

With the support of the Poruch NGO, a pilot study was conducted on women’s and men’s access to energy. As part of the research process, employees of structural units of the Ministry’s staff and employees of state-owned enterprises in the fuel and energy complex participated in a survey. It was determined that women and men have mostly the same access to basic services, opportunities for education, and economic activity.<sup>96</sup>

Ukraine is only beginning to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies. However, important steps have already been made between 2020 and 2024. Notably, the inclusion of an environmental component in the national gender policy has been achieved. Additionally, gender working bodies within central executive bodies have been strengthened, and relevant surveys have been conducted to identify existing gender gaps in environmental policies. These steps mark significant progress in addressing gender-specific impacts and ensuring equal participation in environmental decision-making and access to resources.

### **32. In the past five years, what actions has your country taken to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programs for disaster risk reduction and building environmental and climate resilience?**

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<sup>94</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Higher and professional (professional and technical) pre-higher education in Ukraine, 2022. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2021/osv/vush\\_osv/arh\\_vuz\\_20\\_u.html](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2021/osv/vush_osv/arh_vuz_20_u.html).

<sup>95</sup> United Nations Population Fund, *What guides Ukrainians when choosing a profession: Results of a national survey of public opinion on key factors and stereotypes*, UNFPA, Kyiv, February 2021. [https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/prezation\\_trampoline\\_eng\\_3\\_1.pdf](https://ukraine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/prezation_trampoline_eng_3_1.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> USAID Energy Project. USAID ESP promotes developing and implementing the state gender policy in the energy sector. 7 March 2024. <https://energysecurityua.org/news/usaids-esp-promotes-developing-and-implementing-the-state-gender-policy-in-the-energy-sector/>



Given the context of Ukraine, an urgent task in this area is to ensure support for women’s participation and leadership in strategies, programs, and projects related to disaster risk reduction, environmental stability, and resilience to climate change. For this purpose, specialized agencies such as the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine and the State Energy Inspectorate are intensifying their work on training their employees on issues of gender equality. Employees are recommended to consider training focused on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, preventing and countering gender-based violence, and implementing gender-sensitive policies when drawing up individual professional development programs for civil servants holding civil service positions of categories “B” and “C” (middle and lower-level positions).

To raise awareness and deepen knowledge about the importance of gender policy and gender approaches in policy implementation in this area, representatives of the Ministry of Environment participate in commissions, meetings, working groups, trainings, and seminars. This is part of the implementation of the operational plan for the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men up to 2030.

In 2022, the State Energy Inspectorate and the Ministry of Environment conducted gender audits, resulting in recommendations aimed at eliminating the imbalance between the opportunities for women and men to exercise equal rights. These recommendations included making changes to some administrative documents of the both agencies and creating a Gender Equality section on the websites to publish information on the equal legal status of women and men, as well as the absence of restrictions or privileges based on gender. Key priorities identified include the need to raise employees’ awareness of applying a comprehensive gender approach in their activities, developing recommendations on compliance with ethical behaviour by employees, and conducting training on gender equality, non-discrimination, and social inclusion in the workplace.<sup>97</sup>

The main objective of these training programs is to increase the professional level of gender policy issues, acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct gender analysis, and develop and implement policies of gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusiveness in workplaces. The training resulted in an increase in the professional level of employees of the State Energy Inspection Service and Ministry of Environment in matters of gender policy.

Aspects of green reconstruction became one of the focuses of the Ukrainian Pavilion at the UN Climate Change Conference COP28 in December 2023. Notably, UNDP jointly with the Government organized an event in the Pavilion dedicated to ensuring gender equality in the assessment of environmental damage and the process of ‘green’ reconstruction. The Ministry of Environment emphasizes that Ukraine, in its commitment to “build back better”, prioritizes gender equality and the expansion of women’s rights and opportunities in building environmental and climate resilience.

Overcoming gender inequality in forestry is one of the problems planned to be solved during the implementation of the State Forest Management Strategy of Ukraine until 2035, approved on 29 December 2021. To implement the Strategy in terms of gender issues, the Forestry Sector Gender Action Plan was developed.<sup>98</sup> The Gender Action Plan of the Forestry Sector of Ukraine is a strategic planning tool that determines ways to improve the representativeness of women at all levels of the labour market in the forestry sector and reduces inequalities in the career advancement of men and women. The Gender Action Plan defines important issues regarding the implementation of the innovative model, which is based on the practical and strategic needs of women in the forest sector, included in the Transnational

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<sup>97</sup> See, for example, <https://sies.gov.ua/gender/gendernij-audit-2022>

<sup>98</sup> Forests in Women’s Hands Project. Forestry Sector Gender Action Plan. 7 July 2022. [https://www.openforest.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Gendernyj-plan-dij-lisovogo-sektoru\\_proekt-dlya-obgovorennya.pdf](https://www.openforest.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Gendernyj-plan-dij-lisovogo-sektoru_proekt-dlya-obgovorennya.pdf)

Innovative Road Map developed within the framework of the project “Forests in Women’s Hands” implemented by FORZA NGO and Association of Foresters of Ukraine.<sup>99</sup>

One key lesson learned from Ukraine’s efforts to integrate gender perspectives into environmental policies is the importance of targeted training and awareness-raising among specialized agency employees. Gender audits by the State Energy Inspectorate and the Ministry of Environment have helped identify and address imbalances, resulting in gender equality sections on websites and recommendations for non-discriminatory practices. Focusing on green reconstruction and prioritizing gender equality in environmental resilience efforts highlight the need for women’s inclusion in decision-making processes. The Forestry Sector Gender Action Plan within the State Forest Management Strategy demonstrates the value of strategic planning in improving women’s representation and addressing gender inequalities. These initiatives show that achieving gender equality in environmental policies requires continuous education, strategic planning, and active participation of women.

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<sup>99</sup> Agency for Promotion of Sustainable Development of the Carpathian Region FORZA. Forests in Women’s Hands Project. <https://forza.org.ua/uk/lisi-v-zhinochih-rukah/proekt-lisi-v-zhinochih-rukah>

## Section Four: National Institutions and Processes

### **33. Please describe your country's national strategy or action plan for gender equality, including its name, the period it covers, its priority, funding and alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the targets under SDG 5.**

In 2021-2023, the Government of Ukraine actively developed and adopted the national strategies, national action plans, guidelines, and other political instruments on gender equality. As a result, comprehensive and detailed gender strategies and action plans now guide the activities of national and regional/local authorities for the coming years. Despite the war causing inconsistent implementation of national gender policy across departments, numerous examples of high-level commitment and significant improvements in performance are evident. Overall, the comprehensiveness, detail, and effectiveness of the national gender policy have shown progress since 2021.

In August 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU) adopted the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men until 2030 and approved the Action Plan for its implementation for 2022-2024. The strategy includes four strategic goals, operational goals, and related activities:

1. The national mechanism for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men functions effectively and supports the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of gender equality policies in various spheres of public life and at all levels.
2. Women and men are free from violence, including violence related to hostilities and armed conflicts, have equal access to justice, and participate equally in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.
3. Women and men have equal rights and opportunities for developing human potential in education, healthcare, social protection, culture, and sports.
4. Women and men participate equally in various spheres of economic activity, benefit from sustainable economic development, and have equal access to all types of economic resources.

Considering the challenges of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the strategy incorporates gender aspects in humanitarian aid provision and post-conflict reconstruction. It emphasizes the participation of women in reconstruction processes, including decision-making at all levels, from national to community levels, and strengthens the capacity of state employees to integrate gender approaches in recovery processes.

In December 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted the Strategy for the Implementation of Gender Equality in Education until 2030 and approved the Operational Plan for its implementation for 2022-2024. This strategy aims to overcome gender-based choice of specialties in vocational and higher education institutions, which underlies horizontal gender segregation in the labour market and the gender pay gap.

In September 2023, the National Strategy for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap until 2030 and the Action Plan for its implementation, prepared by the Ministry of Economy with UN Women and the ILO, were approved. The strategy addresses the root causes of the gender pay gap, including horizontal and vertical gender segregation, unequal distribution of domestic work, and legislative gaps regarding equal pay for work of equal value.

The Government of Ukraine is also implementing the National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” for 2021-2025. In December 2022, the National Action Plan was updated to reflect the new realities caused by the full-scale war. The updated plan includes expanded measures to provide effective and timely assistance to victims of sexual violence in armed conflict, eliminate cultural barriers to women’s participation in peace and security issues,

prevent domestic violence and human trafficking, and raise awareness among victims of gender-based violence.

Other important national gender policies include:

- The Action Plan for fulfilling the Government of Ukraine’s obligations within the international initiative “Biarritz Partnership” to promote gender equality (Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1578-p, 16 December 2020).
- The State social program for preventing and countering domestic violence and gender-based violence until 2025 (Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 145, 24 February 2015).
- The National strategy for creating a barrier-free space in Ukraine until 2030 (Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 366-r, 14 April 2021).

There are also sectoral/departmental instruments, including the Gender Policy Action Plan of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Gender Policy Action Plan of the National Guard of Ukraine. The national policy aims to address a wide range of issues affecting women and men, including increasing their awareness of legal rights, combating gender stereotypes, improving access to educational opportunities, health services, and basic infrastructure, and fighting poverty. These tools provide a roadmap for implementing concrete measures aimed at empowering women and raising the priority of gender issues on the government’s agenda.

The target populations of the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, as well as other strategic documents, encompass a wide range of groups to ensure comprehensive gender equality across all sectors of society. These include women and men of all ages, with particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women and girls affected by conflict, rural women, women with disabilities, and women from ethnic minorities. The strategies also focus on promoting gender equality among civil servants, educators, healthcare providers, law enforcement officers, and military personnel to foster an inclusive and supportive environment within these professions. Additionally, the target populations include young people, ensuring that both girls and boys have equal opportunities in education, vocational training, and career advancement. By addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by these diverse groups, the strategic documents aim to create an equitable society where everyone, regardless of gender, can fully participate in and benefit from national development.

The State strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men until 2030 is closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the targets under Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The strategy’s comprehensive goals and operational objectives are designed to support the achievement of SDG 5 targets, including ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls, eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership. This alignment ensures that the country’s gender strategy not only addresses immediate national concerns but also contributes to global efforts to promote gender equality and sustainable development.

**34. Please describe your country’s system for tracking the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting), including the approximate proportion of the national budget that is invested in this area.**

Despite the full-scale war, the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine (MoF) and budget fund administrators continue to implement gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) at the national and local levels. The Ministry issued letters of instructions for the main managers of state and local budget funds with a recommendation to apply a gender approach when formulating budget requests in 2023-2025. The Explanatory Note to the draft Law on the State Budget for 2023 contains information on the implementation of GRB in budget programs and notes that GRB became especially necessary during the war and in conditions of limited budget resources, because it is extremely important to take into account the situation, needs and interests of various groups of women and men, as well as promptly respond to new realities and challenges.

Analysis of budget requests shows that the number of gender-sensitive budget programs has increased. During the preparation of the draft State Budget for 2023, gender aspects were already taken into account in 50 budget programs (33 budget fund administrators). For comparison, during the preparation of the draft State Budget for 2022, gender aspects were taken into account in 47 budget programs (32 fund administrators), and in 2021 – in 41 budget programs (29 fund administrators).

When formulating budget requests for 2023-2025, gender approaches in budget programs were taken into account by such main managers of budget funds as the Apparatus of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development, the Main Intelligence Department of the Ministry of Defense, the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, the Accounts Chamber and regional state administrations.

The main managers of local budget funds also continue to implement gender approaches in the budget process, but it is currently impossible to track the number of gender-sensitive programs.

Work on the GRB has become somewhat less visible since 2020 with the completion of the project “Gender-oriented budgeting in Ukraine,” which was financed by Sida. The project provided expert support and publicized all legislative changes and achievements related to the implementation of the GRB. And yet, even in the face of full-scale war, the Ministry of Finance continues to work on the stability and institutionalization of the GRB.

- During the preparation of budget requests for 2021-2023, gender aspects were taken into account by 29 main managers of state budget funds (35%) under 41 budget programs.
- Among the programs financed from local budgets, 75% were analysed from a gender perspective, resulting in 1,075 programs becoming more gender sensitive in 2020.
- The Ministry of Social Policy, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and the State Statistics Service of Ukraine have made changes to more than 30 normative legal acts on the integration of gender approaches based on the results of the gender analysis of budget programs.

One of the positive examples of gender budgeting is the analysis of budget programs carried out by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Policy, and other departments. For example, according to the results of the gender analysis of the budget program 2308060 “Implementation of the program of state guarantees of medical care for the population,” no signs of gender discrimination were found in the specified budget program. Therefore, it is not considered necessary to include gender aspects in the budget program, with the exception of those that have natural biological differences between women and men. At the same time, further gender analysis of the budget program, its separate tasks, areas of use of funds, and services provided within the budget program is considered expedient. Also, according to the results of the gender analysis of the mentioned budget program, no gender gaps and discrimination of the interests of women and men were found, except for

those that have natural biological differences between women and men, and it is also recommended to constantly improve the process of data collection and processing in the Electronic Health Care System.<sup>100</sup>

GRB has entered the system of public finance management at the state and local levels in Ukraine, as it is aimed at increasing the targeting, efficiency, and transparency of budget expenditures. A full analysis of public spending and gender equality spending at the national level is not possible due to the lack of data and public information available online, especially under martial law. In addition, due to the lack of a monitoring system for tracking and reporting on the total amount of gender-oriented funding, it is also impossible to provide an approximate figure for the total amount of financial resources invested in gender equality priorities by the government of Ukraine.

The current national action plans for ensuring gender equality do not provide for the allocation of funding from the state or regional budgets for gender equality priorities. The State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period until 2030, the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 for the period until 2025, the National Strategy for overcoming the gender pay gap for the period until 2030, and the Strategy for the implementation of gender equality in education for the period until 2030 provide for financing from sources other than the state or regional budgets, that is, they must be financed from the budgets of international development partners and civil society organizations. The state makes its financial contribution to the implementation of these strategies and action plans only by paying the salaries of the employees of the relevant state institutions and providing premises for events, and it is unlikely that this situation will change before the end of full-scale invasion.

### **35. What formal mechanisms are in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

Ukraine has established comprehensive mechanisms to ensure the participation of various stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These mechanisms are embedded within the national institutional framework for gender equality, which integrates gender perspectives across all sectors of government and public life.

The national institutional mechanism for gender equality includes key bodies such as the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Olha Stefanishyna, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, oversees the development and implementation of gender policy. The Government Commissioner for Gender Policy, Kateryna Levchenko, coordinates the implementation of unified national policies aimed at achieving gender equality.

The Ministry of Social Policy and the National Social Service are central bodies responsible for developing and implementing national gender equality policies, respectively. Additionally, executive and local government bodies have 56 coordinators and 25 authorized officials responsible for gender policy at the regional level.

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<sup>100</sup> Ministry of Health of Ukraine. Results of the gender analysis of the budget program 2301400 "Provision of medical measures of individual state programs and complex programmatic measures" in 2022. 4 September 2023. <https://moz.gov.ua/article/economics-and-finance/rezultati-gendernogo-analizu-bjudzhetnoi-programi-kpkvk-2301400-zabezpechennja-medichnih-zahodiv-okremih-derzhavnih-program-ta-kompleksnih-zahodiv-programnogo-harakteru---u-2022-rocj>

Ukraine has implemented a range of tools and mechanisms to mainstream gender equality across sectors, which significantly aid different stakeholders in participating in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Regulatory integration of gender approaches, mandated by the Ministry of Social Policy, ensures that gender considerations are embedded in the development of regulations. Additionally, guidelines for evaluating the gender implications of sectoral reforms help assess the impact of policies on different genders, fostering inclusive decision-making processes. Gender budgeting ensures that financial resources are allocated equitably, promoting gender equality in the use of public funds. Furthermore, a model regulation has institutionalized gender equality units within government bodies, clearly outlining their responsibilities and framework, thereby reinforcing the commitment to gender equality at all administrative levels.

Gender audits and capacity-building initiatives further support the integration of gender perspectives in governance. Detailed recommendations for conducting gender audits have been provided, and comprehensive gender audits were conducted across central executive bodies in 2022, revealing critical insights into gender gaps and informing policy adjustments. Regular training and certified online courses for civil servants, supported by international partners like the EU and UN Women, enhance the knowledge and skills needed to implement gender-sensitive policies effectively. These tools collectively empower various stakeholders, including government officials, civil society, and international organizations, to actively participate in and contribute to the implementation and monitoring of gender equality commitments under the Beijing Declaration and Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda, ensuring a cohesive and inclusive approach to sustainable development.

Strategic consultations between the government, NGOs and international partners on implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also take place through multiple formats:

- Commission on Coordination of the Interaction of Executive Authorities to Ensure Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men,
- Platform of NGOs (under the Office of the Government Commissioner). The NGOs that participate in these platforms promote gender mainstreaming and advocate for the rights of different marginalised groups of women and girls,
- Donor interdepartmental working groups on gender equality,
- Platform for Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusion in Recovery (from the consequences of war),
- Civic councils under central executive authorities.

### **36. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.**

The preparation of Ukraine's national report involved a comprehensive and participatory process, ensuring that various stakeholders contributed effectively. The coordination of this process was carried out by the Ministry of Social Policy, as the specially authorized central executive agency for gender policy, and the Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy, with the assistance of UN Women. Stakeholders were involved at all stages, ensuring their contributions were integral to the report.

The process of national review (and of preparation of the report) was organised as follows:

- Development of a questionnaire to collect information from stakeholders for each area covered by the National Review and according to the framework proposed in the guidelines (achievements, gaps and shortcomings, strategies to eliminate these gaps and problems).



- Formation of a list of interested parties for each area: Central Committee, regional, Kyiv City State Administration, NGOs, international organizations, and development partners.
- Analysis of the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals for the subject of disaggregation by gender (overcoming poverty (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1b), Strong health and well-being (3.7, 3.8), quality education (4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4a), decent work (8.3, 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9), reducing inequality (10.2), sustainable cities (11.7), climate action (13b), Peace, justice and strong institutions (16.1, 16.2, 16.7), partnership to achieve goals (17.18).
- Holding a meeting with interested parties to present and discuss the questionnaire to collect information.
- Sending the questionnaire to the Central Committee, regional, and Kyiv city state administrations.
- Distribution of the questionnaire on the NGO platform (for voluntary completion).
- Preparation by interested parties of draft responses to the questionnaire based on available information.
- Preparation of responses to Chapter 4, which should cover national processes and mechanisms, linking those related to the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action with those related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Preparation of the draft responses to Section 5 on progress in the availability of data disaggregated by sex and gender statistics, the relationship between the monitoring of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, taking into account gender issues.
- Summarization of the information received from the Central Committee, regional, Kyiv city state administrations, and NGOs, and preparation of the first draft of the National Review.
- Organization of the discussion of the first draft of the report within the framework of the National Review.
- Preparation of the second draft of the National Review taking into account the results of the discussions.
- Translation of the National Review into English.
- Filling out the online form on the UN website.
- National review presentation (scheduled for summer 2024).

This participatory approach ensured that each central executive authority and regional administration could summarize its activities in the field of gender policy implementation over the past five years, identify achievements and gaps, and understand the necessary next steps. Joint discussions, commenting, and additions to the draft national report allowed for a collaborative determination of the main achievements and gaps in the national gender policy implementation, ensuring that important information from all interested parties was included.

**37. Please describe your country's action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women.**

Ukraine submitted its ninth report on implementation of CEDAW in 2021. This report covered the period of 2017-2020. The report was considered in 2022, and in October 2022, the CEDAW Committee issued its Concluding observations.

In March 2023, a strategic session titled “Towards gender equality: taking into account the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women” was held. The session aimed to incorporate the Committee’s Observations into Ukraine’s gender equality policies. A roadmap for implementation was discussed, focusing on clear deliverables, timelines, roles, and responsibilities.

The Ministry of Social Policy has analysed the current legal framework and emphasized the need for effective planning and coordination for full implementation. Representatives from central executive authorities, international, and NGOs established common priorities and necessary steps for effectively implementing the UN Committee’s Concluding observations.

These priorities and necessary steps will be taken into account in the Operational Plan for 2025-2027 for the implementation of the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period until 2030. The Operational Plan is currently under development. The findings from the present National Review of implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action will also inform the development of the Operational Plan for 2025-2027.

Information on the implementation of Concluding observations 12, 16 (c) (i), 32 (c), which relate to the WPS agenda, notably on the implementation of general recommendations No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, No. 32 (2014) on gender aspects of refugee status, asylum, citizenship and statelessness of women, No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, should be submitted by Ukraine by 1 November 2024. The deadline for submitting information on the implementation of other Concluding observations is 1 November 2026.

In 2023, the Ministry of Social Policy, with the expert support of the UN Women in Ukraine, organized a training for employees of the security and defense sector in order to prepare for reporting on the implementation of the above-mentioned Concluding observations.

## Section Five: Data and statistics

### **38. What are the most important areas in which your country has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level?**

Over the 2020-2024, Ukraine has made significant achievements in enhancing gender statistics at the national level. These efforts are crucial for monitoring gender equality and implementing effective policies. The following measures and initiatives highlight the progress made in this area.

By order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 2 December 2020 No. 1517 “Issues of data collection for monitoring gender equality,” a list of indicators was approved for monitoring gender equality. According to this order, the State Statistics Service collects data for monitoring gender equality and publishes it on its official website. They coordinate works related to the development of metadata according to the approved indicators. A “Gender Equality” section was created on the State Statistics Service’s official website, which contains national and international normative acts on gender equality, data on gender equality indicators for 2015-2023, their metadata, publications, and other useful information.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, a separate section titled “Women and Men” was created, providing data disaggregated by gender regarding education, healthcare, wages, income, and living conditions.<sup>102</sup>

In 2021, with the support of UN Women in Ukraine, the Monitoring Report “Indicators for Monitoring Gender Equality in Ukraine” was published.<sup>103</sup> Between January and June 2021, the state statistics authorities conducted a labour force survey module on the work activities of volunteers for the first time, with methodological support from the International Labour Organization. A publication based on the survey results, containing sex-disaggregated indicators, was released.<sup>104</sup> Also, in 2021, the state statistical observation of enterprises titled “Wage level of employees by gender, age, education and professional groups” was conducted for the third time.<sup>105</sup> In 2023, the State Statistics Service prepared another publication “Women and Men in Ukraine,” which is available on their official website.<sup>106</sup>

Currently, the State Statistics Service is involved in several initiatives in the field of gender equality. These include implementing the Gender Equality Index of the European Union in Ukraine as part of the project “Network of Analytical Centres: Strengthening Capacity for the Development of Advanced Policies, Impact Assessment, Strategic Advocacy and Focused Policy Communications,” implemented by the Ukrainian Women’s Fund with support from the European Union. Another initiative, “Challenges for Expanding the Rights and Opportunities of Women in the Labour Market and in Entrepreneurship in the Conditions of Full-Scale War and Gender-Oriented Recovery of Ukraine,” is part of a UN Women project in partnership with the Office of the Vice-Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and the NGO “Ukrainian Centre of Social Reforms,” with financial support from the Government of Sweden.

Leadership and staff of the State Statistics Service participate in interdepartmental working groups aimed at achieving equal rights and opportunities for women and men. These include the Interdepartmental

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<sup>101</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Gender equality. [https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/gend\\_rivnist/menu\\_gr.html](https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/gend_rivnist/menu_gr.html)

<sup>102</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Women and Men. [https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/menu/gender/gender\\_u\\_.htm](https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/menu/gender/gender_u_.htm)

<sup>103</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine and UN Women, *Indicators for Monitoring Gender Equality in Ukraine: Monitoring Report 2021*, UN Women, Kyiv, 2022. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat\\_e/2021/2021\\_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor\\_ENG.pdf](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_e/2021/2021_GEIndicators-MonitoringRepor_ENG.pdf)

<sup>104</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Volunteers aged 15 years and over and average duration of time worked, by type of organization of volunteer work, sex, type of area, age group and marital status, January-June 2021. [https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2021/rp/tdv\\_21.xlsx](https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2021/rp/tdv_21.xlsx)

<sup>105</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Salary by professional groups in 2020. [https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat\\_u/2021/zb/12/zb\\_zp\\_pg\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2021/zb/12/zb_zp_pg_2020.pdf)

<sup>106</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Social Protection. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat\\_u/publzhahist\\_u.htm](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/publzhahist_u.htm)

Working Group on Ensuring the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, the Commission on Coordination of Interaction of Executive Authorities on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men, the Interdepartmental Council on Family, Gender Equality, Demographic Development, Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking, and the Sectoral Working Group “Gender Equality.” They are also involved in the working group on preparing amendments to the law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men.”

Ukraine has achieved tangible results in the field of open data and implementation of gender policy. In 2021, our state was identified as one of three countries, and not only ranked high in the European Open Data Maturity Ranking, but has also shown remarkable growth in the field of open data over the previous two years.

In 2023, the Ministry of Digital Transformation, with the support of the USAID/UK aid Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration and Services/TAPAS project, conducted a study on Gender and Social Component in Open Data of Ukraine.<sup>107</sup> This study analysed 80 sets of open data managed by 25 central government bodies. After assessing the relevance and accessibility of the data, 52 sets were analysed in detail. Of these, 25 (48%) contained gender-sensitive data and/or other relevant characteristics:

- 15 sets contained distribution by gender and/or other gender-sensitive data and did not require modification.
- 10 sets contained distribution by gender but needed expansion according to the intersectional approach.
- 27 sets did not contain distribution by gender or other gender-sensitive categories and required modifications.

During the war, gender studies have become an important source of data. On the initiative of the Ministry of Social Policy and with the support of UN Women, the research agency InfoSapiens conducted a study in November-December 2023 on the impact of security challenges on girls and boys, women and men, considering age, place of residence, and other social characteristics.<sup>108</sup>

This study, conducted during the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, aimed to understand the differences in the impact of security challenges and the access of various vulnerable groups to assistance and services, as well as their involvement in decision-making. The study provided qualitative data for evaluating the effectiveness of measures under the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” until 2025 by comparing it with a similar study conducted in 2021. The results will be used to develop an operational plan for 2025-2027 for the State Strategy for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men until 2030 and can inform policy development by sectoral ministries in various social sectors.

### **39. Over the next five years, what are your country’s priorities for strengthening national gender statistics?**

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<sup>107</sup> Gender component in open data. A survey. 2023. [https://tapas.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/OD-research\\_27.11UA.pdf?utm\\_source=350771\\_village&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_campaign=05-24](https://tapas.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/OD-research_27.11UA.pdf?utm_source=350771_village&utm_medium=link&utm_campaign=05-24)

<sup>108</sup> InfoSapiens. Report on the results of the study of the impact of security challenges on girls and boys, women and men, taking into account age, place of residence, other social characteristics, during the period of the large-scale invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine from 24 February 2022 to 2023, and the interests of various social population groups during the post-conflict reconstruction of Ukraine. 20 May 20204. <https://www.sapiens.com.ua/en/publication-single-page?id=313>

Over the next five years, Ukraine's priorities for strengthening national gender statistics are focused on aligning with European standards in the field of statistics, which will require significant time and financial resources. Investments in this area are expected to lead to substantial improvements in the quality of gender statistics, thereby contributing to more effective gender equality initiatives.

The development of gender statistics in Ukraine is expected to take place through the implementation of European standards, which necessitates time and financial resources. Such investments can significantly enhance the quality of gender statistics and contribute to more effective gender equality initiatives. One of the key priorities is the introduction of a sample survey of time use and a survey on gender-based violence, along with monitoring adult participation in lifelong learning (AES). The action plan for the implementation of the Program for the Development of Official Statistics until 2028, approved by the Resolution of the CMU on 15 September 2023 No. 989, includes preparations for these surveys.

However, the ongoing state of war in the country poses a significant obstacle to data collection. Due to the military aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, the Law of Ukraine "On the Protection of the Interests of the Subjects of Reporting and Other Documents During the Period of Martial Law or the State of War" allows individuals and entities to refrain from submitting statistical and financial reports during and for three months after martial law. Consequently, some respondents do not submit reports, making it challenging for state statistics bodies to compile objective statistical information.

The management and experts of the State Statistics Service are part of interdepartmental working groups dedicated to achieving equal rights and opportunities for women and men. One such group is working on amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men." The State Statistics Service has proposed a new version of Article 5, which mandates that state authorities, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions, and organizations collect, preserve, process, analyse, protect, and disseminate documented quantitative and qualitative information on the status of women and men in all spheres of society, as well as on gender-based violence. This data, disaggregated by gender, is considered public information and must be provided upon request, published, and regularly updated on the Unified State Web Portal of Open Data and on the respective websites. This approach ensures thorough consideration of gender equality in all areas and significantly increases the availability of gender-disaggregated data.

Harmonizing the national statistical system with international and European norms and standards, including the development of gender statistics, is crucial. Implementing these norms and standards in demographic and social statistics, conducting mandatory surveys (such as the next round of labour force surveys and surveys on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)), and conducting new surveys on special topics (such as time use, gender-based violence, and adult participation in lifelong learning) will significantly strengthen the gender statistics base and create new gender-disaggregated indicators. Measures aimed at developing gender statistics are included in the Program for the Development of Official Statistics until 2028.

Additionally, the State Statistics Service is working with administrators of administrative data to improve reporting by including gender-disaggregated indicators and establishing agreements for mutual exchange of information resources. To address gaps in gender statistics, employees of the State Statistics Service participate in educational and practical activities with technical support from international organizations and statistical services of other countries.

Currently, efforts are underway to create the Information System of Statistical Production of State Statistics Authorities. This system aims to enhance the efficiency of statistical information production and dissemination by utilizing a centralized data repository, a user-friendly interface, and modern data handling formats.

#### 40. What gender-specific indicators has your country prioritized for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

Ukraine is actively working to prioritize gender-specific indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs, particularly Goal 5 on gender equality. This effort involves collaboration between state authorities, international organizations, and public associations to ensure comprehensive data collection and the development of gender-sensitive policies.

Currently, the joint work of state authorities, international organizations, and public associations is ongoing to update the tasks and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, "Gender Equality." Some indicators of the Gender Equality Index of the European Union are included in the indicators of Goal 5, for which the Ministry of Social Policy is responsible.

The Ministry of Social Policy, with the support of UN Women, held a strategic session titled "Collection of Data on Prevention and Countermeasures against Domestic Violence: Bringing it into Line with the Requirements of the Istanbul Convention." This session included participants from all entities implementing measures to prevent and counter domestic violence and gender-based violence at the central and local levels, as well as NGOs. Drafts of five forms of reporting have been prepared, covering various aspects such as information on persons from whom statements and reports of domestic violence have been received, the results of the work of the National Police of Ukraine in preventing and countering domestic violence, and the activities of general and specialized support services for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence.

The Ministry of Social Policy approved guidelines for the implementation of a gender approach and an approach based on the observance of human rights at the level of territorial communities (order dated 27 December 2023, No. 359). These recommendations contain information on the gender profile of the territorial community and an indicative list of gender-sensitive indicators for the gender profile, which are recommended for use in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of territorial community development programs.

The Ministry of Social Policy has developed a draft monitoring map for the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the concluding remarks to the 9th periodic report of Ukraine. On 19 December 2023, the Ukrainian Women's Fund organized a roundtable meeting titled "European Gender Equality Index: Methodology Adaptation for Ukraine."

By order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 21 August 2019, No. 686, indicators for data collection for monitoring the implementation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) were approved. In accordance with this order, the State Statistics Service provides data collection, including disaggregation by gender, for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs and publishes them on its official website. A section titled "Sustainable Development Goals" has been created on the official website of the State Statistics Service.<sup>109</sup> This section contains national normative acts on SDG issues, links to international sources of information on SDG indicators, information on SDG indicators for 2015-2023 and their metadata, links to the National Reporting Platform for SDGs, publications, and other useful information.

In 2023, employees of the State Statistics Service participated in meetings of 17 working groups regarding the revision of the tasks and indicators of the Central Development Strategy. These groups were formed

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<sup>109</sup> State Statistics Service of Ukraine. Sustainable Development Goals.  
[https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/csr\\_prezent/2020/ukr/st\\_rozv/menu.htm](https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/csr_prezent/2020/ukr/st_rozv/menu.htm)

by Resolution No. 923 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 29 August 2023, which includes the Head of State Statistics.

By order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 21 August 2019, No. 686, indicators for data collection for monitoring the implementation of sustainable development goals (SDGs) were approved. In accordance with this order, the State Statistics Service provides data collection, including disaggregation by gender, for monitoring the implementation of the SDGs and publishes them on its official website. A section titled “Sustainable Development Goals” has been created on the official website of the State Statistics Service. This section contains national normative acts on SDG issues, links to international sources of information on SDG indicators, information on SDG indicators for 2015-2023 and their metadata, links to the National Reporting Platform for SDGs, publications, and other useful information.

Also in 2023, employees of the State Statistics Service participated in the meetings of 17 working groups regarding the revision of the tasks and indicators of the Central Development Strategy under the interdepartmental working group on issues of ensuring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which was formed by Resolution No. 923 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 29 August 2023. These groups include the Head of State Statistics, emphasizing the collaborative effort in revising and updating the SDG indicators to ensure they are gender-sensitive and comprehensive.

This structured approach highlights Ukraine’s commitment to integrating gender perspectives into its monitoring and implementation of the SDGs, particularly Goal 5 on gender equality.

#### **41. Which data disaggregations are routinely provided by major surveys in your country?**

In Ukraine, data from almost all surveys have been disaggregated by sex for several decades. However, analysts do not always consider that disaggregation by sex also reflects the influence of age, given that the average life expectancy of women in Ukraine is 11 years longer than that of men. The full-scale war may exacerbate this gap.

Progress has been made in recent years, with more NGOs publishing not only reports based on survey results but also datasets that allow for separate analyses of vulnerable categories of women. The full-scale invasion has caused a more than tenfold increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), making almost one in five Ukrainians in government-controlled territories an IDP. IDP women are significantly more vulnerable than IDP men, often due to their responsibilities in caring for children and other relatives. Therefore, it is a priority for both public authorities and the public sector to disaggregate data on IDPs and the local population separately for men and women or to publish datasets for such analysis.

Additionally, survey data on refugees abroad is rarely disaggregated by sex. Appropriate disaggregation or the publication of datasets is needed, as demonstrated by the Centre for Economic Strategy.<sup>110</sup> One of the most vulnerable population groups are those living close to hostilities on the frontline, who lack essential goods and services as well as shelter. It is necessary to prioritize surveying this group (most people are reachable by phone) and disaggregating data by sex and age to identify key needs.

Samples of all surveys are based on four parameters: sex, age, region, and the size of the settlement. These include:

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<sup>110</sup> Centre for Economic Strategy. Ukrainian refugees: how many are there, their intentions & return prospects. Second wave. [https://ces.org.ua/refugees-from-ukraine-ukr-final-report/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR2ax93T0Sfnr4St4YCVsvZD3X2BYzQmnlorW6qtKOljr7e7qp3c5LZzYYc\\_aem\\_Aalf-LZFSNaeqZmSv8EL0r24gv0568koqIWFy2qSo5GS\\_o5Vu3om3PxGpwnKEJGOVwB7k4DBfG00ee0wfljoNILdk](https://ces.org.ua/refugees-from-ukraine-ukr-final-report/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR2ax93T0Sfnr4St4YCVsvZD3X2BYzQmnlorW6qtKOljr7e7qp3c5LZzYYc_aem_Aalf-LZFSNaeqZmSv8EL0r24gv0568koqIWFy2qSo5GS_o5Vu3om3PxGpwnKEJGOVwB7k4DBfG00ee0wfljoNILdk)



- Geographical location
- Income (included in most surveys, though not all, with varying question formats)
- Sex
- Age
- Education (present in most surveys but not all, with no official statistics on education since the 2001 census, only survey data)
- Marital status (included in most surveys, with the need to add the civil marriage category)
- Race/ethnicity (questions about race are possible only in migrant surveys due to the low proportion of non-European races in the general population)
- Migration status (included in most surveys since the full-scale invasion, previously only in studies of vulnerable groups)
- Disability (included only in surveys concerning vulnerable groups)
- Sexual orientation (included only in surveys concerning vulnerable groups)
- Religion (included only in polls related to this topic)
- Other characteristics relevant to the country context

Almost all surveys include questions about the language of communication and are conducted in both Ukrainian and Russian. However, since the full-scale invasion, it is forbidden to conduct surveys for public authorities in Russian.

Considering the context of full-scale war and ensuing humanitarian crisis, an important note is the humanitarian needs assessments are conducted with segregation by sex and age (adults and children) by the cluster system, UN Agencies, humanitarian support providers, and the government at the national and local levels. Gender analysis and sex and age data disaggregation in humanitarian needs assessment helps identify differentiated needs, risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities of those who require humanitarian assistance in order to better inform strategic and operational humanitarian programming and funding and ensure that a gender transformative approach is embedded in the Ukrainian response.

## Section Six: Conclusion and next steps

The review of Ukraine's progress in implementing the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) over the past five years has yielded significant insights into both achievements and challenges in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This comprehensive review process has underscored the importance of sustained commitment, robust institutional mechanisms, and inclusive policies to address the multifaceted impacts of the full-scale war and other crises on women and girls.

### Lessons learned and application to future implementation

- 1) **Integrated gender mechanisms:** One of the critical lessons learned is the necessity of developing and maintaining robust institutional gender mechanisms. The integration of gender considerations across all levels of government and sectors has proven essential in ensuring that gender equality is not an afterthought but a foundational aspect of policy-making and implementation. Ukraine will continue to strengthen these mechanisms, ensuring they are well-resourced and effectively coordinated to address gender imbalances comprehensively.
- 2) **Capacity building and training:** The importance of continuous training and capacity building for civil servants and local government officials has been evident. These trainings have enhanced the understanding and application of gender equality tools such as gender analysis, gender-responsive budgeting, and gender audits. Moving forward, Ukraine will prioritize regular and advanced training programs to equip policymakers with the necessary skills to implement gender-sensitive policies effectively.
- 3) **Crisis response and resilience:** The review process highlighted the critical need for gender-responsive approaches in crisis situations, particularly the ongoing war and the COVID-19 pandemic. These crises have disproportionately affected women and girls, exacerbating existing inequalities. Ukraine will focus on developing resilient systems that can effectively support women and girls during crises, ensuring their safety, health, and economic stability.
- 4) **Collaboration and coordination:** The collaboration between government entities, NGOs, international partners, and the private sector has been instrumental in advancing the WPS agenda and other gender equality initiatives. Strengthening these partnerships will be key to sustaining progress. Ukraine will foster greater coordination and exchange of best practices among these stakeholders to create a unified and effective approach to gender equality.

### Ongoing and Future Challenges

- 1) **Economic opportunities and employment:** One of the ongoing challenges is ensuring equal economic opportunities for women, particularly in the context of the war's impact on the labour market. Addressing occupational segregation, the gender pay gap, and barriers to entrepreneurship remains a priority. Ukraine will continue to implement policies that support women's economic empowerment, including vocational training and initiatives to support women entrepreneurs.
- 2) **Gender-based violence:** The prevalence of GBV remains a significant issue, further exaggerated by the ongoing war. Despite progress in legal frameworks and support services, the increase in reported cases during the war and pandemic underscores the need for comprehensive measures to prevent and respond to GBV. Ukraine will enhance its efforts in this area by expanding support services, raising awareness, and ensuring robust legal protections.

- 3) **Health and well-being:** Ensuring access to healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services, is vital. The full-scale war has disrupted healthcare services, making it imperative to rebuild and strengthen the healthcare system with a gender-responsive approach. Ukraine will focus on improving access to healthcare for women and girls, particularly those in conflict-affected areas.
- 4) **Political Participation:** Increasing the representation of women in decision-making roles remains a challenge. While progress has been made, there is still a need to ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate in political and public life. Ukraine will implement measures to encourage and support women's leadership and political participation at all levels.

#### **Priority actions for the Decade of Action**

- 1) **Institutional strengthening:** Ukraine will continue to develop its institutional gender mechanisms, ensuring they are adequately funded and empowered to drive gender equality initiatives across all sectors.
- 2) **Comprehensive training programs:** Expanding and enhancing training programs for civil servants and policymakers will be a priority to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to implement gender-sensitive policies effectively.
- 3) **Gender-responsive recovery plans:** Integrating gender perspectives into all recovery plans and programs at the national and sub-national levels will be essential to address the specific needs of women and girls and to build a more inclusive and equitable society post-war.
- 4) **Enhanced support for marginalized groups:** Focused efforts will be made to support marginalized groups of women and girls, ensuring that their specific needs are addressed in all policies and programs.
- 5) **Strengthening legal frameworks:** Ukraine will continue to strengthen its legal frameworks to protect women's rights and promote gender equality, including the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention and other relevant international agreements.
- 6) **International collaboration:** Ukraine will seek continued support from international partners for financial resources, capacity-building, policy advice, and technology to accelerate progress towards gender equality.
- 7) **Gender in European integration:** Ukraine is committed to embedding gender equality principles across all sectors of European integration process, leveraging experiences from EU countries, and seek technical and expert support to achieve this goal.

In conclusion, the review process has reinforced Ukraine's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. By building on the lessons learned, addressing ongoing challenges, and prioritizing actions that promote sustainable development, Ukraine aims to achieve significant progress in the coming years, contributing to the global goals of the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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