**UKRAINE COUNTRY GENDER PROFILE**

**2021**

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# Abbreviations

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| **AESI** | Amway Entrepreneurial Spirit Index |
| **AFU** | Armed Forces of Ukraine |
| **ATC** | Amalgamated territorial community |
| **CGP** | Country Gender Profile |
| **CEDAW** | Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| **CIDA** | Canadian International Development Agency |
| **CLIP** | Country Level Implementation Plan |
| **CMU** | Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine |
| **CSO** | Civil society organisation |
| **EUD** | Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine |
| **FAO**  **GAP III** | Food and Agriculture Organisation  Gender Action Plan III of the European Union for 2021-2025 |
| **GBV** | Gender-based violence |
| **GDI** | Gender Development Index |
| **GEWE** | Gender equality and women’s empowerment |
| **GRB** | Gender-responsive budgeting |
| **HEI** | Higher education institutions |
| **HRS** | Health Reform Support |
| **IDPs** | Internally displaced persons |
| **ILO** | International Labour Organisation |
| **MIA** | Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine |
| **M&E** | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| **MP** | Member of Parliament |
| **NAP** | National Action Plan |
| **NAPA** | National Academy of Public Administration under the President of Ukraine |
| **NAUCS** | National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service |
| **NDI** | National Democratic Institute |
| **NGO** | Non-governmental organisation |
| **NGU** | National Guard of Ukraine |
| **NPU** | National Police of Ukraine |
| **OECD DAC** | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee |
| **OHCHR** | Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights |
| **PAR** | Public administration reform |
| **PwD** | People with disabilities |
| **SBGS** | State Border Guard Service of Ukraine |
| **SDGs** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SES** | State Emergency Service of Ukraine |
| **Sida** | Swedish International Development Agency |
| **SMS** | State Migration Service |
| **STEM** | Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics |
| **TVET** | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UNECE** | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| **UNFPA** | United Nations Population Fund |
| **UNICEF** | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| **UNSCR** | United Nations Security Council Resolution(s) |
| **UN Women** | The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women |
| **USAID** | United States Agency for International Development |
| **UWF** | Ukrainian Women’s Fund |
| **VRU** | Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine |
| **WHO** | World Health Organisation |
| **WPS** | Women, peace and security |

## 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Methodology

The methodology for Country Gender Profile (CGP) combines various types of methods to make this complex analysis. Given that the scope of assessment encompasses all aspects of gender equality in the country, including public sector, private sector, NGOs, academia, and public sentiment, the methods to be employed for the assessment aim for holistic overview of all possible gender implications of the all sectors. The selected methodology of assessment aims to enable the development of recommendations for producing Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) for the EU Delegation, as well as the recommendations for the EUD on supporting the Government of Ukraine (hereinafter the Government) and the civil society in terms of gender mainstreaming.

Specifically, the methods used were desk review, surveys (both online and offline), public opinion polls and interviews/focus-groups with experts and representatives of the sectors for which sex-disaggregated statistics and data on gender equality is lacking, as well as peer review of the findings to be included in the CGP.

The framework for methodology of gender analysis is rooted in the European Commission GAP III Brief n.1. Gender country profile and gender sector analysis (February 2021). This paper provides a practical guidance for carrying out gender analysis to inform country gender profile. As requested by the brief, the Country Gender Profile will: i) Provide account of country’s legal and political context related to gender equality, ii) Identify and document key gender discrepancies, barriers and challenges focusing on the thematic areas of GAP III; iii) Collect available gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data in all areas covered by the profile; iv) Identify key entry points and opportunities for gender interventions; v) Provide an overview of specific conflict-related and pandemic-related gender issues; vi) Map key actors operating on gender equality; vii) Propose conclusions and recommendations for EUD in terms of CLIP and support to the Government and civil society.

Specific methods used are listed as follows:

1. *Desk review*. During the desk review, the available surveys, statistical data, legislation, assessments and reports on gender equality in Ukraine, and on gender aspects of sectors listed in the outline were reviewed and analysed. These sources cover the period of 2018-2021. Wherever possible, priority will be given to the most up-to-date data and information. Official statistical data on demographics, education, employment, gender pay gap, access to decision-making in public service were augmented by surveys conducted by private research companies and international organisations. All available recent gender surveys produced by the Government, international development partners and other stakeholders were collected, and their findings are summarised in the Country Gender Profile.

Where gender statistics or sex-disaggregated data is not available, it should be *inter alia* considered as part of intervention and planning to support the development of such data.

1. *Interviews and focus groups with* experts and representatives of selected sectors were/will be used to amplify data collected through desk review. In fact, for certain sectors such as women’s entrepreneurship; gender in green transition; gender in digital transformations, statistical data and quality analysis this type of data is still lacking.

At the interviews and focus groups, the discussions are to be structured by the moderator to collect insights on stereotypes around women and men in specific sectors, barriers and obstacles that men and women face, patterns of gender differences in these sectors, reasons for inequality, etc.

1. *Online survey* of experts and representatives of selected sectors will also be used to collect data on issues/sectors where statistical data and detailed information is missing. The surveys will be administered online among the experts and professionals who have profound expertise in certain sectors and can identify stereotypes around women and men in specific sectors, barriers and obstacles men and women face, patterns of gender differences in these sectors, reasons for inequality, women’s and men’s representation in the sector, shares of women and men in decision-making, etc.

The questionnaires for the surveys will be developed by the team of analysts based on the findings of desk review and interviews and focus groups. They will contain both closed- and open-ended questions.

Surveys will be conducted, and their findings will be analysed by the EU4GE Reform Helpdesk expert and researches contracted by UNFPA. The responsible parties will divide questions/topics per the distribution of sections of the CGP to be covered by EU4GE Reform Helpdesk and UNFPA.

1. *Public opinion poll*. For certain sectors such as women’s entrepreneurship; gender in health; gender in green transition; gender in digital transformations, public opinion polls will be conducted to collect data on public perception of gender equality, time-use and other dimensions critical to assess gender equality in society.

The poll should include questions to answers that will enable analysis of men’s and women’s engagement in care economy, health and sports practices, as well as public perception of women in politics and business, of gender policies, and of division of household and care roles between women and men. Final questionnaire for public opinion poll/survey will be developed by the research company contracted by UNFPA. The sample for public opinion poll should be representative in terms of sex, age groups, size of settlement and macro-regions of Ukraine (from 1,800 to 2,000 respondents).

The research company will also provide field data collection and data analysis.

# 2. National context

## 2.1. Gender aspects of demographic situation

As of 1 January 2021, the population of Ukraine is 41.59 million[[1]](#footnote-2). Almost a third of the population lives in rural areas (30.7% or 13 million people), and 32.7% of all households are rural. Ukraine’s population has been in decline since the early 2000s, and the country is also experiencing a demographic shift in the form of rural depopulation. The decrease in the share of people living in rural areas has been driven by economic downturns, rural poverty and a worsening of the social conditions in rural areas. Negative rural population growth is in part a factor of economic migration (both domestically and abroad) and declining birth rates. From 2000-2017, the number of live births in rural areas decreased from 147,100 to 126,100 while the numbers remained almost consistent for urban areas[[2]](#footnote-3).

Across all age groups, women account for 53.7% of the total population and 52.9% of the total rural population (of the 13.1 million rural residents, 6.9 million are women)[[3]](#footnote-4). Women in Ukraine have a longer average life expectancy than men, and the gap is ten years for the rural population (the life expectancy for rural women is 76 years as compared to 65.6 years for rural men[[4]](#footnote-5)). Women make up for two thirds of the population of Ukraine over the age of 65[[5]](#footnote-6) and 62% of the total number of pensioners[[6]](#footnote-7). Due to their longer life expectancy (and perhaps also due to the fact the men dominate among those who move from the villages, including abroad), elderly women are seen as the typical rural residents. In rural areas, of the population aged 65 and above, 67% are women; this figure increases to 74% for those aged 80 and over[[7]](#footnote-8).

According to national household data, women and men are almost equally represented as heads of households. A number of women-headed households are, in fact, households in which there are no men. For instance, of all single-parent households in Ukraine, from 90% in rural areas to 95% in urban areas are single mothers[[8]](#footnote-9). Furthermore, if considering age groups, women only outnumber men as heads of households when they have reached retirement age or older, which reflects women’s average longer life expectancies.

## 2.2. Gender-sensitive country poverty profile

Ukraine has made progress in reducing poverty owing to a two-fold increase in the minimum wage starting in January 2017. This has been a major factor in decreasing monetary poverty. The balance between the minimum wage and social transfers was sustained in 2018–2019 which ensured a further decline in monetary poverty but at a slower pace (Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture, 2020).

The decline has continued since then for both the urban and rural populations. However, considerable disparities in poverty rates exist, with a higher incidence of poverty in rural locations. While the declining poverty rate is a positive trend, a considerably large proportion of the population continues to live below the subsistence minimum, which is calculated by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine to reflect monthly changes in consumer prices.

Rural poverty is connected to a lack of employment opportunities and is also exacerbated by property rights restrictions, namely a moratorium on the sale of land. Rural areas are characterised by non-monetary poverty and a “family’s residence in a rural area makes their risk of non-monetary poverty 2.5 times higher than average in Ukraine”[[9]](#footnote-10). Non-monetary poverty includes poverty of living conditions, also described as deprivation, social exclusion and insecurity. Deprivation is felt more acutely by rural residents who lack access to basic goods including food and non-food goods, basic infrastructure and services (such as medical, educational and social services, as well as transport links, clean water and sanitation) and opportunities for employment and social or community life.

Poverty is generally not considered to be “feminised” in Ukraine, meaning that when looking at the whole female and male populations, poverty rates hardly differ by sex. There are greater differences in the female and male populations when considering age groups, with women somewhat more likely to be impoverished at the beginning of their working lives and after retirement.

However, the proportion of women and men whose monthly income puts them below the poverty line or is below the subsistence minimum do not differ greatly.

Nonetheless, it can be argued that many of Ukraine’s poverty profiles are, in fact, gendered. Women are more likely to face multidimensional poverty. For instance, across the labour market, women’s average incomes (both from wages and pensions) are less than those of men. Poverty rates increase with the number of children within a household, and single female-headed households are especially at risk of poverty. Older women may also become impoverished having reached retirement age, due to a lifetime of lower earnings, smaller pensions and statistically longer life expectancy. This is especially the case for older women living alone. Women also depend more heavily on social benefits and services because they are generally responsible for household management and caregiving in the family – a reflection of gender stereotypes.

Rural women are especially vulnerable to poverty in its various forms: monetary poverty, multiple deprivations and social exclusion. In fact, many of these poverty “risk factors” are combined for the population of rural women. For instance, indicators of ageing show that the largest group of older persons in Ukraine are women living in rural areas, and the share of widowed older women is higher in rural than urban areas[[10]](#footnote-11). Factors that contribute to the specific issue of rural feminisation of poverty, such as low wages, informal and unpaid work, lack of accessibility to basic infrastructure and services, ageing and widowhood, are discussed in greater detail in following sections of this report.

## 2.3. Country ranking in international gender indices and ratings

Three major international indices that measure gender equality are the Global Gender Gap Report, Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index (GII).

The Global Gender Gap Report is annually produced by the World Economic Forum. In 2020, Ukraine’s score on this tool was 0.721 which corresponds to a rank of 74 out of 156 countries. Considering each dimension separately, Ukraine is the farthest from gender parity in the area of political empowerment, followed by access to economic opportunities (103rd rank)[[11]](#footnote-12).

Gender Development Index (GDI) assesses gender differences on how people are faring in a particular country against a global measure comparing the Human Development Index calculated separately for women and men in three dimensions. The women’s HDI value for Ukraine (2020) is 0.746 in contrast to 0.751 for men, and this results in a GDI value of 0.993[[12]](#footnote-13). Considering the three dimensions that constitute the GDI, women’s human development in Ukraine is hindered by their considerably more limited access to economic resources.

Gender Inequality Index (2020) placed Ukraine on the 74th rank with a total score of 0.284, highlighting that key challenges that lower Ukraine’s rating down are gender gaps in labour force participation rate and share of seats in the Parliament[[13]](#footnote-14).

## 2.4. Representation of women in decision-making

Women leaders continue to face barriers and remain underrepresented**,** particularly at the national level, in Government, political parties, and the Parliament.

Specifically, the current Parliament of 9th convocation is composed of 79% men and 21% women members of parliament (MPs). At the national level, the new Election Code (in force since 1 January 2020, will apply to the next elections scheduled for 2024) established the 40/60 gender quota in party electoral lists.

Since 2013, the bonus system for parties that ensure at least 30% same-sex representation among elected MPs was introduced, but apparently it did not affect women’s representation among the MPs elected from the party lists. At the local level, the 30/70 quota system has been in force since 2015. It concerns same sex representation in the electoral lists of candidates for members of local councils in multi-mandate constituencies.

However, participation of women in local decision-making remains the shape of a pyramid – the lower is the level of authority, the higher is the share of women represented there. In October 2020, the latest local elections took place. A 40% gender quota was applied – the parties could not get their electoral lists registered with the election committees unless they have at least two (2) candidates of different sex for every five (5) candidates on the list.

As a result, the number of women elected to local councils increased in the last local elections. In regional councils, 28.2% of recently elected members are women; in district councils, women make for 33.7% of members; in councils of settlements with more than 10,000 voters, women make 32.8% members; and in councils of settlements with up to 10,000 voters, 41.6%[[14]](#footnote-15).

The same kind of a pyramid is observed in the public service system. Representation of women in decision-making in executive authorities is also low. Although women generally predominate among civil servants, their representation is declining in senior management positions. Among civil servants holding “A” positions, women make up for only 33 percent (as of 2016)[[15]](#footnote-16). Among state secretaries of ministries, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, deputy state secretaries of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the share of women is only 8.3 percent (as of 2018)[[16]](#footnote-17).

One of the “promising” indicators of gender equality in judicial sector (and of women’s access to decision-making) is the ratio of men and women among judges. In Ukraine, women slightly outnumber men among judges (2,661 women and 2,361 men)[[17]](#footnote-18). However, among the leadership of judicial institutions, there are slightly more men, though this gap is not critical. At the recently established High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine, there are 24 men and 14 women judges.

At the amalgamated community level, the share of women in councils is 30-35% on average, although when it comes to the women’s representation as leaders of amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs), this number was as low as 18.9% in 2015, decreasing to 14.5% of ATCs in 2016 and 14.3% of ATCs in 2018[[18]](#footnote-19). Therefore, women tend to have poorer access to decision-making positions that are associated with resource control and distribution.

## 2.5. Donor interventions and cooperation on gender equality and women’s empowerment

Throughout the last several years, the key stakeholders involved in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in Ukraine include the Parliament, the Government, international development partners – EU Delegation, USAID, UN Women, Sida, CIDA, National Democratic Institute, UN Population Fund, International Renaissance Foundation, Heinrich Boll Foundation and others – as well as major Ukrainian women’s NGOs – Ukrainian Women’s Fund, La-Strada Ukraine, etc.

Similarly, actors in specific areas are present such as UNICEF (empowering and protecting girls), OHCHR (promoting women’s rights, in particular of female IDPs, women survivors of violence, etc.), UNDP, ILO and other UN agencies in Ukraine (in their respective sectors). In addition, national women’s NGOs that work with various target groups are active in this field, including Positive Women, Ukrainian Foundation of Public Health, Insight, Liga-life, Chirikli, etc.; and regional women’s NGOs – Vis (Vinnytsya), Successful Woman (Kherson), Parity (Zhytomyr), Women’s Perspectives (Lviv), Kharkiv Gender Centre and many other.

The Parliament has a Caucus on Equal Opportunities, and a number of MPs are extremely active at personal and institutional levels in promoting equal opportunities, addressing discrimination and sexism.

UN Women has a Strategy for 2018-2021 that encompasses three sectors: governance and participation (Women, particularly those facing compound discrimination, increasingly participate in and benefit from gender-responsive reforms); elimination of violence against women (Attitudes and behaviour related to women’s and girls’ rights to enjoy life free from GBV improved); and Women, Peace and Security (Enabling environment for implementation of the Women, Peace and Security commitments is created). The UN agency implements a number of major projects in these fields, including those aimed at capacity building of the Government. UN Women have also implemented HeforShe campaign in Ukraine that aims to engage men into gender transformations and women’s empowerment.

The National Democratic Institute runs several projects on women’s political empowerment at national and regional level ([Women Are 50% of Ukraine’s Success](http://50vidsotkiv.org.ua/)), working with the Parliament, prevention and countering discrimination in mass media and advertising, supporting women as experts in various fields ([Povaha](http://povaha.org.ua/)), etc. It has a wide network of contacts in the region, including but not limited to women’s NGOs.

USAID is consistently integrating gender approaches into every project it supports – from financial sector to agriculture, from healthcare to anti-corruption. It provides the UWF in supporting a project on economic empowerment of people affected by conflict which has a gender focus. USAID is supporting a project on civic engagement and strengthening civil society.

The EU Delegation has been an active supporter of gender equality transformations across all sectors in Ukraine over the last few decades. Specifically, it has been supporting gender mainstreaming in the Government, including the development of legal instruments, gender mainstreaming tools, capacity building, etc. The EU also helped integrate gender into the system of education by supporting gender examination of the textbooks, capacity building and gender sensitisation of educators and promoting informal gender education formats. It is also providing support to women’s organisations on various topics – from countering gender-based violence to addressing the women’s rights affected by COVID-19 crisis. Finally, the EU Delegation is engaged in dialogue with the Government on gender transformations at all the levels and in all sectors of governance, both directly and through supporting technical assistance projects implemented by international development partners and CSOs.

UN Population Fund is delivering large-scale [projects](http://www.unfpa.org.ua/unfpa_in_ukraine/projects.html) on promoting equal share of domestic and childcare responsibilities, responsible fathering, and prevention and responding gender-based violence with a focus on Donetsk and Luhansk regions. It raises gender sensitivity of general population and helps the Government address gender-based violence.

Sida supported UN Women, NDI and other development partners’ projects on gender equality and women’s empowerment. In the period between 2014-2020 it financed one of the largest gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) projects in the world – “Gender-responsive budgeting in Ukraine” project that had an impact on PFM reform in Ukraine.

# 3. Legal and institutional framework

## 3.1. International and regional commitments on GEWE and national legal framework on GEWE

Since 1995, Ukraine has undertaken international commitments on the promotion of women’s rights and developed a national legislative and policy framework with the same goal. Ukraine’s entrance into the European Union Association Agreement in 2014 was an additional impetus to advance gender equality commitments and ensure equal opportunities for both women and men.

The principle of equal rights of women and men before the law is enshrined in Ukraine’s 1996 Constitution (Art. 24), which provides for equal treatment (“no privileges or restrictions”) on the basis of sex and applies to political and cultural activity, education and training, employment and social security. Art. 24 also provides for special measures for the protection of work and health of women, such as pension privileges and measures that allow women to combine employment and motherhood.

In the legislative and policy evolution of the country, a considerable milestone within the national framework is represented by the adoption of Law “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” in 2005. The Law marks the passage from a focus on the formal aspects of equality (the absence of “privileges or restrictions”) to a proactive approach towards “the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of gender […and of] the disbalance between the opportunities of women and men to exercise equal rights”[[19]](#footnote-20), and therefore from a focus on equality of treatment to the one on equality of outcomes.

The adoption of the Law on the “Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine”[[20]](#footnote-21) of 2012, propelled by the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Visa Liberalisation Action Plan, proceeded further in this direction and equipped national gender machineries with a favourable legislative framework to operate in. In the attempt to comply with the EU directives on non-discrimination, the Law was further amended in 2014 and substantial work has been done by the Government to apply and promote the principle of non-discrimination in practice.

In recent years, a number of specific legal developments have been put in place to promote gender equality. While Ukraine has no specific legal requirements for economic empowerment of women, in 2017, the law that prohibited women from some 450 professions was abolished[[21]](#footnote-22). However, the legislation on employment is gender blind rather than gender sensitive.

In December 2017, Ukraine strengthened its legislation to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, including through criminalisation of the violence (came into effect in 2019)[[22]](#footnote-23), the legal framework still has a number of important limitations and cannot guarantee necessary protection to women.

In July 2019, the new Electoral Code was adopted that includes a 40% gender quota at the party lists for the parliamentary elections, as well as elections to regional and local councils. It sets a rule that two (2) out of every five (5) candidates in the party lists should be of different sex than other 3 candidates. For the parliamentary elections, the quota will be applied in 2024, while for the local elections, it was applied in October 2020 (please see Section 2.4 on Representation of women in decision-making above).

The most recent legal development in the field of gender equality is the package of amendments to legislation that extend the fathers’ entitlements to leaves to take care of children. It was adopted by the Parliament in April 2021[[23]](#footnote-24). The law provides for a 14-days leave for fathers during the first month after the childbirth and introduces equal rights of men and women to a parental leave until the child is 3 (previously, the law provided such right only to employed women, and if a mother was an entrepreneur, neither her no her partner had such a right. Now an employed father has the right to leave which is not conditional on his partner’s right to leave).

As in the case of anti-discrimination legislation, the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement triggered an active process of policy reform in the social sphere – informed by gender equality principles – which was initiated within the framework of Chapter 21, section V, on Employment, social policy and equal opportunities cooperation. Since 2014, quarterly reporting on the implementation plan of the Association Agreement has been undertaken. Meetings of the Expert Advisory Group on the implementation of the directions of Section III "Justice, Freedom and Security" and Chapter 21 “Co-operation in the Field of Employment, Social Policy and Equal Opportunities” of the Association Agreement take place regularly in the Government.

Ukraine ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981. Ukraine has submitted eight periodic reports on implementation of the treaty, the most recent of which was reviewed in 2017. Based on the Concluding observations provided by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2017, Ukraine has developed the National Action Plan on implementation of these Concluding Observations. Not only it is unprecedented for Ukraine, but also such NAPs are quite uncommon worldwide. Currently, Ukraine is preparing its 9th report. The report will be substantially grounded on the findings of monitoring of the NAP implementation.

Ukraine has also undertaken commitments to advance the agenda of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (in 2015), which includes several strategic objectives pertaining to the risk of poverty and social marginalisation; and a recommendation to governments to formulate and implement policies that enhance the access of women to decision-making, services and resources.

Regional instruments on gender equality that Ukraine is a part of or navigates around are the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence) and Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality.

Ukraine signed the Istanbul Convention in 2011 but failed to ratify it despite numerous attempts. While in 2017, the national law on preventing and combatting domestic violence was strengthened, including with a view to align it with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention (without ratification), the legal provisions still lack necessary mechanisms to provide effective accountability for perpetrators and protection to survivors of violence. In 2020, a petition to act on ratification of the Convention was signed by 25,000 Ukrainian citizens. Civil society and international development partners also widely call for the ratification of this instrument, but neither the President nor the Parliament has taken specific action on that since 2017.

In September 2020, Ukraine officially joined the Biarritz Partnership for Gender Equality upon initiative of the First Lady Olena Zelenska. Under this instrument, Ukraine undertakes commitments to achieve progress in five areas: a barrier-free public space friendly to families with children and low-mobility groups; teaching children the principles of equality between women and men; prevention of violence; reducing the pay gap between women and men; creating greater opportunities for men to care for children. In December 2020, the Government approved an Action Plan on implementation of these commitments[[24]](#footnote-25). Biarritz Partnership is yet another incentive for Ukraine to progress on gender equality in specific areas.

For Ukraine, closing gender gaps will be a key accelerator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. A UN-led Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission identified disparities in women’s economic and political participation and the persistence of discriminatory gender stereotypes as core issues that must be addressed in order to “unlock the full potential of both women and men” and to boost sustainable human development[[25]](#footnote-26). The Government of Ukraine has adapted the Sustainable Development Goals to the national context, set targets and established relevant baselines for monitoring. In addition to national priorities, a series of consultations were held in 2016 to help localise the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the regional level. Interestingly, during the consultations, the issue of gender equality (Goal 5) ranked low among both national and regional-level priorities (in the lower third of the 17 SDGs. However, the topics of gender equality and gender stereotypes were raised in connection with several other goals (for instance, in relation to education, decent work and economic growth, infrastructure, inclusion, health [elimination of hunger], and small business development). This seeming contradiction indicates that national work has so far “not emphasised gender equality as a tool for accelerating SDG progress” and, thus, gender equality and SDG 5 targets are not well integrated into the national policies.

On a positive note, the Parliament, the Government and specific Ministries have gradually taken the lead in developing and promoting new laws and amendments to effective legislation that strengthen the national gender legal framework in the last three (3) to four (4) years (prior to this, almost every legal development was preceded by the pressure from women’s/civil society organisations supported by international development partners).

## 3.2. National gender policies

In terms of national gender policies, the Government has three (3) National Action Plans (NAPs) in force: the State Gender Equality Strategy (National Action Plan) until 2021, the NAP on implementation of UNSCR 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” for the period 2021-2025, and the NAP on implementation of Concluding observations of CEDAW Committee to the Eighth Periodic Report of Ukraine until 2021. Certain sectorial/agency instruments are also available, including the Gender Action Plan of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Gender Action Plan of the National Guard of Ukraine, etc. In 2020, the Government evaluated the progress of the NAP on implementation of UNSCR 1325 until 2020 and approved the NAP for the subsequent five years (2021-2025).

National policy aims to address a wide-ranging set of issues affecting rural women, from increasing their awareness of their legal rights and combating gender stereotypes to improving access to educational opportunities, medical services and basic infrastructure and combating poverty.

These instruments provide a roadmap for implementation of specific actions for women’s empowerment and help put gender issues higher on the Government’s agenda.

At the same time, while theoretically, the reforms in Ukraine should incorporate a gender perspective, gender mainstreaming has been largely absent, and the reforms almost entirely exclude a gender equality perspective and links to the women’s rights international and national commitments. Women’s groups and organisations are not a part of any decision-making forums or consultations over the reforms[[26]](#footnote-27). In addition to limited capacity to undertake gender mainstreaming within the sectors in which reforms are taking place, government officials are often embarrassed to raise gender issues related to hard sectors, such as industry and energy, that are not traditionally associated with women[[27]](#footnote-28).

The Government is currently developing the National Gender Strategy until 2030 and the Action Plan on its Implementation for the period 2022-2024. The Strategy is expected to be the main framework document that will guide gender policies of the country in an upcoming decade. The Government is currently in the process of multi-stakeholder consultations to identify the priorities that should be integration in the National Gender Strategy. The consultations are organised on 4 topics:

* Gender equality mechanism (national gender machinery);
* Peace and justice;
* Human development;
* Social and economic development.

## 3.3. Gender dimension of national development strategies and gender mapping of national reforms

While Ukraine has not adopted a comprehensive document to cover all the reforms taking place in Ukraine, there is an array of strategic instruments that set priorities for the reforms. These are:

* Action Plan on the implementation of the Association Agreement with the EU (Resolution of the CMU #1106 of 25.10.2017);
* Sustainable Development Strategy “Ukraine-2020” approved by the Presidential Decree #5 of 12.01.2015;
* National Economic Strategy until 2030 approved by the Resolution of the CMU #179 of 03.03.2021
* Sectorial reform documents;
* a number of reforms are also mentioned (or developed/specified) in the Priority Action Plan of the Government for 2021, approved by the Resolution of the CMU #276 of 24.03.2021;
* national programmes on general intersectoral priorities for industrial development that stimulate processes of innovation, scientific and technological, export-oriented, energy-saving industrial development, as well as development of human capital;
* national programmes in the field of social development, health care, environmental protection, etc.

This framework offers a comprehensive vision of reforms in all sectors of national development. They aim at spurring economic development by liberalisation of business, tax and fiscal environment, improving the efficiency of public administration and services provided by the Government, delegating the authority to sub-national level, modernising healthcare, education and other social sectors, social cohesion and recovery in conflict-affected areas.

Gender has gradually become mainstreamed into strategic reform documents over the past three (3) to five (5) years. In terms of gender mainstreaming, the reforms can be divided into three types:

1. Gender equality is explicitly mentioned as a specific priority or approach to be used in the reform. It applies to the following reforms: PAR, education, development of entrepreneurship, law enforcement and defence reform;
2. Gender is not explicitly mentioned, but at the practical level, gender implications are considered and partially implemented. It is true for the reforms such as: judicial, healthcare, social policy and labour, digitalisation reforms.
3. Gender implications are not considered in the reforms neither at the strategic, nor at the implementation level.

However, even in the reforms where opportunities of gender mainstreaming are capitalised on, much more effort should be taken both at the level of conceptualising the reform (in terms of gender analysis) and in hands-on implementation – that is, sometimes gender mainstreaming to a reform only happens by adding the words “considering gender equality issues,” without no real action being taken.

Second critical consideration is that the reforms pertaining to human capital development (healthcare, education) and security and defence sector – as opposed to economic (especially land, energy, labour market and pension) – vectors appear to be more gender-sensitive. Land, energy, labour market, pension and environment protection reforms seem to fall flat in terms of benefitting from gender mainstreaming.

Third, a reform seems to become more gender-sensitive as long as international development partners that support this reform put an emphasis on mainstreaming gender into this reform.

The Government of Ukraine is gradually starting to demonstrate commitment to mainstream gender into the reforms, especially in the sectors that have accumulated gender sensitivity and institutional memory on gender mainstreaming, such as PAR, education, law enforcement and defence. A major role is played by the Government Commissioner on Gender Equality (and her Office) who was able to sustain the changes in the Government in 2019 and early 2020 and keeps pushing the Ministries to consider gender implications in the reform planning and implementation, as well as provide gender expertise necessary for that.

The Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine adopted Methodical recommendations on gender impact assessment of sectoral reforms (#257 of 14 April 2020). Nevertheless, there is no available information on how ministries use this document in the reform process. It should also be emphasised that the new framework document that lays behind numerous reforms – the National Economic Strategy until 2030 – includes findings of gender analysis and suggests an array of recommendations on gender mainstreaming into a wide range of reforms – from the development of entrepreneurship to digitalisation.

In addition, Ukraine is currently implementing three National Action Plans on gender equality:

* National Action Plan (State Programme) on Ensuring Equal Rights Opportunities of Men and Women until 2021 (the NAP for next programmatic period is currently under development);
* National Action Plan on Implementation of CEDAW Concluding Observations to Ukraine Eighth Periodic Report until 2021;
* National Action Plan on implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security until 2025.

However, only the latest NAP has a specific focus on mainstreaming gender into law enforcement and military reforms. Other NAPs contain a number of important priorities, but mostly do not elevate them to the strategic reform level.

Having noted positive developments in terms of gender mainstreaming to the reforms, it is critical to highlight that only a few of the Ukrainian reforms are partially gender-sensitive at best, while others are gender-neutral or may even make disproportionate impact on women and men. The Government still has broad opportunities to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in the reforms at all levels:

1. gender equality in decision-making over the reforms;
2. gender analysis to identify existing inequalities and anticipated impact of reforms on men and women;
3. gender mainstreaming tools to make sure that women and men equally contribute to and benefit from the reforms.

Considering available institutional and legal framework in Ukraine, as well as being equipped with EU GAP III, the EUD is in the position to spur gender mainstreaming across the national reform agenda, as it supports the Government in all the sectors/reforms.

## 3.4. Gender implications of decentralisation reform

While the transfer of funding and authority from the central to the local level in the context of decentralisation should ideally give women more opportunities to voice their priorities in local planning, so far “the decentralisation policy making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are not guided by the international gender equality and human rights norms and standards, or by Ukraine’s international commitments, or by the respective national policy and legal frameworks of Ukraine,”[[28]](#footnote-29) and therefore, “does not provide for any formal participation of women’s groups or disadvantaged women facing multiple forms of discrimination.”[[29]](#footnote-30)

One of the critical negative outcomes of a gender-blind approach has been the “sharp reduction in funding for social services – the closure of pre-school/childcare centres and cuts in nursing staff at clinics, when local authorities allocate funds to other projects”[[30]](#footnote-31). In addition to deteriorated access to social services critical to women as their main users, women are the majority of those who lose jobs in the amalgamated communities when schools, kindergartens, family doctor clinics and out-patient service providers are closed as a result of the reform.

As women are under-represented in local decision-making positions, they are not in a position to influence reforms. Most local authorities have suboptimal understanding of or lack of experience in conducting gender analysis or gender mainstreaming. Importantly, the “Government and development partners are not always mindful of the risks to avoid “elite capture” where only a small, privileged part of the population is given a voice,”[[31]](#footnote-32) a voice that may not be representative of larger groups of women and vulnerable groups.

A range of projects implemented by development partners (UN Women, NDI, USAID, Sida and others) presents positive examples of gender mainstreaming in decentralisation. These projects include capacity building and experts’ support on gender-responsive governance, gender-responsive budgeting, gender analysis of budget programmes, gender-sensitive services, etc. Outcomes of these initiatives are associated with local financial decisions that benefit various vulnerable groups, including disadvantaged families, people with disabilities, etc.[[32]](#footnote-33)

## 3.5. Institutional framework/machinery

At the institutional level, gender machinery is composed of:

* The Vice Prime Minister for European Integration who oversees gender policy development and implementation;
* Government Commissioner for Gender Equality, who in Ukrainian realities is the key driving force for gender transformations at the legislative, strategic and executive level across the Government;
* Ministry of Social Policy as the central executive agency on gender policies;
* Fifty-six (56) authorised officials (usually Deputy Head of a government agency) who are responsible for coordination of gender policies in the respective agency;
* Thirty-three (33) structural units on gender equality in the government agencies;
* gender advisers in government agencies (currently there are over ninety (90) of them, in the Ministry of Defence system there are fifty-nine (59) gender advisers);
* Ten (10) advisory councils and working groups in the government agencies;
* Twenty-five (25) authorised officials (Deputy Heads of Regional State Administrations) in every region of Ukraine;
* Twenty-five (25) structural units of Regional State Administrations responsible for gender policies (usually these are from the Department of Social Protection of Population);
* Eight (8) gender advisers to the Heads of Regional State Administrations;
* Twenty-five (25) regional advisory councils on family, gender policy, prevention of gender-based violence and trafficking in persons.

A critical concern around the institutional gender framework is how the authorities and its officials understand gender equality. Firstly, the transition from formal egalitarian treatment (no differential treatment, no privileges or restrictions) to substantial equality of opportunities (removal of barriers, recognition of indirect and systemic forms of discrimination and disadvantage), as described above within the context of legislative evolution, appears to be happening also at the level of individual mind-sets among government officials, perhaps also as a reflection of a broader societal and cultural shift gradually taking place. Such transition not being complete, however, appears to generate ambiguities in the interpretation and especially application of equality principles in the practice of policy design, drafting and implementation.

The prevailing understanding of gender equality within the Government is still one that merely considers the absence of open discrimination and differential treatment between the sexes; translated into positive terms, it is understood to aim at – and manifest itself mainly as – numerical parity[[33]](#footnote-34). On the other hand, the ability of going beyond and considering how societal roles ascribed to women and men often place them in different vantage points to access equal rights and social benefits still belongs to a minority of government officials (evidently, most of them work in gender units or serve as gender advisers within the government system).

## 3.6. Financing for gender equality and gender-responsive budgeting

Over the recent years, Ukraine has achieved visible progress in gender-responsive budgeting. The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, with the support of the “Gender-responsive budgeting in Ukraine” project, funded by Sida, implemented GRB within the PFM reform in order to ensure equal rights and opportunities for both women and men in the budget process. The first initiatives to introduce GRB[[34]](#footnote-35) in Ukraine were taken in the early 2000s, and they were implemented by NGOs, with the support of donors and international projects. Today, Ukraine is considered one of the international leaders in the implementation of GRB. At a Conference hosted by the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, former Managing Director of the IMF, said: *“I take my hat off to what Ukraine and Austria are doing when implementing the GRB!”*

However, it should be noted that the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its Concluding Observations on the Eighth Periodic Report of Ukraine of 03 March 2017 (Paragraph 23 b), made recommendations to State Party to ensure effective coordination and develop a gender mainstreaming strategy to include gender budgeting, which can be used in all strategies and programmes at all levels in order to ensure equal opportunities for women in all aspects of life.

The unified GRB approach was developed and implemented in Ukraine by three development partners: GRB Project in Ukraine, financed by Sida, UN Women and Friedrich Ebert Foundation. This approach applies gender analysis and gender mainstreaming in sectoral budget programmes to ensure fair distribution of public funds and equal access of women, men, girls and boys to education, health, sport social and other services.

The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine with the support of the “GRB project in Ukraine” introduced and applied a gender approach in the budget process at both the state and local level. This allowed Ukraine to rank higher among other states. The Ministry of Finance of Ukraine included the gender-responsive approach in regulations governing the budget process, in particular:

* the implementation of GRB is included in the objectives of the Public Finance Management System Reform Strategy for 2017-2020, through which the integration of the gender-responsive approach into the budget process increased the efficiency and quality of public services provided, taking into account the needs of socio-demographic groups (including by gender) strengthened the accountability of spending units and budget transparency;
* the gender approach is included in the draft of Public Finance Management System Reform Strategy for 2021-2025 at the state and local levels. Each key spending unit obliged to provide gender analysis at least one budget programme per year;
* the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, by the Decree of 02 January 2019, approved the Guidelines for the application of the gender-responsive approach in the budget process, which are used by the key spending units and other budget process participants in order to take into account gender in planning, implementing and reporting on budget programmes[[35]](#footnote-36);
* the Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine on Performance Indicators of the Budget Program No. 1536 of 10 December 2010 stipulates that quality indicators should highlight the benefits for society from the budget program implementation, including in terms of ensuring gender equality[[36]](#footnote-37);
* the Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine on Reviews of the State Budget Expenditures No. 446 of 23 October 2019 approved that the results of gender analysis of budget programmes should be taken into account when analysing the efficiency, effectiveness and economic feasibility of relevant state budget expenditures[[37]](#footnote-38);
* the Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine on Approval of Guidelines for Preparation of the Medium-Term Local Budgets in 2019 No. 130 of 29 March 2019 envisages the use of gender mainstreaming in the forecasting phase aimed at reducing gender gaps, mitigation of negative and strengthening positive trends in the relevant field/sector in terms of meeting gender needs and gender interests[[38]](#footnote-39);
* the Decree of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine ‘Procedure for Evaluation of the Budget Program Effectiveness by Key Spending Units’ No. 223 of 19 May 2020 envisages the use of gender budget programme analysis as one of the sources of information for performance evaluation; assessment of the effectiveness of public services, satisfaction of needs, interests of recipients/users and providers of public services, including by gender and other characteristics; as well as measures to improve the quality and efficiency of public services – study of needs and interests of recipients/users of public services, including the introduction of relevant surveys (questionnaires), conducting gender budget program analysis[[39]](#footnote-40);
* the Letter of Instruction of the Ministry of Finance to the key spending units (KSUs) on the preparation of budget requests for 2021-2023 includes provisions on gender mainstreaming;
* the information on the application of the gender responsive approach in the budget process is included in the Explanatory Note to the Draft Law of Ukraine on the State Budget of Ukraine for 2021.

Spending units of the state and local budgets regular practice GRB, as a result took the following actions:

* in 2014-2020 more than 100 *state budget* programmes were analysed from gender perspective - on agricultural policy, security and defence, education and science, health care, social protection and social security, youth policy, physical culture and sports, culture and arts, etc.;
* during the preparation of budget requests for 2021-2023, gender was mainstreamed by 29 (35%) of KSUs of the state budget under 41 budget programmes;
* 75% of programmes financed from *local budgets* were analysed from the gender perspective, as a result of which 1,075 programmes became gender sensitive in 2020;
* based on the results of the gender analysis of budget programmes, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine and the State Statistics Service of Ukraine amended more than 30 regulations on gender mainstreaming.

At the same time, there are some challenges for GRB implementation, the main ones being:

* Low level of awareness among the civil servants and local government officials of gender equality policy. Despite the fact that the gender equality policy has been implemented over the past 25 years and Ukraine has a strong legal framework, a critical mass of civil servants and local government officials have distorted perceptions and do not share the goals and values of gender equality;
* Limited understanding of GRB by the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine as a financial tool to increase budget efficiency, rather than a tool to achieve the goals of gender equality and empowerment of women. Such an approach leaves behind the strategic gender interests, namely, changing social norms that discriminate women and restrict their access to certain areas of activity and decision-making, as well as hinder their personal realisation;
* Lack of legislative support for the use of GRB. The requirements for the use of gender approach in the budget process, which the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine included in regulations, are of a recommendatory rather than mandatory nature. This prevents using of GRB in sustainable way;
* Formal use of performance based method – the latter has not yet become a powerful tool for ensuring the link between the financing of the budget programme and the final socially significant outcomes expected from its implementation. As before, budget programmes are mostly focused on the maintenance of institutions rather than on the provision of public services; it is difficult to trace in them the focus on meeting the needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys;
* Non-acceptance of changes by civil servants and local government officials who are very reluctant to change the established approaches, procedures and formats in the development of documents used in the budget process;
* Staff turnover leading to the loss of institutional memory, as well as decline of responsibility for previously made decisions;
* Lack of gender-disaggregated data and gender statistics is an obstacle to conducting a qualitative gender analysis of programmes funded from the state and local budgets;
* Weak coordination between all stakeholders on the cross-cutting comprehensive integration of gender in strategies, policies, programmes and projects leading to the fact that the application of GRB is not systemic, but remains at the discretion of individual spending units.

Nevertheless, gender-responsive budgeting has strongly entered the PFM system at the state and local levels in Ukraine due to its orientation on improvement of the targeting, efficiency and transparency of budget spending.

A full analysis of national public allocations and expenditures on gender equality objectives is not possible due to the lack of data and publicly available information accessible online. At present, and in the absence of a monitoring system to track and report on overall gender-responsive financing, it is also impossible to provide a ballpark figure for the total volume of financial resources that are invested in gender equality priorities by the Government of Ukraine.[[40]](#footnote-41)

Direct financing of the gender equality policy is provided though budgeting of the State Programme for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men up to 2021, the State Social Programme for combating trafficking in human beings for the period up to 2020, the National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” for the period up to 2020, as well as the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Recommendations set forth in the Concluding Observations to the 8th Periodic Report of Ukraine on CEDAW for the period up to 2021.

UN Women analysis of the financial resources finds that, with a total estimate of UAH 51.5 million (or USD 1.8 million), from the state budget, allocated for the implementation of key gender equality plans and strategies in the period 2016-2021, domestic public finance is insufficient to meet the country’s ambitious gender priorities, while significantly lagging behind the USD 433 million on average per year in gender equality focused official development assistance for Ukraine committed by the members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2016-2017.[[41]](#footnote-42)

# 4. Gender analysis by sectors

## 4.1. Gender and employment and gender pay gap

Gender inequality in economic opportunities as well as discrimination in recruitment and at work have limited women’s access to employment, income and career promotion. According to the State Statistics Service, Women‘s participation in the labour market is 55.7% compared to 61.4% for men[[42]](#footnote-43). At the same time, the GII highlights the 16% gender gap in the labour force participation rate (47% of women, 63% of men)[[43]](#footnote-44).

The legislation does not create any barriers or impediments for women or men to undertake any position in any profession at the labour market, neither in public nor in private sector. In 2017, the legal act that prohibited women from some 450 professions was abolished[[44]](#footnote-45). However, the legislation on women’s employment is gender blind rather than gender sensitive, as it does not address existing imbalances and women’s underrepresentation in certain economic areas.

Similar to other countries of the region, in Ukraine, the information about women’s and men’s engagement in the informal labour sector is lacking. Specifically, the agriculture sector – that is known for accommodating many informal employments worldwide – needs to be researched further in Ukraine. According to FAO, men have a more diverse profile even in informal work (which also includes construction work) and rural women have very limited options[[45]](#footnote-46).

The State Statistics Service annually collects sex-disaggregated data on wages per sectors of economy and per regions[[46]](#footnote-47). This information is calculated based on the results of the state statistical observation “Observation of Enterprises on Labour-related Issues” which covers legal entities and separate branches of legal entities with 10+ employees.

In 2018, the gender pay gap in Ukraine reported by the State Statistics Service was around 20.4%. However, in certain sectors of economic activity, the gap is more than 35%. For example, the share of wages of women compared to men’s in postal and courier activities amounted to 58.9%, in financial and insurance activities – 63.2%, in the arts, sports, entertainment and recreation sector – an astounding 64.9%. The smallest gaps are in sectors with the lowest remuneration (8% in agriculture) and public sector dominated by women – education, public management and healthcare – 5%, 10% and 11% respectively[[47]](#footnote-48).

Over the past 12 years (since 2009), no substantive progress in reducing the gender pay gap has been observed[[48]](#footnote-49) (in 2009 it amounted to 23%). Differences in wages are largely due to occupational segregation, with women being concentrated in sectors with relatively high educational requirements, but lower wages, primarily in the public sector. System barriers lead to horizontal and vertical occupational gender segregation in the labour market, with women concentrated at lower remuneration levels.

At the same time, there are significant data limitations in terms of sex-disaggregated data on wages.

Firstly, there is no representative data available about the share of the gender wage gap that can be explained by objective factors such as education, occupational segregation, etc. as opposed to discriminatory factors on the basis of gender, nor is there paid/unpaid work connection analysis for Ukraine[[49]](#footnote-50).

Secondly, since the substantial part of the economy is informal[[50]](#footnote-51), official wage statistics does not accurately reflect real wage differences between men and women. Certain businesses do not report their economic activities – and, consequently, salaries paid to their employees. Other businesses pay part of the salary officially (often, in the amount of minimum wage) and report it, while the other part is paid in envelopes, not reported and not accounted for. Women are considered more vulnerable to such kind of violations, since they are less prone to negotiate higher salaries than men[[51]](#footnote-52). There is no credible way to measure this phenomenon and reliably assess the gender pay gap in shadow employment. Therefore, it is likely that the real pay gap between men and women is higher than officially reported by the State Statistics Service.

Finally, it should be noted that the gender pay gap is used as an important indicator. For example, it is included in the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework of the National Action Plan on Implementation of Concluding Observations on the Eighth Periodic Report of Ukraine under CEDAW for 2018-2021 and other M&E systems of both governmental, non-governmental and international agencies as a key tool to measure gender equality progress. Moreover, in 2017-2019 this indicator has been increasingly referred to by the Prime Minister, Minister for Social Policy and other top officials as the manifestation of gender inequality and the challenge to be addressed, holding a promise that addressing the gender pay gap will become one of the priorities for the Government in the upcoming years.

## 4.2. Women’s entrepreneurship

Women are also underrepresented in other important areas of decision-making. Specifically, representation of women in economic decision-making (measured as participation in ownership and top management) is also suboptimal. Only one in four top managers in companies are women (when it comes to large companies, the share of women top managers is less than 10%)[[52]](#footnote-53), and only 13% companies have majority of women in the management. Share of companies with women participation in ownership is 30%[[53]](#footnote-54). At the same time, women make up to 46% individual entrepreneurs[[54]](#footnote-55) where business is smaller in size and where turnover and income are lower. In addition, numerous expert statements conclude that women entrepreneurs have limited access to credit and other financial instruments. Only 61% women had an account at a financial institution, compared to 73% men[[55]](#footnote-56). Yet another factor is stereotypes against women in business and gender segregation of business niches.

According to the Amway Entrepreneurial Spirit Index (AESI) – calculated as aggregated value of three parameters: desire to do business, feasibility for business in terms of skills and resources, and stability against social pressure – women in Ukraine are mostly pessimistic about their chances to start up a business (this survey did not differentiate business by sector). As few as 24% Ukrainian women considered themselves capable of running business (compared to 41% women globally)[[56]](#footnote-57). Lack of financial resources/ venture capital is named as the top reason for their unwillingness to start up a business.

According to numerous anecdotal evidence and expert findings, women entrepreneurs often face gender inequality, and in 2020-2021, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting quarantine and lockdown became an additional obstacle for women who run their businesses, as 17% self-employed women and 12% women who were running their own businesses lost the opportunity to work and, consequently, their income[[57]](#footnote-58). COVID-19 pandemic affected women entrepreneurs more than men because more women run business in areas such as hospitality (restaurants, hotels), small retail trade that were most affected by the lockdown.

Since a survey that would identify the barriers that women face in entrepreneurship has never been conducted, the findings and conclusions are mostly based on anecdotal evidence. This Country Gender Profile could be reinforced by a targeted survey among women entrepreneurs on the problems that they encounter in access to finance, technologies, services, as well as a survey among general population to measure the prevalence of stereotypes about women in business.

## 4.3. Gender and health sector

From a health equity perspective, there are several critical imbalances that impact both women’s and men’s effective access to health services and participation in the health workforce. They include, but are not limited to:

1) Sex is one of the decisive factors in terms of barriers the population faces in access to healthcare. According to a 2017 survey, almost 70% women and 40% men report that the main barrier to healthcare is “health services being too expensive.”[[58]](#footnote-59) While there are many factors influencing why such large gender disparity exists, the final outcome is that women are affected more financially than men[[59]](#footnote-60).

2) Women face corruption in healthcare more often than men. While one of key reasons is that women engage with the healthcare system more often than men on average, it contributes to corruption experience in dealing with the healthcare system. Specifically, over 50% women and 37% men reported offering a bribe or being asked for a bribe when receiving health services (during the 12 months before participating in a survey, 2018)[[60]](#footnote-61). This trend is also supported by preliminary findings of informal payment survey conducted by the Health Reform Support (HRS) project that proved that women and patients belonging to vulnerable populations reported paying informal payments more often than men/general surveyed sample.

3) COVID-19 increased the gap in access to healthcare. In spring 2020, 79% of women had difficulty purchasing medical supplies, masks and gloves, 6% were not able to receive medical care, and 10% waited longer than usual for medical care[[61]](#footnote-62).

4) COVID-19 may also be putting women at a greater risk of infection, due to a greater proportion of women working as front line health workers. Women account for 82% of total health and social workers in Ukraine, compared to the average of 70% worldwide[[62]](#footnote-63) which makes them more exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

5) Men’s average life expectancy at birth is 10 years shorter than women’s: 76.7 years for women and 66.7 years for men, data as of the end of 2018[[63]](#footnote-64).

6) There is anecdotal evidence that men may have less interest in understanding of their rights as health care consumers and have different expectations from healthcare providers as it pertains to their care. These attitudes tend to be universal, as international trends (noted by the World Health Organisation - WHO) systematically show that men visit doctors significantly less often than women[[64]](#footnote-65),[[65]](#footnote-66). Unsurprisingly, this trend is found in Ukraine as well[[66]](#footnote-67). There are multiple reasons for why this trend exists, but some of the most common include: first, men tend to self-rate their health higher than women, and thus do not feel the need to visit doctors; second, women globally tend to be caregivers of children, which means they are in a more regular interaction with healthcare facilities; finally, routine screenings for both reproductive health and cancers for women culminate in greater lifetime visits than men.

Gender analysis of health reform proves that the very sex in most cases is not a barrier in accessing healthcare. However, when coupled with other factors (i.e. age, residing in rural area, etc.), it may become such a barrier.

While the data on mortality and morbidity is available with sex disaggregation (including the prevalence of serious diseases among women and men), other critical data on gender in healthcare is missing, including women’s and men’s experiences of contacting healthcare system (quality of treatment, informal payment, etc.), as well as on women’s and men’s healthy lifestyle practices (physical exercising, healthy eating, regular check-ups, etc.). It limits the programming of gender priorities in the area of health.

## 4.4. Gender and education

In legal terms, all subjects in Ukrainian Universities and vocational institutions are equally open to women, men, girls and boys.

The greatest gender disparities in educational enrolment are seen in technical and vocational education and training (TVET). In the2017-2018 academic year, there was less than 40 percent of female students enrolled in such institutions, and a declining female enrolment has been a trend in Ukraine for a number of years. The continued decrease in the proportion of female students pursing TVET is associated with women’s preferences for tertiary education caused by a declined prestige of vocational training and their interest in higher education, as well as due to the persistent gender segregation of employment[[67]](#footnote-68).

Gender segregation in academic subjects occurs in both vocational and higher education and has a direct impact on the deepening occupational segregation and concentration of women in lower-paid sectors[[68]](#footnote-69). Female students are channelled toward the fields of health care (where women make 85% students), education (82%) and the humanities and arts (78%). These fields correspond to low growth areas in the labour market as they usually lead to jobs in the public sector. Male students predominate among those enrolled in technological and industrial fields, such as transport (90%), engineering (79%) and IT industry (75%)[[69]](#footnote-70). Low share of female students at these subjects is attributed *inter alia* to stereotypes in career choice – both those that the female high school graduates share themselves and that are imposed on them by their environment.

As having higher number of trained female cadre in industrial sectors is critical for increasing women’s participation in entrepreneurship, management and workforce of industrial companies and processes, the Government and international development partners may consider investing in the initiatives that encourage young women to choose industrial professions, especially engineering, manufacturing and other STEM-related specialties. An example may be partnering up with [Girls STEM](https://girls-stem.org/) – an initiative to inspire and encourage young girls to pursue STEM careers launched in 2016 by the Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility in Ukraine[[70]](#footnote-71).

One of the most critical priority of gender mainstreaming in education is overcoming gender stereotypes in education materials and processes. The entry point for gender mainstreaming in education is the human-focused and democratic transformation of the educational process. It is about making sure that both the content and teaching methods are based on respect for women and men, tolerance, equality between men and women, women's empowerment, and are free of any form of violence. The Ministry of Education and Science provides examination of educational curricula, textbooks and manuals for educational institutions in compliance with the principle of gender equality.

## 4.5. Women, peace and security

In 2016, Ukraine adopted its first National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 until 2020 and has since then taken action to improve women’s participation in peace processes, security and defence sector, including in terms of decision-making, and protecting women’s rights related to conflict and post-conflict contexts.

Over the period 2016-2020, a number of important achievements have been made.

Firstly, the idea that it is important to recognise and respond to the different needs of women, men, girls and boys in security and defence processes for strengthening the rule of law, democratic governance and gender equality has been promoted across various stakeholders – the authorities, law enforcement agencies, armed forces, NGOs, media, academia, civil society and wider populations.

Secondly, the representation of women in the security and defence sector has increased. In 2017, more than 450 positions in the law enforcement sector were opened for women (women could not apply for these positions before). Since the beginning of 2018, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has integrated gender into the process of collecting staff statistics, with sex-disaggregated data on 17 staff-related indicators now being available.

The share of women among law enforcement officers has been increasing (in the National Police of Ukraine (NPU) and the National Guard (NGU), by more than 1%, in the State Emergency Service (SES) by 5%. As of mid-2020, the share of women in the NPU has been 25.4%, in the NGU, 11.3%, in the SES, 20.7%, in the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine (SBGS), 26.2%, and in the State Migration Service (SMS) it is traditionally high at 78.7%. Also, positive dynamics is observed in the increase in the number of women at decision-making positions: in the National Police by 4% (now it is 17.7%), in the State Migration Service, by 2% (now 61.0%), in the National Guard of Ukraine – by 1.5% (now 6.6%), the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine and the State Migration Service of Ukraine, by 3% (now 12.9% and 20.5%, respectively)[[71]](#footnote-72).

When it comes to defence, the total number of women employed by the Armed Forces is currently 58,000 – it is almost 25% of the total number of employees of the Armed Forces. Out of them, over 30,000 women serve in the armed forces in military actions, and 28,000 are employed in non-military professions. Since 2016, the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces have adapted about 300 military facilities to the needs of women[[72]](#footnote-73).

Women make more than 10% of the total number of personnel (military servants and employees of the Armed Forces) involved in the Operation of United Forces in conflict area. In 2020, the share of girls enrolled in military universities was 13% of the total number of enrollers[[73]](#footnote-74). This figure is growing every year. Also, military education institutions started integrating gender component into their curricula.

Other national-level achievements include development and implementation of sectorial action plans on UNSCR 1325 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Guard, integrating gender into the curricula of police academy.

In 2020, the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 for the next strategic period (2021-2025) was drafted. One of key features of this NAP is that it capitalises on the experience of previous programmatic period. At the same time, the progress at the regional level remained uneven. The regional capacity to develop and implement the women, peace and security (WPS) policies has room for improvement, as well as the strategic vision on the importance of gender mainstreaming in security and peace processes and in wider regional development processes. The support to regional coalitions should be extended, taking into account lessons learned from previous program cycle. Moreover, there is a risk of backlash in promoting WPS agenda due to the conflicting priorities of the Government and lack of systems safeguarding gender policies.

## 4.6. Gender in green transition

Gender in green transition (and wider, in energy and environmental sectors) has never been a focus of research and policy planning in Ukraine. It is a relatively new topic for international development partners and especially for the Government. Therefore, very limited data is available for gender programming in green transition. Also, gender implications on climate change and green transition that are highlighted by international research – for example, women are more affected by climate change because they depend on natural resources more than men as they are primary caregivers – are not relevant to Ukraine, as women and men have fairly equal access to natural resources, and barriers to such access are associated with factors other than sex (lower economic status, residing in remote areas, etc.).

General trend is that women’s contributions to finding long-term solutions to climate change are often unrecognised, in part because women are often excluded from formal decision-making at the local, national and international levels. Namely, women are impacted on to a greater degree by insufficient heating (due to their larger share of domestic responsibilities), they are also more knowledgeable about the cost of heating (due to their role in paying bills), and employment in the district heating sector is male-dominated (especially in technical and managerial positions).

Thus, it is important to identify areas of green transition in which gender mainstreaming can bring positive results. For this, the body of knowledge on gender in green transition should be extended.

Available data include certain facts of women’s representation in the energy and environment protection sector. Gender balance in the energy sector of Ukraine is suboptimal. If in general, there is a balance in employment and women make up about half of those employed in the economy (54%), in energy, only one in four employees is a woman (24%)[[74]](#footnote-75). At the same time, women mostly work with administrative issues, in the field of sales and finance, and in technological processes their representation is even weaker.

In addition, women receive a lower salary than their male colleagues in similar positions in the energy sector – only 79% of the average salary of men. The largest wage gap is in the mining industry (63%), and in particular in the mining of hard coal and lignite where women earn 48% of the average earnings of men[[75]](#footnote-76).

The trend to change the gender balance is observed in new energy sectors. In particular, in 2019, women held 46% of administrative positions, 32% of senior management positions and 28% of technical positions in the renewable energy sector. However, barriers to women’s advancement and gender pay gaps also exist here[[76]](#footnote-77).

Recent years have shown that women in the energy sector establish professional associations (i.e. [Women’s Energy Club Ukraine](https://www.facebook.com/wecu.com.ua/)) with an aim to improve their career perspectives, knowledge and skills, as well as to support each other in the industry. The EU Delegation can contribute to this trend by supporting such professional associations of women in green transition sector, as well as in other sectors whey women are traditionally underrepresented.

## 4.7. Gender in digital transformations

Digitalisation, including e-service provision and e-democracy, promotes the development of effective, accountable and inclusive public institutions capable of responding to the needs of women and men belonging to different groups. For example, when implemented in the sector of access to justice, such services contribute to the implementation of the rule of law, so that no citizen is left behind.

Women and men mostly have equal access to e-services and digital solutions. However, older women, women living in rural areas, as well as women with low income may face barriers compared to men from respective populations.

Therefore, in the Ukrainian context, gender mainstreaming in digitalisation means expanding access to digital/mobile-based services outside large cities and among the age groups and low-income groups that have not benefitted from the latest generation of telecommunications technologies (at least the 3G Internet)[[77]](#footnote-78).

Accessible civic digital education should be developed and widely implemented to help close digital gaps in knowledge and skills and bridge the digital the divide between generations and groups of Ukrainians with different social backgrounds.

The overall assessment of digital literacy of citizens shows that digital skills of 53% citizens are below the basic level. Analysis of the level of digital skills reflects a strong relationship between age and digital literacy. The 40-49 y.o. group is dominated by those who do not have sufficient digital skills, and in the 60-70 y.o., such people make for 85%. However, 47% citizens expressed interest in learning digital skills[[78]](#footnote-79).

In addition to general digital competences, low level of digital skills is observed among civil servants, medical and teaching staff where women prevail.

Men outnumber women in terms of using electronic public services (58% and 49%, respectively, used them in 2020). Also, women more often than men did not use e-services because of the lack skills (29% women, 17% men), although this difference is manifested only in older age groups. There is no statistically significant difference between women and men under the age of 40 in this regard (9% women to 11% men), but in the 40+ age group, women are slightly more likely than men to indicate that they lack skills to use e-services (34% women vs. 20% men)[[79]](#footnote-80).

Male students predominate among those enrolled in IT education (75%), as well as among the IT sector employees (74%)[[80]](#footnote-81).

The available data prove that the imbalances in access to digital services are not directly caused by sex. Rather, they are caused by age, economic status, residing in rural or remote areas, etc., which also has its gender dimension. At the same time, when it comes to representation in the sectors that support and drive digital transformations, there is a clear divide between women and men – both among the workforce and at the decision-making level. This is the area that the EUD can consider for interventions.

## 4.8. Distribution of household and care work between women and men

Gender imbalances in reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities are a critical factor that prevents women from entering the labour market, pursuing careers and taking leadership positions across all sectors of the economy.

In Ukraine, the share of unpaid care and domestic work between men and women is unequal – in fact, women spend twice as many hours than men on unpaid care and domestic work (women spend 29 hours/week, while men spend 15 hours/week on household activities). When it comes to women and men and their time spent caring for children, the difference is even bigger: 49 hours/week for women vs. 22 hours/week for men[[81]](#footnote-82).

The domestic work burden on women in the lockdown associated with COVID-19 has increased: 63.6% women spend more time on household chores, 74% mostly provide childcare on their own[[82]](#footnote-83).

These differences are deeply rooted in the societal stereotypes which are perpetuated and disseminated through advertising, media, in the education system, and within families, especially by the older generations. Moreover, unpaid work limits women’s access and opportunities in training, employment, career, business development and income generation. That is, stereotypes about women’s traditional gender reproductive roles and family duties of caring for children and other family members and doing all household work are detrimental to their professional and community activities.

COVID-19 pandemic has also increased the burden on women, due to the closure of schools and pre-schools or their transfer to remote modality. According to the same survey, 50% of women reported an increase in the amount of time they spend on cooking, and 63.5%, on cleaning (during the lockdown). It is also important to note that the burden on women has increased disproportionately – in particular, 74% women say that they mostly take care of their children on their own, and 78% are engaged in their children’s education on their own (without men’s involvement), whereas male respondents confirm these trends[[83]](#footnote-84). Thus, it is a double workload due to the combination of paid work (which is often performed from home) and care work. This is especially true for women who are raising children on their own, as well as for mothers with many children.

# 5. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic and other crises on women and men

Yet another challenge to women’s economic status is caused by COVID-19 and the lockdown measures enforced by the Government and local authorities in Ukraine. According to the UN Women policy note (2020), apart from health concerns, women in Ukraine were more likely to be hit economically, as employees in low-paid sectors are mostly women (up to 70%). Women also dominate among those engaged in informal employment – including small businesses, crafts, salespersons in markets, etc. that were closed due to quarantine. As a result, they face the risks of losing their businesses, jobs, and of increased poverty.

COVID-19 also increases the burden on women as caregivers in the society (as they dominate in healthcare, social care, education, retail and other sectors heavily affected by the pandemic) and in their families as it further aggravates stereotypes around ‘caregiving’ social role of women and the risks of increased vulnerability and domestic violence, thus contributing to the rollback of gender equality and women’s empowerment progress achieved over the last several years.

The COVID-19 crisis context highlighted additional aspects of vulnerability of different groups of women, namely: women living in rural areas, especially in remote areas, who lack access to information and skills needed in the digital economy; homeless women who lack shelter facilities to meet their specific needs; women caring for older persons or chronically ill family members; women (as well as men) from sexual minorities, especially due to the unresolved civil law aspects of personal relationships; Roma women.

**General factors** common to most women are:

1. **Loss or decrease in income**. This can be caused by job loss, switch to part-time work or restrictions on doing business, and a decline in the purchasing power of the population. According to a survey conducted by UN Women in April-May 2020, subject to continued quarantine restrictions, 26% employed women expected a decrease in their earnings, and 21% expected their complete loss. 6% women were put on unpaid leave. 17% self-employed women and 12% women who were running their own business lost the opportunity to work and, consequently, their income[[84]](#footnote-85).
2. **Increasing the burden on women**, including due to the closure of schools and pre-schools or their transfer to remote modality. According to the same survey, 50% and 63.5% women reported an increase in the amount of time they spent cooking and cleaning (during the quarantine). It is also important to note that the burden on women has increased disproportionately – in particular, 74% women say that they mostly take care of their children on their own, and 78% are mostly engaged in their children’s education on their own (without men’s involvement), whereas male respondents confirm these trends[[85]](#footnote-86). Thus, it is a double workload due to the combination of paid work (which is often performed from home) and care work. This is especially true for women who are raising children on their own, as well as for mothers with many children.
3. **Increasing the psychological burden on women and stress**. Firstly, according to UN Women survey, 53% women reported an increase in the amount of time spent on providing psychological and emotional support to adult members of their families. Women report experiencing despair, lack of hope, lack of communication, and fatigue from double and/or triple workload. This problem is especially acute for women of certain professions – social workers, bank, transport, retail employees, as consumers often pour negative emotions caused by the pandemic and the quarantine on them[[86]](#footnote-87).
4. **Deteriorated access to resources and services** during the quarantine. According to UN Women survey, at the beginning of quarantine, 79% women had difficulty purchasing medical supplies, masks and gloves. 17% women were unable to receive social services for themselves or their family members, 6% did not receive medical care, and 10% waited longer than usual for medical care. Due to the accelerating spread of the virus in the autumn, this problem is exacerbating. Respondents also reported being unable to buy food (9%) and difficulties in using public transportation (60%)[[87]](#footnote-88).
5. Due to quarantine, a large number of processes, in particular, the organisation of children’s education, search for information and certain social services and support, including from women’s NGOs, was transferred online. This is a problem for those families who **do not have enough technology/equipment** for all children and proper access to the Internet and mobile communications. Other problems are the lack of necessary technical skills in women and the lack of software to support group video chats.
6. In accordance with international and national practice and research, quarantine and the stress it causes exacerbates the risks of **domestic violence**. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in March-April (compared to the previous months) there was no significant increase in the number of calls to the police (102) due to domestic violence[[88]](#footnote-89). At the same time, the number of calls to the national hotline for the prevention of domestic violence (where you can get information and psychological support, but where you do not receive the police service) has doubled during the quarantine[[89]](#footnote-90). In addition, women’s NGOs that participated in the consultations noted an increase in the incidence of domestic violence and other negative factors related to quarantine: 1) lack of systematic information on where the survivors can seek help – many survivors do not have opportunities to find such information; 2) closure or restriction of shelters for survivors of violence; 3) reduced priority of this problem and, accordingly, postponement of action and investment in strengthening the system of providing services for survivors of violence. Given the unusually long time spent in one space and limited mobility, the economic crisis and rising unemployment, psychological stressors and uncertainty, there has been an increase in domestic violence against women. In the first five months of 2020, the National Police of Ukraine registered 84,237 complaints of domestic violence (63,964 of those who complained are women), which is 49% more than in the same period of last year (56,638 complaints). During the lockdown, calls to the national domestic violence hotline (1,547) doubled[[90]](#footnote-91).

The strategic planning should also take into account the factors that create restrictions on the exercise of the rights of specific women’s groups (in addition to the above factors).

Discrimination and restrictions on the rights of **women with disabilities** are exacerbated during the quarantine and pandemic. Representatives of women’s NGOs who participated in the consultations noted problems such as: 1) lack of access to medical supplies, personal protective equipment and medical services due to infrastructure inaccessibility, transport constraints, and reduced incomes; 2) increased risks of infection (women with visual impairments use their hands to navigate in public spaces; women with musculoskeletal disorders are also forced to touch surfaces more often than people without disabilities); 3) impaired access to social services due to the fear of social workers to contract infection, and because certain services cannot be provided remotely; 4) visually impaired women cannot receive visual information about the pandemic and quarantine measures, which increases their risk of infection and stress.

**Roma women** also continue to face multiple discrimination exacerbated by the pandemic because there is a stereotype that they can spread the virus. In addition, the quarantine restrictions create additional barriers for Roma women in finding sources of income, access to food, personal protection, medical care, and information on ways to prevent and treat COVID-19. Roma women mostly do not have the opportunity to organise distance learning for their children due to lack of equipment, unavailability of Internet/mobile communication. For some women, the inability to read in Ukrainian is also a limitation, as it makes it difficult to find information and help children with their studies.

**Women with HIV** also have difficulty accessing essential medical services, as well as special goods and food. They face the risks of interrupting the antiretroviral therapy (especially in small settlements and remote areas) and the disclosure of their HIV status, difficulties in obtaining a disability (if necessary).

**For IDP women**, in addition to the factors listed above, including exacerbation of psychological stress and burden, the inability to travel to the temporarily occupied territories (due to the checkpoint closure or interruptions in their work) and the risk of losing rented housing due to lack of income are especially problematic (according to UN Women survey, this problem is relevant for a half of displaced women).

Given that local elections were held in Ukraine at the end of October 2020, attention should also be paid to **women who** **were running for local councils** or for the positions of heads of settlements/amalgamated territorial communities. Due to limited access to financial resources, women are more likely to use electoral tactics such as meetings with voters. But the quarantine restrictions imposed on meetings, as well as the need to ensure information and epidemiological security, made it difficult to use these tactics. This problem is likely to repeat in the localities where local elections will be conducted later on.

In addition, it is critical that **new women’s groups became vulnerable** because of the quarantine and the pandemic – these are women doctors, women from the security sector (police, women in the emergency services), women working in public transportation, social workers, etc. According to women’s NGOs who participated in the consultations, many women in these groups were not provided with either personal protective equipment or algorithms at the beginning of the quarantine. Because of this, there are numerous cases of increased stress, burnout, dismissal or taking an unpaid leave.

The lockdown continues to affect women’s rights and opportunities more than the pandemic itself: declining incomes, job losses, and deteriorating access to resources and services.

During the pandemic, women and men alike lost their jobs and registered with the employment centres, but data from the Public Employment Centre proved that women were much less likely to find new jobs. Gender pay gap that was observed before the pandemic remained virtually unchanged during the pandemic. Women continue to earn 20-21% lower wages than men. Women, compared to men, faced more challenges during the pandemic. As of November 2020, more than one in three employed women have switched to teleworking, which in some cases has led to an increase in workload due to a combination of domestic work and professional responsibilities[[91]](#footnote-92).

Women entrepreneurs have been more negatively affected by COVID-19, as they are more involved in those economic activities that are most often subject to quarantine restrictions and prohibitions.

# 6. Conclusions

**National context.** In terms of most demographic and poverty-related indicators, the population of Ukraine differs not by sex, but by other factors such as age, residing in rural/urban areas, disability status, etc. However, when coupled with the factor of sex, such differences produce significant inequalities that contribute to general gender inequality in Ukraine.

Ukraine faces significant challenges affecting the enjoyment of equal opportunities and rights by women in general and those facing compound discrimination in particular. These roots can be found in patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes; but also in deeply rooted systemic gaps which have not been addressed – including a weak rule of law, low capacity of the institutional mechanism on gender equality and lack of political will. The conflict, COVID-19 pandemic and socio-economic crisis exacerbated these challenges as well as fostered new challenges and violations of women’s human rights.

According to the most recent Global Gender Gap Report, Ukraine is ranked the 74th of 156 countries, which is a 15 positions regress from 2020. Considering each dimension separately, Ukraine is the farthest from gender parity in the area of political empowerment, followed by access to economic opportunities.

**Legal and institutional framework**. Gender equality is enshrined in Ukraine’s Constitution, as well as in the specific law on gender equality. Over 2010s, a number of important legal amendments have been put in place to advance gender equality in various fields, including elections, employment and combatting domestic violence. It is also critical that the national authorities, including the Parliament, the Government and specific Ministries gradually take ownership and become active in developing and promoting new laws, strategies and action plans on gender transformations in Ukraine.

The Government has been implementing three National Action Plans: the State Gender Equality Strategy (National Action Plan) until 2021, the NAP on implementation of UNSCR 1325 “Women, Peace and Security” for 2021-2025. There is also an array of sectorial gender action plans effective. Moreover, the Government is developing the National Gender Strategy until 2030 and the Government Communications Strategy on Gender Equality.

However, when it comes to gender mainstreaming in other reforms, the progress is still slow. While some of the reforms see gender equality as an explicitly mentioned priority – PAR, education, development of entrepreneurship, law enforcement and defence reform; other reforms mostly fall flat in terms of capitalising on the opportunities of gender mainstreaming. More effort is necessary to make sure that every reform is made subject to gender analysis and specifically to go hand-in-hand with gender mainstreaming.

The institutional framework is being gradually developed, with gender coordinators and gender focal points available across most national executive agencies and in regional administrations, and gender units and advisory boards set up in certain agencies. However, the process to extensive development of the national gender machinery should be coupled with gender sensitisation and capacity building of staff. In this regard, it is critical to note that the transition from formal egalitarian treatment (no differential treatment, no privileges or restrictions) to substantial equality of opportunities (removal of barriers, recognition of indirect and systemic forms of discrimination and disadvantage) is at its start.

The gender mainstreaming tools launched in Ukraine include gender analysis of governmental policies and reforms, gender legal expert assessment of laws and draft laws, gender audit and gender-responsible budgeting. While the guidelines on how to use these tools are mostly available, the practice of their use is extremely limited. The reasons are mostly related to suboptimal capacity of the officials to use these tools and limited understanding of their benefits, as well as the absence of examples/cases and a database on how these tools help improve government policy making and implementation. Coordination on the part of the Ministry of Social Policy as the gender focal point for the Government should be also strengthened.

**Gender analysis by sectors**. Gender inequality in economic opportunities, as well as discrimination in recruitment and at work have limited women’s access to entrepreneurship, employment, income and career promotion. The gender wage gap is 21% and reaches 75% in some economic activities[[92]](#footnote-93),[[93]](#footnote-94). System barriers lead to horizontal and vertical occupational gender segregation in the labour market, with women concentrated at lower remuneration levels. At the same time, men dominate in low-skilled physical labour sectors such as mining, building and construction, thus suffering dangerous and harmful labour conditions. The greatest gender differences in the level of earnings are recorded in the sectors with the largest level of remuneration traditionally dominated by men – finance and ICT.

One of key reasons for this difference is the divide in the areas in which women and men pursue education. Gender segregation in academic subjects in both vocational and higher education has a direct impact on the deepening occupational segregation and concentration of women in lower-paid sectors. As having higher number of trained female cadre in industrial sectors is critical for increasing women’s participation in entrepreneurship, management and workforce of industrial companies and processes, the Government and international development partners may consider investing in the initiatives that encourage young women to choose industrial professions, especially engineering, manufacturing and other STEM-related specialties. Other gender-related problem in the education sector is gender stereotypes in education materials and processes.

Another critical reason is gender imbalances in reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities. It prevents women from entering the labour market, pursuing careers and taking leadership positions across all sectors of the economy. In Ukraine, women spend twice as many hours compared to men in unpaid care and domestic work. COVID-19 has further increased the double/triple burden faced by women, especially women with children. A recent positive development is extending fathers’ entitlements to child-related leaves, but more time and effort is necessary to encourage fathers to use this entitlement, thus providing women with more opportunities to engage in productive activities, such as entrepreneurship or employment.

In the health area, there are significant gender imbalances, most notably the 10-year difference in life expectancy disfavouring men and a number of barriers and burden that women face both as health workers (especially in the COVID-19 pandemic) and patients, including in terms of women’s roles as caregivers for their children and other family members. While gender analysis of health reform proves that the very sex in most cases is not a barrier in accessing healthcare, when coupled with other factor (age, residing in rural area, etc.), it may become such a barrier. Also, additional surveys are necessary to analyse women’s and men’s experiences of dealing with healthcare system and women’s and men’s attitudes to their health.

Women, peace and security is one of the sectors in which the progress over the past 5 years has been the most significant. Growing numbers of women joining the armed forces and law enforcement agencies challenges the long-standing occupational segregation that was leaving women with a marginal role in the security and defence sector. It is coupled with better understanding of the needs and perspectives of women in men in the peacebuilding and recovery processes, and reflecting these perspectives in the national and regional strategies and action plans on women, peace and security.

“New” sectors for gender mainstreaming in Ukraine are green transition and digital transformations. In both sectors, women were traditionally unrepresented in the workforce, at the decision-making level, as well as among entrepreneurs. However, recent years show an increase in women’s engagement in these sectors – examples are Women’s Energy Club Ukraine and increased share of women in the IT sector from 11% in 2011 to 25% in 2020[[94]](#footnote-95). In terms of digital transformations, other critical considerations for Ukraine are overcoming gender divide in digital literacy, access to and usage of digital services.

# 7. Recommendations

## 7.1. Recommendations to the Government

1. Integrate gender approaches in public administration reform:

* Design and include in the public administration reform specific mechanisms to address gender inequalities in public service, especially at decision-making level (quotas, trainings, self-support groups of female officials).

1. Apply gender-responsive budgeting in sustainable way:

* Introduce GRB in the Budget Code of Ukraine;
* Provide mandatory usage of GRB by all key spending units.

1. Increase gender sensitivity of public officials:

* Provide trainings, communication campaigns, produce and disseminate sensitisation materials that will facilitate understanding of the connection between gender equality, the mission/mandate of public authorities and its benefits for its final beneficiaries;
* Deal with the issue of sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour at public service by adopting a “zero-tolerance” approach to sexual harassment, drawing up or revising existing regulations to set up clear procedures for dealing with reports and cases, systematically and periodically informing existing staff (and new staff) about such procedures through memos and circulars, information leaflets, providing training aimed at informing and explaining what sexual harassment is and how to recognise it.

1. Support regular capacity building of public officials on gender equality topics:

* Develop modules/trainings aimed at raising gender sensitivity of public officials and integrating them in their curricula (in coordination between the Government, NAUCS, NAPA and other providers of in-house public officials’ skills development programmes);
* Arrange systematic assessment of knowledge and competence gaps/needs of public officials related to gender equality and gender mainstreaming tools;
* Develop targeted trainings on specific gender mainstreaming tools – gender analysis, gender audit, gender legal expert assessment, gender budgeting – and provide respective trainings to public officials responsible for gender equality policies in central and regional authorities;
* Include competencies related to gender analysis, gender impact assessment, using gender statistics, gender-responsible budgeting in the job descriptions of the staff responsible for gender equality policies in central and regional authorities;
* Explore the opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and cascading of gender training and other capacity building initiatives in public authorities, so that there is the room to deliver peer-to-peer gender training across/horizontally (in other departments/units) and vertically (in regional administrations).

1. Develop and use sex-disaggregated statistics:

* Continue expanding the list of indicators on which data is collected with sex disaggregation (identify priorities on new indicators in consultations with UNECE and the Government agencies as users of the statistics);
* Ensure publication and promotion of biannual statistical digest “Women and Men in Ukraine”;
* Encourage public authorities to use sex-disaggregated statistics in policy planning, including by integrating the requirement on analysing available sex-disaggregated statistics in the guidelines that regulate the development of by-laws, draft laws and draft action plans of the authorities at the national and regional level;
* Support regional authorities in updating and disseminating regional gender profiles (currently available in all 25 regions) and encourage them to use data from these profiles in policy planning.

1. Encourage the use of specific gender mainstreaming tools across government agencies:

* Develop methodological tools (e.g. report templates, checklists, guidelines) that will help public officials to conduct gender analysis, gender audit, gender legal expert assessment, plan and implement gender budgeting initiatives;
* Compound methodological tools (guidelines and instructions) with adequate advice and consultations (that the Ministry of Social Policy and external experts will provide to public officials from other agencies), which are: i) comprehensive enough to cover the foundations of gender equality and non-discrimination; ii) customised around specific policy issue areas of relevance for individual working units;
* Institute a repository of case examples and good practices of gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreamed policy documents that are produced across different public authorities (national and regional), as a way to offer recognition on good performance and also provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and disseminate good practices;
* Develop a framework for systematic integration of GRB principles in existing government processes related to budgeting of service provision to citizens in all areas.

1. Ensure gender mainstreaming in reforms:

* Conduct detailed gender analysis of any reform initiative;
* Develop methodological guidelines on gender mainstreaming in reforms;
* Make gender analysis mandatory in all the reforms initiated by public authorities at any level.

1. Promote gender mainstreaming in decentralisation reform:

* Design and include in the decentralisation reform specific mechanisms to empower women in local decision-making (quotas, trainings, self-support groups);
* Encourage the territorial communities to conduct gender analysis in the communities, including through the [Gender equality toolbox](https://decentralization.gov.ua/news/12129), produce their gender profiles and use their findings in strategic and operational planning of the community development;
* Facilitate collection of success stories of gender mainstreaming in decentralisation process and disseminate these success stories among territorial communities.

1. Intensify gender transformations in education:

* Plan and implement measures to encourage girls to pursue vocational technical and higher education in the field of STEM;
* Expand the practice of gender expert assessment of school textbooks and other teaching materials;
* Strengthen gender component and make it a mandatory part in the curriculum of in-house capacity building centres for teachers with a view to increasing gender sensitivity of teachers.

1. Consult with international partners and donor organisations currently active in the country on issues relating to gender equality and probe opportunities to create synergies/ secure resources and expertise for the implementation of specific components of the plan;
2. Cooperate with civil society organisations and international partners on finalisation and implementation of the National Gender Strategy until 2030 and Government Communications Strategy on Gender Equality, and ensure that their programming is aligned with these strategic documents.

## 7.2. Recommendations to civil society

* 1. Seek opportunities for capacity building at individual and organisational level:
* Conduct organisational and individual needs assessment in terms of capacity building with a focus on constituency relations (representing the interests of the populations whom the organisation serves), gender analysis, project planning and implementation, advocacy, communications, gender budgeting;
* Seek and apply for programmes that aim to strengthen organisational capacity of the NGOs;
* Support individual capacity building opportunities of staff and volunteers of the NGOs (trainings, exchange visits, study tours, burnout prevention programmes);
* Explore and implement modalities for digitalisation of NGOs and their work.

1. Serve the interests of target groups by incorporating their voices and perspectives into programming and service delivery:

* Conduct various types of analysis, including surveys, focus groups, statistical analysis to identify the needs of target groups and their preferred channels of receiving information/services;
* Engage representatives of target groups into programming, advocacy, project planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
* Seek resources from international partners and private business to implement specific programmes and projects for gender equality and women’s empowerment;
* Develop and implement coordination modalities (internal – between the CSOs and external – between the CSOs, the Government, international partners and other stakeholders) to better serve the needs of women and specific target groups facing compound discrimination.

1. In their programming, focus on women’s empowerment and developing strategic solutions to inequality and discrimination:

* Invest in digital, financial, civic literacy and agency of women with a focus on specific target groups facing compound discrimination, with respect to their rights and having their basic needs secured;
* Support women’s entrepreneurship by providing training, mentorship, grants, access to cooperatives and services for entrepreneurs, facilitating experience sharing and association building between women entrepreneurs;
* Support women in online transition, train women in online professions or doing business online;
* Support programmes aiming to engage men in household activities and taking care of children and other family members;
* Conduct advocacy *vis-à-vis* mobile and Internet providers and local authorities to expand connectivity of rural areas to mobile services and the Internet, and connect rural libraries and other service providers to the Internet.

1. Build coalitions of the CSOs working in the areas of gender equality and women’s empowerment:

* Identify the priorities for coalition building at the national and regional levels (for example, a national coalition around WPS agenda, regional coalition on preventing and countering gender-based violence);
* Engage wider spectrum of CSOs in the coalitions, including CSOs of people with disabilities, of people living with HIV, youth CSOs, etc.;
* Seek opportunities for improving knowledge and skills, learning Ukrainian and foreign experiences of coalition building around women’s rights and gender equality and women’s empowerment;
* Seek resources from international partners and private business to support projects for the benefit of women that will be implemented by coalitions;
* Use the power of coalition to advocate for gender equality and women’s empowerment *vis-à-vis* the Government and to raise public awareness on gender equality and women’s empowerment;
* Take advocacy activities to expand women’s access to and influence on public decision-making on all areas of political, social and economic development of the country, regions and communities;
* Take advocacy activities to make sure that government programmes, strategies and action plans at all levels are subject to gender analysis and duly reflect women’s perspectives and needs.

1. Strengthen women’s movement as a transformational tool for gender equality and women’s empowerment:

* Support dialogue between various groups of women activists (inter-generational, inter-regional, inter-sectional dialogue, so that women activists having different background, vision and focus of efforts can unite/join the women’s movement);
* Capitalise on the experience and accomplishments of coalitions of women’s/gender CSOs to develop and strengthen women’s movement;
* Conduct periodic consultations between women’s/gender CSOs to identify priorities of women’s movement development;
* Engage the CSOs working in the sectors other than gender equality and women’s rights into the movement to expand their reach and maximise their efforts;
* Establish non-governmental think tanks/analytical centres that will produce research and provide policy advice on gender equality priorities to the Government and international development partners;
* Conduct regular public activities and strengthen the presence of GEWE champions in media, including social media, to raise public awareness on women’s movement and encourage more women join it.

## 7.3. Recommendations to the EU Delegation and other international partners

**Gender mainstreaming in the Government**

* 1. Support the Government in terms of gender mainstreaming in public administration reform – specifically, in designing and including in the public administration reform specific mechanisms to address gender inequalities in public service;
  2. Support the Government in increasing gender sensitivity and build capacity of public officials on GEWE:
* Provide support in organising trainings, communication campaigns, produce and disseminate sensitisation materials that will facilitate understanding of the connection between gender equality, the mission/mandate of public authorities and its benefits for its final beneficiaries;
* Encourage the Cabinet of Ministers, NAUCS, NAPA and other providers of in-house public officials’ skills to continue efforts on institutionalising gender training of public officials;
* Expand opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and experience sharing between Ukrainian and foreign public officials working on GEWE.
  1. Support the development and use of sex-disaggregated statistics by the Government, civil society, experts, academia and other stakeholders:
* Support the State Statistics Service in expanding the list of indicators on which data is collected with sex disaggregation, including based on the experience of other countries and international organisations;
* Support wide publication of gender statistics that is produced by the Government (State Statistics Service, other agencies), as well as private research companies;
* Encourage public authorities to use sex-disaggregated statistics in policy planning and monitoring;
* Support training and advice on the usage of gender statistics in policy planning and monitoring, including based on international experience.
  1. Support the Government in the use of specific gender mainstreaming tools:
* Support the Government (Ministry of Social Policy) in developing methodological tools (e.g. report templates, checklists, guidelines) that will help public officials to conduct gender analysis, gender audit, gender legal expert assessment, plan and implement gender budgeting initiatives;
* Support capacity building of public officials and provide advice, based on international experience, on applying specific gender mainstreaming tools;
* Encourage the Ministry of Social Policy to institute a repository of case examples and good practices of gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreamed policy documents that are produced across different public authorities;
* Support the Ministry of Social Policy and Ministry of Finance on developing a framework for systematic integration of GRB principles in existing government processes related to budgeting of service provision to citizens in all areas.

1. Support the Government in gender mainstreaming in decentralisation and other reforms:

* Provide advice to the Government on gender analysis of reforms;
* Support the Government in building capacity of public officials on gender analysis of reforms and policies, including through training and sharing international experience;
* Support the Government (Ministry of Territories) in designing and including in the decentralisation reform specific mechanisms to empower women in local decision-making (quotas, trainings, self-support groups);
* Facilitate collection of success stories of gender mainstreaming in reforms and disseminate these success stories among public authorities and communities.

**Support to civil society**

1. Support capacity building of CSOs working in the field of gender equality and women’s empowerment (based on the findings of respective needs assessments):

* Support programmes to strengthen organisational capacity of the CSOs;
* Support the digitalisation of CSOs, including trainings, grants for purchase of equipment and software for more effective work;
* Facilitate training provision to the CSOs working in the field of gender equality and women’s empowerment on a wealth of topics such as gender analysis, project planning and implementation, advocacy, communications, gender budgeting);
* Facilitate training provision to other CSOs on topics such as gender equality and women’s rights to increase gender sensitivity of their staff and volunteers and explore opportunities for gender mainstreaming in the sectors which these CSOs operate in.

1. Equip the NGOs working in the field of gender equality and women’s empowerment with resources necessary to address the issues faced by women in all sectors:

* Support grant programmes for the NGOs that will facilitate improved women’s enjoyment of their rights and access to services;
* Support grant programmes which promote gender analyses and collection of sex-disaggregated data;
* Support experience sharing between the NGOs on how to better address the needs of women and empowering women to have their rights observed;
* Support the CSOs in encouraging women’s entrepreneurship, especially in ‘non-traditional’ sectors such as the STEM-related and IT industry, by providing training, start-up grants, mentoring and business support services (market analysis, value chain analysis, facilitating access to production cooperatives, etc.);
* Support the CSOs in their programmes on improving digital skills/literacy of women’s groups with a focus on the groups that face compound discrimination, such as women living in rural areas, older women, women with disabilities, etc.

1. Facilitate coalition building between the CSOs working in the field of gender equality and women’s empowerment around the topics prioritised by them:

* Facilitate training provision on coalition building to the CSOs at the national and regional/local levels;
* Support the coalitions of CSOs in developing the cooperation modalities, establishing secretariats of coalitions;
* Support provision of grants to the coalitions to jointly address specific issues faced by women and conduct advocacy activities for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment;
* Support the efforts of civil society in establishing non-governmental think tanks/analytical centres that will collect sex-disaggregated data, produce research and provide policy advice on gender equality priorities to the Government and international development partners.

**Advocacy and consultations**

1. Regularly consult with the Government, CSOs and international partners and donor organisations currently active in the country on issues relating to gender equality about their priorities and activities to seek synergies:

* Formalise modalities of donor coordination and coordination with the Government on wide spectrum of issues related to GEWE (gender thematic groups, coordination boards);
* Make all the surveys and other relevant information produced by international partners widely available (if feasible) and encourage the Government, CSOs and academia to use it;
* Ground their programming on the national strategies and action plans on gender equality, including three (3) NAPs, the upcoming National Gender Equality Strategy until 2030 and Government Communications Strategy on Gender Equality;
* Seek opportunities to provide technical and financial support to implementation of specific agenda items of the national strategies and action plans on gender equality, in close coordination with responsible government agencies;
* Provide support to the Government on implementation of Biarritz Partnership and other international and regional partnerships and coalitions on gender equality (for example, Equal Pay International Coalition, etc.).

1. Make sure that gender is mainstreamed across all the programmes and projects of international development partners in Ukraine, and that resources are allocated to promote GEWE across all their priorities.
2. Continue advocacy *vis-à-vis* public authorities on the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment:

* Encourage the Government to expand the influence of women in decision-making – increasing women’s representatives in public authorities at decision-making levels, advisory bodies, working groups; to engage gender expertise in policy planning;
* Encourage the Government to integrate the needs of women, with a focus on women facing compound discrimination, in its programmes, strategies and action plans;
* Emphasise in their communications and dialogue with the Government and civil society the importance of mainstreaming gender across all government priorities, strategies and action plans;
* Continue advocation for the ratification of the Istanbul Convention;
* Encourage the Government to allocate funds to NGOs on implementing specific activities stipulated by gender action plans at the national and regional level, including on providing services to survivors of gender-based violence, improving digital and financial literacy of women and vulnerable groups, promoting women’s entrepreneurship, etc.

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