



IN BRIEF



SECURING GENDER EQUALITY IN UKRAINE AMIDST THE WAR

AN UPDATE ON UN WOMEN'S WORK IN 2022

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Introduction

Women and men, girls and boys have been deeply impacted by the escalation of war in Ukraine in 2022, causing an immediate humanitarian crisis and massive disruption to peace efforts. As of December 2022, at least 17.7 million people (35 per cent of the population of 44 million) needed humanitarian aid, and over 14.5 million people have fled their homes, 4.7 million of whom are registered as internally displaced.

Ukraine has become one of the world's most complex emergencies, and the crisis presents severe gendered challenges, including worsening inequalities and discrimination, compounded vulnerabilities and disproportionate violence affecting women and girls. Multiple forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including intimate partner violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and economic abuse, are being reported, exacerbating the pre-war situation.¹ Women and girls on the move, at border crossing points and transit/collective centres, and in bomb shelters face a particularly high risk.² UNHCR reports that women and children make up 90 per cent of refugees fleeing Ukraine and are at high risk of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.³

Adding to this, pervasive limitations to women's representation in decision-making, despite their key engagement in humanitarian response, are compromising the efficiency of response programmes. With women constituting the majority of refugees from Ukraine and those displaced within the country, they face significantly increased risks to their safety and protection.⁴ The recognition of the gendered effects of the war are essential for States, international agencies and civil society to develop holistic humanitarian responses that address the differential experiences of conflict.⁵

“A large number of women and girls are at the epicenter of the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding in many regions. Their lives and health are in danger- they are threatened by violence, hunger, and they are scared for their children.

— Representative of Women's CSO

1 UN Women and CARE International, [Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine, 4 May 2022](#).

2 GBV Sub-Cluster Ukraine, [Gender-based violence in Ukraine Secondary data review, 27 April 2022](#).

3 UNHCR, [“Ukraine Crisis Creates New Trafficking Risks”](#), 13 April 2022.

4 UN Women [“Study on Women's Meaningful Participation In the Context of War in Ukraine”](#) (Forthcoming 2023).

5 European Parliament, [“Russia's war on Ukraine: A gender-sensitive humanitarian response”](#), 2022.



UN Women in Ukraine

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

In Ukraine, UN Women remains committed to delivering results across strategic priorities, exercising its triple mandate encompassing **normative support**, **UN system coordination**, and **operational activities** – to mobilize urgent and sustained action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. UN Women has long been actively supporting local priority areas in Ukraine – from increased political participation to gender mainstreaming in public policy, and economic development – to facilitate the work of local women civil society organizations (CSOs).

Aligning with the evolving **UN priorities**⁶, UN Women Ukraine now focuses on amplifying the localization agenda and strengthening the local **women-led gender-responsive humanitarian response** and ensuring the experiences of displaced, at risk and vulnerable women and girls are centralized during the **recovery process**.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Gender in Humanitarian Action and Resilience



Governance and Participation in Public Life



Women, Peace and Security Agenda



Ending Violence Against Women and Girls



Women's Economic Empowerment

⁶ United Nations in Ukraine Transnational Framework September 2022-December 2023.

KEY GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS TO WHICH UN WOMEN CONTRIBUTED IN 2022

Women and girls' needs and priorities are better addressed through national legislation, strategies, policies and processes, in the context of war, humanitarian crisis and early recovery.

Despite the challenging context of war, key national stakeholders and duty-bearers continued to demonstrate their commitment to securing and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEWE) in Ukraine. With the long term support of UN Women, the Government developed and ratified key national frameworks, which will be crucial guiding documents holding a wide variety of stakeholder accountable for GEWE results. In 2022, these important **milestones** included:



Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)



State Strategy on Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men by 2030



Revised National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 (NAP 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)



National Strategy on Decreasing the Gender Pay Gap



Framework of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations on the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)



Framework law on regional policy and recovery policy in regions and communities of Ukraine

UN Women contributed to this important progress by providing technical and substantive inputs to government partners on topics including gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, WPS, GBV/CRSV and gender in humanitarian action. Data, evidence and knowledge⁷ was generated by UN Women to help



inform the formulation of policy priorities, budgets, activities and target groups. UN Women also facilitated a variety of consultations and working groups bringing together government authorities and women's CSOs, including those representing various Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) categories and war-affected populations, to provide direct recommendations to the plans. Important advocacy for the approval and advancement of these initiatives was also conducted with partners through media campaigns, lobbying efforts and awareness-raising activities.

Most importantly, UN Women is supporting national partners to put into effect commitments made under these strategies, by continuing to provide:

- **technical advice**, such as on the legal amendments necessary;
- **capacity development**, including trainings to the national police on GBV/CRSV prevention and response;
- **implementing programs** in line with these strategies, such as on localizing the NAP 1325 in regions and communities.

⁷ These included research and reports such as the [Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine](#), the [Rapid Assessment of Women's CSOs](#) and [Challenges encountered by young women affected by the war in Ukraine](#).



Ensuring Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Action

As the humanitarian architecture scaled up significantly in Ukraine to respond to the rapidly escalating crisis, it was essential that all key UN humanitarian strategic and planning documents were underpinned by the needs and priorities of women and girls affected by the war.

Therefore, UN Women worked closely with humanitarian partners to ensure a gender-sensitive response to the crisis. This included for example the integration of important gender provisions and considerations in the [UN Flash Appeal for Ukraine](#),

[UN Transitional Framework \(UNTF\)](#) and [Humanitarian Needs Overview \(HNO\)](#).

Not only did UN Women provide technical input to these processes but also played an important coordinating role, for example by chairing the [Gender in Humanitarian Action Sub Group \(GiHA-SG\)](#) comprised of national and international NGOs and UN agencies. UN Women also facilitated consultations and round-table discussions between the UN and women's CSOs to ensure their voices are heard and considered in planning humanitarian action.

Integrating Key Gender Considerations in Early Recovery

Despite the ongoing war and humanitarian crisis, looking ahead and starting to support different communities with early recovery efforts was important in 2022. Global experience has shown that integrating gender considerations into recovery efforts is critical for the long-term trajectory of a country.

Therefore, UN Women with partners provided significant input to the drafting process of the **National Recovery Plan of Ukraine** (to be finalized in 2023) on how to ensure gender-responsive recovery and to mainstream gender to the different chapters. The plan will function as a primary roadmap for the Government and partners in recovery efforts going forward.



More than 37,400 women and girls acutely affected by the war had access to humanitarian support and services since February 2022, through UN Women and partners.

UN Women directed over US\$2.2 million to more than **20 women's civil society organizations** to rapidly respond to the evolving needs of women and girls. Across the country in **18 regions**, women-led civil society partners provided support to over **37,400 women and girls**, including those most vulnerable in society. This included the following:



15,400+ women benefited from immediate life-saving humanitarian support, such as the provision of food, water, shelter, medicine and hygiene kits



5,000+ women received psychosocial support to help improve the mental health crisis brought on by the war.



10,100+ women had improved access to information on protection and socioeconomic services.



5,000+ women were supported with legal aid/awareness, which will, for example, help them report protection concerns and cases of conflict-related sexual violence.



5,000+ women were able to access economic support or set up a source of income for themselves and their families.

Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

To ensure that no one is left behind and to fully respond to the recommendations of the Rapid Gender Analysis, UN Women and partners made it a priority to support women with a large variety of needs and from different LNOB categories in 2022.

These included young women, older women, rural women, women living with HIV, internally displaced women, women from host communities, Roma women, LGBTIQ+ people, women from low-income areas, single-headed households/single mothers, women veterans, survivors and those at risk of GBV (including CRSV), women with disabilities, and digitally illiterate women. Interventions used an intersectional approach and largely worked through CSOs representing these groups.

Not only did UN Women and partners work directly with these populations to provide humanitarian assistance, but also took active

steps to - where possible - include them in formal decision-making and leadership processes.



Our organization has been engaged in advocacy since 2013. Now, we are seeing that the barriers to accessing medical and social services have become larger. As a result of the war, we seem to have been thrown back 10–12 years in terms of access to services, reproductive health and human rights in general, in particular the rights of women with HIV.

— Nataliia Novitska, NGO Positive Women

Read more about UN Women's work with partners to reach vulnerable and marginalised groups of women on the UN Women [website](#). For example about NGO "[Positive Women](#)", which provides assistance and information to women living with HIV across Ukraine.

Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund



Out of the 37,400+ people supported by UN Women in 2022, over 15,000 women and their children had access to humanitarian support under the umbrella of the [UN multi-donor Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund](#) (WPHF). Through US\$1.4 million allocated to 7 local women-led civil society organiza-

tions in 2022, women and their families across Ukraine received vital support during the humanitarian crisis brought on by war. The projects provided critical services, including psychosocial support, services for survivors of SGBV, health care, shelter, food and hygiene kits. They supported economic recovery and women's livelihoods, especially for internally displaced women and women from rural communities. Another component has also included efforts to strengthen advocacy and promote women's leadership and capacity to participate in decision-making processes for humanitarian action.

A FEW SNAPSHOTS FROM 2022



Safe Spaces for Women and Girls

Over 1,000 women benefited from access to psychological, humanitarian and social support services, as well as information on available essential services, through UN Women's pilot initiative **'Safe Spaces'** (multi-purpose centres for women) in partnership with two local women's CSOs. Four physical safe spaces for women in two regions of Ukraine (Zaporizhzhia and Ivano-Frankivsk) have provided multidimensional forms of support to women and girls affected by the full-scale war and who are at severe risk of GBV. The support has also included individual and group therapy sessions for women survivors of GBV, child-friendly spaces and awareness-raising prevention activities on human trafficking and violence against women and girls (VAWG)..



“ We are very proud of this pilot initiative and grateful for the opportunity to open a space. We were able to unite the community of internally displaced women and local women from the host community to create a safe space in which a woman becomes more confident, knowledgeable, more psychologically stable, and a space where a woman can take time for herself while her children are under supervision. The space is a place where zero tolerance for violence is formed step by step, and a space where a woman can safely share her experience of leaving violence. It is a place where women can get help and support, while in an abusive relationship.

— Representative from NGO D.O.M.48.24

Digital Inclusion of Marginalised Women

Over 400 women facing various forms of exclusion increased their capacity to cope with the consequences of COVID-19 and the humanitarian crisis through digital technology. As many women lack access to digital information about available services, they are excluded from beneficial support mechanisms, including state benefits or humanitarian, cash-based and legal support to IDPs and other war-affected populations.

Through four digital community hubs with open access to the Internet, 70 women librarians provided training and hands-on support to vulnerable women across four regions and 13 communities. UN Women and its partners trained the librarians as digital community managers and equipped the digital hubs with computers and internet access. This was a powerful pilot initiative with promising results and opportunities to scale up.

Women's Economic Empowerment Congress (WEE Congress) in Ukraine



Despite Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, UN Women continued the tradition of holding an annual Congress for the fifth year in a row, where progressive businesses from various fields unite around gender equality and non-discrimination topics. The event included 15 speakers in panel discussions, educational presentations, brainstorming sessions and workshops. The two-day congress convened more than 100 Ukrainian businesswomen, representatives of the private and public sectors, as well as academics, both in-person in Lviv and broadcast online.

Read more about the congress [here](#).

Training on Negotiation and Mediation for Women

Thirteen women from CSOs across Ukraine and seven women from the Ukrainian Government and Parliament strengthened their knowledge and skills on negotiation and mediation in 2022. UN Women in partnership with the Clingendael Institute tailor-made the training to meet the needs and political context of the participants and combine role plays, presentations, self-assessments, inter-active discussions and simulations. The overall objective of this training was to increase the capacities of the participants to successfully negotiate, mediate and meaningfully participate



in decision-making for lasting and inclusive peace at all levels in society. One of the focus areas of the training was negotiations for humanitarian purposes.

UN Dialogue with Ukrainian Women's Civil Society Organizations in Kyiv

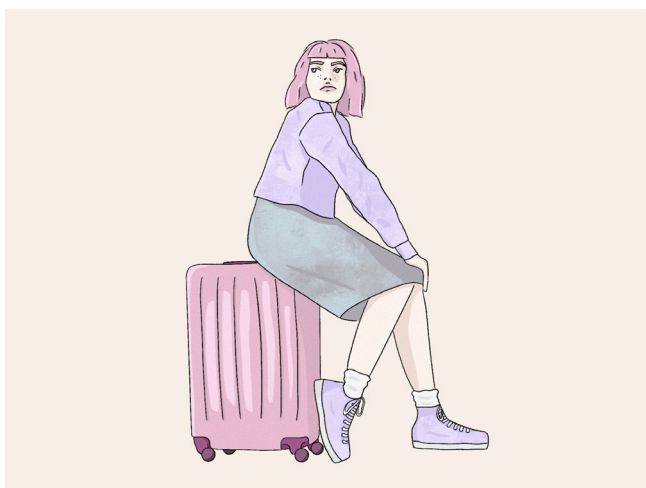


The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UN Women in Ukraine, co-hosted a dialogue with women's CSOs. The event gathered 27 Women CSOs representatives and was the first in a series of dialogues designed to provide an inclusive platform for Ukrainian women's CSOs to highlight emerging and timely priorities across human rights, humanitarian assistance and recovery efforts, and enable direct engagement of women's CSOs with the diplomatic, development and humanitarian community.

Read more about the thematic dialogue [here](#).

Read more about key results and powerful case studies of how UN Women has supported women and girls in Ukraine, especially in the early days of the crisis, in our [5-month update report](#) and on our [website](#)!

More than 4.4 million people were reached through dedicated media initiatives to raise awareness about humanitarian services, the impact of war on women and girls and the importance of women's meaningful participation in all facets of society.



- **820,500+** people were reached through social media by a campaign implemented in partnership with the online magazine Wonder Ukraine raising awareness on the impact of the war on women and girls.

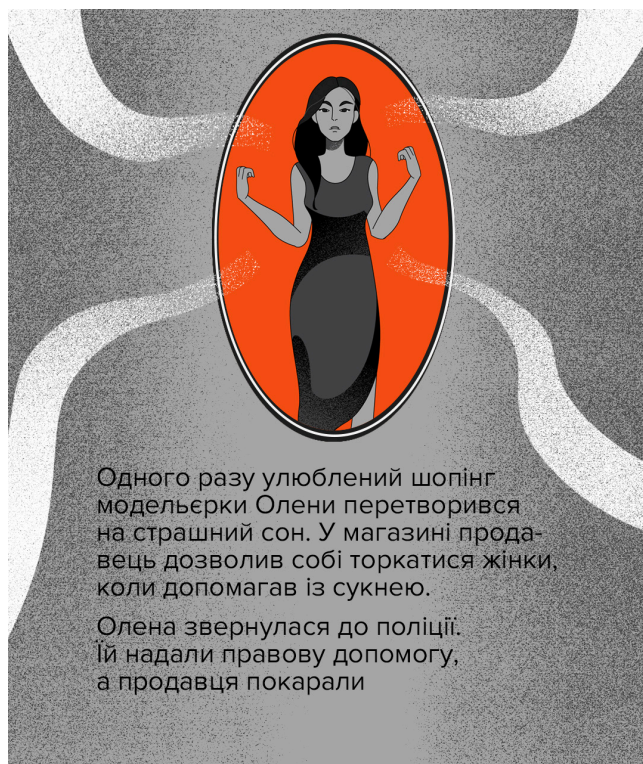
Історія архітекторки Анни Пашинської



**З ВІДКРИТИХ МАЙСТЕРЕНЬ
– У ПРОСТІР ДОМАШНІХ
ОБІЙМІВ**



- **4.4+** million people were reached by the Hromadske Media Campaign 2022, which contributed to spark questioning of widespread gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes during the war through 10 articles and video stories.



Одного разу улюблений шопінг модельєрки Олени перетворився на страшний сон. У магазині продавець дозволив собі торкатися жінки, коли допомагав із сукнею.

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- **246,500+** people were reached through the 16 Days digital campaign against gender-based violence (GBV). Within the campaign, [seven UNiTE video statements](#) featuring UN agencies and [four vox-pops videos](#) with street interviews on GBV and expert comments and recommendations were published.

In **2023**, UN Women will continue to prioritize the needs of women and girls during the crisis caused by the war, in close co-operation with women's civil society organizations and other partners. In line with the UN's Transitional Framework and

UN Women's own Strategic Note, there are ambitious plans to strengthen partnerships, scale up work in local communities and continue to support and advocate for gender-responsive humanitarian, development and peace efforts.

To learn more, please get in touch at unwomen.ukraine@unwomen.org or visit our [website](#).

Thank you!

UN Women is grateful to the incredible efforts of humanitarian and development partners in 2022.

A special thank you goes to the women's civil society organizations, continuing to work tirelessly throughout the year to ensure the needs and priorities of women and girls are met. You have all been incredible partners during this challenging time, going above and beyond for your communities and country.

Thank you also goes to the Government of Ukraine for its ongoing dedication to gender equality. UN Women is especially appreciative of the strong partnership with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and the Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy (GCGEP) for their strong leadership in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Ukraine.

UN Women's response to the full-fledged war and ongoing efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Ukraine, is made possible by the generous financial contributions from the Governments of Canada, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, as well as the European Union and the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF). Thank you also goes to the 12 UN Women [National Committees](#) working hard to raise funds, promote women's rights and secure worldwide visibility for women and girls in Ukraine and affected countries in the region.