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ANALYTICAL REPORT
on the findings of

**”BASELINE SURVEY
OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS
AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
IN DONETSK, LUHANSK
AND ZAPORIZHZHIA OBLASTS”**



The Baseline survey of public perception and attitudes towards gender-based violence against women in Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts was conducted by UN Women Ukraine, within the framework of the United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP) implemented by four United Nations agencies: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The Programme is supported by eleven international partners: the European Union, the European Investment Bank and the governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.

UN Women conducted the Survey as a part of the “Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender Equal Society in Ukraine” project and “Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative approaches to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Ukraine”, funded by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Norway and Denmark, respectively. UN Women gratefully acknowledge the staff of AC «Socioconsulting” who participated in the study, including methodology development, data collection, generalization and analysis, and the preparation of an analytical report.

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women’s equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women’s leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women’s economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system’s work in advancing gender equality.

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WHAT DO WE RESEARCH?

The objective of this survey is to collect and analyze data on gender stereotypes and public perceptions of gender roles and attitudes towards gender-based violence, and to examine current and dominant attitudes, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs toward gender equality and gender-based violence in Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts.

The survey tasks:

- 1)** to study community perceptions of gender roles and power relations between men and women, girls and boys;
- 2)** to study understanding of the terms ‘gender-based discrimination’ and ‘gender-based violence’, their causes and consequences, views about ways to prevent and respond to violence;
- 3)** to evaluate the level of awareness of the legal norms that protect survivors and prosecute perpetrators.
- 4)** to study the experiences of women and men, girls, and boys who have received information messages/participated in campaigns or activities aimed at changing gender roles, norms, and stereotypes.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

This survey focuses on issues of public perceptions and attitudes toward gender stereotypes, gender roles, power relations, and subordination between men and women, as well as the distribution of responsibilities between them in various spheres of life, which is so complicated. This is one of the first studies of this scale in Ukraine, since it comprehensively analyzes the views and attitudes of the population that underlie gender-based violence, as well as the context in which it occurs (eg, public perception of victims of violence and abusers, victims’ willingness to seek help to protect their rights and punish offenders, etc.).

The research was held at the behest of two major UN Women Projects: “Building Democratic, Peaceful and Gender Equal Society in Ukraine” (funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and “Decentralization and Law Enforcement Reforms: Transformative approaches to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Ukraine” (funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark). Its results will contribute to an essential basis for planning and implementation of information, advocacy, training, and other activities within these projects, for establishing effective communication and building in-

tersectoral cooperation between various stakeholders, relevant to the topic of combating GBV.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study combined the use of mutually complementing quantitative and qualitative sociological methods.

The main method of data collection was a public survey, through face-to-face interviews with persons aged 14-70, using tablets.

The main blocks of the questionnaire addressed public perceptions of gender roles, the prevalence of gender stereotypes, understanding the concepts of gender discrimination and gender-based violence, their causes and consequences, knowledge of the relevant legal provisions, the experience of participation in information campaigns and other activities aimed at changing gender roles, norms and stereotypes.

The sampling type for structured interviews was a multistage stratified sample based on the quota selection of respondents at the last stage. The sample is regional, representative of each of the three surveyed areas (Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (specifically areas under Ukraine's government control)). The total sample size is 3,000 respondents (1,000 respondents per oblast). Period of data collection: December 2018 – January 2019.

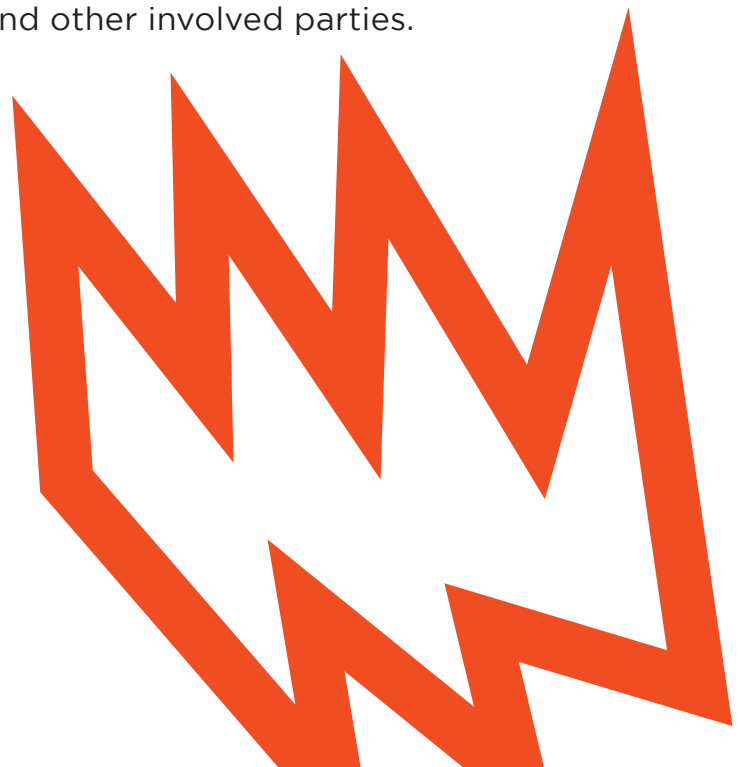
In total, 3,000 respondents were interviewed, 46% of whom were men, and 54% women. Respondents were grouped by age as follows: 37% of the respondents are young people under 35 (including 4% of teenagers aged 14-17), 27% are middle-aged (35-55 years), and 36% represented older age groups (56-70 years). These proportions reflect the distribution of the population by age and sex in the research areas.

In the next phase of the study (April-May 2019), we held in-depth interviews with experts and focus group discus-

sions with representatives of various target groups, to validate and supplement the quantitative data collected during the public survey.

Generally, we held 9 focus group discussions with teachers and school psychologists, female survivors of violence, men and women selected from people leaving with HIV people with disabilities, the elderly, Roma. We also held 21 open-ended interviews with experts, including representatives of local authorities involved in ensuring gender equality and combating gender-based violence (Department of Social Welfare, Family and Youth Policy, etc.), employees of the National Police, Children's Service, social centers for family, children and youth, shelters for victims of violence, relevant NGOs and others.

The results of the research were discussed at stakeholders' meetings in each of the three oblasts. These events were attended by the representatives of local authorities, law enforcement units, social service providers for victims of violence, NGOs, media representatives, and other involved parties.



MAIN RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND MEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

Generally, the respondents are optimistic about gender equality in Ukraine: 80% of the men and 72% of the women surveyed believe that men and women have equal rights and opportunities in Ukraine. Respondents also acknowledge that women can be as successful as men as leaders in local communities (85% of men, 93% of women), political leaders (79% of men, 88% of women), and senior managers (83% of men, 93% of women).

A closer look at the issue suggests that respondents have a superficial understanding of gender equality. In particular, a proportion of respondents (12% of women and 30% of men) disagreed that equal rights and opportunities for women and men also include equitable distribution of household responsibilities. Less than half of women (48%) and slightly more than a third of men (37%) believe that to ensure gender equality, men need to relinquish a share of their rights in favor of women.

The survey results show that gender stereotypes remain prevalent among the respondents. For example, 44% of men and 31% of women said that boys are more capable at science and girls are more adept in the humanities; 44% of men and 27% of women think that men are usually better at running a business than women; 36% of men and 55% of women believe that men are not able to do several things at the same time, etc. Thus, as we see, women and men more often display stereotypes that characterize their own gender positively and the other negatively. More than half of those surveyed, including 54% of women and 62% of men, believe that there should be some “male” and “female” professions. Less common are the stereotypes that priority should be given to male workers in the absence of jobs in the labor market and that women’s lower earnings are fair, because their work is easier. A very small proportion of respondents (15% of men and

11% of women) support the stereotype that it is unnatural for women to work at all.

An analysis of FGD results with educators and vulnerable groups representatives also confirms the conclusion that gender stereotypes are widespread and often unconscious.

Thus, by applying the technique of free association (“What are the first words/association that come to your mind when you hear the word “man”/”woman”?”) we found that almost all FGD participants, irrespective of gender and social status, described a stereotypical perception of men as strong, reliable, responsible, restrained, able to become a defender and supporter for women and children, and women as beautiful, emotional, gentle, patient, sacrificial, diplomatic, etc.

Vulnerable group representatives (both men and women) stated that they had repeatedly experienced stigma and discrimination in their lives. However, these cases were usually related to their belonging to one or another vulnerable group, i.e. HIV-positive status or disability, being elderly or of Roma nationality, etc.

“I would like to find a job, of course. Just anything, washing the dishes at least. No, they don’t hire you simply because you’re a gypsy. And I want my children to learn and work - both daughters and sons.”

(FGD participant, Roma women).

“We (people diagnosed with HIV) are not being hired. I also have tuberculosis; couldn’t someone at least hire me as a janitor? And everywhere - refusal... Some doctors are afraid of you, call you “HIV-infected,” do not want to touch the things that you have touched”

(FGD participant, women with HIV).



THE DISTRIBUTION OF GENDER ROLES IN RELATIONSHIPS

The analysis of the respondents' attitudes towards the characteristics of marital relations showed that in society there is still a commitment to the traditional division of gender roles.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (70% of women, 84% of men) still consider that the most crucial role of women is to be the "caretaker of the hearth," i.e., to take care of the home, children, husband, and prepare food for the family. Two-thirds of respondents (64% of women, 70% of men) are convinced that a man should earn more than his wife. According to 36% of women and 66% of men, the man should have the decisive vote in family decision-making. It is noticeable that men show a more significant commitment to traditional roles than women, especially in terms of agreement on family decisions.

The willingness to support the traditional division of "breadwinner" and "caretaker" gender roles increases with the age of the respondents. Compared to the elderly, a much smaller percentage of young people supports the stereotypical roles that a husband should earn more than his wife and that a woman should devote herself to caring for her family. At the same time, young respondents are more likely to agree with a dominant role for men in decision-making, while the accumulation of experience of family life in older people leads to an awareness of the need for joint decision-making in the family.

Many citizens still perceive parenting as the exclusive prerogative of women. More than half of the respondents (59% of women and 57% of men) believe that men have a less "natural" ability to care for babies, a quarter of those surveyed (20% of women and 33% of men) think that caring for young children is a purely female business. Every second respondent (49% of women and 58% of men) supported

the idea that the primary role of the father was to provide the children with everything they needed. This statement was agreed by slightly more representatives of the older age-group (57% of respondents over 55 vs. 47% of respondents aged 14-17) and rural population (57% respectively vs. 52% of city population). According to 61% of respondents, if there are children in the family, women should choose the family over work. These expectations were much more common among men (70%) than among women (54%).

There is still a widespread tendency in society to undervalue domestic work, which is perceived as not very arduous and is usually identified as the "woman's" sphere of responsibility. In particular, one in five respondents in this survey (14% of men, 28% of women) said that domestic work does not require much time and effort. Although women rated household workload more accurately than men, only 69% considered it necessary to involve men in housework. Men were even less likely to be involved in domestic work: only one in two (50%) agreed that men should fulfill these responsibilities on an equal basis with women.

The vast majority of respondents (94%, differences between men and women are small) believe that spouses or partners should decide together whether they want to have children. At the same time, one in five respondents (22%) still places the responsibility for preventing unwanted pregnancy on a woman. Such expectations are more common among men (27%) than among women (18%), indicating that they lack a responsible attitude to preventing unwanted pregnancy. Respondents were unanimous regarding the sexual education of children, as 90% of the respondents agreed that equal attention should be paid to sex education for both girls and boys. There were no differences in the distribution of answers to this question based on socio-demographic

characteristics: gender, age, level of education, or place of residence.

Attitudes towards women's and men's leisure activities are an important characteristic of gender-acceptable norms for society. Specifically, 43% of men versus 12% of women surveyed in the study felt that men needed more time to rest with their friends because they work harder than women. More than half of respondents (66% men and 41% women) consider that a wife or female partner should consult the man about who she should spend her free time with. Only two-thirds of respondents (61% of men, 72% of women) agreed that a woman is entitled to leave her children for some time with her husband, to spend free time with her friends.

Findings of FGD with representatives of vulnerable groups and with educators also confirmed the widespread stereotypes of "proper" distribution of family roles. In doing so, the answers to direct questions about which spouse should be responsible for certain tasks (such as making money, running a household, or caring for children) were fairly democratic.

"In the family, everyone should do everything, not divide who does what, not to elevate oneself to the rank of deity because you have done something. To do everything together is the way. And then the children will also organize their nest" (female FGD participant, an elderly woman).

"Whoever does what he/she can, you can always negotiate. I can hammer a nail, and my man can wash dishes" (female FGD participant, PLHIV).

However, further discussions revealed that, to some extent, the majority of FGD participants share the stereotypes of the traditional division of family roles, according to which the woman plays the role of housewife and mother, and her husband the role of a family breadwinner.

"It is better for a woman to earn a little than to earn a lot and command. I think so"

(male FGD participant, people living with HIV).

"It's beautiful when women are political leaders. But when it is women elsewhere. Our women do not need this"

(male FGD participant, Roma).

"If you choose between a family or career, of course, the family, otherwise the children will be neglected"

(female FGD participant, people living with HIV).

"Decisions must be made together. But the man should have the last word, and he has all the responsibility"

(female FGD participant, people living with HIV).

"Home affairs are women's work. If a man does housework, he will not be a man anymore"

(female FGD participant, Roma).

"A woman ensures the warmth of the home, let her do it. And a man should earn: or have an occupation, run a business"

(FGD male participant, elderly).

Thus, the survey of respondents' attitudes towards the characteristics of marital relations showed that in society, there is a commitment to the traditional division of gender roles. The primary responsibility of men is considered to be the financial support of the family, while the prerogative of women is to take care of family comfort and parenting. Compared to women, men are more likely to maintain stereotypical perceptions of the distribution of responsibilities and power in marriage; these expectations also enjoy comparatively greater support from seniors and rural residents.

TOLERANCE OF VIOLENCE IN PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS

The stereotypical view of traditional norms of “masculine” behavior often associates them with such attributes as the demonstration of power or authority, domination, and manifestations of aggression. Indeed, every second respondent in this study (50% of men, 54% of women) agreed that naturally, it is more difficult for men to restrain aggression than for women. Half of those surveyed believe that women are inherently weaker and more vulnerable, making it harder for them to cope with stressful situations. The latter statement was significantly more supported by men (63% of men vs. 44% of women) and older people (59% of respondents over 60 years vs. 45% of respondents aged 14-17).

Feelings of power and control are recognized as the most critical factors that shape the prerequisites for domestic violence and can be observed in partner relationships well before the violence is physically manifested. Indeed, 55% of the men interviewed and 34% of the women agreed that a good wife should not question her husband’s point of view and decision, even if she disagrees. According to 31% of the women interviewed and 54% of men, men are entitled to influence the way their wives look and dress.


Overall, 16% of respondents agreed with the statement that both wives and husbands have the right to check the spouse/partner’s personal calls, emails, and social network pages. Although the opinions of women and men are identical with regard to control by the wife (16% of women and men consider that the wife has such a right), the right of men to control the personal communication of their wives is recognized by 2.5 times more men (24%) than women (10%).

Financial dependence and control over economic resources by spouses can also be a prerequisite for domestic violence.

According to 27% of women and 51% of men, the wife/partner should talk to her husband/partner about all expenses. Almost the same percentage of respondents (according to the answers of 41% of women and 37% of men) believe that men have similar obligations for their wives or partners.

On the plus side, the vast majority of respondents do not justify physical abuse by husbands against their spouses. The only reason considered by some respondents (17% of men, 6% of women) as justifying beating a woman is family infidelity. Public opinion is more tolerant of the possibility of a woman’s using physical force against her husband. Thus, a significant percentage of respondents believes that a woman is entitled to strike her husband if he insults or beats a child (20% of men, 32% of women) and if she learns that he has betrayed her (19% of men, 20% of women). Every tenth respondent (10% men, 14% women) agree that a wife may beat her husband if he abuses alcohol, while some respondents (both women and men) agree that it is justifiable to beat a man because of his lack of earnings and or because he spends a lot of time with friends.

Those interviewed are much more tolerant of the possibility of psychological violence in marriage. More than 40% of respondents agree that the husband has the right to shout at his wife, to insult her, including using obscene language, if he learns that she has betrayed him (52% of men and 31% of women). One in five respondents believes that even a suspicion of betrayal is already a sufficient reason to commit emotional abuse (29% of men, 13% of women). Every tenth respondent considered psychological pressure on and insults against a woman to be legitimate if she disobeys her man (15% of men, 4% of women), or if he is dissatisfied with how she performs household du-



ties (14% of men, 4% of women). That is, men show a markedly greater tendency to justify psychological violence against their wives for all the reasons offered by the survey program.

As in the case of physical violence, public opinion finds it much easier to tolerate psychological abuse by women. The women interviewees more often supported all the reasons that could justify psychological violence against a man in marriage. Every second respondent agreed that a wife has the right to shout at her husband if he hurts a child (46% of men, 61% of women), if she learns that he has betrayed her (47% of men, 45% of women), or if he abuses alcohol (37% male, 46% female). One in four recognizes the right of a wife to react emotionally if her husband spends too much time with friends (17% of men, 28% of women), one in seven, if he earns too little (12% of men, 18% of women).

Unfortunately, society still mostly holds the widespread attitude that domestic violence is an issue for the individual family. One in four respondents (24% of women,

30% of men) in the survey agreed that a woman affected by violence should seek help from her relatives, not the police. One in five respondents (14% of women, 26% of men) believe that outsiders should not intervene if they witness a man mistreating his wife. One in ten (7% of women, 12% of men) do not accept the possibility of sexual harassment in marriage because they believe that it is the woman's marital duty to have an intimate relationship with her husband whenever he wants it.

The public's attitude to the issue of violence is shaped by the social climate in which domestic violence occurs, and its health and demographic consequences are felt. Obviously, tolerating violence in relationships and finding reasons to justify it diminish the effectiveness of any preventive programs and restrictive measures against offenders. Advocacy efforts to change stereotypes are therefore essential, as only in these conditions will it be possible to implement any anti-violence policy successfully.

UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, WILLINGNESS TO SEEK HELP AND ACCESSIBILITY OF RELATED SERVICES

The survey results demonstrate a superficial understanding of the causes of domestic violence. It is widely believed that domestic violence is caused by alcohol or drug abuse, mental disorders, and abusive behavior, or affects only poor or uneducated populations. In reality, psychological stress or alcohol abuse is only a "trigger" for aggressive behavior towards close people, while the acceptability of such behavior is determined by the cultural norms and behavioral patterns set out in society. The vast majority of respondents (71%) attribute violence to having bad habits or addictions of family members, such as alcohol, drug or gambling abuse. One in two respondents (55%) recognized the causes of violence in personal misunderstandings

between family members, such as lack of common interests, unhealthy jealousy, excessive control by spouses, etc. Almost 40% of the respondents were convinced that practical problems (low income, unemployment, lack of personal housing) lead to domestic violence. The differences in the responses of men and women are not significant.

Only one-third of the respondents attributed the causes of domestic violence to characteristics of education or culture (36% of men and women), and only a quarter of the respondents (21% of men, 28% of women) recognized the dependence of violent behavior on the distribution of authority between the partners. Much less



support was also given to the reasons for domestic violence based on the historically entrenched power of men in the society and the family (8% of men, 13% of women), or discrimination and subordination of women (6% of men, 9% of women).

In addition, during focus groups and interviews with experts, gender stereotypes were often discussed as one of the underlying prerequisites for violence. It is not just a matter of the stereotype that a man should have more authority in the family than a woman, but also of stereotypes that have an indirect impact on the distribution of marital roles and the psychological well-being of the partners. Specifically, stereotypes drive a person (a boy or a girl, a man or a woman) into a certain pattern, limit their ability to act appropriately in certain areas of life and, accordingly, to succeed in these areas.

“Authority and dictatorship in the family are, of course, the reason. If someone overreacts, there will always be a conflict. If not immediately, then later. Without the consent (of both partners), there will never be anything” (FGD participant, elderly women).

“For example, boys do not cry; the man must be strong, etc. But boys do cry, it’s natural. If in the process of growing up, they are not allowed to cry, then it leads to neuroses. Society constantly pressures the girl: “You have to get married.” And they get married to the first man who comes along, just because they have to. Then we get dysfunctional families, domestic violence, etc.” (a women expert, Zaporizhzhia region).

“Women have fewer opportunities to build their careers, get top positions in the political field, and lead/manage at different levels. And here it is not a matter of legislation, but due to gender stereotypes that have developed in our society. The employer is more

willing to hire a man because he will not go on maternity leave and will not take sick leave if a child is ill. And as a result, men have more opportunities to develop their careers”

(a women expert, Zaporizhzhia region).

“I know such families, where the husband is a breadwinner. And the wife cares only about the home and gets no self-development. Violence quite often occurs in such families: the wife is forced to do what the husband demands” (FGD participant, elderly men).

“The development of relations of equality (between men and women) should not only occur through conversations and beliefs, but special opportunities should also be provided. We are again talking about economic factors. Given the situation of general unemployment, preference will be given to a man in many areas, because he does not go on maternity leave, he does not have to take care of a sick child, he doesn’t take endless sick leaves, etc. For these economic reasons, a woman often cannot escape from the home routine, despite all her struggle for gender equality” (a women expert, Zaporizhzhia region).

Some FGD participants, including both men and women, reported cases where they acted as aggressors against their partners. However, they tried to rationalize these cases, noting the provocation by the partner.

“A woman can provoke. Women sometimes change the pitch and tone of the voice. She can say an ordinary phrase in such a tone that it feels like a punch” (FGD participant, elderly men).

“We had some disagreement. I explain once, provide arguments, then a second time and all to no avail. And then she drove me mad, and I raised

my hand. I had such cases when I did not control myself and I was in a state of 'affect'. Although I understand that you can't do that. But it should be simply forgotten, and you should live on"
(male FGD participant, people living with HIV).

"There was a case when I punished my woman like that. It was hysteria, but she was wrong, and she understood that" (male FGD participant, Roma).

The perception of domestic violence as a private issue within each family, which should not be revealed and discussed with other people, explains the unpopularity of requests for help in cases of violence to the specialized services, especially those offering psychological and social support services.

One-fifth of the respondents (25% of men and 17% of women) said they were not at all prepared to seek help from specialized services if they were to encounter violence. The most common reason why respondents were reluctant to seek help in the event of violence was lack of faith that they would be assisted. Thus, almost three-quarters of the respondents (76% of men and 67% of women) thought that it was pointless to apply to specialized services/institutions because they would not be able to help them. Obstacles such as a feeling of shame (22% of women vs. 12% of men) and fear of possible publicity (24% of women vs. 9% of men) were also widespread among women. To a lesser extent, there were reasons such as expectation that they would be accused of provoking violence by their behavior (13% of women and 8% of men) and fear of revenge (12% of women and 2% of men).

Female FGD participants who experienced violence reported that despite special legislation regulations, it is difficult in many cases for a woman to protect herself even in the most obvious cases of violence (such as physical violence). Women don't believe it is possible to obtain effective assistance from the police.

"Everything is bought and sold here, so it's difficult for a woman to protect herself. It's not guaranteed that you will receive qualified help because they (the police) have already received some instructions, and your position is neglected. You come, and they tell you that today is Thursday and you have to come tomorrow. And when you come tomorrow, something goes wrong again. Then on Saturday and Sunday, the forensic medical examination does not work, so come on Monday. And soon 8 days are over and the bruises disappear"
(female FGD participant who experienced violence).

Certain situations of violence make respondents want to help other people by contacting law-enforcement authorities. This applies mostly to the use of physical force, while sexual harassment and psychological abuse are not perceived as significant threats to the safety of the victims. There is also a tendency for greater willingness to intervene in the case of violence between strangers than in situations of violence between partners/spouses.

Hence, the majority of the respondents (78% of men, 84% of women) said that they would call the police if they witnessed somebody being beaten up by strangers, but only 59% of the respondents (53% of men, 65% of women) would consider contacting the police if a wife or a husband beats their spouse/partner. Sexual harassment ("molestation") in a public place was reported as a reason to call the police by less than half of the respondents (40% of men, 44% of women), while psychological abuse (shouts, threats, insults) by a spouse or partner was reported as a reason to call the police by only 20% of the respondents (19% of men, 22% of women).

Thus, the findings of the study demonstrate a superficial understanding of the causes of domestic violence by the majority of the population. In public opinion, they are mostly identified with some provoking factors and circumstances (alcohol abuse, psychological disorders, stress due to misunderstand-

ing), and not with the influence of cultural and social norms, which reflect inequalities in authority relations between spouses. The perception of domestic violence as a private problem of an individual family, which should not be revealed and discussed with other people, explains the unpopularity of requests for help from specialized services in the case of violence, especially those of-

fering psychological and social support services. Although certain situations of violence witnessed by the respondents make them want to help other people by contacting law-enforcement authorities, but this applies mostly to the use of physical force, while sexual harassment and psychological abuse are not perceived as significant threats to the safety of the victims.

ATTITUDES OF SOCIETY TO SEXUAL ABUSE AND ITS VICTIMS

The results of the survey indicate that there are some gaps in the understanding of sexual abuse by the population. Overall, two-thirds of the respondents (60% of men and 69% of women) agreed that certain acts of sexual nature by a stranger (unwanted touches, strokes, hugs) should be considered as sexual abuse. Nearly a quarter of the respondents (24% of men, 30% of women) said that sexual hints and jokes by a stranger should be interpreted as acts of abusive behavior.

It is a positive trend that the vast majority of the respondents (over 90%) consider the punishment of criminals justified in cases of rape, involvement in trafficking or sexual exploitation, sexual abuse of children, the beating of spouses, children or other relatives, and committing a murder as a matter of honor. There were no significant differences in attitude to these crimes depending on the gender, age, or level of education of the respondents.

Fewer respondents considered the punishment of perpetrators justified in cases of psychological abuse (89% of women, 81% of men), economic violence in the family (86% of women, 78% of men) or sexual harassment of another person, such as: unwanted touching, jokes with sexual content (85% of women, 79% of men), or harassment through intrusive calls, letters, etc. (79% of women, 71% of men). Although the women interviewed appeared to be more sensitive to understanding the violent nature of such acts than men, they were not always able to identify them in everyday life. This attitude has obvious negative practical consequences:

due to insufficient awareness, the mentioned manifestations of violence are not always perceived as criminal offenses, respectively, the offenders do not carry punishment, and the “cycles” of violence can be repeated.

Some experts have noted that acts such as rape or attempted rape are easy to prove and, accordingly, hold the offender liable. According to other experts interviewed, even in such obvious cases, offenders often avoid responsibility. Obviously, these differences are due to the fact that the procedure for collecting evidence in such cases is really well defined at the legislative level, but in practice, it is not always adequately implemented. This is due to both the stereotypes that exist in the society (including the victims themselves and law enforcement officials), with regard to blaming the victims of violence, and other factors (such as staffing shortages in law enforcement). In addition, victims often hesitate for a long time before seeking help, and in this case, an extended period since the act of violence makes it difficult to gather evidence.

“Women often blame themselves for not behaving properly or for doing something wrong. Perhaps this woman has a high social status and does not want this information to be made public. She, accordingly, may not report this”

(women expert, Zaporizhzhia oblast).

“If the man is “nobody,” then everything is fine. But if the man is influential, then there will be no punishment



to him, and it will be almost impossible to prove the guilt of the rapist. Money decides a lot. The examination is a difficult, expensive, and humiliating procedure. Furthermore, the police will accuse the woman”

(female FGD participant who experienced violence).

The most obvious gaps in understanding manifestations of sexual abuse are around the possibility of coercion into sexual relations within marriage, i.e., marital rape. Only 72% of the respondents considered the punishment of the abuser fair in this case, while gender differences in attitudes were the most significant. The suitability of punishment for coercing a partner into sexual relations was supported by 79% of interviewed women, compared to 65% of men.

The FGD participants and experts also confirmed that currently in Ukrainian society, there is a lack of understanding that sexual abuse can be performed not only by a stranger but also by the husband/partner.

“In our society, the topic of sexual abuse in marriage is taboo. It is believed that if a woman got married, the husband has the right to do whatever he wants” *(female expert, Zaporizhzhia oblast).*

“Many people don’t know that even though you have an official marriage, if one of the partners commits sexual violence against another, this is an offense. It is believed that this is a marital duty” *(female expert, Zaporizhzhia oblast).*

Unfortunately, the results of the survey demonstrate the ambiguous attitude of the respondents to the victims of marital violence. Only 53% of women and 45% of men are convinced that partner violence cannot be justified, 39% of women and 43% of men believe that a woman may be partly to blame for her husband’s ill-treatment, depending on the circumstances of a particular situation. Moreover, 6% of women and 11% of men stated that it is usually the women themselves who provoke partner violence.

It is quite a common tendency to blame victims of violence. related to both the victims of marital violence and sexual violence that takes place “outside.”

Every second respondent (43% of women, 55% of men) agrees that it is the woman’s fault that she was raped if she was under the influence of alcohol or drugs. About one-third of those surveyed believe that women can provoke sexual abuse by indiscriminate relationships with men (32% of women, 44% of men) or by provocative outfits (26% of women, 33% of men). According to 11% of women and 23% of men, if a woman was raped, she herself did something that led to these consequences. Although the proportion of men interviewed who supported these allegations was significantly higher than the percentage of women, it is striking that women are also often inclined to blame victims of sexual abuse for provoking abusers with “inappropriate” behavior.



AWARENESS OF THE POPULATION ABOUT UKRAINIAN LEGISLATION ON GENDER EQUALITY AND COUNTERACTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Most respondents believe that under the current law, a person will be punished for serious criminal offenses, such as rape (95%), human trafficking (91%), committing murder as a matter of honor (91%), and sexual abuse of children (87%). However, respondents are much more skeptical about punishment for violence against family members (even physical violence, not to mention psychological and economic). In particular, 64 -72% of those surveyed reported that a person

would be punished for physical violence against his wife, children, and other relatives, 39% for psychological violence, and 37% for economic violence. There were no significant differences between men and women for this indicator.

The experts also confirmed this trend, noting that, despite the availability of appropriate legislation, it is quite tricky in practice to prove the facts of psychological and economic violence and to punish the offender accordingly.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE MEDIA ENVIRONMENT ON GENDER STEREOTYPES IN SOCIETY

More than half of the respondents agreed that the media did not always adequately cover gender issues, which could contribute to the formation or reinforcement of female stereotypes in society, such as “the weaker sex” whose mission is to get married and take care of the home rather than trying to succeed independently. Women mentioned this more often than men.

In particular, more than half of the respondents agreed with the statement that sexual abuse of women (65% of men, 72% of women) is too often used in advertising, but in the media and advertising there are no images of men caring

for children or doing housework, i.e. performing traditionally “female” roles (57% of men, 77% of women), while examples of “successful” women are usually the wives/girlfriends of influential men (53% of men, 62% of women), not those women who have succeeded on their own in different spheres of public life.

Given the significant influence of the media on the formation of public opinion, it should be used as one of the channels of breaking gender stereotypes. Therefore, it is necessary to change the media coverage of gender issues, including gender stereotypes, gender roles, and more.

GENERAL REMARKS

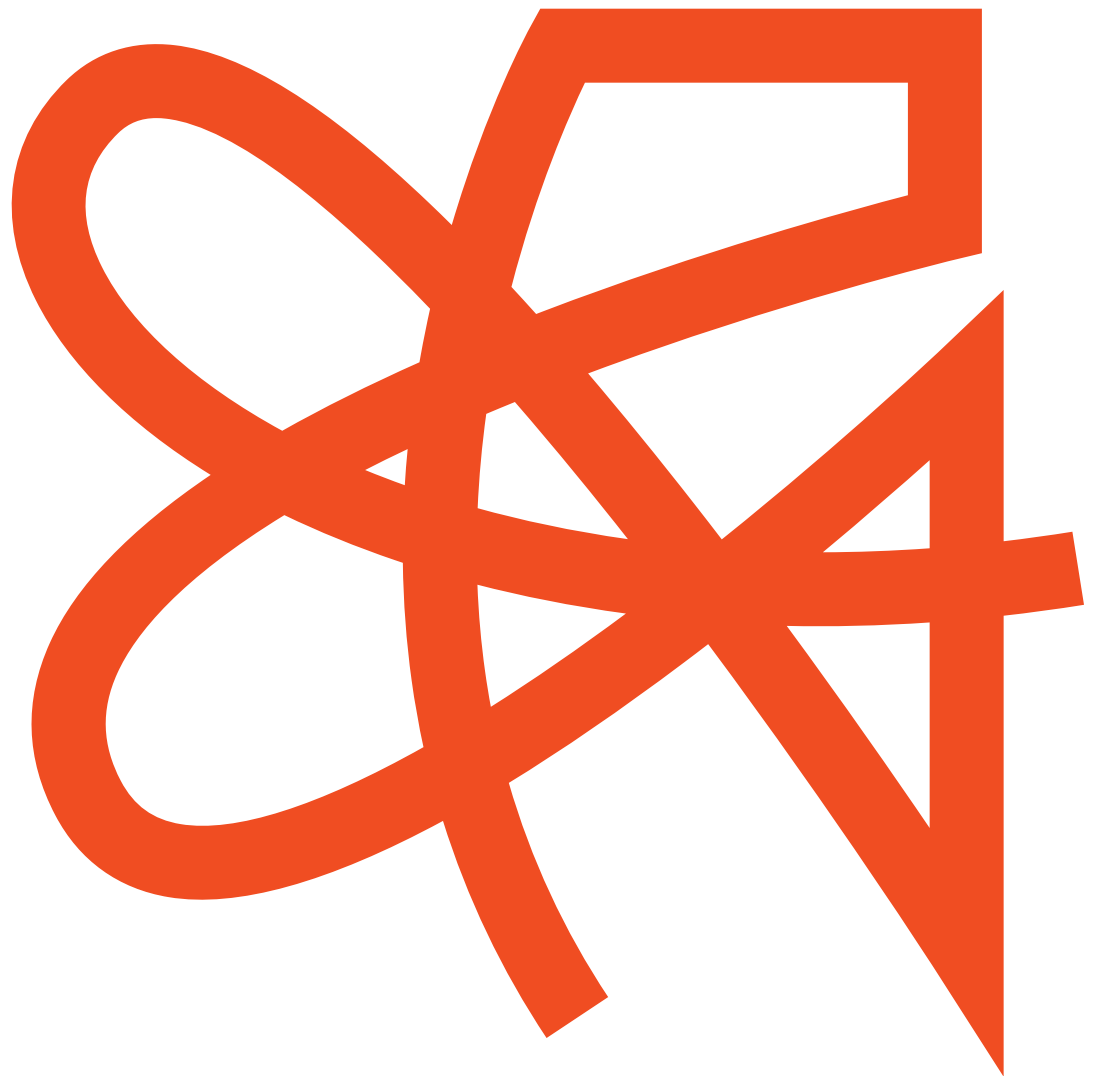
There were practically no significant differences between the opinions of the residents of different regions. Instead, the type of locality in which the respondent resides (rural or urban) has, in some cases, significantly influenced the opinions and attitudes of the respondents. In particular, rural residents more than city ones are likely to support the traditional

distribution of family roles - a woman is a caretaker, a man is a breadwinner. They are also more optimistic about the likelihood that a person who has committed various types of violence (including physical, economic, or psychological abuse against their family members or sexual harassment against others) will be punished for doing so.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCH FINDINGS BE USED?

The research report will be distributed to a variety of stakeholders involved in solving the issue of gender-based violence, including local authorities (e.g. social welfare offices), law enforcement agencies, social services providers for victims of violence (social services for the family, children and youth, crisis centers, centers of social and psychological assistance, shelters for victims of violence, etc.), NGOs of relevant direction, media, etc.

The results of the study will be used to train social service providers for victims of gender-based violence, law enforcement officials, media representatives, and to plan information campaigns.



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