



EU 4 GENDER EQUALITY:

TOGETHER AGAINST GENDER STEREOTYPES AND
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN,
BELARUS, GEORGIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE



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**TOGETHER AGAINST
GENDER STEREOTYPES AND
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CHANGING HARMFUL GENDER STEREOTYPES AND PREVENTING VIOLENCE IN ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, BELARUS, GEORGIA, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

In Eastern Europe, harmful stereotypes and perceptions about women's and men's roles still persist. According to the findings of a 2020 Baseline Study on Stereotypes¹, most women and men (averaging from 50% in Georgia to 83% in Armenia) in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) believe that women are primarily responsible for unpaid domestic work. The notion that "a good wife should never question her husband's decisions, even if she disagrees with them" is widely believed in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. A majority of respondents in Armenia (72%), Azerbaijan (56%), and Georgia (53%) felt that conflicts between a husband and wife, even if involving violence, should remain private.

These stereotypes and perceptions limit women's ability to reach their full potential. Harmful social norms, beliefs and stereotypes are the root causes of inequalities, gender-based discrimination, and gender-based violence. The same traditional gender norms also affect men, assigning them the role of breadwinner and provider. While many men in the region want to spend more time with their children, social and economic pressures prevent them from doing so.

To address and shift those harmful gender stereotypes, in 2020 a three-year project EU4Gender Equality: Together against Gender Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence was launched by UN Women and UNFPA with the generous funding of the European Union. Implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the project aims to shift harmful stereotypes and perceptions about the roles of women and men in society and prevent gender-based violence. In its first year (March 2020-February 2021), the joint project reached 3.3 million people in the region, spreading the messages of equality, elimination of gender stereotypes in all public spheres and increasing men's involvement in fatherhood.

¹ Baseline Study on Gender Norms and Stereotypes (UN Women, UNFPA, 2020)



THE PROBLEMS

Attitudes and social norms based on rigid gender roles restrict women's rights and prevent them from realising their full potential.

On average, women spend three times as much unpaid care work than menⁱ. Cultural expectations about women's work at home, and their role at the office or in sports, limit women's lives and negatively affect men as well.

Fathers are not engaged in sharing unpaid care and domestic work, which significantly burdens women.

Social norms in the region often prevent men from actively participating in childcare and household tasks. Few men in the six countries take paternity leave (from 6% in Ukraine to 18% in Moldova), even when it is offered.² Motivating men to take a more equal role in unpaid care and domestic work is vital.

Gender-based violence persists.

Gender-based violence remains widespread. A [Rapid Gender Assessment](#) of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women's and men's lives and livelihoods indicated that women are even more vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse during pandemicⁱⁱ. Awareness about programmes to shelter women survivors or rehabilitate perpetrators is low.

THE SOLUTIONS

Change attitudes about women's and men's roles in the family and in the public sphere.

Through online and offline strategies, programme partners shared stories of women and men who are redefining traditional roles at home, with children, and in the public sphere. Via social media, influencer partnerships, and live events, 3.3 million people were reached with messages about gender equality and the elimination of gender stereotypes.

Engage men to participate fully in childcare and unpaid domestic work.

Working at the grassroots level, project partners engaged men to take part in Fathers' Clubs, workshops, and training sessions to become more engaged fathers and partners.

Prevent gender-based violence by initiating or improving evidence-based violence prevention programmes targeting perpetrators of domestic violence.

The project identifies best practices and supports development of perpetrators' programmes in the EaP countries. Working with civil society as well as social services and law enforcement to refer perpetrators to programmes to stop the cycle of violence, it also draws from innovative community solutions to violence.

² Baseline Study on Gender Norms and Stereotypes (UN Women, UNFPA, 2020)

IN THE PROJECT'S FIRST YEAR,

- We have increased our knowledge on gender stereotypes and attitudes in the countries of Eastern Partnership as a Baseline Study was conducted.
- 15 civil society organization in six programme countries received small grants to implement creative projects that aim to tackle gender stereotypes and deeply rooted harmful gender norms.
- A [“Look Beyond” regional campaign](#) reached 1.7 million people with messages about men’s and women’s roles at home.
- In Ukraine, the [“Fight Like a Girl” campaign](#) reached 1.5 million people with useful tips on legal and sexual security and physical self-defense against gender-based violence amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Women with disabilities in Armenia](#) gained knowledge on employment opportunities.
- In Georgia, women facing multiple forms of discrimination received small grants to overcome the consequences of Covid-19 crisis.
- Religious leaders in Belarus, Azerbaijan and Georgia were engaged in advocacy and awareness-raising efforts to change stereotypes.

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IN THE PROJECT'S FIRST YEAR,

- A [“Papa Schools” manual](#), as well as a [Resource and Training packages](#) were developed and are available for healthcare professionals on how to engage men during pregnancy and childbirth.
- 306 men have now a father-friendly space to practice skills and become more involved parents in eleven “Fathers’ Schools” in [Moldova](#) (9) and [Ukraine](#) (2).
- In [Moldova](#), [Azerbaijan](#) and [Georgia](#) the programme produced short videos featuring fathers actively involved in childcare and unpaid domestic work.
- In Ukraine, a partnership with private-sector company StarLight Media highlighted how family-friendly leave policies encourage male employees to take a more active role in parenting.
- In Georgia, more than 76,000 people were reached via Facebook with messages about active fatherhood. A children’s book [“Luna and the Planet of the Fireflies”](#) was produced to promote gender equality messages and to encourage fathers to read to their children.
- An [online photo initiative](#) in Ukraine, presenting 19 famous fathers with their children and their stories about childcare, reached 202,741 people.

IN THE PROJECT'S FIRST YEAR,

- In Georgia, the evidence on behavioural correction programmes for perpetrators was analysed to develop recommendations and strengthen available resources for families.
- In Ukraine, design and performance of the referral and service delivery mechanisms for working with perpetrators, including prevention and rehabilitation programmes was analysed.
- In Armenia, national policies and legislation were analysed to assess the possibility of implementing rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators. The analysis will generate recommendations, including legislative amendment packages, that need to be adopted by the relevant institutions to ensure the implementation of rehabilitation programmes.
- In Azerbaijan, which has only 2 shelters for women facing domestic violence, the winner of a Gender Equality Hackathon prototyped a couchsurfing-style app to help women find a place to stay during emergencies.



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i UN Women (2020) [Rapid Gender Assessment](#) of the Impact of COVID-19 on the lives and livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia

ii Ibid.