



**TOGETHER AGAINST
GENDER STEREOTYPES AND
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**
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ANALYTICAL BRIEF

Baseline Study on Stereotypes
in Eastern Partnership Countries



Funded by the
European Union



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UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

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Overarching gender perspectives

Women and men in Eastern Partnership countries generally perceive that there has been progress towards achieving gender equality. A majority of women and men in Georgia (75 vs. 70 percent),¹ Armenia (67 vs. 55 percent) and Belarus (61 vs. 52 percent) think women and men are more equal today compared to their childhood. A smaller, yet sizeable proportion of women and men in the Republic of Moldova (50 vs. 45 percent), Azerbaijan (49 vs. 39 percent) and Ukraine (46 vs. 49 percent) also agree with this positive outlook. In contrast, around one in every three women and men in Ukraine (33 vs. 34 percent), Belarus (31 vs. 36 percent), Azerbaijan (31 vs. 32 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (27 vs. 34 percent) believe there has been no change compared to when they were growing up. This view is endorsed by a smaller share of women and men in Georgia (13 vs. 14 percent) and Armenia (11 vs. 18 percent). Overall, women are generally more likely than men to report progress towards gender equality while men are slightly more likely than women to report that no progress has occurred. While small, the share of women and men that believe that women and men are less equal today compared to their childhood is most notable in Azerbaijan (17 vs. 19 percent), followed by Armenia (14 vs. 17 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (13 vs. 11 percent).

Women and men generally disagree that women's empowerment deprives men of their rights. Between two thirds and three quarters of women and men in Belarus (74 vs. 63 percent), Armenia (71 vs. 65 percent), Ukraine (64 vs. 65 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (63 vs. 66 percent) disagree that more rights for women result in fewer rights for men. In most contexts women are more likely than men to be in disagreement, although differences are generally small.

An overwhelming majority of women and men in most countries view gender equality as beneficial for the economic development of their country. This is particularly obvious in Armenia (92 vs. 79 percent), Georgia (90 vs. 82 percent), the Republic of Moldova (84 vs. 76 percent), Ukraine (80 vs. 81 percent) and Belarus (75 vs. 73 percent), where women are generally more likely than men to agree to this perspective. In Azerbaijan, however, women are twice more likely than men to be positive on the impact of gender equality on the economy (69 vs. 34 percent). These contrasting views are also evidenced by the fact that just 7 percent of women in the country disagree that gender equality is beneficial for their country's economic development, compared to 44 percent of men.

¹ Throughout this brief, sex-disaggregated data analyses are generally presented in brackets, with the former percentage relating to women and the latter percentage referring to men.

Employment and leadership

Employment promotes women's economic independence and personal achievement, which are key to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. While there are signs of shifting attitudes towards the role of women in the workforce, barriers based on gender norms and stereotypes about women's access to and growth within the labour market persist and have gained prominence with the rise of conservative movements. Such norms and stereotypes perpetuate gaps in labour force participation and pay, occupational segregation, unequal working conditions, participation in decision making and the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work.

Women and men in Eastern Partnership countries value participating in the labour market and accessing decent work. A large majority see having a job as a key part of their identity, although women are less likely to hold such views than men, with the widest gender gaps observed in Belarus (76 vs. 98 percent), followed by Azerbaijan (65 vs. 81 percent) and Ukraine (83 vs. 95 percent). Over nine in every ten women and men in all countries consider it is just as important for their daughters to get good jobs as it is for their sons except in Azerbaijan, where over three quarters of women (79 percent) and under half of men believe so (45 percent). The reality, however, does not match perceptions, and men remain more likely than women to participate in the job market in most countries. It is estimated that in 2019 the labour force participation among prime-aged women (25-54) was highest in Belarus (94 percent), followed by Azerbaijan (84 percent) and Ukraine (77 percent), Georgia (69 percent), Armenia (57 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (54 percent).^[1] In contrast, prime-aged men experience consistently higher labour force participation rates than women – in most countries around nine in every ten were economically active, except for the Republic of Moldova (57 percent).^[2]

While generally uncommon, men and other family members may prevent women from joining the labour market. Nearly one in every five men surveyed in Armenia have prevented a woman in their family from working outside the home (23 percent), a share that is considerably lower in Georgia (13 percent), Azerbaijan (12 percent), the Republic of Moldova (12 percent), Belarus (8 percent) and Ukraine (7 percent). However, more women reported having been prevented by a family member from working outside home in Azerbaijan (23 percent) than in any other country (Armenia, 14 percent; the Republic of Moldova, 13 percent; Ukraine, 10 percent; Belarus, 7 percent; and Georgia, 6 percent). As to career progression, mixed patterns emerge when respondents valued the importance of career advancement for men versus women. More women than men stated that career advancement is more important for men than it is for women, in Azerbaijan (68 vs. 39 percent), Belarus (45 vs. 40 percent) and Ukraine (43 vs. 38 percent), while the opposite trend is observed in Armenia (49 vs. 53 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (41 vs. 43 percent), although gender differences are generally less significant.

Good-mother stereotypes constrain women to the home during their children's pre-school years, limiting their participation in the workforce. A majority of men in all countries agree that it is better for pre-school children to have a mother that does not work (Armenia, 75 percent; Ukraine, 65 percent; Republic of Moldova, 60 percent; Belarus, 58 percent; Azerbaijan 52 percent). Among women, this is only observed in Armenia (66 percent) and Ukraine (55 percent), yet more than four in every ten agree with this view in the remaining countries (the Republic of Moldova, 47 percent; Belarus, 46 percent; and Azerbaijan, 41 percent). Evidence from recent labour force surveys confirms that gender gaps in labour force participation indeed widen with the presence of small children

1 ILO (International Labour Organization). 2021. ILOSTAT. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

2 ILO (International Labour Organization). 2021. ILOSTAT. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

in the household. In 2018 prime-aged women (25-54) living with a partner and their children under 6 years of age were less than half as likely to participate in the labour force than their male partners in Armenia (39 vs. 91 percent) and Georgia (44 vs. 90 percent).^[3]

Support systems and policies that help break down gender stereotypes around caregiving roles and support women's participation in the labour force and the involvement of fathers at home are limited. Paternity leave, flexible parental leave and leave sharing arrangements remain unavailable or inadequate in Eastern Partnership countries. As of October 2020, paternity leave legislation had been enacted in Armenia and the Republic of Moldova, granting fathers a leave of 5 and 14 days respectively, while parental leave was available in Azerbaijan, Belarus and the Republic of Moldova, allowing parents to take childcare leave for a shared period of around 3 years.^[4] As of April 2021, Ukraine grants fathers paid paternity leave up to 14 calendar days during first three months of a child's life.^[5] Moreover, men who have children under the age of 14 or disabled children, and single parents are entitled to reduced working hours.^[6] In some countries, these policy gaps are compounded by a shortage of kindergartens and preschools. For instance, in 2018 around half and two-thirds of children participated in organized learning the year prior to starting primary education in Armenia (48 percent), Georgia (49 percent) and Azerbaijan (69 percent) respectively, which

contrasts with the nearly universal coverage achieved by the Republic of Moldova (93 percent) and Belarus (98 percent).^[7]

Women still constitute the majority of those employed part-time and in vulnerable employment, often due to the disproportionate unpaid care and domestic work burden they bear, which has exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis. Rapid Gender Assessments finding confirm that women in Eastern Partnership countries have been less likely than men to lose their jobs during the pandemic, yet they have been more prone to experience changes in their working arrangements, and reductions in paid hours of work.^[8] During the period 2017-2020,^[9] women were between two and three times more likely than men hold part-time jobs in Armenia (29 vs. 13 percent) and Belarus (24 vs. 8 percent) respectively.^[10] This pattern is also reflected - although slightly less pronounced - in Ukraine (20 vs. 11 percent), Azerbaijan (24 vs. 15 percent), the Republic of Moldova (30 vs. 22 percent) and Georgia (26 vs. 21 percent).^[11] They therefore earn, on average, significantly less than men. During the period 2017-2019,^[12] the gender pay gap in monthly earnings was staggeringly high in Azerbaijan (42 percent), Georgia (36 percent) and Armenia (33 percent), whereas significant pay gaps were also observed in Belarus (27 percent), the only country, where legislation mandated equal remuneration for work of equal value as of October 2020,^[13] Ukraine (23 percent) and

3 ILO (International Labour Organization). 2021. ILOSTAT. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

4 The survey questions "Whether your child's father took paternal leave when your most recent child was born?" and "Whether you took paternal leave when your most recent child was born?" were asked to women and men respectively. Results should be interpreted with caution as neither question anchored the concept of "paternal leave" to existing domestic legislation and policies. This concept therefore remained ambiguous and subject to the respondent's interpretation. For instance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Belarus estimates that 1 percent of fathers take paternity leave based on data from the social protection fund that distributes children's allowances, which contrasts with the 11 percent of male survey respondents that report doing so.

5 Labor Code of Armenia, Art. 176.1, and World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law 2021. Accessed 10 June 2021.

6 Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Bill #3695.

7 Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Bill #3695.

8 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

9 UN Women. 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men's Lives and Livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment. Istanbul: UN Women

10 Includes latest available data point during the reference period.

11 ILO (International Labour Organization). 2021. ILOSTAT. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

12 ILO (International Labour Organization). 2021. ILOSTAT. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>

13 Includes latest available data point during the reference period.

the Republic of Moldova (14 percent).^[14] In a context that places them at disadvantage, women in Ukraine are more likely than men to perceive that in most cases it is easier for men to find a well-paid job (70 vs. 53 percent).

Focus group discussions with marginalized and vulnerable population groups revealed the difficulties faced by single mothers in reconciling work and family life, particularly during the first years of their child's life. Many have held low-skilled jobs and allude to employer discrimination in hiring and failure to adjust to flexible work arrangements, resulting in termination threats. In the absence of kindergartens, the reliance on parents, neighbours and friends to perform childcare duties was often highlighted. Similarly, women with disabilities report having a tough time joining the workforce due to stigma from employers and society more broadly. Many find it hard to join the private sector and may be limited to performing a part-time or a home-based job if their disability is severe. For some, accessibility factors such as an inadequate physical environment or transportation limit their chances of getting a job.

Patriarchal perceptions continue to hinder women's progression to leadership positions and their engagement in political and corporate processes. Women are more likely than men to report wanting to see more women in national politics as well as in local government and community activists, yet such preferences generally emerge somewhat stronger in the latter two positions. For instance, around two thirds of women and over half of men in the Republic of Moldova favour more female presence in national politics (65 vs. 54 percent) and in local government and community activism (72 vs. 59 percent). In Azerbaijan, just around one in every ten men would like to see more women

in national politics (15 percent) and in local government and community activism (21 percent), compared to 46 and 58 percent among women respectively. In practice, women are still underrepresented in the political sphere. In 2020 women accounted for 40 percent of parliamentarians in Belarus, while their representation stood at or under a quarter of all parliamentarians in the Republic of Moldova (25 percent), Armenia (23 percent), Ukraine (21 percent), Azerbaijan (17 percent) and Georgia (14 percent).^[15] During the same year, Georgia was closest to achieving parity at the ministerial level (46 percent), followed by Ukraine (35 percent), while women held few ministerial portfolios in the Republic of Moldova (11 percent), Armenia (7 percent), Azerbaijan (3 percent) and Belarus (3 percent).^[16] Meanwhile, in 2018 women's representation in local government was higher than national parliaments in Belarus (48 percent), Azerbaijan (35 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (29 percent), and lower in Georgia (13 percent) and Armenia (9 percent).^[17]

Women's participation in corporate decision-making also lags behind men's, while attitudes towards job competence tend to be generally positive. In 2019 women held nearly half of managerial positions in Belarus (49 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (46 percent), over a third in Ukraine (41 percent), Georgia (37 percent) and Azerbaijan (36 percent), and over a quarter in Armenia (26 percent).^[18] This is likely to reflect the legacy of both World War II and post-war communist political structures, which boosted women's labour force participation and encouraged them to learn skills for jobs traditionally dominated by men.^[19] Indeed, women are more likely to agree that jobs in any industry or sector can be performed successfully by both men and women. These views are shared by at least seven in every ten women and six in every ten men in all countries except for Azerbaijan,

14 World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law 2021. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>

15 UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe). 2019. Statistical Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. https://w3.unece.org/PXWeb2015/pxweb/en/STAT/STAT_30-GE/

16 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

17 IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union) and UN Women. Women in Politics: 2020. Geneva and New York: IPU and UN Women.

18 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

19 The Financial Times. 2015. "Women in Eastern Europe lead the way to senior roles". Accessed 9 June 2021. <https://www.ft.com/content/1e921f8a-e8ef-11e4-b7e8-00144feab7de>

where women are twice as likely to agree with such statement compared to men (58 vs. 29 percent). As of October 2020, however, legislation in Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine did not enable women to work in a job deemed dangerous in the same way as men nor in the same industries as men.^[20] Laws eliminating such discrimination had been enacted in Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova.^[21]

The level of acceptance levels to working with a female boss remains generally low, with women reporting to be more comfortable being managed by another woman compared to men. This is particularly evident in Azerbaijan (68 vs. 17 percent) and Armenia (54 vs. 35 percent). While gender gaps are narrower in the remaining countries, acceptance of female bosses among both women and men is much higher in the Republic of Moldova (64 vs. 57 percent) compared to Ukraine (38 vs. 26 percent), and Belarus (23 vs. 29 percent). This confirms that gender norms and stereotypes remain deeply rooted in women and men, even in countries that have achieved significant progress in women's participation in corporate leadership.

In most countries, a majority of women and men think that there is no difference between women and men's performance in top business and political positions, yet women are more often perceived to perform equally well as managers in the corporate sector. For instance, around eight in every ten women and men in Ukraine believe there are no gender differences in

the performance in top business executives (79 vs. 80 percent) - a share that declines to around two in every three in the case of top politicians (66 vs. 65 percent). Less egalitarian beliefs are notably observed in Azerbaijan, where 45 percent of women and men consider that men make better business executives, and two-thirds of women and half of men believe men make better political leaders (68 vs. 50 percent). Similarly, 44 percent of women and 53 percent of men in Armenia hold this latter perspective. This and the findings above reveal that both women and men in Eastern Partnership countries tend to associate political power with men and masculinity, more so than corporate power, and that such patriarchal gender norms have barred women from joining national and local politics.

Lastly, between two-thirds and three-quarters of women and men reported having a female role model during their teenage years. Of those who did, respondents were generally more likely to mention family members, schoolteachers and celebrities, rather than women in leadership positions, such as politicians and businesswomen. Compared to men, women are slightly more likely to report looking up to a female role model in their adolescence in Belarus (75 vs. 69 percent), Armenia (72 vs. 70 percent), Ukraine (69 vs. 64 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (77 vs. 65 percent), while a different pattern is observed in Azerbaijan (75 vs. 79 percent) and Georgia (64 vs. 65 percent)

20 World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law 2021. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>

21 World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law 2021. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>

Household and family

Gender stereotypes are reflected in household dynamics, where the perception that women should mainly stay as homemakers and mothers is prevalent. Unpaid domestic and care work falls mainly on women's shoulders, a responsibility that oftentimes is accompanied by an influence over decision-making processes in the home, whether related to day-to-day expenditures or big purchases or investments.

Most women state that they are primarily responsible for performing unpaid domestic tasks. This is expressed by six in every ten women in the Republic of Moldova (60 percent), three quarters of women in Ukraine (71 percent) and Belarus (79 percent), and nine in every ten women in Armenia (89 percent) and Azerbaijan (92 percent). In contrast, perceptions among men are generally less homogeneous – for instance, a substantial share in the Republic of Moldova (42 percent), Ukraine (44 percent), Belarus (46 percent) believe this burden is shared equally. In contrast, most men in Azerbaijan (57 percent) and Armenia (77 percent) highlight that it is mainly women who look after the household chores.

Perspectives on unpaid care work responsibilities are to some extent more equitable, although still most women state they are mainly responsible for performing these tasks in the Republic of Moldova (51 percent), Ukraine (56 percent), Armenia (61 percent) and Belarus (76 percent). Once again, significant shares of men in Armenia (41 percent), the Republic of Moldova (46 percent), Belarus (49 percent) and Ukraine (56 percent) indicate they are as equally responsible as women in child and/or elder care. Men are also more likely than women to report that they see some progress towards a more equitable division of unpaid care and domestic work. For instance, 79 percent of men in

Belarus report that women were mainly responsible for household chores during their childhood, while 49 percent agree with this view when asked about their families today. Among women, these shares stand at 85 and 79 percent respectively.

In practice, the evidence from national time use surveys confirms that women do the lion's share of unpaid domestic and care work, spending more hours performing household chores such as cleaning, cooking and doing the laundry, and caring for their children and older relatives. In 2008, women aged 15+ did three and five times more unpaid care and domestic work than men in Azerbaijan and Armenia respectively, whereas in the Republic of Moldova this ratio stood at 1.8 times among women the same age in 2012. In Belarus, women and girls aged 10+ spent twice the time in these compared to men and boys in 2015.¹ This confirms that the actual distribution of unpaid care and domestic work is closely aligned to women's perceptions, compared to the more balanced picture that men tend to portray. It is important to highlight that for women who engage in the labour market, the dual responsibilities at home and on the job make them more time poor compared to men, that is, they are more likely to be left with little or no time for leisure and rest. The COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent imposition of emergency measures, including social distancing, working from home, and the closure of schools and other services- has increased the burden of unpaid domestic work, child-care and home-schooling drastically, with a greater share falling on women. A Rapid Gender Assessment in the Republic of Moldova showed that 62 percent of women reported increased time spent on unpaid care work while 45 percent reported spending more time on domestic chores, compared to 57 and 35 percent of

1 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

men respectively.^[2] This occurred in a context where women were nearly twice as likely to work from home compared to men (54 vs. 30 percent).^[3]

Most women and men report having no access to regular external help with household chores - around three quarters indicate that they do not receive support from cleaning services, cooks, grandparents or other family members in the six Eastern Partnership countries (Belarus, 66 vs. 74 percent; Georgia, 71 vs. 74 percent; Republic of Moldova, 73 vs. 74 percent; Armenia, 75 vs. 73 percent; Ukraine, 75 vs. 78 percent; Azerbaijan, 78 vs. 58 percent). Meanwhile, around two in every ten women and men acknowledge the support received by other family members (Azerbaijan, 7 vs. 20 percent; Ukraine, 21 vs. 17 percent; Georgia, 21 vs. 18 percent; Armenia, 22 vs. 19 percent; Republic of Moldova, 23 vs. 21 percent; Belarus, 31 vs. 21 percent).

Women and men are more likely to receive regular external childcare help with children under 18, be it from pre-schools, childminders or babysitters, grandparents or relatives, although a majority reports lacking access to such support in Azerbaijan (55 vs. 72 percent), Armenia (61 vs. 58 percent), Georgia (63 vs. 63 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (66 vs. 66 percent). In contrast, women and men in Ukraine (41 vs. 36 percent) and Belarus (54 vs. 54 percent) recognize that grandparents represent a key support network in raising their children, while between one and two in every ten women and men do so in Azerbaijan (21 vs. 11 percent), the Republic of Moldova (21 vs. 19 percent), Georgia (21 vs. 20 percent) and Armenia (22 vs. 29 percent). In Belarus, where 98 percent of children participated in organized learning the year prior to starting primary education in 2018, more women and men than in other countries identify of pre-schools as a regular source of childcare support (44 vs. 40

percent).^[4] This view is also echoed by between one and three women and men in the Republic of Moldova (12 vs. 10 percent), Georgia (18 vs. 14 percent), Armenia (21 vs. 19 percent), Ukraine (21 vs. 21 percent) and Azerbaijan (33 vs. 18 percent). These findings are aligned with women's perceptions on the distribution of unpaid care and domestic work presented above: women do most unpaid domestic and care work on their own, while their partners or external parties are more likely to engage in childcare.

Single mothers are likely to rely on their children and mothers to support for household tasks, and rarely receive childcare support from their former partners, as shown by focus group discussions with marginalized and vulnerable population groups. Their children very often contribute to cleaning the house, while washing and cooking tend to be performed by single mothers on their own or jointly. They also mention, to a lesser extent, the support received by other relatives and friends. When it comes to childcare, their parents, siblings and daughters- and sons-in-law are likely to be involved, more so than grandmothers and childminders.

An active involvement in childcare is a key part of the identity for women and men. Nevertheless, they both tend to be more likely to value their role in supporting children's upbringing, educational attainment, and leisure activities, rather than their involvement in day-to-day domestic and care activities such as cooking, cleaning, changing children's diapers and clothes and feeding them. A vast majority of women and men in all countries, too often exceeding 80 percent, sees these objectives as a key part of their identity except for Azerbaijan, where much smaller shares of men do so (21 and 42 percent respectively).

2 UN Women. 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men's Lives and Livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment. Istanbul: UN Women. <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/the-impact-of-covid19-on-womens-and-mens-lives-and-livelihoods>

3 UN Women. 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men's Lives and Livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment. Istanbul: UN Women

4 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

Men are more likely to agree that having at least one son is very important for the family in all countries except for Azerbaijan, where more women do so (68 vs. 35 percent). There are large variations across countries, with such perspectives being most dominant among women and men in Armenia (71 vs. 74 percent), compared to the Republic of Moldova (44 vs. 55 percent), Georgia (40 vs. 52 percent), Ukraine (37 vs. 53 percent) and Belarus (25 vs. 40 percent). While sex-selective abortions are banned across all Eastern Partnership countries, during the period 2015-2020 there were 113 boys born for every 100 girls in Azerbaijan and 111 boys born for every 100 girls in Armenia.^[5]

The importance attached to sons in Azerbaijan is reflected in respondents' attitudes towards their children's education and inheritance. Azeri women are nearly three times as likely than Azeri men to value the education of their daughters and sons equally (89 vs. 34 percent), while around just around half of women and men attach importance to splitting any inheritance equally (42 vs. 55 percent). In contrast, an overwhelming majority of women and men in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, oftentimes exceeding 90 percent, believe that the education of daughters and sons is of equal importance, and that any inheritance should be equally shared among them. In these of countries, gender gaps in such views tend to be small and favor women. As of October 2020, legislation across all six Eastern Partnership countries granted sons and daughters equal rights to inherit assets from their parents.^[6]

More than three-quarters of women and men agree that decision-making in the home, whether related to day-to-day expenditures or big purchases or investments, is a shared responsibility. This pattern is observed across all countries except in Azerbaijan, where respondents have more polarized views: just 28 percent of women and 40 percent of men believe women and men are jointly responsible for decisions around day-to-day expenditures, while 43 and 57 percent respectively consider that decisions around big purchases or investments should be pursued jointly.

Conversely, 83 percent of women and 88 percent of men in Ukraine believe decision-making is a shared responsibility.

The perceptions are less egalitarian regarding who should have the final say in the home. A generally smaller majority of women and men in Republic of Moldova (54 vs. 55 percent), Ukraine (58 vs. 59 percent) and Belarus (64 vs. 58 percent) views this as a shared responsibility. Meanwhile, four in every ten women and two-thirds of men in Armenia (41 vs. 68 percent) and Azerbaijan (47 vs. 64 percent) believe it is mainly men who should have the final say.

Lastly, there is wide consensus that good husband consults his wife in important issues, while patriarchal attitudes towards what makes a good wife are widespread. Around nine in every ten women and men in Ukraine (91 vs. 88 percent), Georgia (93 vs 93 percent), Belarus (96 vs. 90 percent), Armenia (97 vs. 94 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (94 vs. 87 percent) believe that a good husband always asks for his wife's opinion on important issues and decides taking her opinion into account. In Azerbaijan the share of women and men that agree with this statement is smaller (80 vs. 48 percent). On the other hand, a significant share of women and men in all countries agrees that a good wife never questions her husband's opinions and decisions, even if she disagrees with him. Women are less likely than men to agree to this perspective in Belarus (32 vs. 51 percent), Ukraine (40 vs. 45 percent), the Republic of Moldova (52 vs. 53 percent) and Armenia (65 vs. 71 percent), while the reverse is observed in Azerbaijan (68 vs. 45 percent).

While single mothers tend to manage their budget and plan their expenses on their own, they are also likely to involve relatives such as parents, grandparents or siblings in decision-making processes, as shown in the focus group discussions with marginalized and vulnerable population groups. This support network may in turn be sources of monetary, in-kind and childcare support. This is especially evident among single mothers living in extended households, where they contribute to common expenses.

5 United Nations Population Division. 2019. World Population Prospects 2019. Online edition. Rev. 1. Accessed 21 June 2021. <https://population.un.org/wpp/>.

6 World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law 2021. Accessed 21 June 2021. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>.

Gender-based violence

Violence against women and girls is a pervasive human rights violation and serious impediment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite progress in the development and enforcement of legal and normative frameworks, and in the provision of services for survivors, gender norms and stereotypes persistently make violence against women acceptable in couples, families, communities and societies, thereby perpetuating women's discrimination in public and private life.

Tolerance towards violence against a female family member varies across Eastern Partnership countries.

Georgia, Belarus and Ukraine have the most progressive views and most women and men think beating a female family member is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law (Georgia, 83 vs. 74 percent; Belarus, 82 vs. 58 percent; Ukraine, 81 vs. 73 percent). The gender gap observed in Belarus is accounted by one in every three men (32 percent) deeming it unacceptable but not always punishable by law, compared to just 15 percent of women.

In contrast, views on this topic are more polarized in the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In the Republic of Moldova, around half of women and men believe beating a female family member is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law (50 vs. 48 percent), while around a quarter consider it unacceptable but not always be punishable by law (26 vs. 29 percent). In addition, nearly two in every ten women and men (17 vs. 16 percent) deem it acceptable in certain or all circumstances. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, around half of women and a third of men do not accept the beating of a female family member and believe that such act should always be punishable by law (52 vs. 31 percent and 48 vs. 36 percent respectively). The view that while unacceptable it should not always be punishable by law is supported by around half of Armenian women and men (47 vs. 54 percent), half of Azeri men (50 percent) and 20 percent of Azeri

women. In this regard, Azeri women are twice as likely than Azeri men to accept violence against a female family member in certain or all circumstances (27 vs. 15 percent).

In the case of sexual violence against a woman, slightly more than half of women and men in Belarus (56 vs. 61 percent), Georgia (56 vs. 55 percent) and Armenia (55 vs. 54 percent) agree that it is unacceptable to blame her (e.g., for her clothes, drinking, behaviour, reputation or any other reason). Opposing views are observed in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, with around four in every ten women and men agreeing with (44 vs. 44 percent and 43 vs. 44 percent respectively) and disagreeing with this statement (38 vs. 41 percent and 40 vs. 40 percent respectively).

Most respondents agree that any sexual intercourse in marriage occurs by mutual agreement. This is particularly evident in Armenia (85 vs. 86 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (78 vs. 77 percent), where at least three quarters of women and men agree with this view. More women than men support this view in Azerbaijan (71 vs. 52 percent), while the opposite is observed in Ukraine (59 vs. 69 percent) and Belarus (57 vs. 69 percent).

Reports of violence before coming of age confirm that women are more likely to experience sexual violence and less likely to experience physical violence than men, although this varies between genders and across countries:^[7]

▶ **Men are more likely than women to report having experienced physical violence such as punching, kicking or slapping before turning 18.** Men are between two and four times more likely than women to report having suffered physical violence when they were growing up in Belarus (39 vs. 19 percent), Ukraine (30 vs. 14 percent), Georgia (29 vs. 7 percent), the Republic of Moldova (22 vs. 11 percent) and Armenia (11 vs. 4 percent). However, the

7 The generation of quality and reliable estimates on the prevalence of violence against women was beyond the scope of this baseline survey. Therefore, the measures presented in this section should not be interpreted as violence prevalence estimates.

opposite pattern is observed in Azerbaijan (12 vs. 17 percent). Both female and male survivors tend to cite the family as the environment where such violence took place, while male survivors also commonly report experiencing it at school.

- ▶ **Women are more likely than men to report experiences of sexual violence before turning 18 years old.** These are highest in Belarus (7 vs. 2 percent) and Ukraine (6 vs. 1 percent) – where around one in every 14 and 17 women respectively report experiencing sexual violence before turning 18- followed by the Republic of Moldova (3 vs. 2 percent), Georgia (2 vs. 1 percent), Azerbaijan (2 vs. 0 percent) and Armenia (1 vs. 0 percent). Female survivors tend to indicate that they suffered such violence at the hands of family members or friends.
- ▶ **Women are more likely than men to report having seen their mother hit or humiliated by her partner/husband before turning 18 years old** in Belarus (41 vs. 35 percent), Azerbaijan (40 vs. 13 percent), the Republic of Moldova (39 vs. 31 percent) and Ukraine (37 vs. 36 percent). Gender differences are very minor in Georgia (10 vs. 10 percent) and favour men in Armenia (8 vs. 11 percent).

Lifetime reports of violence since adulthood reveal that surveyed women and men are generally more likely to report experiencing psychological or physical violence compared to sexual or economic violence, with large variations observed by sex and across countries:

- ▶ **Women are more likely than men to report experiencing controlling behaviour after turning 18 years old**, such as having their phone checked or not being allowed to go somewhere or speak to their friends or relatives. In Azerbaijan nearly half report experiencing it (49 vs. 7 percent), while this share falls to between one in every four and one in every ten women in the remaining countries (Belarus, 25 vs. 18 percent; Ukraine, 21 vs. 16 percent; the Republic of Moldova, 19 vs. 14 percent; Armenia, 17 vs. 9 percent; Georgia, 14 vs. 11 percent). Among women survivors of this type of violence, the share that experienced it during the 12 months preceding the survey ranged from 14 percent in Ukraine to 88 percent in Azerbaijan.
- ▶ **Women are also more likely than men to report experiencing a deliberate humiliation in front of others after turning 18**, although levels and gender gaps are much higher in Belarus (23 vs. 15 percent), Ukraine (19 vs. 17 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (19 vs. 13 percent) compared to Georgia (4 vs. 4 percent) and Armenia (4 vs. 3 percent). Among women survivors of this type of violence, the share that experienced it during the 12 months preceding the survey ranged from 19 percent in Belarus to 38 percent in Georgia.
- ▶ **Men are more likely to report experiencing slaps or pushes after turning 18 years old** in Belarus (25 vs. 26 percent), Ukraine (20 vs. 29 percent), the Republic of Moldova (15 vs. 18 percent), Armenia (10 vs. 20 percent) and Georgia (4 vs. 8 percent), yet between 10 and 25 percent of women have been victims of such physical violence in the first four countries. Women in Azerbaijan are more than twice as likely than men to have been slapped or pushed in their adulthood (20 vs. 8 percent). Among women survivors of this type of violence, the share that experienced it during the 12 months preceding the survey ranged from 6 percent in Azerbaijan to 21 percent in Georgia.
- ▶ **Reports of pressure to have sexual intercourse after turning 18 years old are more common among women than men** in Belarus (12 vs. 2 percent), Ukraine (9 vs. 1 percent) and Azerbaijan (7 vs. 1 percent), compared to those in the Republic of Moldova (3 vs. 1 percent), Georgia (2 vs. 2 percent) and Armenia (0 vs. 1 percent). Such experiences are rarely cited by men. Among women survivors of this type of violence, the share that experienced it during the 12 months preceding the survey ranged from 0 percent in Armenia to 20 percent in the Republic of Moldova.
- ▶ **Less than one in every ten women and men report having money taken away from them by a family member after turning 18 years old in all countries.** It is more common for women in Azerbaijan (9 vs. 6 percent), Ukraine (7 vs. 3 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (6 vs. 5 percent) to experience this type of economic violence compared to men, while no gender gaps are observed in Belarus (6 vs.

6 percent), Georgia (4 vs. 4 percent) and Armenia (2 vs. 2 percent). Among women survivors of this type of violence, the share that experienced it during the 12 months preceding the survey ranged from 10 percent in Ukraine to 42 percent in Georgia.

Data available covering the period 2000-2018^[1] confirms that the share of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-49 subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months is highest in the Republic of Moldova (9.1 percent) and Ukraine (8.7 percent), followed by Belarus (6.3 percent), Azerbaijan (5.2 percent), Armenia (4.6 percent) and Georgia (2.9 percent).^[2] The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated violence against women and girls and domestic violence in particular. For instance, Rapid Gender Assessment findings indicated that over 15 percent of women in Georgia perceived having felt/heard an increase in domestic violence during the COVID-19 outbreak.^[3]

Women and men in Ukraine (96 vs. 91 percent), the Republic of Moldova (88 vs. 83 percent), Georgia (88 vs. 80 percent) and Belarus (85 vs. 87 percent) believe that a woman who is facing violence in her family should not tolerate violence and try to stop the perpetrator at any cost. This view also holds in Armenia (74 vs. 57 percent), although women are considerably more likely to agree with such view than men, and around two every ten women and men believe that the victim should tolerate violence for the sake of keeping her family together instead (17 vs. 23 percent). In Azerbaijan, this latter view is held by nearly half of women and two-thirds of men (44 vs. 65 percent).

Many respondents believe that conflicts between a husband and wife, even when they lead to violence, are a private matter and others should not intervene.

Women and men in Armenia (72 vs. 71 percent), Azerbaijan (63 vs. 50 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (46 vs. 54 percent) agree with this perspective, which is less common in Ukraine (30 vs. 39 percent) and Belarus (21 vs. 39 percent).

There is a low level of awareness of laws and policies on domestic violence and rape low across countries.

Between a quarter and a third of women and men in Belarus (31 vs. 31 percent), Armenia (31 vs. 37 percent) and Ukraine (35 vs. 25 percent) report being unaware of domestic violence laws, a share that is higher in the Republic of Moldova (41 vs. 41 percent) and Azerbaijan (46 vs. 37 percent). Meanwhile, at least four in every ten women and men in Armenia (56 vs. 43 percent), Azerbaijan (52 vs. 46 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (44 vs. 44 percent) report being unaware of rape policies, while this is generally lower in Ukraine (43 vs. 29 percent), and Belarus (31 vs. 21 percent).

These findings confirm that women and men are generally more unaware of rape laws and policies compared to those related to domestic violence, and that in most countries, women's reported awareness is lower than that of men. Women and men who are aware of these policies generally rank them as somewhat efficient. As of October 2020, legislation across all six Eastern Partnership specifically addressed domestic violence, yet such legislation did not establish clear criminal penalties in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus.^[4] At the same time, specialized courts or procedures for cases of domestic violence were available in all countries with the exception of Armenia.^[5] Also in 2020, a high percentage of achievement in terms of legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality in the area of violence against women was observed in Armenia (83 percent), the Republic of Moldova (83 percent) and Ukraine (83

1 Includes latest available data point during the reference period.

2 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

3 UN Women. 2020. The Impact of COVID-19 on Women and Men's Lives and Livelihoods in Europe and Central Asia: Preliminary Results from a Rapid Gender Assessment. Istanbul: UN Women. <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/07/the-impact-of-covid19-on-womens-and-mens-lives-and-livelihoods>

4 World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law 2021. Accessed 21 June 2021. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>

5 World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law 2021. Accessed 21 June 2021. <https://wbl.worldbank.org/>

percent), compared to Belarus (67 percent), while no data was available for Azerbaijan and Georgia.⁶

The local police department is frequently perceived as an effective source of help for survivors of domestic violence by women and men in Belarus (77 vs. 67 percent), Ukraine (74 vs. 77 percent), the Republic of Moldova (72 vs. 74 percent) and Georgia (68 vs. 61 percent). This view is supported by over half of women and men in Armenia (61 vs. 54 percent), where a slightly higher share identifies psychologists as a primary source of support (70 vs. 66 percent). In Azerbaijan women and men are much more likely to identify

family members as a key source of support (80 vs. 67 percent), compared to the local police department (44 vs. 40 percent). Across most countries, between four and six in every ten respondents identify family members, friends and psychologists as effective sources of support for survivors, while between four and six in every ten do so in the case of health workers, social workers in specialized non-governmental organizations and special phone hotlines. Women are generally less likely than men to mention friends or family members as effective sources of help, but more likely to refer to professional sources of support.

6 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 10 June 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

Sexual relationships and reproductive health

Stereotypes and gendered power inequalities in relationships, compounded by barriers embedded in laws, policies and the economy prevent many women from enjoying the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health and well-being. Much remains to be done to ensure women and girls in all their diversity can freely access sexual and reproductive health information, education, services and commodities, and make autonomous decisions about their bodies free from coercion, violence, and discrimination.

Both women and men are more likely to believe that a woman should abstain from having sex before marriage, but not men. A large majority of women and men in Azerbaijan (85 vs. 77 percent), Armenia (75 vs. 75 percent) and Georgia (59 vs. 65 percent) believe women should refrain from pre-marital sex. Around half of respondents in the Republic of Moldova (53 vs. 43 percent) and under a third in Ukraine (30 vs. 24 percent) and Belarus (28 vs. 26 percent) agree with this. In contrast, a smaller number of women and men agree that men should abstain from premarital sex. These beliefs are most common in Azerbaijan (54 vs. 25 percent), the Republic of Moldova (44 vs. 35 percent) and Georgia (43 vs. 29 percent), compared to Armenia (36 vs. 26 percent), Ukraine (23 vs. 17 percent) and Belarus (20 vs. 18 percent). The findings above also confirm that women tend to hold more conservative attitudes towards premarital sex than men.

Single mothers and women with disabilities generally discuss issues of puberty with their adolescent children, while children tend to rely on friends and the Internet, as shown in focus group discussions. Limited access to comprehensive sexuality education and friendly sexual and reproductive health services may

increase their risk of unintended pregnancies. Data covering the period 2014-2019^[7] confirms that early pregnancies remain significantly high in Azerbaijan (48 live births per 1,000 per women aged 15 to 19), Georgia (29 live births per 1,000 per women aged 15 to 19) and the Republic of Moldova (27 live births per 1,000 per women aged 15 to 19).^[8] In contrast, adolescent fertility did not surpass 20 live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 in Armenia (19), Ukraine (18), and Belarus (12).^[9]

Women and men agree that the use of contraception is a shared responsibility between both sexual partners. Consensus around this issue among women and men is strongest in Belarus (93 vs. 90 percent), followed by Ukraine (87 vs. 87 percent), the Republic of Moldova (81 vs. 78 percent), Azerbaijan (79 vs. 66 percent) and Armenia (72 vs. 65 percent). Yet stereotypes around modern contraception and promiscuity are relatively common. Between two and four in every ten women and men in Ukraine (22 vs. 19 percent), the Republic of Moldova (32 vs. 29 percent) and Armenia (38 vs. 41 percent) associate a woman carrying condoms with a sign of sexual promiscuity. The share of women and men that agree with this perspective is lower in Belarus (16 vs. 15 percent) and higher in Azerbaijan (54 vs. 63 percent). When asked instead about men who carry condoms, women and men are generally less likely to view men as promiscuous than women. Differences in this regard are most notable in Armenia (28 vs. 32 percent) and Azerbaijan (25 vs. 38 percent).

A large majority of women and men in Azerbaijan (71 vs. 72 percent) and the Republic of Moldova (64 vs. 54

7 Includes latest available data point during the reference period.

8 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 5 July 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

9 United Nations Statistics Division. 2021. Global SDG Indicators Database. Accessed 5 July 2021. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

percent) agree that it is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant. These views are also shared by a smaller, yet significant share of women and men in Belarus (53 vs. 48 percent), Armenia (40 vs. 39 percent) and Ukraine (39 vs. 42 percent). If a man does not want to use a condom and a woman would not like to get pregnant, a majority of women and men in most countries believes that a woman should either use an alternative form of contraception herself or refuse to have sex without condoms, rather than simply agreeing to have unsafe sex. In Azerbaijan, however, around one in every ten women support this latter point of view, compared to more than one in every three men (12 vs. 35 percent). In all countries, women are more likely than men to believe that they should have some choice to avoid having unsafe sex, be it by using an alternative family planning method (Belarus, 63 vs. 60 percent; Republic of Moldova, 58 vs. 51 percent; Ukraine, 58 vs. 49 percent; Georgia, 57 vs. 46 percent; Armenia, 51 vs. 37 percent; Azerbaijan, 49 vs. 20 percent), or by declining to engage in sexual activity without condoms (Ukraine, 32 vs. 32 percent; Belarus, 29 vs. 25 percent; Georgia, 23 vs. 26 percent; Azerbaijan, 23 vs. 15 percent; Armenia, 19 vs. 18 percent; Republic of Moldova, 20 vs. 20 percent).

In practice, evidence shows that more progress is needed to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health. For instance, the share of women of reproductive age (15-49) who had their need for family planning satisfied with modern contraceptive methods in 2020 was remarkably low in Azerbaijan (31 percent), Armenia (43 percent) and Georgia (51 percent).^[1]

Despite sustained efforts from the international community, demand and supply-side shortfalls in the access to sexual and reproductive health information, education, services and commodities remain in these countries, including to modern contraceptive methods. Meanwhile, between two-thirds and three-quarters of women of reproductive age in the Republic of Moldova (66 percent), Ukraine (74 percent) and Belarus (78 percent) had their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods.^[2]

Although women and men's views on abortion vary across countries, women are more inclined towards freedom of choice compared to men. Around one in every ten women and two in every ten men in Georgia (36 vs. 22 percent), Belarus (34 vs. 19 percent) and Ukraine (30 vs. 22 percent) think that abortion during the first three months of pregnancy should always be women's choice, when asked to rank their perspectives on a scale from 1 (Never women's choice) to 10 (Always women's choice). Lower support is observed in the Republic of Moldova (26 vs. 21 percent) and Armenia (26 vs. 15 percent), while in Azerbaijan just a very small minority is pro-choice (5 vs. 4 percent).

Lastly, most women and men find sex between same-sex partners unacceptable, but women tend to be less conservative than men. Opposition is strongest in Armenia (84 vs. 86 percent), followed by Azerbaijan (78 vs. 95 percent), the Republic of Moldova (77 vs. 76 percent), Georgia (68 vs. 80 percent), Ukraine (66 vs. 78 percent) and Belarus (64 vs. 74 percent).

1 United Nations Population Division. 2020. Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2020. Accessed 5 July 2021. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp_model.asp

2 United Nations Population Division. 2020. Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2020. Accessed 5 July 2021. https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/family-planning/cp_model.asp

Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this brief, a set of six recommendations has been identified with the vision of promoting progressive and egalitarian norms, relationships and practices in Eastern Partnership societies:

- 1. Strengthen gender mainstreaming and gender equality principles within national education systems.** Education shapes the way individuals see and understand the world that surrounds us, and as such it is a key driver of positive societal change. It is therefore central to the formation, as well as the perpetuation of stereotypes. By designing education curriculums that incorporate gender equality principles and life skills, including non-violent conflict resolution, emotional self-regulation and emotional intelligence in a crosscutting manner, a trickle effect can occur whereas gender attitudes can be altered, and individuals be better prepared to challenge conservative perceptions and support progressive, non-violent, gender-equal actions. The delivery of comprehensive sexuality education for girls and boys in and out of school remains central to this end. Lastly, the education system can also have a key role in promoting specific subjects to specific genders, which would help address gender imbalances in representation in certain professions and in managerial roles, such as in the STEM field.
- 2. Build the capacity of key actors across all media platforms to ensure messages and communication do not reproduce nor promote gender stereotypes but rather encourage diversity and equality.** Media platforms play a key role in disseminating information and as such in shaping and perpetuating stereotypes. By educating professionals in this sector on the importance of using correct language and guaranteeing representation and inclusivity, the information broadcasted, including entertainment such as TV soap operas, can help promote gender equality and be a driver of societal change. Trainings for media professionals, or public campaigns
- highlighting the difference between a biased vs. an impartial news headline, may help the general population to identify subjective interpretations as well as negative stereotypes. Social media influencers across all age groups remain an important group to engage with, in addition to traditional media platforms such as newspapers and TV stations.

3. Conduct national communication campaigns promoting more egalitarian gender norms, including giving visibility to positive and egalitarian images of marriage, highlighting the value of male involvement in childcare and domestic chores, and raising awareness to prevent gender-based violence. This includes the identification of female and male positive role models, female and male, that speak up against pervasive gender stereotypes and promote more equitable relationships in different environments, including in employment and leadership, in household and family environments, around sexual relationships and on gender-based violence. Campaigns can also help address misconceptions, such as about what constitutes gender-based violence, rape, harassment, and sexual misconduct, psychological abuse and raise awareness about prevention measures as well as services available to survivors.
- 4. Engage the private sector to identify ways in which gender equality can be promoted in the workplace, and negative stereotypes related to employment and leadership reversed.** The private sector is an important ally in promoting gender equality in the workplace, as recruitment and human resource policies can both perpetuate or promote change in behaviours and perceptions around the roles and capabilities of women and men. Governments and the private sector can build on the high value placed by women and men in participation in the labour market and accessing decent work, by developing policies and services that support women and men to reconcile their family and work life, including paternity

and parental leave schemes, flexible working arrangements for mothers, fathers and those caring for the elderly, and affordable, quality child and elder care services.

5. Undertake further research, exploring the relationship between perceptions identified throughout this survey and existing norms and practices. For example, gaining a better understanding on the services made available to survivors of violence, may help inform further policies and strategies to strengthen institutions providing care to survivors of violence- such as the police, judiciary and others. Exploring further whether the perceived bottlenecks to the progression of women into leadership roles in the workplace are true, would help governments and companies design measures to further promote the inclusion of women in decision making roles.
6. Work with key actors in the health sector, including governments, civil society, educational bodies, and medical professionals to promote non-discriminatory and equal use of services among all women and girls through gender-responsive budgets. By addressing specific gender-stereotypes present in relation to health, health services will be able to provide better and equal access to women and girls who might be facing double or triple discrimination due to their age, place of residence, disability or HIV status, income, ethnic or religious background, sexual orientation and gender identity. This includes providing and promoting access to factual and impartial information on sexual and reproductive health and contraception.

Baseline study methodology

This baseline study collected quantitative and qualitative data by implementing a nationally representative survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews across all six Eastern Partnership countries.

The survey sample was set at no less than 1,000 individuals aged 18 years and older per country, assuming a maximum margin of error of 3.1 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. Interviews were conducted during the period of 23 October to 16 November 2020 using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) method.^[3] The CATI method, with calls to mobile phone numbers, facilitates nationally representative samples in each country as more than 90 per cent of the population of each target country uses mobile telephones.^[4]

Survey samples were obtained using a simple random sample approach without stratification. Phone interviews with random digit dialing were used, meaning that phone numbers were generated automatically and, when the number was valid, interviewers invited respondents to participate in the

survey. Post-stratification weights were built, using the most recent official population data for each country on age, sex, settlement type and regions to bring the sample into conformity with the demographic profile of the population.

This methodological approach contrasts with the one followed by International Men and Gender Equality Surveys (IMAGES) surveys conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic in Eastern Partnership countries. IMAGES surveys implemented a multi-stage stratified cluster sampling approach, face-to-face interviews and assumed a smaller margin of error. Such differences in survey design, coupled with differences in questionnaire design, demand the exercise of caution when comparing data from both sources.

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted with specific social groups (e.g., single mothers and women with disabilities) to understand their perceptions on selected issues featured in the survey and explore specific stereotypes and experiences of intersectional discrimination.^[5]

- 3 A telephone research interview supported by digital software. During the call with the interviewee, the interviewer reads the questionnaire from the computer and enters all interview data into the online database. The average duration of each interview was 25 minutes.
- 4 In Azerbaijan where women's access to mobile phones appeared to be more limited, 30 per cent of all interviews were conducted by landline phones. The local fieldwork implementer applied random digital dialing approach to landline phones similarly to that implemented with mobile phones in order to get a random sampling of respondents.
- 5 The survey questions "Whether your child's father took paternal leave when your most recent child was born?" and "Whether you took paternal leave when your most recent child was born?" were asked to women and men respectively. Results should be interpreted with caution as neither question anchored the concept of "paternal leave" to existing domestic legislation and policies. This concept therefore remained ambiguous and subject to the respondent's interpretation. For instance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Belarus estimates that 1 percent of fathers take paternity leave based on data from the social protection fund that distributes children's allowances, which contrasts with the 11 percent of male survey respondents that report doing so.



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