



# Empowering Women and Girls in Ukraine

## UN Women Progress Update

### January-June 2023



As the full-fledged war in Ukraine entered its' second year, addressing the needs and priorities of women and girls remains paramount. Women account for 61% of those displaced by May 2023 and out of the 17.5 million people in need of assistance, 56% are women and girls.<sup>1</sup> Women's civil society organisations (CSOs) working across Ukraine continue to highlight the urgent needs of women and girls and how the war is disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable populations.

The UN Women Ukraine Strategic Note for 2023 is in line with the priorities of the UN Transitional Framework for 2023 and has been developed in close consultation with women's CSOs and government counterparts. **This brief provides an update on UN Women's contributions to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Ukraine, during the first half of 2023.**



**+ 75,700 women and girls** have been supported by UN Women



through close partnership with **38 women's civil society organisations (CSOs)**



across **23 oblasts** (regions) and **133 rayons** (districts) in Ukraine

- Internally displaced women
- Unemployed women
- Women with disabilities and women with dependants with disabilities
- Single female headed households
- Survivors of GBV, including CRSV and domestic violence
- Women veterans
- Women who survived captivity
- Women from host communities
- HIV+ women and their children
- Women humanitarian volunteers
- Women human rights defenders
- Roma women and other ethnic minorities
- Women with many children and large households
- Rural women
- Pregnant women and new mothers
- Widowed women
- Older women
- LGBTQ+



<sup>1</sup> UN 2022, Ukraine Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 Programme Cycle

# Saving Lives

War affected women and girls are provided with lifesaving essential assistance, especially emergency livelihoods and GBV and other protection related services.

Between January and June 2023, UN Women and partners continued humanitarian efforts that started in 2022 to ensure that war affected women and girls are provided with support to meet their basic needs and the needs of their families.

**+9,600 women and girls** were provided with direct humanitarian assistance and **+23,200 dependants** were indirectly supported.

**108 women living with HIV/AIDS (WLwHIV) had improved access to humanitarian support and services.**



WLwHIV and their children were provided with tailored humanitarian support in shelters in Ivano-Frankivsk, Cherkassy, Chernivtsi and Khmelnytsky regions. 114 adults (108 women and 6 men) and 54 children received direct humanitarian support in the form of food, hygiene packages, medication, baby food and diapers. 9 women were supported to evacuate from regions where their lives were in danger and relocate to the shelters. 18 women also received on-line individual consultations with a psychotherapist. UN Women supported these women and families through local partner organisation 'Positive Women.'

Through partnerships with women's CSOs and the Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), humanitarian support has been tailored and localised to meet the specific needs of different populations of war affected women across the country. This has included providing a wide variety of support such as the provision of food, hygiene kits, medication, legal aid, information on humanitarian assistance and emergency protection referral pathways. **Since 2022, the WPHF has supported over 25,000 direct beneficiaries in Ukraine and over 9 million indirect beneficiaries, through 42 projects and 9.7 million US dollars.** Among the many UN Women initiatives providing gender-responsive humanitarian support, some results include:

**93 war affected women and girls received legal advice on gender-based violence (GBV) including conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).**

Координаційний центр з надання правової допомоги у співпраці з Асоціацією жінок-юристок України "ЮрФем" за підтримки "ООН жінки в Україні" організують проведення серії заходів для юристів та адвокатів з надання правової допомоги постраждалим від різних форм сексуального насильства під час війни.

**Запрошуємо юристів та юристок системи надання безоплатної правової допомоги та адвокатів/ок на онлайн-тренінг «Докази та доказування СНПК: особливості національного та міжнародного права»**



### ОНЛАЙН-ТРЕНІНГ

**ДОКАЗИ ТА ДОКАЗУВАННЯ СНПК: ОСОБЛИВОСТІ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО ТА МІЖНАРОДНОГО ПРАВА**

27 ЛИПНЯ, 2023  
11:00 - 13:00

Для юристів/ок системи надання БПД та адвокатів/ок



ХРИСТИНА КІТ

Legal advice related to gender-based violence is particularly important for women and girls during war, when risks of violence are higher, particularly to CRSV. In addition to the robust legal advice provided, 12 women and girls were also supported with information and referral services for CRSV survivors. UN Women supported these women and girls through a partnership with Ukrainian Women Lawyers Association "JurFem". 81 lawyers (66 women and 15 men) of the centres for free legal aid also improved their knowledge on how to address SGBV/CRSV and provide support to the survivors as a result of dedicated training event, organized by JurFem.

**Watch 5 videos about UN Women’s multi-purpose centres (‘Safe Spaces’) for women to receive psychological, humanitarian and social support services.**

Safe Spaces for women and girls

Swedish Circles

Psychologic security

Economic security

Olena Savkun, Safe Spaces coordinator



UN humanitarian response and coordination mechanisms are strengthened to promote the needs and priorities of women and girls affected by war, especially from vulnerable and marginalised groups.

UN Women in Ukraine achieved a noteworthy milestone in February 2023 by transitioning from an observer to a full member of **the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)**. The decision to grant full membership reflects the confidence and trust placed in UN Women’s capabilities to strategic decision-making processes and to effectively collaborate with key stakeholders in the humanitarian response in Ukraine. UN Women continues to contribute to humanitarian planning and decision-making to ensure that all efforts are underpinned by the voices, needs and priorities of women and girls. This has included co-chairing the **Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group**, which consists of gender-sensitive INGOs, UN agencies, CSOs, and cluster focal points. Within the GiHA working group two task forces have been established on gender assessment and analysis and on capacity strengthening. The working group and task forces provide ongoing support to various humanitarian planning and implementation processes, such as technical input and trainings for gender-responsive multi-sector needs assessments. Under the Capacity Strengthening Task Force, UN Women conducts trainings to equip humanitarian actors with the skills to provide gender-responsive assistance. Additionally, UN Women trains women’s local organizations to effectively engage in humanitarian action. UN Women partnered with RedR UK to prepare training sessions aimed at building the capacities of women’s organizations from frontline areas involved in humanitarian response. Furthermore, UN Women actively contributes to gender analysis efforts by providing technical inputs to different clusters and support them in mainstreaming gender aspects in their programs and activities.

Communication between the top management of the **United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and Women’s Human Rights Organizations (WHRO)** was strengthened through the

establishment of dialogue platforms including with WHRO’s operating in frontline areas, representing Roma and disabled. These channels provide a platform for engagement to address urgent needs, protection risks, and advocacy opportunities identified by women’s CSOs.

### **Women’s CSOs advocated for their needs and priorities at UN dialogues**



In January – June 2023 UN Women teamed with the office of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) and other UNCT members to host a series of consultation with women’s CSOs, facilitating discussions on the challenges of engaging in the humanitarian programme cycle and thematic areas. The consultations were designed to provide an inclusive platform for Ukrainian women’s CSOs to highlight emerging and timely priorities across human rights, humanitarian assistance and recovery efforts.

Overall, 4 consultations in Kyiv and 1 in frontline Kramatorsk gathered representatives of over 40 women civil society organizations to share experience and develop recommendations for UN agencies in key areas, including access to and participation in humanitarian assistance, access to social protection, health and medical services, access to education and labor market/livelihoods, inclusion and participation in early recovery and reconstruction programs, protection and social services, including in response to gender-based violence.

**Sabine Freizer Gunes, Representative, UN Women Ukraine** stressed the need to increase communication between WHROs and women leaders, and the UN system to improve aid effectiveness. As Ukraine's government and development partners have begun to plan and budget for early recovery, she also urged for women needs to be: «not only reflected in the humanitarian response, but also taken into account in the longer-term perspective, including reconstruction and recovery processes of the country. Ukraine is now on the path to becoming an EU candidate country, and this is also an opportunity for us to reiterate the rights of women and girls.»



and lessons learnt to their UN partners, and shared recommendations on how to enhance the implementation of the FoC on CRSV.

The Inter-Agency Working Group on CRSV (IAWG on CRSV) under the Coordination Commission demonstrated strengthened capacity to coordinate the implementation of the FoC on CRSV through its regular meetings and monitoring activities. At least three series of meetings of thematic sub-groups were held to discuss progress achieved, ongoing challenges, and plans of next interventions. A **CRSV monitoring report** on the outcomes of implementation was developed to aggregate the information on CRSV activities of different partners. UN Women contributed to these results by expert inputs to activities of all thematic sub-groups, co-coordinating of a sub-group on reparations and compensations, and technical support to developing and disseminating of the IAWG monitoring report.

During the first half of the year there were also significant efforts towards enhancing the implementation of the **Framework of Cooperation on CRSV (FoC) prevention and response**. To promote the needs and priorities of women and girls affected by war and at risk of violence, a meeting of Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in the Conflict (SRSG-SVC) with women-led CSOs was organized by UN Women jointly with UNFPA in March. 10 representatives of women's CSOs and two representatives of a network of CRSV survivors, voiced key challenges



## Strengthening Systems

Government at all levels has strengthened capacity to develop, implement, monitor, and coordinate Ukraine's commitments to GEWE, across the humanitarian -development nexus, particularly in the areas of justice, security, protection and livelihoods.

UN Women continues working closely with the Government of Ukraine at all levels (national, regional and local) to provide support in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment and safeguarding the rights of women and girls, especially during times of ongoing crisis caused by the war. During the first half of 2023, the following key progress was made:

- **The Government took steps towards strengthening its' capacity to eliminate discrimination against women.** The Government drafted a roadmap on implementation of the recommendations from the 9th periodic review of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Commission Concluding Observations in 2022. 155 representatives (20 men, 135 women) of central executive authorities, regional military administrations, civil society organizations, international organizations, and development partners participated in the 2-day strategic planning session. UN Women supported the Deputy Prime Minister Office on European and Euro Atlantic Integration (DPMO) and Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy (GCGEP) with drafting the roadmap and facilitating the strategic planning session.
- **The Government developed three draft laws to better to tackle GBV, including CRSV.** Since ratification, the Government continues to align Ukraine's legislation with the Istanbul Convention. The DPMO and the GCGEP in consultations with other central executive bodies and women's CSOs drafted two legal amendments. Members of Parliament and the Government also developed draft laws on the legal status of CRSV survivors to establish a normative basis for regulating a system of reparations (or compensations). UN Women contributed by providing expert and substantive support including to the DPMO and GCGEP on international laws and best practices to support survivors.. (These draft laws are pending approval.)
- **The Ministry of Economy took important steps towards decreasing the gender pay gap.** The Ministry of Economy finalized the National Strategy on Decreasing the Gender Pay Gap by 2030 and Action Plan on its Implementation for 2023-2025 (pending final approval). To validate the draft documents, a multistakeholder presentation event was supported by UN Women jointly with ILO. As part of a communication campaign on the equal pay for equal value work, an [advocacy video](#) was produced and disseminated via social media.
- **The Ombudsperson's Office enhanced their capacity to monitor the implementation of the human rights and gender equality commitments.** In April 2023, the Ombudsperson Office established a Civil Expert Council on Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination, representing 15 CSOs, including women's CSOs. Starting April 2023, the Ombudsperson Office conducted two meetings to monitor the implementation of human rights and gender equality commitments, identify challenges and develop a plan to provide expert support and advice to the Ombudsperson Office. UN Women was invited to participate in the Council and supported its meetings.



- Four regional ‘oblast’ administrations reaffirmed their commitments to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and the National Action Plan (NAP) on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). Four Regional Action Plans (RAPs) on UNSCR 1325 from the Sumy, Kirovohrad, Chernihiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts were updated in the Spring of 2023 based on the consolidated recommendations provided by local women from SHGs and from technical support of UN Women. The RAPs are important documents to guide regional administrations to implement and monitor their gender equality and WPS commitments for the coming years.



## The Government and Women’s CSOs met to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda



Between 26-27 June 2023 – the national forum «National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Implementation at the National and Local Levels in War Context» was held. The forum brought together over 300 participants to determine the status of the National Action Plan implementation, review the problematic aspects that exist in its implementation at the national, regional and local levels and develop effective ways to solve them in the context of war. UN Women organised the event in partnership with UWF and Government Commissioner for Gender Policy.

- **Regional and local authorities have strengthened capacities to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, including implementing various WPS commitments and tackling GBV at the local levels.** A variety of capacity strengthening initiatives have taken place with regional 'oblast' administrations, regional military administrations, and local self-governing administrations 'hromadas,' facilitated by UN Women. One initiative was a training on gender-sensitive humanitarian action based on the Manual on Gender-sensitive Humanitarian Action at the Local Level in Ukraine developed by UN Women. Another training focused on supporting authorities to increase their knowledge on the development and use of Gender Community Profiles for gender-sensitive local policy. Additionally, authorities from 16 communities and 4 regions strengthened their capacity on gender-sensitive analysis and prioritizing needs within their communities, in the context of martial law, local recovery and reconstruction.

## Police officers across Ukraine have strengthened capacity to prevent and respond to CRSV at all levels.



159 police officers (97 women / 62 men) representing investigators, district officers, patrol officers, and heads and deputy heads of departments for juvenile prevention countrywide, strengthened their capacity on CRSV. In partnership with the National Police of Ukraine, UN Women conducted five 2-day in-person trainings for police officers from every region/ oblast. The trainings supported the officers to gain a better understanding of international and national norms to detect, respond to, and document CRSV with a central emphasis on survivor-centred approaches. Trainings were also provided to the State Emergency Service psychologists on how to sensitively respond to CRSV.

## Women and women's organizations have conditions, capacity, resources and platforms to advocate for their priorities and participate in policy and decision-making.

During the first half of 2023, UN Women remained committed to supporting women across the country to mobilize, strengthen their capacity and be able to participate in decision-making processes. Women's CSOs and women human rights defenders continue to play an essential role in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in Ukraine.

- **+12,600 women and girls** were supported to strengthen their capacity in leadership, decision-making and governance.

As the Ukraine Government sped up its efforts to plan and begin implementation of recovery efforts, UN Women began partnering with women's organizations to advocate for a gender responsive recovery. This includes organizing a side event on the topic at the London Recovery Conference together with the Government of the United Kingdom, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), Crown Agents (UK), Ukrainian Government and CSO partners. This advocacy will continue.

UN Women has formal partnerships with **38 women's CSOs** across the country and is engaging with over **300 gender equality organisations** on the UN Women CSO register through various trainings, dialogues and advocacy activities. Some of the highlights from this work is described below.



“The role of women’s organizations is essential to determine humanitarian priorities. Being part of the community, they have the legitimacy and trust among vulnerable groups. Indeed, women’s groups serve as our eyes and ears in the community, allowing us to see problems and hear voices that we otherwise wouldn’t see or hear. As such, they should be at the heart of our efforts to respond to the humanitarian crisis.”

*Nataliia Onipko is the Founder and President of the Zaporuka Foundation that helps children with cancer and their families.*

### Women’s advocacy in Lviv has led to improved services and support for war-affected women.



Through 10 advocacy trainings conducted by UN Women’s CSOs partners in Lviv region, specific advocacy tools for women’s civil society were developed. Women’s advocates then used these tools to influence local decision makers to take their needs and priorities seriously. The advocacy contributed to key changes in several local communities in Lviv, including:

- The establishment of the IDPs Council in Chervonograd local community;
- Renovating temporary accommodation for IDPs in Skole local community;
- Improving healthcare services for IDPs and residents of Strilky and Zabolotsi communities;
- Enhancing local transport services in Strilky community;
- Improving access to pre-school education for children of internally displaced families based in Lviv.

### Rural women mobilised to form new CSOs and implement grassroot initiatives for women and girls in rural areas.



360 rural women were mobilised to implement 11 grass-root advocacy initiatives aimed at empowering rural women facing multiple discrimination and establish 5 new rural women’s CSOs in Chernivtsi, Sumy and Volyn regions as a result of capacity development activities, mobilisation efforts and financial support by UN Women.



Government, civil society, and other stakeholders have increased capacity to progressively align with the EU gender equality acquis and have the institutional framework to enforce it.

During the first half of 2023, UN Women began supporting Ukraine in its' ambition to join the EU. A critical component in this pursuit is to ensure gender equality commitments and requirements are in place.

Key stakeholders including government and civil society, demonstrated their commitment to progressively align the Ukrainian legislation with the EU gender equality acquis when they drafted an outline for this work and provided recommendations on further steps of Ukraine to ensuring gender equality in EU integration. UN Women provided expert and technical support by supporting a strategic planning session (25 February 2023) and providing expert input in its working groups for drafting the roadmap.

The Government of Ukraine also mainstreamed gender to the EU Enlargement Package. UN Women provided expert support to review and ensure gender mainstreaming in the 2023 Annual Progress Report prepared by the Government of Ukraine.

The National Agency for Civil Service initiated the Europe Week on May 8-12, as part of civil service capacity development and advocacy efforts to promote GE within the EU approximation process. A series of thematic events were devoted to European values, including a Day of non-discrimination, gender equality and human rights. UN Women contributed to the event with expert lectures and technical support.

## Building Resilience

Women have increased support with livelihood recovery, skills development, business support, and access to finance, jobs, networks and markets.

In 2023, UN Women has significantly accelerated efforts to economically empower women, as this is a critical component of the recovery process and building medium- and long-term resilience in society.

- **+57,000 women and girls** were economically empowered through livelihood initiatives, business support, skills development and/or access to finance, jobs and networks.
- **+1 million** people have been reached through communication campaigns on career and employment opportunities.
- **5 private sector companies** have committed themselves to advancing gender equality through their work by signing the 'Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)' and developing action plans and initiatives to support war-affected Ukrainian women and girls.

Through UN Women's CSO partners, over 57,000 women have benefitted from support for their income and livelihoods through a wide range of initiatives across the country. Some of these initiatives include:

### Strengthening women's role in the sewing industry in Rivne.



In Rivne region efforts are under way to enhance the promotion of the seamstress profession and employment of women (including IDPs and those living in rural areas) among clothing manufacturers. A roadmap for the development of the industry in Rivne region has been designed and a training centre for sewing equipment operators has been established. 40 women have also increased their knowledge and skills, and have been certified, through sewing equipment operator training courses. UN Women has supported this initiative through local partner organisation 'PRO Women UA.

## “Women for the Future” – Empowering war affected women for employment and business opportunities.

Around 1 million people have been informed on career and employment opportunities, and over 55,000 war-affected women and girls have strengthened their professional skills to meet new and different employment and business opportunities during the full-scale war in Ukraine through the online platform “Women for the Future”.



## Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs): Private sector commits to gender equality

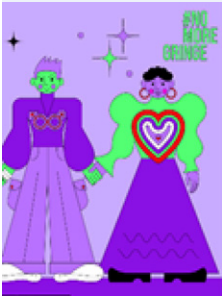
Five new private sector companies signed the [Women’s Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\)](#) in 2023, bringing the total number of WEPs signatories in Ukraine to 25. By signing the WEPs, private sector companies demonstrate their commitment to GEWE and develop plans for how they will contribute to women’s economic empowerment. In May 2023, Shell joined HeForShe, the global solidarity movement for gender equality.



UN Women continues its efforts to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women through national communication campaigns to influence harmful social norms and societal inequalities.

Some of the highlights from the first half of 2023 include:

### #NoMoreGringe



#NoMoreGringe POWERBANK is a social media campaign (Telegram bot and TikTok) to address gender bias and stereotype and cultivate gender tolerance, in partnership with UNFPA and Pisylyazavtra. [https://t.me/NoMoreGringe\\_ua\\_bot](https://t.me/NoMoreGringe_ua_bot)

### Women in Science



Women in Science is a nationwide communication campaign telling stories about Ukrainian women in science in partnership with UNFPA and INSCIENCE. The campaign included two short documentary videos and meetings with girls interested in STEM subjects. [Olena Pareniuk, radiobiologist](#) [Kateryna Shavanova, biologist](#)

### International Women's Day



- **Women in Arts Award 2023.** UN Women and the Ukrainian Institute conducted communication campaign to support annual Women in Arts. The Resistance Award contest highlights the achievements of women working in culture and the arts and celebrate their contribution to victory.
- **Women's Manifesto «You Are a Great Power»** video was created in partnership with MEGOGO streaming platform.

- **Women's portraits** communication campaign **THIS IS US** to raise awareness about the impact of war on women and girls and highlight recognize the diversity of women's roles in modern Ukrainian society, especially during the war.



In the second half of 2023 UN Women will continue to prioritize the needs of women and girls during the crisis caused by war in close cooperation with women's civil society organizations and other partners. In the line with the UN's Transitional Framework and UN Women's own Strategic Note, there are ambitious plans to strengthen partnerships, scale up work in local communities and continue to support and advocate for gender-responsive humanitarian and recovery efforts.

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

## THANK YOU!

UN Women is grateful to the incredible ongoing efforts of humanitarian and development partners, as well as the Government of Ukraine for its ongoing support and dedication to gender equality. A special thank you goes to women's civil society organizations, working tirelessly during this challenging time.

UN Women's response to the full-fledged war and ongoing efforts to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Ukraine, is made possible by the generous financial contributions from the Governments of Austria, Canada, Japan, Norway, Poland and Sweden, as well as the European Union and the Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF). Thank you also goes to the 12 UN Women National Committees which work tirelessly to raise funds, promote women's rights and secure worldwide visibility for women and girls threatened by poverty, abuse, disasters, and armed conflict including in Ukraine and affected countries in the region.

