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TOGETHER AGAINST GENDER STEREOTYPES AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

#eu4genderequality

Geographical coverage: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine

Implementing partners: UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, UNFPA Armenia, UNFPA Azerbaijan, UNFPA Belarus, UN Women Georgia, UNFPA Georgia, UN Women Moldova, UNFPA Moldova, UN Women Ukraine, UNFPA Ukraine

Development partners: European Commission, European Union delegations in implementing countries

Total budget: €7,875,000

The Issue

Over the past 30 years, Eastern Partnership countries have undergone tremendous political, economic and social transformations. But despite the progress achieved in many areas, gender equality remains an unmet goal across the region. Women and girls in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine face numerous challenges that restrict their human rights. These include limited economic opportunities and access to decision-making; the gender wage gap and the unequal burden of unpaid care work; a high prevalence of gender-based violence; and the persistence of harmful practices such as child marriage and gender-biased sex selection.

Recent studies carried out in these six countries illustrate how entrenched these issues are. In Moldova, for example, 4 in 5 people believe that men should be the breadwinners, while 3 in 5 think that women should take care of the family and the home.¹ In Armenia, unemployment among women under the age of 25 is 46%, compared to 30% of men in the same age group.² In Ukraine, the average gender wage gap is 25%, reaching 40% in some areas of the country.³ In Georgia, 14% of women marry before the age of 18, with lifelong implications for their education, health and vulnerability to domestic violence.⁴ In Azerbaijan, 1 in 3 men openly admit to perpetrating violence against their spouse,⁵ while in Belarus, 17% of women report experiencing sexual abuse at least once during their lifetimes.⁶

These gender inequalities are perpetuated by stereotypes concerning the roles of women and men that are embedded into cultural beliefs and social norms across the region. A recent backlash against gender equality and women's rights has further promoted a return to traditional gender roles, including associating women's primary value with reproduction, maternal care and household work.

Our Solutions

Addressing gender inequalities and empowering women and girls would significantly accelerate progress in the region towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While considerable advances on gender equality have been made over the years, previous efforts were generally not coordinated or were unilaterally implemented, hampering their effectiveness and reducing their long-term impact.

The three-year "EU 4 Gender Equality: Together Against Gender Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence" programme aims to take a more coordinated, sustainable approach. It seeks to strengthen equal rights and opportunities for women and men by shifting social perceptions around gender roles, tackling gender stereotypes and increasing men's participation in childcare and other domestic responsibilities.

Programme Objectives

- 1 To shift perceptions around gender stereotypes and the role of women and men in the family, thus challenging patriarchal norms that limit women's rights and opportunities;
- 2 To improve men's involvement in household and caretaking responsibilities and increase their participation in programmes that promote active fatherhood; and
- 3 To spur the adoption of best practices in programmes working with perpetrators of violence against women and improve prevention interventions.



The programme is funded by the European Union and implemented jointly by UN Women and UNFPA, which are globally recognized as leading agencies in the area of gender equality and the prevention of harmful practices against women and girls. Both agencies have long experience in challenging gender stereotypes and harmful practices, fostering social change and advancing the empowerment of women and girls.

The design of the programme was informed by lessons learned from previous programmes, evidence from an in-depth analysis of gender inequalities in the region, and consultations with partners in the six countries. The planned activities target government bodies, community leaders, civil society, faith-based organizations and the private sector, but also aim to achieve real behavioural change among the general public. These activities rely on strategies designed to challenge structural gender barriers and norms, with particular emphasis on transforming gender-stereotyped behaviour, strengthening men's involvement in parenting and domestic responsibilities, increasing men's access to parental leave, and preventing gender-based violence by working with perpetrators and enabling civil society organizations (CSOs) to carry out prevention programmes.

Overall, the programme provides a unique opportunity for both the EU and the six countries to change the social discourse, perceptions and practices on gender equality in the region, and to empower women and girls to fully access their rights and develop their potential.

Making a Difference, Step by Step

The programme approach consists of:

- **Researching the best ways to challenge gender stereotypes** in order to better understand which approaches are most successful in achieving gender-transformative behavioural change;
- **Launching innovative awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns** to tackle gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices against women and girls;
- **Providing grants to CSOs to roll out a series of tailored activities** aimed at improving opportunities for women by tackling gender stereotypes;
- **Working with local health-care facilities** to increase men's engagement in prenatal care and establish networks where fathers can benefit from peer-to-peer exchange;
- **Advocating for the adoption of best parental-leave practices** to increase the number of men involved in raising and caring for their children;
- **Developing guidance on working with potential perpetrators** to prevent violence against women before it happens; and
- **Providing technical assistance** to institutions working with perpetrators of violence against women on how to integrate innovative models for evidence-based early prevention.

For more information, please contact: Olga Osaulenko, *Programme Manager*
Email: olga.osaulenko@unwomen.org, osaulenko@unfpa.org

¹ Gender Equality Index 2017. What is the level of equality between women and men? (2017)

² Labour market in the Republic of Armenia. Statistical Handbook (2017)

³ State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2015)

⁴ Exploring Harmful Practices of Early/Child Marriage and FGM/C in Georgia (2017)

⁵ Gender Equality and Gender Relations in Azerbaijan: Current Trends and Opportunities. Findings from the Men and Gender Equality Survey (2018)

⁶ Domestic Violence Against Women in Belarus. Alternative Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2016)