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Ukraine



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GENDER
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**EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA**

NATIONAL GENDER PROFILE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS

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Foreword



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Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, critical for inclusive and sustainable development. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations recognizes that rural women provide a substantial contribution to food security and nutrition and for achieving its mandate for a world free from hunger, malnutrition and poverty, gender equality is a pre-requisite and a pre-condition. Therefore, FAO is committed to address gender equality systematically in all its normative and technical work and to promote inclusive agricultural and rural development.

The first step towards translating these commitments into action is collecting disaggregated data, analyzing and building knowledge to expand the evidence base on gender in agriculture, natural resource management, food security and nutrition. FAO Country offices periodically carry out country gender assessments to provide national and international partners with an updated profile on gender, agriculture and rural development for gender-responsive policymaking, and inform country planning and programming.

We are pleased to present the first FAO Country Gender Assessment (CGA) report for Ukraine. This publication contributes to the existing knowledge about the status of gender equality in the country by bringing together gender statistics and expert opinion. It also serves as an advocacy tool, providing greater visibility to rural women's contributions to agricultural productivity and food security. As the report is designed to be of a practical nature, we hope that development practitioners, policymakers, analysts and civil society and private sector actors, will use the presented recommendations and that the report will be accessed by a wide audience.

The data and analysis presented in this publication require urgent action by all stakeholders. As is the case for women around the world, women in Ukraine represent a large proportion of the agricultural labour force. They form the majority of food producers, play key roles in the management of natural resources and also contribute significantly to the care of their households. However, rural women are limited in their capacity to contribute to agricultural production and take advantage of new opportunities because they are concentrated in informal jobs and overloaded with unpaid work on family farms. Moreover, many women have become even more vulnerable since the outbreak of COVID-19 because of the higher risk of domestic violence and greater burden of unpaid care work due to the widespread closure of schools. These rural women include women with disabilities, women from ethnic minority groups, such as Roma women, women who have been internally displaced, and many more.

On behalf of FAO, I would like to extend sincere gratitude to our national partners who made the publication of this report possible. This Country Gender Assessment marks a milestone for collaboration between FAO and government and non-governmental partners in working towards a more inclusive society.

It is now time for us to begin implementing concrete actions: to raise the visibility of women in rural development and acknowledge their roles; to grant women equal access to land and farming assets; to incorporate them into power structures; and to achieve development which is truly sustainable and leaves no one behind.

Raimund Jehle,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raimund Jehle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Regional Programme Leader for Europe and Central Asia

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This Country Gender Assessment was researched and written by FAO International gender expert, Elisabeth Duban, with additional inputs gained from interviews, research and data analysis conducted by FAO National gender consultant, Larysa Kobelyanska. Overall technical guidance was provided by Dono Abdurazakova, Senior gender and social protection advisor to the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (FAO REU). The process of developing and finalizing the report was overseen by the FAO Office in Ukraine, under the supervision of Mara Lopes, FAO Programme coordinator, and Yana Voitovska, Programme support specialist.

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"Protecting national minorities, including the Roma and minority languages in Ukraine"
- » Ella Libanova, Academician, Doctor of Economics, Director of the Institute of Demography of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
- » Tatyana Pikuza, Chairwoman of the All-Ukrainian public organization "Union of Rural Women of Ukraine" Table of contents

Acronyms

ATC	amalgamated territorial community	MHH	male-headed household
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	MSME	micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
CGA	Country Gender Assessment	NGCA	non-government controlled area
CPF	Country Programming Framework	NGO	non-governmental organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
FHH	female-headed household	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
GCA	government controlled area	SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
GDI	Gender Development Index	TVET	technical and vocational education and training
GDP	gross domestic product	UAH	Ukraine Hryvnia
GII	Gender Inequality Index	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
HDI	Human Development Index	USREOU	Unified State Register of Enterprises and Organizations of Ukraine
IDP	internally displaced person	WHO	World Health Organization
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support		

Contextual update to the country gender assessment

The research for this country gender assessment was undertaken in March and April 2019. The resulting draft report was presented to Ukrainian experts during a consultation roundtable held in Kyiv in July 2019. Representatives of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food, the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, UN agencies and civil society organizations as well as women leaders provided comments and recommendations on the text. The period for finalizing the country gender assessment coincided with several significant events, both in Ukraine and globally.

First, government restructuring in August 2019 resulted in the liquidation of the **Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine**. The functions of the ministry were taken over by the newly-created Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture (itself formerly the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services). A number of senior ministerial staff left their posts in anticipation of a new institutional structure. In July 2020, the government restored the separate Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food; and in December 2020, the Ukrainian parliament approved the appointment of a new Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food.¹

Thus, one of FAO's key institutional partners was in the process of restructuring, and when this gender assessment was carried out, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food had not yet assigned responsibilities for gender mainstreaming. This country gender assessment makes several references to the strategies, programmes and data collections of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food that existed until 2019. The report also includes a recommendation about increasing the capacity of the ministry to mainstream

gender into policies concerning agriculture and rural development, which remains relevant for the newly-formed ministry. Note that wherever possible, statistics used in this report have been updated to reflect the most recently-available data as of January 2021.

Second, in early 2020, the government of Ukraine took steps to prevent and mitigate an outbreak of a novel **coronavirus disease (COVID-19)** that was spreading across Europe and soon became a global pandemic. The state introduced measures that included nationwide temporary restrictions, such as the closure of educational facilities, limitations on passenger transport and public gatherings, and the suspension of various establishments and businesses considered non-essential (such as cultural and entertainment venues, and catering and shopping establishments). The impacts of these restrictions were widespread across all regions and sectors of the economy.

The situation of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to change, and therefore it is too early to assess how women and men living in rural areas of Ukraine will be affected in the long term. It is clear, however, that the pandemic is impacting on people in rural areas in various ways, not only on their health but also on their livelihoods. Based on FAO, UNDP and UN Women assessments, a number of the gender gaps discussed in this country gender assessment have already widened as a result of the measures taken to counter COVID-19 (UN Women, FAO and UNDP, 2020). Because it is not possible to revisit all of the findings contained in this report in light of the health crisis, several key conclusions from impact assessments conducted in Ukraine are summarized here, focusing on the agricultural sector and impacts on the rural population. The timing and scope of the assessments are relevant. The first, a rapid gender assessment of the situation and needs of women in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic conducted by UN Women in Ukraine, was carried out from March to April 2020. The second, a

¹ See Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, On the appointment of Leshchenko RM Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 17 December 2020, N^o 1118-IX.

socio-economic impact assessment carried out by UNDP, UN Women and FAO from May to June 2020 focused on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and households.

FAO has pointed out that although rural areas may benefit from low population density that can slow the spread of COVID-19, rural populations will, nevertheless, be put at risk for increased poverty (FAO, 2020a). Pre-existing issues, such as limited access to adequate sanitation, transportation, health services, internet technologies, social protections and public infrastructure mean that rural areas were less prepared to manage the impacts of the restrictions taken to address COVID-19. Furthermore, rural populations often have precarious employment situations, depending on informal or migrant labour, that may not have been feasible during obligatory quarantine.

In patterns similar to those that have occurred in other crisis situations, including health crises, rural women in Ukraine are bearing a disproportionate burden during the pandemic, based on the fact that they already undertook a larger share of unpaid domestic and care work, often combined with paid employment and work on family farms, before the widespread closure of schools and non-essential services. The greater constraints that rural women face in ordinary times, such as in accessing productive resources, services, technologies, markets, financial assets and local institutions, leave them especially vulnerable to the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions put in place to control it (FAO, 2020b). Preliminary assessments conducted in Ukraine, however, present a mixed picture of how gender and location (rural areas compared with urban ones) intersect in terms of the potential long-term impacts of the pandemic.

Regarding changes to **employment and income** as a result of temporary restrictions, almost half of surveyed women expressed fears about losing employment, but more urban women were concerned about job loss than rural women (UN Women Ukraine, 2020). Similarly, over a third of rural women (39.8 percent) considered it likely that they would continue to receive their full salaries, a larger proportion than women in urban areas (ibid.). These findings could be explained by the fact that the women who most often experienced job losses were self-employed women and women who owned businesses, both of which are more likely to be located in urban areas. Overall, as of April/May 2020, women and men had experienced similar patterns of job loss and temporary leave from work. A later household survey found that rural households had lower incomes overall than urban ones, as well as a greater likelihood of having unofficially employed members in the

household. Nevertheless, around half of respondents, both rural and urban, reported a significant reduction in average monthly household income as an effect of the pandemic. Generally rural households were slightly less likely to report income losses than urban ones (UN Women, FAO and UNDP, 2020) but this is likely to be a reflection of the fact that rural households were in vulnerable situations even before the pandemic.

At the same time, preliminary assessments of potential disruptions to **agricultural production and entrepreneurship in rural areas** found some indicators of resilience in the agricultural sector. A survey conducted among owners of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) indicated that most of the respondents in rural areas were engaged in land cultivation, meaning that they are self-employed independent farmers. All MSMEs experienced various operating constraints during the health crisis, but when compared with urban MSMEs, rural-based businesses were impacted on less, particularly in terms of suspension of operations, decreases in market demand, cancellation of orders by customers or difficulties related to costs (UN Women, FAO and UNDP, 2020). The specifics of quarantine restrictions in Ukraine meant that none of the MSMEs that cultivate land were required to fully suspend their operations, and export prices for wheat and maize remained stable in early 2020 despite export restrictions (ibid.).

The situation was less favourable, however, for smallholder farmers and for women business owners generally. As discussed in more detail in the country gender assessment report below, women who engage in farming are more likely to be smallholders, or to engage in non-commercial agriculture. The restrictive measures taken to address COVID-19 impacted on agrifood supply chains, and smallholder farmers were particularly affected by difficulties accessing markets “due to low volumes of produced products, restrictions on small cars used by small-scale farmers, and the closures of roads leading to the cities,” and lack of storage facilities that required farmers to sell crops at lower prices (UN Women, FAO and UNDP, 2020, p. 32). Given that women farmers have more limited access to productive resources, it is likely that they were even more severely affected. Self-employed women, especially those in rural locations, likewise, tend to operate micro and small businesses and in sectors that were under the most restrictions during quarantine (such as personal services, catering, hospitality, tourism and trade). Women who relied on low daily wages from small business reported a number of specific challenges. According to one survey, more than half of women entrepreneurs had to close their businesses, while a quarter had to find new ways to operate, but

nevertheless lost income (UN Women Ukraine, 2020). Rural women entrepreneurs also highlighted the fact that poor internet access and lack of computer equipment meant that they were unable to find other avenues for sales. Furthermore, the inability to hire employees increased the physical burdens on women running agriculture-related businesses (ibid.).

The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to impact on **food security** and may mean that households will be unable to meet their **basic needs**. A survey conducted in May and June 2020 found that generally rural households were more food secure than urban ones, mainly a reflection of the fact that 67 percent of rural households could potentially produce their own food (UN Women, FAO and UNDP, 2020). There are, however, important differences in the strategies that women and men employ to manage their financial situations in the context of job and income loss related to COVID-19. A rapid gender assessment suggested that women were more likely than men to express concerns over being able to afford food, pay rent and utilities, and keep up with basic household expenses (UN Women Ukraine, 2020). Among all respondents, concern over lack of food and ability to meet basic needs increased in relation to the vulnerability of the households. Those who expressed the most concern included older women, women with two or more young children, persons on leave caring for a child, single parents, unemployed or informally employed persons, persons in households with a member with a chronic illness or disability, as well as respondents in certain regions, specifically women living in the south and in Donbas.

The closure of schools and limitations on **health and social services** during the quarantine period were potentially more difficult for the rural population who had more limited access to these services before the COVID-19 outbreak. In fact, travel restrictions were especially burdensome for rural residents, and 64.9 percent of women living in rural areas experienced difficulties related to using public transport (UN Women Ukraine, 2020). Moreover, 17.2 percent of women who participated in a survey were unable to access social services for themselves or family members during April and May 2020 (ibid.). Of note, a larger proportion of urban households applied for social benefits (housing support, child support, targeted assistance or unemployment benefits) compared with rural ones. This situation could reflect demographic differences between rural and urban areas or possibly other factors that made it difficult to apply for assistance. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, women represented 73 percent of registered beneficiaries of in-kind and cash assistance (ibid.) and so it would be useful to conduct further analysis about whether rural women were able to access

the assistance they needed during the pandemic.

The quarantine measures dramatically altered the internal dynamics of many households in important ways. For women, the restrictions and limited access to social infrastructure (such as schools and childcare facilities) directly resulted in an increased burden of unpaid care work. The **uneven distribution of domestic and care work** between women and men that predated the pandemic became evident. According to a rapid gender assessment, in April when quarantine measures were in place and more family members were at home, women reported spending more time on all domestic chores than men (including, but not limited to, cleaning, cooking, schooling children, caring for children, assisting elderly or ill family members and shopping; UN Women Ukraine, 2020). Another effect of family members being quarantined together, and isolated from support services, was the creation of conditions that increased the risks of **domestic violence**. The national hotline for the prevention of domestic violence recorded an increase in contacts from women affected by domestic violence in March and April 2020, as did organizations that provide assistance to survivors of violence in Ukraine; and assessments have also documented an increase in psychological and physical violence against women in domestic settings (ibid.). As noted in this country gender assessment, the prevalence of gender-based violence does not differ significantly between urban and rural areas. However, rural women faced greater difficulties accessing specialized assistance through crisis centres and shelters before the pandemic. A number of measures have been taken in Ukraine to increase protection for victims of gender-based violence, including the use of mobile brigades to provide outreach to women in rural areas. During the pandemic, resources were mobilized to provide services to survivors of violence remotely (mainly online), however, due to pre-existing gender digital divides, many rural women have great difficulty accessing such services or, indeed, information in general. Further research is needed to clarify how the pandemic has aggravated gender-based violence in all forms and also whether women in rural areas are adequately protected from such violence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and it also has the potential to worsen the situation for rural women both directly and indirectly. In many ways, the situation of rural women was largely invisible in policymaking on agriculture and rural development before the health crisis. It will be vital to ensure that in the post-COVID recovery period, the gendered impacts of the pandemic are identified and, among many competing issues, that rural women are not left behind.

Executive summary

Gender equality is central to the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) because goals of achieving food security, improving agricultural productivity and bettering the lives of people in rural areas all depend on eliminating social and economic inequalities between women and men.

In Ukraine, as is true for other countries, women represent a large proportion of the agricultural labour force, and they play key roles as food producers and in the management of natural resources. Yet gender inequalities, such as limited access to key productive resources, mean that women are often not able to reach their full potential. Whole families experience the negative consequences of such inequalities that contribute to poverty and food insecurity. FAO works to close the gender gap, eliminate inequalities, and to ensure that rural development processes take into consideration the distinct needs and values of women and men.

Under the extended Country Programming Framework (CPF) for 2016–2022, FAO and the Government of Ukraine recognize that rural women are more vulnerable than men in many areas and therefore priority is placed on cooperative actions for the economic empowerment of rural women and women running family farms. However, viewed overall, the CPF does not focus on gender equality in its outputs, targets or indicators. This country gender assessment for Ukraine is intended to provide insights into the most prominent gender gaps in the agricultural sector and concerning rural livelihoods, with the intention that the findings contained within will inform implementation of the CPF and also generally enrich the knowledge base concerning the intersections of gender, agriculture and rural development. Recommendations are included in section 8 of the full report.

Methodology and research limitations

The assessment process consisted of analysing quantitative data and qualitative information, based on a review of literature and statistical compilations,

interviews with Ukrainian experts and analysis of survey data relevant to conflict-affected areas. One of the most significant limitations to developing this country gender assessment – that will also impact upon the implementation of the CPF – is the inaccessibility of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data concerning topics relevant to agriculture and rural development. Official statistics are available for women and men separately, and often for rural and urban residents, but the two are rarely tabulated jointly. In fact, there is very little scholarship dedicated to the lives of rural women in Ukraine. Furthermore, a general agricultural census has not been conducted in Ukraine, and therefore basic information about women as formal farm owners and managers is incomplete. Annual national surveys of household farming practices do shed light on where there are gender gaps (when data are disaggregated for female- and male-headed households), but further studies are needed to fill out the picture of how rural women and men spend their time, their labour patterns, and how they cope with poverty and deprivation.

Country overview

Ukraine has made progress in reducing poverty over the last decades. However, poverty is characteristic for the rural population. Ukraine has seen a rise in non-monetary forms of poverty, such as poverty of living conditions, deprivation (lack of access to basic goods and services), social exclusion and insecurity. While there is little evidence that poverty is feminized in Ukraine when considering the overall poverty rates, when looking more closely at the country's several poverty profiles, gender differences do emerge. Most significantly, elderly women, single women who head households (including single mothers) and women from national minority groups, are at particular risk of poverty. Rural women, who fit into many of the above categories, are another group that is more marginalized than either urban women or men in rural areas.

Macro-level indicators of gender equality show that Ukraine's positive achievements in terms of gender

parity in educational attainment and health outcomes are offset by gender gaps in political participation and economic empowerment, both fields in which women have considerably less engagement than men. National strategy and policy documents have also recognized the role that gender stereotypes play in shaping perceptions about the work that women and men are expected to perform, as well as the distribution of unpaid labour between them.

The labour market and employment patterns: Within the working age population,² 68.9 percent of women and 79.2 percent of men participate in the labour force. Or, to put this another way, 31.1 percent of women and 20.8 percent of men are neither employed nor looking for work (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j). While a gap in labour force participation rates is characteristic for countries of the European Union, the fact that women are much more likely than men to leave the workforce due to domestic responsibilities indicates that traditional gender roles remain ingrained in Ukraine. The labour market is characterized by stratification in terms of occupations and vertical segregation, which refers to the hierarchy of positions. Particular jobs are closely associated with either “female” or “male” occupations; for instance, men represent 71 percent of all formal employees in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Women are less represented in top management and executive posts compared with clerical and support work. Both forms of employment segregation contribute to the gender wage gap in Ukraine, in which women’s average wages are slightly higher than three-quarters of men’s average wages (ibid.). The gender wage gap in agricultural employment is narrower than the average in the economy as a whole, but at the same time a large proportion of agricultural work, including work that women typically perform, takes place in the informal and unpaid spheres.

Poverty, high unemployment, the impacts of conflict and the desire to improve personal circumstances are all factors that push rural residents into labour migration. Ukraine experiences labour migration both from rural areas to cities and abroad. Women represent 56.5 percent of labour migrants for Ukraine as a whole and 58.9 percent of migrants from rural areas specifically. Men are more likely to migrate abroad, but women tend to migrate internally (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2019b). As migrants, women tend to take on domestic work, but they also work in agriculture, industry, trade and the service sector. In contrast, men mainly work in construction and

agriculture, with a smaller number working in industry or commerce. Labour migration often overlaps with irregular and informal forms of employment.

Health profile: In terms of lifetime health, Ukraine has a gender gap in life expectancy of around ten years. This gender gap is similar to that observed in other post-Soviet countries, but it is almost twice as large as that of Western Europe (where women’s average life expectancy exceeds that of men’s by around five years). Healthy life expectancy is affected by one’s residence, and thus rural residents have shorter life expectancies than urban residents. The gender gap in life expectancy is also slightly greater for the rural population of Ukraine (in 2019, it was 76.2 years for women and 65.6 years for men; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020q). The gender gap can be attributed, in part, to behavioural differences, such as the greater likelihood that men smoke or drink alcohol excessively, work in unsafe jobs and do not seek treatment for health issues. Ukraine has made progress in reducing the spread of two serious epidemics: HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. But viewed through the lens of gender, both epidemics continue to affect women and men differently. For instance, as the primary vector of HIV transmission has changed from injecting drug use to sexual transmission, the proportion of women among new HIV infections has been increasing. In contrast, men form the majority of those diagnosed with active tuberculosis, which points to the fact that the infection is poorly controlled among the incarcerated population, the majority of whom are male.

For rural residents, improving access to high quality healthcare services is a pressing issue. The unmet needs of the elderly rural population are high, but there is also a lack of specialized services, for example, for people living with HIV or requiring rehabilitative or emergency care. While it is unrealistic to expand all specialist healthcare to each rural community, poor transport links between villages and the nearest medical facilities could be improved.

Education: Ukraine has many positive indicators in the sphere of education, notably gender parity in enrolment from the pre-primary level up to tertiary education. The greatest gender disparities in enrolment in educational institutions are seen in technical and vocational education, in which female enrolment has declined as women prefer to enter more generalized higher education institutions. There are distinct gender patterns in fields of study that suggest young women and men are channelled toward certain academic subjects. At the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year, women represented the vast majority of students in the healthcare and education fields,

² The working age population refers to people between 15 and 59 years of age.

but accounted for merely 27.9 percent of students of colleges, vocational schools, academies, institutes and universities providing academic training in the fields of agricultural and food sciences, and veterinary medicine (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020f). Women's low representation in academic and research posts related to agriculture, when contrasted with the labour they perform in this area, raises questions about whether women are fully contributing their knowledge to scientific study and policy development.

Gender-based violence: Ukraine has taken steps to address the issue of gender-based violence, legislatively and through policy and national planning. Gender-based violence is a violation of women's rights and also an obstacle to achieving gender equality. It can take the form of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence. Domestic violence is the most prevalent form of violence affecting women, as evidenced by national hotline data. A nationwide prevalence study found that 22 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced at least one form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes. The evidence does not suggest that the incidence of gender-based violence differs greatly between rural and urban areas (for instance, ten percent of rural women, compared with eight percent of urban women, reported having experienced some form of violence in the preceding year). A critical difference for rural survivors of gender-based violence is the difficulty they face in accessing specialized assistance and protection. Most services are located in cities and large towns. However, recent positive changes include the expansion of social and psychological support to people living in remote areas through the use of mobile teams with expertise in assisting survivors of gender-based violence.

Gender and conflict-affected areas: Ukraine is in its seventh year of protracted conflict that has had a destabilizing effect on the entire country. The conflict has led to large population displacement, and this has impacted on both those who have been displaced as well as those who are living in areas that are receiving internally displaced persons (IDPs). Compared with other fields, there has been a comparatively large number of studies of the gendered impacts of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, but much less attention has been given to how the conflict has impacted on the livelihoods of rural women and men. This country gender assessment was not able to explore this topic in depth, but it did analyse data obtained from a survey conducted in settlements (rural and urban) 20 kilometres from the contact line, in early 2019. Among IDPs, there is a larger proportion of women, and they have particular needs in terms of protection, livelihood support, water, sanitation,

education and shelter. For both IDPs and conflict-affected populations generally, unemployment and the scarcity of job opportunities are key concerns. The agricultural production of smallholder farmers and rural inhabitants has been affected by the conflict, as farming areas have become cut off from markets and some land has simply been abandoned. However, research indicates that even though pensions are the main source of income for most households in the government controlled territory, farming still represents the main income source for five percent of households. Further information is needed about how the conflict has impacted on rural populations, with particular attention to gender differences in livelihoods and strategies for coping with poverty, food insecurity and unemployment.

Agricultural labour, farming and rural enterprises

Agriculture is one of the most important providers of jobs and income-earning opportunities for rural inhabitants. Out of all working people in Ukraine, every sixth person works in the field that combines agriculture, forestry and fisheries. This translates to just under three million people. There are no clear gender differences in formal employment in agriculture. Yet much of the work in rural areas is informal in nature. The agricultural sector is characterized by a high degree of informality compared with the number of available formal jobs. Overall, men are more often employed informally, but when it comes to informal agricultural work, the female employment rate is much higher than it is for men – encompassing half of informally employed women and just over a third of informally employed men. These figures suggest that men have a more diverse profile even in informal work (which also includes construction work) and that rural women have very limited options. Agricultural employment also encompasses unpaid work on household farms. The lack of time use data makes it difficult to clearly assess the extent of women's and men's engagement in unpaid work. For rural women, unpaid work is burdensome and it encompasses not only work on household farms, much of which is manual labour, but also daily housework, childcare and often the care of other family members.

Despite the role that women play in farming, they are rarely officially recognized as "farmers" (referring to the head of a farming enterprise). Their contributions are invisible, and women themselves receive no social protections for their unpaid and informal work.

Women represent just over half of all registered land owners, but this figure (which is high when compared

with other post-Soviet countries) may reflect specifics about how the sale and transfer of land has been limited in Ukraine since independence. While women may be well-represented as formal land owners, their share is not necessarily equal. For instance, the average land area belonging to female-headed households is smaller than the average for male-headed households, and in relation to agricultural land specifically, female-headed households have a slightly smaller proportion of arable land. Moreover, only a small proportion of women landowners cultivate agricultural products for sale. As of January 2020, only 20.5 percent of farming enterprises among legal entities were headed by women (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020u). Generally, the accepted notion of a “farmer” is a man running a private farm. A family farm would generally be considered women-managed only if there was no male household head.

Gender issues in agriculture and rural livelihoods

In the absence of an agricultural census, much of what is known about gender differences in farming practices is based on surveys of rural households, both those headed by women and by men. On the whole, female-headed households have a smaller proportion of arable land and are also less likely than male-headed households to grow industrial crops (compared with fodder crops). There are also gender differences in both the harvests and in the volume of sales of agricultural products produced by rural households. Rural women and men have different areas of focus and responsibilities. For instance, men are more likely to engage in large-scale crop production (wheat, corn, sunflowers), while women typically focus on horticulture and herbs. Women generally undertake manual labour, such as cultivation, planting, weeding, and harvesting perishable vegetables, berries and herbs, while men more often undertake mechanized work, such as tilling, ploughing and planting fodder crops, harvesting grain and corn (with combine harvesters) and transporting products to markets. In the area of crop farming, men’s work covers much more of the value chain and includes a greater role in management and decision-making.

As is the case with crop farming and horticulture, women and men perform distinct tasks in animal husbandry. For example, women are especially active in dairy production and do most of the work associated with milking and care of the cows, while men are usually responsible for transport and mechanized labour.

Rural infrastructure

Deprivations at the household level impact on all household members, but women are particularly affected when a lack of basic conveniences leads to an increase in their domestic work burden. Rural households are more likely than those in urban areas to experience fuel shortages. A not insignificant number of rural households rely on gas boilers, wood or coal for heating, but these options can be prohibitively expensive. Many rural women report that they do not have hot water in their homes as they have no means to heat it. While an increasing number of rural households has access to the centralized water supply, around two-thirds still rely on other water sources for drinking and cooking, most often a well or standpipe located near the house. Due to the gendered division of labour, women are the major users of household water (which they use in preparing meals, washing dishes, cleaning, laundering and bathing children), and so they are particularly affected when water is not readily available. Problems with water supply mean that less than ten percent of the rural population has access to centralized sewer networks. A pressing issue for rural inhabitants is the poor road and transport infrastructure that means rural communities are isolated from basic services including, for example, emergency medical assistance provided by ambulances. Women rely more on public transport than private cars to access basic services, and if such transport is unavailable, they are limited to facilities that are within walking distance, which generally do not include banks or larger shops. For rural women, the lack of social infrastructure, most notably limited access to preschool education, limits their abilities to engage in employment, to take part in training or other development projects or even to participate in local decision-making.

Food security and nutrition

Ukraine has a low level of food insecurity, but it does exhibit a trend in increasing rates of overweight and obesity – signs of poor nutritional status. Among adults, men are more likely to be overweight, but obesity rates are higher among women. There is also some evidence of micronutrient deficiencies among women, most notably during pregnancy. Information about nutrition and food security for rural women and men specifically was not found for this assessment, however, poverty affects the extent to which households are able to purchase a variety of nutritious foods. Rural households consume less of certain food groups, such as meat, fish, fruits and berries, compared with urban households,

and they also rely more on the consumption of breads, oils and fats, vegetables (especially potatoes) and sugars for their daily meals. Intra-household decision-making about food consumption may play a role. One survey suggested that there is a tendency within families for priority to be given to men for better quality food, as they are thought to have a greater need due to the work they perform.

Climate change in Ukraine poses a threat to food security, as it may negatively affect crop yields. This

country gender assessment did not reveal any studies of the gendered impacts of climate change in Ukraine. However, it is generally known that women and men experience climate change differently, and that gender inequalities (such as economic disparities, differences in access to productive resources, and different levels of education and cultural norms) affect their abilities to successfully adapt. Further analysis is needed on this subject, as well as to determine how women can contribute to finding long-term solutions to climate change in Ukraine.

1. Introduction

1.1. Why is gender relevant to sustainable agriculture and rural development?

Gender equality is central to the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) because goals of achieving food security, improving agricultural productivity and bettering the lives of people in rural areas all depend on eliminating social and economic inequalities between women and men. FAO recognizes the diverse role that women play in agriculture and rural development and their potential to bring about positive change.

Around the world, women represent a large proportion of the agricultural labour force: they form the majority of food producers, play key roles in the management of natural resources and also contribute significantly to the care of their households. However, women are limited in their capacity to contribute to agricultural production and take advantage of new opportunities to shape rural economies. Women also face both “overt and implicit discrimination in access to key productive resources such as land and to services... and are more likely than men to be in part-time, seasonal and/or low-paying jobs when engaged in rural wage employment; and they often work without remuneration on family farms” (FAO, 2013, p. 3).

The inequalities that women experience – also described as a “gender gap” – not only reduce women’s contributions to the agricultural sector by diminishing their productivity, but they also negatively impact on the wellbeing of families and “[impose] a high cost on the economy through productivity losses” (FAO, 2013, p.3). FAO believes that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, that is, if the gender gap were minimized or even eliminated, agricultural productivity would increase, resulting in less poverty, a reduction in hunger and nutrition insecurity, and in economic growth.

As part of the UN system, FAO is mandated to promote gender equality and the elimination of discrimination

against women, principles that are enshrined in fundamental human rights instruments. Rural women represent a quarter of the world’s population and are vital contributors to rural communities and the economies of their families. Yet all too often, the rights and needs of rural women “remain insufficiently addressed or ignored in laws, national and local policies, budgets, and investment strategies at all levels” (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2016, p. 3). Even when special measures to ameliorate rural women’s situation have been devised, they are often not sufficiently implemented to affect real change in the lives of rural women.

The themes of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls intersect with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and align with the international framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many of the SDGs apply to the situation of rural women, particularly the goals relevant to ending poverty (Goal 1), achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture (Goal 2), achieving gender equality and empowering women (Goal 5) and providing universal access to clean water and sanitation (Goal 6). The pledge that the international community has undertaken to “leave no one behind” is an obligation to consider the situation of rural women and girls throughout the Agenda. FAO integrates a gender perspective into all of its work, and the practice of gender mainstreaming is also required at the national level, “in all agricultural and rural development policies, strategies, plans (including operational plans) and programmes” (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2016, p. 10). Ensuring that policies and initiatives related to both agriculture and rural development are responsive to gender is a critical means to enable rural women “to act and be visible as stakeholders, decision-makers, and beneficiaries” (ibid.).

1.2. FAO in Ukraine

Ukraine joined FAO in 2003 and cooperation has focused on capacity building and technology transfer,

Table 1: Priorities and areas of cooperation for FAO and the Government of Ukraine for 2020–2022

Priority area	Main areas of cooperation
(1) Business climate, law enforcement and setting up a stable legal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Strengthening capacities of stakeholders in improvement of seed systems and phytosanitary procedures » Strengthening the governance framework on food safety and quality schemes, particularly in schools, kindergartens and along the food donation chain » Enhancing sustainability of animal health and production by reducing risks associated with transboundary animal diseases and antimicrobial resistance, and supporting the implementation and monitoring of SDGs in the livestock sector
(2) Land reform, food security and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Enhancing the capacity of amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs) on sustainable tenure management » Strengthening national school food policies and nutrition-focused social protection programmes
(3) Agro-food production chain development and access to international markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Supporting development of a cost-effective advisory services model » Strengthening capacities of national stakeholders on export promotion and the application of digital technologies in the agri-food sector » Supporting development of food loss and waste-related policies
(4) Environment and management of natural resources, including forestry and fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Strengthening capacities of line ministries and relevant stakeholders on sustainable management of natural resources » Providing technical support for the implementation of the water/irrigation strategy » Strengthening capacity on responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture » Strengthening capacity in disaster risk reduction, early warning systems and agro-meteorological services
(5) Emergency response and economic recovery of the conflict-affected regions in Eastern Ukraine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Supporting vulnerable rural households and smallholders, cooperatives and other rural micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including those residing in conflict-affected areas, with a focus on rural women and youth » Building capacity of national authorities to effectively absorb the available Food Security Cluster coordination mechanism

Source: FAO, 2021.

including the design and implementation of several agriculture and rural development-related investment strategies (led by the FAO Investment Centre). FAO assistance to Ukraine is outlined in the extended FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Ukraine (2016–2022). The CPF was developed in consultation with the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, and it targets five priority areas that reflect Ukraine’s Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development for 2015–2020. Under the CPF, there are five priority areas for cooperation, with outputs and targets for each, summarized in Table 1.

The Country Programming Framework includes an observation from the national Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2015–2020 that rural women, especially elderly women, are more vulnerable when compared with men. Therefore, actions such as promoting opportunities for women running family farms and the economic empowerment of rural women are to be given priority. The CPF is aligned with the Ukrainian government’s commitments in this area and also follow the FAO Policy on Gender Equality. The CPF includes several targets for female participation

(in the context of capacity-building), foresees the development of a gender-sensitive water/irrigation strategy, and aims to increase economic opportunities for women in the conflict-affected regions in Eastern Ukraine.

The FAO Policy on Gender Equality provides minimum standards for gender mainstreaming, and the FAO Regional Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan for Europe and Central Asia (2019–2022) outlines the priority areas for FAO’s work in this region (FAO, 2019). These areas of future work, which are summarized below, are also reflected in the Country Programming Framework for Ukraine for the period 2020 to 2022.

- » Developing capacity and raising awareness about issues related to gender equality, social protection and rural development. The aim of knowledge generation is to improve the evidence base for policymaking.
- » Economically empowering rural women through the development of inclusive and gender-sensitive value chains, diversifying income, and creating

employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for improved food security and rural livelihoods of smallholders in areas affected by land degradation and climate change.

- » Mainstreaming gender into FAO technical assistance, and in particular providing technical guidance and support for collecting and using sex-disaggregated data to monitor progress in closing the gender gaps in key areas of FAO's mandates, as well as enhancing national and regional capacities for better integration of gender concerns in formulating, implementing, monitoring, reporting and evaluating development and humanitarian interventions.

1.3. Scope and purpose of the country gender assessment

In accordance with FAO's gender mainstreaming requirements, a country gender assessment should be conducted as part of country programming, for example when preparing a Country Programming Framework (FAO, 2013). FAO must also carry out gender analysis for all strategic objectives at the country level and ensure that gender is taken into consideration in project design, approval and implementation.

This country gender assessment (CGA) contributes to the knowledge base about gender inequalities affecting agricultural production and rural life in Ukraine. The assessment provides recommendations on enhancing agriculture and developing rural communities, taking into consideration issues such as gender roles and differences between women and men in access to productive resources, inputs and information. The findings and recommendations of the CGA are aimed primarily at FAO staff in order to ensure that gender will be effectively mainstreamed into the CPF for 2020–2022. A related objective is to strengthen the integration of a gender perspective into programme and project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The assessment also aims to serve as resource material for FAO's assistance to national partners, as well as in cooperative work with the Government of Ukraine and donor organizations.

The report may be of use to other UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers, alongside diverse professionals in the fields of agriculture and rural development. This country gender assessment is the first produced by FAO for Ukraine.

1.4. Methodology

The methodology follows the format recommended by FAO's internal guidance on preparing a country

gender assessment (FAO, 2017a). The assessment process consisted of collecting and analysing quantitative data and qualitative information, based on a review of the literature and statistical compilations, interviews with experts at key Ukrainian institutions, and analysis of survey findings relevant to conflict-affected areas.

The literature review focused on materials pertaining to agriculture and rural development, but due to the limited number of gender-sensitive studies on these topics, information was also extracted from general research concerning gender inequalities in Ukraine. Research and studies conducted by international development organizations, including FAO and other UN agencies, donor organizations, NGOs and academic institutions were consulted extensively. In addition, government policy documents and official reporting under international conventions, most specifically the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Platform for Action (from the Fourth World Conference on Women), also provided information about the constraints that women and men face in sectors related to agriculture and rural development.

Official data, compiled by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, were used whenever possible. However, there are several gaps in terms of the data related to agricultural production and rural livelihoods that make it difficult to present a clear picture of gender inequalities. First, the State Statistics Service does not produce a unified compilation of gender statistics every year (the most recent *Women and Men of Ukraine* datasets are from 2018). This compilation does not pertain to indicators related to agriculture, and data are disaggregated by region but not for rural/urban areas.

Second, an agricultural census has not been conducted in Ukraine. However, the State Statistics Service regularly publishes data on the agricultural activities of rural households, based on a household survey, in which the main indicators are disaggregated for households headed by women and men. The most recent survey was conducted in May 2020 with a sample of 28 500 rural households (representing 0.6 percent of all rural households in Ukraine). These data give a good indication of several gender gaps in terms of farming practices at the rural level, but they do not capture a full or detailed baseline of how women and men are engaged in agriculture.

Furthermore, of the statistics that are published by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, very few are disaggregated by both sex and settlement type. Accessible cross-referenced data are available for

indicators related to demographics (for example, household composition and life expectancy) but are not available for key indicators concerning the labour market, education or access to social protection. It should also be noted that statistical compilations published by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine exclude data from Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020x).

When data from the State Statistics Service were unavailable, sources of information about rural households and studies that focus on rural women were consulted. One particular survey of rural women (conducted with the joint support of UNDP and the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights) provided data and information relevant to the status of rural women and the constraints they face. The survey was carried out in 2014 with 2 000 female respondents representing all of Ukraine, with the exception of areas not under government control.

All of the data limitations mean that the diverse statistics that are reproduced in this country gender assessment are not directly comparable because they are based on differing methodologies and metadata. Nevertheless, viewed on the whole, the data help to build up a picture of the gender gaps concerning agriculture and rural life in Ukraine. They also suggest areas in which further data collection and research are needed.

This country gender assessment makes use of data produced by a REACH-Initiative³ survey of conflict-affected areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The REACH survey, conducted between February and March 2019, was used to monitor the impact of protracted conflict in Eastern Ukraine on household economic security by measuring change in several key socio-economic indicators at the household level. The researchers for this country gender assessment worked with the REACH-Initiative to include several gender-specific indicators in the survey questionnaire. The survey was administered through face-to-face interviews with heads or other representatives of households. Stratified sampling was applied with stratification for four areas: 5 km/20 km from the contact line dividing government-controlled areas (GCAs) and non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs) and rural/urban locations. The survey sample consisted of 820 respondents (535 women and 285

men), resulting in a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of seven percent. Data from the REACH survey are presented only in section 4 of this assessment on the intersections of gender and rural livelihoods in conflict-affected areas.

Data and information found in secondary sources were complemented by interviews conducted with several Ukrainian experts in issues pertaining to rural livelihoods, agriculture and gender equality. The experts represent the following institutions: the Ministry of Social Policy, the Union of Rural Women of Ukraine, the Institute of Demography of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the Council of Europe project on “Protecting national minorities, including the Roma and minority languages in Ukraine”. The interviewees provided opinions and information based on their expertise in gender-related fields.

Although this country gender assessment draws on the available data and studies of the situation of rural women from a number of sources, it should be noted that such information was not extensive. There are a number of gaps in information about the diversity of women’s roles in the agricultural sector. A particular trend was also observed – some of the very few articles concerning Ukrainian women in agriculture appear only around 8 March (International Women’s Day). While this finding may seem insignificant, it suggests that women’s contributions to the sector are mainly remembered once a year, and that few efforts are made at other times to recognize rural women and women in agriculture.

³ REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). It is a humanitarian initiative that provides data and information on the humanitarian situation of crisis-affected populations.

2. Country overview

2.1. Macro-level view of gender equality

A review of indices that measure human development indicates that progress has been made in Ukraine toward reducing gender inequality but that such inequalities still persist. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a measure used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that takes into consideration a long and healthy life, average years in education and a decent standard of living (income per capita). Ukraine's HDI value of 0.779 corresponds to countries with high human development and places it 74 out of 189 countries.⁴ From 1990 to 2019, Ukraine's HDI value increased by 7.4 percent (UNDP, 2020a).

The Gender Development Index (GDI) assesses gender differences in people's lives against a global measure comparing the HDI calculated separately for women and men in three dimensions: health, education and economic empowerment (command over economic resources).⁵ The female HDI value for Ukraine is 0.776 and the male value is the same, resulting in a GDI value

of 1.000. This value places Ukraine slightly above the average value for the European and Central Asian countries combined, which is 0.953 (UNDP, 2020a). Considering the three dimensions that constitute the GDI, in Ukraine, disparities in human development for women concern their more limited access to economic resources and for men are related to their lower average life expectancy.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) measures the loss in potential human development due to disparities between female and male achievements in three dimensions (reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity, calculated as a composite of five indicators).⁶ Ukraine's GII value in 2019 was 0.234, representing a 23 percent loss in human development due to gender inequality (and a rank of 52 out of 162 countries). The GII was introduced in 2010 and since that time, changes in the GII value for Ukraine indicate that there have been improvements in gender equality (the 2010 GII value was 0.334⁷). Yet, as Table 2 illustrates, positive indicators in Ukraine, such as near

Table 2: Gender Inequality Index (GII) values for Ukraine, compared with regional values (2019)

	2019 GII value	Maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100 000 live births)	Adolescent birth rate (births per 1 000 women aged 15–19 years)	Share of seats in parliament (% held by women)	Population with some secondary education (% aged 25 years and over)		Labour force participation rate (% aged 15 years and over)	
					F	M	F	M
Ukraine	0.234	19.0	23.7	20.5	94.0	95.2	46.7	63.1
Europe and Central Asia Region	0.256	19.9	27.8	23.1	79.9	88.1	45.0	70.0
OECD countries	0.205	18.0	22.9	30.8	84.1	87.0	52.1	69.1

Source: Adapted from UNDP, 2020a, p. 357, p. 364.

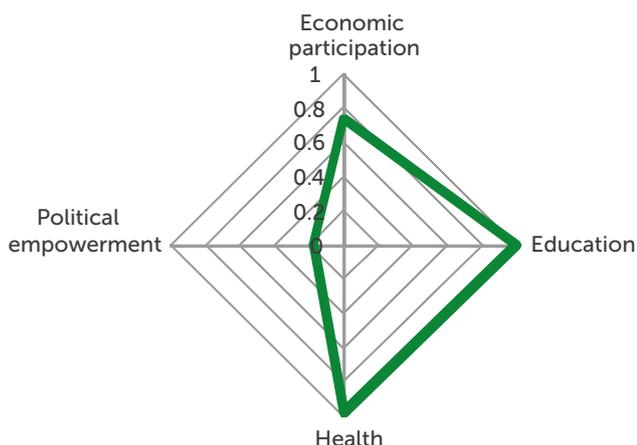
⁴ In simple terms, HDI scores range from 1.00 (the highest possible level of human development) to 0 (the lowest level of human development).

⁵ The GDI uses the same scale as the HDI.

⁶ For the GII, a value of 0 indicates full equality and a value of 1.00 represents the highest level of inequality.

⁷ See UNDP Gender Inequality Index data (1995–2019), available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data>.

Figure 1: Global Gender Gap scores for Ukraine, by dimension (2020)

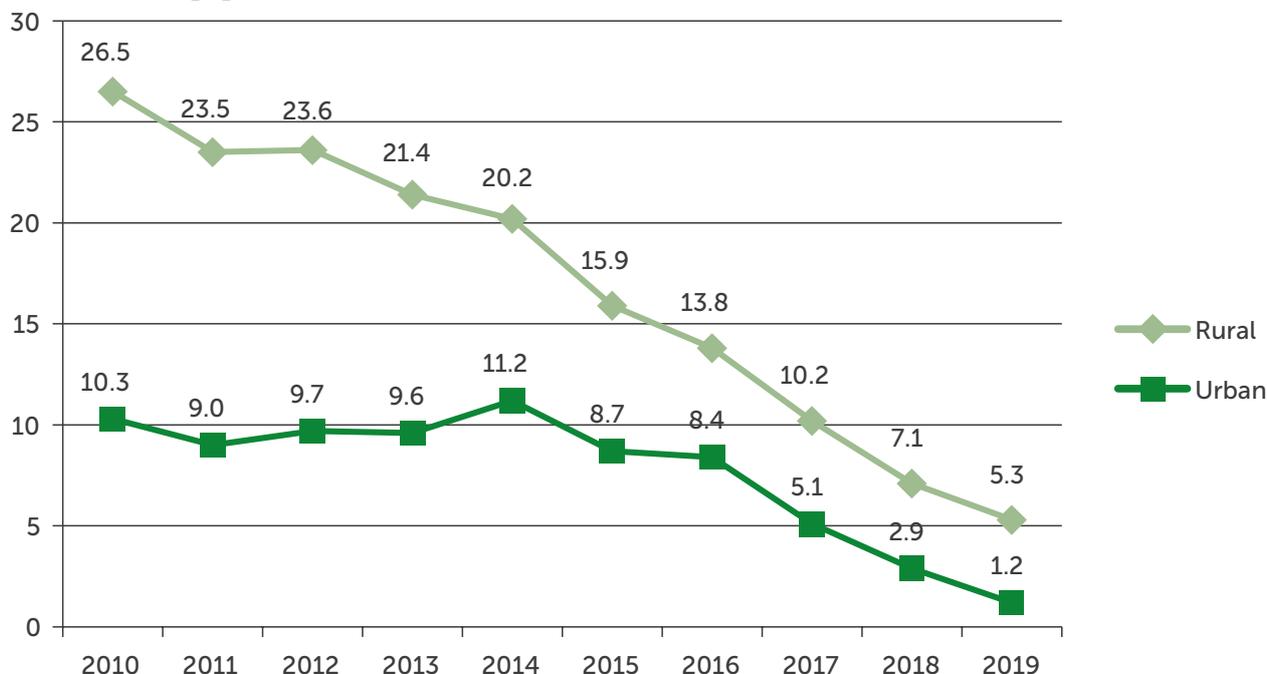


Source: World Economic Forum, 2020, p. 347.

attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. In 2020, Ukraine’s Global Gender Gap score was 0.721⁸ which corresponds to a rank of 59 out of 153 countries (World Economic Forum, 2020). Considering each dimension separately, Ukraine is the farthest from gender parity in the area of political empowerment, followed by access to economic opportunities, as illustrated in Figure 1.

The indices provide a macro view of the situation of gender equality and disparities in Ukraine, and thus they help to generally orient strategic planning and programming processes. However, they do not adequately capture significant differences in the lives of rural and urban populations or provide insights into how gender issues intersect with the agricultural sector in particular.

Figure 2: Population with an average monthly per capita income below the poverty line, by location and year (% of total population)



Sources: All data were compiled by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine and published in Statistical Yearbooks for the following years: 2014 (data for 2010–2014); 2016 (data for 2015–2016); 2018 (data for 2017–2018); and 2019 (data for 2019).

gender parity in literacy rates, are offset by women’s low representation in national political office and the gap in labour force participation rates, decreasing the overall value and ranking. Ukraine’s GII value indicates a greater degree of gender equality compared with the regional average for Europe and Central Asia combined, but less progress than is seen for the OECD countries combined (notably in the areas of women’s representation in the labour force and in political office).

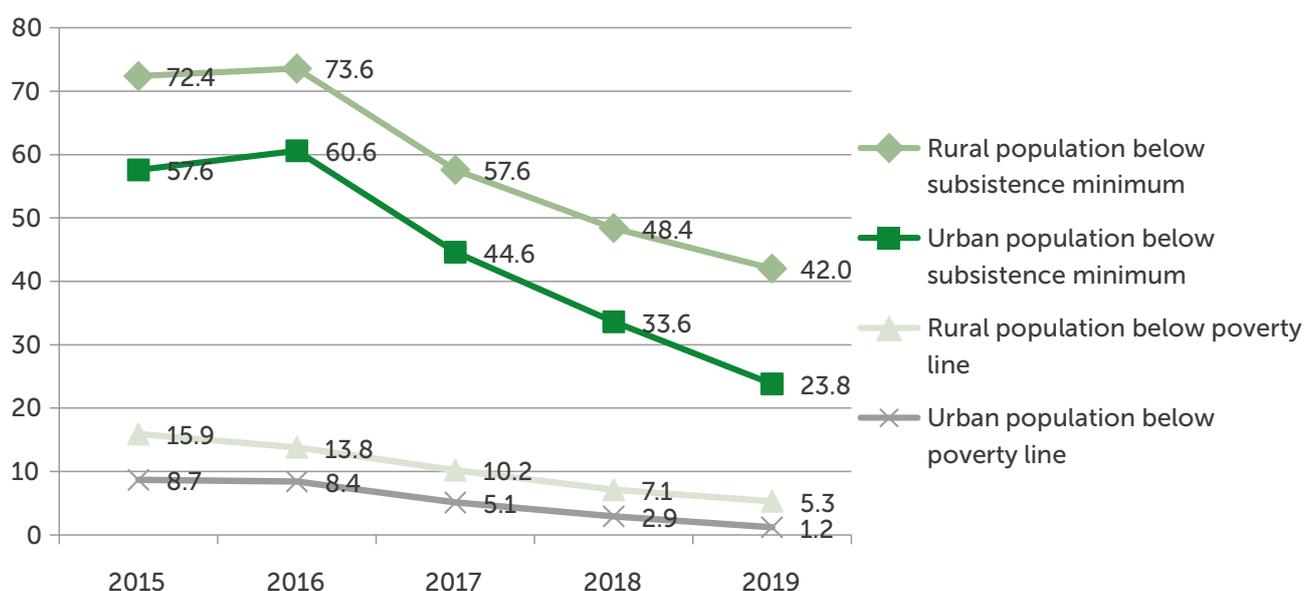
Finally, the Global Gender Gap, developed by the World Economic Forum, offers yet another perspective on progress towards gender parity in four dimensions: economic participation and opportunity, educational

2.2. Socio-economic profile

Ukraine is well-known for its fertile black soil, once labelled “the breadbasket of the Soviet Union” and now of Europe. Agriculture is an important economic driver, and the agricultural sector accounts for 10.2 percent of the country’s GDP, third after wholesale and retail trade and the manufacturing industry (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2019c).

⁸ A score of 1.00 represents gender parity and a score of 0 represents complete imparity.

Figure 3: Population with an average monthly per capita income below the subsistence minimum, by location and year (% of total population)



Sources: All data were compiled by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine and published in Statistical Yearbooks for the following years: 2016 (data for 2015–2016); 2018 (data for 2017–2018); and 2019 (data for 2019).

Ukraine has made progress in reducing poverty owing to a two-fold increase in the minimum wage starting in January 2017. This has been a major factor in decreasing monetary poverty. The balance between the minimum wage and social transfers was sustained in 2018–2019 which ensured a further decline in monetary poverty but at a slower pace (Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture, 2020). The decline has continued since that time for both the urban and rural populations. However, considerable disparities in poverty rates exist, with a higher incidence of poverty in rural locations. Figure 2, illustrates the proportion of the population whose income places them below the national poverty line (which is defined as 75 percent of the median income).

While the declining poverty rate is a positive trend, a considerably large proportion of the population continues to live below the subsistence minimum, which is calculated by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine to reflect monthly changes in consumer prices. Figure 3 illustrates the differences in these two measures of poverty for both the rural and urban populations.

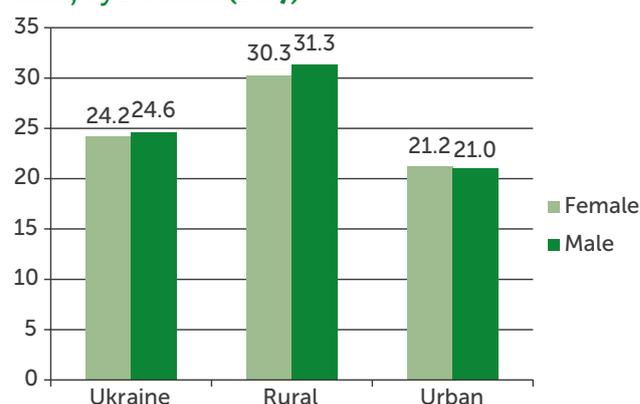
Rural poverty is connected to a lack of employment opportunities and is also exacerbated by property rights restrictions, namely a moratorium on the sale of land. Rural areas are characterized by non-monetary poverty and a “family’s residence in a rural area makes their risk of non-monetary poverty 2.5 times higher than average in Ukraine” (UNDP in Ukraine, 2015, p. 21). Non-monetary poverty includes poverty of living conditions, also described as deprivation, social exclusion and

insecurity. Deprivation is felt more acutely by rural residents who lack access to basic goods including food and non-food goods, basic infrastructure and services (such as medical, educational and social services, as well as transport links, clean water and sanitation) and opportunities for employment and social or community life (ibid.).

Poverty is generally not considered to be “feminized” in Ukraine, meaning that when looking at the whole female and male populations, poverty rates hardly differ by gender, as seen in the figure below which is based on the national poverty line.

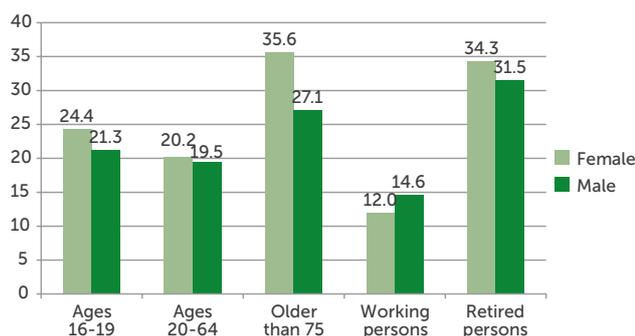
There are greater differences in the female and male populations when considering age groups, with women somewhat more likely to be impoverished at the beginning of their working lives and after retirement.

Figure 4: Relative poverty levels of women and men, by location (2017)



Source: Data provided by the Institute of Demography of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, March 2019.

Figure 5: Population with a per capita equivalent monthly income below the subsistence minimum, by sex and age, 2019 (% of total population)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d, p. 335.

However, the proportion of women and men whose monthly income puts them below the poverty line or is below the subsistence minimum do not differ greatly (see Figure 5).

However, it can be argued that many of Ukraine's poverty profiles are, in fact, gendered. Women are more likely to face multidimensional poverty. For instance, across the labour market, women's average incomes (both from wages and pensions) are less than those of men. Poverty rates increase with the number of children within a household, and single female-headed households are especially at risk of poverty. Elderly women may also become impoverished having reached retirement age, due to a lifetime of lower earnings, smaller pensions and statistically longer life expectancy. This is especially the case for elderly women living alone. Women also depend more heavily on social benefits and services because they are generally responsible for household management and caregiving in the family – a reflection of gender stereotypes (Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture, 2020). The conflict continues to create new forms of deprivation, such as lack of safe housing, income and access to services. Such deprivations are especially acute for women who represent the majority of internally displaced persons and also have the primary burden of caring for children, the elderly and people with disabilities or illness (MAPS Mission, 2018).

Rural women are especially vulnerable to poverty in its various forms: monetary poverty, multiple deprivations and social exclusion. In fact, many of these poverty "risk factors" are combined for the population of rural women. For instance, indicators of ageing show that the largest group of elderly persons in Ukraine are women living in rural areas, and the share of widowed older women is higher in rural than urban areas (Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms and United Nations Population Fund, 2014). Factors that contribute to the specific issue of *rural* feminization of poverty,

such as low wages, informal and unpaid work, lack of accessibility to basic infrastructure and services, ageing and widowhood, are discussed in greater detail in later sections of this report.

2.3. Political and institutional profile

In the decades since declaring independence from the Soviet Union, Ukraine has undertaken international commitments on the promotion of women's rights and developed a national legislative and policy framework with the same goal. Ukraine's entrance into the European Union Association Agreement in 2014 was an additional impetus to advance gender equality commitments and ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

Ukraine is undergoing a number of large-scale reform efforts that all contribute to the country's sustainable development up to 2030. Some of the most significant reforms that have a bearing on this country's gender assessment are the comprehensive Ukraine 2020 strategy that encompasses reforms and state programmes in virtually every sector, including reform of agriculture and fisheries, land market reform, and the process of decentralization. Under the decentralization process, the territorial administration of the country is being restructured and local self-government has become increasingly important. One of the broad aims of decentralization is to strengthen local capacity to address pressing issues such as the worsening quality of public services, the deterioration of infrastructure (energy, water and sewer networks), demographic problems (including the depopulation of rural areas), and reforming the management of land (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2014). Thus, while decentralization concerns the entire country, the process has specific impacts on rural areas.

Commitments to ensure gender equality should mean that reforms are implemented in such a way that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in the reform agenda and that, ultimately, the whole population benefits from national development efforts.

2.3.1. Key international commitments on gender equality

Ukraine ratified the UN **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (CEDAW) in 1981 when it was the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Ukraine has submitted eight periodic reports on implementation of the treaty, the most recent of which was reviewed in 2017. In addition to the anti-discrimination standards of the treaty itself, the CEDAW Committee's general recommendations, for

example on the rights of rural women (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2016), provide additional guidance on Ukraine's obligations under the convention. Ukraine has also undertaken commitments to advance the agenda of the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**, which includes several strategic objectives pertaining to the risk of poverty and social marginalization that women in rural and remote areas face; and a recommendation to governments to formulate and implement policies that enhance the access of women agricultural and fisheries producers to a range of productive resources.

For Ukraine, closing gender gaps will be a key accelerator for achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals**. A UN-led Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission identified disparities in women's economic and political participation and the persistence of discriminatory gender stereotypes as core issues that must be addressed in order to "unlock the full potential of both women and men" and to boost sustainable human development (MAPS Mission, 2018, p. 60).

The government of Ukraine has adapted the Sustainable Development Goals to the national context, set targets and established relevant baselines for monitoring. In addition to national priorities, a series of consultations were held in 2016 to help localize the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the regional level. Interestingly, during the consultations, the issue of gender equality (Goal 5) ranked low among both national and regional-level priorities (in the lower third of the 17 SDGs; Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, 2016), but the topics of gender equality and gender stereotypes were raised in connection with several other goals (for instance, in relation to education, decent work and economic growth, infrastructure, inclusion, health [elimination of hunger], and small business development). This seeming contradiction indicates that national work has so far "not emphasized gender equality as a tool for accelerating SDG progress" and, thus, gender equality and SDG 5 targets are not well integrated into state policies (ibid., p. 62).

Ukraine has identified six national targets for Goal 5, all of which have particular relevance to rural women as they cover the following topics: discrimination; gender-based violence; gender balance in domestic responsibilities; representation in political and public life; family planning services; and women's economic opportunities (Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, 2017). The MAPS study expressed concern that a number of national targets (for example, those related to reproductive health and encouraging shared responsibility for domestic work and childcare)

"have no government policy or programme backing their achievement" (MAPS Mission, 2018, p. 62).

Ukraine takes a gender mainstreaming approach to achieving Goal 5 by recommending that "a wide range of gender priorities in achieving all the SDGs" be taken into account (MAPS Mission, 2018, p. 43). Several SDG targets that are relevant to the topics covered in this country gender assessment explicitly mention women and girls. These include, for example, targets for Goal 1 (on ending poverty) that aim for equal ownership and control over land and natural resources; for Goal 2 (on ending hunger) that has a target related to women's nutritional needs and simultaneously targets ending hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture; and for Goal 6 (on sustainable water and sanitation management) that calls for special attention to be given to women and girls in vulnerable situations. Also relevant to this CGA, there are other SDGs related to sustainable industrialization and protecting ecosystems that implicate agricultural practices and may well have different implications for female and male farmers, but the related national targets are gender neutral.

The **European Union Association Agreement** between the EU and Ukraine, requires national actions to ensure gender equality and non-discrimination. Implementation of the Association Agreement refers not only to the core EU directives concerning gender but should encompass all major EU standards and take a mainstreaming approach, as the EU itself endorses. For example, the EU Common Agricultural Policy for 2014–2020⁹ incorporates the principle of gender equality as a means of promoting sustainable economic growth and rural development, and EU Member States are required to consider the specific situation of women in their national rural development initiatives.

As a member of the **Council of Europe**, Ukraine has ratified the fundamental European human rights documents that guarantee gender equality and freedom from discrimination (specifically, the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter). Additionally, Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1806 (2011) on Rural Women in Europe sets forth a number of areas in which member states should take action in order to address the fact that rural women face many obstacles to enjoying their rights – a situation that is aggravated when states fail "to adequately ensure gender mainstreaming in the development and implementation of legislative and

⁹ Further information about EU agricultural and rural policy can be found on the website of the European Institute for Gender Equality, available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/agriculture-and-rural-development>.

policy measures relating to agriculture and rural areas” (Parliamentary Assembly, 2011, p. 1).

At the policy level, the actions that the Council of Europe and EU recommend that national governments take are echoed in the FAO Policy on Gender Equality. They centre on core objectives such as:

- » reducing gender gaps in access to productive resources and services, through specific legal measures, policy, programmes and projects – in other words, a gender-sensitive approach to agriculture and rural development;
- » ensuring that rural women and men are involved in policy development and decision-making – this includes meaningful participation in governing bodies and other relevant bodies (for example, agricultural associations and cooperatives);
- » ensuring that rural women and men can take full advantage of economic opportunities to improve their individual and household wellbeing; and
- » improving statistical data and information in order to develop policies that are more responsive to the situation and living conditions of women in rural areas.

2.3.2. National law and policy

The national legislative base for equality of women and men is established by the Constitution of Ukraine, which provides for equal rights and equal treatment on the basis of sex (Constitution of Ukraine, Part II, Article 24). Three laws reiterate the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination:

- » Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men (2005)
- » Law on the Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine (2012)
- » Law on Introducing Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine regarding Preventing and Countering Discrimination (2014)

In order to realize the standards set forth in the law, the Government of Ukraine has also adopted the following policy documents:

- » Strategy for Preventing and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine 2014–2017 and an Action Plan for its implementation (also 2014–2017)
- » National Strategy on Human Rights and a

corresponding Action Plan (2016–2020)

- » National Action Plan for the Implementation of Recommendations set forth by the CEDAW Committee by 2021
- » State Social Programme on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men up to 2021

It is notable that several national programmes and plans devote attention to the condition of women and girls in rural areas and call for the collection of more detailed data on their situation (see for example, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2018a). National policy aims to address a wide-ranging set of issues affecting rural women, from increasing their awareness of their legal rights and combating gender stereotypes, to improving access to educational opportunities, medical services and basic infrastructure, and combating poverty. Some planned actions overlap with FAO priorities and competencies, such as training opportunities for women on small business development, farming and rural cooperatives, empowering women to be active participants in rural planning and strategizing, and increasing the access of women and girls to formal and paid work (see generally, National Action Plan for the Implementation of Recommendations set forth by the CEDAW Committee by 2021 and State Social Programme Providing Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men up to 2021).

In theory, the reforms under Ukraine 2020 should incorporate a gender perspective. One of the three pillars that serve as a roadmap for the reform process (responsibility) notes that every citizen, regardless of sex/gender, will have access to high quality public and private sector services (President of Ukraine, 2015). Experts maintain, however, that gender mainstreaming has been largely absent and that “the reforms almost entirely exclude [a] gender equality perspective and links to the women’s rights international and national commitments. Women’s groups and organizations are not a part of any decision-making forums or consultations over the reforms” (United Nations Country Team Ukraine, 2017, p. 5). In addition to limited capacity to undertake gender mainstreaming within the sectors in which reforms are taking place, government officials are often “embarrassed” to raise gender issues in relation to sectors such as agriculture, industry and energy, that tend to be male-dominated and are not “traditionally associated with women” (Duban, 2017, p. 34).

The tendency to “isolate” national strategy related to gender equality from other, broader, reform efforts can be seen in the fact that the National Strategy of Regional

Development for the period until 2020 includes a number of detailed objectives related to improving the lives of rural residents (ranging from promoting non-agrarian rural businesses to ensuring the accessibility of preschool education institutions). The strategy does not, however, consider differences in the roles and responsibilities of rural women and men, or any potential differential impacts of rural development projects.¹⁰

Despite slow progress in incorporating a gender perspective into overall national reform, there are good practices in Ukraine concerning gender mainstreaming in agriculture and rural development. For instance, in 2015, the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food held public consultations and organized eight working groups to inform the drafting of a Single and Comprehensive Strategy and Action Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development in Ukraine for 2015–2020. The draft strategy identifies a need to diversify employment opportunities for women in agriculture and to support women managing family farms as small agricultural producers. However, for other issues (such as land reform, access to financial resources and local governance), gender disparities are not elaborated. Additionally, actions proposed under the plan are described in neutral terms, without particular measures aimed at women. If this strategy document was to be fully gender mainstreamed, gender gaps related to the core topics of the strategy would need to be identified and appropriate actions planned.

2.3.3. Government bodies responsible for gender policy and the advancement of women

In the context of ongoing reforms, including decentralization efforts, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern that government restructuring had “weakened the national machinery for the advancement of women and resulted in a lack of continuity in gender equality policies” (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2017, para. 22). In response, the government acknowledged the need to consolidate and strengthen the national mechanism for the advancement of women, at both the national and local levels. Specific actions, mentioned in the national action plan on the implementation of the CEDAW Committee recommendations, are: creating subdivisions in the central executive bodies with oversight of the implementation of policy on equal rights and equal opportunities; and restoring the system of advisors on equal rights and opportunities (gender advisors) in central and local executive authorities (Cabinet of Ministers, 2018b).

As of 2019, when this country gender assessment was conducted, structures connected to advancing gender policy existed in the executive and legislative branches. In 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine established the office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, with responsibilities for coordinating the work of ministries and other executive bodies (central and local) on equal rights and opportunities, monitoring the implementation of state policy and assisting in developing state programmes on gender equality, working with international organizations and civil society. Located in the Cabinet of Ministers, the Deputy Prime Minister on EU and Euro-Atlantic Integration also has responsibilities for the implementation of state-level gender equality policy. The Ministry of Social Policy is the authorized executive body for equal rights and opportunities for women and men and is the main coordination body for the government. The Ministry of Social Policy does not have a special division that is concerned with rural women (or any other sub-groups of women), but it takes a cross-cutting approach to such issues.

The 2005 Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men requires every central executive agency (including line ministries) and regional administrations to appoint gender focal points. The national action plan confirms this arrangement. In practice, the deputy head of the institution usually holds this role. A recent MAPS report found that “far from every Ministry has gender focal points. Among those that do, many focal points cover gender equality only as an additional task and are not necessarily trained on this, while others do it out of personal interest” (MAPS Mission, 2018, p. 63). For this assessment, it was only possible to confirm that the Ministry of Social Policy and the Ministry of the Interior have gender focal points.

Regardless of whether the system of gender advisors/gender focal points has been fully re-established, the State Social Programme on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men articulates the line ministries that are responsible for implementing the programme’s activities. This list includes both the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food and the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Development. Under the programme, these particular ministries have management and/or funding responsibilities for activities that include gender impact assessments, data collection and gender analysis, and training for rural women, all of which would necessitate having staff with expertise in these subjects.

The national parliament (Verkhovna Rada) has a Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliament Cooperation with seven subcommittees, one of which is the Subcommittee on Ukraine’s compliance with

¹⁰ Some regional-level development strategies include basic sex-disaggregated data, however, indicating greater gender sensitivity.

international obligations in the field of human rights and gender policy. In addition, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights has a department dedicated to monitoring equal rights and freedoms, under which is a subdivision on discrimination that includes a section dedicated to gender equality.

The decentralization process makes it increasingly important that gender expertise be transferred to the local level, as many practical issues affecting the lives of rural women will be decided by local authorities. Both central and local authorities are expected to coordinate their actions on implementing gender policy, and this should be facilitated by training for civil servants and government officials on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The Ministry of Social Policy is planning to introduce changes to a ministerial order on regional policy that will add a gender component into the methodological recommendations for drafting and implementing programming on the socio-economic development of amalgamated territorial communities. The result will be that local planning and programming will become more sensitive to the specific needs of women and men.

2.4. Demographic profile

2.4.1. Population, sex ratios and household composition

As of January 2020, the population of Ukraine was 41.9 million (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020r). Almost a third of the population lives in rural areas (30.5 percent or 12.8 million people), and 32.5 percent of all households are rural (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d). Ukraine's population has been in decline since the early 2000s, and the country is also experiencing a demographic shift in the form of rural depopulation. The decrease in the share of people living in rural areas has been driven by economic downturns, rural poverty and a worsening of the social conditions in rural areas. Negative rural population growth is in part a factor of economic migration (both domestically and abroad) and declining birth rates. In 2019, the number of live births in rural areas decreased from 147 112 to 106 171, while the number for urban areas decreased from 238 014 to 202 646 (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020n).

Some regions of the country are considerably more urbanized than others. Specifically, the oblasts in which less than half of the population lives in urban settlements (Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Rivne, Ternopil and Zakarpattia) are all located in the western part of the country, while heavy industrialization in the east (for example, the Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Luhansk oblasts) means that most of the population there – more than 80 percent – lives in urban areas.

Box 1: Definition – Rural population

For administrative purposes, Ukraine is divided into urban and rural settlements, which are further categorized as either cities or “urban-type settlements” (generally translated as “towns”) or as villages or “rural settlements”.¹¹ The status of a settlement is determined by the national parliament, based on population size and other factors.

The Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food points out that there is no single legal definition of either the term “rural areas” or “rural development,” but the following explanation is contained within one law: “rural areas” are territories located outside city boundaries that are mainly areas of agricultural production and rural development.¹²

It should be noted that from 2015, as part of the decentralization process, small local communities/councils (*hromady* in Ukrainian) have been reorganized into larger amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs) that are expected to be able to more effectively organize, finance and deliver basic services. As of 2019, 4 081 small communities (most having an average population of around 1 500 people) had been amalgamated into 878 larger ATCs (in which approximately nine million individuals live).¹¹ Not all ATCs are located in rural areas, but the creation of ATCs will change the rural landscape by resolving the situation of depopulated villages and also transferring more powers to local self-governing bodies.

Across all age groups, women account for 53.7 percent of the total population and 52.5 percent of the total rural population (out of 12.8 million rural residents, 6.7 million are female; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020t). Women in Ukraine have a longer average life expectancy than men, and the gap is as much as ten years for the rural population (the life expectancy for rural women is 76.2 years compared with 65.6 years for rural men;¹⁴ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020p). Due to their longer lives (and perhaps also a reflection of emigration patterns), elderly women are seen as the “typical” rural residents. In rural areas, 67 percent of the population aged 65 years and above are women, and this figure increases to 74 percent for those aged

¹¹ See the Government of Ukraine online portal, available at <https://decentralization.gov.ua/en/about>.

¹² In Ukrainian, місто (city); селище міського типу (urban-type settlement/town); село (village); and селище (rural settlement).

¹³ This definition is from the Law on Agricultural Advisory Services (2004) found in Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food (no date).

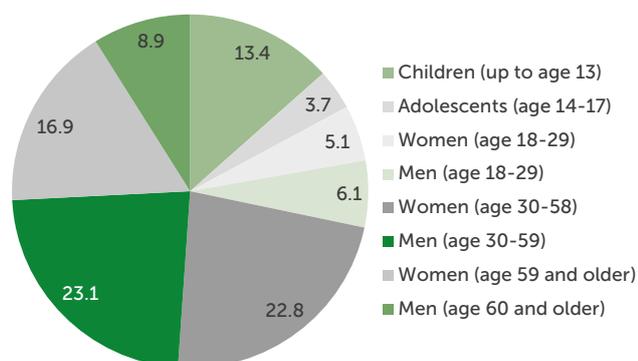
¹⁴ The topic of the gender gap between women's and men's average healthy life expectancy is discussed in more detail in section 2.5 on Health in this CGA.

80 years and over (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020t).

Rural households are slightly larger than urban ones (an average of 2.67 members compared with 2.54 members), but in rural areas there also tend to be both more single person households and households consisting of five or more persons than are found in urban areas (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d). The composition of rural and urban households is similar in that women and men are represented almost equally among certain age groups, but, as noted above and illustrated in Figure 6, women of pension age (age 59 years and above) considerably outnumber men of pension age (age 60 years and above).

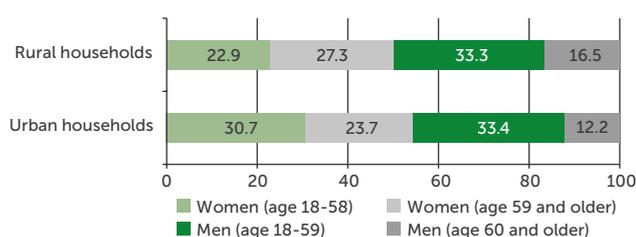
According to national household data, women and men are almost equally represented as heads of households (see Figure 7). A number of female-headed households are, in fact, households in which there are no men. For instance, out of all single parent households in Ukraine, 96 percent in both rural and urban areas are headed by single mothers (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d). Furthermore, when age groups are considered, women only outnumber men as heads of households when they have reached retirement age or older, which reflects women's average longer life expectancies.

Figure 6: Average composition of rural households, by sex and age of members, 2019 (%)



Note: Data for children and adolescents are not sex-disaggregated.
Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d, p. 39.

Figure 7: Head of household by age and sex, for rural and urban households (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d, p. 52.

Experts note that one of the pressing issues concerning rural development is the existence of villages in which virtually the only residents are single elderly women who are effectively isolated from family members, social infrastructure and the amenities available in the rest of the country.

2.4.2. Migration

In Ukraine, migration patterns take the form of both internal movement from rural areas to cities and towns, and migration abroad, primarily motivated by economic factors and the desire for improved living conditions. Experts point out that even though the average income in cities is not much higher than that found in rural areas, migrants are nevertheless motivated to escape poverty which is more pronounced in rural areas. Young people from rural areas also migrate to take advantage of educational opportunities. It is worth noting that Ukraine has been experiencing large-scale population displacement as a result of conflict, but this issue is addressed in section 4 below on the intersections of gender and rural livelihoods in conflict-affected areas.

Concerning external migration, more rural residents migrate to other countries for labour purposes than urban residents, regardless of age group (on average, 8 percent of the rural population and 3.5 percent of the urban population, ages 20 to 64 years; National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2018).

The representation of women and men among migrants depends on whether internal or external migration is being considered. According to official data, women represented just over half of all migrants in 2017 (56.9 percent), but men are more likely to migrate abroad, and they accounted for 65.1 percent of migrants from Ukraine (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2018). Figures compiled by the International Organization for Migration suggest that migration outside of Ukraine has become less feminized over time, meaning that the proportion of women among migrants has been decreasing over the last decade (ibid.). This change also seems to have been exacerbated by the conflict; for instance, before 2013, 67 percent of labour migrants from Ukraine to Poland were women, but after 2014, the balance changed with men representing 58 percent of migrants (Gulina, 2018).

The profile of female and male migrants differs, as does the type of work they undertake. Out of those who migrate abroad, women are on average older, more likely to be divorced and have higher levels of education than men (Libanova and Malynovska, 2012). Women migrants are also far less likely to work in fields that match their qualifications than men. One

study found that more than half of female migrants from Ukraine were working in jobs that did not match their qualifications (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2018). Among the various destination countries, women most often find work in Poland, followed by Italy and then the Russian Federation, while men migrate in approximately equal numbers to the Russian Federation and Poland, with a smaller number working in the Czech Republic (ibid.). The countries of destination reflect the different types of work that women and men engage in. Women tend to take on domestic work, but they also work in agriculture (especially in Poland), industry, trade and the service sector. In contrast, men mainly work in construction and agriculture with a smaller number working in industry or commerce (ibid.).

The gendered impacts of migration are varied. Of course, there are positives in that labour migrants can support their families through remittances.¹⁵ But there are also risks that families become fragmented when some members are working elsewhere. In particular, women migrants tend to spend much longer abroad than men, due to the unregulated status of their employment as well as the type of work they perform, and this arrangement “has serious consequences on family relations and parenting” (Libanova and Malynovska, 2012, p. 21). Labour migration affects intra-family dynamics, for example, when men are absent women are left to take on the *de facto* head of household role, or when women migrate, they cannot fulfil (or are even perceived to be neglecting) their traditional care roles.

Labour migrants are vulnerable to irregular and informal employment arrangements. Women migrants from Ukraine are more likely than men migrants to be working in insecure and “invisible” jobs (that is, working informally without proper legal status), such as those found in domestic and care work. Irregular employment and migration can intersect with trafficking in human beings, especially when people use informal channels to find work abroad. Since the early 2000s, Ukraine has been primarily a country of origin for victims of human trafficking. When the first national programme to prevent human trafficking was adopted in 1999, the majority of identified victims were women trafficked outside of Ukraine for sexual exploitation. Both women and men are at risk of labour exploitation, and as more complex patterns of human trafficking have been revealed in Ukraine, more male victims of trafficking for labour exploitation have been identified. Experts are concerned that the worsening economic

situation and ongoing conflict in parts of the country are creating conditions that may facilitate illegal working arrangements, as well as human trafficking, especially among internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Despite many years of work by the government and civil society organizations to prevent trafficking in human beings and provide assistance to victims, it is thought that the general population of Ukraine still has insufficient understanding of the risks of human trafficking and generally associates the phenomenon with the sexual exploitation of women, without recognizing other forms of trafficking such as forced and exploitative labour (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2018). It has also been observed that the government’s anti-trafficking response does not pay sufficient attention to the issue of internal trafficking and the vulnerabilities of the rural population to both sexual and labour exploitation (Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2014).

2.4.3. National minority groups

Gender and other personal identities or characteristics (such as ethnicity, age, ability/disability, residence, socio-economic status and sexual orientation) interact and overlap in significant ways. Multiple or intersectional discrimination refers to the fact that the rights and opportunities of women who belong to minority groups are even more limited than those of either women or men from the majority population. From the point of view of policy development and programming, it is important that not only are gender differences given consideration but also that intersecting inequalities are both identified and understood. In other words, gender analysis should also include analysis based on other minority statuses.

Ukraine has a diverse population, encompassing more than 130 ethnic groups according to the last population census, as well as minority language groups. However, other than census data, official statistics do not include a breakdown by national minority group.

Ukrainian national policy related to the advancement of women recognizes the particular situation of Roma national minority women and girls.¹⁶ There are no accurate data about the size of the Roma population in Ukraine; according to the 2001 census (the most recent to include such a question), over 47 000 people indicated their nationality as Roma.

¹⁵ Since 2014, personal remittances have accounted for around 10 percent of Ukraine’s GDP (World Bank, 2021).

¹⁶ In 2013, Ukraine adopted the national Strategy for the Protection and Integration of the Roma National Minority into Ukrainian Society until 2020 as well as a plan for implementation of the Strategy. Although both documents cover issues in which women face disadvantages, such as education, employment and social protection, neither has a dedicated section on gender issues or the needs of Roma women and girls.

Other unofficial sources place the estimate between 200 000 to 400 000 Roma people, around half of whom are women (European Roma Rights Centre and the International Charitable Organization Roma Women Fund “Chiricli”, 2016). The fact that many Roma women lack civil registration documents (such as birth certificates or passports) also means that administrative data (if such records were to indicate ethnicity) would not be an accurate record of the female population.

Roma households are located in both urban and rural parts of the country, but because of discrimination and prejudicial attitudes toward the Roma community, they are often pushed “to the margins of [Ukrainian] society” (European Roma Rights Centre and the International Charitable Organization Roma Women Fund “Chiricli”, 2016, p. 3). Because of their marginalized position, their needs are often not well understood or addressed in the context of reform projects, including those on rural development.

Roma settlements tend to be isolated from the larger community, and in rural areas, Roma communities are even less integrated into village life. In fact, conflicts may arise between Roma and non-Roma populations. If rural women in general face a number of deprivations that are not felt by women in urban areas, then Roma women living in rural areas experience even greater marginalization than other rural residents. While difficult living conditions are characteristic of rural areas, Roma women also have much more limited access to basic services and education and employment opportunities, due to linguistic and cultural differences, as well as stigmatization. They are further isolated by a lack of appropriate social programmes that are specific to their needs as Roma women.

Where it is available, this country gender assessment includes specific information about the situation of Roma women and girls in rural areas. Likewise, this report aims to depict the diversity of rural women, which can include women who face intersecting forms of discrimination or marginalization, such as elderly women, women living with HIV or women with disabilities. This report, however, should not take the place of a more detailed analysis of the situation of rural women from national minority groups that should be included in any future FAO programming.

2.5. Health

Several of the core national health priorities, as outlined in SDG 3 on health and wellbeing, that have a particular gender dimension are: reducing maternal mortality, ending the HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis epidemics, reducing premature mortality from non-communicable

diseases, reducing injuries and deaths from road traffic accidents, and reducing the prevalence of smoking. National targets related to health are general for the country as a whole, and the lack of accessible official data for health-related indicators that are disaggregated by settlement type may obscure the main health concerns of the rural population.

In terms of general lifetime health, the average life expectancy at birth in Ukraine is 72 years, slightly lower than the average for the Europe and Central Asia region combined and almost a decade lower than the average for the OECD countries (UNDP, 2020a). In Ukraine, women’s average life expectancy is longer than men’s, with a difference of around ten years. This gender gap is similar to that seen in other post-Soviet countries of high human development (for example, Georgia, Moldova and the Russian Federation), but it is twice as large as the gap observed in countries of Western Europe (for example, in Austria, Belgium and Germany the male/female gap in life expectancy is less than five years). In Ukraine, both female and male rural residents have shorter life expectancies than urban residents, and the gender gap in life expectancy is also slightly greater for the rural population (see Table 3).

Poor indicators of longevity and the gender gap in life expectancy are both causes for concern, especially the fact that the greatest disparities are seen in the young working age population. For the 20 to 29 years age group, the male mortality rate is three times higher than the female mortality rate (World Bank, 2016). While there is a biological component to the lower life expectancy for males, in Ukraine men’s shorter healthy lives are closely correlated with preventable causes and lifestyle choices. For instance, most male deaths are caused by injuries, suicide and poisoning, and men more often undertake risky behaviours (such as abuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco and unsafe driving) that contribute to their higher mortality rates.

Gender norms and expectations about the “appropriate male role” play a part in pressuring men to take on unsafe and dangerous work and can lead to increased stress. According to one survey of Ukrainian men,

Table 3: Life expectancy at birth, by sex and location (2019)

Life expectancy at birth (years)					
Rural population		Urban population		Total population	
female	male	female	male	female	male
76.2	65.6	77.3	67.7	77.0	66.9

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020p, p. 56.

38 percent of employed respondents reported that they “were frequently stressed or depressed” because they did not have enough work and/or income from employment (UNFPA, 2018, p. 29). Men tend to seek relief for stress through unhealthy eating habits and substance abuse, and high levels of frustration can also lead to interpersonal conflicts. At the same time, notions of masculinity prevent men from seeking treatment for health concerns, not only for illnesses and injuries but especially for mental and sexual healthcare. According to the abovementioned survey, nearly half of respondents (43 percent) had not used health services in the previous year, and only one out of seven men had been to a medical facility more than five years prior to the survey (*ibid.*, p. 31).

Considering some health concerns in more detail, smoking and excess drinking are both more prevalent among men than women. Out of all adults who self-report that they currently use tobacco products, the rates are 40.1 percent for males and 8.9 percent for females (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2017). Women are also more likely than men to report that they quit smoking for more than six months or made an attempt to quit within the last year.

Male alcohol consumption per capita is more than double that of female alcohol consumption (20.5 litres for males age 15 years and above, compared with 7.1 litres for females age 15 years and above), and the prevalence of heavy episodic drinking (defined as consuming at least 60 grams or more of pure alcohol on at least one occasion in the last 30 days) is 29.6 percent for the male population and 7.6 percent for the female population (WHO, 2018). The consequences of alcohol abuse are serious in terms of men’s much higher mortality rates from road traffic accidents and liver cirrhosis.

While Ukraine has made progress in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, rates of both illnesses remain very high compared with other European countries. Initially, the HIV epidemic was driven by injection drug use and was primarily affecting men, but in the last decade, sexual transmission has become the main means by which HIV is spread among people who are at risk and their sexual partners. This pattern explains why the proportion of women among new HIV infections, who were infected due to sexual transmission, has been increasing. Out of the estimated 240 000 adults (people aged over 15 years) living with HIV, the divide is almost equal between women (45.8 percent of the population living with HIV) and men (51.2 percent). Women represented 42.5 percent of all new HIV infections among adults in 2017 (UNAIDS, 2017). The new HIV infection rate has also been increasing in

rural areas. However, out of the 151 sites for treatment of drug abuse (specifically, opioid substitution therapy), only 13 are located in villages, making it very difficult for rural inhabitants who are living with HIV to receive the care they need (Skipalska, 2018).

The populations most affected by HIV are injecting drug users, sex workers, gay men and other men who have sex with men and prisoners. These groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Men and women within each of these groups have specific risks that are related to gender roles and norms. The gender dimensions of the HIV epidemic warrant special research, but some key issues are highlighted here.

Although there are far more men among injecting drug users than women, the HIV prevalence is higher among women who inject drugs. This can be linked to the fact that at least a fifth of women who inject drugs also report engaging in transactional sex, which puts them at an elevated risk for HIV transmission (Avert, 2019). The primary sexual partners of men who inject drugs tend to be women who do not use drugs. But factors such as violence in intimate partner relationships decrease women’s autonomy and ability to negotiate safe sex practices, leaving them vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections and HIV. The fact that female sex workers commonly experience physical and sexual violence likewise reduces the likelihood that they will be able to take precautions against HIV transmission. Furthermore, due to stigma and legal sanctions, sex workers may be reluctant to disclose their occupation, meaning that data about HIV prevalence may be imprecise.

Men who have sex with men face a high level of stigmatization, also contributing to inaccuracies in data and information about HIV prevalence rates among this population. Stigma inhibits men who have sex with men from seeking assistance, which means they are less likely to have access to prevention services, testing or counselling and are often unaware of their HIV status. Lastly, as a consequence of the criminalization of drug use, there is a high concurrence of incarceration and HIV infection among men; prisoners are often undertaking risky behaviours in prisons, where treatment facilities are inadequate. Incarceration also exacerbates the spread of tuberculosis infections. In fact, men are overrepresented among those with tuberculosis (68.3 percent of people diagnosed with active tuberculosis in 2018 were male; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2019d). Some unhealthy behaviours, such as smoking, may also increase men’s susceptibility to tuberculosis infection.

Improving access to high quality healthcare services is a pressing issue for rural communities, and especially

for elderly residents who have greater health needs. It is estimated that the unmet needs of older rural people are on average 47 percent for outpatient care, 81 percent for rehabilitative care through polyclinics, 71 percent for in-patient homecare, and 32 percent for emergency medical care (Poliakova, 2017). The limited healthcare infrastructure in rural areas, and even more significantly the lack of transport links between villages and the nearest medical facilities, have negative consequences for all rural inhabitants.

Interestingly, men's patterns of health-seeking behaviour do not vary from urban to rural areas, which indicates that their reasons for not visiting medical institutions are motivated more by cultural or psychological factors than infrastructural issues. Rural women, on the other hand, do not seek medical treatment for different reasons, including the closure of feldsher points (FAPs) that provide basic services (including midwife services), a lack of specialized services and limited transportation. However, the most prevalent answer to the question "What are the main health problems in your village?" given by 48 percent of rural women was the inability to afford medicine and medical services, followed by the lack of availability of gynaecologists and obstetricians, family doctors and dentists (Volosevych *et al.*, 2015, p. 28). Experts point out that rural women are in need of specialized treatments due to the harsh conditions they experience and heavy physical labour they perform. For example, substandard water and sanitation facilities exacerbate gynaecological problems. Rural women, however, tend to neglect their own health due to the difficulties of travelling to medical centres and poverty.

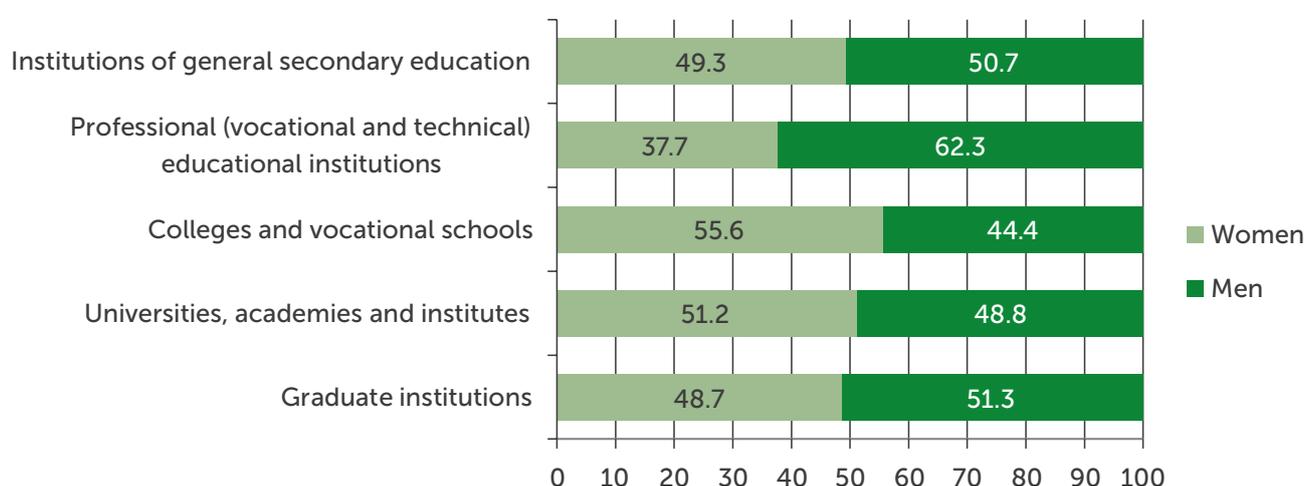
Some female populations have unique problems accessing healthcare. For example, Roma women tend

to lack official documents, and this means they cannot access free services. Furthermore, discrimination by medical professionals, in turn, makes Roma women distrustful and reluctant to even seek medical care (UN Women, 2018). Likewise, people with disabilities living in rural areas have limited access to medical facilities, medicines or specialized services (such as rehabilitation or family planning), also exacerbated by a lack of accessible transport. Disabled persons' organizations have pointed out that accommodations must be made to meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of women with disabilities in the country as a whole (for example, special equipment is lacking and medical professionals require additional training), while the needs of rural women and girls with disabilities are largely unmet (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015; Ukrainian Disabled Persons' Organisations, 2015). Some advances have been made in the area of improving access to reproductive health services for all persons with disabilities, but it is not clear to what extent such improvements have reached rural women. A related issue worth consideration is the care burden placed on rural women for family members with disabilities, especially in terms of ensuring that their health needs are met.

2.6. Education

The compulsory education system consists of grades 1 to 12 (ages 6 to 17 years), followed by higher education. From the perspective of gender equality, Ukraine has many positive indicators, including gender parity in educational enrolment from the level of preschool education up to the tertiary education level. The main notable exceptions are the lower female participation rate in post-secondary (non-higher) education which is explained in part by a gender gap in higher education

Figure 8: Female and male enrolment rates at the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year, by type and level of educational institution (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020c, p. 204.

enrolment (bachelors, masters and doctorate levels) in favour of women (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020e). The greatest gender disparities in educational enrolment are seen in vocational education. As illustrated in Figure 8, women represented only 37.7 percent of students enrolled in such institutions in the 2019/2020 academic year. The continued decrease in the proportion of female students pursuing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is associated with women's preferences for tertiary education "due to a decline in the prestige of vocational training and their interest in higher education attainments, as well as because of the persistent gender-based segregation of employment" (World Bank, 2016, p. 30).

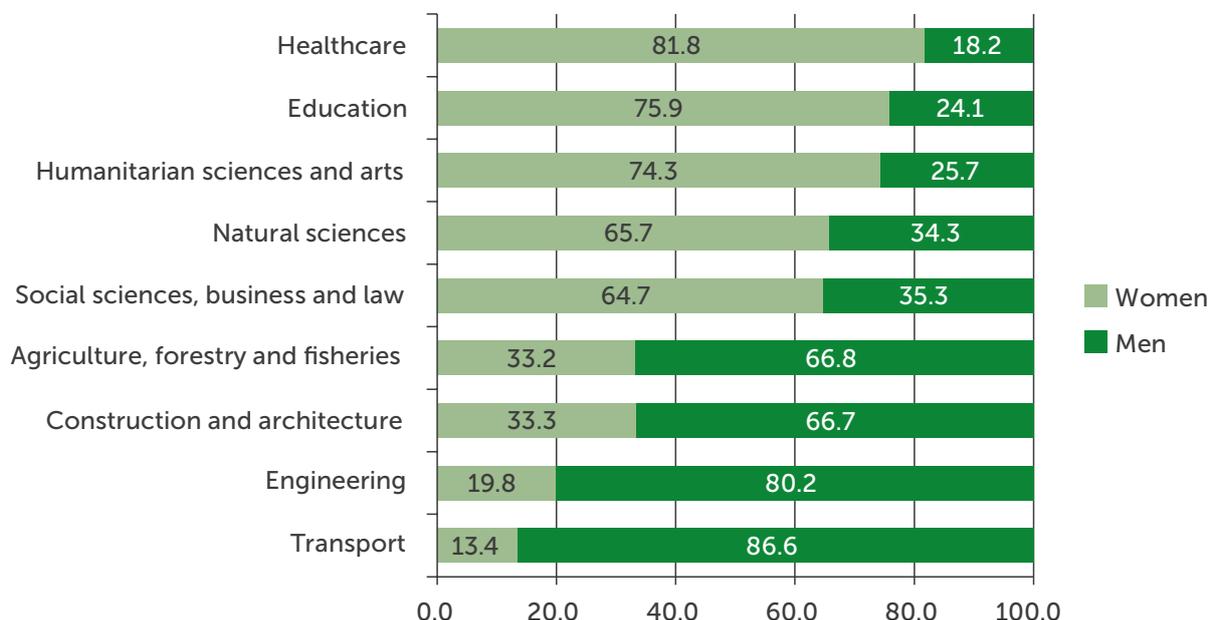
Gender gaps in enrolment at the post-secondary level are also influenced by household income. Household survey data indicate that male enrolment rates hardly vary depending on the wealth status of the household, but female enrolment rates are much lower for the poorest households (World Bank, 2016). Because rural households are more vulnerable to poverty, women may be more at risk of being excluded from higher or continuing education. Indeed, among rural women included in a survey who were interested in increasing their level of vocational education, almost half stated that they did not have the funds to pay for such studies or to live in a city while studying (Volosevych *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, prevailing attitudes place equal value on education for girls and boys (based on survey results in which less than ten percent of male respondents agreed with the statement "if money for schooling is scarce, it is better to spend it on boys"; UNFPA, 2018, p. 67).

Gender segregation in academic subjects, occurring in both vocational and higher education, has a direct impact on the "deepening occupational segregation and concentration of women in lower-paid sectors" (Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, 2017, p. 35). Female students are channelled toward the fields of healthcare, education, social sciences, business, law and the arts. Many of these fields correspond to low growth areas in the labour market as they usually lead to state jobs. Male students predominate among those enrolled in technological and industrial fields, such as transport and engineering (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020f).

Of particular interest for this assessment, women represent only around a quarter of students of colleges and vocational schools and around a third of students of universities, institutes and academies specialized in the combined fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries (see Figures 9 and 10). Considering the sub-specialities within the field of agriculture and forestry, female students tend to be concentrated in the subjects of production and processing of agricultural products and have much smaller representation in fisheries and aquaculture specialities.

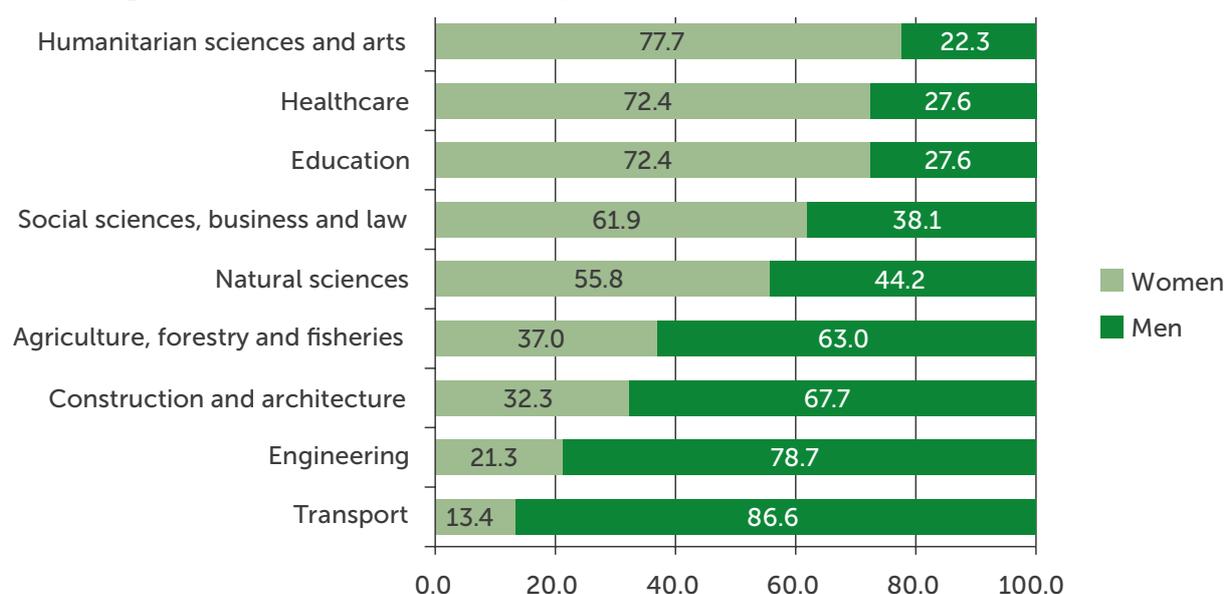
Gender-based differences in fields of study reflect widely-held stereotypes about certain professions being either "feminine" or "masculine". The fact that the job of agronomist is seen as a "male" job, and not a "feminine" profession, sheds light on the fact that few women are employed as agronomists. However, the profiles of several women agronomists, some of whom have been working for more than two decades in this

Figure 9: Distribution of female and male students in colleges and vocational schools, by selected specialization, 2019/2020 academic year (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020f.

Figure 10: Distribution of female and male students of universities, academies and institutes, by selected specialization, 2019/2020 academic year (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020f.

profession,¹⁷ are encouraging because they indicate that the main obstacles to women having successful careers in agricultural science are the lack of role models and misconceptions that they are not jobs for women.

The government has recognized that gender stereotypes are often reinforced by the education system itself and therefore the elimination of discriminatory stereotypes and “patriarchal perceptions of the role and responsibilities of women and men in family and society” is part of national planning (as examples, within the national action plan on the implementation of the CEDAW Committee recommendations and under SDG 4 on quality education). Particular attention should be paid to addressing stereotypes around women’s education and employment in agriculture-related jobs.

It is important to keep in mind that educational enrolment patterns differ considerably for the Roma community, and Roma girls are missing many educational opportunities. It has been estimated that fewer Roma girls attend preschools, especially when families have limited funds to cover school fees. At the primary level, only 73 percent of boys and 75 percent of girls are attending school. At the secondary school level, the dropout rate is high for Roma children, but there is also a distinct gender gap, with only 65 percent of boys and 59 percent of girls attending (European Roma Rights Centre and the International Charitable

Organization Roma Women Fund “Chiricli,” 2016).

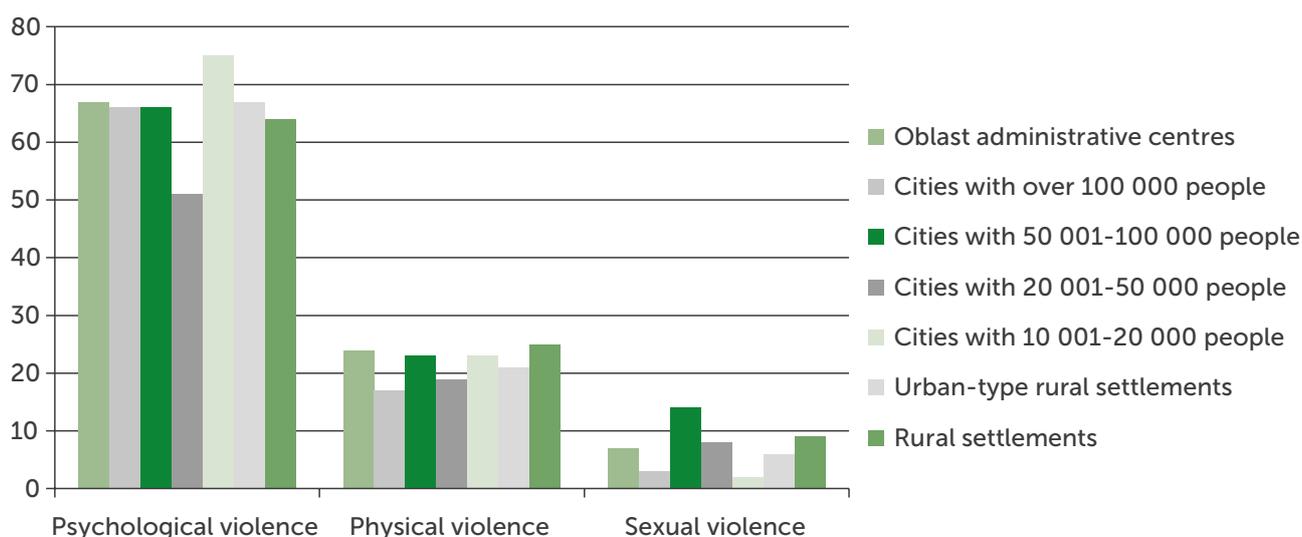
Early marriage, discrimination in schools, and parents prioritizing the education of boys are all reasons behind Roma girls not completing compulsory education. The low education level among Roma women compounds their difficulties finding decent employment and contributes to their marginalization. There is a lack of adult educational and training opportunities for Roma women, and especially for Roma women living in rural areas.

2.7. Gender-based violence

The problem of gender-based violence (GBV) has been addressed through legal and policy reform. Ukraine was the first post-Soviet state to adopt a law on domestic violence (in 2001). Since that time, Ukraine has signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention), amended and strengthened national law, and elaborated specific measures to address gender-based violence in the national action plan on implementing the CEDAW Committee recommendations.

GBV is both a violation of women’s rights and also an obstacle to achieving gender equality. GBV can take many forms, including physical, sexual and emotional violence, perpetrated by a family member, intimate partner or by others. Domestic violence, a form of violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, is the most prevalent form of violence affecting women. Since 2016, the national GBV hotline has received over 82 000 calls, 82 percent of which concerned domestic violence (United Nations in Ukraine, 2018a). According

¹⁷ For example, the article “A job for life. Is it easy to be a female agronomist?” (7 March 2017) provides information about the positive contributions made by four women agronomists, available at <https://superagronom.com/articles/50-sprava-vsogo-jittyia-chi-legko-buti-jinkoyu-agronomom>.

Figure 11: Women who reported ever having experienced intimate partner violence, by settlement type, 2018 (%)

Note: Data refer to forms of violence perpetrated by a partner or former partner. Kyiv is included within oblast administrative centres, and the category "Cities with populations of more than 10 000" does not include oblast administrative centres.

Source: Adapted from OSCE, 2018, p. 92.

to a national survey on GBV, 67 percent of women in Ukraine have experienced psychological, physical or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15 years, and around a third of women reported that they had experienced some form of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey (OSCE, 2018).

There is not an especially strong correlation between the incidence of GBV and residence, although rural women report having experienced various forms of violence at slightly higher rates than women in urban areas. For instance, one survey indicated that the prevalence of sexual violence is lower in urban areas than in rural areas (OSCE, 2018), while in another survey, a higher percentage of rural women reported having experienced psychological violence than urban women (Vološevych *et al.*, 2014). Figure 11 provides a more detailed breakdown of the prevalence of forms of violence against women in different areas of residence.

Experts note that living in a rural area is not a predictor of a woman's risk for violence or of a partner's propensity to use violence or exert control. Both rural and urban women report experiences of spousal control, ranging from expressing jealousy and anger if their wives speak with other men, to not permitting them to spend time with family and friends, and not allowing them to have any money, at almost identical rates (Vološevych *et al.*, 2014).

Only a fraction of GBV victims seek help. According to a survey of respondents who knew of a victim of domestic violence, 40 percent stated that the victim did not report the incident to any formal body that could

take action against the perpetrator (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, 2018). Women do not report violence due to overlapping and varied factors, such as feelings of shame and not wanting information about interpersonal violence to become public, in response to a general societal tolerance towards domestic violence,¹⁸ because of a lack of information about where to turn to for help, and distrust of law enforcement. Rural areas tend to be characterized by more traditional values, and this can mean that women living there may be less willing to report violence (OSCE, 2018).

Rural women who are survivors of GBV face additional obstacles in accessing specialized assistance and protection. Although there are national telephone hotlines operating free of charge from anywhere in the country, most centres, including shelters that provide more intensive and specialized services, are located in cities and larger towns, with very limited or even absent assistance in rural areas. Many rural women may lack information about such services or would not be able to easily travel to a crisis centre or shelter located in an urban area. Important efforts have been made to improve access to quality assistance for survivors of GBV who are living in rural and remote areas and out of reach of social services. Starting in 2015, mobile teams consisting of a specialist coordinator, psychologist and social worker were created to make field visits, monitor families and

¹⁸ A 2018 survey of men's attitudes towards violence against women found that men often justify such violence in specific circumstances (such as when a wife is unfaithful to her husband or a woman behaves in a "provocative" way, for example being drunk or promiscuous; see generally, UNFPA, 2018).

assist survivors to connect with other social service providers, lawyers and shelters in five eastern regions. Since that time, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has issued regulations to institutionalize this assistance model as part of a nationwide response to GBV. At present, local authorities and local self-government

bodies have established these mobile brigades in all regions of Ukraine, which should both improve prevention and increase protections for rural women who have experienced violence (Government of Ukraine, 2019).

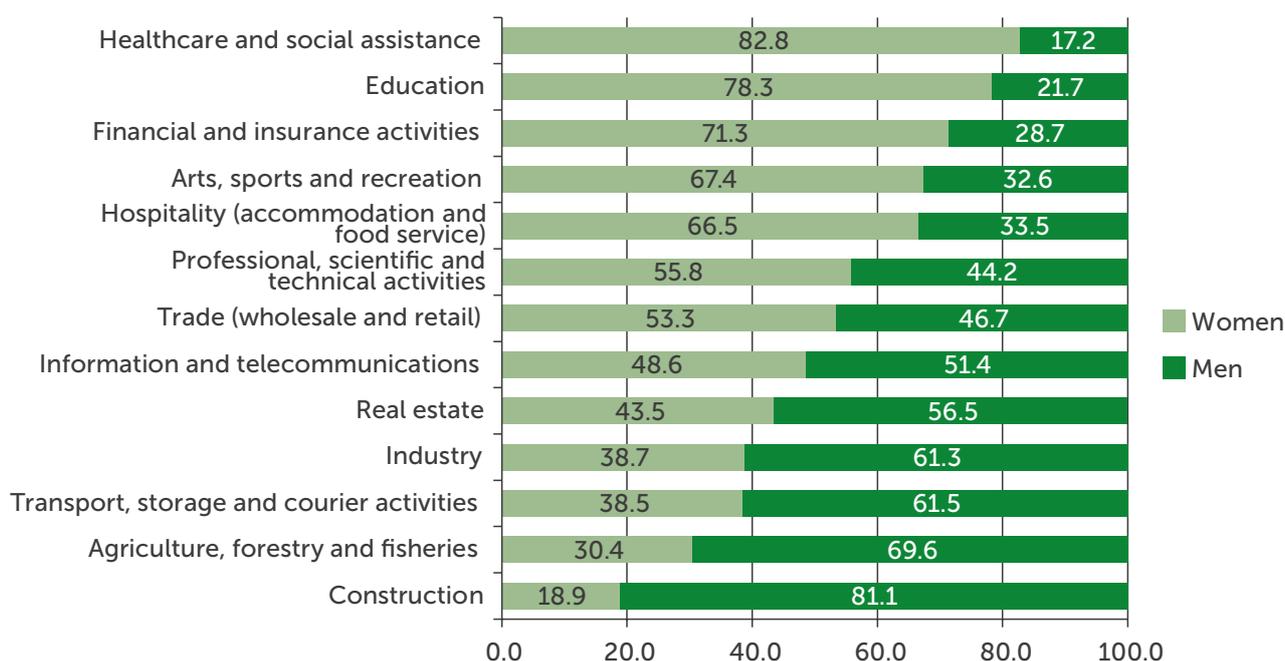
3. Gender issues in rural households and family farming

3.1. The Ukrainian labour market and agricultural employment

The labour force of Ukraine (people between the ages of 15 and 70 years) is comprised of 18 million people. In the working population, 57.5 percent of women and 69.9 percent of men were economically active in 2019 (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j). To put this another way, 43 percent of women are not in the labour force; they are neither employed nor looking for work. The figure for men is only 30 percent. Participation in the labour force is higher in urban areas (64.3 percent of the working population) than in rural areas (61.5 percent).

The gap in labour force participation rates (women made up 61 percent of the total economically inactive population in 2018; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2019d) is similar to that seen in the EU. For both women and men, periods of economic inactivity correspond with times when they are in education or when they retire. But women also become economically inactive due to family and domestic factors, such as marriage and parenthood. Labour Force Survey data indicate that the largest gender gap in economic activity is among married people (World Bank, 2016), which corresponds with the time when women leave work due to family responsibilities and to raise children, while men are mainly engaged in supporting the family financially.

Figure 12: Employment in key sectors of the labour market, by sex, 2019 (% of total employed)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020k, p. 38.

These findings suggest that traditional gender roles are the norm in Ukraine.

The labour market can be viewed through a gender lens. It exhibits both occupational segregation and vertical segregation. Occupational, or horizontal, segregation reflects the fact that particular jobs are closely associated with either women or men. Women predominate in public sector work (such as healthcare, education and jobs in cultural institutions), where they represent close to 80 percent of all employees. Men occupy a narrower field of professions, but they also account for around three-quarters of all employees in industrial and technical fields, such as construction, transport and manufacturing jobs.

Of particular relevance, men represent 69.6 percent of all employees in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (see Figure 12; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020k). It is worth noting that these figures refer to *formal* employment in agriculture. As discussed in greater detail below in this report, women are more likely to undertake informal work in this sector.

Vertical segregation of the labour market refers to the fact that women have lower representation in top management and positions with higher authority than they do in jobs with administrative functions. As Figure 13 illustrates, women are well-represented among experts and clerical workers but have a lesser role in senior management.

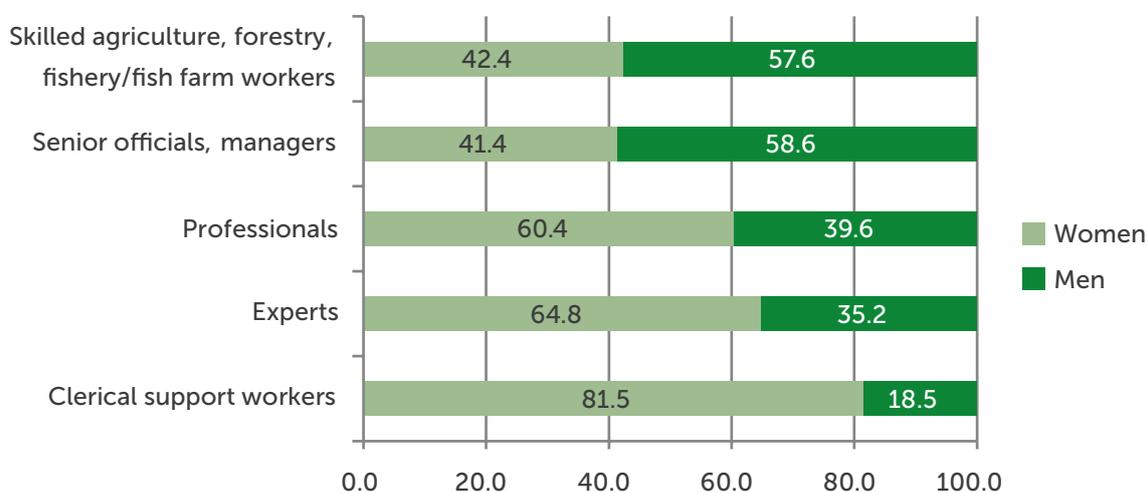
Labour market segregation, especially women’s dominance in low paid sectors of the economy, contributes to a gender wage gap in Ukraine. According to national data, in 2019, women earned an average of UAH 9 237 per month compared with UAH 11 961

earned by men. In other words, the average female wage was 77.2 percent of the average male wage (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020k). This figure has changed little since 2008 when the gap was estimated to be 75.2 percent (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2011).

The size of the wage gap varies by economic activity. It is smaller for the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector (where women’s wages are on average 79.9 percent of men’s wages) and for agriculture alone (women’s wages are 78.5 percent of men’s wages; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020k). The fact that the data appears to suggest that there are more equitable wages in agriculture should not be overemphasized. Instead, it should be kept in mind that a large part of agricultural work takes place in the informal sector or is characterized as individual entrepreneurship/self-employment. Furthermore, experts maintain that accurately estimating the size of the wage gap is made more complicated by the fact that “wage statistics are based on official wages and include neither what is paid in the ‘envelope’ nor non-registered self-employment” (UNDP, 2011, p. 15).

Occupational segregation reflects gender stereotypes in Ukrainian society, but it is also linked to protective legislation that historically prevented women from performing certain types of work.¹⁹ In 2017, such prohibitions (that excluded women from 458 professions, night work and some forms of overtime work and travel) were officially abolished. The prohibited jobs were mainly those that involved heavy physical labour or were considered dangerous or hazardous to health; the list had subsections that encompassed jobs in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (including driving certain types of tractors, work in slaughterhouses, tree felling and some forms of fish processing). Even when the legislation was in place,

Figure 13: Employment of women and men, by occupational group, 2019 (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020k, pp. 85–87.

¹⁹ The limitations on women’s labour were based on the Labour Code and a specific order from the Ministry of Health.

some women were employed in such jobs. However, their work was technically informal which meant that they would not necessarily receive the full salary or pensions that corresponded to these jobs. The official prohibition was also used as a pretext not to hire or promote women to certain positions. Now that labour law has been brought in line with non-discrimination standards, this should expand training and employment opportunities for women in agriculture.

Rural labour and agricultural work

The following section provides information about the types of labour that rural women and men undertake. It should be noted, however, that official statistics are disaggregated by either sex or place of residence, but there are no combined data on key labour indicators pertaining to rural women. Unfortunately, no dedicated studies on the employment of rural women have been conducted.

The process of dismantling state-owned collective farms and transitioning to private agricultural enterprises resulted in a decrease in rural jobs. The rural labour market has not sufficiently diversified, and there are few non-agricultural jobs for the rural population. In a 2013 survey, 53 percent of the rural population named unemployment as the primary problem in their village (Moroz, 2015). For a great many rural residents, their only source of income is what they can generate from their household plots and informal work. In terms of formal non-agricultural work, there are some opportunities in trade and private business as well as agricultural processing. The development of the tourism industry has been identified as having the potential to bring jobs to rural areas, but whether women and men are able to take advantage of new opportunities is not yet clear. As discussed in an earlier section of this report, a large proportion of the rural population does not work in their place of residence, but instead migrates to cities in Ukraine or abroad.

Formal and paid employment opportunities for rural women are especially scarce, and many women

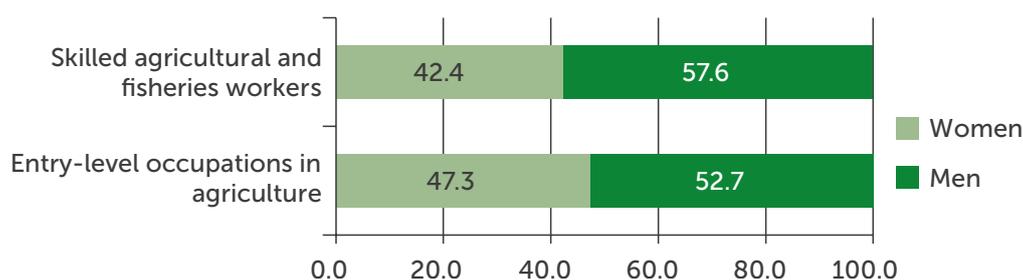
depend on jobs in small cities to which they can travel. Experts note the phenomenon of rural women who spend several days each week working in Kyiv and other urban centres without establishing residency or technically migrating from their villages. It is not known how many rural women are working in this way, or about the impact this working arrangement has on them or their families. However, this situation is difficult for women who “spend much time and money travelling to their workplace,” while also dealing with “geographical inconvenience... poor local transport, poor quality of roads, and lack of social infrastructure,” such as childcare (kindergartens) and care for elderly family members (Women’s and human rights organizations on the initiative of the Gender Strategy Platform, 2016, p. 22).

Despite significant changes to Ukraine’s collective farming system, agriculture remains one of the most important providers of jobs and income-earning opportunities for rural inhabitants. Out of all working people in Ukraine, every sixth person works in the sector that encompasses agriculture, forestry and fisheries. In 2019, this translated to approximately three million people (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j).

Data on the role of women and men employed in agriculture are very limited, but when considering skilled workers and workers in “elementary occupations” in the sector, the representation of women and men is close to equal. Women account for 42.4 percent of skilled workers in agricultural fields (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j). However, much of agricultural work is in fact unskilled, and women represent a slightly larger proportion of unskilled agricultural workers than the proportion they represent in skilled professions (see Figure 14). It is also notable that formal work is only a small percentage of all agricultural labour, which also includes self-employment and informal employment. Entry-level occupations tend to be situated in the informal sector.

Furthermore, data about formal employment rates in agriculture do not accurately represent all the ways that

Figure 14: Employed population, by occupational group and sex, 2019 (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020k, p. 91.

rural people are engaged in farming, including those who would be classed as unemployed in official statistics. As one study showed, men who were formally employed spent 7.5 hours per day in formal employment and 4 hours working on their household farms (a total of 11.5 hours per day in agricultural work). The figure for formally employed women was about the same (11.3 hours). However, *unemployed* men and women had similarly long average working days of 11.8 hours per day for men and 12.1 hours per day for women (Tolstokorova, 2009). These figures indicate that the work burden on household farms is heavy. But the discriminatory nature of this arrangement becomes clear when viewed in light of the fact that rural women are far less likely to be the registered owner of a household farm and have limited outlets for paid employment. Thus, household farms rely on the substantial and unremunerated contributions from women.

Informal employment

The number of people employed informally has declined, but in 2019 there were still 3.5 million people working informally, which was equivalent to twenty percent of the entire employed population (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j).

Informal employment is more common in rural areas than in urban ones. In 2019, almost 36.3 percent of all employed people in rural areas were working informally. The rate of informal employment among men (ages 15 to 70 years) is also higher than that for women (23.8 percent of employed men compared with 17.7 percent of employed women), as shown in Table 4. However,

Box 2: Definition – Informal employment

Informal employment includes: employees of informal enterprises, unregistered self-employed persons, contributing (unpaid) family workers in formal enterprises, and people who work in an informal capacity in a formal enterprise (meaning they do not have a formal contract or social guarantees such as pension payments, annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, and so forth; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j, p. 13). Note that the EU favours the term “undeclared work”. The most relevant forms of undeclared work in Ukraine are:

- » informal employment in the formal sector;
- » employment in the informal sector;
- » underreporting of actual working hours/wages;
- » disguised employment (for example, substituting employment contracts); and
- » unreported secondary employment (ILO, 2018).

differing patterns appear depending on which type of undeclared work is being considered, which sector of the economy is examined and also how the factors of gender and locality intersect.

Considering first *informal employment in the formal sector*, most women who are employed under such an arrangement work in temporary accommodation and catering or trade, whereas most men work in construction, followed by the abovementioned sectors (International Labour Organization, 2018). There are quite limited informal jobs within the formal agricultural sector and, in fact, in rural areas generally. What is striking about informal employment in the formal sector is that it has been decreasing among women and men in Ukraine, with the only exception being an *increase* in women’s informal labour in the formal sector of agriculture (from 3.6 percent in 2015 to 4.2 percent in 2016; *ibid.*).

The picture is quite different when considering *employment in the informal sector*. This type of working arrangement is most prevalent in construction and agriculture. In fact, the agricultural sector is characterized by a high degree of informality compared with the number of available formal jobs. For the informally employed population, their most common activities are in agriculture, forestry and fisheries (42.3 percent of informal employment is in this sector; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j). In the informal agricultural sector, the female employment rate is much higher than it is for men, encompassing half of informally employed women, and just over a third of informally employed men (50.0 percent compared with 37.1 percent; *ibid.*). Informally employed men are almost as likely to be working in informal construction as they are in agriculture. These figures speak to the fact that men have a more diverse profile in terms of both formal and informal work, and they also suggest that rural women have few options for informal work other than in agriculture.

Table 4: Formally and informally employed population, by sex and place of residence, 2019 (%)

	Formal employment (%)	Informal employment (%)
Total	79.1	20.9
Women	82.3	17.7
Men	76.2	23.8
Rural areas	63.7	36.3
Urban areas	86.1	13.9

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020j, p. 103.

As would be expected, employment rates in the informal agricultural sector, as is the case for the informal construction sector, are much higher in rural than urban areas. Almost all of those employed in the informal sector of agriculture (90.5 percent in 2016) are rural residents; whereas the majority of informal workers overall are in urban areas (International Labour Organization, 2018).

Informal employment presents risks for both women and men because it is not regulated. Women often find informal work preferable because it can be flexible and, therefore, they can more easily combine work and domestic responsibilities. But informal work leaves women unprotected in terms of pregnancy and childcare leave, and their labour would not be counted toward their pensions. Indeed, among a sample of surveyed rural women, 17 percent said their employers had not paid for time off as sick leave, and 14 percent were not paid for maternity leave (Vološevych *et al.*, 2015). It should be noted that the study did not clarify that such women were informal workers, but these are the kinds of problems that women working in the informal sector typically face.

Unpaid work

Agricultural employment also encompasses unpaid work on household farms. According to the Ukraine Longitudinal Monitoring Survey, last conducted in 2007, women make up the majority of unpaid farm workers (Grushetsky and Kharchenko, 2009). Women who perform unpaid work may be officially classified as unemployed or may combine agricultural work with other off-farm employment.

The responsibility for unpaid care work is burdensome for rural women; it encompasses not only agricultural labour on household farms, much of which is manual work (such as weeding family plots, feeding animals

Box 3: Definition – Unpaid work

“Unpaid work” is predominantly performed by women. This term is not defined in Ukrainian law, but the International Labour Organization describes it as “work that is undertaken to maintain the wellbeing of household members, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, or elderly and sick family members. Much unpaid work is unrecognised, both statistically and economically”. Unpaid work also includes contributory family work in an economic unit (a family business or farm), as well as volunteer work and fetching water or fuel for household consumption (ILO, 2014, p. 21, p. 85).

and milking cows) but also daily housework (made more difficult by the fact that a substantial number of rural homes have inadequate water supply), and care responsibilities for children or other family members. Despite the role women play in farming, they are rarely officially recognized as “farmers” (referring to the head of a farming enterprise). Their contributions are invisible, and women themselves receive no social benefits from this type of work (such as pensions).

In late 2018, important legal changes were enacted that affect the operation of family farms and which should provide farmers working their land with greater social protections. The legislative amendments may also have a positive impact on women. However, specific gender analysis is required in order to better understand how unpaid family workers will be impacted upon.

Labour force survey data indicate that generally women have been moving from unpaid work into self-employment which is a positive trend in Ukraine. Nevertheless, self-employment for low pay or even without payment are still forms of vulnerable employment and they can reinforce the phenomenon of the “working poor” (Libanova, 2012, p. 18).

3.2. Land ownership and farm structures

Over 70 percent of Ukraine’s territory is categorized as agricultural land: 41.3 million hectares, of which 32.8 million hectares are arable land (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020x). In Ukraine, the purchase and sale of agricultural land by both citizens and legal entities is limited under the law. In 2001, the Land Code of Ukraine established a moratorium on selling or disposing of agricultural land plots with exceptions for inheritance, exchange and expropriation of private land for public use. The moratorium was intended as a temporary measure to protect the rights of citizens who had received land after former collective farms were dissolved and until land market infrastructure and a cadastre system could be devised. In 2020, the Law on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Turnover of Farmland was adopted that will expand the rights to acquire ownership of agricultural land. A market for farmland will be operational from July 2021.

Under the moratorium, there was no official market for agricultural land, but land was nevertheless “sold” and “purchased” through informal arrangements. Land was also leased from private owners or from the state. Thus, agricultural companies in Ukraine were using agricultural land “based on rent agreements with large numbers of small-scale individual land owners” under long-term leases (National Investment Council of Ukraine, 2018, p.

16). A high proportion of the rent payments were being made in kind (Nivievskiy *et al.*, 2013).

Gender equality in the ownership and control over land “contributes to economic efficiency and has positive multiplier effects for the achievement of a range of... SDGs including poverty reduction (Goal 1), food security (Goal 2) and the welfare of households, communities and countries (Goals 3, 11 and 16, among others)” (FAO, 2018c, p. 2). FAO is the “custodian agency” for indicators 5.a.1. and 5.a.2. of SGD 5 (on women’s ownership of agricultural land and women’s equal rights to land ownership), and is supporting capacity building in how to develop and report on statistical data for these indicators.

Determining the patterns of women’s and men’s access to and control over land, both as owners or renters, as well as the size of their land parcels, is made complicated by the fact that sex-disaggregated data for these indicators are not publicly available. The State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre is currently considering methods to track the sex of landowners in Ukraine for SDG 5a indicators, but the results of this process have not yet been publicized.

Data that were consulted for this country gender assessment about gendered patterns of land ownership give the following picture. From the time that Ukraine became independent in 1991 to 2017, around 35.2 million hectares of land have been transferred to private ownership, which includes 27 million hectares of farmland that was granted to former members of state collective farms (Bashlyk and Nizalov, 2018). As a result of granting each collective member a land plot, women became 53 percent of small-plot owners. However, since that time, it has been reported that women now own 60 percent of privately-held land plots in Ukraine, due to disparities in life expectancy (Chemonics International Inc., 2013).²⁰

More recent figures, calculated by the State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre using a tax identifier number that indicates sex, show that women represent 51.6 percent of registered land owners, and that the average land plot registered to women is 1.7 hectares compared with 1.6 hectares for land plots registered to men (Bashlyk and Nizalov, 2018).

Given that the moratorium has hindered land transactions, the initial gender equitable distribution

of land plots seems to have been preserved. However, gender experts approach such figures with caution, because land registry and formal land ownership do not necessarily equate to equal access to or control over land; and land ownership on its own does not give an indication of whether land resources translate to financial benefit for women.

Rural household data show that the average land area belonging to female-headed households (FHHs) is smaller than the average for male-headed households (MHHs have 1.46 hectares on average compared with 0.96 hectares for FHHs). In terms of agricultural land specifically, FHHs have a slightly smaller proportion of arable land (90.7 percent of agricultural land belonging to MHHs is arable, in contrast to 86.7 percent of agricultural land belonging to FHHs; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020). A survey of women living in rural areas indicated that the majority of respondents (86 percent) were landowners, but only nine percent cultivated agricultural products for sale on their land for a variety of reasons, many of which are explored in other sections of this assessment (Vološevych *et al.*, 2015).

As agribusinesses have been expanding, concern has been expressed over land grab tactics that are taking advantage of vulnerable land owners. In some cases, women are coerced to “sell their land for a low price because they have no other source of cash income” (Women’s and human rights organizations on the initiative of the Gender Strategy Platform, 2016, p. 22). Here, the “sale” of land refers to a *de facto* situation in which women lease their land plots through long-term arrangements. Instances have been documented of vulnerable people, generally elderly, single or widowed women, being targeted by large agricultural concerns and “systematically pressured” and “intimidated” to sign leases (Kolomiets and McGrath, 2015, p. 29). Such agricultural concerns conclude leases for up to 49 years at a time, and often, lease payments are made through in-kind compensation (a share of the crop produced) or cash. This leasing procedure is particularly advantageous for investors because lease payments are low compared with the potential market value of the land and the taxes that the land owners pay (by some estimations, leases range from EUR 30 to EUR 50 per hectare). Thus, investors are able to save “millions of dollars in cash that would otherwise be required to purchase the land directly” (Fraser and Mousseau, 2014, p. 3).

The State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre is planning to undertake further assessments of gender differences in the following areas: types of land tenure (for example, leasing and permanent use), land market transactions (for example, sales, leases and inheritance), and registration of land in

²⁰ This figure seems to have been derived from a baseline survey on land ownership and rights commissioned by the USAID AgroInvest Project and conducted by the Centre for Social Studies, the Sociology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences in 2012.

rural and urban areas (Bashlyk and Nizalov, 2018). Such forthcoming analysis will provide important information about gender equality in land ownership. However, data that would clarify the picture of ownership of rural land, land used for agricultural purposes, and size and quality of the land are still needed to identify gender disparities in the agricultural sector.

3.2.1. Farm ownership and management

As a result of privatization processes, there are two main types of agricultural structure in Ukraine: agricultural enterprises (legal entities or agro-holdings) and rural households. An **agricultural enterprise** is a business entity that carries out activities in agricultural production. Within this category are **private farms**, defined as citizens' entrepreneurial initiatives conducted through a legal entity established with the goal of producing agricultural commodities, processing goods and selling them for profit. These activities are carried out on land plots provided for farming purposes (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020a). In contrast, a great many **rural households** use their own land plots for agricultural production, both for self-sufficiency and also to sell, but they are not considered commercial entities. Rural inhabitants undertaking this form of farming can also include individual entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector (ibid.).

Because imprecise terms are often used to describe rural agricultural producers, such as "individual farms," "peasant farms," "family farms," "smallholdings" or "household plots," it is unclear whether small private farms or non-commercial farming households are being discussed. In fact, rural households (smallholdings) are organized by and operate on the basis of family members, but until recently they did not have the legal status of farms and, therefore were outside of the social protection system. It was only recently, when the Ukrainian Tax Code was amended in 2018, that the term "family farm" was officially introduced as a type of legal entity.

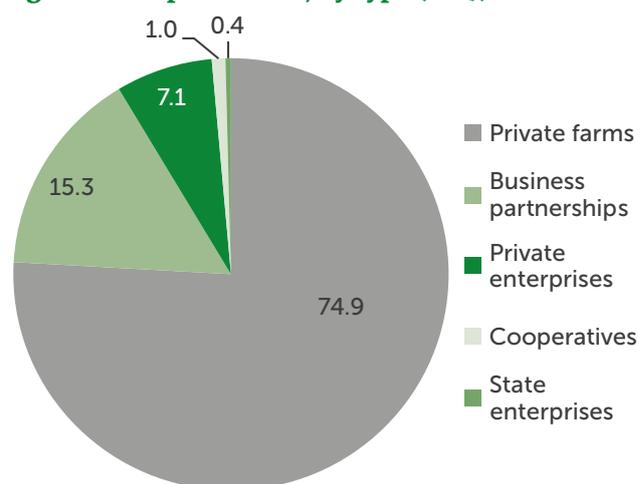
Elsewhere in this country gender assessment, the term "family farm" is used in a general sense when discussing the role that women play in supporting smallholder farming, whether as a business or within a rural household. In this section, however, agricultural enterprises are distinguished from rural households that produce agricultural goods.

Most of the legal entities engaged in agricultural production are private enterprises, with only a small number of state-owned enterprises. According to national statistics, there were 48 504 agricultural enterprises registered in 2019. Within this figure, private farms are the most common and account for two-thirds of all agricultural enterprises (66.9 percent; State Statistics

Service of Ukraine, 2020a). Figure 15 demonstrates the most recent and accessible data on the prominence of private farms among agricultural enterprises.

Private farms primarily belong to individual farmers/private entrepreneurs, who as a group, cultivate about 13 percent of Ukraine's total arable land (Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 2015).

Figure 15: Proportion of enterprises engaged in agricultural production, by type (2017)



Note: Data representing "other enterprises" (1.3 percent of the total) are omitted from the figure.

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2018a, p. 171.

Box 4: Agro-holdings in Ukraine

The number of private farms is, in fact, decreasing due to the merging and consolidation of smaller farms under a new structure of agro-holdings, virtually all of which are controlled by Ukrainian investors. Several of the largest holdings have secured loans from international finance institutions. Significant foreign investment by transnational corporations has also enabled the growth of such companies. While large-scale agribusinesses have the potential to bring much-needed employment opportunities to rural areas, activists have expressed concern that they have a negative impact on the livelihoods of small agricultural entrepreneurs and are a threat to smallholder farmers, many of whom are women (see for example, National Ecological Centre of Ukraine, 2015). Other issues have been raised related to the expansion of large agricultural concerns, such as the lack of consultation with local stakeholders, the use of pressuring tactics to obtain land leases, health and safety issues for workers, and potential pollution of the environment. While the expansion of agribusinesses cannot be fully explored in this CGA, there is a need for greater analysis of the gender implications of investments into large agro-holdings.

Estimations of women's representation in agricultural enterprises vary depending on the source as well as the type of enterprise that is being considered. According to a 2013 assessment that relied on official data and a baseline survey, women represented a third of Ukraine's 132 000 registered farmers, and there were four times as many men in farm management positions as women (70 percent of "heads of farms" were men; Chemonics International Inc., 2013). The most recently available official data indicate that of the country's 46 929 private farms in 2019, 9 606 were headed by women, or 20 percent (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020u). The picture is different for larger farming businesses, and it has been estimated that women manage only one tenth (11.4 percent) of all large and medium-sized agribusinesses in Ukraine (Women's and human rights organizations on the initiative of the Gender Strategy Platform, 2016).

The abovementioned baseline assessment points out the complexity of determining women's precise role as a "farmer". For one thing, the distinction between "farmers (owners)" and "farm managers" can be difficult to specify, given variations in survey answers depending on whether the respondent was female or male, and a lack of sex-disaggregated data that could provide confirmation. Furthermore, small private farms are prevalent in Ukraine, and the term for an individual "farmer" does not capture the fact that many family members undertake farm labour and make decisions about agricultural production, regardless of whether they formally own or manage the farm. Women who work on such farms may be officially classified as unemployed or retired. Other women combine local employment with farm work or undertake agricultural labour seasonally. Thus, it is useful to consider the range of ways that women and men engage in agricultural production beyond formal farm ownership or management.

Although Ukrainian women are represented among farm owners and managers, the default perception of who is a "farmer" on a private farm belonging to a married couple is the male head of the household. The farm would only be considered to be woman-led if the male household head had died or in the case of divorce; otherwise, she is considered the wife of the farmer (Robbins and Galustian, 2017). This explains why the "typical" woman farmer is older than the average male farmer (between the age of 40 and 65 years). Female farmers usually have higher education (university or college), very often with a specialization in agriculture (Chemonics International Inc., 2013). This finding should dispel any notion that women are less qualified to be farmers merely because they are less often recognized as such.

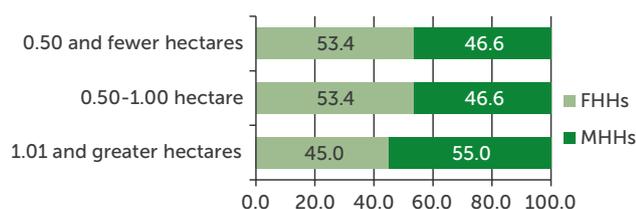
Private farms headed by women tend to be smaller than those headed by men (on average, each farm headed by a woman occupies 105.7 hectares of agricultural land, while those with a man as the head are 141.6 hectares) and therefore they also include less arable land in hectares (but they have the same proportion of arable land when compared with the entire acreage; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2016).

Historically, it has also been noted that when land was privatized in Ukraine, two groups were able to form private farms: the rural elite who were usually men who held influential positions (in agricultural collectives or local government) or people who were on the margins of rural society, which included single, middle-aged women and other people with low status on collective farms (Allina-Pisano, 2004). This particular pattern, in addition to gender stereotypes, may account for women's low representation in agribusinesses and less prominent role in formal farm management, despite the fact that they are well-represented as land owners.

In addition to farming enterprises, a large number of rural households are agricultural producers. In 2018, 4.6 million rural households were registered as using their household plots for non-commercial agriculture; the average size of land cultivated by such households is 1.5 hectares (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2018b; Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, no date). This form of farming is considered self-employment. A large proportion of rural households only produce goods for their own consumption (over 40 percent). Around 30 percent sell small amounts of agricultural products commercially, often to local distributors because they do not have the means to transport their products to markets. The majority of these smallholdings are engaged in subsistence and semi-subsistence farming; only around 20 percent could be considered market-oriented or potentially viable commercial farms (Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, no date). The Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food calculates that the latter category includes between 800 000 and 900 000 household smallholders.

Although small in scale at the level of individual households, agricultural production of the type described here is an essential activity that supports many rural families and contributes significantly to the country as a whole. In 2019, such households accounted for 33.9 percent of the total volume of agricultural production in Ukraine (and additionally 30.1 percent and 48.7 percent of crop production and animal production, respectively; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020a).

Figure 16: Average land area of rural households, by head of household, 2020 (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020I.

The government has recognized the potential for such smallholder activities to be transformed into family farms. Acquiring this status would then lead to greater social protections for these farmers, and, importantly, being covered by the pension system. The 2018 changes to the Tax Code, mentioned above, simplify the process by which rural residents can register as individual entrepreneurs and establish family farms, provided they meet certain criteria (they are exclusively engaged in agricultural cultivation, members of the farm are household members, and land plots must be no less than two hectares and no greater than 20 hectares; see for example, Verkhovna Rada, 2018, p. 276).

There are limited sex-disaggregated data for indicators concerning rural smallholdings that would give an idea about women's and men's differing experiences of this type of farming. An agricultural census could generate this kind of information. The State Statistics Service of Ukraine does, however, conduct an annual survey of agricultural activities among a sample of rural households. According to the most recent results, female-headed households in rural areas have smaller land plots on average than male-headed households, as illustrated in Figure 16. Both female and male heads of rural households tend to be elderly, but women are older on average (an average age of 62 years, compared with 56 years for men; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020I).

Further data for indicators such as agricultural production (crop and livestock) and access to inputs and resources, disaggregated by the sex of the head of household, are explored in later sections of this country gender assessment to fill out the picture of gender differences in farming.

3.3. Status of rural women: gender roles, leadership and empowerment

Perceptions about gender roles and gender stereotypes can limit opportunities for women in the family and society. For instance, despite the fact that the public is supportive of the notion that women and men should be equally involved in decision-making in the family and should share many domestic duties (such as caring for elderly parents and managing the family budget),

there remains a clear division in people's minds that some duties (for example, house cleaning and cooking) are the responsibility of women, while other roles (for example, the breadwinner role, policing and defending the country) are in the men's sphere (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, 2018).

Women take on a disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work, resulting in a "double" or even "triple burden" (if they undertake paid employment, unpaid work on a family farm and domestic chores). In fact, for women, the time spent on domestic chores increases with marriage, but for men, marriage means a reduction in the time spent doing housework. For instance, married women who also work outside of the home spend an average of 24.6 hours per week on domestic chores (excluding childcare), while married men spend an average of 14.5 hours per week on housework (Aksyonova, 2013).

There is no evidence to suggest that gender stereotypes are more pervasive in rural areas than in urban areas. In fact, estimates of time use show that the pattern differs far more significantly along gender lines than by location. In one survey, men in rural areas reported that they spend an average of 18 hours per week on household work compared with 30 hours reported by rural women. In contrast, men in larger cities say they spend 12 hours per week on unpaid domestic work, while women spend 27 hours (UNFPA, 2018). Residential location is a decisive factor in terms of the time burden only in the sense that rural women are isolated from and underserved by the types of service infrastructure that can alleviate household chores in urban areas (such as laundries and dry cleaners, house cleaning services, cafes and catering).

It is worth noting that there have been no detailed or national time use surveys conducted in Ukraine. Several time use questions have been included in other studies, and the only research on the time constraints of rural women was carried out in 1994 and 1995 (see Yakuba, 1998). There is a need for dedicated study not only to clarify more precisely women's and men's engagement in unpaid work, but to also reveal how household chores are distributed between rural women and men.

Assessing rural women's empowerment and participation in decision-making in the household or concerning agricultural practices is complicated because women's roles may differ depending on the household type and the decision being considered. Rural women report that they more often make decisions about the use of farmland when they are not living with a husband or partner.

Table 5: Women’s responses to the question “Who makes the final decision about the use of land for agricultural products that are grown for sale?”

	Living with husband or partner (%)	Not living with husband or partner (%)
Your husband or other male relative	48	32
You	34	41
Your female relative	5	15

Source: Volosevych *et al.*, 2015, p. 49.

Nevertheless, women’s participation in such decision-making is high even when married or partnered. It is common on family farms for women to manage the financial and administrative operations. Thus, even though the man is recognized as the formal head of the farm, in this way, women may also be involved in other decisions, about planting new crops or how to use agricultural resources, for example (Robbins and Galustian, 2017).

Experts also note that a critical limiting factor for rural women is not so much an issue of their personal empowerment, but that they have few opportunities to obtain important information, for instance, about their rights, available services, benefits, or even about farming technologies and entrepreneurship. Rural women are cut off from information, in part due to time poverty and also the logistical difficulties they experience travelling to larger towns or cities. And it is this isolation, more than their sex, that prevents them from fully taking advantage of opportunities or participating in many aspects of social life.

3.3.1. Women’s role in leadership: political office, cooperatives and civil society

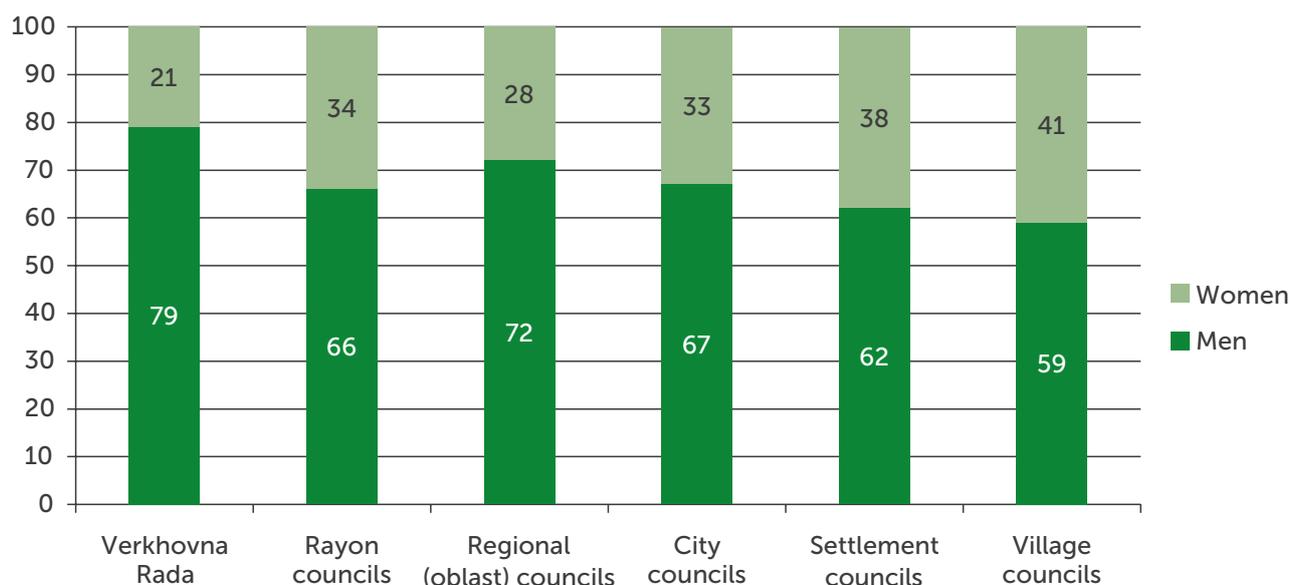
Although women are politically active in many ways in Ukraine, notably during the Euromaidan demonstrations of 2013–2014, their activism has not translated to formal representation in political office in equal measure. Important measures have been taken to increase women’s involvement in political office. The first gender quotas were included into Ukrainian election law in 2013 (stipulating that party lists must have a minimal representation of 30 percent of either sex; and no party should have a division greater than 30:70 percent between female and male candidates) for national and local elections. The impact was minimal on the 2015 local elections, the first to apply the quota, due in large part to a lack of sanctions against parties that did not apply the law (United Nations Country Team Ukraine, 2017). The adoption of a new Election Code and subsequent amendments reformulated the gender quota (effectively requiring 40 percent representation by either sex in political party

lists for local councils in large communities; and a 30 percent quota for small settlements and communities with fewer than 10 000 voters). The changes led to a significant increase in the number of women on candidate lists in the October 2020 elections, particularly at the oblast level and for positions on councils of large cities.

Women’s representation in legislative offices follows a distinct pattern. The proportion of women in governance decreases with the level of authority, meaning that women are better represented at the most local levels of decision-making. This “glass ceiling effect” in political office is apparent when comparing the proportion of women in the national parliament to those on settlement and village councils. After the 2020 elections, the share of women deputies in the Verkhovna Rada (national parliament) increased from 12.3 percent to 20.8 percent. In comparison, women represent 33 percent of city council members and 41 percent of members of village councils (see Figure 17).

Monitoring of the 2020 election results indicates a worrying trend; while more women were elected to councils in large cities, in general women’s representation on local councils *decreased* by 12.6 percent (Ukrainian Women’s Fund, 2021). Decentralization and the consolidation of territorial communities beginning in 2015 has meant that there are fewer elected positions in total, but in this process, women have not maintained the same proportion of seats. For instance, women represented 31.4 percent of city mayors and settlement and village councillors combined after the 2015 elections, but after 2020, their representation was reduced to 16.6 percent (*ibid.*).

Women’s decreasing presence is attributed to the greater competition for financial and other resources needed to run a campaign in consolidated communities. Women’s representation is greater for ATCs that constitute settlements and villages than for urban ATCs, and this may well be a reflection of the more limited resources and prestige at stake in

Figure 17: Women's representation in legislative office in Ukraine, 2020 (%)

Note: With the exception of data for the national parliament, data are from the Central Election Commission as of 24 December 2020.
Sources: IPU, 2020; Ukrainian Women's Fund, 2021.

rural areas. Additionally, the trend may also reflect the increase in community budgets that has attracted greater interest among men to campaign for these positions. As the Minister for Regional Development, Construction and Housing and Communal Services explained, "When reform began, it was difficult and when no one believed in it, women were not afraid to be the first to take responsibility, to stand for elections and to win. But now when the reform has brought clear results, and everyone understands its success, the situation is changing" (Government of Ukraine, 2018, no page number).

Reversing the trend and creating opportunities for women to be elected are especially important processes to ensure the legitimacy of local governing bodies, otherwise there is a risk that women's perspectives will not form part of local decision-making concerning issues that impact on their communities and livelihoods. There is a need for continual support of and mentoring for women who are interested in entering formal office, including at the local level. Persistent barriers must also be addressed. Surveys suggest that rural women tend not to be very active when it comes to resolving local issues (one survey indicated that 36 percent of rural women do not participate in any kind of village problem-solving; Volosevych *et al.*, 2015). The most common reasons that women give for their inactivity are perceptions about their own abilities and self-doubt, scepticism that change will happen (or perhaps that they can have an influence over bringing about change) and lack of free time (*ibid.*).

Rural women have other avenues for leadership, although the picture of their role is not very clear

due to limited data and membership information. A 2013 assessment that considered women's role in agricultural service cooperatives, industry associations and producer organizations noted that despite their leadership potential and role in management, women were rarely formal leaders, with the exception of dairy cooperatives (Chemonics International Inc., 2013). A more recent study confirmed that it is not common for women to join agricultural cooperatives (Robbins and Galustian, 2017).

Civil society organizations (CSOs) offer rural women opportunities to unite around common interests, but rural women are not especially active in public associations generally. According to one survey, 84 percent of rural women stated that they were not active in any organizations; and only one percent reported that they took part in the activities of either farmers' or other professional organizations (Volosevych *et al.*, 2015). The primary reasons that women gave for their lack of involvement were not seeing a need (64 percent) and too little free time (15 percent); only one percent stated that local organizations do not accept women (*ibid.*).

It might be useful to distinguish between public associations that are organized by farmers and focus on agricultural issues and those that are more generally concerned with community development in rural areas. In terms of agricultural associations, it was not possible to determine women's participation (due to a lack of publicly-available data on membership). However, women are active in the Ukrainian Women Farmers Council, suggesting that female farmers have particular issues that they feel are not addressed in other farmers'

associations. The Union of Rural Women of Ukraine is the most prominent organization that represents rural women generally. Among other activities, this organization has taken part in international forums to raise issues that are of particular concern to their members.

In order to take on leadership positions, to participate in civic work and take part in community activities, rural women must overcome gender stereotypes and the fact that they have little time for self-realization due

to their heavy workloads (formal work and domestic responsibilities). Rural women are also expected first and foremost to devote themselves to these duties before undertaking any "additional" social activities. There is a need for leadership programmes for rural women that help women to apply leadership skills in practice but also more general initiatives to empower women to value their potential contributions, while at the same time working to ameliorate the constraints on their time.

4. Intersections of gender and rural livelihoods in conflict-affected areas

Since 2014, Ukraine has been experiencing armed conflict, which has had a destabilizing effect on the whole country but has been particularly acute in several regions. The conflict has led to large population displacement, and this has impacted on both those who have been displaced as well as those who are living in areas that are receiving internally displaced persons (IDPs). Analysing how the conflict has specifically affected rural women and men is made complicated by the fact that conflict-affected areas are both urban and rural, and also that the movements of IDPs are not necessarily only from rural to urban areas.

A comparatively large number of studies of the gendered impacts of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have been conducted, especially compared with gender-sensitive research in other fields. However, there has been considerably less attention to the intersections of gender and settlement type, specifically rural locations, and how the conflict, that has now entered its seventh year, is impacting on the lives of the rural populations. The purpose of this section is not to provide the in-depth analysis that is needed but, rather, to explore some issues that could be further elaborated.

The information contained in this section summarizes the findings and conclusions from other research that has been conducted about the impact of protracted conflict in Ukraine. This section also makes use of data obtained through a dedicated survey conducted by the REACH Initiative in early 2019 (see the Methodology section of this report for further information). It is important to note that while the full dataset contains data for female-/male-headed households in rural/

urban areas and for households situated 5 km/20 km from the contact line, the data presented here are disaggregated along gender lines only, due to the fact that the sample was too small to present any statistically significant patterns or distinctions when cross-tabulated for each characteristic. When other data are used, the source is indicated.

4.1. Background and demographics

As of early 2021, the Ministry of Social Policy had registered over 1.4 million people as internally displaced in Ukraine (Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, 2021). However, the number of people affected by the conflict and in need of humanitarian assistance is larger at 3.5 million (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UN Country Team in Ukraine, 2019). Humanitarian agencies have assessed that women represent a larger share of the population in need of protection (64 percent of those in need), food security and livelihoods (55 percent), water, sanitation and hygiene (54 percent), education (53 percent), and shelter (52 percent); the only area in which women are not the majority of those in need is health and nutrition, where they represent 40 percent (ibid.).

Analysis of where IDPs originate from has found that 87 percent of IDPs are from urban settlements and 13 percent are from rural areas, and that this distribution corresponds to the pre-conflict demographics for the area that is now not under government control (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). This means that the pattern of displacement from rural areas is roughly the same as from urban areas.

Both Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have sizeable rural populations including in both the government controlled areas (GCAs) and non-government controlled areas (NGCAs), and women form the slight majority of the population in both cases. In many ways, the situation that rural women face in conflict-affected areas mirrors that for the country as a whole, but their deprivations are much more acute and they have the additional burden of ongoing conflict that impacts on their livelihoods. Active conflict is most highly concentrated along the contact line, and this poses even greater protection risks to the inhabitants there and leads to especially intensive humanitarian needs for these populations.

The REACH survey offers further insights into the demographic situation. It is striking that women dominated among the respondent group; they represent 67 percent of all respondents and 66 percent of heads of households. In fact, a quarter of all households included in the survey have no men aged 18 years or older (in comparison, only five percent of households have no women). This pattern, in which women outnumber men by a factor of five, is characteristic of the conflict-affected areas and can be attributed to various factors, including the mobilization of men into the armed forces, the fact that men may have more opportunities to migrate for work or to study and men's shorter life expectancies.

According to the REACH survey, 56.6 percent of female and 51.2 percent of male heads of households are pensioners. There were no single fathers among the surveyed population, but 3.9 percent of women were raising children alone.

4.2. Employment and income

The lack of employment opportunities in rural areas is a concern for both local residents and IDPs. In fact, it has been reported that some IDPs have refused to be relocated to rural areas because of the lack of work (OSCE SMM to Ukraine, 2016). In a survey conducted by the International Organization for Migration among IDPs, the lack of job opportunities was the most common reason given for unemployment, and in fact, women, as well as IDPs living in rural areas, mentioned the lack of vacancies for those seeking employment most often (International Organization for Migration Mission in Ukraine, 2018). Women tend to occupy a more limited range of professions that also corresponds to fields in the labour market that are either receiving limited investment or have been closed as a direct result of the conflict (schools and medical facilities, for instance). Therefore, without retraining or other

employment assistance, women find it especially difficult to obtain work.

The REACH survey indicated a much more similar situation between women and men in terms of their employment status. Concerning the heads of households, more than half of female heads of household and male heads of household are retired, close to a third of all heads of households are in paid work, and just under 10 percent are unemployed. The primary reason for unemployment, given by 62 percent of women and men is the lack of relevant vacancies. Employment by sector also shows similar patterns for women and men living in both rural and urban conflict-affected areas. Most women and men are employed in trade (22 percent), the service sector (21 percent) and industry (17 percent). Out of the employed respondents, only a small group works in agriculture. As few as 3.6 percent of female, and 4.5 percent of male, heads of households are employed in the agricultural sector.

Data obtained through the REACH survey about time use, both in employment and in other activities, sheds light on gender imbalances. It should be noted that because a nationwide time use study has not been conducted in Ukraine, the REACH data should not be extrapolated to the entire country.²¹ The findings are, however, representative of conflict-affected areas. According to the survey, men spend more time in paid productive work each day than women, while women spend up to 20 percent more time than men on household chores and childcare, despite the fact that they also dedicate a not insignificant proportion of their day to paid and unpaid labour (see Table 6).

As is the case for the country as a whole, women's greater responsibility for domestic work means that they have less time for productive activities, such as employment or running a business, that would bring additional income to the household. Thus, it is not surprising that the REACH survey revealed a gender gap in household incomes of 28 percent. While male-headed households surveyed by REACH earned UAH 7 119 per month on average, female-headed households only earned UAH 5 125 per month (these figures represent combined income, including salaries, social benefits, pensions, income generated from any businesses, and so forth).

Given that the overall economy of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts has experienced a severe downturn and that the gross regional product in this region has

²¹ More general information about time use patterns of women and men, including for the rural population, is included in section 3.3 of this report.

Table 6: Average time spent by women and men on various activities in conflict-affected areas

Activity	Time spent by female heads of household (average hours per day)	Time spent by male heads of household (average hours per day)
Paid employment	2.2	2.5
Unpaid activities	0.38	0.41
Housework or chores	4.24	3.76
Caring for children and/or other members of the household	1.48	1.19

Source: Data provided by the REACH Survey (2019) for the purposes of this assessment.

still not recovered to its pre-conflict levels, a better distribution of paid work and household chores by women and men would be especially beneficial for the economic empowerment of women and would enhance women's opportunities for greater engagement in the economy.

4.3. Agricultural production and labour

As is the case in a discussion of agriculture generally in Ukraine, here it is useful to distinguish between agribusinesses and smallholder farmers. There is an indication that some "huge agro-conglomerates and a thin layer of successful middle farmers are riding out the war on strong global markets for wheat and sunflower oil," and that "large grain farmers have become a new economic elite in a region once dominated by industrial interests," despite low prices for wheat compared with the rest of the country (Milakovsky, 2018).

The picture is very different, however, for smallholder farmers and rural inhabitants (an estimated 45 000 rural households are located in Donbas). While they once relied on the sale of agricultural products to nearby cities, they are now cut off from most of these markets because the cities are no longer under government control (Milakovsky, 2018). Furthermore, a lack of critical agricultural inputs and infrastructure in GCAs (for example, too few licensed slaughterhouses or insufficient refrigeration and poor transport for dairy products), the fact that many rural residents have fled thereby depleting the labour force, and the difficulties in trying to cross the contact line to sell products, are all factors which have put small-scale farming in a precarious position.

Based on an FAO assessment of agricultural production in conflict-affected areas (which considers GCAs and NGCAs, as well as exclusion zones that are both in proximity to GCAs and NGCAs), there has been a trend towards land abandonment in these areas, and the

share of households producing crops has decreased, as has the number of areas under cultivation (FAO, 2017b). Nevertheless, after pensions, social transfers and daily labour, the sale of agricultural products is a vital lifeline for many rural households. Still, agriculture is an additional, rather than primary, source of income.

Another survey, that was conducted only in GCAs, showed that while pensions are the primary source of income for most households, farming remains the main source of income for 5.5 percent of households (just greater than the proportion that rely on an IDP allowance as their main income source). Elderly residents are less likely to be reliant on agriculture: only 2.3 percent rely on farming as their main source of income, which is about the same as those who rely on income from family members (2.7 percent; HelpAge International, 2018).

Limited information is available about the specific contributions of women to agriculture in conflict-affected areas. However, FAO research indicates that in all of the territories studied, women perform slightly more of the overall agricultural labour (FAO, 2017b). This pattern is consistent with farming practices in Ukraine generally, in which there is a gendered division of labour, with women and men performing specific tasks. It should also be kept in mind that most of the farmers in the FAO study cultivated their land by hand, where the burden on women can be especially heavy, especially when one considers that women farmers tend to combine agricultural labour with domestic responsibilities.

4.4. Deprivation and problems accessing services and social protections

Research indicates that pensions are the most important income source for households in conflict-affected areas. A survey limited to GCAs found that virtually all households in both the Donetsk and

Luhansk oblasts identified pensions as their main income source (HelpAge International, 2018). The REACH survey confirmed that 99 percent of both female and male heads of households are in receipt of pensions or other social benefits from the government.

People living in the conflict-affected areas experience a number of problems accessing basic amenities and services. For instance, frequent closures of the demarcation line crossing points “complicate access to schools, hospitals, workplaces and shops” for residents, and they also impede critical services, such as, “ambulances, repair technicians and humanitarian workers... from reaching many front-line villages that are closed to non-military traffic” (International Crisis Group, 2018, p. 21). People who live in villages in GCAs along the contact line experience restrictions on their movement, and there have been reports of looting of property and food from village houses.

Access to public transportation is varied and can be more limited for certain populations. The REACH survey found that the large majority of female and male respondents live within one kilometre of public transportation options. At the same time, the fact that female-headed households are somewhat poorer is reflected in the most frequently used forms of transport. Specifically, women’s most frequent transport options are public transportation (59.6 percent), travel by foot (26.2 percent) and use of a personal car (8.0 percent). Men use the same general forms of transportation, but their reliance on personal cars is much greater at 20.4 percent. Age can also be a factor in whether public transportation is accessible, and older people in rural areas tend to be isolated from basic amenities.

In terms of household amenities, the REACH survey suggests that both energy for household heating and water supply and sanitation are concerns. Only 18.9 percent of female and 15.4 percent of male respondents rely on a centralized heating supply. Both female- and male-headed households rely on the same alternative energy sources for heating, in almost equal measure: natural gas, followed by coal and then wood. It is possible that the collection of wood for fuel is more difficult for women in the conflict-affected areas, but the survey data neither confirm nor deny this theory. There are gender differences, however, in whether FHHs and MHHs have *sufficient* fuel supply to heat their homes. In the REACH survey, 29.0 percent of female, but only 14.1 percent of male, respondents reported that the available fuel supply was insufficient. Furthermore, 15 percent of women and 12 percent of men reported that they had experienced heating shortages during the previous three months. Given

that the average cost of heating in 2018–2019 was almost the same for FHHs and MHHs, the findings about sufficiency of the heating suggests that female-headed households are generally poorer. A larger share of female respondents (75.3 percent) than male respondents (62.4 percent) reported that they lacked the money to pay for sufficient fuel for heating.

While virtually all REACH respondents have access to running water in the home, slightly more FHHs are without a centralized sewage supply (33.6 percent of FHHs compared with 28.1 percent of MHHs).

The contact line has isolated much of the population from important densely populated urban settlements in NGCAs, which has effectively cut off the GCA population from their family networks, livelihood opportunities and basic services. Some of the services that are either difficult to access or no longer accessible are of critical importance to women. Services that are mentioned by gender experts include crisis centres and shelters for women who are victims of gender-based violence. Women living with HIV in rural areas in the conflict-affected areas and close to the contact line are thought to be especially vulnerable (UN Women, 2017). The conflict exacerbates the risks associated with HIV transmission among IDP communities, for victims of sexual violence and for at-risk women who are economically dependent (reports have been made of vulnerable women living in villages and towns close to the contact line who have had to resort to risky practices, such as engaging in transactional sex, in exchange for food, alcohol or money; see for example, OSCE SMM to Ukraine, 2018). Moreover, rural areas have very limited rehabilitation and harm reduction services.

4.5. Poverty and coping mechanisms

Due to economic crisis and limited opportunities to seek income, many households in conflict-affected areas are impoverished. In addition to the income disparities uncovered by the REACH survey, mentioned above, FHHs are more likely than MHHs to be in debt (24.5 percent of FHHs and 15.4 percent of MHHs reported being in debt at the time of the survey). Both female and male respondents adopted similar survival mechanisms, which include reducing essential health expenditure (32 percent of REACH respondents), using their savings (16 percent), borrowing or purchasing food on credit (11 percent), selling household property (7 percent), and undertaking illegal work or high-risk jobs (3 percent).

Impoverished households are also experiencing food insecurity. Research has shown that female-

Table 7: Measures to cope with food insecurity, by sex of household head

Action taken	Female-headed households (%)	Male-headed households (%)
Reduce portion sizes	62	51
Reduce the number of meals eaten per day	31	22
Reduce adult food intake in order to provide food to children	13	10

Source: Data provided by the REACH Survey (2019) for the purposes of this assessment.

headed households are affected to a greater degree by inadequate food consumption than male-headed households. These differences are even more apparent for households in NGCAs and so-called “buffer zones”. The UN World Food Programme estimated that in these areas, 6 percent of FHHs experienced poor food consumption levels, compared with 1.9 percent of MHHs. In areas under government control, 2.3 percent of FHHs, and 0.8 percent of MHHs were characterized as having poor food consumption (World Food Programme Ukraine Country Office, 2016). FHHs in areas not under government control were also more likely than MHHs to have borderline inadequate food consumption. Similar gender differences were also observed among the IDP population in GCAs.

The REACH survey found an analogous gender pattern in terms of food insecurity and coping mechanisms. In the seven days preceding the REACH survey, 93 percent of FHHs and 89 percent of MHHs did not have enough food or money to buy food, so they had to rely on less preferred, less expensive food. More female than male respondents took steps to mitigate against the lack of adequate food, with almost two-thirds of female-headed households reducing the amount of food eaten. MHHs consume meat more often than FHHs (3.9 days out of seven, compared with 3.2 days), but otherwise households generally reported diets consisting primarily of cereals (eaten most days), follow by roots and other vegetables and then fruits.

Other research suggests that households in rural areas have better food consumption levels as well as lower expenditure on food, which is attributed mainly to these households having greater access to land and the ability to take advantage of their own food production (World Food Programme Ukraine Country Office, 2016). However, this situation may be tenuous and depends very much on the season as well as whether there is adequate household labour to work the land.

The REACH survey indicated that women and men have similar coping strategies for heat shortages.

Namely, they heat the house for only several hours per day, maintain a minimum temperature, and use fuel sparingly. Another study of elderly people in conflict-affected territories found that rural residents have more limited access to fuel than in urban areas. When older people in rural areas cannot purchase sufficient fuel for heating, they borrow money, minimize their costs for other needs, ask relatives or friends for help, critically reduce their use of solid fuel, or move to live with their children in urban areas during the winter (HelpAge International, 2018).

4.6. Security and humanitarian assistance

The REACH survey was conducted in the 20-kilometre zone from the contact line (with a sub-sample of respondents in the five-kilometre area) where security and humanitarian needs are both important concerns. Significant security risks associated with the ongoing conflict are regular shelling and encounters with unexploded ordnance (including landmines or bombs) that cause civilian casualties, significant damage to critical infrastructure and restrictions on movement. The ongoing conflict also necessitates continued protection of the local population that contributes to the increasing humanitarian needs in areas around the contact line.

According to this survey, 60 percent of both women and men report having security concerns. There are slight differences in how women and men rank their concerns, with women being the most concerned about the military presence (21 percent of female respondents (but 18 percent of male respondents), wild animals or stray dogs (19 percent of women and 14 percent of men), shelling (16 percent of female respondents but 18 percent of male respondents) and shooting (15 percent of women, but this was the primary concern for men at 20 percent). It should be noted that the survey methodology asked respondents to select their security concerns from several options; it was not an open-ended question. Thus, it is possible that other concerns were not adequately captured by the survey.

For instance, there have been reports of women having been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence at checkpoints (Duban, 2017), which heightens the risks associated with travel. Men too may be victims of harassment and violence at checkpoints, but the incidence of GBV appears to be much lower. Of the REACH survey respondents, eight percent of women and seven percent of men must cross checkpoints/ the contact line in order to access services such as education, employment, healthcare, markets and social payments. The relatively small number of respondents who travel through checkpoints may also explain the specific security concerns that they identified.

On a positive note, less than ten percent of either women or men reported that any of the abovementioned security concerns affected their households' access to services or employment. Furthermore, 37.9 percent of women and 40.4 percent of men in the REACH survey believe that the security situation has improved in the past two years, although close to 60 percent of each group saw no change, either for the better or worse.

Almost a quarter (21 percent) of FHH respondents, compared with 18 percent from MHHs, reported that

they have received humanitarian assistance in the past 12 months. These figures contrast with the needs expressed by the REACH respondents; 39.4 percent of women and 34.7 percent of men answered that they were in need. Here, it is also useful to note that although the gender difference is modest, it can be attributed to both a lower combined household income for FHHs as well as their more limited opportunities to improve their financial situations. For most households, the main type of humanitarian assistance they receive are food items (71 percent of households), followed by hygiene products (23 percent) and medical products (10 percent). Still, both FHHs and MHHs expressed a need for assistance in the form of additional food as well as cash. At the same time, women also prioritized hygiene and medical products, while men opted for fuel as a greater need. A final useful finding from the REACH survey was that just over 14 percent of both women and men stated that they had been consulted about their humanitarian assistance needs. This finding indicates that good practices are being applied, as it is often the case that women's needs are not given adequate attention in the humanitarian assistance context.

5. Gender issues in agriculture and rural livelihoods

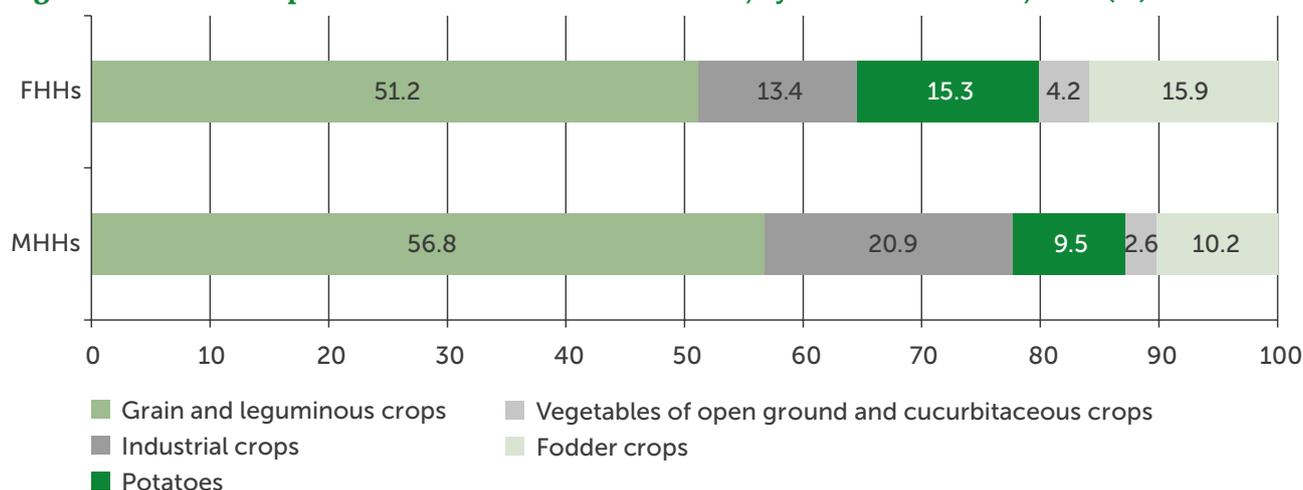
As discussed in the methodology for this report (section 1.4), an agricultural census has not been conducted in Ukraine that would provide details about gender gaps in agricultural productivity, such as differences in farming practices, differential access to resources, disparities in crop yields or how women and men are located along agricultural value chains. Instead, the data that are reproduced in the following section concern rural households and are disaggregated by the sex of the household head. The data were derived from the most recent agricultural activity sample survey (conducted in 2020 with a sample of 28 500 rural households), disaggregated for FHH and MHH. The results of this survey are used here to develop a picture of gender-based patterns relevant to agricultural production and access to key productive resources among rural households. Where available, information about farming practices is included. However, crucial details about gender patterns in commercial farming are lacking due to the very limited research in this area.

5.1. Crop production and horticulture

Crop products make up 79.1 percent of Ukraine’s total agricultural production, representing a wide variety, mainly grain, leguminous crops and industrial crops (oil crops, soy beans, sunflowers, sugar beets), but also potatoes, vegetables, fruits, berries and cucurbitaceous crops (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020a).

According to a rural household survey, on average, FHHs have a smaller proportion of arable land than MHHs; they also have a higher percentage of non-sown arable land. Concerning land use, FHHs and MHHs exhibit variations in the choice of crops, with a key difference being that FHHs have a considerably smaller proportion of land sown with industrial crops (13.4 percent of sown land for FHHs and 20.9 percent of sown land for MHHs) but a larger proportion of land devoted to fodder crops (see Figure 18). Presumably, both industrial and grain crops have a higher market value than fodder crops.

Figure 18: Share of crops in sown areas of rural households, by head of household, 2020 (%)



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020l.

Table 8: Harvests and sale of selected crops per 100 rural households, by head of household (2019)

Categories of crops	Per 100 FHHs		Per 100 MHHs	
	Harvest (in centner)	Sale (in centner)	Harvest (in centner)	Sale (in centner)
Grain and leguminous crops	1 302.90	544.47	2 316.99	1 231.13
Industrial crops:				
Sugar beets	3.01	3.01	3.74	3.74
Sunflowers	143.23	115.55	402.03	344.78
Potatoes	1 513.72	28.00	1 799.67	58.54
Vegetables of open ground	465.38	21.28	499.43	35.38
Cucurbitaceous crops	68.82	--	118.16	--
Fodder crops:		4.91		7.30
Root vegetables	373.98	--	482.77	--
Hay	420.07	--	452.11	--
Fruits	204.43	52.84	212.36	54.11
Berries	14.40	5.06	13.80	3.81

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020m.

There are also gender differences in both the harvests of FHHs and MHHs (when comparing the yield in weight [in centner²²] per 100 households) and in the volume of sales of agricultural products produced by rural households. In 2019, among the 18 different crops for which data are available, FHHs had smaller harvests (in centner) in all but one (berries). The greatest differences in yield are seen in grain and leguminous crops and sunflowers. When considering sales of products produced by rural households, FHHs also had lower sales for almost all products for which the data are collected (see Table 8).

Of course, it stands to reason that lower volumes of sales reflects smaller harvests, but other factors, for example whether women have equal access to agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers and cold storage facilities, or to markets, may also have an impact on the agricultural production of FHHs.

Among households and family-based farms that engage in crop production and horticulture, women and men have distinct responsibilities. Men “typically focus on wheat, corn and sunflowers – crops sown in larger areas... [and] women typically deal with horticulture and herbs” (Chemonics International Inc.,

2013, p. 27). The division of labour for producing, harvesting and selling crops also falls along gender lines. Women undertake mostly manual labour, including the following tasks which are mainly done by hand or partly with equipment: cultivation, grafting of corn, planting, weeding and tending vegetables in fields, harvesting perishable vegetables, fertilizing the soil, planting and collecting berries, collecting and cultivating herbs, and preparing honeycombs and packing honey. Men’s labour regarding crops usually concerns tasks that are mechanized, such as tilling, ploughing and planting fodder crops, harvesting grain and corn (with combines), harvesting and stacking hay, transporting and spreading manure, and transporting products to markets (ibid.).

Men’s responsibilities in crop farming cover much more of the value chain and also entail a greater role in management and decision-making. They are most often the ones to directly supervise field staff, and because they have primary responsibility for harvesting field crops, they tend to deal with wholesalers and negotiate prices (Robbins and Galustian, 2017). Although women play essential roles in crop production and horticulture, they may not have the same opportunities to influence decision-making about farming practices, such as about the purchase of machinery that would decrease their workloads or innovations (for example, in organic farming practices or introducing new crops). It is also

²² A centner is a metric unit of measurement of weight used in some former Soviet countries. One centner is equivalent to 100 kilograms.

important that organizations like FAO, that support the development of family farms, ensure that crops in which women have more engagement are also included in programming priorities.

5.2. Livestock and livestock products

Livestock production represents 20.9 percent of Ukraine's total agricultural production and includes animal breeding, dairy and egg production, and the production of wool and other animal products (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020a). Among rural households, both FHHs and MHHs are equally likely to own some form of livestock: 65 percent of FHHs and 66 percent of MHHs. However, when considering the specific type of livestock, female-headed households are less likely than male-headed households to own cows, pigs or horses, but are more likely to keep goats and equally likely to raise poultry (see Table 9).

Female-headed households have lower levels of production of animal products, measured as an average per household and as shown in Table 10.

As is the case with other forms of farming, women and men perform distinct tasks in animal husbandry. For example, women are especially active in dairy

Table 9: Livestock ownership in rural households, by head of household (2020)

	FHHs	MHHs
Households with any livestock (%)	59.9	64.9
Including (%):		
Cattle	24.0	32.9
Cows	23.4	31.9
Pigs and hogs	30.8	44.7
Sheep	0.4	1.1
Goats	6.1	4.9
Horses	3.0	6.2
Rabbits	4.1	4.9
Poultry	97.2	96.1
Bees	0.7	2.0

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020L.

Table 10: Production of animal products per 100 rural households, by head of household (2019)

Category of animal product	Per 100 female-headed households	Per 100 male-headed households
Milk (in centner)	960.1	1 320.3
Including cow's milk	932.1	1 294.9
Eggs (in thousands)	81.1	84.4
Including hen's eggs	80.7	84.1
Wool (in kilograms)	3.0	8.3

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020m.

production and do most of the work associated with milking and the care of cows (including pre-milking preparation, milking several times a day, milk processing, taking cows to pasture, supervising grazing, pre- and post-calving care and record keeping), while men are usually responsible for transport and mechanized labour (including milk transportation, delivering fodder and water, removing manure, transporting cows for mating/artificial insemination and purchasing cattle; Chemonics International Inc., 2013). Dairy production is strongly associated with "women's work," and so their responsibilities and engagement here may not be typical for other types of animal husbandry. Indeed, dairy cooperatives have been identified as one of the only formal organizations in Ukraine in which women farmers are engaged.

5.3. Fisheries and aquaculture

The Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food characterizes the fishing industry as an area for potential development, but it is also an industry that is in need of considerable modernization and investment, both of which would lead to job creation.

Fishing has long been an important source of food and income for coastal communities, but no data were found for this assessment about current employment rates within fisheries and aquaculture or about the roles of women and men in this industry. FAO reported that there were 31 000 people working in the fish production sector, 12 000 people working in aquaculture, and 2 000 in processing; however, these figures are 2001 estimates (FAO, 2004). Women in Ukraine seem to be more involved in aquaculture than women in some other European countries, as indicated by the fact that in 2006 an estimated 20 percent of Ukrainian employees in aquaculture were women, compared with between 5 and 10 percent in several Western Balkan countries (FAO, 2006). Additionally, fishing and fish farming is one of the rare sectors of the economy in which it has been estimated that there is virtually no wage gap between women and men, and in 2008, women had an average salary that was slightly higher than men (Chepurko, 2010).

Globally, the fishery and aquaculture sectors exhibit clear gender segregation. Men form the large majority of workers engaged in direct capture, while women are primarily engaged in secondary activities such as post-harvest fish production, processing and, often, small-scale marketing. Generally, women's work tends to be limited to these stages of the value chain, and they play a small role as owners of fish farms or processing plants. Further research is needed to identify gender disparities in different sub-sectors of fisheries and aquaculture, including in commercial fish farming, fish processing and scientific work in Ukraine.

5.4. Forestry

Ukraine has over ten million hectares of forest and forested areas, which is equivalent to 17.7 percent of the total territory (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020x). Most forests are considered to be publicly owned and their use is controlled by the State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine, under which are State Forest Enterprises that manage forest lands. State Forest Enterprises manage logging and timber harvesting, and issue permits and contracts to logging firms.

The forests provide important non-timber resources, such as berries and mushrooms, to nearby communities. Although community members are not permitted to harvest timber or firewood without a permit, they are allowed to collect small tree branches and non-wood products for subsistence use (Zhyla *et al.*, 2014).

A lack of sex-disaggregated data about the formal employment of women and men in the forestry sector makes it difficult to identify the key gender issues related to forestry and forest management. In 2010, only 12 percent of forestry employees were women (FAO, 2014). This aggregated figure, however, is not especially useful for understanding the varied forms of employment within the sector. Traditionally, women have not been well-represented in timber companies, and their work in the sector has tended to be administrative (for example, accounting), or in nurseries and research jobs. Publicity material about one region of Ukraine provides an example of the patterns of women's employment: out of the more than 1 600 employees of 11 state forestry enterprises in the Vinnytsia region, 280 are women, which would be equal to about 17 percent (Press service of Vinnytsia State University of Agriculture, 2019). Concerning employment within these 11 state forestry enterprises, there are only two women working in the most senior posts – one the chief forester and the other a forestry officer. However, there are several female forestry assistants, senior forest masters and forestry engineers.

The greatest representation of women is among accountants and economists (49 of 50 accountants, and 7 of 12 chief accountants, are women) or in human resources (as inspectors for personnel issues; *ibid.*). One of the reasons that women do not work in forestry jobs that require considerable physical labour, such as cutting timber, driving tractors or hunting, is the legacy of legal prohibitions on employing women for certain types of work that involve heavy lifting or dangerous working conditions, which also include lumber cutting and tree felling.²³ The list of prohibited jobs was itself a reflection of gender stereotypes about the types of jobs that are appropriate for women and men.

Although women do not have a very prominent role in forestry enterprises, they are engaged in forest activities in other ways. Rural communities near forests depend heavily on forest products as a source of income. A study of households in three regions of Western Ukraine found that forest income accounted for five percent of the surveyed households' earnings, mainly the sale of various types of berries, followed by mushrooms, tree branches and firewood; another three percent of household income was derived from trade and entrepreneurial activities such as carpentry (Zhyla *et al.*, 2014). Most forest revenue comes from berries that rural residents collect for both sale and household consumption. In some regions, villagers sell twice as many forest products as they consume, but in others there is greater dependence on forest products for subsistence (*ibid.*). Even though rural households derive more income from agriculture (the sale of potatoes, vegetables and fruit), collecting forest products remains stable because the work is seen as less demanding than agriculture in terms of time, effort and investment, and there is a regular demand for such products (*ibid.*).

There is a gendered division within those who earn incomes from forest products. Berries (mainly blueberries) are collected by women and adolescent girls. Men and boys mainly collect mushrooms, tree branches and firewood, but women do assist with mushroom picking (Zhyla *et al.*, 2014). Other products, such as tree shoots, medicinal plants, nuts, lichen and birch sap, are collected much less frequently. All of these products must be foraged by hand and carried to collection points where they are sold for cash. The work is seasonal and informal. According to the abovementioned study, berries are the most commonly collected forest product by value, meaning they generate the most income. According to one estimate, berry pickers can earn the equivalent of USD 20–30 per day, whereas the average monthly salary for a

²³ This profession is generally known in English as a "lumberjack," an indication of the commonly-held view that it is a "male job".

school teacher is USD 80 (Brown and Martynyuk, 2016). The intermediary buyers also exchange groceries and medicine for berries, especially in villages where local shops and services are lacking (*ibid.*).

5.5. Agricultural extension/advisory services and training

The Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food is tasked with developing and implementing agricultural advisory services. Such services are provided primarily by public institutions.

An NGO, the National Association of the Agricultural Extension Services of Ukraine (NAAASU), was established in 2003 to promote the welfare of the rural population by enhancing the knowledge and skills of rural residents and agricultural producers. The NAAASU is a membership organization that conducts a variety of educational and training programmes (including distance learning), as well as research, exhibitions, legislative drafting and lobbying. There are many farmers' and producers' associations that may provide advisory services to their members. In addition, a number of international donors have supported projects to provide technical assistance for the development of advisory and extension services, generally focusing on particular regions in Ukraine.

Despite the fact that there is a system in place, Ukraine's agricultural advisory services have been characterized as underdeveloped, based on several factors: services are largely underfunded, there are few full-time extension officers, and extension services are not adequately oriented toward the technical and managerial challenges that farms are facing in a competitive market environment (Nivievskiy *et al.*, 2013).

The distinct types of agricultural producers, ranging from agribusinesses to small private farms, have differing technical needs and knowledge gaps that are not necessarily met by existing services. In particular, the large number of rural households that are farming on small land plots, but are not functioning as commercial farms, tend to produce a limited number of products for local markets. They have the greatest need for extension services oriented towards the use of new technologies, marketing and how to receive loans. But this group is also the least likely to be able to afford fee-based specialized advice or training (Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting in Ukraine, 2004).

If the education and advisory needs of small-scale farmers are not being met, this has a particular impact on rural women who are more likely to manage small

farms or to work on their own household plots. In fact, a survey of rural women indicated that some of the problems they encounter when cultivating agricultural products for sale are related to their limited technical knowledge. Specifically, the women reported that they lacked information about how to run a business (18 percent of respondents), how to maximize yields (11 percent of respondents), about business start-ups (6 percent) and about starting or registering an agricultural cooperative (3 percent; Volosevych *et al.*, 2015). When asked about where they receive information that could assist them with agricultural production, the most common answers were specialized publications, television and the internet. A very small proportion of women (five percent or fewer) consulted with professional organizations, attended specialized conferences and seminars, or received advice from distribution companies; only one percent of respondents indicated that they use public advisory services (*ibid.*). Of note, a third of respondents did not provide an answer to this question, which was interpreted to mean that they did not use any of the named sources of information. Statistics from 2014 suggest that only 0.6 percent of all women working in agriculture had received any further training or retraining after having completed their formal education (Women's and human rights organizations on the initiative of the Gender Strategy Platform, 2016).

There are several good examples of donor-led initiatives that have devoted particular attention to the needs of women engaged in agriculture. They have ensured that women were included among participants of general training programmes and also developed special capacity-development activities aimed at women farmers.²⁴

Another area in which extension services can play an important role is in providing training and other activities to increase the skills of rural people to start and manage small non-agricultural businesses. These could include businesses in the processing of agricultural products or those that are well-suited to rural areas, such as green tourism, both of which are fields where there are opportunities to increase women's employment.

5.6. Access to agricultural inputs

Sex-disaggregated data about the ownership of important agricultural resources, such as farm equipment, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and veterinary

²⁴ Two examples are the AgroInvest Project (USAID) and the Ukraine Horticulture Development Project (Canadian International Development Agency).

services, for farming enterprises in Ukraine could not be found when research was conducted for this assessment. Official statistics about specific agricultural machinery, irrigation equipment or equipment used with livestock, for example, are only published by type of farming enterprise and not cross-referenced with the sex of the farm owner/manager.

Data about the proportion of rural households that have access to selected inputs do, however, provide an indication of gender-based differences. The differences are minimal for some resources, most likely because rural households that are working their own plots have limited access to mechanization and innovations in general. MHHs are somewhat more likely to cultivate land without a plough, while FHHs less often make use of irrigation of land or veterinary services (see Table 11).

The fact that female-headed households in rural areas make less use of sanitary checks on milk quality is unexpected especially given that almost a quarter of such households own cows (see Table 9) and dairy production is a traditional farming role for women. Women's more limited use of sanitary checks could mean that they do not meet the safety and hygiene standards that would enable them to sell milk on the market. It would be useful to have further information about how both FHHs and MHHs are impacted on by insufficiencies in agricultural inputs and knowledge

Table 11: Access to selected inputs and practices in rural households, by household head (2020)

Households which use:	FHHs (%)	MHHs (%)
Fertilizers	64.5	63.6
Organic manure	80.5	81.2
Plant protection chemicals	83.1	81.9
Land cultivation without a plough	7.2	8.2
Regionally-adapted crop types	26.7	28.1
Crop rotation	63.2	63.7
Irrigation	3.9	5.0
Artificial insemination	10.0	13.6
Veterinary checks	39.3	46.5
Sanitary control of milk quality	11.6	18.2

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020L.

about effective practices in terms of their abilities to sell agricultural products.

5.7. Entrepreneurship

Stimulating economic growth by supporting private enterprises, especially activating the potential of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and of individual entrepreneurs, is a priority for the Ukrainian government. Both the Strategy for Small and Medium-sized Enterprise Development in Ukraine until 2020 and the Action Plan for implementing this strategy also recognize the importance of making support for private business available in rural areas.

Promoting private enterprise has the potential to enhance rural development through support for SMEs that produce agricultural products, by expanding non-farm businesses, and by creating employment opportunities for rural populations, either with private enterprises or as individual entrepreneurs.

In 2019, there were 1 941 625 registered business entities²⁵ in Ukraine, a figure that includes both enterprises and individual entrepreneurs. In fact, individual entrepreneurs represent 80.4 percent of all business entities. Enterprises in the combined field of agriculture, forestry and fisheries represent a small proportion of the total number of enterprises – 13.6 percent of all enterprises (comprising large, medium and small enterprises). Only 1.6 percent of all individual entrepreneurs are engaged in agriculture (see Tables 12 and 13).

As is the case for business entities in Ukraine generally, most agricultural enterprises are characterized as microenterprises. Out of all business entities (enterprises and individual entrepreneurs combined) in the field of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, 89.6 percent are at the micro level.

Understanding how women are represented among entrepreneurs, as business owners and managers, is hindered by the fact that official sex-disaggregated data about owners and managers of businesses, as well as gender-specific information about businesses in rural areas is limited. Further data and qualitative information would provide a fuller picture of the scale of enterprises owned and managed by women, their activities and

²⁵ Enterprises in Ukraine are classified according to the average number of employees and annual revenue as follows: Individual entrepreneurs and micro enterprises (0–10 employees; revenue not greater than EUR 2 million); small enterprises (10–50 employees; revenue not greater than EUR 10 million); medium enterprises (51–250 employees; revenue not greater than EUR 50 million); large enterprises (over 250 employees; revenue greater than EUR 50 million).

Table 12: Number and size of legal enterprises and share operating in the agricultural sector (2019)

	Total number of enterprises	Number of enterprises in agriculture, forestry and fisheries
Legal enterprises including:	380 597	50 239
Large enterprises	518	34
Medium enterprises	17 751	2 281
Small enterprises including:	362 328	47 294
Microenterprises	313 380	42 633

Sources: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020b; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020o.

Table 13: Number and type of individual entrepreneurs and share operating in the agricultural sector (2019)

	Total number of individual entrepreneurs	Number of individual entrepreneurs in agriculture, forestry and fisheries
Individual entrepreneurs including:	1 561 028	25 211
Medium entrepreneurship	378	4
Small entrepreneurship including:	1 560 650	25 207
Micro entrepreneurship	1 550 633	24 994

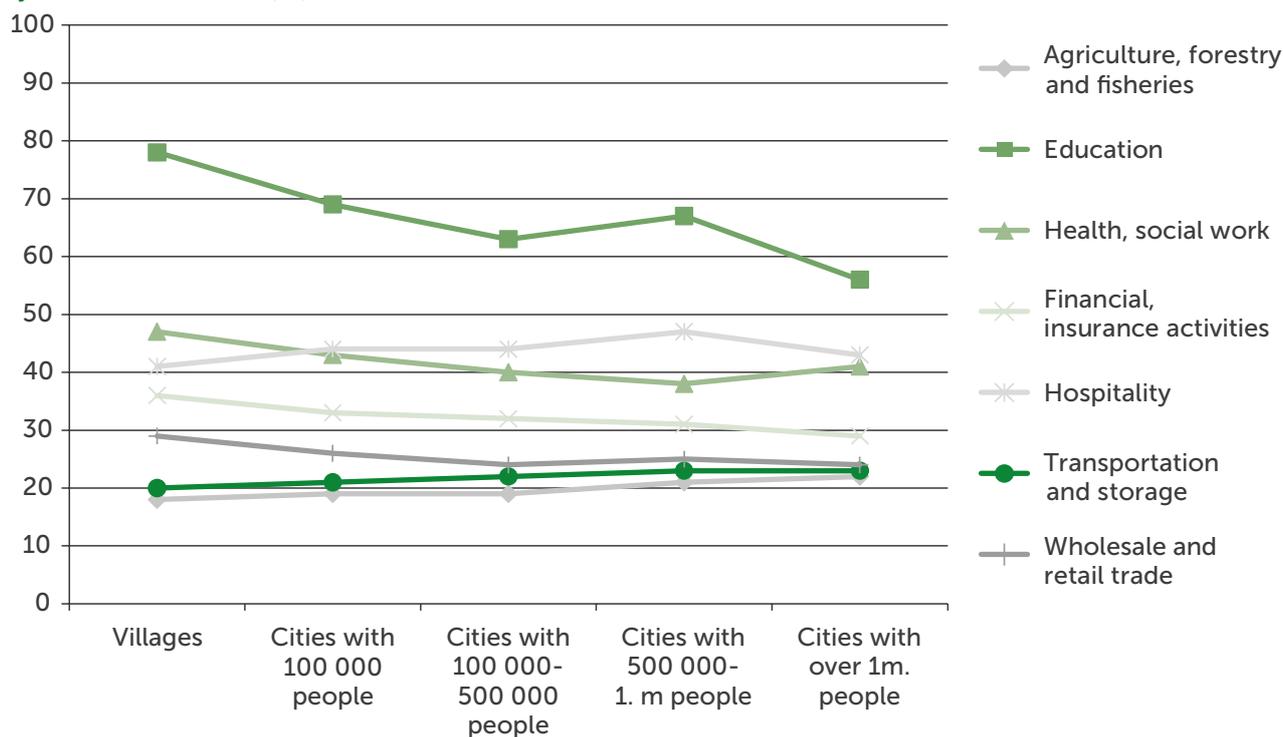
Sources: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020b; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020o.

profitability, and about women who work informally in the private sector.

Official records indicate that women represent less than a third of business leaders. As of January 2021, out of a total of 1 395 448 legal entities (note that not all legal entities are businesses), women head 29.2 percent (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021). This figure is similar to open data from the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities, Individual Entrepreneurs and Public Organizations (USREOU) that showed women as the managers of 30 percent of all legal entities in Ukraine (UNDP in Ukraine, 2017). Women's engagement as entrepreneurs is the most prevalent among the smallest-sized enterprises²⁶ or in sole ownership. In fact, according to USREOU data, there is almost gender balance in sole ownership: women represent 46 percent of individual entrepreneurs. Generally, women's engagement as majority owners and top managers of firms decreases as the size of the firm increases (World Bank, 2013).

Entrepreneurship in Ukraine reflects patterns of labour market segregation in as much as businesses that are primarily led by women tend to be in distinct sectors from those that are primarily led by men. For example, among SMEs and large enterprises, women are the majority owners of almost half of garment manufacturing firms, but they own less than ten percent of other types of manufacturing businesses (World Bank, 2013). The "female-dominated" business sectors (those in which women manage the majority of businesses or predominate among individual entrepreneurs) align closely with expectations about women's work and also where they are likely to have the most professional experience, namely where their businesses centre around care industries and support services. Specific sectors that are characteristic of women's businesses are: beauty treatments, education and childcare, social work and healthcare activities, accounting, bookkeeping and auditing, travel agency services, manufacturing of garments and some forms of wholesale and retail trade (UNDP in Ukraine, 2017). Men, on the other hand, represent the large majority of managers and individual entrepreneurs in businesses connected with information and communication, transportation and storage, construction and

²⁶ Using the World Bank definition of firms with 5–19 employees.

Figure 19: Percentage of women among managers of legal entities for selected economic activities and by size of settlement (%)

Source: UNDP in Ukraine, 2017, pp. 40–41.

manufacturing. It is worth noting that, according to USREOU data, men are overwhelmingly represented as business leaders in agriculture, forestry and fisheries; whereas women represent only 18.4 percent of managers and individual entrepreneurs in this sector (ibid.).

Data analysis also shows that the location of where a legal entity is registered, whether in a rural or urban area, has some bearing on women's representation as a manager or sole entrepreneur. For both legal entities and individual entrepreneurs, the percentage of women managers is greater in rural areas (villages) and in smaller cities. The general pattern is that the smaller the settlement, the more female business managers are present, but women individual entrepreneurs are most prevalent in small cities (with populations under 100 000) rather than in villages (UNDP in Ukraine, 2017). Moreover, the gender segregation is also more pronounced in villages than in larger cities, meaning that there is a tendency toward greater gender balance among business managers in urban areas, while in rural areas, the division between "female sectors" and "male sectors" is more stark. Figure 19, illustrates this phenomenon for several areas of economic activity.

Segregation by economic activity is also apparent for individual entrepreneurs, but in most sectors, women have more balanced representation in larger settlements than in villages. An important exception is the wholesale and retail trade, in which just over half

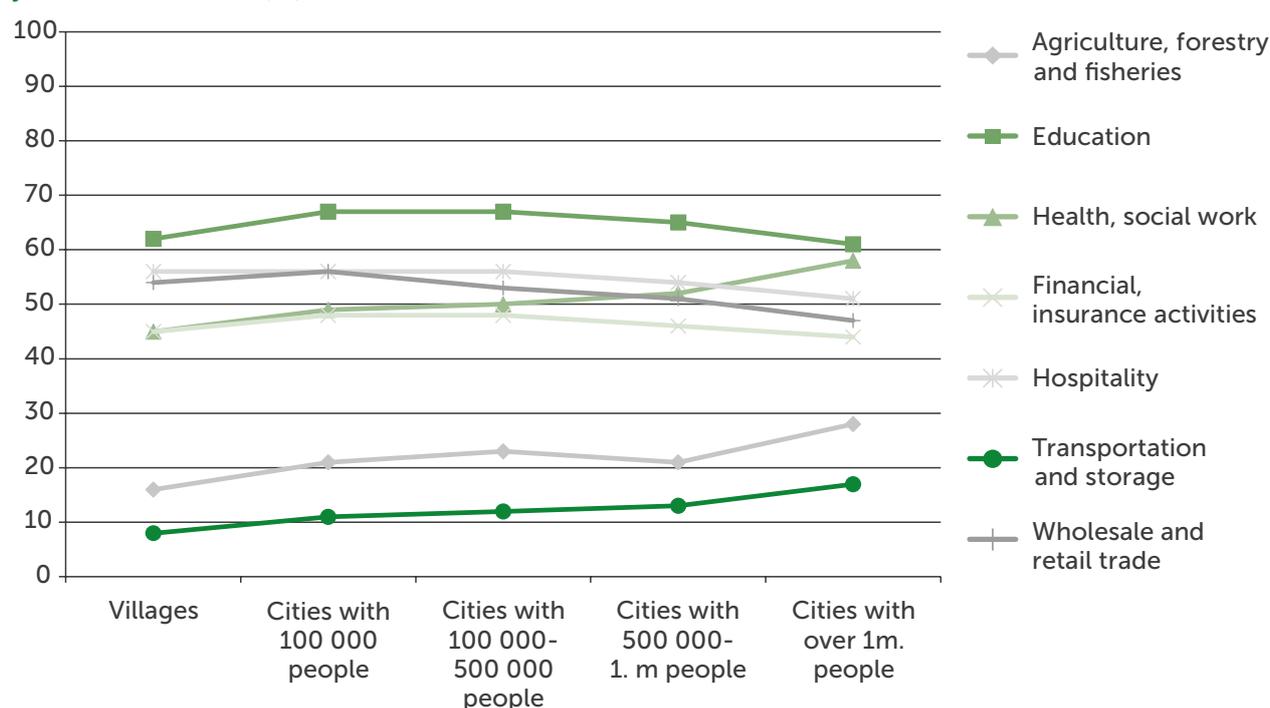
of all individual entrepreneurs are engaged. In fact, in smaller cities (with under 100 000 residents) and villages, 69–71 percent of all female sole entrepreneurs have wholesale and retail trade as their core activity, while the activity of female entrepreneurs in larger settlements is more diverse.

Women's seemingly greater entrepreneurial activity in rural areas does not mean that the private sector is well-developed there. Rather, the phenomenon most likely reflects the facts that there are fewer other employment opportunities, women face less competition to opening a business outside the larger cities, and also that they may not have as many opportunities to expand their businesses outside their own villages.

Notably, rural women have a very low presence in formal businesses related to agriculture, forestry and fisheries, which stands in stark contrast to the work they carry out in this sector. Whereas women lead a quarter of private enterprises, they are the heads of only 20.8 percent of legally-registered farms (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021). Women represent 18 percent of managers of businesses and 16 percent of individual entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector in rural areas. Only two percent of all female individual entrepreneurs in villages are engaged in agriculture, forestry or fisheries as a core activity (UNDP in Ukraine, 2017).

Studies of the business climate in Ukraine show that women and men entrepreneurs at the individual

Figure 20: Percentage of women among individual entrepreneurs for selected economic activities and by size of settlement (%)



Source: UNDP in Ukraine, 2017, p. 42.

and SME level, as well as business managers, identify many of the same constraints but some particular barriers pose greater challenges for women. For instance, surveys found that while female and male entrepreneurs (which includes SME managers) highlighted common obstacles, women tended to emphasize issues that included: the unstable political situation, limited support from government, local authorities and industry associations, not enough demand for their products or services, difficulties delivering good and services to their customers, the problem of liquidity and lack of working capital, and high levels of competition (Duban, 2017). In addition to the shared problems, men in business focused more attention on larger-scale issues such as the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, corruption, inflation, limited access to capital and/or credit and the lack of a qualified workforce (ibid.).

The fact that businesswomen cited some obstacles to a greater degree than men reflects differences in the scale of their businesses and the spheres in which they operate. Women are more likely to have businesses in saturated markets, the small size and profit margins of their enterprises limit the cash they can invest, and women do not have the same business networks and personal connections as men (either within authorities or associations). Both women and men entrepreneurs identify corruption as an obstacle to doing business, but, again, the degree to which this is a problem also varies. Male senior managers report more often that

they engage in some corrupt practices than others, and the same is true for female senior managers (for example, men more often report having to pay bribes to obtain import licenses, while women report that they pay bribes for operating licenses; UNDP in Ukraine, 2018). These variations are likely explained by the differences in the types of businesses that women and men manage. In general, when asked why they did not resort to corruption to resolve business issues, women entrepreneurs were much more likely than men to explain that they did not have enough money or did not know how to perform the corrupt activity. In this sense, the lower profile of women's businesses (meaning, they are more often sole proprietors or micro enterprises) may insulate them from some forms of corruption because they have less to offer.

The general constraints that women in business report are, of course, compounded for women trying to start or run a business in rural areas because they are more isolated from professional associations and networks, financial institutions, opportunities for business-related training and markets. Rural women who are engaged in agricultural production cite obstacles related to their lack of specific information that would help them operate a business, such as a lack of knowledge about business start-ups and problems accessing markets where their goods could be sold for a larger profit (Volosevych et al., 2015). Rural women entrepreneurs could be assisted through either agricultural extension or business advisory services or, ideally, a combination of the two.

In contrast to farming or business, women appear to have greater opportunities to found cooperatives. As of early 2021, 27.4 percent of legally-registered cooperatives were headed by women (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021). Even within this category, however, women are most active in consumers' cooperatives (also including service cooperatives) but are less likely to head an agricultural service cooperative (24.6 percent of such entities are led by women) or an agricultural production cooperative (only 15 percent of these cooperatives have women heads; *ibid.*). Some of the same factors that hinder women's businesses are likely to also present challenges for the creation of cooperatives. Therefore, the same types of capacity-building and technical support activities, for instance on business management or provision of equipment, could be equally beneficial to women in rural areas with an interest in either farming-based businesses or cooperatives.

5.8. Access to finance

The availability of finance is essential for anyone who is starting or expanding a business, and difficulties accessing credit (meaning, access to affordable loans) is a concern that both female and male entrepreneurs mention as a constraint to doing business in Ukraine. In one survey, 46 percent of male business managers and 36 percent of female managers identified access to capital/credit funds as a "highly or somewhat" hindering factor (GfK, 2017, no page number). The difference in response rates is likely to be connected to the fact that men in business tend to be more active in developing their businesses, whereas women are generally more risk averse and very often lack specific knowledge about how to transition from a sole entrepreneur to a small business.

There are no legal barriers that prevent women from applying for credit, but practice shows that women do not exercise this option, mainly due to their more limited access to the kinds of economic resources and property that are used to secure loans and high interest rates. Experts note that these two issues have a significant impact on rural women who are often "ready to start their own small businesses, but they cannot do it... due to... the lack of affordable loans" (Vološevych *et al.*, 2015, p. 50). As a rule, property that could serve as collateral is not in women's names because according to traditional practices, property is registered to the husbands. Among a group of surveyed rural women, 79 percent reported that they had not used credit at any time in the previous two years. Women who were living with a husband were much more likely to have received loans (20 percent, compared with 11 percent of single women). The reasons that rural women gave for not

applying for loans included a lack of trust in credit institutions, high interest rates, a lack of collateral, fear of taking on debt, no need for credit, and having been denied a loan in the past (*ibid.*).

The picture is similar concerning agricultural financing. Small farms are not attractive lenders for banks, due to their lack of collateral and "limited ability to generate adequately documented cash flow" (Chemonics International Inc., 2016, p. 24). For farmers, high-interest loans (with rates ranging from 15 to 25 percent) are not a viable option because "repayment under these terms would be fiscally impossible given current incomes in the agricultural sector" (Robbins and Galustian, 2017, p. 11). In the absence of microfinance institutions in Ukraine, banks and credit unions are the only options for small farmers to receive loans.

A fairly small proportion of rural women engaged in agricultural production (8 percent) named difficulty accessing loans as a reason for problems related to the sale of agricultural products (Vološevych *et al.*, 2015). This finding does not indicate a lack of need for credit but probably reflects the fact that rural women rarely use the services of banks or credit unions to apply for loans for agricultural purposes. They may simply not view credit as a realistic option, given that they would experience the constraints that small farmers face to the same or even to a greater degree. Women's lack of financial literacy to meet the requirements for loan applications has also been identified as a gender-specific barrier, as has their cautiousness and unwillingness to take risks (Chemonics International Inc., 2013). It is also significant that credit unions report that loans to family farms are usually used as a survival mechanism, to carry them from one season to the next. Men usually seek credit to purchase seeds, fertilizers, fuel, livestock and machinery. Women use credit mainly to purchase seedlings, but also for plastic for greenhouses, drip irrigation or items used for green tourism. What farmers have in common, though, is that "[t]hey are not taking risks or borrowing in order to try something new, and they are not using finance as a mechanism for expanding [an agro-business]" (*ibid.*, p. 33–34). There are examples of projects that have made affordable credit and grants, especially for women, available to farmers, with the results that they have been able to start-up ventures planting new/secondary crops and purchase new technologies.

6. Rural infrastructure and its impact on rural women

6.1. Housing conditions

In rural areas, individual houses are the dominant form of housing stock (93 percent of all rural housing; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020v) compared with individual apartments that are typical in cities and towns. Although rural houses are larger in terms of the number of rooms per person, 42 percent of the rural population is considered to reside in overcrowded housing (this figure is even higher for the urban population; *ibid.*).

Ukraine’s housing stock is fairly old; only ten percent of rural housing was built after 1991 (this is also typical for urban areas), and around three-quarters was built before the 1980s (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020v). Ageing of the country’s housing stock means that it is in need of repair, but capital repairs have proceeded slowly, and for the country as a whole, have been limited to urgent repairs that have not led to either “a substantial increase in housing quality [or] energy efficiency” (UNECE, 2013, p. 21).

Although rural residents are more likely to have made repairs to their houses, this varies based on the sex of the household head and their age. A study of rural women in Ukraine found that among those who had made major repairs to their houses, the work had been done between 10 and 25 years previously (Volosevych *et al.*, 2015, p. 54). Very often elderly women are prevented from making necessary house repairs due to their financial and health status, and so they live in substandard conditions.

There are very critical disparities in living conditions between rural and urban areas in terms of access to utilities. For example, around three-quarters of rural housing stock does not have a hot water supply,

and just under half have no central heating (see Table 14).

Not only are there regional variations in access to basic amenities, but there are also differences by household type. Households of older people, especially single people, are even less likely to have basic conveniences such as hot water supply, an indoor bath or shower, a home telephone, a supply of gas or sewerage. According to one study, only a small proportion of elderly single people in rural areas live in housing with basic conveniences. Women aged 60 and above in rural areas live in the most deprived conditions, with only around 12 percent having such basic amenities (see Table 15).

Rural households also have fewer standard household items, including many that are considered labour-saving for women because they are used for domestic chores (for example, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, microwave ovens and food processors).

Table 14: Access to utilities in rural and urban housing stock (2019)

Percentage of housing stock equipped with:	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
	Water supply	38.3
Sewerage	34.5	77.1
Heating (except for stove heating)	55.7	78.6
Hot water supply	25.0	61.6
Gas supply	83.7	81.8

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020h.

Table 15: Access to conveniences, by household type and settlement, 2011 (%)

Household type:	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Persons aged 60 years and above	20.0	35.1
Single women aged 60 years and above	11.9	29.0
Single men aged 60 years and above	12.3	25.4
Households with children and with at least one woman aged 60 years and above	35.1	40.5

Source: Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms and UNFPA, 2014, p. 53.

National surveys offer insights into the impact of poverty on access to basic household goods. Rural households more often report that they are unable to purchase the basic goods listed in Table 16. For instance, 11.0 percent of rural respondents report that they have insufficient funds to purchase a washing machine (compared with 5.1 percent of urban respondents) and 3.2 percent of rural households cannot afford to buy a refrigerator (compared with only 2.3 percent of urban households; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020g).

Table 16: Households with selected durable goods, by locality, 2018 (% of total population)

Goods:	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Refrigerator	98.6	97.9
Freezer	37.3	16.2
Washing machine	86.7	91.6
Electric vacuum cleaner	72.0	84.1
Microwave oven	44.7	57.9
Food processor	10.0	20.7
Sewing machine	21.9	20.1
Television	96.3	94.0
Personal computer	24.7	42.1
Mobile telephone	95.9	98.2
Bicycle	65.7	29.7

Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2019a, p. 15.

All rural household members are negatively affected by a lack of basic comforts and limitations on consumer goods, but because women spend a larger share of their time at home, they may experience these deprivations to a greater degree. For instance, the lack of hot water and washing machines has a greater impact on women because they tend to have responsibility for cleaning, laundering and bathing children. In Ukraine, elderly women living in rural areas are especially likely to be living in conditions with few modern conveniences and comforts.

6.2. Energy sources

Access to electricity is nearly universal through the national grid in Ukraine, but more remote rural areas may experience an intermittent energy supply. Rural households, especially farming households, often make their own arrangements to compensate for this, for example, by purchasing electricity generators or gas in tanks (Chemonics International Inc., 2013). Unreliable electricity supply, in addition to poverty, may explain why rural residents are less likely to own household items such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines.

Energy used for heating and cooking is a special concern for rural areas in Ukraine. Central heating is not used in these areas, but most rural homes rely on gas boilers or other types of individual heating (primarily heating by a stove that uses solid fuels such as wood or coal, see Table 17). Rural communities that live near forests rely heavily on fuelwood for heating and cooking, especially because coal and liquefied natural gas are often unaffordable. However, harvest of fuelwood requires a permit and so rural households must still pay for this fuel source (Zhyla *et al.*, 2014). Fuel shortages and problems with energy supply have a particular impact on women as they usually bear the burden of finding alternative solutions for cooking, heating the home and heating water.

Rural women tend to be energy poor. The most common types of heating used by rural women are similar to the pattern for rural areas on the whole. The large majority rely on gas boilers or a stove for heating, with some having more than one source of heat in their homes (Volosevych *et al.*, 2015). Fewer than half of the rural women in this research reported that they have hot water in their homes (43 percent); most heat water using a gas boiler and only 17 percent were connected to a centralized hot water supply (*ibid.*).

Table 17: Energy supply in rural and urban housing stock (2020)

Percentage of households equipped with:	Rural (%)		Urban (%)	
	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Central heating	0.1	52.6		
Individual heating system	61.8	41.3		
Gas boiler	7.1	11.9		
Central gas supply	64.6	88.1		
Gas cylinder	25.9	2.8		
Electric floor heating	2.7	7.0		

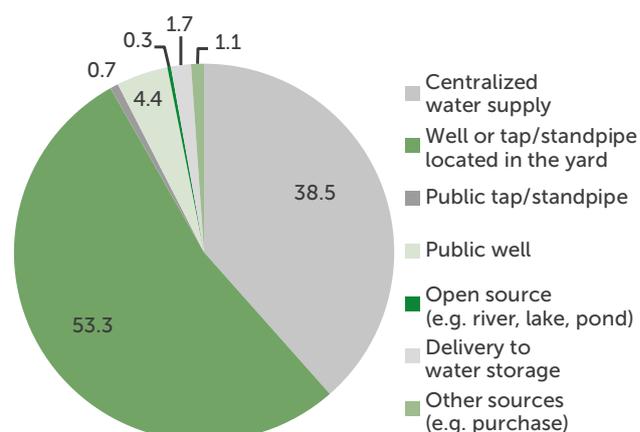
Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020v, p. 40.

Recent events in Ukraine have also impacted on the affordability of energy. In the past, a large number of Ukrainians benefitted from subsidies for fuel and heating that kept prices for consumers comparatively low. In 2014, as a requirement of International Monetary Fund lending, such subsidies were reduced. The immediate impact was a very large increase in utility bills and a reduction in household energy consumption by 30 percent. Experts have pointed out that the increase in fuel tariffs was not matched by increases in either wages or pensions. Furthermore, the negative impact has been disproportionately felt by rural residents, especially women, who are further impoverished and may suffer health consequences when they cut back on fuel consumption (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 2017).

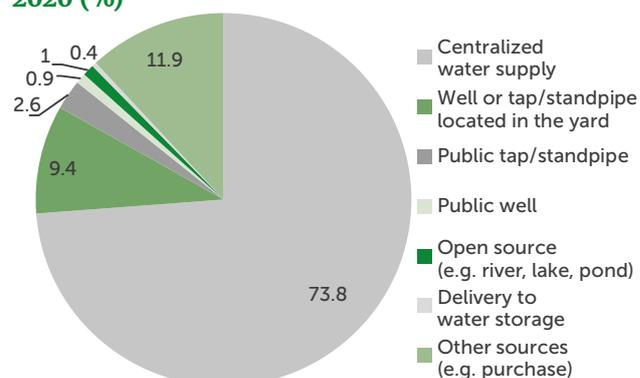
Ukraine depends on energy imports even though it has energy-generating capacity. National Goal 7 of the SDGs focuses on developing affordable and clean energy, which would require a shift from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind, hydropower, biomass, and gas from organic waste (UNDP in Ukraine, 2015). Some renewable energy initiatives (such as solar or wind energy) could be particularly beneficial for rural households, but may also require substantial initial investment to convert to new systems, which is not feasible for many, especially for female-headed households.

6.3. Safe drinking water and sanitation

Although Ukraine has adequate water resources for industry, agriculture and household use, ensuring water supply to rural households is problematic. Access to the centralized water supply system has

Figure 21: Main sources of water used for drinking and cooking in rural households, 2020 (%)


Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020v, p. 38.

Figure 22: Main sources of water used for drinking and cooking in urban households, 2020 (%)


Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020v, p. 38.

increased, but there are still considerable disparities between urban and rural areas. According to a national report, in 2015, over 90 percent of cities and towns were served by a centralized water supply, while this was the case for only 22 percent of rural settlements (UNDP in Ukraine, 2015). As of 2018, a larger share of rural households had access to the centralized water supply, but around two-thirds still relied on other water sources for drinking and cooking, most often a well or standpipe located near the house. As illustrated in Figures 21 and 22, rural households that do not have access to water through wells, standpipes or open water sources rely on water delivered by truck and seldom purchase water.

Insufficient safe drinking water affects the lives of all household members in terms of health and personal hygiene, but the situation also impacts on women and men differently. Due to the gendered division of labour, women are the major users of household water (which

Table 18: Sanitation estimates for rural and urban households (2012)

	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Improved sources:	97.1	99.7
Connection to sewer system	7.8	74.9
Piped to septic tank	3.2	0.7
Latrines	86.1	24.1

Source: Data generated from WHO and UNICEF, 2019.

they use in preparing meals, washing dishes, cleaning, laundering and bathing children).

Problems with water supply mean that only a very small proportion of the rural population has access to centralized sewer networks. Sanitation facilities in rural households consist primarily of pit latrines (latrines that are covered by a roof and door and located in private yards separated from living areas) rather than septic tanks. Less than ten percent of rural housing stock has a connection to a sewer network (see Table 18).

6.4. Roads and rural transport

The poor condition of rural roads, or even a lack of roads, means that residents can be cut off from basic services including, for example, emergency medical assistance provided by ambulances. Poor road infrastructure, such as a lack of street lights, speed limit signs and road markings, has consequences for the safety of drivers, a larger proportion of whom are men, and pedestrians, among which there are many women.

In households that own cars (around a quarter of rural households), most car owners are men. According to one survey, only three percent of rural women reported that they own their own car (Volosevych *et al.*, 2015). Due in large part to prevailing gender stereotypes that men are the owners, and therefore drivers, of private cars, rural women are much more likely to walk or rely on public transport for their daily needs.

Rural areas are also underserved by transportation networks. More than a quarter of rural settlements have no public transport. Furthermore, 484 rural settlements (that encompass a population of 57 400 people) are located more than 10 kilometres from the nearest public transport stop, while 661 settlements (with a total population of 451 600) are located more than 10 kilometres from paved roads (FAO, 2016b). Only 47.8 percent of rural streets are paved.

The majority of rural women in one survey have a local shop that has basic necessities within walking distance, but access to other services is more limited. For instance, only around three-quarters of women reported that they can walk to preschools, schools or post offices, and half or fewer women have a pharmacy, medical facility or bank within walking distance. Around 60 percent of women respondents reported that they must use local transport to reach banks or larger stores that sell clothing, shoes and household goods. Between 12 percent and 16 percent of rural women responded that it is problematic for them to reach banks and large shops (Volosevych *et al.*, 2015). Women's mobility is further affected when transport becomes less available in the winter or due to the reduction of certain routes and cost increases (that reflect rising fuel prices; *ibid.*).

Further research would be useful to better understand the gender differences in how rural women and men cope with poor roads and transport deficiencies, and also the impact on their employment and livelihoods, access to health and education services and ability to take advantage of cultural and leisure activities.

6.5. Social infrastructure and protection

One of the national targets for addressing SDG 1 (ending poverty) is the implementation of appropriate social protection systems and measures (such as targeted assistance programmes) to ensure maximum coverage of poor and vulnerable people by 2030. The system of social benefits in Ukraine includes: various pensions schemes (including old age pensions and disability pensions); insurance (for example, unemployment benefits, sickness insurance, maternity benefits and employment injury insurance); social assistance (such as childbirth/maternity benefit, benefits to single mothers, and assistance for low-income families, persons with disabilities and caregivers of persons with disabilities); and social protections (including for war veterans and related to the Chernobyl accident). A MAPS assessment of Ukraine's roadmap towards the SDGs assessed the social protection system in Ukraine to be "complex, fragmented and inefficient, with critical gaps. Despite absorbing 17–18% of GDP, social protection expenditure is ineffective in reducing poverty and inequality..." (MAPS Mission, 2018, p. 32).

Despite the need for an overhaul, a substantial number of people rely heavily on the current social protection system. For the country as a whole, about half of household income is derived from wages, while social benefits and other allowances constitute another 27 percent (United Nations in Ukraine, 2018b). In fact, as a proportion of the whole, rural inhabitants form the majority of social assistance applicants (FAO, 2016b).

The issue of providing social assistance to IDPs has become a critical concern over the last few years. This topic is addressed in section 4 of this report.

Ukraine is in the midst of comprehensive reform of the system of state social support, with a key goal of ensuring that social benefits can be financed by the state and are properly targeted to those in need. This country gender assessment cannot cover the complexities of the social protection system but, rather, highlights the following areas in which potential impacts have been identified.

First, changes were introduced to the **pension** system in 2011, with one of the most significant reforms being the equalization of the retirement age for women and men; this means raising women's retirement age from 55 to 60 years in six-month increments up to 2021 (the retirement age for men in some professions has also been increased to 62 years). Women's historically earlier retirement age, as well as their average lower salaries, has contributed to a gender gap in old age pensions. As of the beginning of 2020, this gap was 32.4 percent – the average monthly pension for women was UAH 2 602 (approximately USD 110) compared with UAH 3 851 for men (approximately USD 163); the pension gap is also considerably larger than the wage gap (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020w). In addition to leaving the labour market sooner (as well as time out of work when raising children), women live longer on average than men, and these factors not only explain why women account for two-thirds of the total number of pensioners in Ukraine (or seven million women; *ibid.*), but also why older women are especially vulnerable to poverty. The fact that rural women are likely to have work histories that include informal employment means that any state pension they receive may well be insufficient to meet even the subsistence minimum. Experts point out that levelling the retirement ages for women and men has not fully taken into consideration the various inequalities that exist in the labour market, such as women's lower participation rates in the formal economy, as mentioned above, their overrepresentation in low paid sectors of the economy and in positions that receive lower wages, and the unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities. All of these factors combine to mean that many women, and rural women in particular, may simply not have attained enough pensionable employment to retire with the minimum pension.

Concern has also been raised about reform of social assistance in the form of **childcare benefits**. In 2014, the system of monthly payments for childcare up to the age of three years was effectively ended. Under the former system, families with children received monthly benefits for childcare in addition to a one-off payment

per child, based on the number of children in the family. This benefit "helped low-income families and single parents to survive during their time away from the labour market" (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 2017, p. 8). Under the reformed system, a fixed payment is given at birth per child (regardless of how many children are in the family), which is paid in instalments over three years. Because women shoulder the larger burden of childcare (in 2013, for example, only one percent of men took parental leave), such changes to social assistance "primarily affect the economic independence of women" (*ibid.*, p. 9).

While childcare benefits are technically available for all mothers, for low-income families, for families with multiple children and for single mothers (who represent the large majority of single parents), the actual cash amount provided is often inadequate to meet basic needs. For instance, an insured pregnant woman receives a social benefit equal to her salary before maternity leave, while an uninsured woman would receive a benefit of around UAH 400 (approximately USD 15) for pregnancy and childbirth. Benefits for single parents range from approximately UAH 1 492 (USD 57) for children under the age of six years, to UAH 1 762 (USD 67) for children over age 18 years (UN World Food Programme, 2017). The benefits for single parents of especially young children are unlikely to be sufficient to cover the nutritional needs of children or breastfeeding mothers, who "require foods with high nutritional content that are more expensive than regular food" (*ibid.*, p. 15).

Lastly, it should also be noted that Roma women face particular difficulties accessing any kind of childcare benefits, or indeed other forms of social assistance, due to the fact that they very often have no identification documents, and therefore cannot obtain birth certificates for their children. For some Roma women, child benefits are their primary financial resource (European Roma Rights Centre and the International Charitable Organization Roma Women Fund "Chiricli", 2016).

Childcare and preschool education

Limited access to affordable childcare and preschool education for rural households not only impacts on children's readiness for school but also restricts the opportunities that women with young children have to engage in paid employment outside the home, to take part in training or other development projects, and to participate in local decision-making.

In Ukraine, preschool education is guaranteed by law for children ages one to six years. Demand for

preschool education is high, but coverage is not sufficient to meet this demand. In rural areas, only 40 percent of preschool-age children attend preschools as opposed to 68 percent of children in urban areas (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020s). More than 17 000 rural settlements (66 percent of the total) have no preschool education institutions for children under the age of six years (Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, 2017). Various factors contribute to the lower attendance of rural children in preschool education, such as the distance of such facilities from rural households

or the absence of preschools, overcrowding, outdated teaching materials, the high cost of private preschools and the lack of alternative facilities. In addition, rural areas have difficulties attracting qualified professionals. Although university graduates are offered a one-time allowance to work for three years in rural schools, fewer and fewer are taking advantage of this possibility each year (for example, in 2014, 2 504 graduates took this allowance compared with 800 in 2016; Putcha *et al.*, 2018). It is thought that graduates in preschool education are reluctant to relocate to rural areas for three years.

7. Food security and nutrition

Goal 2 of the national SDGs is to end hunger in Ukraine by promoting sustainable agriculture. Several deficiencies have been identified that are potential threats to food security: the typical diet is nutritionally unbalanced (consumption of meats, dairy products, fish, fruits and berries are all lower than the optimal levels); and households spend a large proportion of their incomes on food. In 2019, households spent the equivalent of 48.5 percent of their expenditure on food (including meals away from home). Rural households allocate a larger share of total expenditure to food – more than half (51.4 percent; State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d). These figures are three to five times higher than those found in EU countries. In the Global Food Safety Index for 2019, Ukraine earned 57.1 points (out of a maximum of 100), which resulted in a ranking of 56 out of 113 countries (Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, 2020).

Ukraine is a country with a low level of hunger – a significant improvement since 2000 when it had a moderate level of hunger according to estimates by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI, 2018). However, Ukraine does exhibit a trend in increasing rates of overweight and obesity, signs of poor nutritional status. Differences also appear for women and men. Among children and adolescents aged 5 to 19 years, the rates of underweight have decreased since 1999, but during the same period, rates of overweight and obesity have increased, and to a greater extent among boys than girls. A different pattern is seen among adults; while overweight and obesity rates are also increasing among adults, men are more likely to be overweight, but obesity rates are higher among women (see Table 19).

The increasing rates of overweight and obesity in Ukraine could be related to a number of factors, such as overconsumption of calorie dense foods, a lack of knowledge about nutrition and a decline in physical activity. Ukraine has a low level of exclusive

Table 19: Nutritional status for children and adults, by sex, 2015 (%)

	Children and adolescents (aged 5 to 19 years)	
	Girls	Boys
Underweight	16.2	13.5
Overweight	18.1	24.2
Obesity	4.7	8.9
	Adults	
	Women	Men
Overweight	55.5	61.4
Obesity	25.7	22.0

Source: Development Initiatives Poverty Research Ltd., 2018, no page number.

breastfeeding (estimated to be 19.7 percent of the relevant population), and according to the World Health Organization, there is increasing evidence that breastfeeding can play a role in protection against childhood overweight and obesity (FAO, 2018b).

There is some evidence of micronutrient deficiencies among women in Ukraine, most notably among pregnant women. The prevalence of anaemia among women aged 15 to 49 years increased from 21.4 percent in 2005 to 23.5 percent in 2016 (FAO, 2018b). In 2007, it was estimated that only around half (55 percent) of women who had been pregnant in the last five years had received iron and folic acid during their pregnancies (Development Initiatives Poverty Research Ltd., 2018). Target 2.2. for SDG 2 concerns ending all forms of malnutrition by 2025, with particular attention to the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women.

Information about nutrition and food security for women and men in rural areas was not found for this

assessment, however, it is known that poverty affects the extent to which households are able to purchase a variety of nutritious foods. Data about household food consumption indicate that rural households consume less of certain food groups, such as meat, fish, fruits and berries, compared with urban households, but they also rely more on the consumption of breads, oils and fats, vegetables (especially potatoes) and sugars for their daily meals (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2020d).

Intra-household decisions about food and nutrition can have a gender dimension, which could account for the fact that obesity is more prevalent among women than men. For instance, a 2005 study among people in rural areas found that a high proportion of men and women (62.6 percent of men and 43.5 percent of women) agreed with the proposition that because men work more, they require “more and better quality food” (Tolstokorova, 2009, p. 5). Women traditionally undertake the role of purchasing food and preparing meals, and 41 percent of rural women in one survey reported that they have to economize on food in order to purchase needed clothes and shoes (Vološevych *et al.*, 2015). There may also be an educational component, and if women do not have adequate information about nutrition, they may not be selecting the optimal products, even when they are available to them.

Finally, nutritional needs and food security among the IDP population and for inhabitants of conflict-affected areas have a different character to populations living in other parts of the country. These issues are addressed in section 4 of this report.

7.1. Climate change adaptation and disaster risk management

Climate change poses several potential risks to Ukraine’s agricultural sector, for instance in the form of the vulnerability of crops to changes in precipitation and temperature, an increased risk of both droughts and floods, the erosion of coastal areas and an increased risk of forest fires (USAID, 2016). Climate change also threatens food security. Although rising temperatures in some parts of the country could benefit crop yields, more fertile regions may be harmed if rainfall decreases. Ukraine has recognized the need to build the resilience of socially vulnerable populations and reduce their exposure to climate-related events, extreme weather, environmental shocks and natural disasters (see for example, SDGs 1, 2 and 13).

It is important that measures for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction be guided by principles of gender equality and women’s

empowerment. Gender inequalities, and in particular the specific roles that women and men play, as well as their unique needs, vulnerabilities and sources of livelihoods, must be given consideration in adaptation and mitigation strategies. In brief, climate policy should be gender-responsive, in the same way that gender has been mainstreamed into other policymaking.

In general terms, women and men experience climate change differently, and gender inequalities (which can encompass economic disparities, differences in access to productive resources, different levels of education and cultural norms, for instance) affect their abilities to successfully adapt. At the same time, women’s contributions to finding long-term solutions to climate change are often unrecognized, in part because women are often excluded from formal decision-making at the local, national and international levels. Given differences in gender roles (for example, women’s greater responsibility for gathering food, fuel and water), it is frequently the case that women have a unique understanding about what is needed to adapt to changes in the environment and can offer innovative solutions. However, when gender is not effectively integrated into efforts around climate change, opportunities to take advantage of women as change agents can be missed.

During the desk review process for this country gender assessment, no comprehensive research was found that explores the intersections of gender and climate change in Ukraine. The only exception was some targeted analysis related to investments in the scale-up of renewable energy as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, focusing on district heating in Ukraine.²⁷ While the findings of this analysis are more relevant to the narrow topic of priorities in heating investments, some general patterns of difference are revealed. Namely, women are impacted on to a greater degree by insufficient heating (due to their larger share of domestic responsibilities), they are also more knowledgeable about the cost of heating (due to their role in paying bills), and employment in the district heating sector is male-dominated (especially in technical and managerial positions; Hjorth and Stoltz, 2016). The lessons learned that can be extrapolated from this study can be applied to other initiatives aimed at managing the impacts of climate change. Specifically, these include that it should not be assumed that women and men have the same experiences, and that women may be well-positioned to adapt new strategies at the household level, but that there may be

²⁷ For example, a gender assessment was conducted under a project conducted by the Clean Technology Fund (CTF) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in 2016.

too few women at certain decision-making levels to be influential.

Additional and issue-specific assessments are needed to better understand the gender issues implicated in other fields related to climate change. It should be noted that at the time of this country gender

assessment, FAO in Ukraine was supporting research into the gender risks associated with natural resource management and agriculture under a project that addresses land degradation (sponsored by the Global Environment Facility).

8. Recommendations

The recommendations contained within the following section are generated from the findings documented in this country gender assessment. The recommendations also reflect a consensus call for action, which was a key outcome of the regional conference on *Promoting socially inclusive rural development in Europe and Central Asia: Action for the 2030 Agenda*, convened by the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) with the support of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2017 (FAO, 2018a).

Most of the recommendations pertain to FAO in the context of implementing the Country Programming Framework for 2020–2022 that itself aims to address the most critical gender inequalities in agriculture and rural development. Additional recommendations are provided to policymakers, with a focus on the state structures with mandates concerning agriculture and rural development, as well as improving the status of women in Ukraine.

8.1. For FAO

1. In implementing the CPF for 2020–2022:

- » Ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the Country Programming Framework. Priority areas, targets, outcomes, outputs, activities and indicators of the CPF should take gender inequalities and gaps into consideration.
- » Take into account particular impacts on socially deprived and disadvantaged groups, primarily rural women and men, when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating all programmes and projects.
- » Conduct dedicated gender analysis for specific sub-sectors related to agriculture and rural development; and consider publishing such gender analyses in order to add to the evidence base in Ukraine. Research is needed into how COVID-19 has impacted on the rural population, with attention to

how gender gaps have widened as a result of the pandemic.

2. In working with government and other stakeholders:

- » Build knowledge of and competencies in issues pertaining to gender equality and women's empowerment to support rural and agricultural development in Ukraine.
 - » Support the further production, analysis and dissemination of gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated data. There is a strong need for technical assistance in how to implement a gender-sensitive agricultural census. FAO should also provide expertise in how to produce gender statistics from existing databases and administrative data.
 - » Provide support to the State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre to develop statistical data on gendered patterns of land ownership and use.
 - » Raise gender awareness among the relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture, as well as other national stakeholders, especially the agencies responsible for formulating and implementing rural development policies. Specific actions could include supporting and disseminating gender statistics and qualitative research into sub-issues concerning gender, agriculture and rural development.
3. In raising the visibility of rural women and women's role in agriculture:
- » Use opportunities to profile women's contributions to agriculture as well as the vulnerabilities and capabilities of rural women in Ukraine. FAO should avoid gender neutral language and descriptions in its materials and should highlight issues pertaining to rural women, including rural women from national minority groups, whenever possible.

8.2. For Government and national institutions

1. In formulating gender-inclusive national policies, strategies and programmes for agriculture and rural development:

- » Ensure that national policy and strategies on gender equality are not isolated from other broad reform efforts but, rather, that each inform the other.
- » Improve the evidence base for policymaking, through support for the production of gender statistics and for detailed analysis of how gender issues intersect with other topics that have so far been approached as gender neutral (for example, smallholder/family farming, access to land markets, the expansion of large agro-holdings, agricultural value chains, agricultural production in conflict-affected territories and climate change).
- » Identify and expand on good practices in gender mainstreaming of policies and programmes on agriculture and rural development. Ensure that lessons learned from gender mainstreaming in one sector are applied to other sectors. Implement a uniform methodology for gender mainstreaming to address disjointed efforts across sectors and introduce accountability mechanisms to make sure that gender-responsive initiatives are implemented.
- » When conducting gender analysis related to the development of policy, strategies or programmes on rural development and agriculture, include separate assessments of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and men in rural areas.

2. In supporting programmes aimed at rural women's economic empowerment:

- » Create decent work (paid jobs in the formal sector) for rural women in agriculture and off-farm sectors of the economy. Aim to diversify employment opportunities for rural women and narrow the gender wage gap. Support the (re)training and recruitment of women related to jobs that were once

prohibited under national labour law but are now, theoretically, accessible to women.

- » Increase support for women farmers and women who want to enter into entrepreneurial activity with rural-based businesses (both agricultural and non-agricultural). Support could encompass financial and legal support, as well capacity-building, to increase women's entrepreneurship skills and address knowledge gaps. Special measures should be included in post-COVID-19 recovery plans to ensure that rural women entrepreneurs have access to affordable loans and other forms of support.

3. In projects on social protection reform and rural development:

- » Design and implement transformative social protection policies and measures that will address the needs of the large population of elderly rural women who are vulnerable to poverty (including non-monetary poverty), deprivation and social isolation.
- » Invest in rural infrastructure that specifically targets rural women, including through investment in physical infrastructure and social infrastructure (for example, increasing access to basic services), and policies and programmes to ensure that unpaid care work is recognized, reduced and reorganized.

4. In raising the visibility of rural women and women's role in agriculture:

- » Following national priorities to address gender stereotypes, use opportunities to promote a non-stereotypical image of the "woman farmer in Ukraine," and of women in other agriculture-related professions, and raise awareness of rural women's capabilities, as well as their vulnerabilities.
- » Engage male leaders and stakeholders in efforts to overcome gender stereotypes, especially in sectors related to agriculture and rural development.

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