

**UKRAINE**  
**GENDER REVIEW**

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# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND: TEN YEARS OF TRANSITION

Since the late 1980s, Ukraine has undergone a number of fundamental political, economic and social changes. There are regional variations, particularly between the rural and urban areas, but since independence, Ukraine has experienced “one of the most severe economic declines of any country in this century.”<sup>1</sup> During that time, national income declined about 60 percent, real incomes dropped sharply, as did social indicators, and 27 percent of the population found itself below the poverty line.<sup>2</sup>

After a decade of “missed opportunities and great disappointments on the economic and social front,”<sup>3</sup> however, indications are that the economy may have begun to turn around. The Government’s pro-reform program, budget surplus, and improved 2000 economic performance provide some basis for optimism. Indeed, 2000 was the first year of GDP growth since independence, and among the emerging small and medium enterprise sector, there was “almost universal growth in value added activities.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, despite continuing concerns over the difficult institutional environment and the strength of vested interests in Ukraine, there are voices in Government and civil society committed to fundamental reforms. The 2000 CAS therefore focused on building *demand* for better governance and seizing available opportunities to increase the *supply* of better, development-oriented institutions. It is hoped that this report will contribute to both building blocks by suggesting useful guidelines to help ensure that no-one is excluded from emerging opportunities on the basis of gender.

In the following discussion, we use *gender* to refer to the ways people in society interpret sexual differences, and the socially learned behaviors, expectations and identities associated with males and females. Gender, like race, ethnicity or class, is a social category that profoundly shapes the way in which an individual participates in society and the economy. Thus, gender roles and relationships are relevant to development, because they can open up or severely limit economic, political and or social opportunities. While the nature and extent of gender inequities varies worldwide, nowhere do women and girls enjoy parity with men in access to and control of resources, in economic participation or political voice. But although “women and girls bear the largest and most direct costs of these inequities, gender disparities detrimentally affect the welfare of everyone in society.”<sup>5</sup> It is therefore essential to give voice to

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<sup>1</sup> Ukraine: Restoring Growth with Equity: A Participatory Country Economic Memorandum. The World Bank. October 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Country Assistance Strategy for Ukraine. The World Bank. August 16, 2000. The poverty figure given here is based on consumption that is 75 percent of median.

<sup>3</sup> Ukraine: Social Safety Nets and Poverty. Volume I. The World Bank. ECSHD. June 15, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Max Yacoub, Bohdan Senchuk, and Taras Tkachenko. Ukrainian Enterprises in 2000: An IFC Survey of Ukrainian Business. IFC. May 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Engendering Development: Policy Research Report on Gender and Development. The World Bank. 2000.

both men and women in the exploration of gender relations and their implications for development.

The evolution of gender relations in Ukraine is complex. During the Soviet period, Ukrainian men and women enjoyed equal access to education and employment, and women participated in government, enjoyed generous maternity leave and other child-related benefits, and rights to early retirement and pension. For the most part (except for protective labor legislation that excluded women from “dangerous” but also highly paid and benefited jobs), legislation treated women and men equally. Throughout the Soviet period, however, widespread conservatism undercut the liberating aspects of gender equality; women continued to bear primary responsibility for the family, giving rise to the infamous “double burden” of work and housework that handicapped women. Women’s representation on political bodies notwithstanding, their real power remained limited and men overwhelmingly dominated in the higher echelons of power. As Hefte neatly summarizes it: “Lenin promised equality to women; Stalin mobilized a massive workforce of women while reversing many of Lenin’s reforms directed at benefiting women; and Gorbachev, through *perestroika* and *glasnost*, unintentionally lowered the standard of living and intentionally promoted the return of women to the hearth in order to “save” the Union from perceived social ills...”<sup>6</sup>

The economic and social upheaval of the transition has had different but arguably equally difficult impacts on poor men and women. In the current socioeconomic situation, strongly entrenched stereotypes of men as leaders, managers, and primary breadwinners, and stereotypes of women as wives and mothers first, workers second, limit actual gender equality in Ukrainian society. Wide-scale male underemployment and unemployment has undermined the traditional role of men, thereby affecting the structure of authority and relative bargaining power of men and women within the household. Changing roles have introduced uncertainties in gender relations that are reflected in declining marriage and fertility rates, and increasing numbers of female-headed households and children living in single-parent families. Inability to live up to role expectations and the consequent decline in self-esteem appear related to sharp increases in alcoholism, suicide and mortality rates among men, as well as increased levels of domestic violence. For women, gender-based job discrimination, loss of state support for child care, poor maternal health, limited political representation, gender-based violence and the dramatic increase in prostitution and trafficking have also emerged as serious issues. At the same time, a burgeoning civil society sector, the emergence of many organizations addressing social problems whose existence was formerly ignored or denied, and the emergence of a private sector provide opportunities to explore new solutions.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THIS REVIEW**

The study focuses on gender-related issues that have a poverty impact. Gender-sensitive development strategies contribute significantly to economic growth by ensuring that all

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<sup>6</sup> Hefte, 2000. P. 19.

groups of the poor share in program benefits. As an example, the serious trends in male health (mediated through alcoholism, suicide, stress-related illness, etc.) has a direct impact on male productivity and household well-being. Such a focus addresses the fact that differences between men's and women's needs are not always fully recognized in poverty analysis or taken into consideration in the selection and design of poverty reduction strategies.

To date, gender issues in the ECA region, including Ukraine, have received limited Bank attention. Part of the reason is that Bank interventions have focused on developing the macroeconomic institutions seen as vital for surviving the transition and reviving the economy. Another reason has been that relative to most other Regions where the Bank works, gender issues have not been seen as acute. It has become evident over time, however, that the transition has impacted men and women differently. As a result, the Ukraine Country Assistance Strategy (FY 01-03) explicitly called for a study to identify policy options for integrating gender issues more effectively in Bank assistance. The proposed gender review also received positive expressions of interest and support from the Ministry of Economy. The main audiences of the review consist of internal Bank staff and management and the Government of Ukraine. Ukrainian civil society, particularly the NGO sector, constitutes an important secondary audience.

The key objectives of the Ukraine Gender Review are to:

- Identify how transition has affected gender differences and clarify their relevance to development outcomes.
- Provide a framework for enhancing the effectiveness of Bank lending and non-lending activities in each sector and a menu from which the Bank can selectively choose

## **METHODS**

We have used a variety of methods, including a review of written sources and consultation with stakeholders. We began with a desk review of recent documents on gender-related work in Ukraine, including reports prepared by the World Bank, other donors, national and international NGOs active in the country, and researchers, to provide the basis for in-country discussion with civil society and government counterparts. Next, we worked with the nine months of 2000 household data collected by the State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine to measure material and consumption-based poverty by gender and to provide other gender-disaggregated data.

Further background work involved a round-table discussion with Washington-based donors with active portfolios in Ukraine to elicit their perceptions of current or potential constraints to the implementation of development initiatives in Ukraine. Second, we organized video-conferences with donors, NGOs, and Ukrainian government counterparts in Kyiv to

inform them of the Country Gender Review, verify current information, ascertain any issues missed, and to develop a list of sectoral experts for the regional consultations.

In Ukraine, interviews and focus group discussions with national and local government officials, beneficiaries, citizen groups, community leaders, and donors were organized in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lyubotyn (Kharkiv oblast), Odessa, Belgorod-Dnestrovsky (Odessa oblast), Lviv, and Brody (Lviv oblast), to collect new qualitative and quantitative data on gender issues. The focus groups were each organized around the theme of labor market participation, or around the cluster of issues related to health (including domestic abuse and trafficking). Given the importance of the informal sector in general and the shuttle trade in particular, we used Trust Funds to commission social scientists from Kharkiv National University and the Academy of Legal Studies to carry out a study on gender aspects of the shuttle trade. The study will be submitted by April 4, 2002.

Together, information from these different sources is intended to provide a basic framework that should aid in mainstreaming gender issues into the development process. However, the Bank will not have the comparative advantage to deal with all of the identified country priorities. Therefore, the final step of the Review will consist of internal planning meetings with sectoral staff and management to discuss implications of the Review for current projects and to draw up a Bank action plan for guiding gender-related lending and non-lending activities in each sector.

# GENDER AND POVERTY IN UKRAINE: 2000

## INTRODUCTION

Quantitative poverty studies conducted in Ukraine over the past ten years offer little direct information on the gender impact of poverty. As a rule, these studies are based on standard measures of consumption and/or material poverty, measures that are difficult to disaggregate by gender for three reasons. First, regardless of whether the data can be sorted by criteria such as “female” or “male” head of household, the source surveys were not designed to measure gender-related aspects of poverty. Second, consumption and material poverty data are calculated using assumptions of the “unitary” household that make no provision for how consumption is distributed by gender within the household. Third, the value of inter-household transfers in these studies is self-reported and assumed to be undervalued. Without qualitative research on how consumption is distributed within households, as well as on the role of inter-household transfers to female-headed households, it is questionable whether the available data can provide a complete gender analysis (see box below).

### PROBLEMS OF GENDER POVERTY ANALYSIS

Most studies of poverty and gender in transition countries have not found a significant link to gender, but it must be admitted that few of the available poverty studies on transition countries have focused on gender. For example, the World Bank’s major comparative poverty study *Making the Transition Work for Everyone* (World Bank 2000) did not discuss gender as a separate topic in its profile of consumption poverty. Rather, it briefly covered female-headed households in the section on children. The World Bank has conducted or is completing poverty assessments in virtually all the transition countries, yet very few of these studies identify female-headed households as being at particular risk for poverty. Single-parent households are sometimes identified as facing an elevated risk of poverty, but concerns are usually dismissed by the argument that such households constitute a numerically small share of the population in transition countries (except for FYR Macedonia and Russia).

For most countries, when individuals are examined, poverty rates for men and women are basically the same, while poverty rates for children are sharply above average and poverty rates for the elderly are below the average. This generalization is broadly true across a range of equivalent household sizes, being reversed only in cases where extreme economies of scale are assumed. Poverty rates for female-headed households are typically slightly above those of male-headed households, but usually not extremely so.

To a very large extent, the lack of differentiation between male and female poverty rates reflects the limits to our understanding of how consumption or income is distributed within the “black box” of the household. Standard poverty analysis attributes household welfare equally to household members and, indeed, there is no accepted method in the literature to apportion consumption to members differentially. (Some limited attempts have been made centering around 24-hour food-intake studies, but there are significant problems with measuring food intake accurately in such studies, not to mention that people have different dietary requirements.) The situation is even worse when money measures of poverty are used.

It is obvious that some members of the household are likely to consume less than others—children eat less than adults and the elderly do not need to purchase expensive clothing for business purposes. Equivalent household size, a measure of how many “adult-equivalents” are in the household, is a way to capture economies of scale in consumption. Economies of scale in consumption occur when the marginal

cost of an additional family member declines. There are two components of the declining marginal cost of an additional member: the first component is that fixed costs (such as rent) are divided among a larger number as household size increases and the second component is that households can economize by reusing children's clothing or "stretching" a stew by adding less costly vegetables in the place of meat, etc. Although this seems like a straightforward variation on the old saying "two can live cheaper than one," in statistical practice, it becomes quite complicated. For example, it is currently impossible to use economic techniques to attribute consumption to individuals or to derive the equivalent household size. For example, for many years, the OECD used an equivalence scale whereby the first adult in the household was set equal to 1, subsequent adults were 0.7 and children were 0.5. Thus a nuclear family of four would have a household size of 4 but an equivalent size of only 2.7. It is important to understand that there was no substantiated economic or econometric basis for the OECD decision to set children as half the value of the first adult—it was a normative judgment.

The OECD has since revised its scale to reflect even more extreme economies of scale. Two approaches were used previously in the economics literature—the Rothbart (1943) approach to estimating equivalent size, based on a notion of goods consumed only by children, and the Deaton and Muellbauer (1986) approach, also called the Engels expenditure method. Deaton and Muellbauer (1986) demonstrated fatal flaws in the Rothbart method, but soon afterwards, Deaton (1997) repudiated his own approach with Muellbauer.

To date, economists have not been able to come up with an acceptable method for estimating equivalent household size or for distributing consumption across household members differentially. Since most women live in households with men, there is no reliable way to sort out who is consuming more or whether they are indeed consuming equally. As a result, poverty analysis is hampered significantly when it comes to addressing gender issues, and in most cases in transition economies, poverty risks are not found to be significantly different between men and women. Economists have been able to devise ways to test many aspects of the "unitary household model" and have generally found that they do not hold. An extensive literature is cited in *Engendering Development: Through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2001. Thus it is quite possible that the true welfare position of women in Ukraine is much worse vis -à-vis men than is suggested in the poverty analysis documented in the chapter entitled "Gender and Poverty in Ukraine."

Even the finding that single elderly females do not face a higher risk of poverty than male-headed households is extremely sensitive to the equivalence scale used (World Bank 2000), and could be reversed under extreme assumptions about equivalence. Unfortunately, there is no agreed method to estimate equivalence empirically, so common sense will have to substitute. For most of the range of equivalence scales used in the World Bank 2000 study, the elderly were not at greater risk of poverty than children in Ukraine.

Although the "black box" of quantitative poverty analysis precludes any measurement of how consumption and welfare is distributed among men, women, and children within the "unitary" household model, the findings relating on child poverty in Ukraine discussed in Chapter 1 also suggest a gender dimension, since it is primarily women in Ukraine (and the rest of the world) who are responsible for child welfare and child-care. Folbre (1994) raised the question of "who pays for the kids?" and, given increasing poverty in families with young children, found the burden fell disproportionately on women. This finding is quite likely to generalize to Ukraine, as supported in the qualitative analysis provided in this study.

Further, it is important to note that in the Ukrainian data examined for the gender and poverty chapter, female-headed households did not benefit disproportionately from inter-household transfers – they averaged 10 percent less for female-headed households than for male-headed households. However, there was a marked difference by type of female-headed household: single elderly female households averaged 45 percent less gifts than all other households, but single adult females with children (no males) received 14 percent more in gifts than average for all other household types. The problem with these figures is that few household surveys obtain detailed information about inter-household transfers and even when these

questions are included in the survey, respondents tend to under-value remittances and transfers in-kind in the extreme. For example, in the Ukraine survey data, reported gifts (primarily in-kind transfers) were only 4 percent of total household consumption and, as is common, were higher in non-poor households than in poor households.

In general, recipient households tend to under-report the value of gifts received, while donor households typically over-estimate their value (particularly of help in-kind). Under-reporting is clearly indicated in the case of Ukraine, which has an extensive informal system of inter-household transfers. If such transfers could be properly valued, it might be the case that a differential would emerge between male and female households, such that fewer male-headed households would be measured as poor and more female-headed households would therefore be poor.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that this study, based on nine cumulative months of survey data for the year 2000 collected by the Ukraine State Committee on Statistics, confirms the findings of previous work on poverty in Ukraine: there do not seem to be sharp gender differences in poverty, whether poverty is measured by means of consumption or material poverty.<sup>7</sup> That said, there are a number of gender differences that are still statistically significant and worth considering. Moreover, given the limitations of the statistical data, it is worth considering that non-economic factors examined in other chapters of this study may shed greater light on the gender dimension of poverty than the findings discussed below. Certainly, females report more illness, suffer more widely from domestic abuse, earn less money and suffer more discrimination on the labor market than do men in present-day Ukraine. Such quality of life dimensions of gender need to be borne in mind when trying to achieve an overall picture of poverty in Ukraine.

In most cases, women live with men in Ukraine, with only 13 percent of the population living in female-only households. Overall, female-headed households<sup>8</sup> are slightly more numerous than male-headed (53 percent versus 47 percent). Poverty in female-headed households is only slightly higher than that for male-headed households, (28 percent versus 25 percent), and poverty rates for men (28 percent) and women (29 percent) are virtually identical. Only one kind of female-headed household in Ukraine (those lacking an adult male, but with children) demonstrates an elevated risk of poverty, but this risk is relatively low (seven percent differential). There are no large gender discrepancies by place of residency (rural or urban), nor

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<sup>7</sup> The welfare measure was per equivalent consumption. Consumption was calculated as the imputed value of consumed food produced on a private land plot, plus the sum of money expenditures, excluding consumer durables and other non-consumption expenditure items. The equivalence scale and poverty line used were the same as those used in the World Bank study on Ukraine: *Social Safety Nets and Poverty*, Report No. 22677 UA, Vols. 1 and 2, Human Development (ECSHD), The World Bank, Europe and Central Asia Region, June 15, 2001 (also referred to as “World Bank 2001a”), namely, a modified OECD scale and a relative poverty line of 75 percent of median per equivalent consumption.

<sup>8</sup> “Female-headed household” is a self-defined category identified by the survey respondents themselves. Two additional variables were created to understand the gender dynamics of poverty: single elderly females and adult females (no male) with children. Adult females with children (no males) may or may not have additional adult females or elderly females or males in the household. In some cases, the adult female may be married, but the male was not living in the household at the time of the survey, so a further variable for unmarried adult females with children (no males) was created.

in the type of housing occupied, even when considering female-headed households. The latter, however, do occupy one-room apartments at a rate (61 percent) higher than their incidence in the population (53 percent). The following individual sections explore in detail the results of statistical analysis of the data collected by Ukraine State Committee on Statistics for nine cumulative months in 2000.

### **POVERTY RATES, GENDER, AGE, AND HOUSEHOLD TYPE**

As noted above, 27 percent of female-headed households in Ukraine were poor in 2000, while 25 percent of male households were poor (Table 1). This small difference does not suggest that females face a greatly elevated risk of poverty in Ukraine. The World Bank (2001a) also found that “female-headed households are not significantly poorer than those headed by men.” Extrapolating to the population level, 29 percent of individuals living in female-headed households were poor, while 28 percent of individuals living in male-headed households were poor (Table 1). Using only that data for individuals with a specified gender in the survey, 28 percent of females and 27 percent of males were poor.

The poverty rate of female-headed households with children, however, is noticeably higher than those of other households (35 percent, versus 28 percent poor for male-headed households). The difference, however, is not so great that one can automatically equate female-headedness (with children) and poverty. Overall, households were 53 percent female-headed and 47 percent male-headed (Table 2). Breaking down female-headed households by type, however, it is clear that households with children face an increased risk of poverty, as the World Bank’s 2001 study (2001a) and the earlier World Bank Poverty Assessment of Ukraine (1996) also found.<sup>9</sup> It appears to be the presence of children in female-headed households, however, rather than female headship per se, that leads to a higher poverty rate for households comprised of single adult females with children. Nevertheless, the finding suggests that the gender of the household head has important implications for child poverty.

An important share of the population in Ukraine – 13 percent – lives in female-headed households. Of this total, 5.4 percent resides in elderly single female households and nearly 8 percent lives in households of adult females with children and no males (Table 2). Unlike some transition countries, where female-headed households are a small share of the population (World Bank 2000), the argument cannot be advanced for Ukraine that the small share of female-headed households makes their elevated poverty risk less significant – the share exceeds 10 percent of the population.

Other kinds of female-headed households do not appear to be at risk of poverty. Single elderly females, for example, do not face a higher risk of poverty than male-headed households,

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<sup>9</sup> “Poverty in Ukraine,” Report No. 15602-UA, June 27, 1996 (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1996).

which corroborates the World Bank's previous findings in *The World Bank Poverty Update*.<sup>10</sup> There is only one percentage point difference in the poverty rates on a population basis for women living in single elderly households and for individuals in male-headed households.

Poverty in Ukraine is strongly linked to age, with children being the poorest and the elderly the least poor (Table 2).<sup>11</sup> For example, 38 percent of male children six and under are poor, while 35 percent of female children in this age range are poor. This small difference in poverty rates is probably random – there is no indication of a significant bias in poverty rates between male and female children as observed in some developing countries.

While the poverty rate for males (28 percent) is indistinguishable from that of females (29 percent), there is a noticeable gender difference in poverty rates for the elderly, where males aged 60-69 and 70 and over are respectively four and seven percentage points less poor than females. This difference may simply reflect the differential survival rates of males and females, with males being much more likely to live in an “intact” family, whereas more elderly females live by themselves. On average, single elderly female households in Ukraine are about as poor as male-headed households (30 percent of the population versus 29 percent, Table 2). This fact suggests that there is no particular poverty problem for the female elderly in Ukraine.

#### **LOCATION AND GENDER**

Overall, there was virtually no differentiation in poverty rates by location in Ukraine in either 1999 (World Bank 2001a) or 2000. In addition, there are no differences between the sexes when broken down by location. Unlike some developing countries, females do not appear to be clustered in remote rural areas. Rather, the poverty rates of rural females and males are both equal to 30 percent of the population; males also have no significant premium over females in large urban areas (Table 4). There is also no real gender difference in place of residency – women constitute 55 percent of the population (from the survey data) and 55 percent of residents in large cities, small cities, and rural areas (Table 5).

#### **MATERIAL POVERTY: NUTRITION AND HOUSING**

Although consumption-based poverty is an important welfare indicator, it is valuable to look at other indicators of poverty, particularly material indicators such as housing attributes, the distribution of consumer durables, and malnutrition. To a certain extent, the Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey can be used to ascertain some aspects of material poverty.

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<sup>10</sup> This finding is extremely sensitive to the equivalence scale used (World Bank 2000) and could be reversed under extreme assumptions about equivalence. Unfortunately, there is no agreed method to estimate equivalence empirically, so common sense will have to substitute. For most of the range of equivalence scales used in the World Bank 2000 study, the elderly were not at greater risk of poverty than children in Ukraine.

<sup>11</sup> This is true over a range of “reasonable” equivalence scales; the finding is only reversed when extreme assumptions about equivalence are made (World Bank 2000).

## Malnutrition

The survey included questions on the age, height, and weight of household members. However, values for age, height and weight were all missing for children aged six and under, and weights were reported rounded to the nearest kilogram.<sup>12</sup> The data appear to show a striking difference in the prevalence of low height-for-age (stunting) between boys and girls, with the rate for boys twice the rate for girls. This problem does not seem to be related to female-headship, as children in other households had rates of stunting slightly below those of children in female-adult only households, but, as in the case of consumption poverty, the differences are slight – less than four percentage points.

There are problems, however, with the way in which this particular data was recorded, meriting further investigation of this extreme finding. In addition to the technical considerations discussed in the footnote below, it is not clear how to best interpret the data, as there may very well have been considerable measurement errors in the data (survey interviewers were possibly not well-trained in taking the physical measures; age data were rounded to years instead of in months).

At first observation, it appears that Ukraine has a severe problem with chronic malnutrition as reflected by the prevalence of children (23 percent) who are more than two standard deviations away from the reference population in height-for-age (stunting), although one must examine the data on malnutrition for children aged 7-10 in Ukraine (Table 6) with these caveats in mind.<sup>13</sup> This finding puts Ukraine in the company of its neighbors in the (primarily) Central Asia countries surveyed by the World Bank (Rokx, Galloway, and Brown 2000). Unfortunately, the latter study had a limited country sample.

Wasting (low weight-for-age) is understood to reflect acute malnutrition, and at five percent of the children sampled, does not seem to be excessively high. Nevertheless, considering the typical high-fat diet in Ukraine, children may still be malnourished even if their weight is close to the reference population. Again, there is some differential between boys and girls, but this differential (unlike the stunting results) is quite modest, with boys at about 6

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<sup>12</sup> For reliable malnutrition estimates for children, it is crucial to have weight to the nearest 10th kilogram. Further, malnutrition indicators are not typically calculated for children over the age of 10, since adolescence creates a wide dispersion in the standard malnutrition indicators. Upon consultation with World Bank and World Health Organization experts (Claudia Rokx, World Bank, and Mercedes de Onis, World Health Organization) it was assumed that at least the measures of height-for-age should be useable, since data were collected to the nearest centimeter, which is the correct method. (At the same time, the software required age in months, not years, which is how the Ukraine data were collected). However, weight-for-age and weight-for-height measures are considered as indicative only, due to the reported rounding of weight to the nearest kilogram.

<sup>13</sup> The reference population is the standard U.S. population as used by the Center for Disease Control in their ANTHRO software, which was used with the Ukrainian data.

percent with low weight-for-age and girls at 3.5 percent. Nevertheless, these results should not be viewed complacently.

### **Housing type, ownership, and access to services**

There are some gender discrepancies in types of housing occupied and access to services, but these are not major, even when considering female-headed households (Table 7). Overall, 53 percent of households in Ukraine are female-headed and 55 percent of households living in communal apartments are female-headed, which is not a significant difference. Females are slightly more likely to be apartment-dwellers (59 percent) while single elderly females are more likely to live in individual houses (or in parts of individual houses). Housing ownership is also basically gender-neutral. Female-headed households are less likely to live in leased housing than male-headed households (Table 8), but are more likely to live in private housing.<sup>14</sup> Single adult females with children (no males), however, are more likely to live in leased housing, which is an unexpected finding.

Dormitories, however, are an exception -- female-headed households comprise 61 percent of dormitory-dwelling households. Only 21 percent of households living in dormitories are single female adults with children (no males). Since only seven percent of households are single female adults with children, the percentage of this group living in dormitories is indicative of an inferior housing situation.

There is a clear gender dimension to the size of housing occupied by male- and female-headed households, with female-headed households occupying smaller domiciles at rates higher than their incidence in the population (Table 9). For example, female-headed households are 53 percent of total households, but 61 percent of one-room apartments are occupied by female-headed households. This finding seems to be driven by single elderly females, who lived in one- and two-room apartments at a rate much higher than their incidence, and also to a lesser extent by households of single female adults with children (no males), which are also noticeably clustered towards smaller apartments.

Single elderly females are, not surprisingly, clustered into the oldest housing, with few living in homes constructed within the past five years (Table 10). The pattern is not very clear for single female adults with children (no males), who seem to be disproportionately living in domiciles constructed in the previous 10 years, but this may simply be a statistical artifact reflecting the low share of such households out of all households (7 percent). Once the influence of single elderly females is taken into account, however, male- and female-headed households occupy housing more or less in accordance with their incidence in the population.

Male-headed households are very slightly more likely than female-headed households to

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<sup>14</sup> It is likely that the category of “leased” housing includes expensive rental housing, while “private” is likely to be primarily privatized homes in rural areas, together with privatized apartments in urban areas.

be connected to services such as central heating, an individual heating system, running water, sewerage, hot water or a hot water heater, central gas, liquefied gas or an electric stove, a bathtub or shower, and a telephone. The difference is typically only three or four percentage points (Table 11a), and generally speaking, male- and female-headed households have the same access to these attributes as their incidence in the population. Single adult females with children (no males), however, are slightly more likely to have these attributes than their incidence in the population, while single female elderly are somewhat less likely to have the attributes (Table 11b). The differences are more pronounced for single female elderly, but never exceed seven percentage points.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Statistical analysis of poverty data in Ukraine reveals that women and men had virtually the same rate of poverty in 2000. Female-headed households slightly outnumbered male-headed households and their rate of poverty was slightly higher than male-headed households, but these differences were never greater than seven percent. While children faced an increased risk of poverty in Ukraine in 2000, elderly women did not. Overall, the findings are consistent with previous studies conducted in the country by the World Bank. Findings regarding stunting and wasting, however, while inconclusive due to inadequate data, should be a cause for concern.

To a very large extent, the lack of differentiation between male and female poverty rates in Ukraine reflects the limits to our understanding of how consumption or income is distributed within the “black box” of the household. Standard poverty analysis attributes household welfare equally to household members and, indeed, there is no accepted method in the literature to apportion consumption to members differentially. The situation is even worse when money measures of poverty are used. Without qualitative research designed to more accurately document differences in consumption within the household by gender, as well as the real volume of inter-household transfers, further analysis of existing data is unlikely to significantly enhance our understanding of poverty and gender in Ukraine.

These conclusions suggest the importance of more qualitative research to examine patterns of intrahousehold allocation of resources. Also, while the data on stunting and wasting among children is inclusive, it is nevertheless alarming and calls for further investigation.

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**Table 1. Ukraine: Poverty Rates of Specific Household Types**

	Poor	Not Poor
<u>Percent of Households by Type</u>		
Adult Female (Only adult) with Children	31.1	68.9
Single Elderly Female Only	29.7	70.3
Female-Headed	27.1	72.9
Unmarried Adult Female with Children	...	...
<i>Memorandum Items</i>		
Male-headed	25.2	74.8
Total	26.2	73.8
<u>Percent of Population by Household Type</u>		
Adult Female (Only adult) with Children	35.2	64.8
Single Elderly Female Only	29.7	70.3
Female-Headed	29.3	70.7
Unmarried Adult Female with Children	35.8	64.2
<i>Memorandum Items</i>		
Male-headed	27.9	72.1
Total	28.6	71.4

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months)

**Table 2. Ukraine: Household Types**

Type	Percent of Total Households**	Percent of Population
Adult Female with Children (no Males)	7.3	7.8
Single Elderly Female	14.7	5.4
Unmarried Adult Female with Children (no Males)	...	6.6
Elderly Female with Children (no Males)	0.6	0.6
Female Headed*	53.0	47.1

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey 2000 (9 months)

Notes: \* Female Headed as self-determined by household.  
 \*\* Poor as percent of population by household type.

**Table 3. Ukraine: Age, Gender, and Poverty**

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Not Poor</b>
<u>Males</u>		
0-6	37.6	62.4
7-17	29.9	70.1
18-29	28.4	71.6
30-39	28.0	72.0
40-49	25.6	74.4
50-59	26.3	73.7
60-69	23.7	76.3
70+	26.8	73.2
Total Males	27.9	72.1
<u>Females</u>		
0-6	35.9	64.1
7-17	32.0	68.0
18-29	30.9	69.1
30-39	27.6	72.4
40-49	24.6	75.4
50-59	23.8	76.2
60-69	27.5	72.5
70+	34.1	65.9
Total Female	29.0	71.0
Memorandum Item		
Total	28.5	71.5

*Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey 2000 (9 months)*

Note: Population Basis

**Table 4: Ukraine – Location, Gender and Poverty**

	Poor	Not Poor
Percent of Households	26.2	73.8
Male-Headed	25.2	74.8
Major Urban (Large City)	25.4	74.6
Minor Urban (Towns)	24.4	75.6
Rural	25.8	74.2
Female-Headed	27.1	72.9
Major Urban (Large City)	25.0	75.0
Minor Urban (Towns)	28.8	71.2
Rural	29.7	70.3
Percent of Population	28.6	71.4
Male	28.0	72.0
Major Urban (Large City)	25.3	74.7
Minor Urban (Towns)	28.2	71.8
Rural	30.3	69.7
Female	29.0	71.0
Major Urban (Large City)	27.7	72.3
Minor Urban (Towns)	29.2	70.8
Rural	30.2	69.8

**Table 5. Ukraine: Type of Settlement**

Type	Gender of Respondent	
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Large City	45.1	54.9
Small City	45.4	54.6
Rural	44.9	55.1
Total	45.1	54.9

*Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data)*

**Table 6. Ukraine: Indicative Malnutrition Indicators for Children Aged 7-10.\***

	<b>Stature/Age**</b>	<b>Weight/Stature*</b>	<b>Weight/Age**</b>
<b>Full Sample</b>			
Total	22.9	5.1	3.0
Males	29.0	6.4	4.2
Females	16.4	3.5	1.8
<b>Female Adult Only with Children</b>			
Total	19.2	7.9	5.7
Males	20.0	7.9	7.7
Females	18.4	6.6	3.7
<b>Non-Female Adult Only Households</b>			
Total	23.7	4.5	2.5
Males	30.7	5.9	3.5
Females	15.9	2.8	1.4

*Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey 2000 (9 months)*

Notes: \* Calculated using Center for Disease Control "ANTHRO" program.

\*\* Percentages represent that proportion of children whose ratios are more than 2 standard deviations from the standard U.S. population used by the Center for Disease Control.

**Table 7. Ukraine: Type of Housing by Gender of Household Head\***

Type of Housing	Gender of Household Head		Single Elderly Female (%)	Female Adult with Children (%)
	Male (%)	Female (%)		
Apartment	41.3	58.7	10.5	9.3
Communal Apartments	45.0	55.0	8.3	12.8
Individual Home	52.5	47.5	18.6	4.8
Part of Individual Home	45.6	54.4	17.8	<b>8.9</b>
Dormitory	38.8	61.2	5.0	20.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	14.7	<b>7.3</b>

\*Head as determined by respondent(s).

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data).

**Table 8. Ukraine: Housing Ownership by Gender of Household Head\*\**

Type of Housing	Gender of Household Head		Single Elderly Female (%)	Female Adult with Children (%)
	Male (%)	Female (%)		
Private	47.6	52.4	16.9	5.9
Public	42.8	57.2	6.1	12.6
Municipal	54.0	46.0	8.8	7.0
Leased	60.5	39.5	1.2	<b>12.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>7.1</b>

\*Head as determined by respondent(s).

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data).

**Table 9. Ukraine: Number of Rooms by Gender of Household Head\***

No. of Rooms	Gender		Single Elderly Female (%)	Adult Female with Children (%)
	Male (%)	Female (%)		
One	38.8	61.2	23.6	8.8
Two	42.3	57.7	17.7	8.2
Three	50.4	49.6	10.0	7.0
Four	56.1	43.9	10.0	4.3
Five/Six	69.4	30.6	4.9	4.4
Seven/Eight/Nine	75.0	25.0	<b>0.0</b>	2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>14.7</b>	7.3

\*Head as determined by respondent(s).

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data).

**Table 10. Ukraine: Year of Construction of Building/House by Gender of Household Head\***

Year of Construction	By Gender		Single Elderly Female (%)	Adult Female with Children (%)
	Male (%)	Female (%)		
1940s	41.1	58.9	<b>26.2</b>	5.9
1950-1959	45.5	54.5	24.4	5.2
1960-1969	47.0	53.0	17.4	6.1
1970-1980	48.2	51.8	<b>10.8</b>	<b>7.3</b>
1981-1990	51.0	49.0	4.7	9.3
1991-1995	49.0	51.0	2.9	11.5
1996	57.3	42.7	3.4	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	14.7	7.3

\*Head as determined by respondent(s).

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data)

**Table 11a. Housing Attributes by Gender of Household Head\***

Type	Gender of Household Head					
	Male (%)			Female (%)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Connection to central heating	40.9	51.4	47.0	59.1	48.6	53.0
Individual heating system	53.0	43.5	47.0	47.0	56.5	53.0
Running water	44.9	50.5	47.0	55.1	49.5	53.0
Sewage	44.5	50.3	47.0	55.5	49.7	53.0
Hot water	40.5	49.7	47.0	59.5	50.3	53.0
Water heater at home	46.4	47.1	47.0	53.6	52.9	53.0
Connection to central gas	44.9	50.1	47.0	55.1	49.9	53.0
Liquified gas	53.2	44.7	47.0	46.8	55.3	53.0
Electric stove	39.4	47.3	47.0	60.6	52.7	53.0
Bathtub or shower	44.2	50.1	47.0	55.8	49.9	53.0
Home telephone	46.9	47.1	47.0	53.1	52.9	53.0

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data)

**Table 11b. Ukraine: Housing Attributes by Type of Female-Headed Household**

Housing Attributes		Adult Female with Children (% )*	Single Elderly Female (%)**
Connection to central heating	Yes	9.9	10.0
	No	5.4	18.0
Individual heating system	Yes	5.3	15.4
	No	8.4	14.3
Running water	Yes	8.5	<b>11.0</b>
	No	5.2	20.8
Sewage	Yes	8.9	10.3
	No	5.2	20.6
Hot water	Yes	9.9	8.2
	No	6.2	17.4
Water heater at home	Yes	7.4	12.6
	No	7.2	15.0
Connection to central gas	Yes	8.1	11.8
	No	6.0	19.0
Liquified gas	<b>Yes</b>	4.7	<b>19.1</b>
	No	8.2	13.0
Electric stove	Yes	15.2	5.5
	No	7.0	15.0
Bathtub or shower	Yes	8.9	9.5
	No	5.5	20.4
Home telephone	Yes	<b>7.7</b>	10.0
	No	7.0	17.8

Source: *Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data)*.

Notes: \* Percentage of the 7.3% of this type of household in 2000.

\*\* Percentage of the 14.7% of this type of household in 2000.

# **GENDER AND THE UKRAINIAN LABOR MARKET**

## **BEFORE AND AFTER 1991**

Before independence, Ukrainian state institutions, like those in other Soviet republics, provided employment, job security, and a range of social benefits, including pensions, child allowances, heavily subsidized housing, child care, holidays, and municipal and other services. Although some income was derived from self-employment, the private sector was largely absent. The state supported women's participation in the labor market through subsidized child care, sick leave to take care of family members, and generous maternity leave with pay that allowed mothers to return to their jobs after up to three years of absence.

At the same time, state policies also supported and further institutionalized prevailing gender stereotypes regarding "appropriate" occupations for men and women, as well as traditional domestic arrangements in which men were primary breadwinners and women were responsible for child care and housework. In some cases, these stereotypes were embodied in legislation that excluded women from night shifts and hazardous (but better paid) labor, or in pro-natalist legislation that encouraged them to withdraw from the labor market to take care of children, effectively limiting their advancement. The same stereotypes also constrained men's choice of professions, steering them away from "feminized" service professions or the humanities.

Given their domestic responsibilities, women in fact often preferred to withdraw from full-time employment outside the household in order to cope with the famous Soviet "double burden." Time budget studies from the Soviet period indicate women consistently reported fewer hours of leisure during the week and spent more hours working in the house than their male counterparts.

Independence, the contraction of an economy heavily geared toward military production, and the severe reduction in formerly state-provided services has altered opportunities for all Ukrainians. The state sector, including agriculture, had not yet undergone thorough restructuring in 2001. The result has been both unemployment and under-employment (people enrolled on enterprise ledgers but not receiving wages), as state factories find they cannot sell their goods on the open market. The relative gender impact of these phenomena has varied depending on region and sector. For example, the drop in the real value of public sector wages has more severely affected women, who had dominated the public sector. In the rural sector, problems in the agricultural sector are also having an uneven gender impact, as discussed later in this chapter.

Emerging small, medium, and large enterprises are increasingly providing employment to men and women, although female entrepreneurs remain clustered among smaller enterprises. Nevertheless, the numbers are encouraging, with women managers representing a fifth of managers of all reported small businesses and over 12% of managers in mid- and large-size enterprises. Men and women are both active in the burgeoning informal sector, which includes the shuttle trade, small unregistered enterprises and even larger enterprises that operate on both the formal and informal (unregistered) levels

simultaneously. The lack of accurate data on the size of the informal sector suggests that far more “unemployed” are actually earning income in the private sector than is reflected by the official data.

As the type and value of state subsidies and services has diminished, reduced access to affordable child care and transportation have created particular obstacles for women with children. Sharp competition for employment, inadequate labor legislation, and lax legal enforcement have made men and women – particularly the latter – vulnerable to discrimination based on sex, age, and disability, most noticeably in the private sector.

### **GENDER PATTERNS OF EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

Since 1990, employment has declined and unemployment increased for both men and women.<sup>15</sup> According to administrative data,<sup>16</sup> from 1990 to 1998, the employed population declined 12.1 percent (from 25.4 million to 22.3 million). Of those employed, only 13 percent were self-employed, a low figure when compared to the self-employment percentage in many other CIS states.<sup>17</sup> According to labor force surveys conducted by the Ukrainian government,<sup>18</sup> however, only 20.6 million people (56.4 percent of the population aged 15-70) were employed in September 1999. For every age group, employment rates are lower for females (Table 12), however, the gap is narrower for the most active years, 20-49. (For those 50 and older, the gap is due in part to women’s earlier retirement age.)

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<sup>15</sup> This section draws heavily from Arvo Kuddo, “Trends in the Labor Market” (background paper written for the publication, “Ukraine: Social safety Nets and Poverty,” The World Bank, ECSHD, ECA Region, June 15, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> There are several sources of labor market information for Ukraine: first, regular and ad-hoc surveys and censuses based on the household; second, regular establishment-based surveys and censuses; and third, administrative data. These sources give us different indications of employment, underemployment and unemployment. Administrative data reflects the number of employees on enterprise payrolls, although many of these workers are actually on unpaid administrative leave and not working. Administrative records also do not account for a significant number of those employed in informal activities and as unpaid family workers.

<sup>17</sup> Particularly in the Kyrgyz Republic, Georgia, and Armenia, self-employment accounted for, respectively, 56, 49 and 43 percent of total employment in 1998. In Ukraine, 36.4 percent of the workforce were employed in state enterprises and organizations and 13.1 per cent in organizations of mixed ownership types. While private sector employment prevailed in most CIS states by the mid-1990s, reflecting rapid changes in ownership structure and privatization, the share of private sector employment in Ukraine was only 50 percent level of the total by 1998.

<sup>18</sup> In 1995-1998, Ukraine conducted labor force surveys once a year in October. After 1999, the national statistics office initiated quarterly surveys.

**Table 12. Age-specific employment and unemployment rates in Ukraine**

	Employment		Unemployment	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total, at age 15-70, % including:	61.1	52.1	10.5	10.0
Working age	67.2	63.4	11.0	10.9
15-19	11.5	8.8	35.4	41.3
20-29	67.8	59.5	16.9	14.7
30-39	80.8	76.6	9.7	9.7
40-49	81.3	78.1	7.2	7.7
50-59	69.8	49.8	5.3	5.7
60-70	23.6	15.2	1.9	1.2

*Source: Ukrainian Government Labor Force Survey Data, September 1999.*

When it comes to assessing unemployment, however, there is a considerable gap between the number of people who have registered as unemployed and unemployment as measured by labor force or household surveys. As a result, it is very difficult to accurately estimate gender disparities in unemployment. According to survey data, unemployment increased from 5.6 percent of the economically active population (age 15-70) in 1995 to 11.3 percent in 1998, or from 1.437 million to 2.937 million people. When compared to survey data, the low rate of registered unemployed may partially reflect the lack of incentives for people to register with state employment services. Focus group discussants<sup>19</sup> and expert informants also noted that many people reported themselves unemployed when in fact they were fully involved in the informal sector.

Research conducted by Women, Law & Development International (WLDI) found that women were subject to disproportionate layoffs.<sup>20</sup> According to WLDI, among 280 surveyed enterprises, 80 percent of employees downsized between 1994 and 1998 were women; only 20 percent were men. In 1996, 25 percent of surveyed managers said they had downsized men and women in equal proportions, but 29 percent stated that they had released mostly women. According to this study, while more women than men registered to find work – in 1997, 53 percent of job seekers applying to employment bureaus were women – fewer women found work (21 percent of female applicants compared to 31 percent of male applicants). A focus group discussant representing a business training academy noted that although “there is no difference we know of in the salaries being offered by enterprises to young people graduating from our Academy, 80 percent of young men get jobs by the time they are in their fifth year; the percentage of young women finding employment is smaller.”

<sup>19</sup> World Bank staff conducted focus group discussions in three oblasts of Ukraine in October and November 2001 for the present study. Separate focus groups were held in each oblast on labor market issues.

<sup>20</sup> Women, Law and Development International. 2000. “Women’s rights under privatization in Bulgaria, Poland, Russia and Ukraine.” 2000. The research by WLDI included a survey of 280 enterprises in four regions of Ukraine; in-depth interviews with thirty managers in industry, trade and services; and sixteen focus groups involving a total of 140 people.

## CHANGING GENDER PATTERNS WITHIN AND BETWEEN SECTORS

Looking at the gender composition of different sectors reveals striking differences. Women overwhelmingly dominate such fields as health and education, retail trade, food processing, and finance and insurance. It should be noted that these “pink collar ghettos” are occupational classes with pay much lower than average. Under the Soviet system, many women in “finance and insurance activities” actually worked as low-level bookkeepers and file clerks, rather in the lucrative but few positions in commercial banking and finance. These same sectors were also identified by survey recipients as ones in which women predominate (Table 13). On the other hand, men dominate defense, industry, agriculture, transport, and construction. In addition, strong, long-standing gender stereotypes discourage women from entering better-paid higher management positions, leading to the clustering of women in poorly paid professions such as nursing and teaching. It may be that women chose to remain in the latter professions because they are morally rewarding and because, as was true in Soviet times, they offer a concrete sense of social purpose.

The changing wage structure among economic sectors is also affecting the gender distribution of employment in both the formal and informal sectors of the labor market. For example, while teaching is becoming more feminized, men are increasingly dominating the banking sector (formerly dominated by women) as salaries rise. The head of the Kharkiv job information center noted that even when women have the appropriate education, employers prefer to hire men in the technology field.

While men and women both have difficulty finding employment suitable for their educational backgrounds, educated women remain at a disadvantage to educated men. Sectoral analysis indicates that, overall, women tend to be employed in jobs that demand lower professional skills. Indeed, most focus group discussants, including the director of a career planning organization in Kharkiv, agreed that while women dominate in skilled middle-management positions, particularly in the finance units of companies, senior chief executives are almost always men. According to focus group discussions, even in social sectors such as health and education, where they are over-represented as a whole, women had greater difficulty in obtaining management positions.

**Table 13**

Ukraine: Male-Female Distribution in Sector of Economy  
(Percent)

	Male	Female
Industry	59.2	40.8
Agriculture	64.2	35.8
Forestry	75.7	24.3
Construction	71.7	28.3
Transportation	73.6	26.4
Communications	37.5	62.5
Retail Trade	32.5	67.5
Food Processing	24.5	75.5
Intermediary Services	60.5	39.5
Material-Technical Supply	61.8	38.2
Information Services	43.8	56.3
Housing	42.5	57.5
Utilities	55.5	44.5
Services	46.2	53.8
Other Material Production	57.9	42.1
Health	15.4	84.6
Sport	47.4	52.6
Social Security	16.3	83.7
Arts	21.4	78.6
Culture	33.9	66.1
Other Arts & Culture	80.0	20.0
Science	42.9	57.1
Finance & Banking	22.5	77.5
Civil Service	27.6	72.4
Defense	77.5	22.5
Civic Organizations	58.3	41.7
Other	50.0	50.0
Total	49.0	51.0

Source: *Ukraine Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 Months)*

Color-Coding

Male Dominated

Female Dominated

About Equal

Discrimination also exists in remuneration. Depending on the sector, women's salaries range between 45 to 70 percent of men's salaries,<sup>21</sup> despite higher levels of education among women. For

<sup>21</sup> Arvo Kuddo, "Trends in the Labor Market" (background paper written for the publication, "Ukraine: Social safety Nets and Poverty," The World Bank, ECSHD, ECA Region. June 15, 2001).

example, women seem to fare better when salaries are paid in-kind or at secondary workplaces, but in terms of money wages at primary workplaces, women reported earnings at a level of 75.5 percent of men's (Table 14). About 70 percent of workers in Ukraine with higher or secondary educations are women and nearly half of all workers, 49.9 percent, are women. Despite their higher educational levels, Ukrainian females earn 72.5 percent of the average wages for males and in the industrial sector, 64.5 percent of the male average<sup>22</sup>. Ukraine is not an outlier in this aspect, either among post-socialist or OECD countries. For example, Polish and American women earn 61 percent of men; for the Netherlands, the figure is 51 percent, while the highest figure is for Sweden, at 68 percent.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 14. Male and Female Mean Reported Earnings and Income (hryvna per 9 months)**

Type	Male	Female	Female as percent of male
Salary at Primary Workplace	1290	974	75.5
Compensation & Allowances at Primary Workplace	249	198	79.5
Salary in Kind at Primary Workplace	270	234	86.7
Salary at Other Workplaces, Cash & Kind*	546	493	90.3
Income from Entrepreneurial Activity*	2186	1578	72.2
Self-employment Income	1022	770	75.3
Income from Other Temporary Work	389	293	75.3
Pensions	780	572	73.3
Stipends	77	99	128.6
Unemployment Benefits	209	210	100.5
Payments Due to Work Interruptions*	332	251	75.6
Other Income	293	172	58.7

\*Reported by less than 1 percent of sample

Source: *Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 Months data)*.

With respect to educational levels, the same proportion of females in Ukraine have completed higher education as their share in the population – some 55 percent. (Table 15) Females predominate in certain kinds of education, particularly basic higher education and specialized secondary education. Men predominate in only one category of education – professional-technical education. Although completion of higher education is associated with a lower risk of poverty (World Bank 2001a), women's educational specializations (particularly, economics, medicine, humanities, teaching, and culture) lead to low-paying jobs (Table 16). Other areas of female educational specialization are also all strongly associated with low-paying occupations in Ukraine.

<sup>22</sup> .Ukraine: Employment. No 2 (2). May, 1999. Financial Markets International, Inc.

<sup>23</sup> Source: Human Development Report 2001. Human Development Indicators.

**Table 15. Ukraine: Educational Level by Gender**

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Gender of Respondent</b>	
	<b>Male (%)</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>
Complete Higher	44.8	55.2
Incomplete Higher	51.9	48.1
Basic Higher	36.4	63.6
Professional-Technical	56.3	43.7
Specialized Secondary	38.1	61.9
Completed Secondary	45.7	54.3
Basic Secondary	43.7	56.3
Primary	43.9	56.1
Incomplete Primary	42.6	57.4
Illiterate	39.2	60.8
Total	44.7	55.3

*Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data)*

**Table 16. Ukraine: Area of Education by Specialization**

<b>Specialization</b>	<b>Gender of Respondent</b>	
	<b>Male (%)</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>
Economics	26.0	74.0
Law	63.9	36.1
Medicine	27.5	72.5
Technical Services	58.7	41.3
Natural Services	47.2	52.8
Humanities	29.8	70.2
Training	21.4	78.6
Culture	35.6	64.4
Military	99.2	0.8
Agriculture	61.1	38.9
Total	44.4	55.6

*Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data)*

According to a Deputy Director of the Kharkiv Oblast Employment Center, only 30% of the labor force in agriculture, transport, and construction in Kharkiv oblast are women, while they make up over 80% of the labor force working with pensions, social security, insurance, and services. In these latter areas, the average pay of women is 1.5 times that of men, but in the oblast as a whole, the average pay of women is 30% lower than that of the men. The most significant wage gap is found in the fuel and energy sector, where women on average receive 46.7 percent of men's salary. In the health sector, which is predominantly female, women's salaries were barely 63 percent of the average male wage in the sector between 1997-99. It is only in the 50-54 age group that women's income is slightly higher than men's, due to additional earnings from subsistence agriculture.

### **THE RURAL SECTOR**

In 1998, about one-third of the population (16.3 million) lived in rural areas; 8.8 million, or 54 percent, were women. Employment opportunities are more limited in rural than urban areas. The deep socio-economic crisis in Ukraine has had a negative impact on the rural sector, which is particularly characterized by low living standards and poor access to social services. According to recent poverty numbers for 1999 and 2000, however, the rural poor do not appear to be poorer, probably because subsistence agriculture has buttressed rural consumption, thereby compensating for the dearth of employment opportunities.

In 2000, the distribution of rural men and women in the workforce was basically the same as for the country as a whole as follows: 36 percent female in agriculture; 87 percent female in health care, 62 percent female in culture; 37 percent in industry; 75 percent in retail trade.<sup>24</sup>

Deteriorating infrastructure makes commuting to school or work difficult in rural areas, while poor social services, including child care facilities, have hampered women's ability to find jobs. An

<sup>24</sup> Calculated from the Ukraine Living Conditions Survey for 2000 (9 months data).

emerging form of family enterprise in the rural sector consists of subsistence agriculture on a small plot of land, often the dacha plot. Even such a “simple” enterprise requires considerable time and physical effort, making it difficult for single-parent families

Although a majority of rural women have secondary or higher educations, less than five percent of them hold managerial positions in rural areas. As the director of a private company in Lviv noted ironically, “[M]en are used to being in charge. . . a man heads a collective farm and a woman works in the field. . . A man holds this office because he is a man, and a woman has yet to break that wall.” Focus groups discussions also revealed that when restructured collective farms, many of which operate as joint stock companies, tried to increase profits, they disbanded unprofitable sectors traditionally dominated by women (vegetable growing, cattle breeding, or beet production). Such measures worsened rural female unemployment. In addition, rural women have greater responsibility for gardening and livestock, not to mention housework and child care,<sup>25</sup> which renders them less mobile than men and thus less able to access information.

In addition, women’s attitudes toward legal and financial obligations has, at times, worked to their disadvantage. According to Lubov Moldovan, an agricultural researcher who heads a UNDP project financing rural women’s centers, women became independent farmers during the first phase of restructuring were more likely than men to have used their resources to pay off debts attached to the non-farm assets. Thus, when the Government decided to forgive these debts, these farmers found themselves at a disadvantage relative to the men who had invested in machinery and other assets rather than paying off their debts.

Female-headed households in rural areas are also somewhat less likely to have access to a private land plot and to have farm animals than male-headed households (Table 17), but again, these differences are not pronounced. For example, only 48 percent of households with private plot access and only 45 percent with farm animals are female-headed, as opposed to their incidence in the population (53 percent). Still, these differences suggest that female-headed rural households are at a disadvantage for accumulating these assets.

**Table 17. Ukraine: Land and Farm Animals by Household Head\***

		Gender of Household Head		Single Female	Adult Female
		Male (%)	Female (%)	Elderly	with Children
<b>Plot of land</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>51.6</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>
	No	50.0	50.0	15.4	7.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>51.6</b>	<b>48.4</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>5.5</b>

<sup>25</sup> Time-budget surveys from Russia and Ukraine indicate that in addition to the same workday as men on paid and household agricultural work, women spend three to five more per day on housework. From E. Yakuba, “Women in the Ukrainian village: socio-demographic problems,” *Ekonomika Ukrainy* 4 (1999): 58-59, cited by Tatiana Zhurzhenko, “Women and reproduction in post-Soviet Ukraine: Nationalism, state-building and family politics.” *In....* The Wilson Center Press. Forthcoming 2002..

<b>Household owned farm animals</b>	Yes	54.8	45.2	15.7	4.8
	No	41.1	58.9	13.9	9.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>7.3</b>

Source: *Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey, 2000 (9 months data)*

\*Head as determined by respondent(s).

### NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEN AND WOMEN: THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Despite considerable ups and downs over the past decade, many men and women have exploited opportunities in the emerging private sector. Women have made important inroads as entrepreneurs, but have not yet succeeded in entering the corporate world as managers or owners. A 1999 USAID enterprise and household survey found that women owned 21 percent of all small enterprises (11-50 employees); owned or managed 12.7 percent of all medium (51-250 employees) enterprises and 13 percent of large (251+ employees) enterprises.<sup>26</sup> According to discussants, men's greater access to working capital was an important factor underlying these figures. An Odessa entrepreneur noted that "in big business we find mostly men, because it's they who, in most cases, own administrative capital. Women are predominantly engaged in those businesses which can offer them at least a small profit – sufficient to survive – and those are mainly small businesses."

Focus group discussions indicated that women experienced greater barriers to entry in big business,<sup>27</sup> and observed that women-owned businesses were more often concentrated in the services sector, while men-owned businesses dominated production. According to the USAID survey,<sup>28</sup> women-owned enterprises with employees were more likely to pay wages – in cash – on time, and less likely to lay off workers. The USAID study found that women hired approximately four female workers for every male, while men hired more men than women. Women-owned businesses were also likelier to hire part-time workers.

While obtaining credit was considered a problem for both men and women entrepreneurs, discussants and expert informants concurred that, through the old-boy network, men were able to raise

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<sup>26</sup> A Survey of Business in Ukraine (October 1999). Commissioned by USAID in cooperation with the State Committee for Entrepreneurship Development, the study surveyed approximately 5000 businesses drawn from a random sample of businesses, stratified by size, taken from state registration records. A survey was also undertaken of 4000 households, based on clustered area samples from randomly selected sites throughout Ukraine.

<sup>27</sup> According to the USAID study, however, the proportion of medium and large businesses owned and controlled by women compares favorably with the situation in the US. Moreover, research in North America and Europe suggests that women business owners appear to be better planners of business activity, are active in building links with other business owners, and devote more attention to detail, which may make for competitive business performance. And women business owners compete very effectively in markets where preferences are shifting rapidly.

<sup>28</sup> USAID survey, cited earlier.

money from contacts in the government (also usually men) who controlled public allocations, as well as with men in the criminal world. In addition, although relevant business legislation makes no distinction between men and women, according to the KIIS study referred to above, women-owned businesses were more likely to be inspected and harassed by state agencies and less likely to have contracts with state agencies for the purchase of their products. Although women are more pessimistic about future sales, they concur with their male counterparts that obtaining credit is difficult.

A recent IFC enterprise survey provides indirect support for findings that women-owned enterprises may be somewhere more subject to harassment and to an uneven playing field than men-owned businesses. Given findings by the USAID study that most of the businesses owned by women are to be found among smaller enterprises, IFC findings concerning the particular burdens of small enterprises are relevant. They found that in terms of inspections, which ranked among the biggest problems face by enterprises, smaller firms had a much greater burden overall, and firms with fewer than 10 employees had more than 20 times more inspections per employee than did very large firms (over 500 employees). Moreover, small firms had fewer resources to deal with the consequences of inspections. Only nine percent of small firms managed to secure bank credit, compared to a quarter of large firms.<sup>29</sup>

One focus group discussant observed that if “there is no support from the authorities in small business, the most important thing is that [the business] is not hampered. Limitations in conducting business for females are purely physiological: family and children.” On the other hand, discussants noted that businesswomen have to overcome more barriers because they are not taken as seriously as their male counterparts. The chairwoman of a Kharkiv civic organization characterized the difference between women’s and men’s enterprises in terms of public attitudes: “the attitude to a businesswoman is rather scornful, whereas a man is looked on as a true businessman. Officially, support is not denied, but men establish rapport with authorities much more easily – through bribes. A woman is often treated as an article of trade.” A representative from the Lviv association of entrepreneurs commented that “support from authorities requires durable and persistent effort. One needs a great deal of patience for that. One also needs to assess whether it’s worth the effort.”

Discussants highlighted the critical importance of tax and other business legislation in facilitating or discouraging would-be entrepreneurs, male and female. As a result of recent streamlining of tax procedures for small businesses, many small businesses, including a large percentage of female-run businesses, have entered the formal sector. A private entrepreneur from Lviv commented, “the simplified system of registration and taxation is a significant achievement in small business.” However, respondents felt that men and women, especially the latter, remain vulnerable to harassment by various “mafias.”

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<sup>29</sup> Max Yacoub, Bohdan Senchuk, and Taras Tkachenko. Ukrainian Enterprises in 2000: An IFC Survey of Ukrainian Business. IFC. May 2001.

## THE INFORMAL SECTOR: THE SHUTTLE TRADE

While the actual scale of the informal sector is difficult to estimate, it provides primary or secondary employment to a significant number of men and women. Labor force survey data collected in September 1999, for example, revealed that more than one million people between the ages of 15-70 were engaged in additional work, principally as self-employed or unpaid family workers on their own household plots. (Table 18.) Sample surveys like those conducted by the Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies in 1997<sup>30</sup> indicate a remarkable growth in “secondary” employment that compensates for the inadequacy of jobs and wages from primary employment. The boundaries of the informal sector are unclear, with many formal (registered) enterprises employing some of their workforce “off the books” for tax purposes and other enterprises operating entirely in the informal, or unregulated, sector. Focus groups reported that some managers sign contracts with employees for minimal pay, while the parties verbally agree to a larger amount, with the balance to be paid under the table. This is done so that both parties can avoid taxes. Typically, no benefits are offered in such cases, including pension accruals.

According to the survey, women are particularly active buying and selling low-quality imported goods at open market places. Men are more active in construction, agriculture, and transportation. The Ukraine Living Conditions survey (2000) also found sharp gender differentials in reported self-employment activities, but many of the categories had so few respondents that the results can only be taken as indicative and not definitive. Women’s participation in trade appears to be a survival tactic that exacts a high price. “Often in selecting a job, women ignore their health and take risks,” said an entrepreneur from Lviv, “They sacrifice themselves. This is especially the case when they go abroad – it’s a high risk both health-wise and financially. The goal is to provide for their family, since a majority of men fail to assume this responsibility.” It is also evident that women are more vulnerable to non-contractual work, discrimination in hiring, sexual harassment, and illegal dismissals while on maternity leave.

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<sup>30</sup> Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies, “**name of survey**,” as cited in “**title of UNDP Report**,” 1999.

**Table 18. Ukraine: Type of Self-Employment by Gender**

	Males Count	Females Count	Total	Males Percent	Females Percent
Sale of Own-Produced Food	23	16	39	59.0	41.0
Sale of Baked Goods	1	9	10	10.0	90.0
Sale of Consumer Durables	13	4	17	76.5	23.5
Sale of Industrial Goods	61	76	137	44.5	55.5
Shuttle Trade	4	4	8	50.0	50.0
Construction-Installation	67	10	77	87.0	13.0
Automobile Repair	17	0	17	100.0	0.0
Repair of Every-day Items	9	1	10	90.0	10.0
Beautician	0	4	4	0.0	100.0
Housecleaning	0	2	2	0.0	100.0
Other services (tailoring)	6	8	14	42.9	57.1
Transportation	38	1	39	97.4	2.6
Tutoring	0	5	5	0.0	100.0
Printing/Info services	2	2	4	50.0	50.0
Medical Services	3	8	11	27.3	72.7
Babysitting/elder care	0	3	3	0.0	100.0
Security guard	2	0	2	100.0	0.0
Agriculture	24	10	34	70.6	29.4
Intermediary services	8	6	14	57.1	42.9
Hunting, fishing	1	0	1	100.0	0.0
Legal	1	0	1	100.0	0.0
Other (unspecified)	17	16	33	51.5	48.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>38.4</b>

Source: Ukraine Household Living Conditions Survey 2000 (9 months)

Note: Population Basis

Color Coding:

Male Dominated

Female Dominated

About Equal

Informal commerce expanded with the collapse of the Soviet system of production and distribution, as the Soviet-era black market expanded to meet consumer demand for items no longer manufactured locally. This commerce built upon an established tradition in which farm workers were allowed to sell produce raised on personal plots in urban markets. After the Soviet breakup, *chelnoki* (literally, “shuttles”) began traveling by bus, train and air, both individually and in groups, to Central Europe and the Middle and Far East, where they purchased cheap manufactured goods to resell domestically. A phenomenon also observed in the other parts of the world, women’s notable prominence in the shuttle trade has been ascribed variously to the need to compensate for their husbands’ loss of employment, and, in light of employer discrimination, to lower barriers to entry for women.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, many focus group discussants felt that women in the shuttle trade were

<sup>31</sup> See the case study of urban traders by Lyudmilla A. Kirillova, “Gender Implications of Small-Scale Urban Trade in Ukraine,” M.A. Thesis, Oregon State University, December 1999.

more vulnerable than men to risks and abuses from unscrupulous trading partners abroad, thieves, and mafias.

Few precise data exist on the shuttle trade, but references note the numerous difficulties and risks, including raising capital, insuring against losses, frequent changes in state regulations, and harassment from customs officers, police, and criminal groups.<sup>32</sup> The shuttle trade has become part of household survival strategy and includes people from every educational and occupational background. Many shuttle traders are pensioners trying to support their children or grandchildren and such people find trading a stressful activity: “I am not sure I can bear it for a long time. Even now I get nervous and exhausted at any single occasion of failure in trade.”<sup>33</sup>

While this phenomenon is widespread, there is still a significant knowledge gap about the composition, income levels, and educational and occupational profiles of shuttle traders. One discussant felt that “this trade has a shape of an iceberg – one cannot see much on the surface. Most of it remains invisible.” In particular, it is unclear where female traders cluster in the trading hierarchy – whether they are to be found predominantly among petty traders or whether they constitute an emerging group of middle-level entrepreneurs. Based on a study of middle-aged women traders in Kharkiv, Kirillova (1999) concluded that job loss, plus their husband’s inability to find work, was the single most important factor impelling women to join the shuttle trade. Most initially found the working conditions physically arduous and humiliating. While older women never changed their negative attitude toward trade, younger women indicated more willingness to pursue it as a profession. For the most part, this type of trade remained most important as a survival strategy rather than as a route to a new profession.

Focus group discussions in Odessa, Lviv and Kharkiv suggest that although women dominated the “shuttle” or “suitcase trade” in the first years of independence, men were playing an increasingly important role in this trade as operations expanded and trucks and containers, operated by men, replaced suitcases. Discussants estimated that equal numbers of men and women are currently engaged in the shuttle trade. Yet a number of discussants felt that shuttle trade as a small-scale informal activity was decreasing, which suggested that men would dominate the larger-volume trade now developing.

### **DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOR MARKET**

With the shift from full employment to sharp competition for limited jobs, discrimination on the basis of sex, age, family status, disability, and sometimes ethnicity, has become a fact of life for many job seekers and employees. The focus group discussions and interviews conducted for this study confirmed earlier findings that women in particular face overt discrimination on a number of grounds, including age and family status. Findings from these groups are cited extensively in this section due to the dearth of official data regarding discrimination, particularly with respect to sexual harassment. Once hired, for example, women are likelier to face sexual harassment, but highly unlikely to report it.

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<sup>32</sup> Claire Wallace, Vasil Bedzir, and Oksana Chmouliar, “Spending, Saving or Investing Social Capital: The Case of Shuttle Traders in Post-Communist Central Europe,” *East European Series* 43 (June 1997). See also Cathy Wanner and Nora Dudwick, “An Ethnographic Study of Living Standards in Ukraine,” The World Bank, 1996.

<sup>33</sup> Ukrainian woman trader in Slovakia, as quoted in Wallace, Bedzir, and Chmouliar, *op. cit.*

Many focus group discussants felt that employers generally preferred to hire men, although the case was sometimes reversed for explicitly female employment such as the textile industry. Discussants pointed out that many job advertisements explicitly state a gender preference. A representative from the Lviv Oblast Employment Center explained, “Only 30 percent of vacancies at the employment center are for women, 70 percent are for men . . . [and] in hiring there is discrimination – the advantage is clearly given to men.”

In some cases, required maternity and family leave benefits provide disincentives to employers. In other cases, protective labor legislation acts against women’s interests. For example, Ukrainian labor law still bars women from a range of occupations deemed hazardous or requiring strength, as well as from night shifts. However, the Ukrainian Government Report on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) acknowledges that “more than half a million women are employed in industry under conditions that do not meet the country’s own health and hygiene standards, while more than 24,000 are engaged in heavy physical work, and more than a million work in hazardous work conditions entitling them to additional leave and shorter working hours.”<sup>34</sup> CEDAW points out that if an occupation is hazardous, it poses a danger to the safety of all workers, women and men. The convention recommends that protective legislation be removed on the grounds that many women possess the skills necessary to hold jobs from which the law excludes them.

Focus group discussions gave priority to the difficulties faced by women with children when they seek to enter or re-enter the job market. At the same time, both male and female private sector employers argued that reluctance to hire women with childcare responsibilities was a completely legitimate employer concern. As the female vice-president of a Kharkiv business association explained, “As a senior executive, I am interested in the enterprise performing stably. This is why I have to know if a woman has children.” Discussants pointed out “women working at state-run enterprises are more secure. They are entitled to sick pay, their jobs are kept for them during maternity leave.” At the same time, some noted that such laws have become a barrier to female employment, because employers don’t want to incur such expenses. Disregard for the law is such that a respectable newspaper openly publishes information to employers on how to avoid fulfilling their legal obligations to female employees. One discussant pointed out that employers sometimes hire women contingent on their verbal promise not to become pregnant.

Working mothers among the discussants acknowledged that decent child care has become so expensive that poor women often choose to stay at home and work part-time in the informal sector because they cannot afford to pay for child care. This may be the start of a vicious circle because the women become deskilled. A number of discussants felt that part of the problem lay in poor allocation of funds on the part of the government, which is more willing to fund foster or institutional care than to help

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<sup>34</sup> International League of Human Rights, “Comments on the Third Periodic Report of Ukraine to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women,” January 26, 1996.

young parents. Given the developmental importance of child care, several discussants argued that state support for quality child care was preferable to targeted assistance for poor families.

There was consensus that both men and women face age-related discrimination when they approach 35 years of age (although some respondents felt men didn't face the problem until they turned 50). Several discussants attributed this preference to the prevailing belief that people in their late thirties "cannot be trained." In other cases, age discrimination is related to a woman's appearance rather than her responsibilities. "Women in their forties always have trouble finding a job, even that of a cleaner," said one discussant, "So age and appearance do count." For jobs where specific experience is required, however, age can sometimes be a plus. The director of an Odessa job agency explained, "[G]arment factories need women in their late forties. There are many instances when manufacturing industries want women in that age bracket." Likewise, an older woman entrepreneur explained that her small, specialized agency preferred older women because they interacted better with elderly clients.

Young women entering the job market experience two kinds of difficulties: age discrimination and sexual harassment. Age discrimination is usually related to employers' fears that young girls will marry and give birth to a child. At the same time, young women often find that they are expected to provide sexual services to employers. Said the director of a Kharkiv job information center, "I can tell you from my practice that 90% of businessmen offering positions of managers or secretaries to young women also have sex services in mind." Sociological surveys show that some 50 percent of all women fall victim to sexual harassment at work; however, in 1996, only six cases were registered and two persons convicted.<sup>35</sup> According to the results of a poll cited by the UNDP, single women are most likely to be subjected to sexual harassment and cases of sexual harassment are 1.5 times more frequent in private companies than in state enterprises.<sup>36</sup>

Focus group discussants concurred that sexual harassment has become a very real issue for female employees. As the head of a Kharkiv women's organization said,

'The situation is very similar everywhere: a girl gets a job and a month later she is invited to dinner plus ... [The young women] are ashamed to go to the law, they do not want to go through all those police formalities, they are afraid of publicity and do not believe they will win the case. There has been no precedent for a trial of such cases in Ukraine to date.'

Discussants noted that the problem was worse in private enterprises. A woman entrepreneur from Lviv bluntly stated, "If there is a sexual harassment at work, there is only one way out: to quit." Other discussants pointed out that some girls offered "certain services" when applying for work or preferred

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<sup>35</sup> Sexual harassment is not a distinct criminal offense in Ukraine. According to the International Helsinki Federation of Human Rights, however, it can be dealt with under Article 199 of the Criminal Code, which states that forcing a woman to have sexual relations with a person on whom she is economically or officially dependent is punishable by one year imprisonment or by corrective labor.

<sup>36</sup> UNDP poll.

“to accept the boss’s proposition and get a higher salary rather than quit. The problem is there, but it is a latent one.”

## **FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS**

A review of recent studies, together with interviews and discussions with expert informants highlighted the following issues relevant to gender in the labor market:

- Although women are as well-educated as men, they tend to occupy a greater proportion of lower-skilled, poorly paying jobs.
- In part due to prevailing gender stereotypes about “appropriate professions,” men and women are not equally represented in different sectors of the economy, with women clustered in lower-paid social sectors.
- Women experience greater discrimination in hiring, in large part because of expected family obligations and age.
- Women own or manage fewer businesses than men, have less access to capital, and report greater harassment from authorities.
- Women are particularly active in the informal sector and shuttle trade.
- Young single women are vulnerable to sexual harassment, particularly in private employment.

Discussion of these issues suggest the following:

- Protective labor legislation acts against women’s interests; both men and women should be guaranteed rights to occupational safety and family-related leave.
- Clear business legislation (such as the simplified tax system and streamlined registration for small businesses) and stronger enforcement of this legislation particularly benefits small entrepreneurs, including women, and protects employees of both sexes. Better gender-disaggregated data in business and labor force surveys is called for.
- A multi-pronged approach is required to prevent sexual harassment on the job, including incentives for the judicial system to respond to the problem and a public information campaign to acquaint women and men with their legal rights.
- State-subsidized quality child care would level the playing field and reduce barriers for poorer/younger women seeking employment.

## HEALTH IMPACTS OF TRANSITION FOR MEN AND WOMEN

### THE MALE HEALTH CRISIS : RISING MORTALITY AMONG MEN

*"Why do Ukrainian widows live so long? Because they don't have to live with wives."  
Staff member, Anti-Aids Center (and Bank PIU)*

Perhaps the most dramatic health story of the transition in Ukraine is the mortality crisis among men. Although general mortality has been increasing -- from 12.9% in 1991 to 14.8% in 1999 - the mortality rate for men is higher than that for women in all age groups. For those in the 35-39 age group, it is 3.4 times higher. This rise is consistent with worldwide patterns that show men are likelier to experience premature death, while women are likelier to experience poor physical or mental health. The increases are largely due to circulatory illnesses (heart attack and stroke), accidents and injuries, which accounted, respectively, for 32.8 and 33.2 percent of the increase in male deaths in Ukraine from 1991-1999.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, a recent study of Russia, where figures are comparable, found that recent declines in the number of deaths was a function of the changing age structure rather than a real decline in death rates.<sup>38</sup>

Both survey and qualitative data suggests that many causes of the male mortality crisis are linked directly or indirectly to the transition. Interviewees and focus group participants argued that unemployment has devastated men's social identity and sense of worth, as well as undermined their authority in the family, creating high levels of stress and depression. A participant from the Brody focus group argued that a "main reason for male mortality is poor financial security, which results in a stress, since conscious men are aware of their responsibility for their family. Stresses lead to alcohol abuse, which, in its turn, deteriorates one's health and leads to death [compounded by] an indifferent attitude to one's health."<sup>39</sup>

Contributing to this dismal health picture are long-standing health behaviors such as heavy alcohol use and smoking, which participants felt had intensified in reaction to stress. Alcoholism was observed among men and women, and increasingly, among youth. A Brody focus group participant felt that "the major problem in our town is alcoholism. I see entire families being ruined by alcohol. All other problems result from this one. When parents drink everything away, the children are prepared to do

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<sup>37</sup> Elizabeth Brainerd, "Economic Reform and Mortality in the Former Soviet Union: A Study of the Suicide Epidemic in the 1990s," *European Economic Review* 45 (2001), p. 1011.

<sup>38</sup> Cited in Verdon S. Staines, "A Health Sector Strategy for the Europe and Central Asian Region," The World Bank, 1999.

<sup>39</sup> World Bank staff conducted focus group discussions in three oblasts of Ukraine in October-November 1991 for the present study. Separate focus groups were held in each oblast for specific topics (e.g., poverty, health, labor markets, etc.).

anything just for food. Alcoholism is more than visible – they are openly selling cheap vodka and moonshine.”

### **THE SUICIDE EPIDEMIC**

Suicides have also increased among men. Since 1991, the number of suicides among males have increased from 8,371 per 100,000 (compared to 2,372 for women), to 12,586 per 100,000 (compared to 2,672 for women) in 1996.<sup>40</sup> Thus, while the number has remained stable for women, the number of male suicides has increased by about 50 percent. An Odessa participant cited a suicide ratio in Odessa of three women to seven men, adding that over the past ten years, "18,000 senior citizens have committed suicide, above all due to poverty. By comparison, 17,000 people died in the Afghan war, and that caused a public outcry. Today no one is saying anything about this number of suicides." These impressions are corroborated by research findings from Ukraine, Russia and the Baltic countries that find suicide rates among men, now among the highest in the world, have been very sensitive to changing social and macroeconomic conditions. By contrast, female suicide rates have remained relatively stable.<sup>41</sup>

### **SMOKING AND PREMATURE DEATH**

By all accounts, the impact of smoking on premature death, particularly among men, is extremely serious in Ukraine. According to the survey conducted in November 2000 with 1797 respondents, 58 percent of men smoke daily, as opposed to only 14 percent of women.<sup>42</sup> A nationally representative survey carried out in June 2001 of 2721 respondents found male smoking prevalence higher than female smoking prevalence in all age groups. The gap is two-fold in the 20-year-old age group, but almost eightfold in 50-59 year age group.<sup>43</sup> This increase places Ukraine among the ECA countries with the highest smoking prevalence among men.

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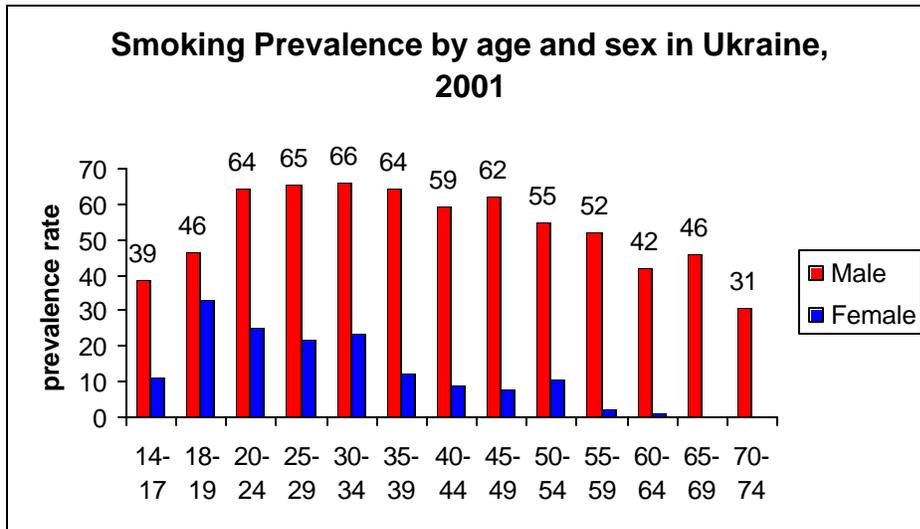
<sup>40</sup> UNICEF – TRANSMONEE database.

<sup>41</sup> Brainerd, 2001.

<sup>42</sup> Konstantine Kravosky, "National Representative Smoking Prevalence Survey in Ukraine," HDNHE, November 2000. According to a national representative household survey funded by DFID in February 2000 with 1,590 respondents, 57 percent of men and 10 percent of women were current smokers. See Anna B. C. Gilmore, Martin McKee, Maria Telishevska, and Richard Rose, "Epidemiology of Smoking in Ukraine," DFID, 2000.

<sup>43</sup> Data provided by HDNHE, June 2001.

Chart 1. Smoking Prevalence in Ukraine, 2000



According to the World Health Organization, the death of every seventh person in Ukraine is connected with smoking.<sup>44</sup> In 1990, 14,000 out of 15,000 lung cancer deaths were attributable to smoking among males aged 35-69. Tobacco was also responsible for a total of 64,000 out of 159,000 deaths among males aged 35-69.<sup>45</sup> In 1995, annual smoking-attributable deaths among males were 68 per 1000, compared to only six per 1000 for women.<sup>46</sup> According to the World Bank survey, however, women are smoking in increasing numbers and there have been sharp increases in female lung cancer in the region.<sup>47</sup> While smoking prevalence is high among men in both low- and high-income groups, women's smoking peaks among the high-income group. Although smoking has been banned in many public places and cigarette packs carry health warnings, cigarette advertisements are prominent on billboard and printed media. Little exists in the way of treatment options. Primary health care facilities do not offer smoking cessation programs, although some private institutions or NGOs do. According to the November survey, only two percent of smokers had sought medical help to quit.

<sup>44</sup> "Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration," **Publisher**, 2000.

<sup>45</sup> Peto, Richard., Alan D., Lopez, J. Boreham, M.Thun, and C. Heath, Jr. 1994. Mortality from Smoking in Developed Countries 1950-2000, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>46</sup> Information provided by Aysa Aysun Yurekli, HDNHE.

<sup>47</sup> Staines, 1999, p. 15.

**Table 19. Smoking-Related Deaths in Ukraine in 1999**

	<b>Smoking- Attributed Deaths</b>	<b>Total Deaths</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b><i>Lung cancer</i></b>			
Males 35-69	10878	11451	95
Females 35-69	771	1606	48
Male 70+	3857	4334	99
Female 70+	653	1333	49
<b><i>Upper aerodigestive cancer</i></b>			
Males 35-69	4727	5588	76
Females 35-69	77	385	20
Males 70+	686	1248	55
Females 70+	22	109	20
<b><i>Chronic Respiratory Disease</i></b>			
Males 35-69	7188	8457	85
Females 35-69	726	2075	35
Males 70+	6277	9369	67
Females 70+	2595	7413	35

Source: Calculations made based on WHO methods.<sup>48</sup>

## **WOMEN'S HEALTH DURING THE TRANSITION**

### **Stereotypes and realities**

Participants stereotyped women as "naturally" more resilient and adaptable. According to a participant from the Odessa pensioners organization, "woman has been a keeper of hearth and home from time immemorial and she naturally has more things to do: she has to think about her children, husband, income, shopping... all this is on her shoulders... she is more adaptable to things and can endure more than men." Despite this stereotype of the strong Ukrainian woman, however, a survey of self-reported illness found that women in Ukraine actually report more illness than do men (about 30 percent more for young women aged 18-20 and adult women aged 30-54, but nearly 2.4 times as much for elderly women), although men report more cancer from smoking.

If young and adult men and women are compared by the type of illness they self-report, however, it appears that women and men report respiratory and digestive system illnesses at about the same rate, but women are less likely to report neural illness or skeletal-muscular disorders. Cardiovascular disease is a mixed picture – young women report this illness 30 percent more than do males,

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<sup>48</sup> Peto, Richard., Alan D., Lopez, J. Boreham, M.Thun, and C. Heath, Jr. 1994. Mortality from Smoking in Developed Countries 1950-2000, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

but the percentages are about equal for adult and elderly women and men. Cancer is an outlier – five times as many adult women as men report that they have neoplasms, but fewer elderly women than men report cancer, and for young women, their cancer rate is only 30 percent more than young men. The only other outlier is the "other" category; its high prevalence for young and adult women suggests that reproductive illnesses are covered by this category.

## Reproductive health

Overall poor health and declining access for the poor to good quality health medical care has directly affected women's reproductive health. The advances made in reducing maternal mortality in the 1980s have slowed during the transition period of the 1990s. Due to unreliable transport facilities, health services are not always accessible to poor women, particularly in rural areas. Diagnostic facilities for pregnant women exist only in large cities, and the gap in access to obstetric care between urban and rural areas has significantly widened in the last decade. Access to family planning facilities is mainly confined to urban areas and more educated users. Contraceptives are more widely available than in the past, but remain expensive. Nevertheless, abortions, which were once the preferred method of contraception, have declined from 77.6 per 1000 women of reproductive age in 1991 to 36.7 in 1999 (Table 20).

**Table 20. Contraception Usage in Ukraine, 1994-1999**

Year	Number of Abortions	Per 1000 women of childbearing age	Usage of intrauterine devices per 1000 women	Use of hormonal contraceptives per 1000 women
1994	772,629	61.2	18.2	32.5
1995	715,692	56.5	17.7	34.4
1996	664,156	52.0	16.9	34.3
1997	571,479	44.7	15.9	40.4
1998	498,627	39.0	14.6	47.8
1999	468,803	36.7	14.4	62.0

*Source: Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration*

Between 1989 and 1999, the rate of anemia during pregnancy increased 4.4 times, related to documented poor nutrition among pregnant women. In addition, childbirth complications have been increasing. Fortunately, the rate of maternal deaths has decreased since 1995, but at 26.5 per 100,000 births (1999) it is almost double the rate of other European countries.<sup>49</sup> Focus group participants in Lyubotyn, for example, complained that their town lacked family planning services, any qualified gynecologist, and that the local maternity hospital had closed.

## GENDER TRENDS IN INFECTIOUS AND SEXUALLY-TRANSMITTED ILLNESSES

At present, health experts characterize the situation with both tuberculosis and HIV as epidemics. The two trends started together, with TB in particular affecting mainly men who are poor, often marginal (including the incarcerated population). An Odessa focus group participant told us that

<sup>49</sup> "Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration.»

during the 12 years she had worked at a Health Ministry tuberculosis sanatorium, most of the patients were men. "The reason is their work. Quite a few patients were former convicts who got infected in the prison. When they get sick and catch a cold, men normally pay less attention to their health. There were, for some reason, many young boys there after they had served in the army. The army, just as the prison system, is a breeder of TB."

The growth in the incidence of HIV infections is also staggering. Ukraine is currently the most affected country in the region, with the estimated number of carriers soaring from about 1500 in 1994 to some 110,000 in early 1998.<sup>50</sup> In 1999 and during the first quarter of 2000, UNAIDS and WHO worked closely with national governments and research organizations to recalculate current estimates of people living with HIV/AIDS. The estimated number of adults and children living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 1999 are 230,000 adults (ages 15-49), 70,000 women and 7,500 children (ages 0-15). The number of diagnosed infections increased from 398 cases for the whole period 1987-1994 to 1490 in 1995, 5400 in 1996 and a total of 23,315 in 1997-1999.<sup>51</sup> These figures represent only officially registered cases and therefore underestimate the number of diagnosed cases. The highest rates of reported HIV infections were initially found in the regions of Odessa and Mikolayev, but cases are now reported from all 27 regions of the country. According to the Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration (2000), the most infected oblasts are in Eastern and Southern Ukraine: Donetsk (6458 cases), Dnipropetrovsk (6002), and Odessa (4745). The majority of those infected are persons of 20-39 years old.

Focus group participants working for health organizations concurred that intravenous drug use appeared to be behind this dramatic surge in HIV infections, but that unsafe sex and prostitution constituted a potential for further spread. This indicates that HIV infection, which used to be more prevalent among males, is now increasingly prevalent among women. The Odessa-based NGO *Vera Nadezhda Liubov* (Faith, Hope, Love), which focuses on the prevention and treatment of AIDS and HIV-related infections as well as on trafficking, reported a recent shift in the gender balance of HIV/AIDS victims. In 2000, about 70% (about 60% of whom were men) of those infected were intravenous drug users; by 2001, about 70% (about 60% of whom were women, mainly sex workers) of those living with HIV had been infected through sexual transmission. Respondents working in the health field were very concerned at the level of ignorance about HIV; an Odessa focus group participant noted, "The situation with HIV in the region is very serious. Children in the provinces ask the kind of questions which urban children no longer ask."

## **DIFFERENTIAL GENDER IMPACTS ON YOUTH**

### **Alcohol, drugs and violence among boys**

Young men and women in Ukraine are at risk for a number of behaviors. The people with whom we consulted concurred that while boys and girls are equally involved in risky behavior, boys

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<sup>50</sup> UNICEF- TRASMONEE Database, 1999.

<sup>51</sup> UNAIDS/WHO Epidemiological Fact Sheets, "Ukraine 2000 Update."

seem to have a greater tendency to become involved in drug use, heavy drinking, and relatedly, in gang and criminal activity. According to surveys, we were told in Lyubotyn, "children start using drugs as early as the age of 12. Yet there is no narcotics expert in town.... 60% of calls coming through the "Confidence" Helpline relate to the use of drugs." Three drug dealers in Lyobotin were said to "set up networks to distribute the stuff and involve teenagers in the sale of drugs. This year, eight drug-related crimes were registered in the town."

Respondents linked heavy drinking among boys to violence and cited reports from the Office of Public Prosecutor that "juvenile crime has grown younger. One recounted that an acquaintance had been attacked by youth: "Waiting for a commuter train, he came into a café. Some young guys, already drunk, demanded that he buy them drinks. When he refused, they beat him up right there." Small town respondents especially emphasized the desperate need for youth centers to provide activities for young people. They also attributed problems to the "negative influence of the mass media" which propagates violence, drugs, and sex. A Lyubotyn focus group participant argued that the media "forms the image of a superman in children from an early age. This issue can only be resolved at the government level."

### **A dearth of sex education**

Health professionals also pointed to the lack of education about sexuality, sexual relations and health issues in the public school system. The problem is as much the lack of funding for curriculum revision as the lack of expertise among education authorities to address these issues. Focus group participants in Odessa observed, "Many teachers in state schools are afraid to conduct such classes because of their own complexes. . . . But young people know almost nothing about safe behavior and it requires intervention by specialists. . . . This job in schools is often assigned not to specialist psychologists, but to physical education teachers or the like. Regarding the issue of contraception, they don't discuss this at all." Another participant alleged, "Girls are said to show more interest in this issue, which bears on personal safety. But again, not every teacher can bring him/herself to speak about this. In other words, it requires specialists."

### **Girls: Unwanted pregnancies, STDs, and prostitution**

The actual number of minors giving birth has increased, and a representative from the Christian Children's Fund, an American-sponsored NGO that works with underaged mothers in Kherson, Vizhgorod, and Marievka, the actual number of young unwed mothers is higher than official figures indicate. Few of these young mothers ask or receive government assistance. In Brody, the representative of an NGO working with children observed that due to the lack of sex education or information on reproduction, girls were often so ignorant they did not even understand that they were pregnant. In Kharkiv, girls were said to seek treatment more often than boys for STDs, although a Kharkiv oblast pediatrician observed this might be because girls were closer to their mothers, who then brought the problems to the attention of a doctor.

During consultations, prostitution among girls also emerged as a serious concern. A pediatrician working for the Kharkiv oblast administration pointed out the recent increase. The same issue emerged

during focus group discussions in Lyubotyn, a small town near Kharkiv. With only two industrial enterprises and heavy unemployment, few opportunities exist in this small town. Sixth and seventh graders are having sex, and prostitution is emerging as a problem among girls as young as 10 to 15. Discussion participants felt that prostitution among ten-year olds sometimes occurred because the children were hungry; in some cases, they said, "problem families" with many children pressured their girls to earn money on the street.

## **FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

As in other transition countries of ECA, poverty, transition-related stress, and a deteriorating medical system have compounded both unhealthy lifestyle choices and the Soviet era curative, rather than preventive, approach to medicine. Our findings include the following:

- Male mortality has increased dramatically in the past decade and remains very high; alcohol and smoking related illnesses play a major role.
- Lifestyle choices (alcohol abuse, smoking, poor diets) are an overall health issue, but while men have disproportionately suffered from smoking-related ailments, increased smoking among women is increasing their risk of smoking-related illness.
- Although men die earlier than women, women report more illnesses than do men.
- Levels of HIV/AIDS and STDs have soared. To date, drug users, a majority of whom are men, have been primary victims of HIV/AIDS, but this trend is starting to reverse as HIV/AIDS increases among commercial sex workers, most of whom are women.
- Despite increases in STDs and unwanted pregnancies, there is a serious dearth of sex education in schools as well as family planning facilities, particularly in rural areas.
- Increased drug and alcohol use appear to be contributing to youth violence.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Given the strong relationship between alcohol abuse and smoking to high male mortality, a multi-pronged approach to these issues is important, including: improving public awareness of the health risks, availability of help for those who wish to reduce consumption, changing tax laws and other incentives to reduce smoking, improving and enforcing traffic safety (including stricter enforcement of drunk driving laws).
- Given that public health services are experiencing greater financial constraints, (health care expenditures as a percentage of GDP fell from 3.6 percent in 1992 to 2.8 percent in 2000), it is increasingly important that the issue of sexually transmitted diseases be addressed through widespread public education campaigns that target at-risk groups as well as the general public, as well as provide better access to reliable and affordable means of prevention.
- In addition to public health campaigns, sex education, targeted separately for boys/girls, should be introduced in the schools – especially in rural areas where access to information is more limited.

- Attention to reproductive health is important for improving the health of women as well as the next generation. It will be important for health reform to protect access to prenatal care, particularly in more poorly served rural areas and, given reported high rates of anemia among pregnant women, to consider provision of discounted vitamins or food supplements.

# CHANGING GENDER RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FAMILY

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC PICTURE

Ukrainians express considerable concern over their declining population, as well as worrying trends in family formation. Since 1995, the overall population has fallen by about two million and the gap between men and women has slightly narrowed (Table 21). Nevertheless, largely because of higher male mortality, even though boys outnumber girls among newborns, women outnumber men (in the 70 and over age group, they outnumber men two to one).<sup>52</sup>

**Table 21. Male, Female Demographics in Ukraine, 1995-2000 (in thousands)**

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Resident population (beginning of the year):	51,474	51,079	50,639	50,245	49,851	49,456
Men	23,905	23,726	23,523	23,342	23,164	23,244
Women	27,569	27,353	27,116	26,903	26,687	26,212

Source: Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration, 2000.

The birth rate has also declined, reflecting a decrease in the number of marriages (Table 21) but not in the rise of divorces, the number of which has remained stable, and an increasing proportion of families with one or no children. The number and proportion of single mothers is also growing -- the share of out-of-wedlock births has steadily increased from 11.2 percent in 1990, to 16.2 in 1998.

**Table 22. Crude marriage rate (marriages minus divorces)<sup>53</sup>**

B	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
289,918	292-257	171,445	208,908	191,575	233,431	114,513	156,781

Source: Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration, 2000.

## GENDER ROLES IN THE FAMILY, DIVORCE AND CUSTODY

Focus group discussions identified stressful relations in the family, abusive treatment of women, and general suppression of women as an important precipitating factor in divorce. A representative from a pensioners organization told us that none of the women she knew would seek help at a center “because they are ashamed to do it: they are used to resolving problems on their own. And they would rather file for divorce. According to statistics, men seldom want a divorce, the initiative usually comes from women.”

After divorce, although men and women receive equal protection under Ukrainian law, in practice, they are treated differently, particularly regarding property division and child custody. Equal rights to property are often not defended, such that if a man forces his ex-wife and children out of their

<sup>52</sup> Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Program of Actions Approved by the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). 2000.

<sup>53</sup> UNICEF – TRANSMONEE Database.

home, she has little practical protection from law enforcement agencies. A participant from the Brody City Council described a typical situation she encounters: “A man divorces his wife, throws her out into the street with two children. The woman appeals to court and the court does not protect her, but supports her husband, who leaves his wife and kids without any means for existence.” Likewise, divorced women with children have little way of enforcing payment of child support, given the fact that the father’s earnings may derive from the large informal sector and therefore be impossible to document. In cases of disputed paternity, poor women have difficulty in finding resources to pay for establishing paternity.

However, men are a serious disadvantage in obtaining custody of their children after divorce; even when the mother is clearly unfit. We were told that it is easier for the state to deprive a mother of parental rights than for the father to gain custody. Nor is it accepted for fathers to take family leave to care for sick children.

A number of participants felt that fatherhood is seriously undervalued in Ukrainian society. While women’s social identities expanded during the Soviet years, when they were encouraged to hold full-time jobs while maintaining traditional family responsibilities, men’s social identities focused primarily on their role as worker rather than father. Indeed, the role of fathers only emerged once, during our focus group discussion in Lyubotyn. One of the participants described the father’s board that had been set up at his children’s school to problem “street-smart” children: “It is believed that men enjoy great prestige among children. With this in mind, we set up the fathers’ board. But its influence is not that effective because of the negative attitude of other children.” The relegation of fathers to secondary status also takes place on the highest official levels. In 1999, at the joint request of the Ministry of Family and Youth and women’s public organizations, the President of Ukraine revived Mother’s Day, “to honor the Woman-Mother and appreciate her work and upbringing of children...”<sup>54</sup>

## FINDING AND IMPLICATIONS

The transition has had notable effects on the formation of families and the demographic picture of Ukraine. Overall, the marriage rate is falling, but the number of out-of-wedlock births has increased. Of particular concern is the fact that minors are giving birth. Overall prospects suggest a further aging of a population already characterized by the relatively large numbers of elderly.

Within the family, gender stereotypes continue to prevail. Participants emphasized that women’s problem in juggling domestic and professional responsibilities – both of which they view as important – arises not so much from their self-definition, but in the narrow ways men’s roles are constructed and the devaluation of fatherhood.

While divorce and custody laws are written in a gender-neutral manner they are not fairly applied. In the overwhelming number of cases, women retain custody of the children, but are not

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<sup>54</sup> Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration. 2000.

supported by the law neither in enforcement of child support payments, nor of their property rights. Men, however, have a severe disadvantage in custody disputes.

Possible practical implications these findings include:

- Frequently projects with an early childhood or child health focus are phrased in terms of maternal and child health projects. It may be worth finding ways to more explicitly attempt to bring men into such projects, finding ways to support their explicit involvement *as fathers*.
- Projects dealing with legal and judicial reform should include components explicitly aimed at increasing access for low-income men and women, regarding their rights in cases of divorce-related property and custody disputes.
- While labor laws that protect parental rights can backfire, men's right to take paternity leave or family leave to take care of sick children or other family members should be part of the legal code (it may already be on the books).

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ABUSE AND TRAFFICKING

*“Domestic abuse was, is, and will be as long as women remain economically dependent on men.” From a Lyubotyn focus group.*

Domestic abuse, by most accounts, was a significant problem in Soviet times, and although estimates regarding the scope of the problem are only approximate, numerous reports suggest that the economic crisis and male unemployment have increased the level of domestic and sexual violence. Interviews with police and medical personnel carried out for a recent study<sup>55</sup> confirmed the routine nature of domestic violence, in many cases resulting in serious injury. Our interviews with the Kharkiv Centre for Women’s Studies also revealed that in a field survey with 89 Kharkiv secondary school students and their mothers, only 29% of families declared that they did not experience any form of violence in relations between parents and/or between parents and children. The director of an Odessa organization concerned with children’s issues observed that the trend in “family conflicts leading to physical violence or the threat of such violence... is a growing one... many women think that husbands feel they can do whatever they want since they don’t meet with resistance.”

Respondents also pointed out that children often become victims of sexual violence. Based on conversations at a local children’s home, the director of a youth services center in Odessa explained that “the children (and this is a home for boys) often become victims of incest... during discussions, it transpires that children often become victims of violence on the part of a stepfather or a senior brother, or some companions who are stronger than they are.” A recent study of sexually abused youths in Ukraine found that female rape victims outnumbered males fivefold, although in correction facilities for juvenile offenders, almost the same number of boys between the ages of 10 and 13 had been raped. The study also found that youth who had been perpetrators tended to come from families marked by aggression, alcohol and drug abuse and that many had been sexually assaulted. The prevalence of sexual abuse was much higher in Eastern Ukraine (a finding that correlates with higher incidences of HIV/AIDs), which the researchers attributed to a higher level of migration.<sup>56</sup>

According to Inna Bohoslovska (deputy head and only woman member of the Parliament’s Budget Issues Committee), the limited recreational and cultural outlets available for youth and men in terms of sports and culture have influenced the level of domestic violence. This is particularly a problem in industrial areas such as Donetsk or Lugansk. The closure of mines and other heavy industries, and the construction of new light industries where 98% of new employees are women has resulted in a “terrible psychological drama.” Demographic research links alcohol abuse among Ukrainian males to female homicides,” demonstrating that male alcohol abuse threatens not only the well-being of Ukrainian males, but directly threatens female well-being as well.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, “Domestic Violence in Ukraine,” December 2000.

<sup>56</sup> Boris Vornik, “Sexual victimization of adolescents in Ukraine: survey of 1,486 teenagers in Ukraine who considered themselves victims of sexual abuse,” *Choices-Sexual Health and Family Planning in Europe* 26, no. 2 (1997).

<sup>57</sup> Lisa Marie Godek. Abstract of “Increasing Mortality in Ukraine, 1965-1994: The contributions of alcohol and tobacco abuse,” Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1998.

Some respondents linked domestic abuse of women to women's secondary status in the household. An Odessa focus group participant said that "A woman is not perceived as a human being – 'And who do you think you are?'" – is a very common male assertion here." Another continued, "even in normal families, where a man earns enough, he behaves so that his wife can't fulfill herself... And when you start speaking to such women, you understand that the cause for the crisis is in the psychological atmosphere that has developed in their homes." Another added, "Men absorb with their mother's milk the idea that they are bosses in the family and they don't think otherwise."

The issue is generally not acknowledged by society, in part because of the norm of "not washing dirty laundry in public." Moreover, mothers often dissuade daughters from coming forward when they have been the victims of rape, for fear that it will adversely affect their chances of marriage. During focus group discussions, however, domestic abuse was widely acknowledged by all respondents as a severe and widespread problem. A recent university graduate told us that women's sense of oppression had been discussed by professors and instructors. A member of the Brody City Council explained that women were "more afraid of disclosure than their husband's violence as such." Another focus group participant told us that none of the women she knew would seek help at a center because were ashamed, mistrustful of the confidentiality of such services, and feared damage to their reputations.

For the most part, police in Ukraine are not equipped to deal with domestic violence. Focus group participants felt that police simply didn't care – "Call them or not, the police won't come. So a person is unprotected." Nor do the police have a special unit or training to deal with violence against women; similarly, judges and court officials are not offered training or guidance in this area. To report a rape case, a victim must undergo a medical examination. She must pay for this examination and is often subjected to critical comment and insensitive treatment by the medical staff. In cases of sexual or physical abuse, it is usually the responsibility of the victim to press charges. The police, however, do have powers to act independently if it is suspected that intimidation may occur. These powers are rarely used.

In addition, if a woman retracts a statement made to the police, she may be prosecuted for lying. In Brody, we were told, "if there is violence in a family, the local militia department is informed... They mandatorily react to that: document it, submit the case to court. There are women who are afraid to go to court in case of violence on part of their husbands, but brave women do appeal to court." Recently, legislation addressing the issue of legal protection for victims of domestic abuse has been discussed in parliament. On Nov. 11, 2001, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a "Law of Ukraine on Prevention of Domestic Violence."<sup>58</sup> This is the first time such a law has been drafted and voted for in Central/East Europe or the NIS countries. It remains to be seen how it will be implemented.

Some NGOs have developed relations with local police departments to help them respond more adequately to the problem. They have established crisis hotlines and a few homes for women who have been victimized by abuse or trafficking. Some new initiatives involve working directly with the

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<sup>58</sup> The law was drafted by a working group of experts led by Dr. Alexnadra Rudneva, the Kharkiv Centre for Women's Studies, Vice-Speaker Professor S.B. Havrysh, J.D., and President of Domestic Affairs O. M. Bandurka.

police and courts and establishing self-help groups on the topics of alcohol abuse, domestic violence and sexual violence. The director (then a deputy to the oblast council) of *Beregyna*, an organization in Kharkiv, claimed the organizations was the first to found a center for domestic abuse in 1993. At that time, the police had started to reduce home visits and the chief declared that police would only go when someone was badly beaten. *Beregyna* organized public meetings with the police chief, who felt that cooperating would enhance his political status. Initially, the police were reluctant to have a community center in their district because it would put the spotlight on them. However, they have gradually changed their attitude. *Beregyna* has applied to the local police to provide a list of abusive families and asked the police chief to keep special watch on them.

Despite the pioneering efforts of some NGOs, most focus group participants stressed the lack of services. Noting the frequency of violence against women, an Odessa participant complained that “we do not have a crisis center where a woman with a child could come and ask for protection. Nor do we have shelters where women could stay for some time to escape from their violent husbands. There are no protection services. And if you work, he is sure to find you there, too. We set up a coalition for family violence prevention, but it is not working.” The director of a youth social services center in Lyubotyn explained, “We at the Center receive phone calls from them, but cannot give them any help except psychological support.”

### ***Trafficking of persons***

Many women, and some men, discouraged by sharply diminishing job opportunities at home, look for work abroad. Although some migrate by choice, in some cases knowingly engaging in prostitution, many have become victims of sexual trafficking, experiencing abuse, exploitation and violence. Most, according to an Odessa focus group participant, are motivated by the “financial position of their families. Cases are not rare when a woman is the sole wage earner having to support her husband, child and the elderly mother. To this end, she is prepared even to sell her body. So, they take such jobs knowingly.”

Ukraine is now a major source of young girls and women trafficked and sold into international commercial sex markets, including to countries in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. The illicit movement of women takes place at the hands of “traffickers,” loosely defined as people profiteering from organizing and facilitating the illicit transfer of persons. Officials from the State Department of Youth and Family in Kyiv noted that young men were often active in organizing trafficking, although in other cases, it had become a “family business” run in the guise of special tourist companies. As the result of being trafficked, the majority of women find themselves trapped in debt bondage, servitude or slavery-like bondage. Although the commercial sex industry is one of the principal sectors into which individuals are trafficked, people are also trafficked into begging, the service industry, sweat shops, domestic work and enforced marriage.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> “Trafficking in Human Beings: Implications for the OSCE,” ODIHR Background Paper, 1999/3.

*Vera Nadezhda Liubov*, an NGO that, among its other activities, runs a hotline for men and women concerned about domestic violence, STDs, and related issues, receives many calls from women calling to discuss the risk of seeking work abroad or responding to Internet marriage proposals. They found that the majority of women who had been trafficked were rural residents, had completed secondary or vocational – but not university – education, and were over 25. Most had been unable to find work, had children to support, and had left their children with relatives or friends when they sought work abroad.

Interviews with parliamentarians in Kiev indicated that they were also aware of young male rural and construction labor migrants from Ukraine in situations of forced servitude in Russia and Finland. According to an Odessa NGO, ships arrive in Odessa twice a week with 40-80 women who have been deported from other countries. Not all are victims of trafficking, of course – some intentionally sought prostitution jobs abroad, others are shuttle traders whose visas expired. Winrock International and other donors actively working on anti-trafficking issues pointed out that in Chernivtsi oblast, near the border with Moldova, the problem has reached such huge proportions that there are rural communities virtually without young women. As a result, oblast officials have openly expressed their concern over the issue. According to Inna Bohoslovska, the problem is acute in a number of the western oblasts that joined Ukraine after 1945. They lacked local industry, were poor, patriarchal, had lower than average levels of education, and fewer women in the labor market. In her view, this was a reason that a relatively greater number of women from this region had become involved in prostitution and trafficking.

These issues, particularly those surrounding trafficking, have generated considerable international attention. In Ukraine, a trafficking law exists, but many observe that police, prosecutors and judges have been reluctant to enforce the law against traffickers, and traffickers have been successful in bribing government officials to assist in the trafficking process<sup>60</sup>. While officials and law enforcement agencies acknowledge that a trafficking problem exists, the belief that women are aware of the risks involved is still pervasive. In some cases, public debate about the problem and how to tackle it have been diverted by debates over the legality of prostitution and rights to “sexual freedom.” In addition, there are basic disagreements on whether trafficking and prostitution are aspects of the same problem. Although Ukraine is a signatory to the 1949 UN Convention on the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, it has not been widely ratified, nor a monitoring body created for the evaluation of its implementation. The U.N Convention is under attack currently by those who favor legalized prostitution and “consensual trafficking” that requires proof of coercion. Acceptance of these positions would make it potentially difficult to convict traffickers and benefit transnational criminal networks.<sup>61</sup>

The International Organization of Migration, La Strada and the Global Survival Network are working to document the nature and magnitude of trafficking, including illicit government involvement.

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<sup>60</sup> “Trafficking in Women: Moldova and Ukraine,” Winrock International and Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, December 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Vanessa Susan O’Rourke von Struensee, Donetsk State University Faculty of Law and Economics. World Bank Case web discussion.

The NGO, Rebirth of the Nation, holds a weekly seminar for lawyers who are going abroad to pursue cases. A documentary on the subject was shown on TV and resulted in many women coming forward, although most are unwilling to acknowledge their trauma in public. According to staff of *Vera Nadezhda Liubov*, many Ukrainian women are now working in Denmark and Finland; they are often afraid to contact the police when abused, but often equally reluctant to return home because they earn more through prostitution than they can in Ukraine. They show a high level of STD infection. At present, *Vera Nadezhda Liubov* is working with European NGOs, including the German “Yadviga,” to help women who have been returned to Ukraine to reintegrate into society and find work.

### ***Findings and implications***

- Domestic abuse, primarily toward women and children, is increasingly acknowledged by victims, police, and officials as a serious public concern; at the same time, the police and the legal system are still not equipped to respond effectively and virtually no social services are available to victims.
- Despite public information campaigns, trafficking, particularly in Western Ukraine, continues to attract women who see no viable economic alternative.

Based on these findings, the following approaches are recommended:

- Domestic abuse deserves attention as a complex public health and legal issue. The Bank can help indirectly, by supporting interventions that increase women’s economic independence. More directly, Bank projects such as the SIF might consider outreach to encourage applications for social services programs (including hotlines, shelters, public information about where to turn for help, legal assistance, etc. to abused women/children).
- Although NGOs and donors are already dealing with the public education component, the main educational thrust must target employment-creation schemes for women who are unskilled, live in rural areas, and/or are single mothers.
- For both domestic abuse and trafficking, judicial reform can now build on recent legislation concerning abuse to support information campaigns that educate the public about their legal rights and increased access to legal services. As noted above, measures to combat domestic abuse should be linked to efforts to reduce alcohol consumption.

## POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

### UNEQUAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN HIGHER OFFICE

An area where the exceptionally high educational levels achieved by Ukrainian women during the Soviet era did not confer equal advantages and opportunities was the political sphere. Prior to 1990, nominal gender equality in political life was imposed by quotas for representation on national and local political bodies. Women held 36 percent of the seats in the last Supreme Soviet of Ukraine and 50 percent on municipal councils. However, their political representation, even in the Supreme Soviet, was largely symbolic, since all decisions were made at the highest party level. At the same time, women's involvement in organizational life – through the Communist Party, the Communist Youth League, Women's Council, and other broad Party-linked organizations – gave active, ambitious women the opportunity to learn organizational and political skills. Indeed, many older women now active in the NGO sector gained their first organizing experience through these official channels.

In 1997, the Verkhovna Rada passed a new electoral law, according to which candidates for half of the 450 seats are to be elected from single-seat constituencies, as before, and half from party lists according to a system of proportional representation. This law favors parties with strong organization, such as the Communist Party of Ukraine, and was designed to reduce the number of nonaligned independent deputies and consolidate Ukraine's fledgling party system. In June 2001, the parliament introduced further electoral law changes that reduce the number of single-seat constituencies from 225 to 115. Thus far, few women have entered into public life as deputies to parliament or as high-level officials, since women in Ukraine tend to run for small parties and the bigger parties do not typically recruit women.<sup>62</sup>

In Ukraine, there are no legislative articles, norms or language that are explicitly discriminatory on the basis of sex. Women make up a majority of the staff in the executive branch offices of Ukraine. But there are no women in management positions on the staff of the President of Ukraine, or in the Council of Ministers of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, or among the presidential representatives (governors) in the oblasts and major cities; only five women serve as deputy governors. However, the representation of women is much higher in local government structures. The elections to legislative bodies of all levels in Ukraine in 1994 resulted in women being 30 percent of the successful candidates. In the 1998 elections, there was an increase in the number of women elected to local councils, where they now constitute 38 percent of the membership. Election of women to local legislative bodies is a step on their way to the national political arena, but according to the UNDP study "Promoting Gender Equality" (2000), even with a successful broadening of gender democracy at the local level, women still have to struggle to reach the Verkhovna Rada, where the country's most important laws, national policies, and basic strategic directions for the country are determined. The figures for Ukraine are similar to those of other post-socialist countries, but lower than most OECD countries (see table below).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Only 8-14% of women are nominated by the bigger parties, even though women have 30 percent membership in these parties.

<sup>63</sup> Source: Human Development Report 2001. Human Development Indicators.

**Table 23. Gender aspects of empowerment**

	<b>Seats in parliament held by women (as % of total)</b>	<b>Female legislators, senior officials and managers (as % of total)</b>
<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>38</b>
Sweden	42.7	29
United States	13.8	45
Netherlands	32.9	23
Russian Federation	5.6	37
Poland	12.7	34

**Source: Human Development Report 2001. Human Development Indicators.**

Similarly, women constitute 68% of state civil service employees, but very few hold managerial positions today. Out of 736,000 people employed by the health care sector, 617,000 (83.9 percent) are women, but only 3,100 thousand women (roughly 25 percent) are in managerial positions. The inadequate number of women in managerial positions within the executive branch of the government prevents them from having any real influence on decision-making processes or from taking an active part in the implementation of these processes.

A recent evaluation of women's participation in public and political life of the Ternopil region (World Bank 2000) illustrates a decline in women's public participation in elected bodies, as well as in the activities of public authorities. In fact, many authors, including Tserkovnitska (1997), point out that women are not prominent in politics because of three factors: (i) the collapse of the old quota system and the consequent vacuum, with new women's organizations slow to gain prominence in ensuring strong representation in parliament; (ii) lack of interest or disillusionment over past experience, when political participation was motivated by the need to demonstrate party loyalty or to advance one's career, and (iii) the belief that in Ukrainian society, politics are the province of men.

Focus group discussions and interviews with women in political life also revealed that women remain undecided about whether it is more advantageous to form women's political parties or to try to move up /advance through established parties. Since there are very few large-scale businesses run by women, politically ambitious women have fewer resources to call upon. Thus far, there are few effective networks of female politicians, although international organizations and donors (including Canada and Sweden) have initiated several projects to promote women's entrance into public life. The under-representation of women in public life derives in part from the widespread stereotype, held by both sexes, that women are less able to cooperate than men in the pursuit of common goals, and the fact that ordinary men and women are simply not interested in seeing more women in politics.

#### **WOMEN'S NGOS IN UKRAINE**

Western critics have noted that the emergence of women's NGOs cannot be characterized as a women's movement, primarily because of the lack of organizational structure and co-coordinated direction against the government. In fact, the Ukrainian women's movement has tried to avoid the "feminist" label in order to embrace a broad spectrum of women's rights and to give validity to any decision a woman makes, whether it be to become a housewife or to run for political office. This position is in part a reaction to Soviet era pressures on women to both participate in the labor force and to bear the brunt of domestic responsibilities. According to Galbraith (2000),<sup>64</sup> the downgrading of the Ministry of Family and Youth to a committee without effective political power (State Committee for Youth Policy, Sports and Tourism) has prompted individual citizens to learn how to lobby and effect change starting with themselves.

Today, women are active in community organizations and charitable foundations. Numerous new women's organizations are working to raise the status of women, developing both new content for and new forms of the women's movement. In some cases, as was acknowledged by some women we interviewed, ambitious and active women are using NGOs as a stepping stone into politics. During the past seven years, Ukraine has seen the creation of the President's Committee for Women, Mothers and Children (reorganized in 1996), The Cabinet of Ministers Office for Women, Families, Mothers and Children (established in 1993), the Ministry of Family and Youth (created in 1996 and reorganized in 2000 as the State Committee for Youth Policy, Sports and Tourism). Within the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Health, there are departments and offices responsible for issues on the status of women, families and children. Parallel structures operate in oblasts, counties and municipalities.

In a presentation at the Kennan Institute in Washington, D.C., in October 2000, Alexandra Hrycak, a sociology professor at Reed College, explained there are principally two kinds of NGOs that work on women's issues in Ukraine.<sup>65</sup> The first is the "feminist" group, which has Washington D.C as its center of networking, with an emphasis on winning grants, producing publications, and going on study exchanges. Agendas of the NGOs in this group are largely driven by those of their Western donors. They therefore have small memberships and/or publication circulations, and are often in competition with other, similar groups. The second broad grouping is the "maternalist" NGOs, which were often originally ignored by Western groups because of their association with nationalism. Examples include the "Soldiers' Mothers" groups and the women's section of Rukh. However, these groups have more effectively framed issues toward Ukrainian women rather than Western donors and therefore have stronger networking and organizational ties, as well as much higher membership and readership than the more numerous "feminist" groups.

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<sup>64</sup> See Cara K. Galbraith, "The Ukrainian Women's Movement: Contextualizing Feminism," Master's Thesis, Russian and East European Studies Program, Graduate School of the University of Oregon, March 2000.

<sup>65</sup> Personal communication.

## FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

According to current figures for women's participation in political life, and as confirmed by numerous interviews (with men and women focus group participants, women parliamentarians and women directors of NGOs), women lag considerably behind men. Ambitious women are seeking to enter political life, but must find ways to overcome "old boy networks" of power and money, as well as popular indifference on the part of men and women to greater female involvement in politics. NGOs, however, are providing an important avenue by which women are entering public life.

- The Bank and other donors can encourage greater empowerment of women seeking to enter political life by supporting the development of NGO-friendly legislation (including tax laws); by ensuring that collaboration with NGOs includes those that are rooted in local concerns and values, and thus have more potential for engaging broader grassroots support among women, rather than those that respond more to outside donors, or are simply vehicles for the advancement of individuals.
- Given women's greater ease of participating in local-level elected government bodies, encouraging decentralization and addressing many of the contradictions between local and regional level mandates may provide greater avenues for women to gain self-confidence and political experience. While women in politics do not and should not necessarily focus on "women's issues," given the gender-based differences in experience and interests, their greater participation should add breadth to political discussion.

## CONCLUSIONS

### FINDINGS

Based on a review of recent literature on the gender impacts of transition, gender analysis of 1999 and 2000 poverty data, meetings with donors and NGOs, and regional consultations with front-line organizations dealing directly with the social impacts of change in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Lyobotyn, Lviv, Brody, and Odessa, a number of very clear findings have emerged with regard to the labor market, health, domestic abuse, and trafficking.

- *Poverty:* While the analysis of poverty data does not reveal striking differences between poverty rates of men and women overall, poverty rates in female headed households, without adult males and with children, are seven percentage points higher than for male-headed households, which is a significant difference with serious implications for child poverty.
- *Labor market discrimination:* Labor market analysis demonstrates that gender-based segregation is significant. Despite a comparable, even superior, level of education, women tend to cluster in lower-skilled and lower-paid occupations. Now that the state is no longer able to provide Soviet-era supports that allowed women with child- and elder-care responsibilities to enter the labor market, women of child-bearing age and those with small children face serious employment discrimination. The high price of quality child care has become a significant impediment to women, forcing them into the more flexible, but less remunerative, informal sector, or out of the labor market entirely. In addition, women report that incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace have increased.
- *The private sector:* Men and women entrepreneurs face many problems of harassment by tax and other regulatory bodies and “mafia” groups. Female entrepreneurs have the highest rate of management positions among smaller enterprises which, according to IFC data as well as respondent perceptions, are subject to a greater level of harassment by officials and have less access to capital. Likewise, while male entrepreneurs have better access to long-standing “old boy networks,” the medium- and larger-sized enterprises in which they predominate enjoy more preferential treatment from government bodies. In rural areas, privatization in the absence of available mechanization and support for child care is likely to disproportionately increase the workload of women, while reducing their mobility and access to information, legal and other services. Despite the importance of the informal sector in the Ukrainian economy, there is a dearth of reliable data, and particularly gender-disaggregated data.
- *Health:* Men and women’s health has suffered considerably over the last ten years, as evidenced by the “male mortality crisis” and increased male suicide rates. There are looming epidemics in tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases among intravenous drug users (mostly men) and, increasingly, among sex workers (mostly women); smoking- and alcohol- related illnesses and accidents (mostly men), as well as maternal health and mortality figures remain unacceptably high. This serious picture is attributed to the stresses of transition – mediated

through increased alcohol use and smoking, deteriorating investments in public health, and under-nutrition. While men are more directly at risk from alcohol and smoking-related illnesses, evidence of links between alcohol abuse among men and domestic violence indicate that women suffer indirectly from alcohol abuse. For women, increased contraception availability and falling (but still high) abortion rates are positive news. Given increased out-of-wedlock births to minors, rising maternal anemia and birth complications, however, reproductive health remains an area of concern.

- *Health among youth:* Young people in Ukraine are caught between a deteriorating school system that fails to address their needs or provide marketable skills, and a difficult job market. Boys are seen as particularly at risk for alcohol and substance abuse (and related HIV/AIDS infection), as well as alcohol-related violence and criminal activity. Girls are engaging at young ages in unsafe sex (and unwanted pregnancies), and becoming involved in prostitution and trafficking.
- *Domestic abuse:* A long-standing problem in Ukraine, domestic abuse is more openly acknowledged by society at large, by victims, and by government agencies. According to available literature, as well as to the increasing number of local and international organizations addressing the issue, abuse has increased in the last ten years, apparently as a response to male unemployment, loss of social identity, and increased alcohol abuse. Despite some NGO programs that work with local police and the introduction of hotlines and “safe houses,” the problem remains a major concern to women, as evidenced by the prevalence of abuse-related calls to hotlines, as well as reports from police and medical personnel. Recent legislation, however, may give women more avenues of redress, including legal protection.
- *Trafficking:* Ukraine has become a major transit point for and sender of trafficked women. While donor-sponsored information campaigns have had some success in educating women about the risks, women continue to seek work abroad, even knowingly engaging in prostitution abroad. Many trafficked women are characterized as rural, poorly skilled, often single, and with children to support. A small but undocumented number of boys and men have also been trafficked, some as laborers abroad, some into the sex trade.
- *Changing domestic arrangements:* Crude marriage rates and fertility are both falling in Ukraine, and the overall population, among which women predominate, is aging. Although men and women enjoy legal equality, legal practice in cases of divorce make it difficult for women to demand child support, or to press claims for their share of joint property. Men seeking child custody also face discrimination, however, even when the mother is clearly the less fit parent.
- *Political participation:* Significant gender disparities characterize most aspects of political participation. Men far outnumber women in all higher echelons of government and parliament; the gap is a slightly less on local councils. In part, women are excluded because they have less access to the important networks and capital essential for obtaining political office, in part, they are excluded because most ordinary men and women are not interested in seeing more women

in politics. Perhaps as an alternative, active women have become more engaged in NGOs and other civic associations.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BANK AND OTHER DONORS**

While development organizations may once have been reluctant to directly address gender disparities, the Bank now recognizes that these work against the Bank's mission of reducing poverty through equitable economic development. Gender inequalities reduce labor productivity, household incomes, and overall well-being. Moreover, they are generally more severe among the poor. The recent Bank gender strategy thus commits the Bank to work with governments and civil societies to identify and reduce gender-related barriers to opportunities and development.<sup>66</sup> Given this commitment, based on the findings summarized above, the following policy suggestions are made:

#### *Gender and poverty.*

- Qualitative research is needed, however, to explore the role of inter-household transfers to female-headed households and to better understand why these households do not seem to be at higher risk for consumption-based poverty. Qualitative research is also needed on the question of how consumption is distributed within households in which there are both men and women members.

#### *Labor market discrimination*

- The present protective labor legislation that excludes women from occupations deemed hazardous to female health acts against women's interests because it excludes them from higher-paid professions. Rather, both men and women should be guaranteed rights to occupational safety and family-related leave. Legislation mandating rights to a safe workplace should be supported by mechanisms whereby men and women can seek redress for grievances.
- Clear business legislation (such as the simplified tax system and streamlined registration for small businesses) and stronger enforcement particularly benefits small entrepreneurs, where women predominantly cluster. Rethinking regulations, including payroll taxes, is important with respect to larger enterprises so as to remove disincentives for employers to hire workers without contracts.
- It is important to address the information gap concerning the informal sector, and to ensure that future studies of both the informal and the formal sector (such as the IFC business surveys) provide data that can be gender-disaggregated.
- Given the dearth of off-farm activities in rural areas and women's poor mobility and access to information, the Bank can support other donor projects (UNDP, DFID) that target rural women with micro-finance projects, technical assistance and outreach geared to reach women who wish to pursue independent farming.
- A multi-pronged approach is required for sexual harassment on the job – drafting more explicit legislation, providing incentives for the judicial system to respond to the problem, and initiating a

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<sup>66</sup> Integrating gender in to the World Bank's work: A strategy for action. The World Bank. January 2002.

public information campaign through appropriate NGOs to acquaint women and men with their legal rights in this sphere.

- Poor access to quality child care is a very sore issue for low-income parents, especially women. Some form of state-provided subsidy to child care facilities could level the playing field, reduce barriers for poorer/younger women seeking employment, and also benefit children from disadvantaged households. The Ukraine SIF already focuses on social services and could provide the basis for parents who wanted to form cooperative nurseries.

### *Health*

- Given the importance of lifestyle choices (alcohol, smoking, diet and exercise) to the male mortality crisis and serious morbidity situation overall, a public health campaign broadly aimed at the population is one important measure; such a campaign could be supplemented by legislation limiting advertisement of cigarettes and specific programs targeting young people at school.
- At present, there are few treatment facilities for people wishing to reduce alcohol consumption and smoking – funding such facilities could be a cost-effective alternative to treating people for the medical consequences of not reducing consumption.
- Suicides and the other psychological consequences of transition harm the well-being as well as productivity of households and have consequences that affect the younger generation as well. Making counseling available to people, particularly after redundancies, hospitalizations and other stress points, is an important preventive measure.
- Drugs, STDs, and other reproductive health issues such as contraception or unwanted pregnancies, require a public health campaign, especially regarding safe sex. Sex education in the schools is also important and needs to be targeted separately for boys/girls; family planning facilities need to be more widely available, especially in poorly served rural areas.
- Youth often fall between the cracks of programs that address child or adult health. A LIL could be considered for youth who are outside the education system, to help the government more effectively coordinate and target measures that address increasing youth substance abuse, violence, as well as the related issue of trafficking.

### *Domestic abuse and trafficking*

- Domestic abuse is of serious concern to many people in Ukraine. NGOs are already active in this areas, with hotlines for people seeking information about where to turn, and centers for abused women/children. However, funds have been limited, and possible outreach for such projects through the SIF could help support these efforts. In addition, public information campaigns about the issue, including where to turn for help (including legal assistance, see below) are called for.
- Although NGOs and donors already dealing with the public education component of trafficking, the main thrust of the Bank must be employment-creation schemes targeted at women who are unskilled, and/or rural, and/or single mothers.

- For both domestic abuse and trafficking, judicial reform can now build on recent legislation on abuse. It should be supported by information campaigns that educate the public about their legal rights and create increased access to legal services.

#### *Domestic arrangements*

- Frequently projects with an early childhood or child health focus are phrased in terms of maternal and child health projects. It may be worth finding ways to more explicitly attempt to bring men into such projects, finding ways to support their involvement *as fathers*.
- Projects dealing with legal and judicial reform should include components specifically aimed at increasing legal access for low-income men and women regarding their rights in cases of divorce-related property and custody disputes.
- While labor laws that protect parental rights can backfire, men's right to take paternity leave or family leave to take care of sick children or other family members should be part of the legal code (it may already be on the books).

#### *Political participation*

- The Bank and other donors can encourage greater empowerment of women seeking to enter political life by supporting the development of NGO-friendly legislation (including tax laws); by ensuring that collaboration with NGOs includes those that are rooted in local concerns and values, and thus have more potential for engaging broader grassroots support among women, rather than those that respond more to outside donors, or are simply vehicles for the advancement of individuals.
- Given women's greater ease of participating in local-level elected government bodies, encouraging decentralization and addressing many of the contradictions between local and regional level mandates may provide greater avenues for women to gain self-confidence and political experience. While women in politics do not and should not necessarily focus on "women's issues," given the gender-based differences in experience and interests, their greater participation should add breadth to political discussion.

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## **ANNEX I: REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS**

### **KYIV**

Liubov Moldavan, Center for Agrarian Reforms  
Natalia Ivanova (Head of National Employment Center)  
E. Libanova (Head of the Council of Productive Forces Studies, President's Administration )  
Liubov Palyvoda, Counterpart Creative Center  
Olena Garyacha (Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection  
Olena Borodina, Title Registration Project Consultant  
Grygoriy Naumenko (Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Science and Education)  
Alexandra Kuzhel (Head of State Committee on Regulative Policy and Enterprise)  
Sergei Volkov, UNDP Gender in Development Programme  
Inna Bogoslovska (member of Parliament)  
Valery Tsybuh (Head of the State Committee on Youth, Sport and Tourism)  
Mr. Illinsky (Head of Department, Ministry of Economy)  
The Second All-Ukrainian Congress of Women  
Yulya Timoshenko (leader of the political party *Bat'kivschina*)  
Valeriy Khmarsky, AIDS Research Center  
Galyna Laktionova, Christian Children's Fund  
Grace Warnecke, Winrock  
Elinor Valentine, Winrock  
Tetiana Timoshenko, USAID

### **KHARKIV**

Larysa Kulakova, "World of Women" NGO, Visit to women's shelter  
Liubov Chub, "Beregynya" NGO  
Oleksandra Rudneva, Women Research Center  
Kharkiv Oblast State Administration

### **ODESSA**

Odessa Oblast State Administration  
Valentyna Kudimova, Head of State juvenile affairs commission  
"Vira Nadezhdy Liubov" Health Charitable Organization

### **Belgorod-Dnestrovsky**

Belgorod-Dnestrovsky State Employment Center  
Belgorod-Dnestrovsky State Shelter for young children

## **Lviv**

Lviv Oblast Administration  
Lesya Dovganyk, Youth Employment Center  
Lviv Agrarian Chamber  
Lviv Extension Center  
Lviv Credit Union

## **ANNEX II: FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

### **ODESSA**

Our Children NGO  
Odessa City Organization of Pensioners  
Almed Medical Company  
Hope Medical Company  
Promtohrservis Company  
City Center of Social and Psychological Support to Youth  
Odessa National University

Rural Enterprises Support Project  
Impulse Private Enterprise  
Personnel Agency Professional-Select  
Nasha Spravka Private Enterprise  
Astr, Private School  
Maybuttya Private School  
Myr, Extra-curricular Development Organization

### **KHARKIV**

Career Center, Tsentr Perspektiva Society  
Kharkiv City Organization, The World of Women  
The People`s Ukrainian Academy Career Planning Laboratory  
Businessperson`s Association of Kharkiv Oblast  
Kharkiv City Center of Youth Social Services Dovira, Employment Promotion Unit  
Kharkiv Oblast Employment Center  
Kharkiv City Information Center Labor Exchange  
Ariadna Women`s Club

### **LYUBOTYN**

Teacher, School ? 5, and Editor of the local newspaper, Parallel  
Legal counsel, L-Digest Press Center  
The Youth Movement of Lyubotyn  
Head of the city methodology unit, Chairman of the local organization of the political party, Working  
Ukraine  
Service for the Affairs of Minors  
Ukrainian State Administration Academy, Kharkiv Regional School  
Volunteer Center Family planning specialist, Center of Youth Social Services,  
Physician, Lyubotyn Regional Children`s Home

Center of Youth Social Services  
Representative of national Deputy V. Mukhin  
Businessman

#### **LVIV**

Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship of Women and Youth.  
Provans – IM, Private enterprise  
Lviv Regional Employment Center.  
*Lviv Regional Association of Small and Medium-sized enterprises*  
Employers' Association of Lviv Oblast  
*Svitanok, Private School*  
Radosti, Private School  
Lviv Chamber of Commerce.  
Lviv Business College

#### **BRODY**

Education Department of the Brody Regional State Administration  
Brody Central Regional Hospital  
Juvenile Service  
Department of Labor and Social Protection of the Population  
Pupils Creativity Center (Extra-curricular Institution)  
Stream Rehabilitation and Education Center of Brody  
I. Franko Lviv National University, Chair of Psychology  
Regional Center of Youth Social Services  
Brody City Council  
“Trust,” Lviv Regional Voluntary Society for Protecting the Rights of Children and Childhood  
“Hope,” Brody Regional Society for Protection of Rights of Disabled Children

## ANNEX IV: STUDY OF KHARKIV SHUTTLE TRADER

### Introduction

The problem of migration in Ukraine has taken new forms and has broadened its scope. This has largely resulted from changes in the system of state sovereignty and borders in the past decades. International borders have changed because of disintegration of a number of states and formation of new ones. Borders that used to be closed are open now. Consequently, the number of people traveling across international borders continues to grow. Decline in the standards and conditions of living, employment, health care and education, and higher and better social and economic standards that exist in bordering states are the main reasons for out-migration.

Largely due to economic and employment crises, Ukraine is predominantly an exporter of labor force. During the erstwhile period of administratively regulated economic system, labor migration served the purpose of efficient territorial reallocation of available labor force with regard to supply and demand for it in different regions of the country. Here, migration facilitated better usage of labor power, promoted structural shifts in economics and increase of labor productivity. Presently, migration is controlled only to a certain degree. It is noteworthy that the outflow of labor migrants from different regions of Ukraine is uneven. This fact is related to considerable differences in development of regional economics, levels of unemployment, income, etc. Also, migrant flows are influenced by geographic location of regions, transportation and historic traditions of migration. From the legal standpoint, there are legal, illegal and semi-legal migrants. The latter are those who travel abroad on legal grounds and have necessary visas, but refuse to leave after their visas expire and stay abroad. Another category of semi-legal migrants are the so-called “shuttle traders” who come to the country on tourist visas, but choose to find employment and seek permanent residence there.

Ukraine’s particular geographic situation in the center of Europe predetermines its status as an important strategic crossroads of transit routes from the Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East. Ukraine’s relative closeness to countries of Western Europe makes it a very convenient route to penetrate the west. Having found itself in the midst of migration flows, Ukraine begins to serve in fact as a sort of bumper zone between Western Europe and countries of the third world.

Given all these facts, it becomes obvious that many unemployed Ukrainians choose to become involved in the so-called shuttle trade. This definition describes regular travels to either large wholesale markets in Ukraine, or to neighboring countries (Russia, Belarus, Poland, Turkey) with the purpose of purchasing goods (usually, consumer goods) to be retail sold later. Often, such trips are disguised as regular tourist trips (such definition as “shop tours” was even coined), and thus, it becomes impossible to control real flow of money out and goods into the country. Furthermore, most of shuttle traders are registered as private entrepreneurs paying fixed tax (under Ukrainian legislation they can do so, if their annual turnover does not exceed a certain amount). They sell imported goods at open-air markets and thus are not required to use cash registers. As all purchases from them are made in cash, most of it goes unreported, and consequently it is impossible to officially assess the real volume of sales coming from shuttle trade. For this reason, it is safe to assume that shuttle trade makes up a very significant share of Ukrainian shadow economy.

Presently, there is a strong hypothesis that the majority of those involved in shuttle trade are women, or, at least, the majority of market vendors and “shuttles” (those traveling to make purchases) are women. There are several assumptions as to the reasons for it, among them are women’s unemployment, which is strongly and consistently prevalent over men’s, difference in pay for men’s and women’s work that forces many women to seek better paid opportunities to support their families.

This research is particularly concerned with studying the gender aspects of shuttle trade, with the aim of establishing trends in labor migration, the degree of spread of shuttle trade in the Ukrainian economy, the magnitude of the number of women and men involved in the shuttle trade, and the reasons for women’s involvement in the trade. It is expected that the results will be utilized in laying the foundation for effective Ukrainian labor and tax legislation, migration and social policies.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To study the specifics of the labor migration processes in Ukraine including legal, illegal and semi-legal migration; categories of workers who migrate; regions from and to workers migrate etc.
- To examine different aspects and forms of shuttle market activities, including obstacles to men/women in this trade; hierarchy/kinds of goods men and women trade, scale of trade and levels of income attributable to the shuttle trade.

### **Expected Project outcomes**

- Recommendations for changes in the Labor Code, Tax Code, Migration and Social Legislation.
- The foundation for a large scale study on labor migration in Ukraine.

### **Sampling framework and methodology**

This sociological research employs qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews with experts and traders. It will be conducted in Kharkiv region, which is the center of shuttle trade in Ukraine (as the largest open-air consumer goods market in Ukraine is located here) and is one of the key labor migrants’ target regions. Moreover, as it borders with Russia, it is one of the major migration routes.

In-depth interviews present an opportunity to find out reasons for men’s and women’s participation as employees in a shuttle trade where the level of social benefits and social protection in many cases is very low. The study singles out two major categories of interviewees, traders and experts. To get a clear picture, the following groups of traders will be interviewed:

- Consumer goods market vendors -- 10
- Shuttle traders – 20
- Private entrepreneurs involved in the shuttle trade – 10
- Total number of respondents in this category is 40.

Respondents will be selected according to their gender, forms of migration, volume and geography of purchasing goods, income, nationality (Ukrainian), degree of involvement in the shuttle trade (regularity and length of trips, hierarchy). All respondents in this category will be selected at three major consumer goods markets of Kharkiv.

The experts' group will consist of the following:

- Employment center consultants – 3
- Legal experts – 3
- Customs officers – 4
- Total number of respondents is 10.

Respondents in this category will be selected according to their areas of professional expertise. Employment center consultants will be selected from Kharkiv regional, city and district centers, one of each, to present information on employment trends at each level. One of legal experts must specialize in migration issues, while the other two must be experts in employment and private entrepreneurship issues. All of them must be practicing lawyers. Customs officers are to be selected from the number of staff members of Kharkiv customs posts at Hoptivka (border with Russia) and at Kharkiv railway station and airport. They will provide information on real scope and volume of shuttle trade migration and trends. It is expected that information obtained from these groups of experts will serve as the basis for development of amendments and improvements in the national migration policy.

### **Details of In-Depth Interviews**

Separate questionnaires will be developed for traders and for experts. Interviews with traders will be directed to obtain the following information: reasons for their involvement in shuttle trade; geography and regularity of shuttle trips; usual obstacles they encounter in the course of shuttle trips; contacts with local authorities, customs and state controlling bodies; range of goods purchased for further retail; average monthly profit; their perception of the current employment, tax and migration policies; possible areas for improvement; plans, expectations, hopes are for the shuttle trade: would the individuals move to another profession if possible; plans to expand their business.

Questionnaires for experts will include the following blocks of questions: reasons that caused spread of shuttle trade; prospects for further development of shuttle trade; regional specifics of shuttle trade; social risks and ramifications of the growth of shuttle trade; possible mechanisms for legal and financial (including taxation) regulation; international legal specifics of shuttle trade.

The average interview length is estimated as 90-120 min. In-depth interviews will be transcribed and analyzed. The results will be incorporated in the final analytical report (in English) with clearly organized narrative text (20–24 pages). Dr. Rudneva will lead the research, and in particular will be responsible for the expert interviews and the production of the final report.