

JANUARY – MARCH 2023

EXPANDING THE NETWORK OF NATIONWIDE SERVICES

War disrupts social and economic structures, leading to breakdowns in community support networks and leaving women and girls without protection. In addition, breaking the rule of law can exacerbate the risk of gender-based violence, as perpetrators may go unpunished.

In 2023 UNFPA continued to develop the support services system, opening primary social and psychological assistance services, crisis rooms, shelters, day care centres and other facilities nationwide. Since January, 5 partner cities of the “Cities and Communities Free from Domestic Violence” project opened 14 services for GBV survivors.

Overall, with the support of Governments of UK, Canada, Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID), Denmark, Finland, Ukraine Humanitarian Fund and other partners, UNFPA’s humanitarian response has offered support to enhance, recover, or establish 15 primary psychosocial counselling services, 4 shelters, 7 crisis rooms, and 5 day care centres, as well as mobile teams in 52 communities throughout 11 regions of Ukraine. As of early 2023, efforts to enhance, recover, or establish 75 specialized services in 45 communities throughout 19 regions of Ukraine are ongoing.

A PLACE OF SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE MOST AFFECTED AREAS

In December 2022, UNFPA launched a network of women and girl-friendly spaces called “Vilna”. This network provides a place for women and girls to take a break from worries, bad news, air raid alarms, and troubles and rebuild their lives to become happy again. The “Vilna” space also offers women and girls specialized services and psychosocial support related to gender-based violence.

In February, a new mobile model of the “Vilna” space was implemented in Kharkiv oblast in response to the needs of women and girls in the territories recently retaken by the Government of Ukraine and the most affected regions of Ukraine. Every week, a team of psychologist and social worker travels to villages, towns, and communities in Kharkiv oblast in a minibus equipped with the necessary furniture and appliances. The specialists provide information and psychosocial support, as well as conduct various activities for local women and girls.

In March 2023, the mobile model of the “Vilna” space successfully started its work in Mykolaiv and Kryvyi Rih cities.

This initiative is implemented as part of the humanitarian response of UNFPA Ukraine, with the support of the

Governments of Great Britain, Canada, Denmark, USAID, CERF and Ukraine Humanitarian Fund.



PROVIDING DIGNITY AND ASSISTANCE TO IDPS IN DNIPO

“When leaving the Donetsk region, many pass through Dnipro City and stay there, with almost 150 thousand internally displaced people from Donetsk region now living in the city. Each has their own rescue story, needs, and the right to live with dignity. The “Zatyshok” project aims to provide safe emergency evacuation and facilitate the social integration of displaced persons into

host communities. Therefore, it is important that it is implemented in Dnipro City,” said Pavlo Kyrylenko, Head of the Donetsk Regional Military Administration.

The anti-crisis transit hub “Zatyshok” has opened in Dnipro to assist critically vulnerable groups of internally displaced people from the Donetsk region.

The establishment of this hub is a critical development, as it provides survivors of violence, including gender-based and domestic violence, with a refuge that offers hot meals, legal assistance, psychological counselling, and advice on further evacuation. This multifaceted centre can accommodate up to 20 people with children for ten days. The hub is staffed with social workers, psychologists, and lawyers trained to identify survivors of gender-based and domestic violence and provide quality services and referrals.

The hub opened at the initiative of the Donetsk Oblast Military Administration supported by UNFPA, UNDP and other organizations provides services for free at the address: Dnipro, Naberezhna Sichevska Street, 33.



TWO MORE SURVIVOR RELIEF CENTRES OFFERING SUPPORT IN UKRAINE

“Since the beginning of the full-scale war, tens of thousands of displaced persons from East and South Ukraine have arrived in Chernivtsi. They came with nothing but a suitcase and a series of memories of their traumatic experiences. That is why our mission is to let those who have suffered from the war know that they are not alone and that help and support are available and necessary after their rescue!”

Olga Stefanishyna, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration

Two more Survivor Relief Centres opened in Chernivtsi and Mukachevo to provide comprehensive social and psychological support to people who have left the zone of active hostilities and/or areas beyond the control of the Government of Ukraine. The centres offer comprehensive services, including legal aid for registration, restitution, document procurement, psychological counselling and case management. Citizens may also receive assistance with humanitarian aid, housing, employment opportunities, and educational placement.

The centre specialists also provide psychological aid and rehabilitation for survivors of sexual violence, enabling them to cope with the post-traumatic syndrome and long-term recovery.

The centres were created on the initiative of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, with the assistance of the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy and the support of UNFPA and local authorities.



THE FIRST SURVIVOR RELIEF PLATFORM LAUNCHED IN UKRAINE

In March, the Office of the Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, along with the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy and with the participation of UNFPA, introduced the Survivor Relief Platform, the first online platform in Ukraine that compiles comprehensive information on all critical services for survivors of war. This means citizens now have easier and quicker access to the necessary assistance.

All initiatives posted on the platform aim to provide support to Ukrainians across the country and beyond its borders. All services are verified, confidential, and free.

The platform complements other similar initiatives that have been created and continue to be developed, such as “Aurora”

www.help-platform.in.ua

and Survivor Relief Centres. The platform is expected to help people access information in a simple and timely manner and provide practical recommendations on where to seek help.



ASSISTING WOMEN DURING WARTIME



The war in Ukraine has taken a toll on the lives of millions of women and girls who were forced to flee their homes, separate from their families, or become the sole providers for their households. In times like these, the risk of gender-based violence increases while access to help services becomes even more difficult.

One of UNFPA's priority tasks is to provide life-saving reproductive healthcare services to women and girls in areas heavily affected by war. Since the beginning of the year, UNFPA provided internally displaced women and girls with more than 3000 female essentials packs and dignity kits. The kits were distributed by social service centres of the Kharkiv region, by “Vilna” women-friendly spaces in Kharkiv, Sumy, and Odesa, and by Survivor Relief Centres.

Distributed kits contain commodities for menstrual hygiene and personal care of women and girls. The kits help women and girls meet essential hygiene needs with dignity as they face the consequences of the hostilities. Each pack contains information about available support services in cases of GBV to mitigate the risks of GBV for vulnerable women and girls.

Women and girls who received dignity kits and psychological assistance told how important it was for them to feel needed in a difficult moment.

With the support of Australia, Iceland, Norway, Ireland and other partners UNFPA will continue the disbursement of similar kits and packs in other areas the most affected by war so that every woman and girl feel appreciated and cared for.

ENHANCING CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE WARTIME



Capacity building is an essential part of UNFPA's GBV program, especially when it comes to crisis situations like the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. UNFPA is building the capacity of local partners, including NGOs, healthcare providers, and social service workers, to effectively prevent and respond to GBV through technical assistance, training, and support.

From March to May, supported by the Government of Finland, a series of events will take place to strengthen the skills of service providers in working with people affected by gender-based violence and to improve inter-agency cooperation.

During the first month, over 600 professionals from 16 regions of Ukraine enhanced their expertise in providing quality

assistance to GBV survivors, equipped with knowledge of the latest approaches and legal means of protection. The training additionally covered psychological aspects of providing assistance, including those for survivors of sexual violence.

By fostering collaboration among stakeholders during the workshops, with the support of the governments of UK, Finland, Canada and Sweden, UNFPA ensures that at all levels services are delivered in a coordinated and effective manner.



STRENGTHENING POLICE RESPONSE TO GBV

With UK Government support, UNFPA continued to assist the National Police of Ukraine in the development of an effective response to GBV and quality service provision to GBV survivors.

In March, 107 police officers completed training on the specifics of police response to GBV and support to GBV survivors, including survivors of domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence survivors.



Six training sessions, covering matters of GBV cases policing, communication with GBV survivors and aggressors, cases documentation and referral, were held for officers of the police mobile groups in Chernihiv, Khmelnytskyi, Kropyvnytskyi, Boryspil and Chernivtsi. The training resulted both in building knowledge and enhancing skills of the police officers on GBV response and revision of the standard police instruction on policing domestic violence.



BREAKING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

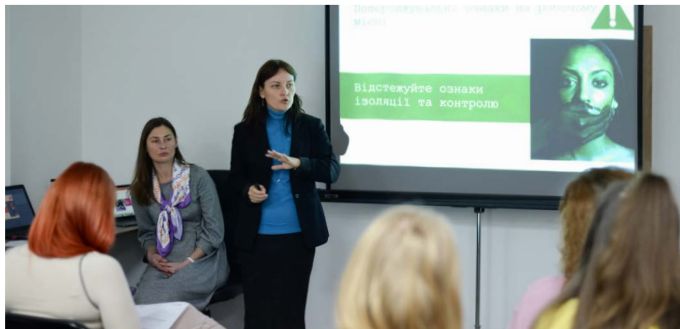
Since 2019, UNFPA in Ukraine has been collaborating with businesses to implement a project aimed at the economic empowerment of women. Such collaboration has been mutually beneficial, as businesses helped career hub clients. At the same time, the project team has educated businesses on social responsibility and the prevalence of GBV and domestic violence in the workplace.

According to a study on the use of family-friendly policies by companies in Ukraine and the prevalence of domestic



violence among employees, a quarter of personnel suffers from domestic violence.

In January, with the support of UK Government, UNFPA launched training sessions “Domestic Violence is NOT a Private Matter” in Lviv, Uzhhorod and Chernivtsi. These training sessions are essential for eradicating violence in society and promoting the economic empowerment of women. Additionally, UNFPA plans to hold a second wave of training in seven other cities across Ukraine: Avangard, Rokytno, Kalush, Starokostiantyniv, Ternopil, Khoroshiv and Cherkasy.



NO TRIVIA WITHOUT LONGREADS: EDUCATIONAL MICROCOURSES FOR TEENS

“Feelings, emotions and experiences of teenager are not trivia! Especially during the war. This is what is said on the “No Trivia” platform created by the United Nations Population Fund in Ukraine (UNFPA Ukraine), which helps Ukrainian children to support their mental health and deal with problems and experiences exacerbated by the war”,

First Lady Olena Zelenska on
World Teen Mental Wellness Day

In 2022, UNFPA relaunched the “No Trivia” project with the support of the UK government to help teenagers better understand their emotions and support their mental health. The platform offers adolescents professional psychological counselling and has provided 7,471 such consultations from the launch of the “No Trivia” chatbot through the end of March 2023.

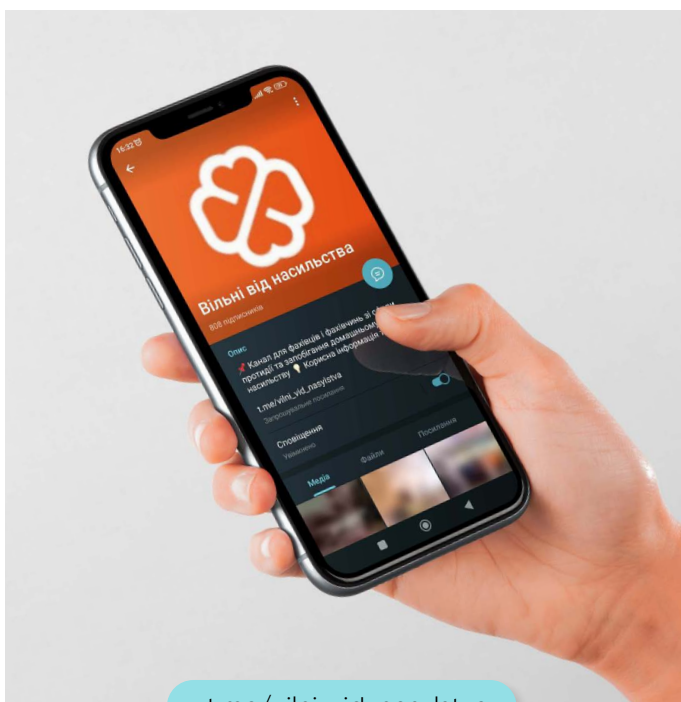
UNFPA continues to develop the “No Trivia” platform by offering teenagers blitz interviews with influencers discussing personal anxieties and self-discovery, as well as inviting professional psychologists to analyse life stories that adolescents share in the comments. In February 2023, a new feature was introduced to the platform, allowing teenagers to take two 7-day micro-courses on healthy communication and personal productivity. The micro-



courses consist of small daily tasks with interesting theories in chat messages and short videos from psychologists and opinion leaders. Each course takes only 20 minutes per day to complete.

Since the launch of this educational opportunity, 165 chatbot users have completed the first micro-course and 99 users – the second. UNFPA is committed to promoting the courses and collecting feedback to improve the product in the next project cycle.

FREE FROM VIOLENCE: 1 YEAR AND 1000 SPECIALISTS



A year ago, in February, supported by the Government of Canada, UNFPA launched a “Free from Violence” Telegram channel for specialists and practitioners of GBV response and prevention. The channel quickly became a place of communication and experience sharing for the specialists. For the most part, channel users include professional community members such as GBV duty bearers and service providers, who receive information on current trends and valuable insights such as legislative news, events announcements, helpful resources and other information that assist them in day-to-day responsibilities.

Over the last year, 151 publications were posted on the Telegram channel. Since its launch, this Telegram channel has brought together over 1000 specialists and continues to grow.

Subscribe to the channel to be at the centre of knowledge exchange on GBV matters.

INSPIRING ACTION AGAINST GBV IN UKRAINE

Since 2015, the “Break the Circle” campaign has been challenging harmful attitudes that excuse gender-based violence in Ukraine. The campaign aims to encourage every Ukrainian to recognize and reject any form of such violence.

Over the past year, the campaign has grown and adapted to reflect Ukrainians’ evolving perspectives and values as they fight for their beliefs and move forward. In the first quarter of 2023, the campaign updated its visual style and information platform on domestic violence, which provides information on the various types and signs of violence, as well as ways to combat it. The platform also offers resources on means and services of assistance and advice for those in unhealthy relationships or seeking to help the survivors of violence.

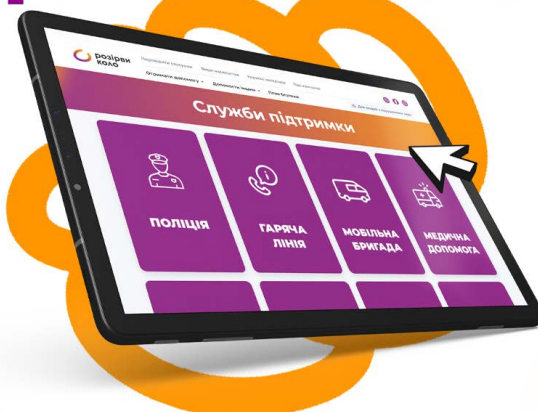
The purpose of the campaign is to give people the power to live life on their own terms, free from oppressors. Because every experience, emotion, and pain is unique and equally significant. And each of these shapes a unique “vicious circle”, which can and should be broken.

The “Break the Circle” campaign is implemented by UNFPA with the support of the UK Government.

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ЗВЕРНИСЬ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ!



FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS WITHOUT ILLUSIONS

In December 2021–February 2022, UNFPA conducted a comprehensive study on the relationships of married couples in Ukraine. The findings revealed that 50.8% of respondents were in relationships that could be considered toxic, with 8.1% even experiencing abuse. Furthermore, the study found that 72.6% of respondents were somewhat

tolerant of toxic behaviours, which increases the risk of domestic violence among intimate partners.

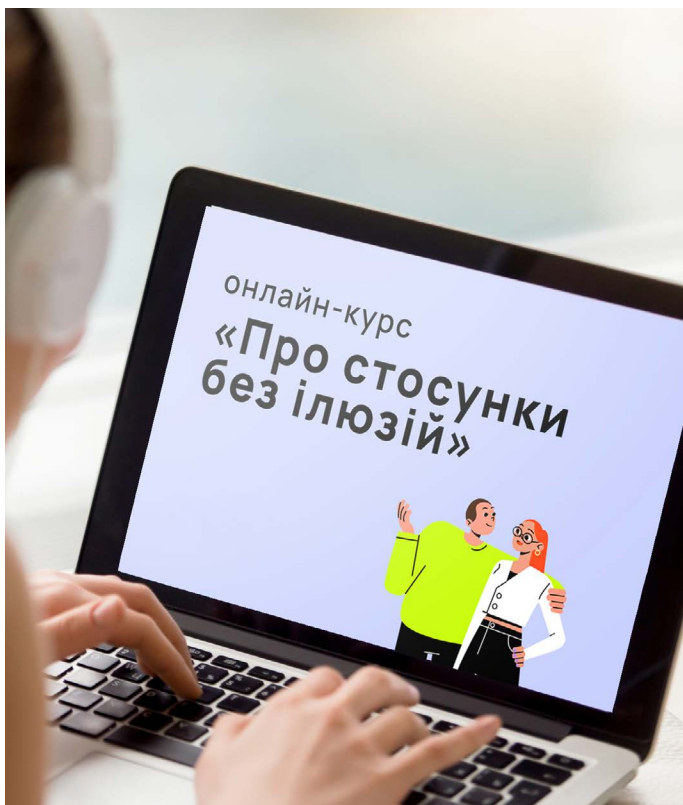
To raise awareness of healthy relationships among Ukrainian men and women, UNFPA, with support from the UK government, launched a demo version of an online course called “Relationships Without Illusions.” This course teaches people how to build healthy relationships through dialogue and mutual support, as well as how to recognize toxic and abusive behaviour.

At the beginning of the course, users take a short test regarding their current relationships, which redirects them to one of three blocks based on their results:

1. Healthy relationships and how to navigate crises as a couple
2. Destructive relationships
3. Relationships where domestic violence occurs

Each block contains information on all types of relationships, with a higher percentage of study material relevant to the user’s situation.

In March, 362 people joined the testing of the demo version. Feedback from users who participated in the all-Ukrainian testing of the course’s pilot version will be considered to create the final, more refined version.



courses.stosunky.com

CURRENT STATE OF MUNICIPAL GBV RESPONSE SYSTEMS

Since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, local authorities in many Ukrainian cities have had to deal with existential threats, leaving them unable to focus on GBV response and prevention. The “Cities and Communities Free From Domestic Violence” project, that supported by the governments of UK and Canada, develops local GBV response and prevention systems in 30 Ukrainian cities and communities, conducted an analysis to identify changes.

The state of local GBV response and prevention systems during the war was assessed in 29 of 30 project cities and communities (except Kramatorsk) based on the experts’ recording of progress in achieving the Roadmap developed for the cities in the project.

According to the results, the stabilization of the situation at the front line, the liberation of temporarily occupied territories, and the crimes exposed in connection with this confirmed the relevance of the problem of preventing and

combating gender-based violence. As of July 2022, the deterioration in implementing the Roadmap steps due to the full-scale invasion had stopped, and the situation had gradually improved. As of October 2022, there was a 2% increase and an additional 9% increase as of December. Thus, the situation in all cities and communities participating in the project has generally returned to pre-war levels.



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY: TRANSFORMING LIVES AT “VONA HUB”

” *“At the Hub, I heard stories of other women who endured, got up from their knees and found the strength to start a new life. I realized: if it worked out for them – it will work out for me too,”* said Tetyana, one of the “VONA Hub” clients.

In January, the local “VONA Hub” in Uzhhorod held a special event where GBV survivors shared their journeys. The Hub facilitates the economic empowerment of women, providing in-person guidance and tailor-made programmes on economic and financial independence, as well as assistance from qualified psychologists.

Attendees expressed their appreciation for the support, guidance, training, and inspiration provided by the Hub, all of which enabled them to transform their lives. One of the stories of the clients of “VONA Hub” is Tetyana’s. After a difficult divorce from her husband, she was left alone with a small son, without a home, or a job, in a state of stress that caused oncological disease. For several years, she struggled against difficulties and illness. Despite these hardships, with the support of the hub staff, she managed to overcome her struggles.



“Clients were happy to share information about how their lives have changed. Just yesterday, they were in difficult circumstances, and today we heard stories of success that inspire other women not to be afraid of change and to turn for help to the Hub!” said Inna Lopatchenko, coordinator of the career “VONA hub” in Uzhhorod.

Overall, there are 8 “VONA Hubs” operating in Ukraine with the support of UK Government and Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID).

FROM TRAININGS TO COMICS: COMMUNITIES’ JOURNEY TO ZERO GBV TOLERANCE

“Our team is honoured to be a part of such an important mission – changing social norms to prevent violence. We are grateful for the support for our initiatives, which are increasingly needed today. The enthusiasm for our activities speaks for itself, both in Uzhhorod and across the Zakarpattia region”,

Marianna Kolodiy, project coordinator

43 Ukrainian communities launched projects to address domestic and gender-based violence. With the support of the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States, 52 projects were initiated, reaching over 5 million people. Projects introduced a wide range of activities, such as educational programmes for residents of towns and cities, with a particular focus on young people;



information campaigns; street rallies; and the production and distribution of thematic informational materials. Additionally, novel approaches to address the issue included the creation of chatbots, quest games, and comics.

The “Lilac Ribbon” is one of the pilot projects implemented in Uzhhorod. The community team organized a series of training sessions on preventing domestic violence for preschool teachers, psychologists, and secondary school teachers. In addition, a flash mob called “Lilac Birds” was organized within the project. Children and young people created lilac-coloured origami birds to commemorate those who died of domestic violence. Uzhhorod residents also participated in a mobile thematic photo exhibition, which more than 600 people have already visited. After an information campaign, 141,000 people received beneficial guidance on violence prevention through TV and online media.

All the initiatives implemented were launched by the teams, who attended a two-day online workshop on changing social norms to prevent GBV and domestic violence. The teams who successfully completed the training received an opportunity to prepare the project. In total, 97 teams from all regions of Ukraine, comprising 269 participants, participated in the workshop.

After the second wave of workshops, UNFPA received 43 project applications, the best of which will be supported this year.

CAREER HUB “VONA” IN THE SPOTLIGHT

In March, the Ambassador of Great Britain to Ukraine, Melinda Simmons, visited the “VONA” hub in Lviv. This hub has been helping women find employment or start their businesses since July 2022. During her visit, Ms Simmons learned about the hub’s work and spoke with some women who had received assistance.



“I am impressed by the work being done and the assistance you provide to women,” she said.

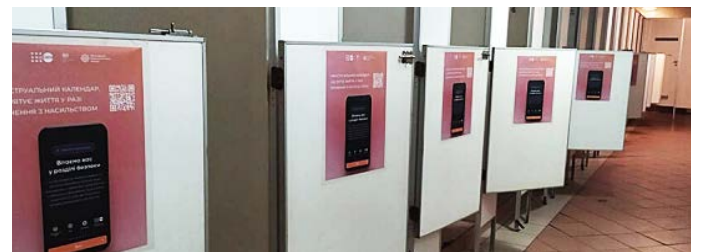
The hub has effectively collaborated with various organizations, including the Lviv Regional Military Administration, the Department of Social Protection of the Population, the Regional Center for Social Services, the Lviv City Council, the National University “Lviv Polytechnic”, and several public and donor organizations.

Since opening in July of last year, the “VONA Hub” has served 545 women, with 94 finding employment and 18 starting their own businesses.



ASSISTANCE TO GBV SURVIVORS ONE CLICK AWAY

In August 2022, the Ministry of Interior of Ukraine and the National Police of Ukraine, in partnership with UNFPA, introduced a mobile application for women who are survivors or at risk of gender-based violence. The application allows women to contact the police using the “SOS” button that automatically shares the user’s location. This feature makes it more accessible for women with disabilities, those subject to continuous control over their personal life, or lacking phone credit to ask for help.



From December to March, an intensive information campaign was launched to spread the word about the application among women and girls who are at risk of GBV. The application’s name was kept confidential to ensure the safety of women using it.

The campaign reached over 2.8 million people within the target audience. The campaign was supported by 36 businesses and organizations, including Ukrainian Railways, MacPaw, Osvitoriya Hub, SOCAR, and others. Additionally, 29 influencers and media outlets joined the campaign and shared the information with their audience.

As a result of the communication activities, the application has been downloaded over 35,000 times since its launch.

