



## WOMEN CAREER HUB: OPEN DOOR TO ECONOMIC AUTONOMY

*"For almost 15 years, I was married to a man who kept all our family's money with him. Even the purchase of feminine hygiene products was impossible for me without his permission. Recently, he started beating me and even beating our daughter. After that, I decided to leave him and contact this Hub. Found the work. But it turned out that I didn't know how to handle money. As a sign of destiny, there was an offer to study at the Hub's course "Personal Finance" taught by Lviv Business School. It was eight days of painstaking and, frankly, hard work. But thanks to it, I already have my annual and monthly budgets, keep daily records of my financial flow and even have already created my piggy bank. I am incredibly happy that in addition to safety, I received such skills!" – Olga B, 34, a shelter client, Kharkiv.*

Lack of economic autonomy makes many women feel forced to tolerate the abusive behaviour of their partners. This situation may deteriorate given gender-discriminatory reductions of workplaces and economic downturn following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aspiring to economically empower women to break the circle of violence, UNFPA launched online Women Career Hub. The Hub offers free employability support, career counselling and professional capacity development to women survivors of GBV.

Since November 2020, 418 women already received employability guidance from the team of Hub's seasoned career counsellors, who consult via phone, online and in-person in Lviv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Poltava and Vinnytsia. 182 women are undergoing Hub career support programme that includes individual needs assessment, talent mapping, assistance with preparing job applications and coaching for job interviews.

Informed by the results of the UNFPA conducted assessment of the professional needs in restoring economic capacity of

women survivors of GBV, the Hub developed a range of training programmes. From sewing and accounting to customer relationship management and social media marketing, the interactive courses help women gain professional skills to find employment or start income-generating initiatives in most resilient and demanded sectors during COVID-19.

In partnership with leading subject matter experts, psychologists and specialised social workers, the Hub develops training programmes that are tailored to the needs of GBV survivors and factor in their vulnerabilities. Jointly with Lviv Business School and psychological centre "Perspective", the Hub designed a course on financial literacy for GBV survivors who are receiving help at shelters and daycare centres. 120 women completed the training that opens up new approach not only to managing their finances but also independent life.

Stay tuned for more updates from the Women Career Hub work.

# 1-YEAR MILESTONE TO GBV-FREE CORPORATE WORLD

*"Last year we joined the working group and signed the Declaration for Gender Equality and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence. Understanding the problem and wishing greater involvement, we decided to launch a corporate programme on GBV response. It was developed and approved thanks to the best practices presented during trainings organised by UNFPA and their expert support,"* Michael Tsarev, StarLightMedia CEO

Realising that the workplace can play a vital role in helping end GBV, UNFPA established the first business coalition in Ukraine to promote gender equality and prevent GBV. 14 business entities became its first signatories in December 2019, declaring their commitment to provide equal rights and opportunities and supportive environment for their employees.

Throughout 2020, UNFPA led targeted advocacy to encourage companies to join the Declaration and improve corporate practices to meet its resolutions. The business coalition grew by 17 more companies interested in developing corporate culture of zero tolerance to violence. UNFPA provided capacity development of the signatories, equipping them with knowledge and skills to promote gender equality, prevent GBV and provide assistance to survivors.

A year since the Declaration launch, the

companies' representatives shared their success stories and discussed progress towards the Declaration goals. StarLightMedia, Avon and Kernel already piloted corporate initiatives to prevent GBV. StarLightMedia, one of largest media holdings in Eastern Europe, launched its first ever corporate programme on GBV response. With UNFPA support, the company conducted thematic training for employees, organised awareness-raising campaigns and integrated GBV response into the media group content. StarLightMedia serves a compelling example of sound corporate response to GBV. The company's advance has a strong potential to spark a positive competition among 30 other businesses-signatories of the UNFPA Declaration for Gender Equality and Prevention of GBV.

## ELECTIONS BEHIND, WORK ON, SUCCESS AHEAD

Following local elections of October 2020, all partner-municipalities of the project "Cities Free from Domestic Violence" saw the renewed city councils. Five cities also welcomed new mayors amidst intensive work on developing municipal systems of GBV response and prevention with UNFPA support.

Promptly establishing a sound dialogue with incumbents, UNFPA advocated continued progress in creating a systemic response to GBV in the cities. Municipal GBV experts, who completed the UNFPA rigorous training programme, supported a smooth transition of political coordination, sustaining the speed of advancement per agreed with UNFPA action plans.

Following targeted advocacy, newly elected mayors and councils reconfirmed their commitment to developing municipal systems of combating and preventing GBV. Thus, Poltava approved the municipal joint action plan for 2021 that envisages the

establishment of a robust network of specialised services for GBV survivors – a mobile team of psychosocial support, daycare centre, crisis room for GBV survivors and child-friendly investigation room in line with international standards. Dnipro adopted an action plan for 2021-2022 that foresees setting up of a crisis room and ensures financial sustainability of created specialised support services for GBV survivors. In its 2021-2022 municipal programme, Kremenchuk factors in resources for sustainable operation of the crisis room, currently being set up with UNFPA support, and mapping of services for GBV survivors for effective referral.

In turbulent times of local political change and global COVID-19 pandemic, partner-municipalities stay true to their commitment of developing effective systems of GBV response and prevention. UNFPA technical support guides them on their way to success in this course.

## EMPOWERED AND TRANSFORMED FOR A BETTER LIFE



*"I joined the project not only to get a new education but to receive psychological help. And all of you managed to bring me back to life,"*  
Olena, course participant

6-month upon the launch of the training, 27 women look proudly in the mirror. They admire the beauty of the tremendous work they have done. It is not only the exquisite haircuts that they have learnt to give. Their eyes catch the natural glow of joy and confidence that has blossomed on their faces. They gladly embrace the change they could not even dream of when joining the "Beauty for a Better Life" school, organised by UNFPA and L'Oreal, in June 2020.

While mastering the art of hairdressing from prominent experts, trainees, most of whom are GBV survivors, were receiving individual and group counselling. A seasoned psychologist helped women overcome trauma, rebuild confidence and enhance self-esteem. In December 2020, they completed the programme, many

holding invitations to intern or work at professional salons. Gained expertise, developed personal portfolio and sound professional references increase alumnae chances of securing dignity employment and economic autonomy. Their restored faith in self sparks a passion for life and desire to succeed in the new professional domain. They have both strength and tools to build violence-free life, thereby inspiring other women to break the circle of violence.

A cohort of new trainees cannot wait to embark on their life-transforming journey as "Beauty for a Better Life" school is about to start fresh editions in February 2021. The school will run in new training centres opened by UNFPA with the support of Kyiv city administration and NGO Bosco Centre in Kyiv and Lviv respectively.