

## Executive Summary

### The Women`s Learning Needs in Ukraine: analytic report of the research

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The Women`s Learning Needs Analysis in Ukraine project, conducted by the League of Professional Women with the support of the CIVICUS Solidarity Fund in 2020, focuses on women's empowerment in Ukraine within the framework of the central component of this process - education and learning. Adult learning and education in the research project following the change in UNESCO terminology from "adult education" to "adult learning and education" (abbreviated - ALE), is interpreted as a permanent activity aimed at acquiring, recognizing and applying key skills. Acquisition of new skills, abilities and knowledge by adults usually occurs after they receive basic education and a person enters the labor market. Basic education means secondary school, vocational or higher education.

In European practice, ALE covers formal, non-formal and informal forms of adult learning. Adult participants in this project mean persons (women and men) aged 18 to 64 who have learning needs. ALE can take place through "retraining", "advanced learning" courses in special centers, colleges, higher education institutions, civil society organizations, using full-time or distance learning. ALE is important for personal self realization, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment or professional development. This Executive summary of the Analytical report is designed to take overview of LPW`s full research in Ukrainian for the way forward. The longer, full version of the Analytical report will also be available on LPW`s website.

#### **Who might be interested in an analytical report?**

- *Adult learning providers* in terms of designing their programs and courses.
- *Women with learning needs* who will use these services.
- *Policy makers at the national and local levels* in terms of the attitude of public experts and adult learning providers to the legislative support of the ALE process.
- *Analysts* from the public, scientific, educational environment who are interested in describing relevant methods of conducting social research in a virtual format. These methods became extremely relevant during the current phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The analytical report was prepared based on the results of quantitative and qualitative field research of the 2020 project.

**The research tasks** facing the project team are as follows:

- Analyze the information received through the online expert survey and virtual conference of experts and stakeholders on the learning and service needs of women from the 4 target groups.
- Analyze data from a mass survey on the participation of women and men in various forms of non-formal adult learning in Ukraine, as well as from other Ukrainian and global secondary sources.
- Compare this information with secondary data obtained during the study.
- Propose recommendations that will help create or improve conditions for women's empowerment in Ukraine (with a focus on adult learning and education).

To analyze the current learning needs of women from the target groups of the project in Ukraine, the methodology of the research project was developed and updated in March-April 2020. Its design includes the results of desk and field research (*expert online survey of adult learning professionals in May 2020 and virtual conference of experts and stakeholders in June 2020*) of the project team, as well as the results of a mass survey conducted at the request of the League of Professional Women on non-formal adult learning as part of a nationwide sociological survey conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation in December 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of quarantine restrictions led to the transfer of all forms of field research to a virtual format.

The period of conducting qualitative field research by the project team is:

- *expert online survey* conducted in Ukraine on May 8-22, 2020;
- *virtual conference* "Women's Learning Needs: a discussion of service providers and users in Ukraine" by video conference, which took place on June 18, 2020.

The key indicators for assessing the level of ALE *services use* are: (a) actual *quantitative indicators* of women's and men's participation in formal and non-formal adult learning and education programs in a given country; (b) information on sources of funding for participation in ALE. Since in Ukraine the statistical data in this sphere are essentially limited, for the further analysis of a domestic level of ALE services use the data of questions of mass sociological polls are taken from.

According to the results of a sociological survey on non-formal adult learning in a nationwide survey **in Ukraine in 2019, 8.5% of people participated** in non-formal adult learning programs. 9.1% of women and 8.8% of men gave an affirmative answer to this question. The most active are in the west of Ukraine (11.6%), slightly less - in the east (11.4%), in the south - 9.3% and in the center - 5.2%. In terms of sources of funding for participation in these forms of non-formal adult learning, the largest number were received by the next two - payment by the current or future employer (44.6% - for men and 26.3% - for

women); as well as self-payment (24.7% - for men and 26.3% - for women). Representatives of the cities of Kyiv and Mariupol, as well as from Kharkiv, Kyiv, Sumy, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Vinnytsia and Mykolayiv regions took part in the online expert survey in 2020. According to these data, women-professionals (hereinafter referred to as professional women) use 84.2%, and the least - women-employers - 5.3%. All surveyed experts, along with a high assessment of the professional knowledge of professional women, also name the high level of their communication skills and presentations, note a satisfactory level of skills on the Internet (information retrieval, digital security, digital literacy). Among the skills that need to be developed are: design thinking, creative thinking, internet marketing, career planning, emotional resilience, change management, project management skills. Experts note that in order to be fully involved in the labor market, women from vulnerable and marginalized groups need, in terms of the subject of the expert survey, first of all to obtain information in an accessible way about the possibilities of social and state support; as well as skills in organizing work in the digital space.

Among the barriers to access to ALE for women, the most important were (in order of choice): financial costs of the program; lack of flexibility in the schedule of classes; lack of access to child care during learning and education; responsibilities in the workplace and lack of information at the local level. Among the recommendations of the survey was the importance of forming values at the state level in a society where the professional realization of women is higher than their sexual attractiveness. The professional successfulness of women forms a strong community, so local governments should actively support ALE, including by creating appropriate infrastructure. Learning service providers should pay more attention to the flexibility of ALE programs and courses for women.

### **Key conclusions and recommendations**

- Women's empowerment has better prospects through the process of self-determination and self-affirmation, when women gain the necessary learning and education on their own on the basis of institutional, financial and logistical conditions created by the state.
- A well-developed and flexible ALE system, an active labor market policy and a relatively low level of general inequality will help increase the number of users of learning services among adults in the country, including women.
- Strengthening financial support from all stakeholders (a combination of funding from government agencies, international donors and employers) for adult learning and education will have a positive impact on the growth of women's and men's participation in ALE in Ukraine.

- Among the developed skills of women from 4 research groups, experts name communication and presentation skills. Low assessment of English, written communication skills, mathematical, accounting, financial competencies.
- Providers of adult learning and education should take into account the requirements of employers for the professional competencies of employees, as well as the features and approaches to the learning process.
- According to the reviewer, the high 3rd place among the required skills is "leadership and management skills", which is in line with the trends identified by international research. Leadership development is a key competence in the programs of a significant number of business schools, which are also a major player among adult learning and education providers.
- A study of the learning needs of professional women and women from vulnerable and marginalized groups to ensure self-realization and well-being identified various aspects of the problem. The following skills were important for women employers and women entrepreneurs: to find a balance between personal and professional life, financial literacy, burnout prevention, rational decision-making, understanding of equal rights for women and men. At the same time, for vulnerable and marginalized groups, respondents noted an external factor - the level of tolerance of society.
- Since, according to the LPW`s 2020 expert survey, learning methods that are part of the non-formal form of learning (including short-term interactive training programs, trainings and study visits in the organization) have been chosen as effective methods of successful adult learning in Ukraine, it makes sense to attention to the development of these methods. It should also be noted that internships within Ukraine and study visits to the organization were rated higher than internships abroad.
- Coordination mechanisms need to be established in Ukraine to develop and implement, with the participation of all stakeholders (including civil society organizations, academia, universities, non-formal adult learning providers and others), various forms of support for the ALE sector as an important component of lifelong learning.
- Access to all forms of learning (including non-formal and informal learning) for its users, including vulnerable and marginalized women, should be promoted.
- Recognition, certification and accreditation of ALE needs to be improved through the adoption of targeted national and regional adult learning programs; development and adoption of the relevant law of Ukraine (and other regulations) with appropriate financial support.

Among the **recommendations** (their full list is given in the final provisions of the Ukrainian version of the Report) we will draw the reader's attention to the following:

***For policy makers at the national and local levels:***

- ☐ Introduce programs and legislative support for the ALE process in the country.
- ☐ Develop and implement a mechanism for monitoring the coverage of adult learning and education in Ukraine at the national, regional and local levels.
- ☐ Create a separate expenditure item for ALE in national, oblast and local budgets, instead of including it in the general education budget, which is also a funding mechanism that can be used to ensure more stable support for ALE programs.
- ☐ Provide financial support for access of women from vulnerable and marginalized groups to ALE when formulating budgets at appropriate levels.
- ☐ Provide information policy measures in the program of activities of public authorities aimed at raising awareness about ALE.

***Recommendations for educational and learning service providers and professional communities:***

- ☐ Pay attention to the formation of the content of ALE, flexibility of forms (remote, stationary) and schedules of classes in accordance with the needs of professional women and women from vulnerable and marginalized groups. The most requested form of ALT is interactive training and short-term training programs.
- ☐ When shaping the content of the program, it is necessary to pay attention for professional women to increase the level of knowledge of English, law and non-discriminatory policies.
- ☐ In shaping the content of programs for women from vulnerable and marginalized groups, it is necessary to pay attention to the development of entrepreneurial skills and increase English language skills.
- ☐ Develop ALE proposals for women from vulnerable and marginalized groups in cooperation with local governments.

***Recommendations for service users (project target groups)***

- ☐ Proactive behavior in applying for financial support from the employer of ALE services and professional development.
- ☐ Search for sources for personal and professional development.
- ☐ Cooperation with other women in various public associations and professional networks to address organizational issues and eliminate barriers to access