Analytical Research Summary

“EXPANSION OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES IN UKRAINE”

April - June 2021
The project is implemented under the sponsorship of the Center for Women's Economic Empowerment (CWEE) at the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

The analytical research is compiled by

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The research is conducted under the sponsorship of the Center for Women's Economic Empowerment (CWEE) at the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE). The CWEE develops women's leadership in communities engaged in entrepreneurship and private sector involvement. Since 2018, the CWEE has been consolidating CIPE's institutional efforts to promote women's leadership and improve the economic conditions of women around the world by strengthening private sector involvement. The center's team is convinced that equal participation of women in the economy strengthens free markets and democratic processes.

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Stakeholder's Guide

List of institutions, entities, and organizations, information on which is included in the analytical research

Non-governmental / Private sector:

- The American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine, business community
- The Ukrainian Philanthropists Association, NGO
- The Bukovina Business Women Association, NGO
- Women’s Association of Ukraine “Diya” (“action”), NGO
- Women Lawyers Association JurFem, NGO
- Business, magazine
- Bureau of Gender Policies and Budgeting, NGO
- All-Ukrainian Council of Female Farmers, NGO
- Gender in detail, information resource
- Dengi.ua, a Russian-language online version of the magazine “Groshi” (“Money”)
- Ukrainian Business Women, NGO
- European Business Association, business community
- Women in business. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) program.
- Women's Business Chamber of Ukraine, NGO
- Women’s League, NGO
- Women's professional league, NGO
- Women business, information portal
- Women's Energy Club of Ukraine, NGO
- Women's Information and Coordination Center
- Women’s Consortium of Ukraine, NGO
- Women's Information Consultative Center
- Information and Education Center “Vis”, NGO
- Career for a new life. Caritas Ukraine project
- Kyiv Gender Studies Institute, NGO
- Kyiv International Economic Forum
- Business People Club, NGO
- Club of successful women “Women of Ukraine”
- Women's partnership circle, public union
- Convictus Ukraine, NGO
• Krona. Gender Information and Analytical Center
• League of Business and Professional Women of Ukraine, NGO
• Women’s Rights Protection League Harmony of Equals, NGO
• International Embassy of Women Entrepreneurs, NGO
• National platform for small and medium business, the informal network of organizations
• UN Women Ukraine
• Pact Ukraine, NGO
• Council of Women of the Donetsk Region, NGO
• Union of Women of Ukraine, public union
• Union of Ukrainian Entrepreneurs, public union
• Modern Woman, NGO
• Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
• Ukrainian Business Incubators and Innovation Centers Association
• Ukrainian Business and Trade Association, public union
• Ukrainian platform “Women in Business”, NGO
• Ukrainian Business Council, business community
• Ukrainian Women's Congress
• Ukrainian Women's Foundation
• Ukrainian Philanthropists Forum, charitable organization
• Kherson Regional Center “Successful Woman”, NGO
• Federation of Employers of Ukraine
• Entrepreneurship Development Fund
• French-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, business community
• Center for Economic Strategy
• Center “Women’s Perspectives”, NGO
• Free People Employment Center, NGO
• Center for Small and Medium Business Development, Gender Culture Centre
• BusinessWoman, magazine
• Business Woman Club, business community
• CEO Club Ukraine, business community
• CFO Club Ukraine, business community
• CosmoLady, magazine
• L’Officiel, magazine
• She Exports
• The devochki, information resource
• Ukrainky.com, magazine
• WTECH, business community
• WIN Ukraine. Women in nuclear.
• WOMAN Magazine, magazine
• WoMo, information resource
Government / State sector:

- M.V. Ptukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.
- Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
- Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine
- Ministry of Finance of Ukraine
- Ministry of Justice of Ukraine
- National Agency of Civil Service
- Small and Medium Business Development Office, advisory body
- Business Ombudsman Council, advisory body
- Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights
- Government Commissioner for Gender Policy
Expert opinion on women's entrepreneurship development in Ukraine

Introduction

An important stage in the project implementation was an expert discussion held to obtain unprejudiced and, which is of crucial importance, personalized information on the real situation with women’s entrepreneurship in Ukraine. The survey was conducted in May 2021 as personal semi-standardized interviews via the Zoom platform.

All the experts that were interviewed met at least one of the following criteria: experience in running own business; participation in advocacy and promotional campaigns in the field of women’s entrepreneurship; direct participation in educational/training activities designed for the small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) development in Ukraine; member of the governing bodies of the business community at the state, regional, or local level.

The project experts were:

- Bedrychuk Nadiia, Executive Director, Ukrainian Association of Direct Sales (city of Kyiv);
- Haman Tetiana, Deputy Director, Khmelnytsky Regional Center of Advanced Training (city of Khmelnytskyi);
- Hlazkova Kateryna, Executive Director, Union of Ukrainian Entrepreneurs (city of Kyiv);
- Zaika Yuliia, founder and Executive Director of the League of Business and Professional Women of Ukraine NGO (city of Chernihiv);
- Krysiuk Hanna, founder and the President of Business Woman Club, owner of Business Woman magazine (city of Kyiv);
- Mustafina Daria, founder and Director of the Institute of Partnership and Sustainable Development NGO, founder of the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (city of Kyiv);
- Nahaivska Daria, co-founder of the Business and Human Rights Club, Project Manager of the Modern Woman NGO (city of Kharkiv).
The key discussion topics included the following:

- dynamics of women’s entrepreneurship development in modern Ukraine;
- assessment of the women’s business community importance for small and medium-sized businesses development;
- the role of leading women’s business communities in implementing best business practices;
- prospects of family businesses as drivers of economic development of Ukraine;
- contradictions of public and private partnership in the field of small and medium business;
- characteristics of the social dimension of women’s entrepreneurship.

Summary

The vast majority of respondents positively assess the opportunities and prospects of doing business in Ukraine and see no real grounds for its division into purely “female” or purely “male” ones.

“What entrepreneurship has no gender. It has no social status” (D. Mustafina).

At that, business communities are not only effective business institutions, they also establish a model of “proper synergy”. Women-entrepreneurs are trying to “fulfill themselves” not only in such sectors as direct sales, HoReCa, retail, fitness, and the beauty industry.
Businesswomen in the agricultural sector, IT industry, energy sector, real estate, metallurgy, etc. are becoming more and more notable. The age limits of the businesswomen circle are also changing both at the expense of very young businesswomen who are taking initial steps in business being first-year students, and women of the “golden age” whose personal success is proof that active entrepreneurship is the best protection from ageism.

“There is a difference in opportunities, but it is based not so much on real limitations as on stereotypes that thrive in our society” (T. Haman)

According to experts, the key to successful SMEs development should be active and systematic advocacy (promotion) of business interests in front of the authorities at all levels, adherence to the principles of social responsibility, continued efforts to create equal opportunities for men and women, the capability of individual women’s societies to unite around constructive and consolidating ideas. Also, experts see that an indispensable condition for successful doing business is the borrowing and mastering of the best foreign practice, which makes it important to study the practical cases of women’s entrepreneurship in Central and Eastern Europe. Women’s business associations must play a significant role in achieving these goals.
Representation of women's entrepreneurship institutions on the internet

Introduction

The subject matter of analysis was the official websites of institutions, organizations, initiatives, and projects that reflect women's entrepreneurship development in contemporary Ukraine. The total number of scanned Internet resources is seventy-nine, and their list is presented in the first section of this research. All scanned sources were divided into two different groups: 1. Representatives of the non-governmental sector (business communities and NGOs), and 2. Representatives of the government/state sector (authorities, state scientific institutions, etc.).

During the research, we have analyzed the availability and quality of the following key elements: description of the organization; its management/team; mission, vision; information on current and implemented projects; analytical materials; reporting information; contact information, including the availability of official pages of the organization in social networks Facebook, Instagram.
As to official Internet resources of business associations, we paid attention to the following: information on the conditions and benefits of membership in a particular community; availability and clarity of the algorithm for joining/ascending to its ranks; list of members and partners of associations, etc.

It was important for us to find on the websites training materials that would be useful to those interested in starting their own business. These are, in particular: workshop materials, methodical recommendations, various kinds of guides, tips by professionals, etc.

**Summary**

Thus, most of the scanned websites meet their main purpose – to represent the organization, its management, and the services provided as effectively and efficiently as possible. Does the financial capacity of the organization affect the quality of its Internet resource? To certain extent, yes. But it’s more about design elements rather than content.

The information content of most of the scanned websites of non-governmental sector organizations depends on the way their leaders see the idea of website functioning. To this end, all the websites we have scanned can be divided into the following categories:

1. Websites of prestigious Ukrainian business communities (CEO Club Ukraine, CFO Club Ukraine, etc.). These are made to high standards, they are functional, meaningful. The facts are presented without extra diversity, in the style of “respectful restraint”. However, they contain the optimal amount of information needed for both current and potential community members. The information is actually updated in the “day-to-day” mode. Mandatory focus on mission and values, as well as on membership conditions. Comprehensive information about the founders and leaders of the community. Illustrative component (photo, video) presented at professional level.

2. Websites of industry-specific business associations (Women Lawyers Association JurFem, Women's Energy Club of Ukraine, etc.). These are contentful, filled with relevant and useful information for representatives of a particular industry (IT, agribusiness, energy, etc.). Analytical data is often included. Therefore, they can be useful not only to community members, but also to government officials, journalists, and academic researchers. Particular attention is paid to the lobbying resources of associations, participation of their members in the development and implementation of policy and management decisions, as well as to examples of effective networking.

3. Websites of women's business communities (Business Woman Club, etc.). A relatively new player in the network space. It is not uncommon to place special focus on the “privacy” of the community as an element of elitism and a sense of having been chosen for its members. The information is presented in an emotional, exciting way. Active use of visual material to illustrate the current business life of the community. Much attention is paid to the personalities of the founders, their personal success stories. At that, special emphasis is placed on collective events organized and held with the participation of community members. Active use of pages in social networks (Facebook, Instagram) as an additional, and sometimes even the main information platform of the community.
4. Internet resources of Ukrainian representative offices of international organizations that support women’s entrepreneurship (UN Women Ukraine, Pact Ukraine, etc.). These pages are informative, clearly structured, at least bilingual. They contain information on current projects, as well as algorithms for participation in promising business initiatives. As a rule, they also contain high-quality analytical and reporting documentation, including financial data. They are of particular interest for potential beneficiaries of international technical assistance, as well as businesses seeking access to international markets. Top managers of such representative offices are frequently influential members of those business communities that we have identified in section 1 of this summary.

5. Websites of well-established public non-governmental organizations (“Modern Woman”, “Successful Woman”, etc.). They represent women’s entrepreneurship development not only at the national but also at the regional level. They are a valuable source of specific step-by-step information for starting and developing one’s own business, contain numerous examples of successful local cases (trade, beauty industry, handmade, food, etc.). Such platforms contain training materials: manuals, workshops materials, tips by business coaches, etc. They will be especially useful for women who wish to fulfill their potential in the field of small and medium business. This group of organizations often has got the opportunity to create high-quality websites due to grants from international agencies (USAID, GIZ, SIPE, etc.).

6. Internet resources of public organizations and initiatives, for which the issue of women’s entrepreneurship is rather secondary, but not a priority one. These contain information that usually reflects the progress and current outcomes of a specific project, which addressed local tasks related to assistance to certain categories of women: unemployed, internally displaced persons, mothers with many children, victims of discrimination, and/or violence. This resource block is the least useful for our research, but may be of independent research interest to professionals in the field of gender policy, women's studies, social and demographic development.

7. Online versions of the media, both purely business and women-related ones (The devochki, CosmoLady, etc.). The most mobile and vivid sources of information both in content and in the form of presentation of the material. They successfully try to get rid of the image of “shallow” publications about fashion and cuisine, instead, they try to satisfy the need of women for relevant and useful information on entrepreneurship, taxation, starting one’s own business, etc. They allow tracking trends in women's entrepreneurship development in dynamics. They contain numerous interviews with successful businesswomen, women leaders in politics, management, art, sports, etc.

The given list is not exhaustive and is the result of conscious authors' aggregation, a kind of attempt to generalize the analysis outcomes. This differentiation is conditional also because certain communities, which are perceived by experts and ordinary citizens as business ones, are legally public (non-governmental, non-profit) organizations, as stated in their statutes, registration certificates, etc.
Recommendations

The following should be seen as recommendations for improving the content of Internet websites.

1. Regular publication of reporting information, summarizing the organization's activities for a certain period of time, usually for a calendar year. This is especially important for women's NGOs that regularly participate in competitive grant programs. The availability of reporting documents, including financial ones, is an important element of transparency, which, in its turn, contributes to the creation of the organization's positive image for potential donors.

2. Aligning information on the official website with that on the official Internet pages in social networks to avoid discrepancies, especially in terms of personal data of leaders: their full names, positions.

3. Special attention should be paid to the sections “News”, “Events”, “Our projects”. They should either be administered in a timely manner or removed from the official website. The absence of relevant information in these sections may create a misconception about the lack of activity or passivity of the organization or business community.

4. Constant monitoring of the contact information relevance: addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail, etc. Outdated information makes it impossible to establish timely contacts between a business service provider and a potential recipient.

5. To follow the “less is better” principle. A small amount of specific information about the time schedules, content, and results of the organization's activities makes a better impression on a potential partner than large but shallow novels. Also, it is necessary to place on the website the organization's constituent documents: the charter, the certificate of registration, licenses. This information, along with quality illustrative material, will help the interested person to get a comprehensive idea as to the full range of real resources of the organization/institution.

6. To adhere to the principle of relevance. To demonstrate interest and capabilities to solve problems of women's entrepreneurship, which are “within the power” of a particular organization, especially if it is a community of regional scale. The declaration of global goals, the pursuit of which is clearly not supported by either human or material resources, should be avoided. A photo report on the opening of a new coffee shop in the city by a woman entrepreneur will make a better impression than lengthy speculations about saving the domestic economy.

7. To systematically keep in touch with the contributors of official pages on social networks: answer questions, declare and explain the position of the organization on topical issues, comment on the content of the pages. Establishing real connections with visitors will help to convince stakeholders that the organization sees its own page as an effective channel of communication with potential business partners and customers.
1. It is worth involving the potential of local business communities in the regions of Ukraine more actively because the problems the regional business community are facing are not fundamentally different. Thus, the effective tools developed in one region to promote small and medium-sized businesses are likely to be just as effective in all other regions of Ukraine. Therefore, an approach should be used, under which the local branch of the business association is a full and equal partner of its head office, but not a “younger brother”.

2. It is appropriate to promote the best examples of women’s entrepreneurship through social advertising. Subject to quality implementation and positive content, it can play a motivating role for women of all categories, regardless of their demographic, settlement, or professional characteristics. Examples of successful family business development can be a kind of “highlight” of such advertising, especially in cases when the founder and the head of the company is a woman. The customers of such a product can be powerful business associations, which see the strengthening of the position of women in the business environment, on the labor market, etc., among their main tasks.

3. It is worth strengthening the position of women’s business communities in the media space, and focus not on quantitative but on qualitative indicators of success. A worthy example is the format of the so-called “smart slick magazine”, which is represented in Ukraine by the magazine “Business Woman”, which, due to the regular placement of decent analytics, has become one of the leading expert publications in the field of business, gender policy, women’s leadership, and more.

4. The study of the best examples of foreign experience continues to be an indispensable condition for improving SMEs development in Ukraine. However, attention should be paid not only to those countries that are considered established leaders in building a favorable business environment: the United States, Canada, countries of Western Europe, and others. No less important for Ukraine is the experience of creating a full-fledged market economy by those countries that have similar political and economic experience: the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the countries participating in the Eastern Partnership program.
5. Creating/availability of a supportive social environment is one of the important factors for those women who are planning to start their own businesses. The components of this environment are not only the family but also a safe and comfortable everyday life, which will combine business with family life, happy motherhood, and more. Here the activities of local self-government bodies on the creation of comfortable conditions for the realization of the basic social and economic rights of citizens, and also an active position of local centers of the business associations capable to stimulate local authorities to such positive changes come to the fore.