



Gendered Perceptions on Participation in the Mine Action Sector



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Introduction

Gendered norms in Ukraine, as in other contexts, influence men and women's access to resources and capacities, with patriarchal norms promoting discrimination and systematic bias against women at institutional-, structural-, community-, and household-levels. This is evident in the participation of women in the mine action sector, which is traditionally male-dominated.

The importance of increasing the participation of women in the mine action sector has been recognised by the Oslo Action Plan to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) in 2019 through a dedicated action point on gender equality and women's participation (Action #3).¹ The increased participation of women in a traditionally male-dominated sector not only empowers women and challenges traditional gender roles, but also contributes to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, stressing the importance of women's equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security-relevant processes as well as to the wider Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Women have played crucial roles in reclaiming land for their communities by actively participating in demining, as seen in Yazidi communities in Northern Iraq or in the north of Sri Lanka.² Additionally, employing women in community-facing roles, such as non-technical survey (NTS) and explosive ordnance risk education activities (EORE), is essential for effective mine action interventions, as these activities need to be designed and implemented through a gender and age lens.

In Ukraine, like in many other contexts, humanitarian mine action (HMA) is male-dominated due to gendered norms, including perceptions about safety risks and physical demands. This has resulted in limited female employment. According to a 2021 study, women constituted between 4% and 10% of the workforce in government demining agencies (State Special Transportation Service, State Emergency Service of Ukraine) and between 23% and 29% in international non-governmental organisations (NGO) conducting demining. Structural barriers have further constrained women's participation in Ukraine. Legislation prohibited the employment of women in the mine action sector until 2017. While national legislation supports equality of labour rights and prohibits discrimination based on gender, some legislation designed to protect women reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. For example, the Ukrainian Labor Code restricts women with young children from business trips, night work, and overtime, without similar protections for men. This legislation reinforces the stereotype that childcare is solely a women's duty and does not recognise women's agency and decision-making capacities.

Ukraine currently faces the significant challenge of being the world's most heavily mined country, posing threats to civilians and hindering reconstruction efforts, which in turn jeopardizes rural communities and global food security. Reclaiming safe land through survey and clearance, as a

¹ Oslo Action Plan, 2019 - Action #3 *Ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action programmes, in order to deliver an inclusive approach. Strive to remove barriers to full, equal and gender balanced participation in mine action and in Convention meetings.*

²https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/uploads/gichd/Publications/GICHD_Sri_Lanka_Study.pdf,
<https://newint.org/features/2022/02/07/iraq-women-landmines>

prerequisite for peace and recovery, should involve women's participation as a matter of principle. This is particularly crucial considering that the humanitarian mine action (HMA) sector is among the major priorities of the Ukrainian government and has been experiencing steady growth.

Recognising the importance of women's participation in the HMA sector, with women accounting for approximately 30% of the sector, DRC Ukraine aimed to gather representative data on the challenges of engaging women in the sector sustainably. To achieve this, DRC invited other HMA NGOs, through the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, to participate in a survey aimed to identify **information gaps and understand the barriers women face in accessing and retaining employment in the mine action sector**. This invitation was extended to NGOs, excluding governmental bodies or commercial companies, as they have more similar approaches and working conditions in the sector.

It is important to note that while this survey focuses on gendered barriers in the mine action sector, gender is not the only obstacle to working in this field. DRC is currently committed to conducting further assessments to better understand and address barriers to inclusion, making workspaces and job adverts accessible to people with various impairments. Additionally, DRC is working to ensure that awareness-raising efforts promote the employment of people with disabilities, including survivors of explosive weapons and veterans.

Methodology

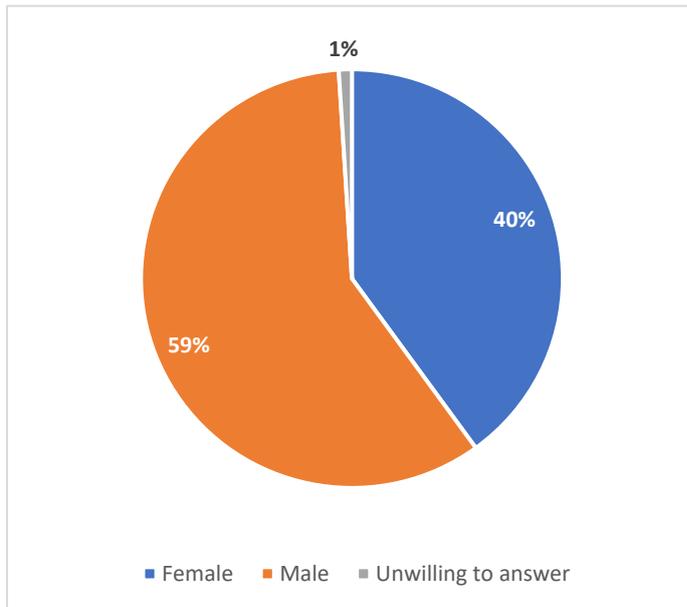
DRC Ukraine initially invited partners to review the tool before the end of November 2023 to ensure that the questions accurately captured the nuances of the barriers to accessing employment. Following finalisation, the tool was translated from English to Ukrainian to accommodate staff preferences. Data collection took place between the 25th of November and 26th of December 2023 through an online survey. To ensure a comprehensive response rate, DRC utilised a quantitative research method. Sampling was conducted through a snowball sampling approach, relying on partners to disseminate the survey to both men and women within their country teams.

A total of four hundred and fifty-four (454) individuals responded to the survey. Please refer to the demographics section to better understand the demographic makeup of the survey respondents.

Demographics

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of participants responding to the survey were male, with 40% female. This is expected given the lower rate of female employment within the mine action sector.

Figure 1: Gender of Participants

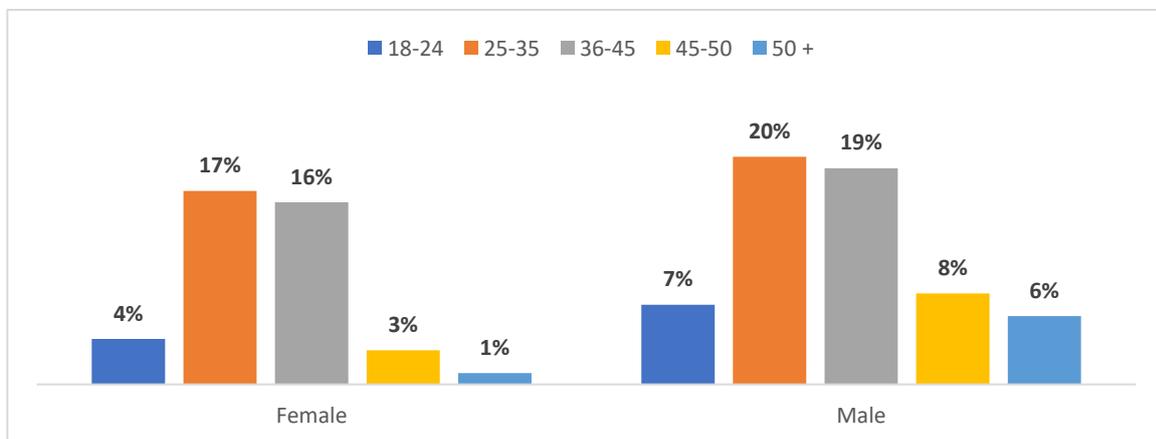


The majority of participants fell within the working age group, with 37% in the 25-35 age range and 35% in the 36-45 age range. This distribution is consistent with expectations for a survey targeting individuals of working age. The significant representation of female participants in the 25-35 and 36-45 age groups is noteworthy, considering gender disparities in Ukraine's labour market (World Bank, 2020). In Ukraine, there is a noticeable gender gap in employment, particularly in younger age groups, which is often attributed to women's reproductive roles (UN Women, 2021). However, the survey's finding that most female participants

were from younger age groups challenges this trend.

It is also important to note that 18 % of participants were over the age of 45, with 12% aged between 45 and 50, and 6% aged 50 and above. Previous DRC research on livelihoods in southern and eastern Ukraine³ has highlighted discrimination against individuals over the age of 45 regarding engagement and re-training for employment. This context is valuable for the forthcoming analysis.

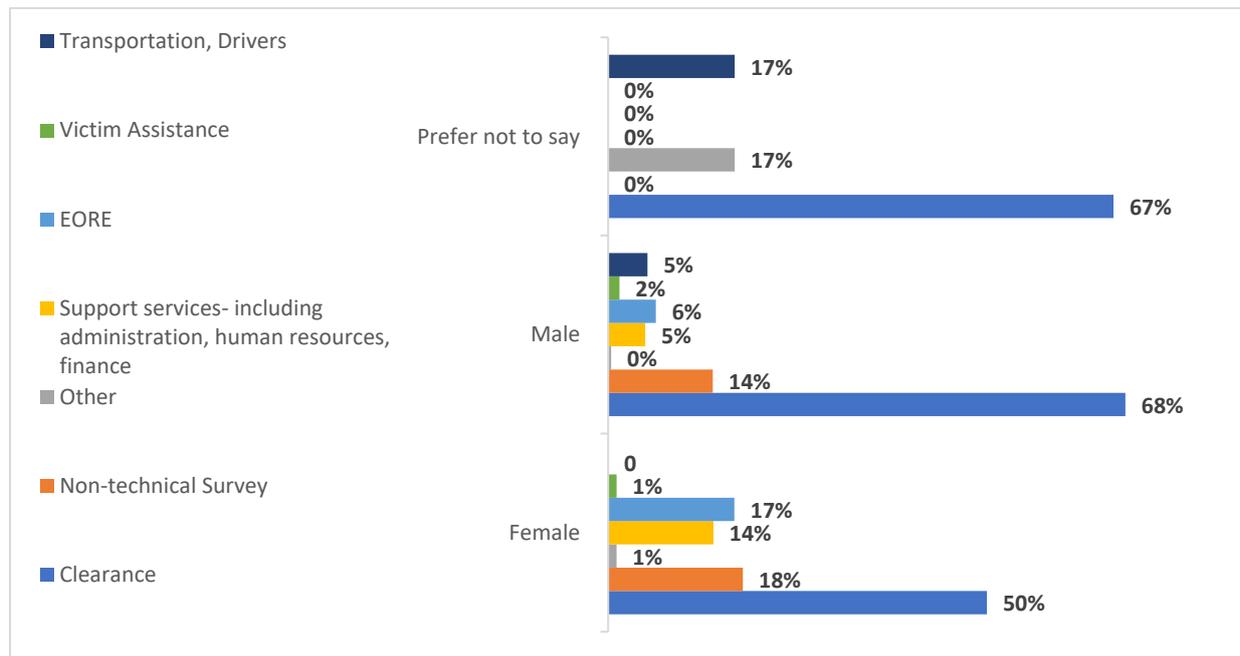
Figure 2: Age of Respondents, disaggregated by Gender



The majority of respondents were working in Clearance (61%), followed by NTS (15%), both of which are typically dominated by male colleagues. This is important framing for the subsequent analysis.

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-livelihoods-baseline-evaluation-mykolaiv-dnipropetrovsk-zaporizhzhia-and-kherson-oblasts-october-november-2023>

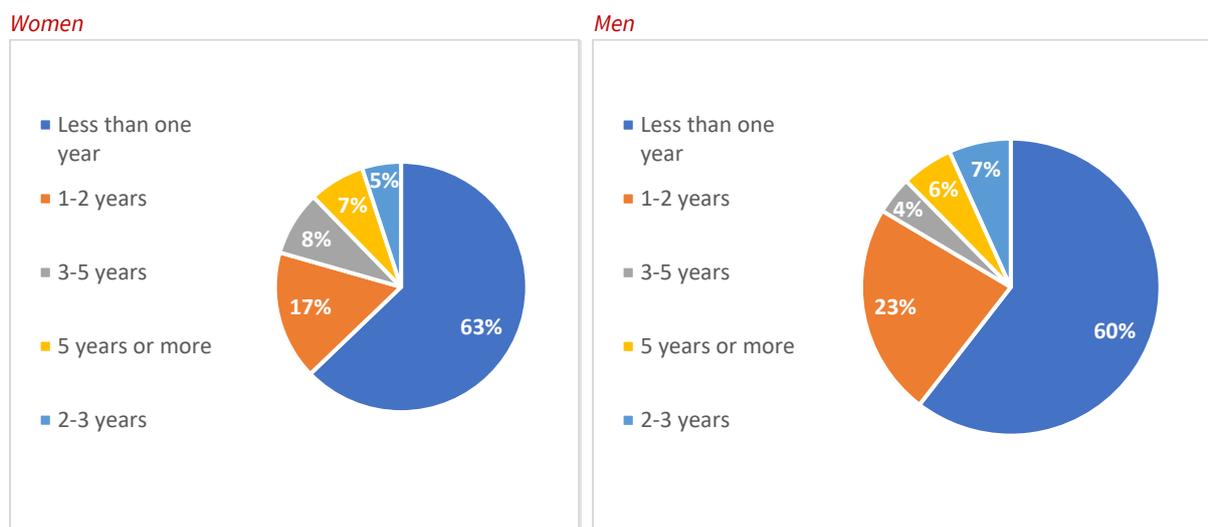
Figure 4: Area of Discipline of Respondents, disaggregated by Gender



The survey also assessed the length of time respondents had been engaged in HMA as a career. The majority of male (60%) and female (62%) respondents reported having worked in the sector for a year, with 7% and 6% respectively having more than 5 years of experience. This information provides an important context for understanding women's involvement in the sector.

Despite demining activities being present in Ukraine since 2014, the sector scaled up significantly since 2022 in terms of employment opportunities, with a large proportion of the workforce being new to the sector. Additionally, the fact that women's participation in demining activities was prohibited under Ukrainian legislation until 2017 suggests that female respondents may have less experience in the mine action sector compared to their male counterparts.

Figure 10: Experience within the Mine Action Sector, disaggregated by Gender



Summary

The assessment conducted with both female and male respondents in the HMA sector underscores a shared commitment to improving the living conditions and safety of those residing in Ukraine, as well as a genuine interest in the sector. The **primary motivation** for both men and women were a reported desire to benefit society (80%), with financial considerations being less prominent for male respondents (56%) compared to female respondents (59%). **Satisfaction levels** were reportedly high (94%), with a slight advantage for male respondents (95%), but to enhance overall employee satisfaction, respondents advocated for a need to review working conditions, especially among women working in clearance activities.

Both women and men reported that they find purpose and fulfilment in their HMA sector roles, with the importance of the work being the **most favoured aspect** for both (83% male, 82% female). Financial considerations are of the least importance (58%), and findings suggested gendered perspectives in the least favourite aspects. Female respondents emphasised positive aspects (36%), while male respondents expressed concerns about salary competitiveness (18%). Examination of the compensation work cycle reveals variations, particularly in Clearance and NTS areas, underscoring the need for tailored approaches to address the unique demands of certain disciplines.

While both women (82%) and men (83%) perceived that there are **career development opportunities** in the HMA sector, significant barriers to career development were reported, greatly varying between male and female respondents. Concerns regarding the impact of gender stereotypes on the progression of women within the HMA sector was the major barrier identified by female respondents, with 83% of female respondents noting this. This highlights the need for humanitarian organisations working in HMA to challenge gendered perceptions regarding the role of women in the HMA sector.

In contrast, male respondents identified family commitments as their main barrier to career progression. Findings support DRC's commitment to addressing gendered norms fostering an inclusive work environment and promoting equal opportunities for career development within the HMA sector.

Commonly reported **barriers to accessing the sector** included the assumption that previous military training is necessary (22%), however there were also specific barriers identified for female and male respondents. Female respondents expressed stronger concerns about traditional stereotypes, including the perception that demining is a male-dominated sector (26%), limited childcare (16%), and physical demands of the role (15%). This contrasts with male respondents who highlighted insufficient information about the sector (22%) and limited support from family/friends (11%) to pursue a career in the sector. These findings confirm that challenging stereotypes and addressing gender-specific barriers is essential to ensure that the HMA sector is gender inclusive.

Surveyed participants generally believed in the equality of professional duties between genders (56%), with women (71%) more strongly supporting this notion compared to men (48%). However, the data reveals that men hold more stereotypes about **professions suitable for a particular gender** reporting that some professions are better suited to women due to physical or personality traits, that men have to work on high-paying jobs to support their families. While a majority agrees that certain roles have no gender-specific suitability, perceptions of gender roles persist, emphasising the complexity of gender perceptions and the importance of ongoing efforts to challenge stereotypes and promote inclusivity across various professions.

Key Findings

Motivation

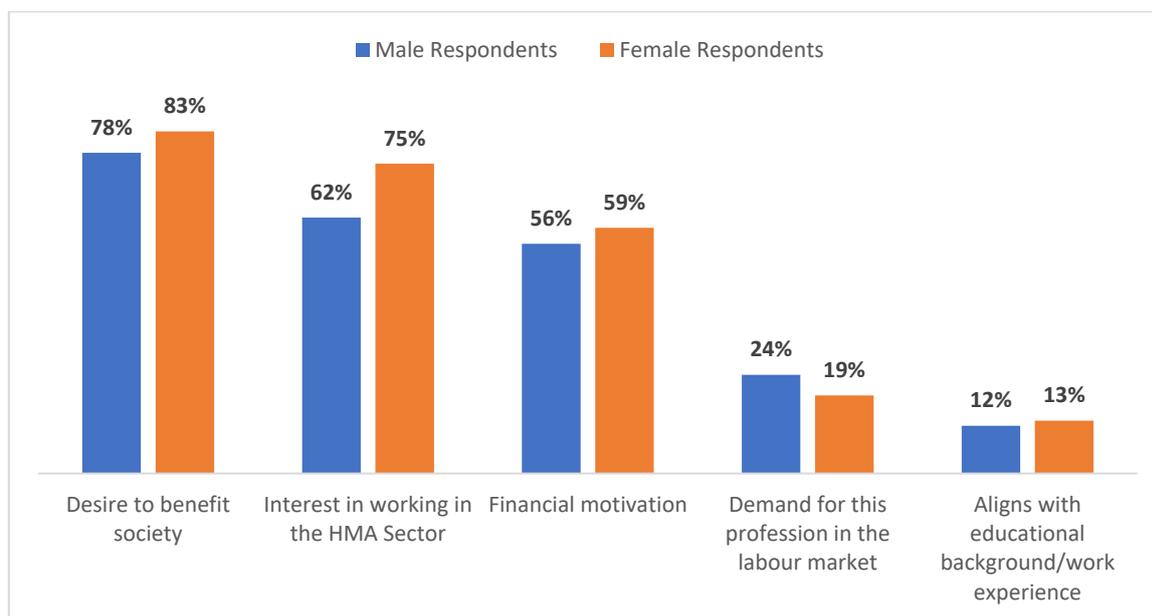
Both male and female respondents reported similar motivations for working in the HMA sector, including a desire to benefit society (80%), interest in the sector (67%), as well as financial considerations (57%). Moreover, the reported responses, both in terms of priority and percentage, show minimal deviance between responses of female and male respondents.

The desire to benefit society emerges as the primary motivation for both male and female respondents, with 78% of male respondents and 83% of female respondents highlighting this aspect. The second most reported incentive is the interest in working in the HMA sector, with 62% of men and 75% of women expressing this interest. Financial motivation ranks third, with 56% of men and 59% of women citing it as an incentive.

While financial considerations are important for women entering the HMA sector, they are not the primary motivation. Instead, women are more motivated by a genuine interest in the field and a desire to make a meaningful contribution to society through their work in the mine action sector.

Additionally, the assessment underscores that existing demands in the labour market (24% for male and 19% for female), as well as alignment with educational background or work experience (12% for male and 13% for female), are the least reported incentives for individuals entering the HMA sector.

Figure 5: Reported Incentives to join the HMA sector, disaggregated by Gender



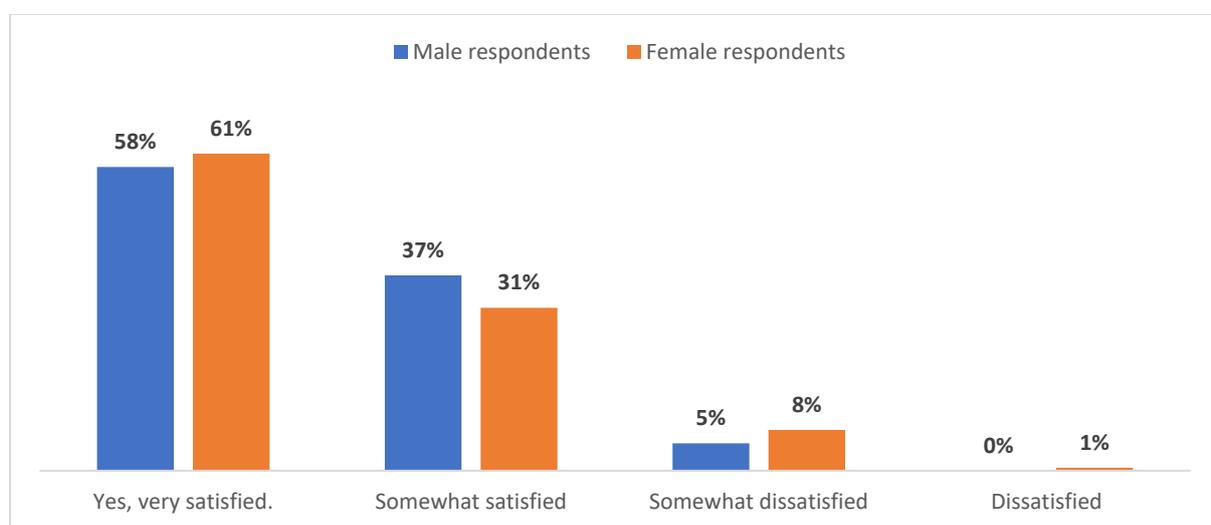
Despite minor variations in percentages, findings suggest a largely consistent pattern between the male and female respondents regarding motivations for employment. This alignment in motivational factors challenges stereotypes and underscores the shared commitment of male and female workers in the HMA sector. By highlighting and understanding these commonalities, the sector can focus on creating an inclusive environment that recognises and leverages shared motivations to build a diverse and effective workforce in the HMA sector.

Satisfaction

The satisfaction levels with employment conditions and work among respondents in the HMA sector appear generally high, with a majority of both male and female respondents expressing contentment. However, a small level of dissatisfaction with the current profession was present, particularly among female clearance workers.

The overall positive satisfaction level was above 90% (95% male to 92% female). Nevertheless, small level of dissatisfaction is presented in respondents' answers. Whilst one female respondent was 'dissatisfied', 8% of female respondents and 5% of male respondents were reportedly 'somewhat dissatisfied'. See the below Figure 6 for a detailed description.

Figure 6: Reported Level of Satisfaction, disaggregated by Gender



Analysing the respondents' level of dissatisfaction with their profession based on areas of discipline, the highest numbers are in the Clearance area, with 11 females and 13 males. This suggests that working conditions in this area could be reviewed to enhance employee satisfaction and therefore make it more suitable for expansion.

Table 1: Reported level of Dissatisfaction, disaggregated by Area of Discipline

Area of Discipline	Dissatisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Victim Assistance	1 (100%)	0	0	0
Clearance	0	0	11 (79%)	13 (93%)
EORE	0	0	2 (14%)	1 (7%)
Non-technical Survey	0	0	1 (7%)	0

Despite an overall positive satisfaction level, the presence of dissatisfaction, especially in the Clearance area, highlights potential areas for improvement in working conditions to enhance overall employee satisfaction. Dissatisfaction, particularly among female workers, sheds light on potential obstacles that may deter women from engaging or remaining in the sector sustainably. Addressing these concerns could contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in mine action, thus facilitating their meaningful participation and retention in the workforce.

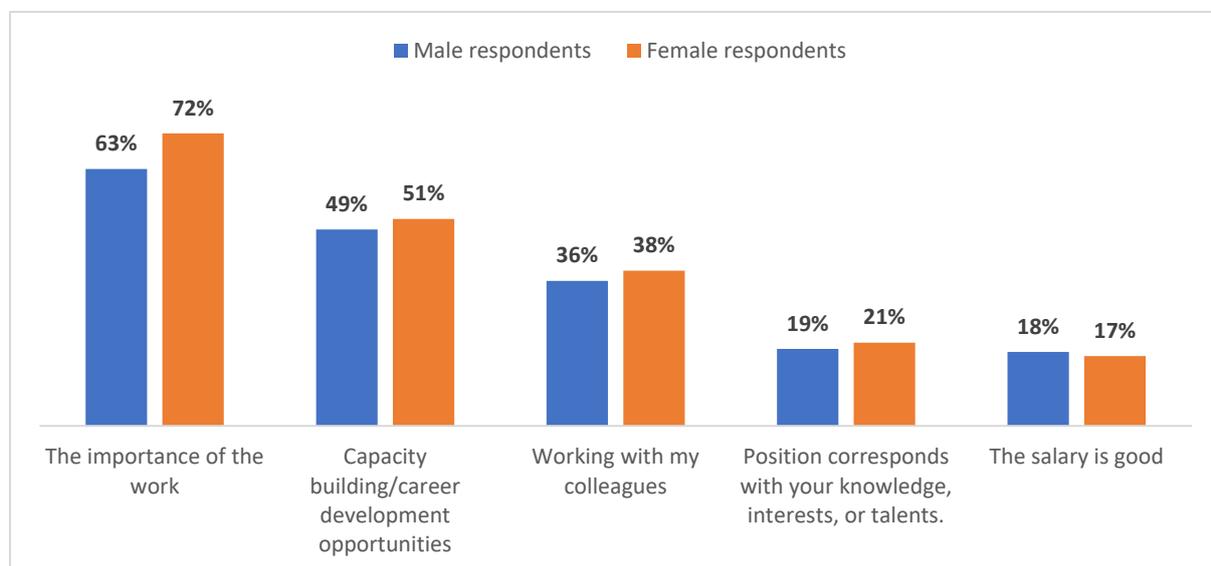
Least and Most Favourite Aspects of Working within the Sector

The findings suggest convergence and shared preference in the **favourite aspects** of working within the HMA sector for both female and male respondents, however there are some nuanced differences. Both male and female respondents expressed a strong sense of purpose and fulfilment in their roles, potentially reflecting the meaningful impact of their work in communities. Female respondents show a slightly higher inclination towards aspects associated with social responsibility, suggesting that both male and female respondents find fulfilment in their work, but female respondents may place a slightly greater emphasis on contributing to social responsibility aspects of their roles.

The most favourable aspect for both male and female respondents is the importance of the work, with 72% of female respondents and 63% of male respondents most commonly reporting this factor. This is further supported with the comments from respondents, highlighting factors such as clearing their native land of mines, helping their people, or feeling needed as distinctive reasons. Additionally, capacity building and career development opportunities within the HMA sector was the second most commonly reported factor, with almost half of both female (51%) and male (49%) respondents reporting this. Working with colleagues ranked as the third most favoured aspect for 38% of female respondents and 36% of male respondents.

Only one fifth of all respondents reported that the salary or the position aligning with their knowledge, interests, and talents were their most favourite aspects, indicating that neither the financial component nor the existing technical skill or interest is the primary consideration for individuals joining the HMA sector. This is in line with previous reporting.

Figure 7: Five Most Commonly Reported Favourite Aspects of Working in the HMA Sector, disaggregated by Gender



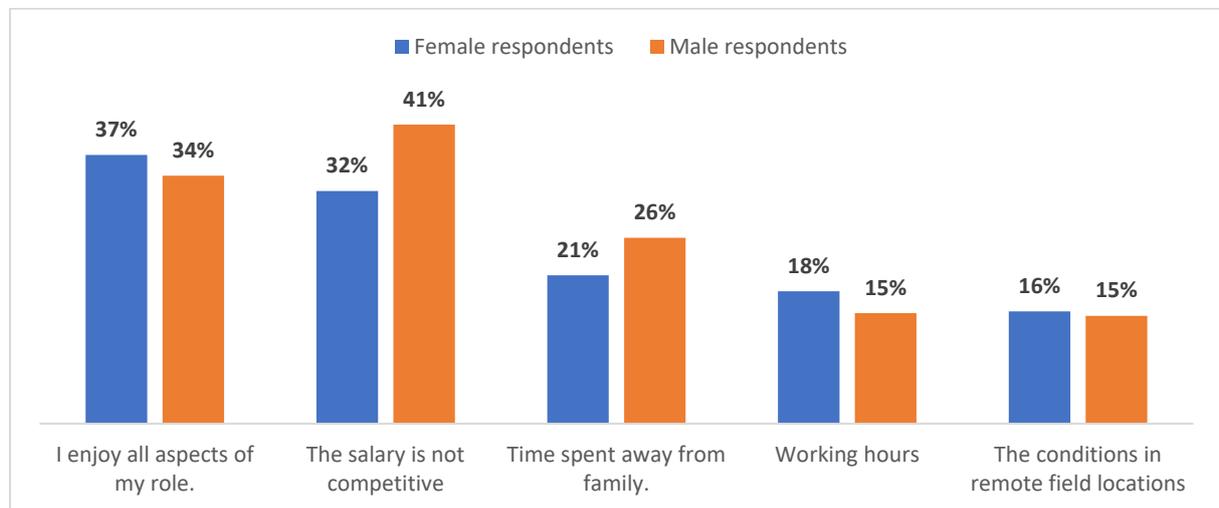
Distinct gendered perspectives emerge when considering **least favourite aspects** of working within the HMA sector. Female respondents tend to emphasise the positive aspects of their roles, whilst male respondents' express concerns about the competitiveness of their salaries (32%), indicating a potential gendered expectation tied to income and societal norms around the role of men in providing for their families. Furthermore, for both male and female respondents, the working cycle

and working conditions, mainly reported by respondents working in clearance, show some areas of concern for future employment and retention of staff.

Thirty-seven percent of female respondents that there was no aspect that they would deem as least favorite; they reportedly enjoyed all aspects of their roles. In contrast, male respondents most commonly cited the salary as their least favorite aspect, indicating a gendered expectation of higher earning potential, particularly in households where there are social pressures on men to be the primary providers for their families.

Respondents also flagged issues with being away from family; for both male and female this was the third most commonly reported least favourite aspect of their role. Every fifth female respondent (21%) and every fourth male respondent (26%) reported this. Furthermore, both working hours and the conditions in remote field locations were the fourth and fifth most commonly reported factors for both genders.

Figure 8: Five Most Commonly Reported Favourite Aspects of Working in the HMA Sector, disaggregated by Gender



In order to support a detailed analysis of dissatisfaction with the role, disaggregation by area of discipline is provided. Dissatisfaction is most commonly reported by male and female respondents working in Clearance. More details on the disaggregation are presented in the below table. Whilst working hours were the highest reported across both genders working in clearance, findings below suggest that time away from family is a much larger issue for men than for women, with 75% and 43% reporting respectively.

Table 2: Least Favourite Aspects of Working, disaggregated by Area of Discipline

	Clearance	EORE	NTS	Other	Support Services	Transportation	Victim Assistance
Female							
<i>Time spent away from family</i>	43%	24%	27%	3%	3%	N/A	0%
<i>Working hours</i>	64%	15%	9%	3%	6%	N/A	3%
<i>The conditions in remote field locations</i>	61%	18%	11%	4%	7%	N/A	0%
Male							
<i>Time spent away from family</i>	75%	4%	10%	1%	1%	4%	3%
<i>Working hours</i>	88%	5%	2%	0%	5%	0%	0%
<i>The conditions in remote field locations</i>	73%	8%	8%	0%	0%	8%	5%

While both male and female respondents share a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their roles, the emphasis on social responsibility among female respondents suggests the need to create avenues for women to engage meaningfully in community-focused initiatives within the sector. Additionally, the disparity in perspectives regarding salary competitiveness underscores the importance of addressing gendered expectations and norms surrounding income. Strategies aimed at promoting salary equity and transparency could help alleviate concerns and attract and retain more female talent in the sector.

Working Cycle

In examining the compensation work cycle within the HMA sector, respondents specialising in Clearance and Non-Technical Survey (NTS) areas provided insights into their current working schedules. Prior to the survey creation, it was expected that this cycle would raise vital points about working practices and requirements for change.

Clearance and NTS requires teams to work on cycles to maximise safety and effectiveness of mine action and in particular of clearance operations in more remote areas. This is a deviation from a standard working schedule. For the two largest mine action partners in Ukraine, this is most commonly 10 days on, with 4 days off (for Halo Trust), or 6 days on for 4 weeks, with a full week off in the last week (for DRC). Other operators are using (or have recently switched to) a .

As part of the survey, it was asked whether there was a preference for the working cycle. The most popular option for both male and female respondents was a 10 working-day with 4 days off; followed by 6 working days for 4-5 weeks, with one week off; and the third most prevalent option being the standard work cycle with 5 working days and 2 days off.⁴

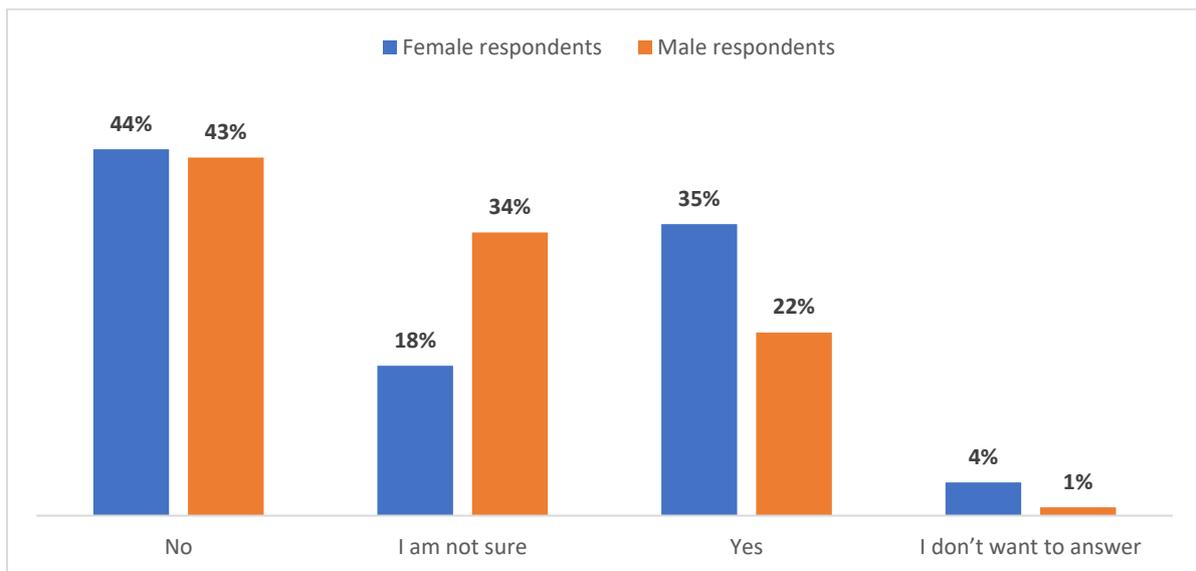
⁴ It is worth noting that the selection of this choice could be skewed by a preference for the status quo from the respondents and the results could be influenced by a larger number of respondents from Halo Trust, who have the largest workforce among NGOs in Ukraine.

Table 3: Current Compensation Work Cycle, disaggregated by Gender

Work Cycle Options	Female Respondents	Male Respondents
10 working days/2-5 days off	73%	70%
6 days a week for 4-5 weeks + one week off	20%	22%
Standard working week (5/2)	8%	8%
Grand Total	100%	100%

Respondents from these areas were also queried about the convenience of the compensation work cycle involving 6 days a week for 4-5 weeks, plus one week off. The majority, comprising 43% of female respondents and 44% of male respondents, indicated that this cycle was not convenient, with no significant gender-based difference. However, the 'I am not sure' option received more female responses (34%) compared to male responses (18%), suggesting that the working schedule may be even more inconvenient for female respondents. This data highlights challenges in the working cycle for employees in Clearance and NTS areas, influenced by the specific nature of their work, potentially impacting individuals' choices regarding employment in these areas.

Figure 9: Convenience of Work Schedule [Six Day Working Week for Four to-Five Weeks plus One Week off Work Cycle], disaggregated by Gender



Data indicates that the majority of respondents find certain compensation work cycles, such as working 6 days a week for 4-5 weeks with one week off, inconvenient. This sentiment is particularly notable among female respondents, suggesting potential challenges in balancing work-life demands. These findings align with concerns expressed by respondents regarding working conditions and the working cycle, emphasising the need for targeted interventions to address these issues and improve the overall work environment in Clearance and NTS areas. The deviation from a standard working schedule in these specialised areas underscores the need to assess working practices and consider potential adjustments.

Opportunities for Career Development

Both female and male respondents reported that career development opportunities exist in the HMA sector. However, for those perceiving a lack of opportunities (3%), the reasons diverged

between genders, emphasising gender stereotypes for female employment and broader challenges related to limited professional growth within organisations.

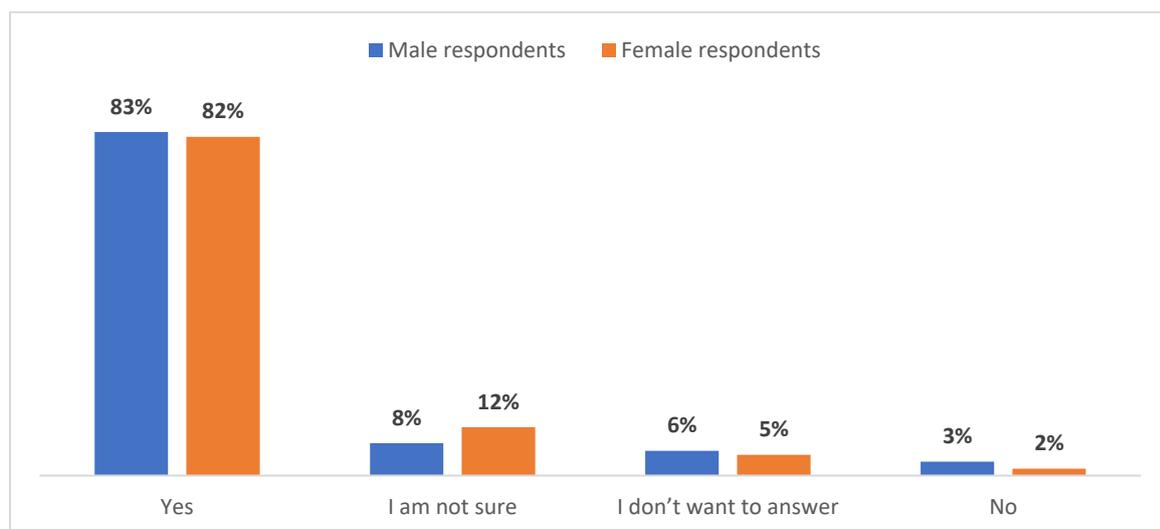
The survey queried respondents about career development opportunities within HMA, revealing a consensus among both female and male participants. The majority of respondents, with a slightly higher reporting amongst males (83%) than females (82%), affirmed the availability of career growth opportunities. This aligns with the findings related to the most favourable aspects of working, where 'capacity building/career development opportunities' ranked second for nearly half of the respondents from both male and female respondents.

However, a significant portion of respondents expressed uncertainty about career development opportunities, with a small difference between men (8%) and women (12%) reporting "I am not sure." Similarly, a minority of both genders (5% of females and 6% of males) chose not to answer, while a small percentage (2% of females and 3% of males) expressed scepticism, choosing "No."

Further exploration into the reasons behind the uncertainty revealed that 50% of both female and male participants cited limited opportunities for professional development and career growth within their organisations. Some respondents, particularly females, also highlighted traditional gender stereotypes, such as the perception that demining is male-dominated, as a concern that can limit women's progression in the HMA sector.

This underscores the importance of supporting women's participation in career development opportunities, including leadership positions, to actively challenge such stereotypes. Additionally, male respondents mentioned family commitments or caring responsibilities as factors limiting their career progression, which aligns with the proportion of respondents citing "time spent away from family" (15%) as one of the least favourable aspects of working in the sector. This emphasises the need to provide both male and female staff members with opportunities to achieve a more supportive work-life balance.

Figure 9: Reported Responses to Opportunities for Career Development/Growth, disaggregated by Gender



It is also worth acknowledging that 62% of women and 60% of men surveyed had only been working in the mine action sector for one year (see demographics section) with no extensive exposure to the career progression available in the sector. Although, both female and male respondents

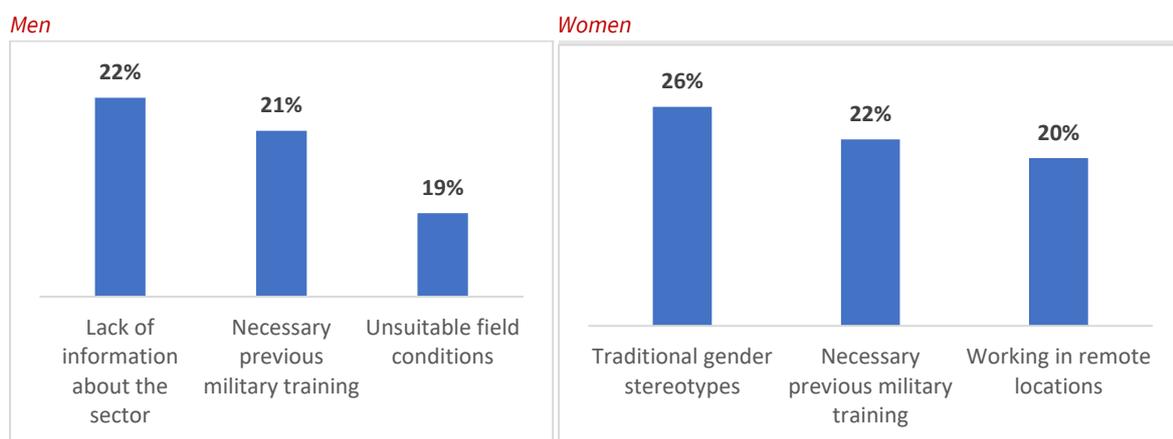
acknowledge the existence of career development opportunities in the HMA sector, the data underscores the need for initiatives to promote gender inclusivity and provide clearer pathways for career advancement within the HMA sector, particularly for female staff. Moreover, the substantial proportion of respondents with limited tenure in the sector suggests a need for enhanced exposure to career progression opportunities to facilitate informed decision-making and foster long-term engagement.

Barriers to accessing the sector

Survey participants were asked to identify the main barriers they faced when attempting to access the HMA sector. The results indicate that both women and men share the assumption that previous military training or experience is necessary for a humanitarian mine action career (22%). However, women expressed a stronger concern about traditional stereotypes (26%), while men highlight a lack of sufficient information about the sector (22%).

The three the most commonly reported barriers, disaggregated by gender, can be found in the table below:

Table 4: The Most Commonly Reported Barriers to Accessing the HMA sector, disaggregated by Gender



Barriers related to family life and stereotypical roles were less commonly reported but still aligned to expected gender norms. For instance, women in Ukraine tend to spend more time on unpaid responsibilities, including childcare. This assessment noted that women (16%) reported limited or a lack of childcare as more challenging when compared to men (11%). It is possible that the limited or lack of childcare could relate to the lack of available childcare services, particularly in rural and frontline areas, as well as childcare not being accessible due to the cost. On the other hand, limited support from family/friends is more commonly perceived as a barrier for men (11%) than women (7%). This could be attributed to increased insecurity and reduced support for male employment due to the perceived exposed risks to conscription. Some men provided this justification outside of the barriers option choices (by selecting other) and flagging the need to visit conscription committees as a barrier. DRCs protection monitoring activities have noted that some men of conscription age are curtailing their movements as a coping mechanism to reduce the risk of

military conscription.⁵ The limitations on movements among adult men was identified as a factor that impacts their access to the labour market.

Female participants also emphasise the physical demands of the work (15%) more than their male counterparts (10%). Furthermore, 6% of women reported challenges working in a male-dominated sector, and 5% noted the gender composition of the team (mostly male) as a barrier. It is worth noting that male respondents did not indicate these concerns in the survey. Upon analysing this per sector of discipline, clearance staff (24%) highlighted the physical demands of the work, with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) weighing approximately 5 kg, making it challenging for some women. It should be noted that there is a scarcity of PPE specifically designed for female workers and the 'uni-sex' PPE does not suit women's needs. Women working in EORE and NTS (30% and 38%, respectively) identified traditional gender stereotypes, perceiving demining as a male-dominated sector, as the most common barrier. Female support services staff (32%) expressed concerns about the assumption that previous military training/experience is necessary.

The survey findings reveal a range of barriers that impede individuals from accessing the HMA sector, with noticeable gender disparities in their perception and impact. These gender-specific barriers emphasise the need for targeted interventions to address stereotypes, improve access to training and employment prospects, fostering supportive environments conducive to female participation in the HMA sector.

Gender Stereotypes and Roles

Surveyed participants were asked to share their perspectives on whether there are some professions that are not suitable for men and for women, revealing a nuanced view on gender stereotypes and roles within the surveyed population. While the majority of both male and female respondents noted that men and women can perform their professional duties equally, the survey revealed that male respondents hold more stereotypes about professions suitable for a particular sex.

Despite aforementioned gendered lens to findings regarding barriers to employment, the majority (56%) of respondents agreed that men and women can perform their professional duties equally, with women (71%) more strongly supporting this notion compared to men (48%). This could be due to the nature of the question related to barriers being more targeted to personal experience, with the latter question being more oriented around general views on the role of men and women in the workplace. Whilst a proportion of respondents (9%) found it challenging to provide an answer, 1% selected 'other,' expressing difficulty in imagining women in roles traditionally associated with men, such as mining or woodcutting. This does create a more challenging environment when trying to ensure that workplace culture and policies are conducive for women to participate in roles that are traditionally associated with male staff, especially with regards to clearance and NTS.

Twenty-three percent (23%) of respondents agreed with the statement that some professions are better suited to men due to physical or personality traits; this was 29% of all male participants in comparison to 14% of female participants. These findings suggest that there is a need to challenge perceptions regarding gender stereotypes among HMA team members. More detailed information

⁵ Conscription officers are reportedly present in different spaces, including public spaces, but can also organize visits in buildings such as collective centres and distribution sites. In addition, men of conscription age must present military certificates when applying for jobs and when registering with employment centres.

on professions that are not suitable for women from male and female point of view is provided in graph below.

Regarding perceptions of professions less suitable for men, 63% of all respondents believed that men and women can equally perform their professional duties, with women (73%) being more likely to support this view compared to men (58%). However, 21% of surveyed men expressed the belief that some professions are better suited to women, with 8% adding that men must work in high-paying jobs to support their families.

Figure 11: Professions in the HMA sector that are Less Suitable for Women, disaggregated by Gender

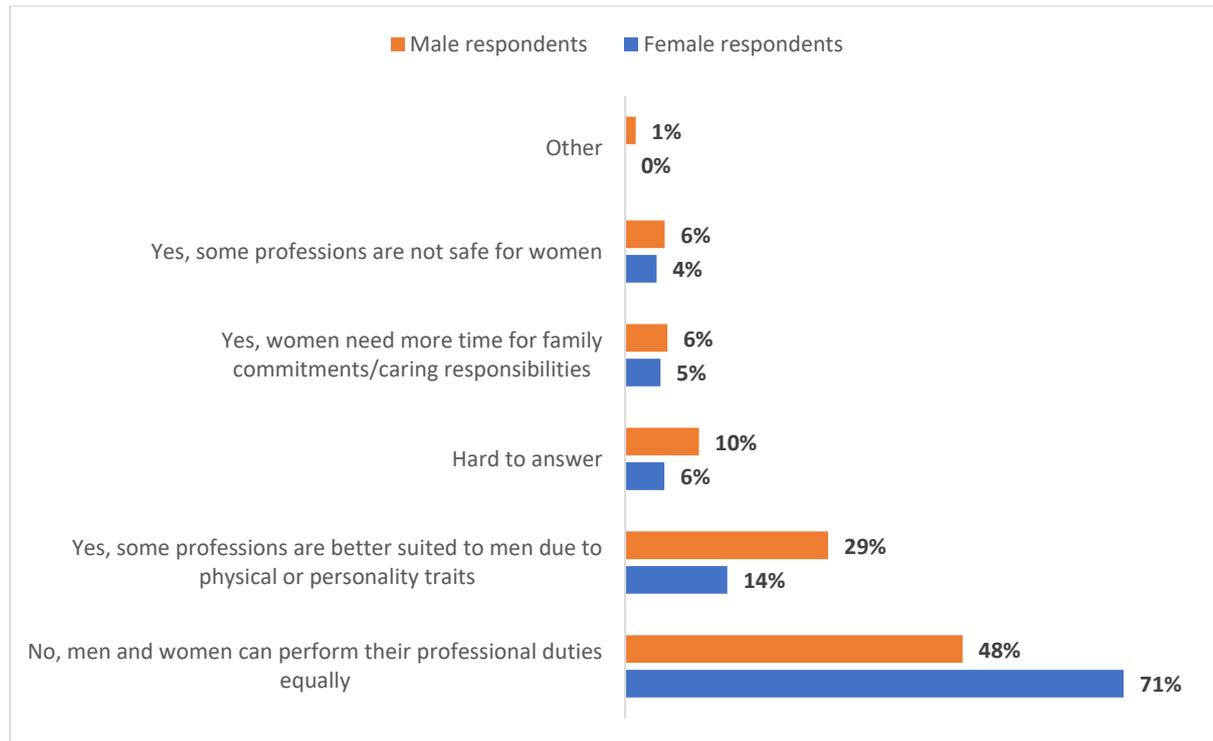
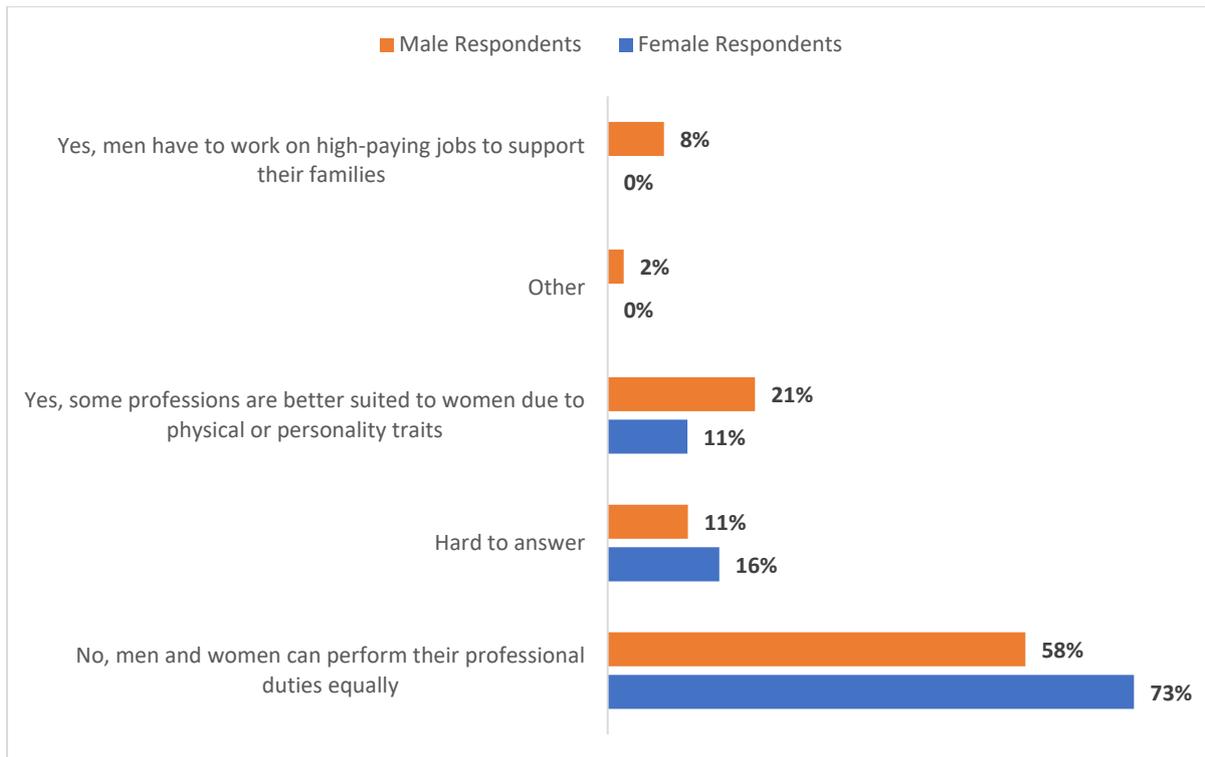


Figure 12: Professional Suitability in the HMA Sector for Men and Women, Disaggregated by Gender



'Other' responses highlighted diverse perspectives, including the acknowledgment of traditional gender dominance in certain disciplines, the importance of individual choice in professions, the role of technology in certain jobs, and the personal responsibility of individuals, regardless of sex.

The data also explored perceptions of gender roles, with 41% of respondents asserting that there are no roles better suited to male or female staff. Notably, women were more likely to support this statement compared to men. However, 41% of men and 44% of women expressed the assumption that certain gender expectations or roles could be fulfilled exclusively by either female or male staff. This demonstrates embedded perceptions on gendered roles for men and women within individuals who work in the HMA sector, highlighting the need to challenge perceptions regarding gender roles among HMA to ensure the working environment is conducive for female staff who are employed in traditionally male-dominated roles.

Figure 13: Perception that the HMA Profession is Better Suited for Women, Disaggregated by Gender

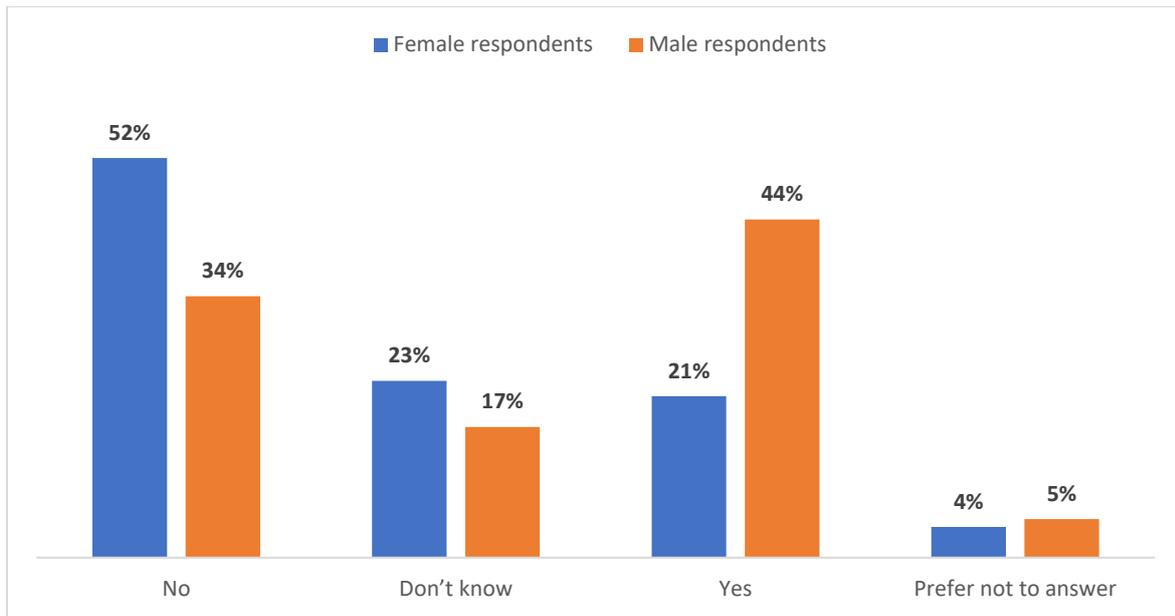
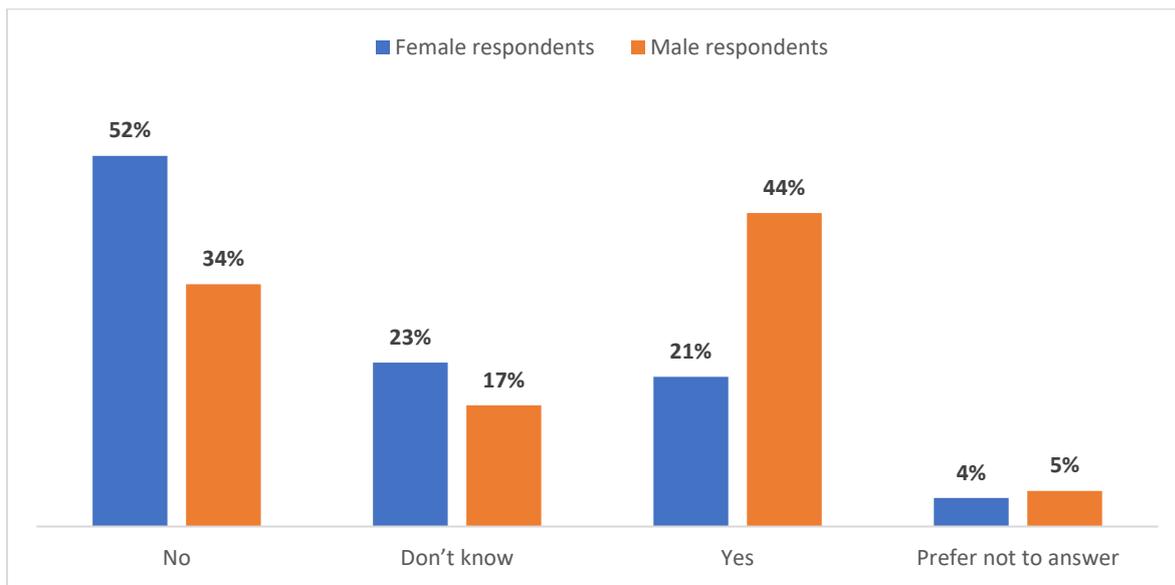


Figure 14: Perception that the HMA Profession is Better Suited for Men, Disaggregated by Gender



Being mindful of gender roles, participants were asked to indicate which professions are more suitable for male and female roles. The results demonstrated a shared composition of preferences for areas of work, with roles requiring more personal (mental) involvement deemed more suitable for women, while roles involving more physical demands were perceived as more suitable for men. This multifaceted data underscores the complexity of gender perceptions in the surveyed population and highlights the need for ongoing efforts to challenge stereotypes and promote gender inclusivity across various professions.

Table 4: Reported Professions better suited for Female and Male HMA Staff

Professions better suited for female HMA staff	Professions better suited for male HMA staff
Support services including administration, human resources, and finance (27%)	Clearance (32%)
Victim Assistance (21%)	Transportation – Drivers (24%)
EORE (19%)	NTS (15%)
NTS (13%)	Victim Assistance (6%)
Transportation – Drivers (4%)	EORE (5%)
Clearance (2%)	Support services including administration, human resources, and finance (3%)

The survey revealed how perceptions regarding traditional gender norms in Ukraine impact perspectives on gender stereotypes and roles within the HMA sector, with men holding more stereotypes about professions suitable for a particular sex than women. While a majority agree on gender equality in professional duties, women tend to support this notion more strongly than men, potentially influenced by personal experiences and workplace attitudes. Challenges arise in setting inclusive organisational policies, especially concerning traditionally male-dominated roles like Clearance and NTS.

Some respondent’s expressed difficulty imagining women in such roles, highlighting a need for cultural shifts. Despite acknowledging gender equality in professional duties, a notable proportion of respondents still believe certain professions are better suited to men due to physical or personality traits. This perception, coupled with the assumption of gender-specific roles, underscores the importance of addressing embedded gender stereotypes to facilitate sector-wide recruitment expansion. The findings also reflect shared preferences for roles, with mental involvement tasks considered more suitable for women and physically demanding roles for men, emphasising the need for ongoing efforts to challenge stereotypes and promote gender inclusivity across various professions within the sector.

Recommendations

- 1. Addressing barriers to recruitment:** To overcome stereotypes about the HMA sector, particularly that military experience is required in order to qualify for a job, HMA NGOs should consider strengthening their recruitment processes, including highlighting that full training is provided for entry-level roles, so anyone can apply, regardless of gender. One option could be to produce short videos for advertising roles in the HMA sector, showcasing both women and men of different ages and abilities, talking about their daily work, with a focus on the job satisfaction elements, which came out as the primary motivation in the survey.
- 2. Challenging gender stereotypes:** Challenging the impact of traditional gender norms on perceptions of male and female staff in the HMA sector requires a multi-faceted response. Direct engagement with male and female staff in the HMA sector is needed, including training and mentoring on concepts related to gender and gender roles/stereotypes. Gender awareness training for all staff should be provided to raise awareness about gender equality issues, unconscious bias, and the importance of creating an inclusive workplace for all employees. The actions should be accompanied by ongoing support to increase the participation of female staff in traditionally male-dominated roles within the HMA sectors, such as Clearance and NTS. A gender lens should be applied to recruitment processes both to attract more female candidates (e.g. women in community facing teams can also talk to women in the communities and encourage them to apply to roles in HMA) as well as equal access to career development and capacity building for both female and male staff members.
- 3. Working conditions:** Working conditions should also be considered – providing a safe work environment through a strict implementation of code of conduct regulations (and conversely acting against code of conduct violations), considering adjustments to working schedule to accommodate for factors that are more likely to impact women, reviewing benefits and pay packages considering factors that may restrict women’s participation. This may vary from one organisation to another, so NGOs may consider further internal surveys or focus group discussions with their staff to identify how to address gender stereotypes in their organisations.
- 4. Review compensation cycles:** DRC implemented a relatively long compensation cycle (six days a week for four-five weeks followed by a week off) a few years ago to account for the fact that the organisation can be tasked on sites in remote locations and teams need to retain flexibility to change operational areas. At the time, the long compensation cycle was preferred as it reduced frequent travel and gave staff the option to spend a more substantial period of time with their families. However, one of the key concerns raised in the survey was about the time spent away from family, which was surprisingly higher for men. As DRC has the longest compensation cycle, it should consider revising this down, which would bring it closer to the model that other HMA NGOs already implement.
- 5. Introduce shared parental/caretaker leave for both women and men:** While care-taking responsibilities can be a barrier for women accessing the HMA sector, working in remote locations and spending time away from family also came across as a key concern for the men taking part in the survey. As in many Western countries, NGOs should consider offering benefits that are beyond the minimum legislative requirements for parental leave and offer the option for equal benefits for women and men.

6. **Implement capacity development plans:** NGOs should ensure staff understand career progression paths and provide regular training and development opportunities for both female and male staff. NGOs should identify international roles that can be nationalised in a reasonable timeframe and develop capacity development plans for individual staff to help them get to a level of expertise where they can take over these international roles. Establish support networks or groups for women within organisations to create a sense of community, provide mentorship opportunities, and promote networking and professional development such as capacity building opportunities, skills training, leadership development, and technical support. Encourage gender diversity in leadership positions within NGOs. Create pathways for women to take on leadership roles and ensure their voices are represented in decision-making processes.

7. **Collect and maintain good data for informed decision-making:** NGOs should maintain gender and disability disaggregated data for managerial and non-managerial staff and review trends, conduct staff satisfaction surveys and assess results considering gender, age, disability disaggregation to evaluate the organisations' progress in promoting gender equality and diversity. Use these assessments to identify areas for improvement and implement targeted interventions. While staff numbers are important, it is essential to understand which policies produce better results in terms of equality and access, and ensure these decisions are being informed by data, such as additional research and feedback surveys from employees.