



2026 Women in Ukraine's Reconstruction:
Diversity, Inclusion, and Beyond
in Supervisory Boards

March 2026

About the research

Context of the research

The second edition of this research comes at a time of heightened global uncertainty, as Ukraine continues to navigate its path toward economic recovery amid the ongoing war and broader geopolitical challenges. The report underscores female leadership as a vital driver of the country's **long-term resilience and reconstruction**, and as an important foundation for **sustainable economic growth** in these demanding circumstances.

Women's leadership continues to face a range of persistent challenges. **Long-standing structural and cultural barriers** are now compounded by emerging pressures, such as the **unequal access associated with advanced digital and AI tools**, as well as the continued impact of the war on the labour market, business continuity, and care responsibilities.

Through this work, we seek to equip the business community and policymakers with actionable insights to help **unlock the potential of female leadership**, advance gender-inclusive governance, and contribute to building a strong and prosperous future for Ukraine.

Data collection methods



We used both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods:

- ✓ Digital survey of 53 respondents
- ✓ 9 interviews with SB members, IFI representatives and regulators
- ✓ Desk-research

Research timeframe



December 2025 – March 2026

Target audience



Members of supervisory boards, representing Ukrainian private and public companies, as well as large international companies operating in Ukraine

Objectives of the research

01

Assess women's representation and influence in supervisory boards, examine stereotypes and biases that hinder women's leadership, and track progress on these issues compared with the previous edition of the research

02

Evaluate the potential for more impactful women engagement within the context of Ukraine's wartime recovery and reconstruction

03

Identify structural, cultural, and emerging barriers, including labour-market disruptions and unequal access to opportunities arising from the rapid expansion of digital and AI solutions

04

Draw lessons from historical post-conflict experiences (World War II and the Balkan wars) to inform Ukraine's future trajectory

05

Provide actionable insights for businesses and policymakers to strengthen gender-inclusive governance and support long-term resilience and sustainable growth

Contents

01 Women empowerment in the workplace

03 Women in the boardroom

-----> Perception of female leaders

-----> Workplace discrimination

-----> Career path

04 Turning insight into action: from engagement to impact

Executive summary (1/2)

- Ukraine's labor and leadership landscape continues to face deep structural imbalances, with **women remaining a significant yet insufficiently engaged part** of the country's workforce and decision-making systems
- Women's leadership faces **persistent structural and cultural barriers, amplified** by emerging digital pressures, the ongoing impact of the war and a broader geopolitical context of growing uncertainty
- While leadership effectiveness is not in question – **100%** of respondents agree that women can be equally effective leaders as men – deeply entrenched gender stereotypes and discrimination continue to constrain women's advancement:
 - 42%** women and **22%** men believe the role of supervisory boards' members is perceived by society as traditionally male
 - 68%** women and **22%** men believe women must prove their competence more often and to a greater extent than men
 - 90%** of female respondents report having at least occasionally experienced or witnessed one or more forms of discrimination
 - 45%** women and **4%** men are convinced that mistakes made by women in leadership roles are judged more harshly than those made by men

Executive summary (2/2)

- ➔ **The barriers to women's corporate leadership**, as identified by respondents, **span individual, organizational, and societal levels** from women's own skepticism about their prospects for senior appointment (46%), to insufficiently flexible working conditions (26%), the pervasive gender bias and persistent "glass ceiling" effect (31%).
- ➔ At the organizational level, **systemic gaps remain significant**. Nearly 7 in 10 companies do not yet have a formal Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) policy in place, and 72% have not assigned specific responsible person for DEI management. In addition, most organizations have not established regular processes for monitoring progress in gender equality (93%).
- ➔ To meaningfully advance women's leadership, **organizations must pursue a dual agenda**: fostering genuinely inclusive corporate cultures while simultaneously providing women with concrete opportunities, resources, and enabling conditions to reach their full leadership potential.

01

02

03

04

Women empowerment in the workplace



A more complex geopolitical landscape is heightening concerns, particularly as the share of women in leadership continues to decline

➔ Recent trends show a decline in leadership gender parity

Global share of women among new hires to leadership roles¹:



1 in 6

companies in the US scaled back or discontinued DEI programs that promoted gender equality²

Roughly one-fifth of Deloitte Global C-Suite Sustainability survey **respondents report** that governments, investors, customers, civil society, boards, and competitors are **pushing them** to somewhat or significantly **pull back from sustainability initiatives**. Yet sustainability remains one of the Top-3 priorities for business leaders, which is reflected in **increased sustainability investments** in the last year³

Sources: 1 – World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report, 2025; 2 – McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace, 2025; 3 – Deloitte, C-Suite Sustainability Report, 2025

Ukraine's labor market is undergoing profound structural challenges that hinder the country's reconstruction potential

Ukraine is showing signs of structural unemployment caused by regional imbalances, a mismatch between skills and labor market needs, outdated labor legislation, **and a low level of population participation in the labor market**

Ukrainian labor market experiences serious pressures:

15%

unemployment level
in Ukraine¹

74%

of enterprises
report labor shortage²

100,000

of open vacancies
are available on the
labor market³

Human capital availability is a critical prerequisite for economic recovery:

8.7 mln

of additional workforce Ukraine will need to attract to
achieve economic recovery⁴

Sources: 1 – CES, Ukraine Economy Tracker During the War, 2026; 2 – EBA, Study of the Ukrainian labor market, 2025; 3 – Work.ua, Vacancy and Resume Statistics, 2026; 4 – ILO, Prospects for Achieving Ukraine's 2032 GDP Target: A Labour Market Perspective, 2023.

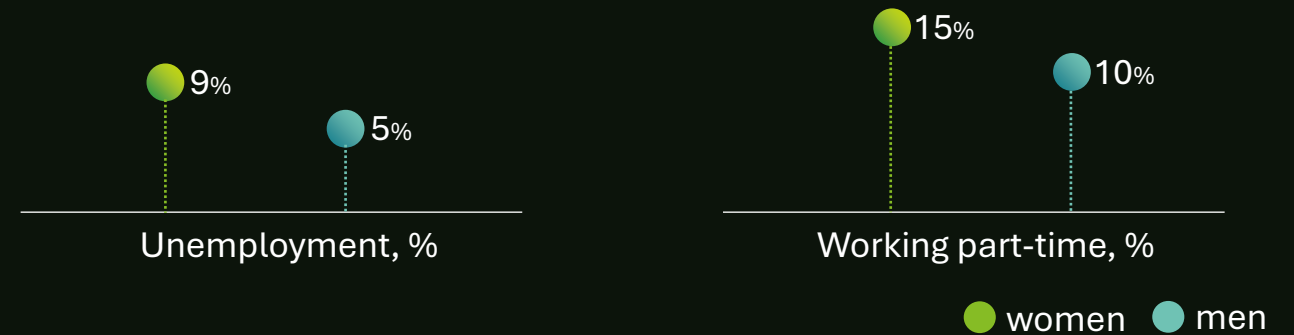
Women's engagement in Ukraine holds significant untapped potential – a critical asset for the country's reconstruction

Today, women make up an estimated **51% of working age population in Ukraine**¹, however they continue to experience worse labor market outcomes than men

Women have significantly lower level of workforce participation²:



Unemployment rate and share of part-time jobs are higher among female population³:



About **ONE-THIRD OF ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE WOMEN CAN POTENTIALLY BE ENGAGED IN THE LABOR MARKET**, but have given up job search or are unaware of existing employment opportunities²

Sources: 1 – UN World Population Prospects 2024; 2 – Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Transformation of the Ukrainian Labour Market: The Economic Empowerment of Women During the War and Post-War Recovery, 2025; 3 – The World Bank, Female Employment in Ukraine, 2025.

Female labor market participation is hindered by entrenched stereotypes, unequal distribution of care responsibilities, and horizontal segregation

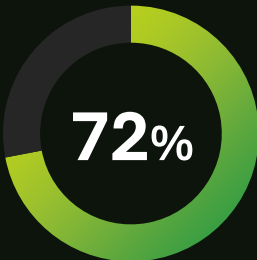
Harmful gender norms are still prevalent in Ukrainian society:

29% of Ukrainians think that men should have **more right to a job** than women when jobs are scarce¹

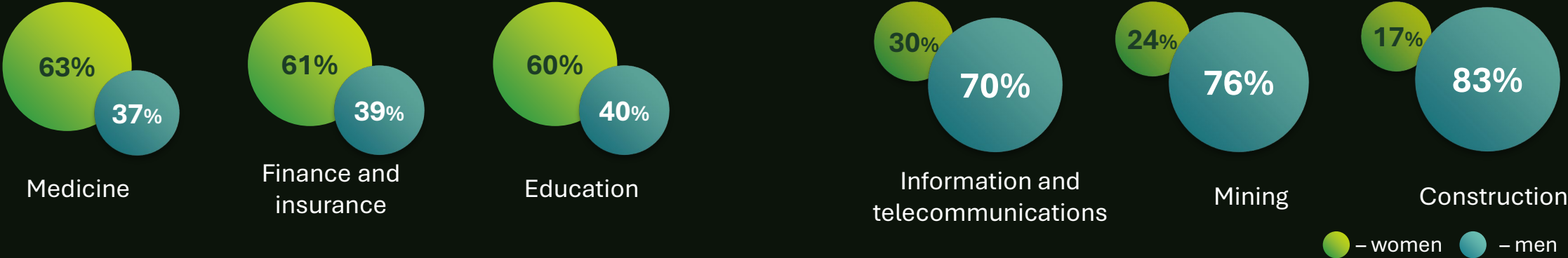
40% agree that men make **better executives** than women do¹

Women continue to shoulder more responsibilities at home:

72% of employed women in Ukraine spend **more than five hours a day** for the housekeeping and carework²



Longstanding patterns continue to persist with men and women remaining concentrated in different economic sectors³:



Sources: 1 – World Values Survey, 2020; 2 – Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Transformation of the Ukrainian Labour Market: The Economic Empowerment of Women During the War and Post-War Recovery, 2025; 3 – State Employment Service of Ukraine, 2025.

The journey toward gender equality in the workplace, beyond longstanding barriers, now faces growing pressure from AI advancements

WOMEN ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN OCCUPATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE AUTOMATED

1/4 OF JOBS WORLDWIDE

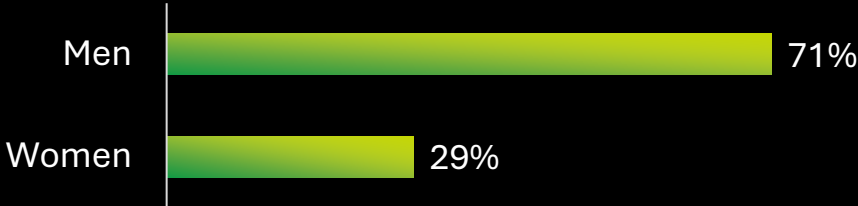
could be exposed to generative artificial intelligence (AI) impact¹

In high-income countries this exposure includes¹:



WOMEN ARE SIGNIFICANTLY OVERLOOKED IN AI UPSKILLING

The vast majority of workers who say they are skilled in AI are men²:



Women are **less represented** among science, technology, engineering and mathematics (**STEM**) fields graduates



33% of women **offered AI skilling opportunities** by their employer compared with **38%** for men²

Sources: 1 – ILO, *Generative AI and Jobs, 2025*; 2 – Randstad, *Understanding talent scarcity: AI & Equity, 2024*.

As history shows, while wartime may be a short-term catalyst of women's engagement, sustaining these gains requires leadership action

54%

of respondents see the war as a catalyst for rethinking women's roles at work, with the potential to expand women's participation in corporate leadership in Ukraine

Female labor force participation often rises during wartime..

6.7 mln women entered the US workforce during World War II¹



However, these gains are frequently followed by post-conflict backlash and reversals

Female employment declined precipitously in the fall of 1945 and spring of 1946, **returning aggregate female labor force participation almost to pre-war levels¹**

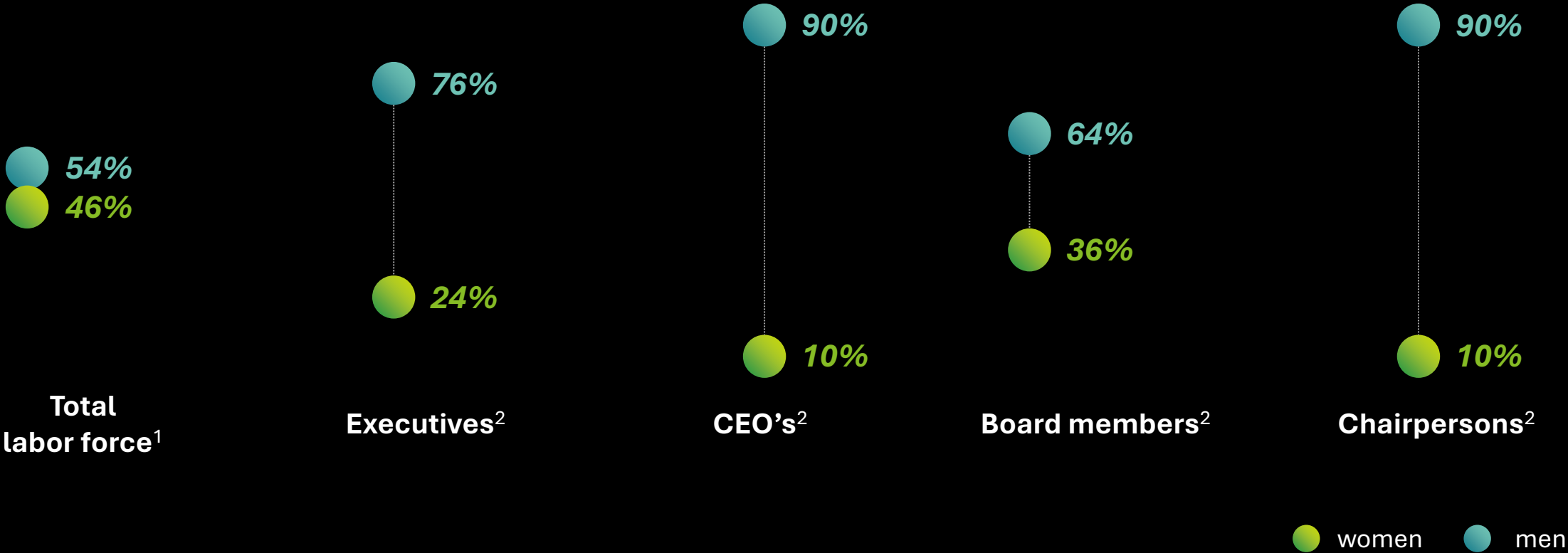
“ *During the war, opportunities are growing, but once it ends, they will decline because most of the country's management and leadership will consist of former officers who commanded military units*

Male member, telecommunications

Sources: 1 – Evan K. Rose, *The Rise and Fall of Female Labor Force Participation During World War II in the United States*

Despite remarkable gains in female labor participation, women remain underrepresented among top leadership positions in the EU

SHARE OF WOMEN AND MEN BY THEIR CORPORATE POSITION



Sources: 1 – World Bank Group, 2024; 2 – European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender Statistics Database, 2025.

EU maintains historic progress in advancing gender equality with a series of impactful legislation, but Ukraine still lags behind



EU REGULATIONS

Directive on Gender Balance in Corporate Boards sets targets for increasing the number of women on corporate boards

Pay Transparency Directive addresses the gender pay gap by requiring more transparency about pay structures

Directive on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence sets frameworks to prevent violence and support victims

Work-Life Balance Directive guarantees provisions like paid parental leave, flexible working arrangements and schedules



UKRAINIAN POLICY

Ukraine **does not have dedicated regulatory tools** such as mandatory gender pay-gap reporting requirements or legally binding gender quotas

Ukraine's comprehensive legal framework on gender equality is grounded in constitutional guarantees and supporting legislation. Ukraine has adopted the **State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men for the period up to 2030**, which outlines key policy priorities and institutional mechanisms for advancing gender equality.

However, the existing approach largely relies on policy measures and institutional practices rather than binding economic instruments

In 2025, Ukraine introduced its own Gender Equality Index (GEI), based on the European Institute for Gender Equality methodology. The country scored 61.4 out of 100, which is 9.6 points below the average EU GEI score for 2024¹

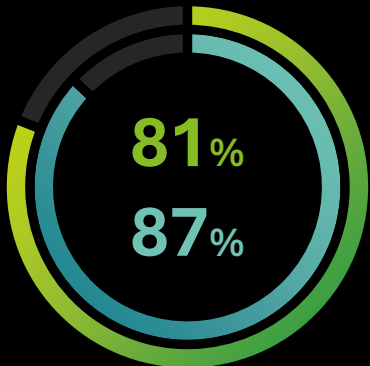
Sources: 1 – Gender Equality Index in Ukraine, 2025

A group of five women are laughing together in a stone-walled setting. One woman on the right is wearing a bright green jacket. The background features a large circular window and some foliage on the left. The text is overlaid on the image in white and green colors.

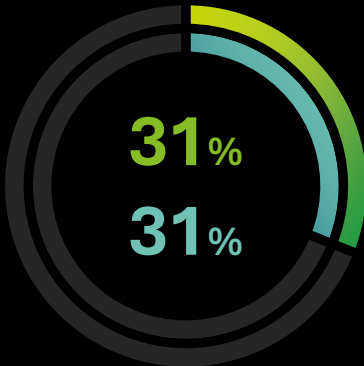
Ukraine must accelerate its efforts to advance gender equality, considering both EU integration prospects and the need to mobilize the workforce for reconstruction

Ukrainian companies moved closer to achieving gender parity in supervisory boards, but there is still room for improvement

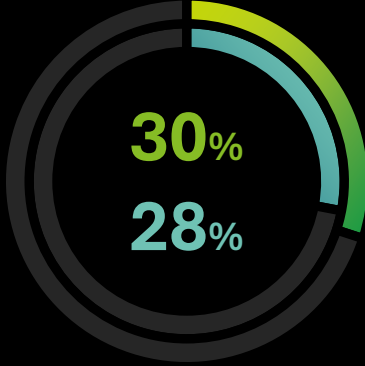
19% of respondents reported an increase in female representation on their supervisory boards over the past year, **72%** reported no change, and **9%** saw a decline



of supervisory boards have at **least one woman** among members



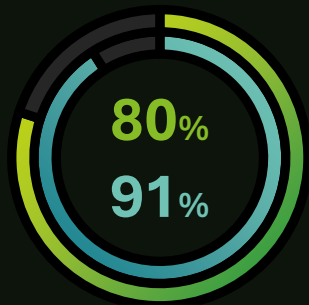
of supervisory boards' seats are **occupied by women**



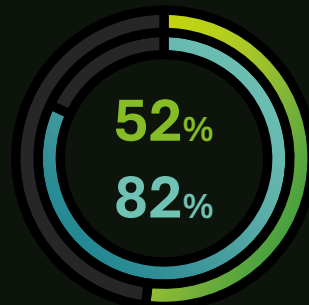
of supervisory boards that are **chaired by women**

● – 2026 ● – 2025

Women are present in all mandatory supervisory board committees, but gender parity among committee chairs is yet to be achieved



of companies have at least one woman as committee member



of companies have at least one woman as committee chair

● – 2026 ● – 2025

Women are represented on most mandatory Remuneration, Audit and Nomination committees, yet a leadership gap persists.

Almost **half of respondents** reported an **absence of female chairs** across all supervisory board committees

COMMITTEES OF SUPERVISORY BOARDS WITH THE HIGHEST WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN 2026

	Women are members	Women are chairs
Remuneration committee	52%	19%
Audit committee	50%	13%
Nomination committee	46%	19%
Risk committee	17%	9%
Strategic committee	7%	4%

01

02

03

04

Women in the boardroom

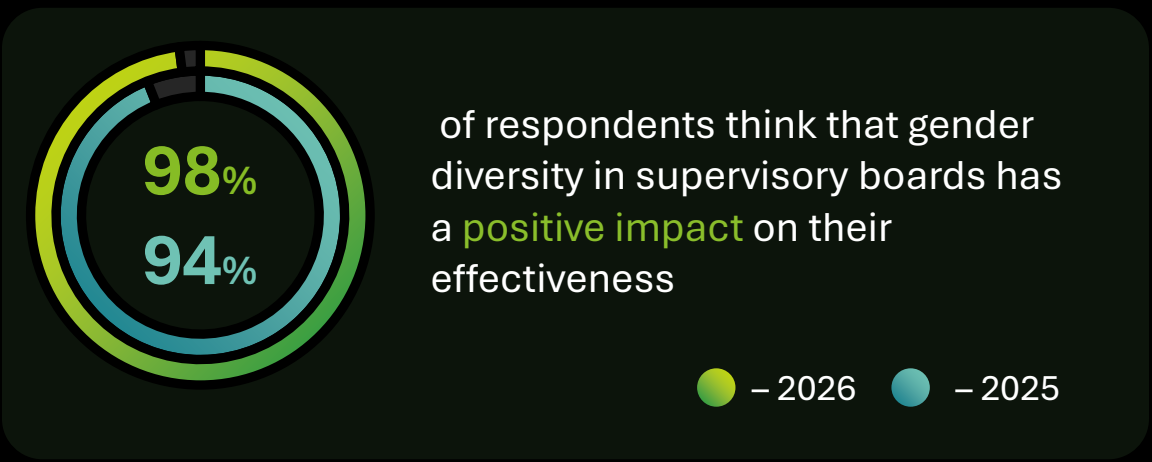
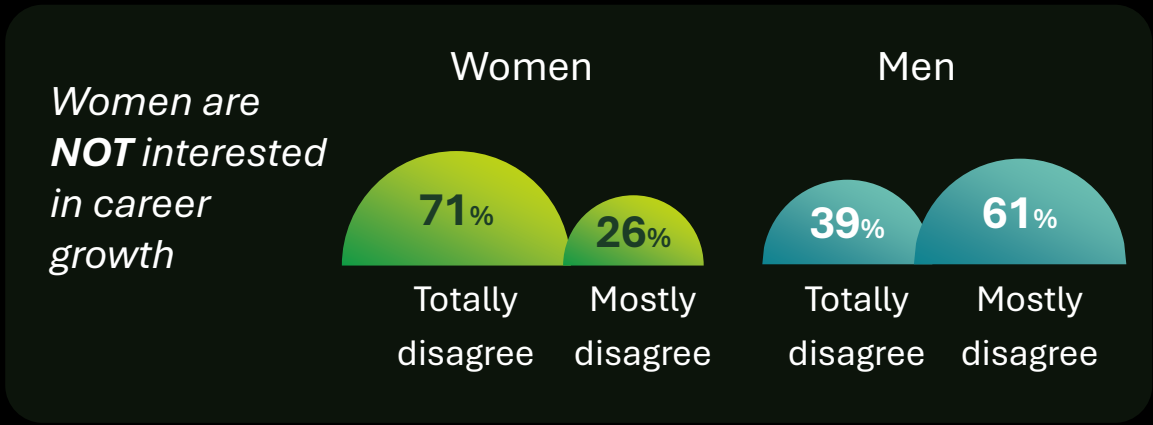
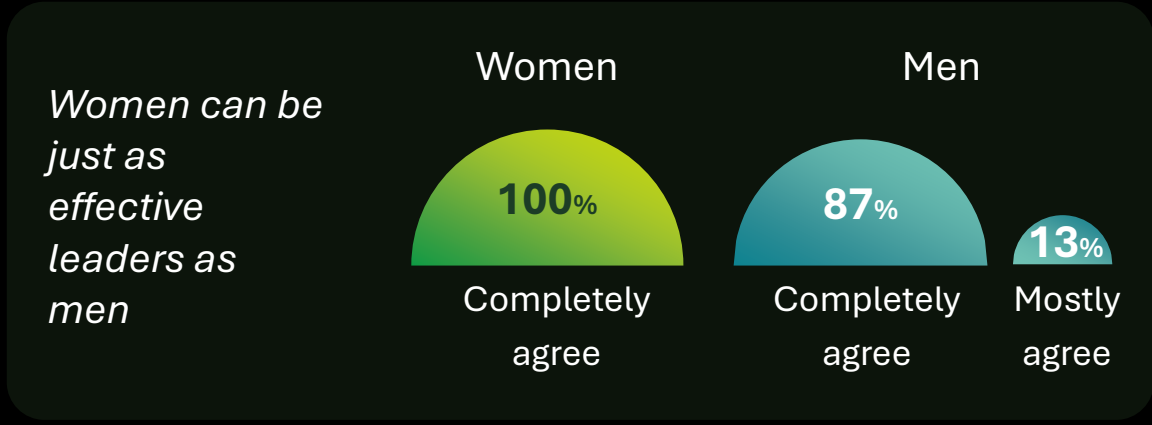
-----> Perception of female leaders

Workplace discrimination

Career path



Women's leadership competence and ambition is largely undisputed...



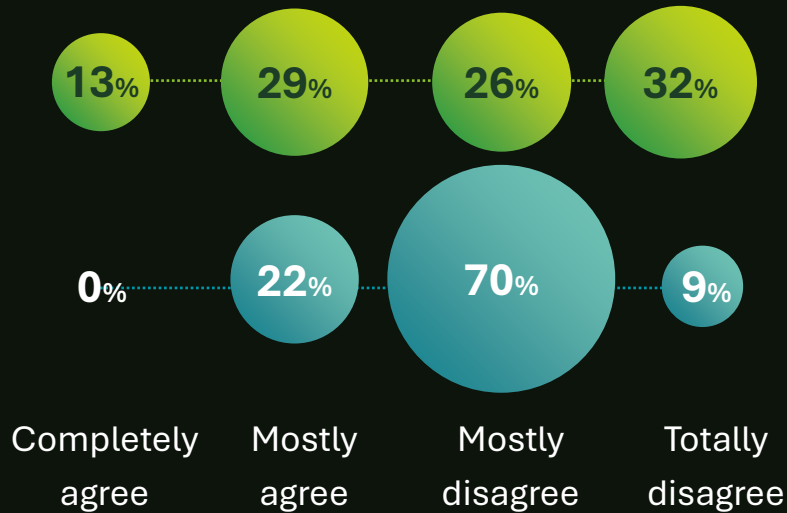
“
For teams, gender diversity is a natural and positive asset. The presence of women in the room can help foster a more constructive dynamic, particularly when their perspectives are valued and respected

Female member, banking

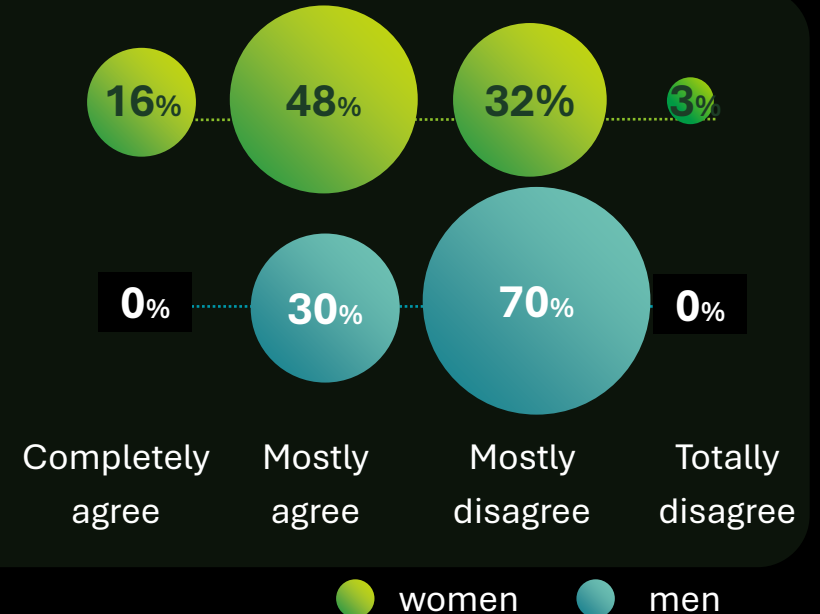
...however, traditional perceptions remain

Although positive contribution to board's effectiveness of female members is commonly recognized, women are more likely to feel that **society has prejudices towards the perception of female leaders**

The role of supervisory boards' members is perceived by society as traditionally male



Media in Ukraine often portray a stereotypical image of woman leaders



There is a problem of perception: a woman's emotionality is often interpreted as hysteria, whereas similar man's behavior is perceived as passion for the cause.

Female member, banking

01

02

03

04

Women in the boardroom

Perception of female leaders



Workplace discrimination

Career path

Most respondents report no direct experience with discriminatory practices...

When asked about gender discrimination from other supervisory boards' members...



● – 2026 ● – 2025

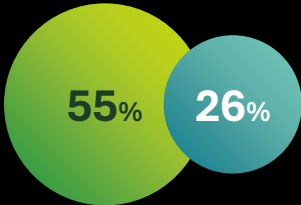
...but much higher share of leaders report encountering discrimination once specific scenarios are framed

87%

of respondents – including 90% of women and 83% of men – acknowledge they have at least occasionally experienced or witnessed one or more forms of discrimination

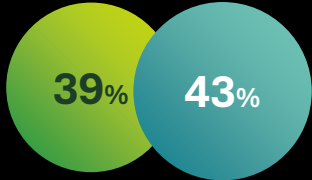
FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION OBSERVED:

Pay gap between men and women in similar positions

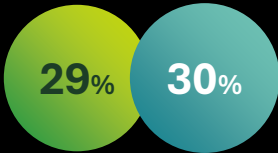


Verbal insults

(including sexist jokes, use of euphemisms, ambiguous phrases etc.)

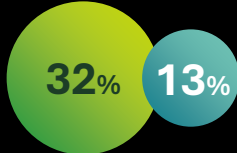


Physical contact without consent
(hugs, patting on the back, touching the shoulder, arm, etc.)

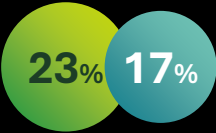


Social segregation

(ignoring women, excluding them from team discussions)



Psychological pressure
(devaluation of achievements, unreasonable criticism, intimidation)



Sexual harassment

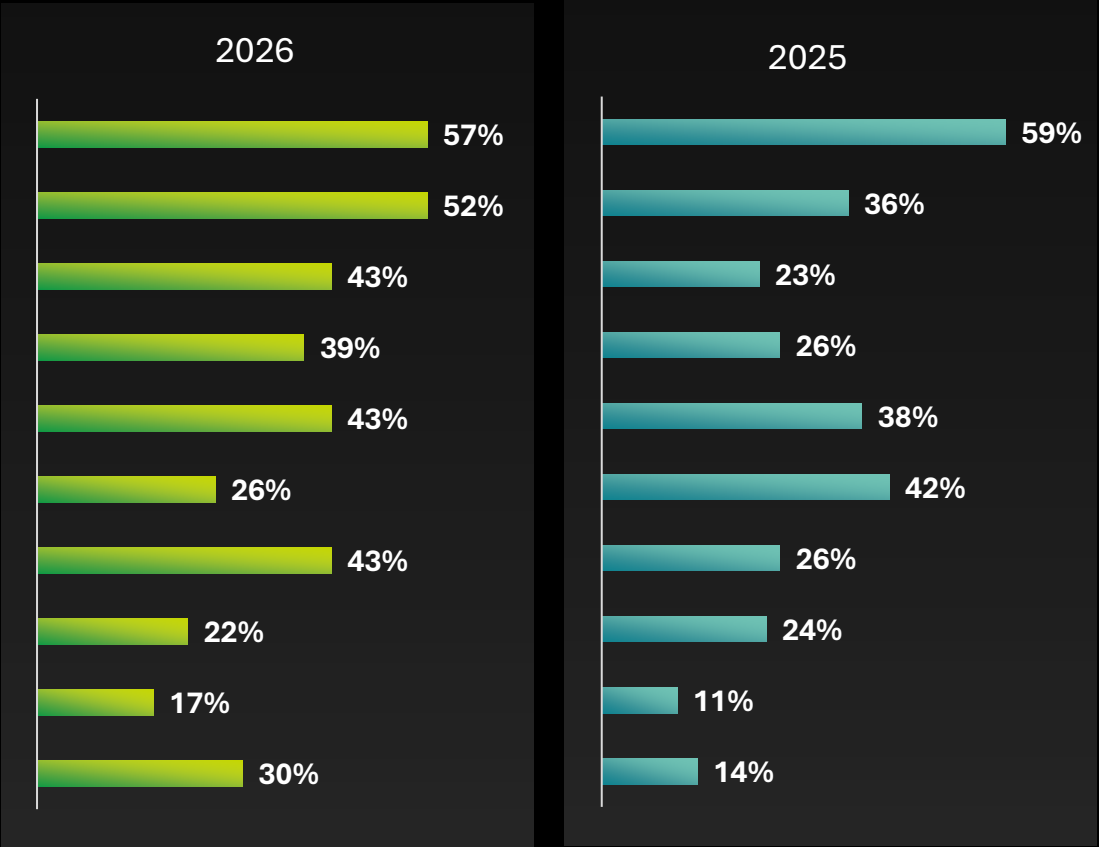


● - women (often/usually, sometimes) ● - men (often/usually, sometimes)

Gender bias continues to be embedded in daily practices, organizational processes, and workplace culture, driving unequal treatment

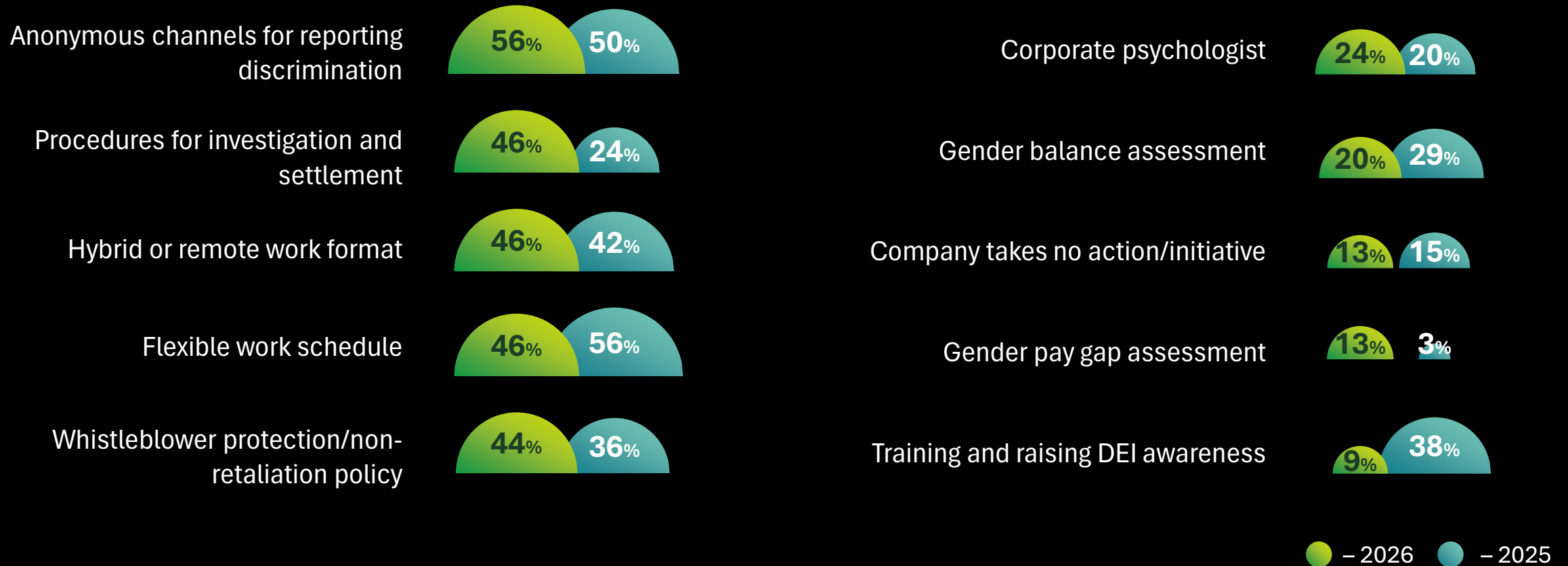
THE MOST WIDESPREAD ACTS/TYPES OF DISCRIMINATION

- Scheduling work meetings for late hours, weekends, and holidays
- Neglecting gender-neutral vocabulary and / or feminines
- Demonstrating gender bias and making gender-biased decisions
- Accusations of excessive emotionality or devaluation of emotions
- Lack of effective channels for reporting gender discrimination
- The pay gap between men and women in similar positions
- Verbal insults
- Prejudiced attitude, justified by women’s possible maternity leave
- Assigning less significant and visible work tasks to women
- Physical contact without consent

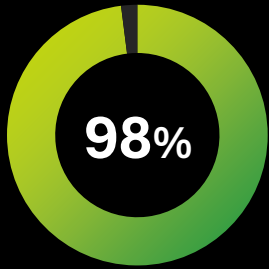


While a growing share of companies report having discrimination response systems, efforts on building DEI awareness are declining

ACTIONS COMPANIES TAKE TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES:

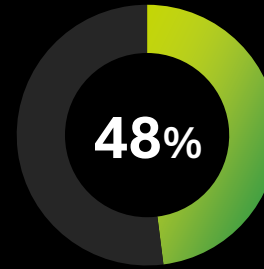


Clear and accessible reporting mechanisms contribute to retention of female leaders



of respondents believe in the effectiveness of their company's systems for addressing discrimination

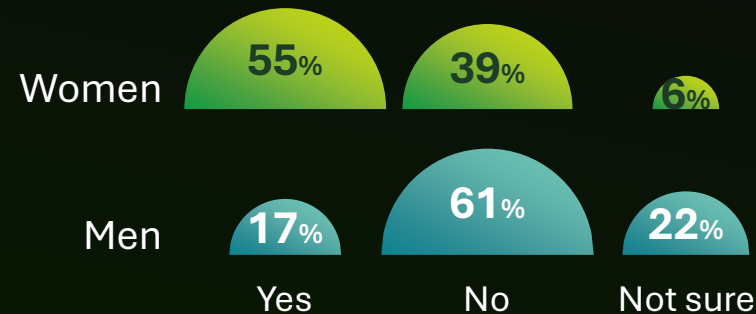
OF THEM



know specific procedure or channel for reporting cases of discrimination

GENDER DISCRIMINATION CAN INFLUENCE A DECISION TO CHANGE A JOB

Did gender discrimination influence OR could it have influenced your decision to change a job?



While most male respondents say that gender discrimination wouldn't influence their decision to change a job, **women perceive the issue as more serious**

01

02

03

04

Women in the boardroom

Perception of female leaders

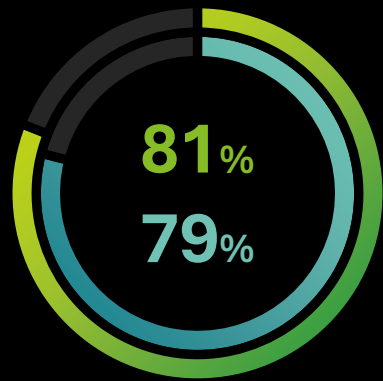
Workplace discrimination

-----> **Career path**

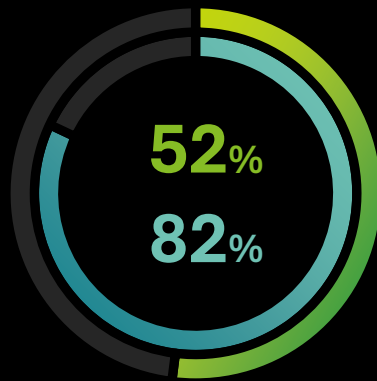


Female respondents feel valued by their colleagues and empowered to voice own opinions...

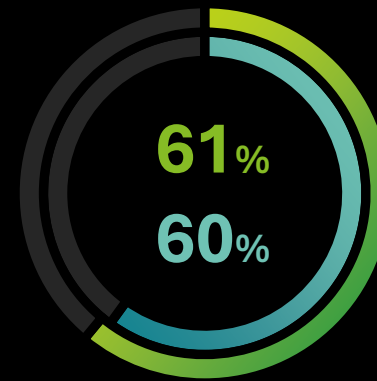
WOMEN COMPLETELY AGREE WITH THE STATEMENTS



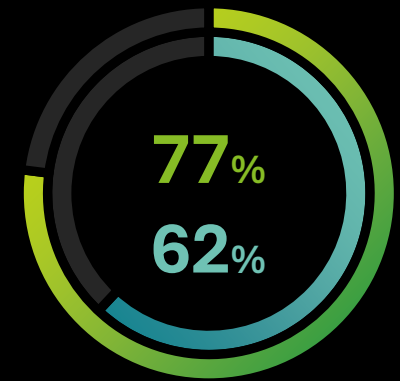
I feel comfortable expressing my opinion at work



I feel that my role makes a significant contribution to my team's activities



I feel being a part of my team



My opinion is respected and considered during decision-making

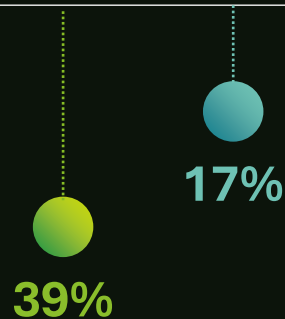
● – 2026 ● – 2025

While women continue to feel comfortable expressing their opinions and increasingly believe their views are respected in decision-making, their sense of making a significant contribution to team activities has declined notably

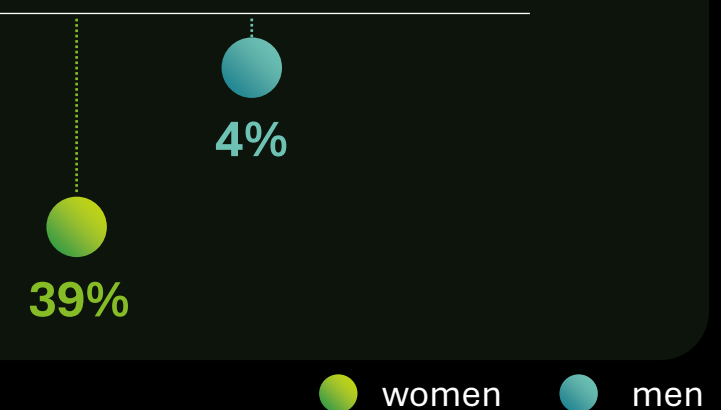
...however, women in leadership need to constantly adjust their behaviors to integrate with male members

RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT

When a woman shows **confidence**, it is sometimes interpreted as “**aggressiveness**”



It is harder for women to **gain authority** among male colleagues

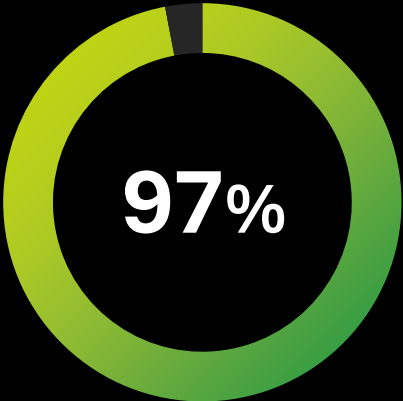


“

Women can often be perceived as overly sensitive or overly assertive. Behaviors or communication styles that may be readily accepted from men are often judged differently when expressed by women, requiring them to rephrase or moderate their message

Female member, banking

Female members of supervisory boards have equal access to development opportunities...



OF FEMALE RESPONDENTS BELIEVE THAT

in their company, **professional assessment does not depend on gender**



their company does enough to ensure **equal opportunities for men and women**



they have **equal access to opportunities for professional growth**

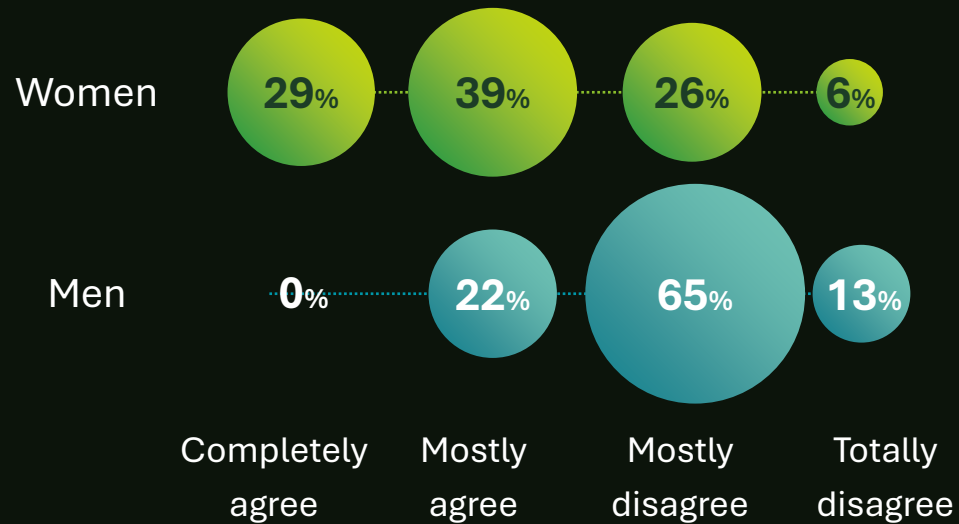


In our company, professional qualities remain the key criteria for evaluation. There are no discounts or preferences in the supervisory board – decisions are made based on expertise, organizational knowledge, and competence, without gender discrimination

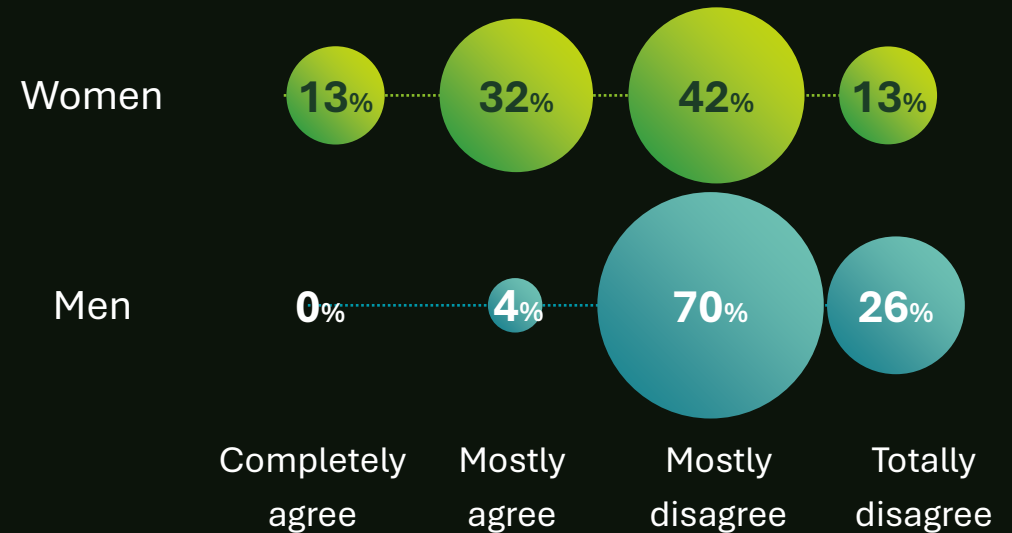
Male member, banking

... but feel more pressure to prove their expertise and face harsher judgment for their mistakes

→ **68%** women and **22%** men believe women must prove their competence more often and to a greater extent than men

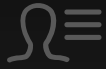


→ **45%** women and **4%** men are convinced that mistakes made by women in leadership roles are judged more harshly than those made by men



Key factors that hinder women's involvement in corporate leadership in Ukraine

46%



Skeptical attitude of women to the possibility of being appointed to management positions

35%



Low representation of women in the business environment

31%



Gender bias in society, in particular "glass ceiling" effect

26%



Lack of flexible working conditions

22%



Lack of female role models in management

13%



Limited access to informal networks (networking)

11%



Lack of opportunities for career growth

7%



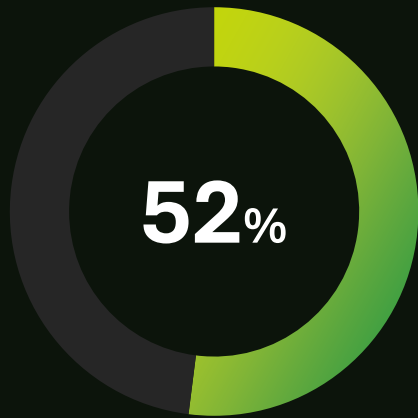
Lack of opportunities for professional development

6%



Unequal pay

Women leaders have the skills; the focus is on translating them into action – this requires inclusive environment

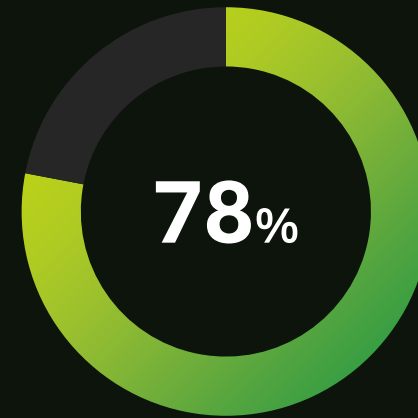


of female respondents think that **women leaders often underestimate their own expectations** for career advancement

“

Confidence matters more than anything else. Women tend to undermine themselves

Female member, banking



of respondents believe **self-confidence and ability to stand up for oneself** are important for women aspiring to leadership positions

“

Confidence is the first and critically important factor for women in corporate governance

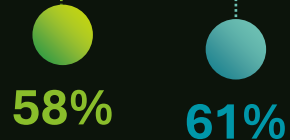
Male member, finance

Wider access to informal professional networks provides women with more exposure and growth opportunities

52%

of respondents believe networking skills are important for women aspiring to leadership positions

Respondents who say that professional networking was one of the key factor that contributed to their career growth



● women ● men

“

I consider networking to be one of the factors that contributed most to my professional growth – it is essential to meet the right people at the right time

Female member, banking

“

Men spend 40% of their time working and 60% networking and thinking about their next job. Women spend all of their time perfectly performing their job, locked in the office, hoping that someone will notice

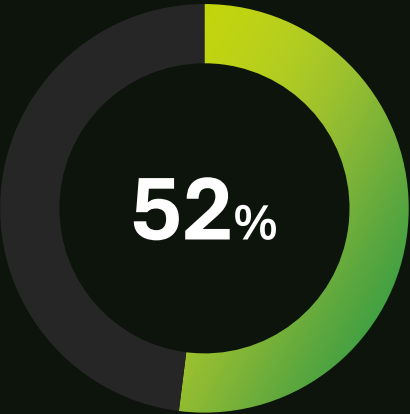
Female member, banking

Mentorship support is a critical driver of women’s desire for career advancement



Having a mentor is a paramount condition for growth. If you have a mentor, someone you look up to, you are a lucky person.

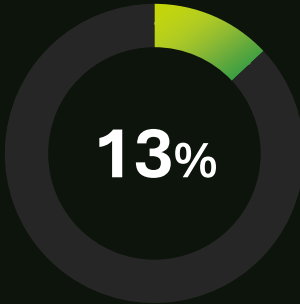
Female member, banking



of respondents believe that **informal mentoring (advice, support from colleagues or managers)** was one of the key factors contributing to their career growth



However, most companies do not maintain a mentorship program



of respondents say that their company has a mentorship program for female leaders

01

02

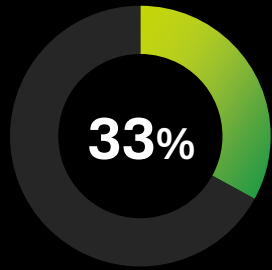
03

04

Turning insight into action: from engagement to impact

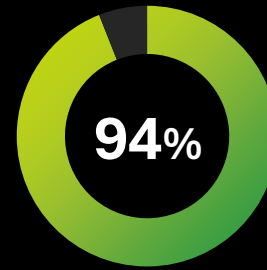


To build an inclusive environment and achieve gender parity, companies need to take a systemic approach to establishing their DEI strategies



33% of respondents have a corporate DEI policy

OF THEM



consider DEI principles as an integral part of their company's culture

HOWEVER, MOST SURVEYED COMPANIES STILL HAVEN'T ADOPTED FORMAL SYSTEMS OF DEI AND GENDER PARITY ENFORCEMENT

6%



have a requirement for a minimum percentage of women in the supervisory board

9%



regularly consider DEI issues in the context of corporate strategy implementation

28%



have an officer or department responsible for DEI issues

7%



regularly measure progress in gender equality

Fostering an inclusive corporate culture and providing women with opportunities and enablers are key drivers for female participation

Building an inclusive culture



Setting the tone from the top



Implementing clear DEI policies with measurable goals



Monitoring DEI progress and ESG reporting



Introducing gender quotas and pay-gap reduction policies



Expanding opportunities



Enabling flexible working conditions



Launching structured sponsorship and mentorship programs



Fostering networking and visibility



Shaping public narratives by promoting role models

Methodology:
profile of respondents



Socio-demographic profile of respondents

54

respondents



31

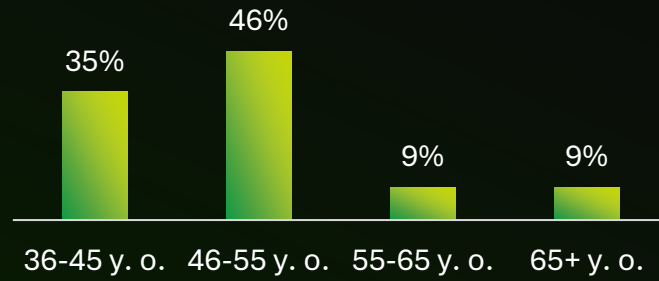
female



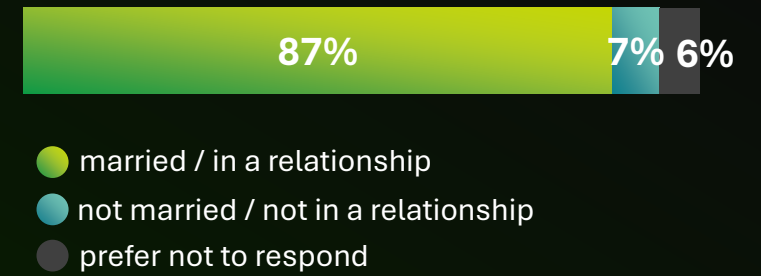
23

male

AGE



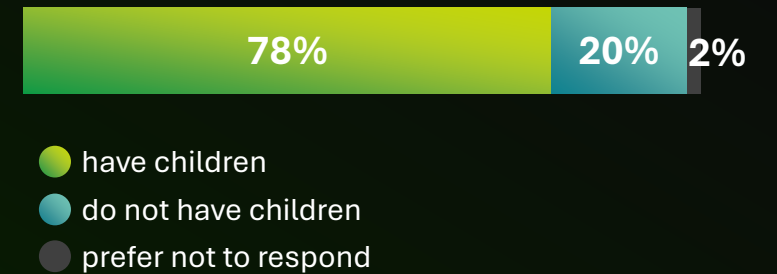
MARITAL STATUS



YEARS IN THE POSITION



CHILDREN

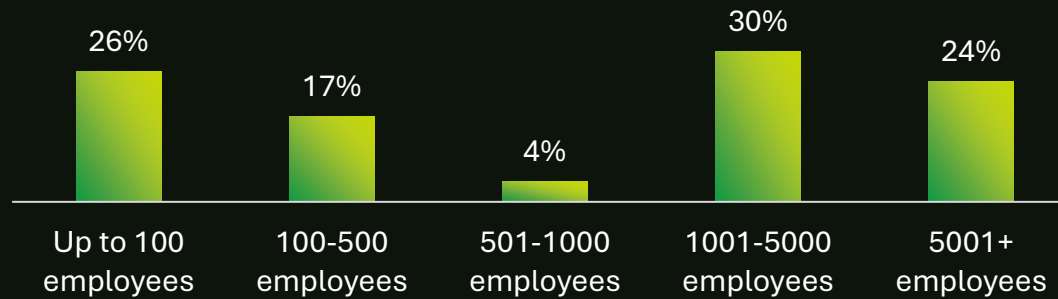


Professional profile of respondents

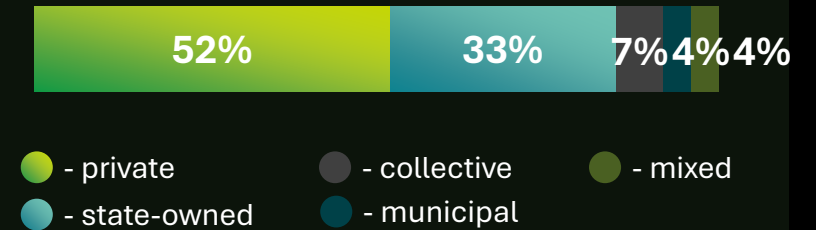
47

organizations

COMPANY SIZE



OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE



INDUSTRY

33%

Financial services

17%

Non-profit organizations

9%

Energy, utilities

7%

Transportation, logistics services

7%

Retail, wholesale trade

6%

Telecom, media, entertainment

6%

Professional services

4%

Medicine, pharmaceuticals, biochemistry

4%

Oil and gas, chemical industry

4%

Information technologies

2%

Consumer goods

2%

Educational services

GEOGRAPHY OF COMPANY OPERATIONS

61% operate locally only

19% has headquarters abroad

20% has headquarters in Ukraine



Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (DTTL), its global network of member firms, and their related entities (collectively, the “Deloitte organization”). DTTL (also referred to as “Deloitte Global”) and each of its member firms and related entities are legally separate and independent entities, which cannot obligate or bind each other in respect of third parties. DTTL and each DTTL member firm and related entity is liable only for its own acts and omissions, and not those of each other. DTTL does not provide services to clients. Please see www.deloitte.com/about to learn more.

Deloitte provides leading professional services to nearly 90% of the Fortune Global 500® and thousands of private companies. Our people deliver measurable and lasting results that help reinforce public trust in capital markets and enable clients to transform and thrive. Building on its 180-year history, Deloitte spans more than 150 countries and territories. Learn how Deloitte’s approximately 460,000 people worldwide make an impact that matters at www.deloitte.com.

This communication contains general information only, and none of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited (DTTL), its global network of member firms or their related entities (collectively, the “Deloitte organization”) is, by means of this communication, rendering professional advice or services. Before making any decision or taking any action that may affect your finances or your business, you should consult a qualified professional adviser.

No representations, warranties or undertakings (express or implied) are given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information in this communication, and none of DTTL, its member firms, related entities, employees or agents shall be liable or responsible for any loss or damage whatsoever arising directly or indirectly in connection with any person relying on this communication. DTTL and each of its member firms, and their related entities, are legally separate and independent entities.

