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PERCEPTION OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND PUBLIC ATTITUDE TO GENDER PROBLEMS IN UKRAINIAN SOCIETY

The Constitution of Ukraine defends the principle of equality between men and women: Equality of the rights of women and men is ensured: by providing women with opportunities equal to those of men, in public and political, and cultural activity, in obtaining education and in professional training, in work and its remuneration; by special measures for the protection of work and health of women; by establishing pension privileges, by creating conditions that allow women to combine work and motherhood; by legal protection, material and moral support of motherhood and childhood, including the provision of paid leaves and other privileges to pregnant women and mothers (Constitution of Ukraine, Article 24).

Besides, Ukraine has ratified and adopted international treaties relating to women's rights, such as «Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women», «European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms», «International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights», «International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights» and others. But as it is stated in Kisselyova and Trokhym research, «in practice international laws are not implemented, and judges and other officials are not aware of them, or not bound by them» (p. 7). The authors are certain that «it is very difficult to use constitutional and international law provisions directly to protect rights in court» (p. 8).

In Ukraine gender education seems to be under anesthesia, and Ukrainians behave as sleeping patients in controlled state of unconsciousness. When surgeon takes scalpel, the patient is under anesthesia. Then the surgeon starts operation. But the surgeon disappeared and nobody is going to cut these painful furuncles, such as gender stereotypes, gender inequality and discrimination. Poor economics, difficult political situation, degrading education and unemployment became the ingredients of painful injection that made people feel anesthetized patients. But sooner or later anesthesia will stop its influence and the society will awaken. In 2007 researchers from the Institute of Sociology of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine with the help of United Nation Organization made a research devoted to gender problems in

the country and published the report «Gender Stereotypes and Public Attitude to Gender Problems in Ukrainian Society». According to this research, 50% of Ukrainians are certain that gender inequality exists, 36% do not agree and state that it does not exist. 18% find it hard to answer the question. 62% of residents say that women's rights are discriminated, and only 6% think that men's rights are discriminated (Sayenko et al., 2007, p. 32). These numbers depict the low level of understanding of gender equality problems in Ukraine, though numerous studies are devoted to the problems of gender discrimination and inequality in the country. Gerasymenko (2009) states that during the transition period in Ukraine economic transformations have led to alarming demographic changes, high levels of poverty and increased unemployment. Also social and economic reforms resulted in strengthening of gender inequality in social and economic spheres. She stresses that «gender imbalances are observed in decision-making, at labour market and economic resources access and redistribution within the households» (p. 1).

Unfortunately, gender relations in many societies are unequal. This is vividly shown by factors such as access to power and control over resources. Gender equality is about valuing women and men equally. Equality means recognizing how women and men have traditionally been treated differently and making changes in order to value the work that women and men do. Gender education speeds up the development of relationships between women and men on the base of mutual respect and tolerance. It gives the possibility to self-realize to both women and men.

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