

Press release

12 JUNE 2025 – Women in Demining

NGO GIRLS AND FSD PRESENTED THE RESULTS OF A UNIQUE STUDY

Kyiv / Geneva, Thursday, 12 June 2025

The NGO Girls, with the support of FSD in Ukraine, presented the results of the study “Women's Perception of Employment in Humanitarian Demining: Key Barriers.” This sociological study analyzes the experiences, challenges, and motivations of women working or potentially being able to work in humanitarian demining in Ukraine.

“This study is important for us because it shows the barriers and prejudices that prevent women from feeling fulfilled in humanitarian demining, where they could help the country and have a stable income at the same time. It helps us understand these stereotypes and talk about them properly to attract women,” says Yuliya Sporysh, Director of the NGO Girls.

The research consisted of two stages. The qualitative stage involved **16 online in-depth interviews** with women in Kharkiv and Chernihiv Oblasts. Half of the respondents are currently working in humanitarian demining, and the other half are potential workers. The quantitative stage involved a survey of **122 women humanitarian demining workers**, including representatives of the field staff, administrative staff, key managerial positions, and senior management.

“This event today is very important for us to gain a real understanding of the barriers women face when entering mine action in Ukraine. It aims not only to help FSD improve the work we do, but also to support other women — by helping them access employment opportunities and feel confident applying to work in demining,” emphasized Eleanor Porritt, Country Director, FSD Ukraine.

Representatives of the Mine Action Office under the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the HALO Trust, and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine took part in the presentation and discussion of the research results.

Hindering stereotypes and driving motivation

Gender stereotypes were one of the key challenges identified by the survey participants. **54%** of the respondents believed that “this is a job for men”.

39% of the quantitative stage respondents and the majority of qualitative stage respondents noted that a lack of general information about demining was an obstacle, as many potential candidates associated demining with a constant risk to life due to a lack of understanding of how the process actually worked.

35% of the respondents believe that misunderstanding on the part of family and partners is a significant obstacle for women to get involved in the field:

FSD

Ave Giuseppe-Motta 14b
1202 Geneva - Switzerland
+41 22 731 14 79
info@fsd.ch
www.fsd.ch



“My mother, grandmother, and everyone started grabbing their heads in shock, asking where I was going. It is dangerous. They don’t get it, don’t understand,” says a woman deminer from Kharkiv.

However, “the desire to be helpful for the country and to be involved in an important activity” was mentioned by all respondents as a key motivation to join the field. As one of the participants noted:

“I didn't even think about it. When I was offered the job, I immediately said I would take it because I intuitively felt that it was mine, and I had been dreaming about this kind of work since my childhood. I have been waiting my whole life to work in this field,” says a junior woman deminer from Sloviansk.

Among the key aspects that motivated them to start working in humanitarian demining, the respondents also highlighted the desire for stability, good working conditions, and salaries, the opportunity to learn and master a new field, and the desire to feel the adrenaline and drive.

A safe environment and support are crucial factors

The opportunity to be helpful for society and make a significant contribution to the security of their own country, as well as salary, were mentioned by women as key advantages of working in humanitarian demining.

At the same time, the participants of the qualitative stage of the study noted the friendly atmosphere in the team, team support, and respectful, humane attitude of the management as important factors of satisfaction with their profession. According to the results of the quantitative survey, all respondents expressed a positive attitude to their work and satisfaction with it.

Why is this research important?

The study by the NGO Girls highlights the key barriers to women's participation in demining, from a lack of information about training courses to accommodation at the workplace. The study also examined the issue of institutional support and the need for psychological support for women specialists.

The study also raises the issue of public recognition of this dangerous and socially important work. As one of the participants noted:

“First of all, it is a safety issue and a lack of understanding of how it all works. I think there is a stereotype that demining is something very scary and should be done by men. There is some general ignorance about what kind of profession it is and what exactly to be done there,” says a potential woman deminer from Chernihiv.

What's next

Based on the study, the main recommendations for employers to attract women to humanitarian demining through enhanced outreach activities were identified. Open lectures, webinars, information sessions, and open days should be held to help overcome fears and combat stereotypes associated with the profession.

It is also important to clearly state that newcomers are trained and not involved in tasks without preparation. In order to attract more women to the field, it is necessary to clearly emphasize the principles of gender equality and openness to hiring women, overcoming the perception of this job as exclusively masculine.

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www.fsd.ch



The report is available for download https://fsd.ch/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Girls_FSD_Research_Womens-in-Humanitarian-Mine-Action_Key-Barriers_ENG.pdf

CONTACT & MEDIA INQUIRIES

- Alexandra Brutsch, Head of Communications: communications@fsd.ch, +41 78 807 45 50
- Photos of FSD's mine action activities in Ukraine: <https://www.swisstransfer.com/d/d23b774d-3294-4b4d-99a2-9575422606ae>

ABOUT FSD

FSD is a Swiss non-profit humanitarian organisation that has been working since 1997 to create a safer and more sustainable future for communities affected by war and instability. Its core mission is to protect civilians from landmines and explosive remnants of war. Since its founding, FSD has operated in around 30 countries and currently employs nearly 1,000 staff across four continents.

More information: www.fsd.ch

ABOUT FSD

The NGO Girls is an all-Ukrainian feminist organization. It helps, protects, and supports women and girls in Ukraine, empowering them through educational, social, and economic initiatives.

More information: www.divchata.org

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