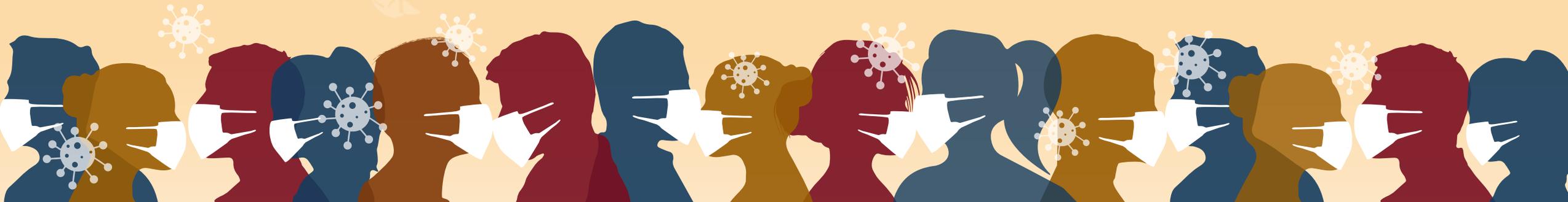


A world map in shades of green and yellow, with several circular hotspots in red and brown. Each hotspot contains a white icon of a coronavirus particle.

Gender Issues under COVID-19

2023 July



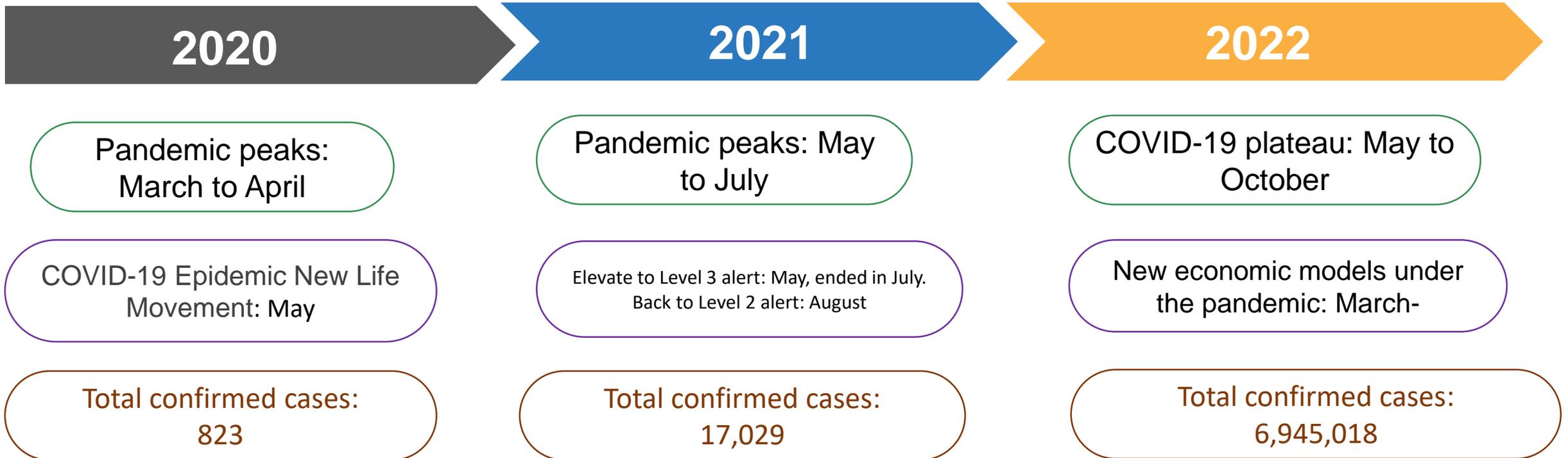
- 01** Background
- 02** Focus of gender issues in different countries
- 03** Focus and assessment of gender issues in Taiwan
- 04** Policy responses and improvements
- 05** Conclusion



I. Background

COVID-19 Timeline and Prevention in Taiwan

- Unlike some Western countries, Taiwan never entered a Level 4 Lockdown where entire cities were shut down, and all work was suspended. A Level 3 Lockdown was only imposed from May to July 2021.
- Level 3 lockdown prevention measures: The number of people allowed in gatherings was restricted, schools suspended, entertainment venues forced to close, and dine-in services in restaurants prohibited.



I. Background

UN Women

“According to experience, women and girls are in a more vulnerable positions during global epidemics. **These predicaments already exist under the gendered institutions in society and because of the pandemic, they are more pronounced.**”



II. Focus on gender issues in different countries



Deepened impacts of occupational gender segregation and gender wage gap on women

Limitations to obtaining medical resources and feelings of stress to fulfill traditional gender roles

An increase in domestic violence case and gender-based violence enabled by digital technology

Business sectors with predominantly female workers such as food service and tourism were severely affected

Sexual and reproductive health services were interrupted

Significantly increase in reports of domestic violence cases due to COVID-19 prevention measures

Job insecurity widened gender wage gap

**Increased burden on women to care for families
Increased number of suicide**

Increased number of cases in gender-based violence enabled by digital technology

III. Focus and assessment of gender issues in Taiwan

**April of 2020 -
Collect data
domestically and
internationally**

Compiled international organization initiatives including the UN and EU, and public opinion on domestic gender issues under COVID-19.

01

**July of 2021
Formulate reminder
regarding gender
issues**

The Executive Yuan formulated the Reminder on Gender Issue Related to Severe Pneumonia with Novel Pathogens and the Country's Preliminary Response.

02

**January of 2022
Conduct preliminary
assessments on gender issues
under the pandemic in Taiwan
and propose results to the
Gender Equality Committee for
further discussion**

Analysis Report on Gender Issues under COVID-19 was reported to the preparatory meeting of the Gender Equality Committee for further discussions with civil committee members and organizations.

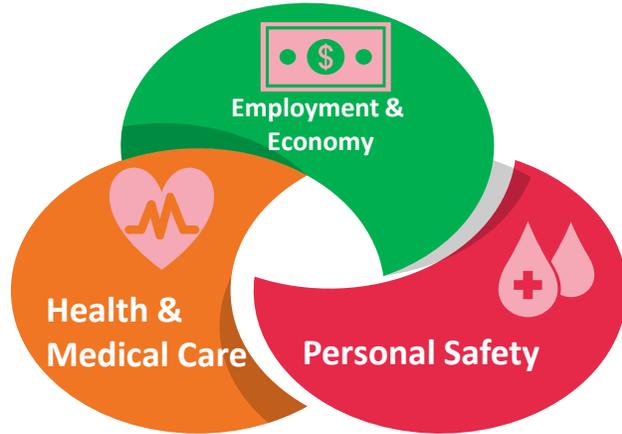
03

**2022 -2023
Updated report**

Updated the Analysis Report on Gender Issues under COVID-19. Commanded relevant authorities to propose improvement measures according to the results of assessment.

04

III. Focus and assessment of gender issues in Taiwan under COVID-19



After compiling international organization initiatives on gender issues and domestic public opinion on the matter, 51 indicators on gender statistics were collected, and ten indicators are listed as follows:



- Unemployment rate
- Gender wage gap (Hourly wage)



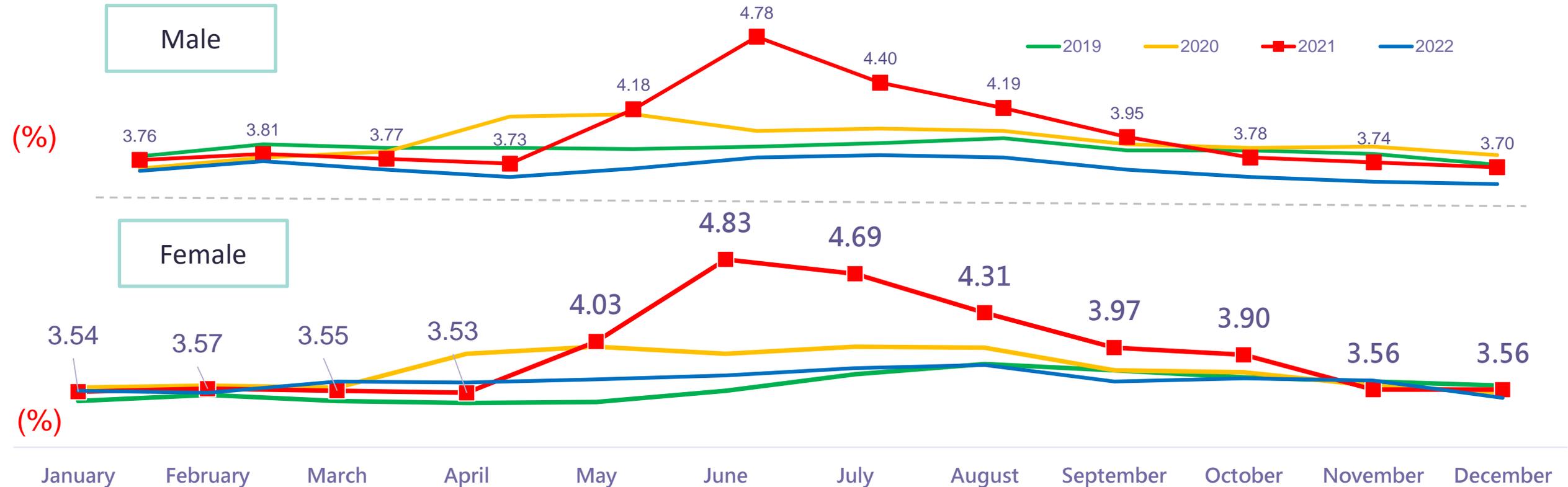
- Average rate of prenatal examination
- Number of people using mental health service hotlines
- Number of reported suicide (including attempted suicide)
- Suicide death rate
- Cumulative confirmed infection rate and death rate of COVID-19



- Statistics on reported victims of domestic abuses
- Number of victims of online sexual exploitation of children and adolescents
- Number of victims in cases of harassment using technological devices

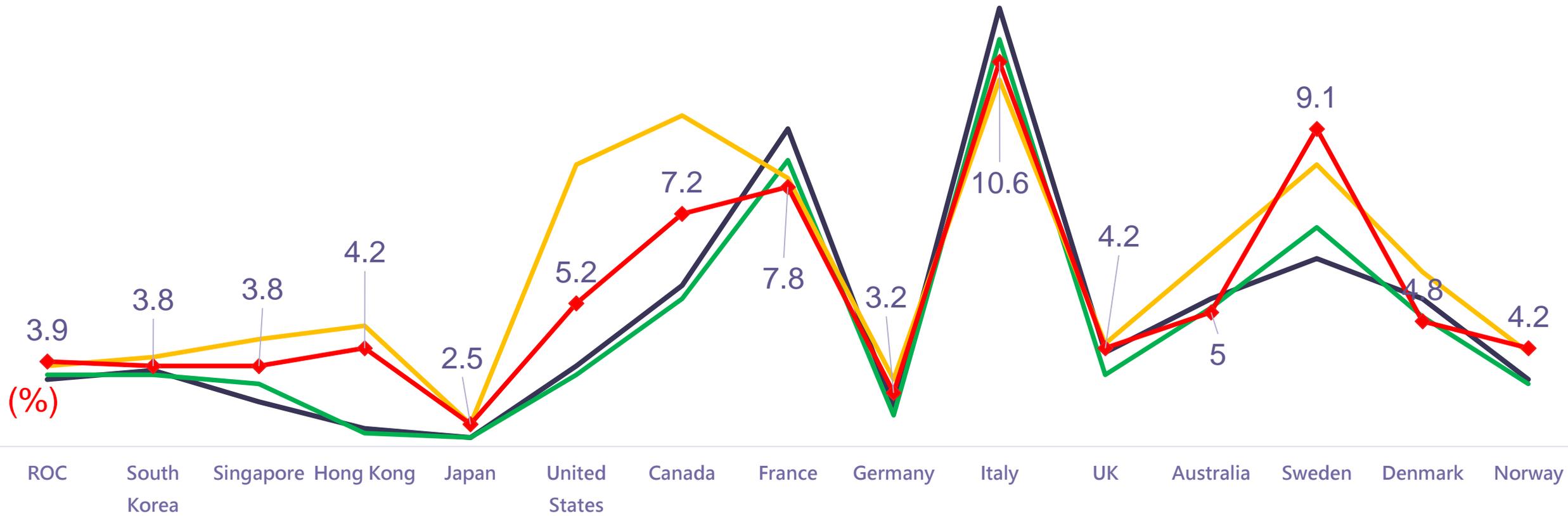
Unemployment rate in Taiwan has returned to pre-pandemic level

- The industries with predominantly female workforce, including hospitality and food service, transportation and warehousing, education, arts, leisure, and entertainment, were heavily impacted due to the pandemic. For the first time, the unemployment rate for women from June to October of 2021 exceeded that of men.
- In 2022, COVID-19's negative impact of employment on women has waned compared to statistics in 2020 and 2021.



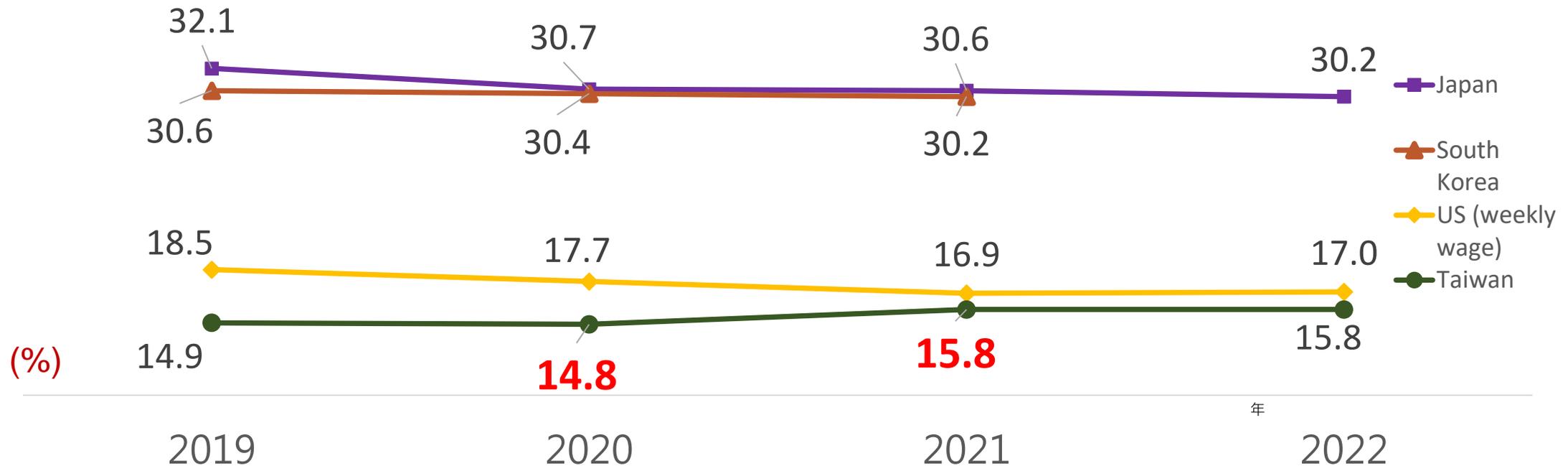
International comparison: Women's unemployment rate in Taiwan was less volatile compared to other countries

During the pandemic, countries with less volatile female unemployment rates included Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, France, Germany, and Italy.



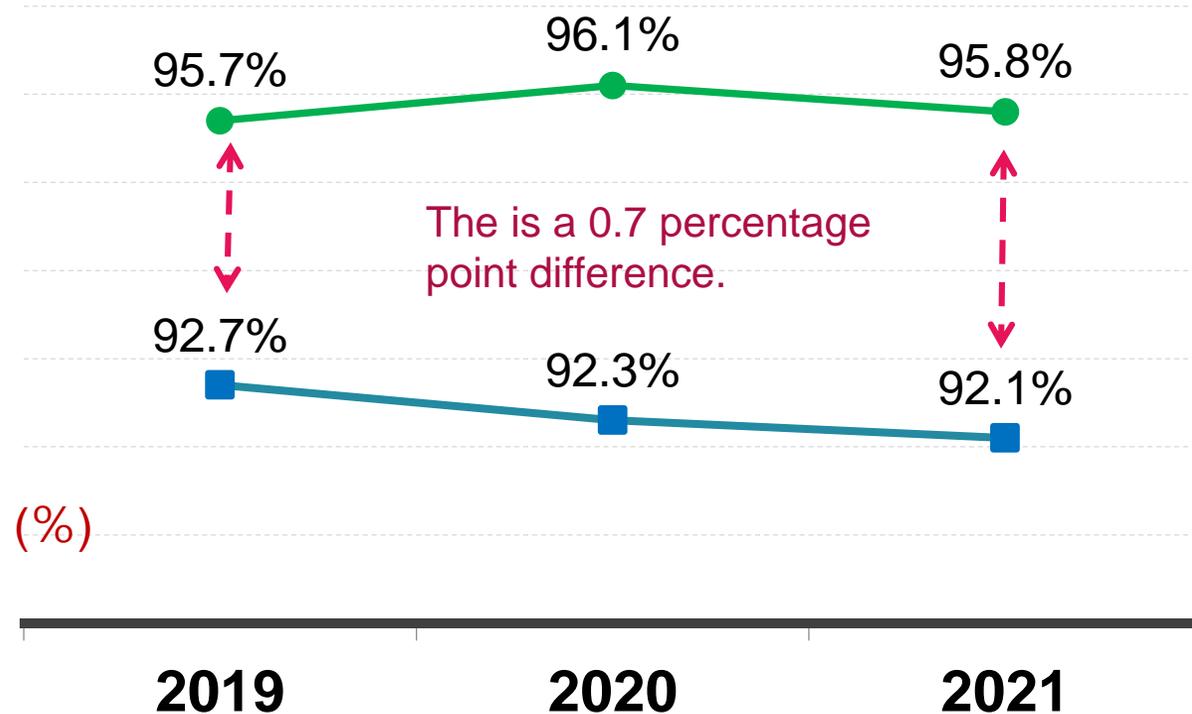
International comparison: Gender wage gap (hourly rate) in Taiwan is smaller than other countries

- In 2021, average hourly gender wage gap was 15.8% which increased by one percentage point compared to 2020.
- In 2021, different sectors were affected by the pandemic differently. The hourly wage for women were lower than for men because there was a large disparity in the raises given out in different types of work and positions.
- In recent years, gender wage gap in the U.S., Japan, and South Korea has gradually narrowed. However, the wage gap of these countries is still wider compared to Taiwan.



Sexual and reproductive health services:

No drastic change in average rate of prenatal examination



Average rate of prenatal examination

Compared to 2020, the rate of prenatal examination in 2021 decreased by a mere 0.3 percentage point.

Average rate of prenatal examination for persons with disabilities

Compared to 2020, the rate in 2021 decreased by a mere 0.2 percentage point.

- Intersectional analysis - All pregnant women compared to pregnant women with disabilities
- When comparing the pre-pandemic rate (in 2019) to the community cluster infection period (in 2021), there is an increase of 0.7 percentage point difference which is not a noticeable change.

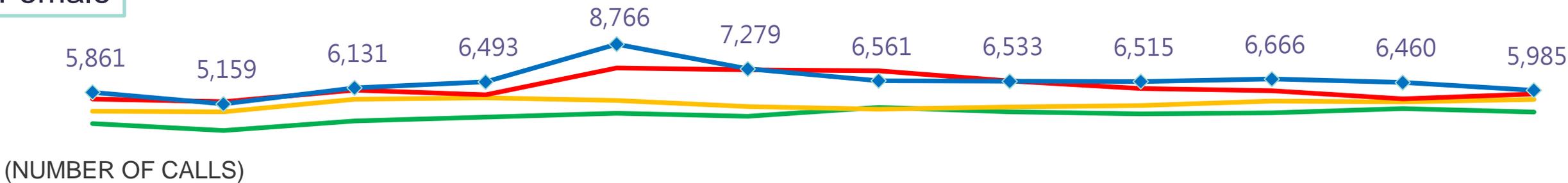
Number of people who used mental health service hotlines during COVID-19 raised for both male and female callers Increase of female callers greater than male

In 2022, number of men who called mental health hotlines increased by 19.77% compared to 2019. Number of female callers increased by 46.72%.

Male

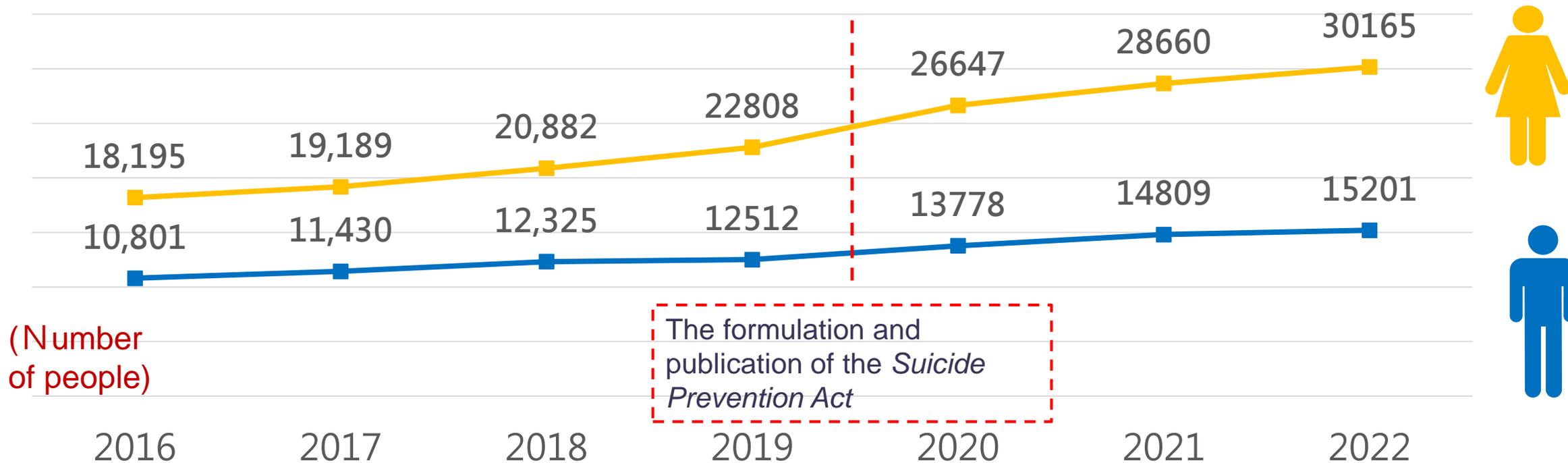


Female



Reported cases of suicide attempts: Increase in women slightly higher than men

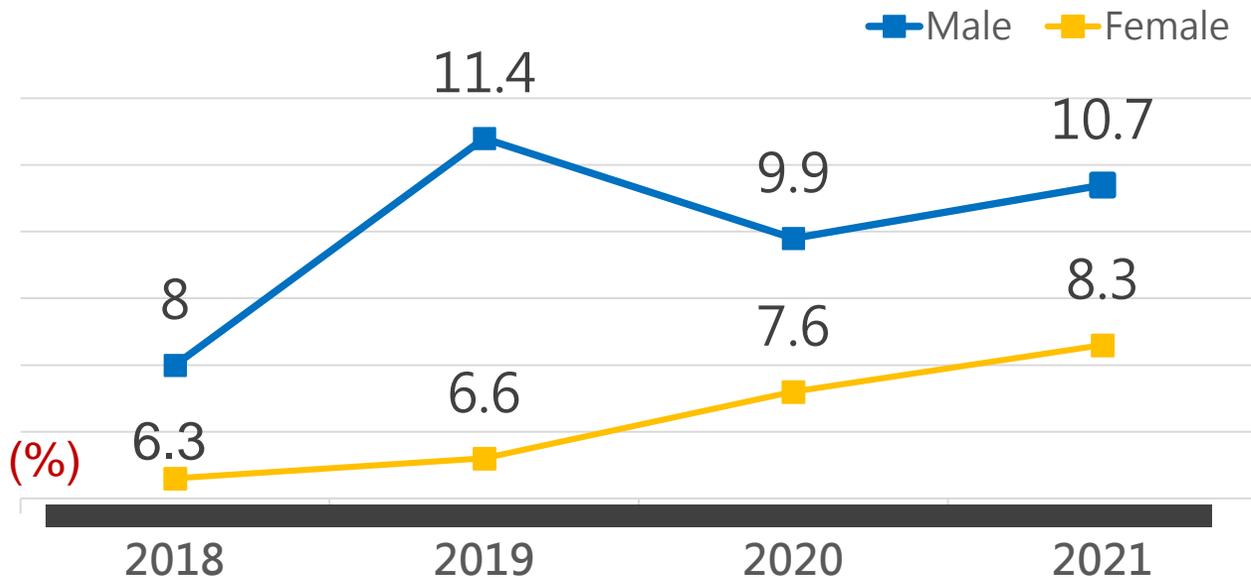
- In 2022, the cases of reported suicide attempts for men increased by 10.33 % compared to 2020. The cases for women increased by 13.2%. The increase is higher for women than men, with a 2.87 percentage point difference.
- In 2019, the *Suicide Prevention Act* was formulated and published, and suicide was listed as a notifiable incident. Afterward, the number of reported suicide attempts continued to rise.



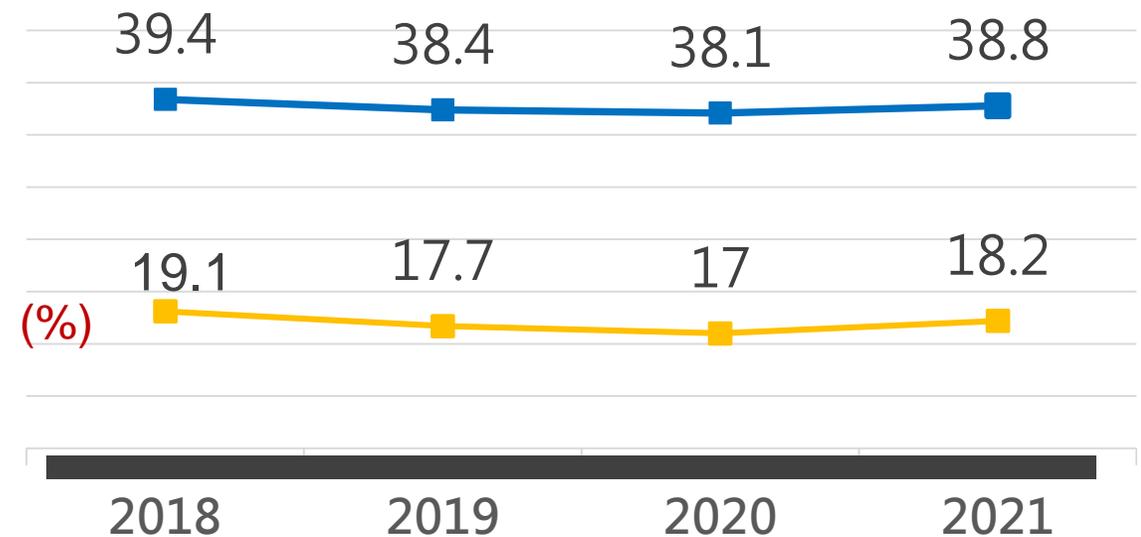
Suicide death rate among elderly and young people rose slightly, with little differences between the genders

Starting in 2018, there has been a downward trend in suicide death rate for men and women. There was only a slight increase in the suicide rate for young people between the age of 15 to 24 and elderly over the age of 65.

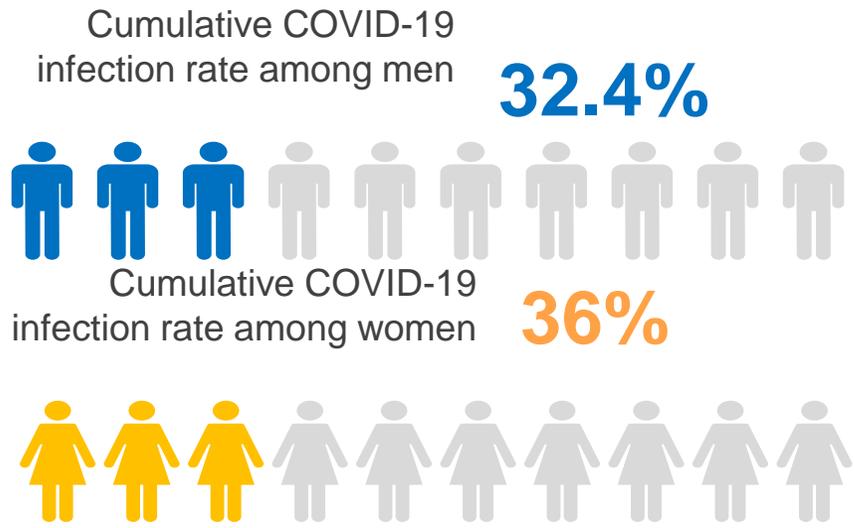
Changes in suicide death rate throughout the years for people aged between 15 to 24.



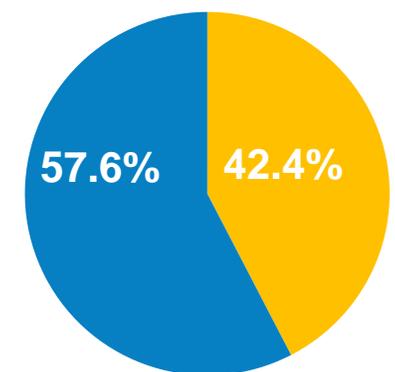
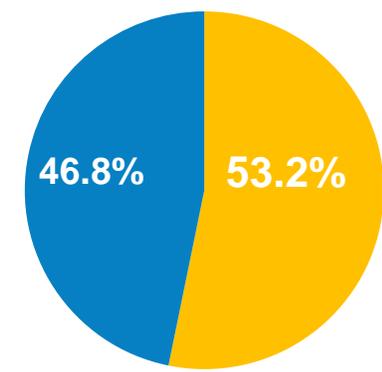
The changes in suicide death rate throughout the years for people aged above 65.



Confirmed COVID-19 cases and cumulative infection rate for women are slightly higher than for men. But the COVID-19 deaths for men are higher than for women.



Total number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Taiwan was 7,939,305. Total number of COVID-19 related deaths in Taiwan was 13,296. (This data was collected from 2020 January 1 to 2022 November 9)

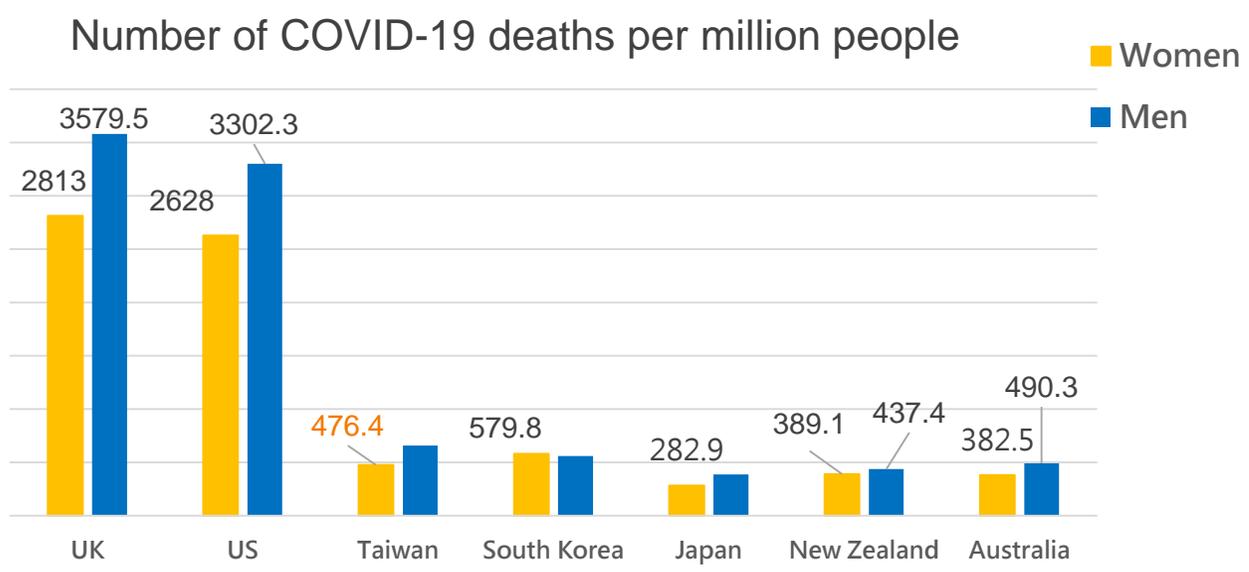


Statistics for confirmed COVID-19 cases

Men: 3,717,440 cases
 Women: 4,220,437 cases

Statistics for number of COVID-19 deaths

Men: 7,654 cases
 Women: 5,642 cases

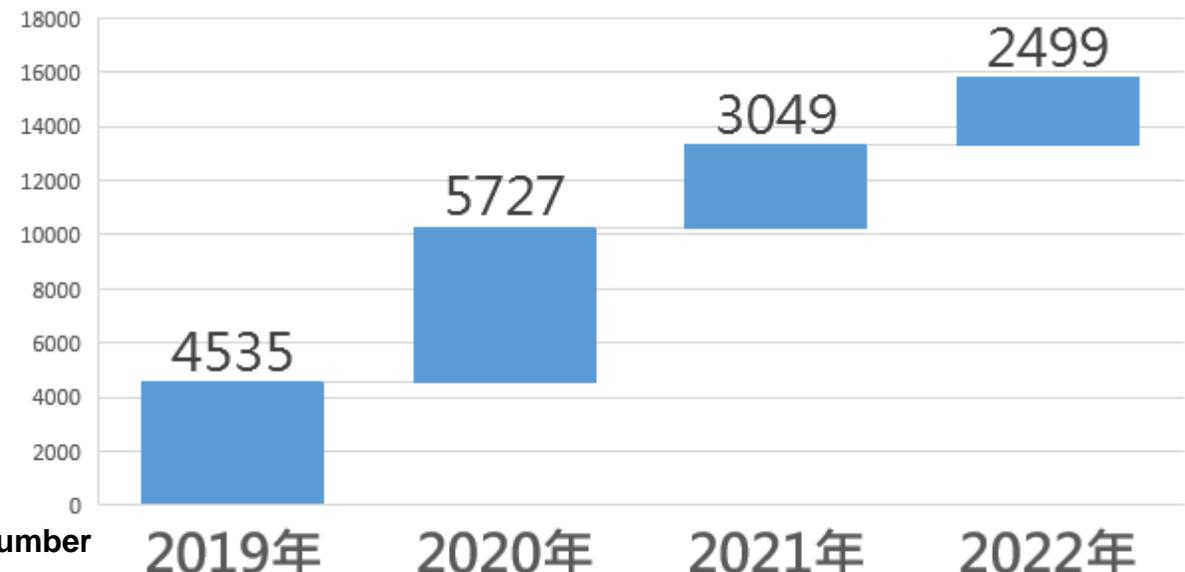
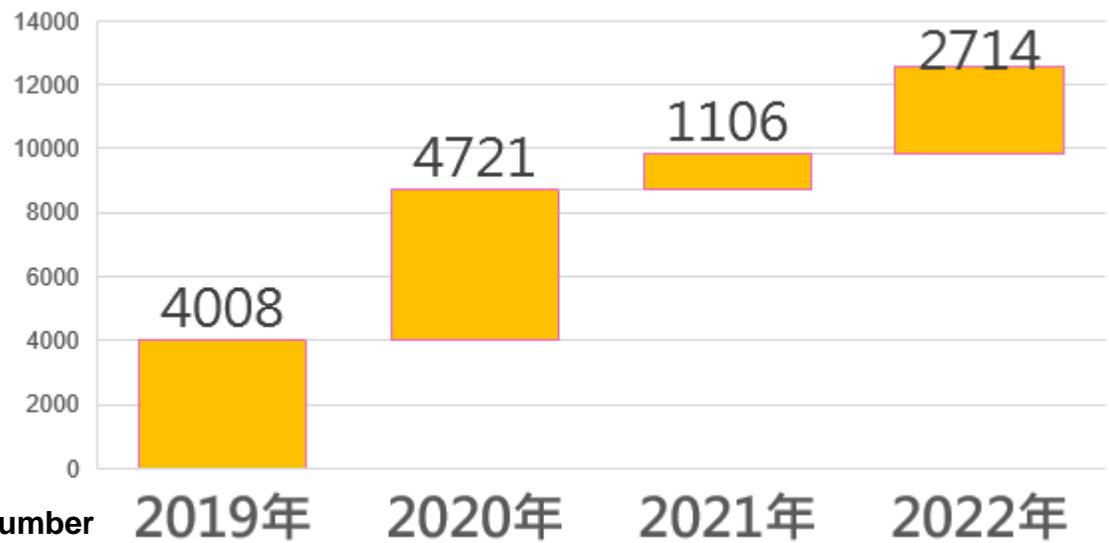


**In 2021, number of reported male victims of domestic violence increased by 7.8%, and number for female victims increased by 1.51%.
No noticeable increase in 2021 in recent trends.**

- Compared to 2020, number of reported victims of domestic violence increased by 3.63% in 2021 (4,155 victims) because of an increase in male victims.
- During level 3 alert from May to July 2021, in-person classes were canceled. As a result, number of child abuse cases reported by schools and hospitals dropped.

Increase in number of female victims

Increase in number of male victims



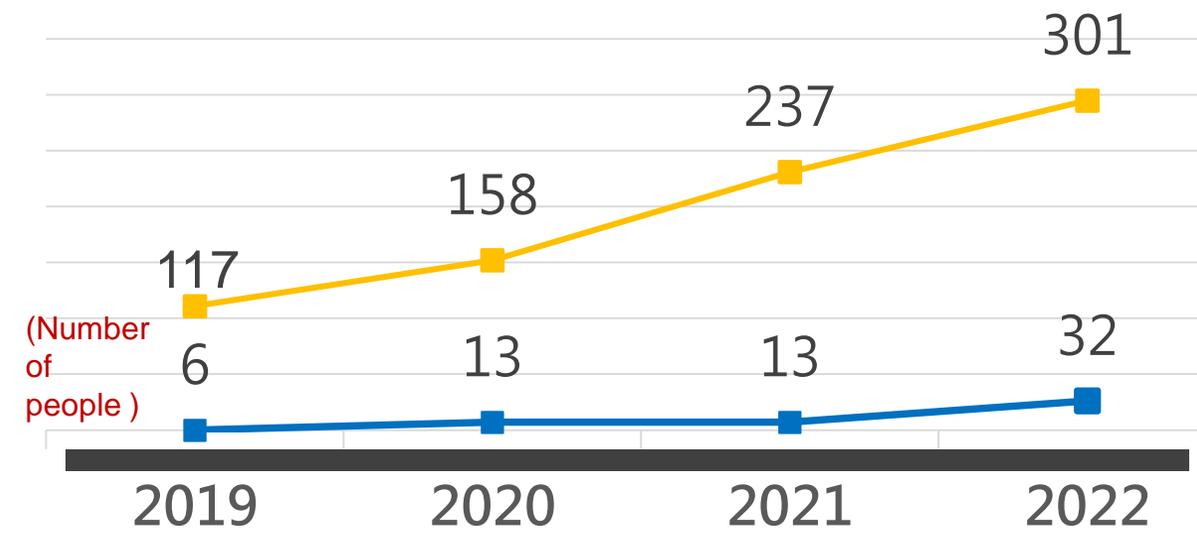
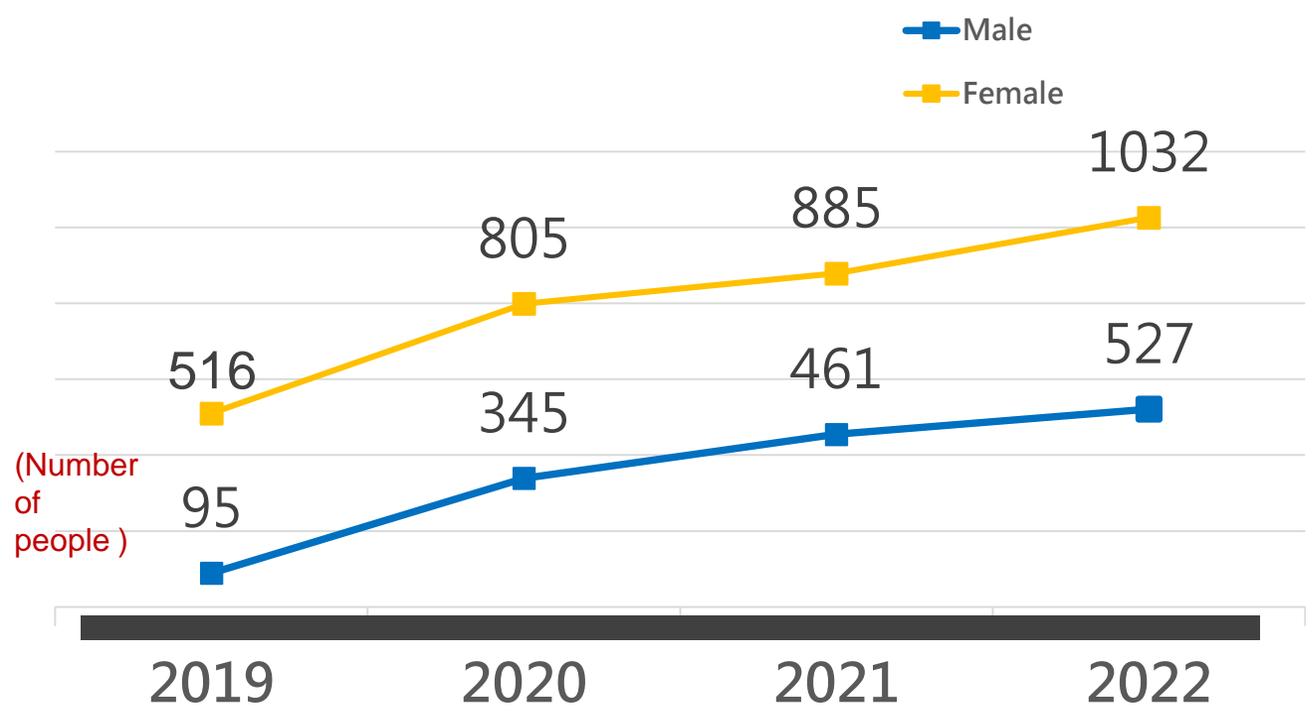
(Number of people)

(Number of people)

Number of male victims of online crimes involving sexual exploitation of children has increased at a higher rate than that of female victims. Number of female victims in cases of harassment using technological devices increased slightly compared to pre-pandemic numbers.

Cases of online sexual exploitation of children and adolescents

Harassment cases through the use of tech devices



IV. Policy Responses and Improvements

- **Relief packages:** Government provided **cash disbursements, loan assistance, and financial burden relief** for financially disadvantaged groups, workers, and industries during COVID-19. The plan has helped relieve financial burden of over 10.53 million individuals, families, and businesses since 2021.
- **Stimulus programs:** Government issued Quintuple Stimulus Vouchers to the public. In September 2021, revenue growth turned positive for female-dominated sectors including retail and food service.

Relief packages & stimulus programs

- Strengthen publicity to close gender wage gap
- **Commissioned research on gender wage gaps** and formulated concrete policies and propose recommendations

- Revised regulations regarding leave without pay, relaxed eligibility for subsidies, and provided 20% of insurance salary during parental leave without pay.
- From July to December 2021, number of men who applied for leave without pay increased by 56%. This increase was bigger than that of women, which can help close the gap in the burden of care between men and women.

Work-life balance

Promote employment of vulnerable women

Formulate regulations to close gender wage gap

Facilitated employers with the creation of gender-friendly measures in the workplace, promoted flexible hours, locations, and substitute workers.

Flexible working hours and location

- Provided job consultations, job matching, free training services to **improve workers' professional skills and cultivate new ones.**
- Provided subsidies to incentivize employers to hire women and vulnerable workers.

IV. Policy Responses and Improvements

- Planned and implemented mental health promotional activities that cater to diverse gender needs regarding health education and educational training.
- Established referral mechanisms in schools, planned to introduce the Mental Health First Aid program from Australia, and enhanced reporting capacity for suicide incidents.

- Monitored how the symptoms and the long-term side effects of COVID-19 impact the health of different genders and age groups as a reference for developing medicine and improving Taiwan's pandemic prevention system.

- Monitored the adverse events of the genders after receiving vaccination to adopt relevant responses.

Health &
Medicine

Personal
Safety

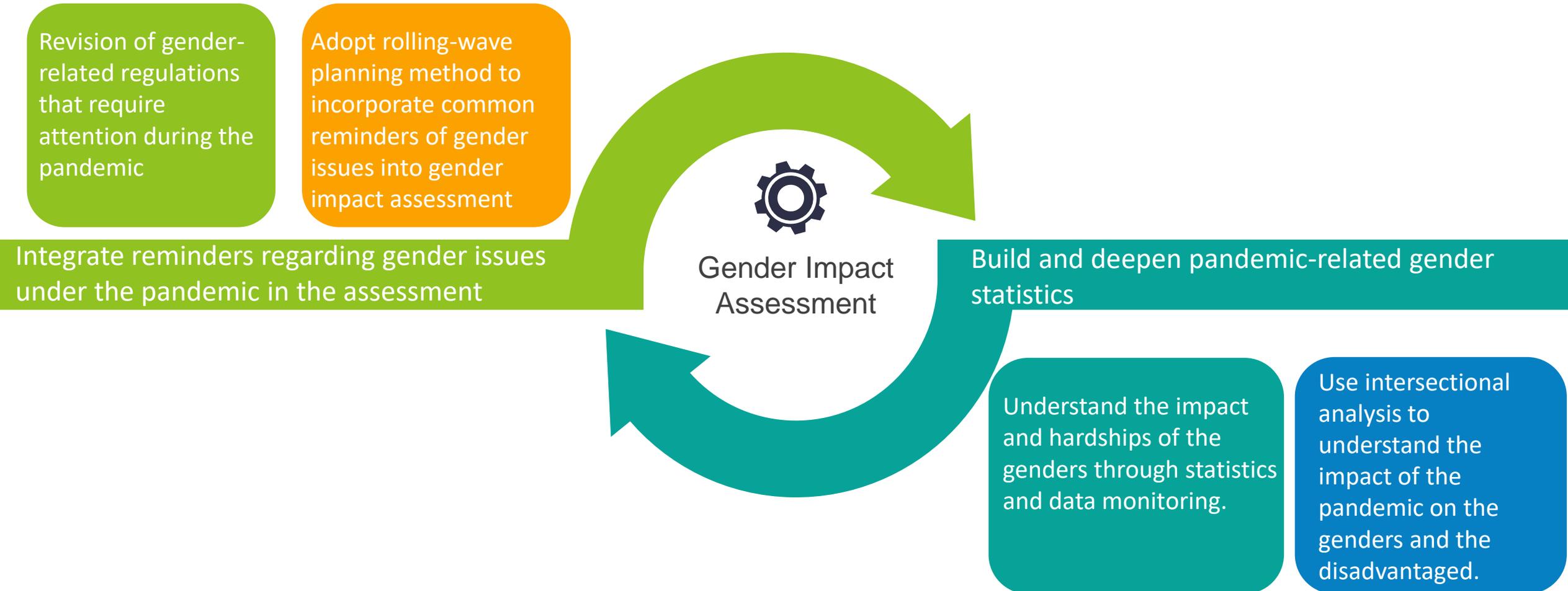
- Built an online sexual violence protection network. Revised and added new regulations in the four acts concerning sexual violence prevention. Amendments took effect in 2023.
- Implemented measures such as increasing criminal responsibilities, offender's punishment, and appropriate treatment to prevent the occurrence and reoffending of crimes involving non-consensual intimate images. Swift removal and confiscation of such images to minimize re-traumatization. Prioritized protection and assistance to the victims.

- Provided assistance for domestic violence victims who can no longer seek assistance from school or hospital during the pandemic. Promoted incident reporting from village secretary/village head, and apartment building management service personnel.

- Promoted different service channels, including online assistance and text messages for domestic violence victims conducting at-home testing or quarantining.

IV. Policy Responses and Improvements

In the future, the government will integrate gender issues during the pandemic into existing gender impact assessment as reference for future revision on current regulations and plans.



V. Conclusion



Leverage the pandemic as an opportunity to reflect on gender issues and propose strategies and actions that align with international organizations' efforts.

The government and corporations should reevaluate gender-friendliness of workplaces, promote flexible work arrangements, address gender wage gaps, and provide support to financially disadvantaged women. It is also crucial to integrate a gender perspective into healthcare services and strengthen support services for victims of domestic violence. Regular monitoring of data should also be conducted to track changes and progress in these areas.



Essential to improve government and social measures to promote inclusivity and equality in preparation for future epidemics that may deepen gender inequality!

