



IN BRIEF



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN GEORGIA

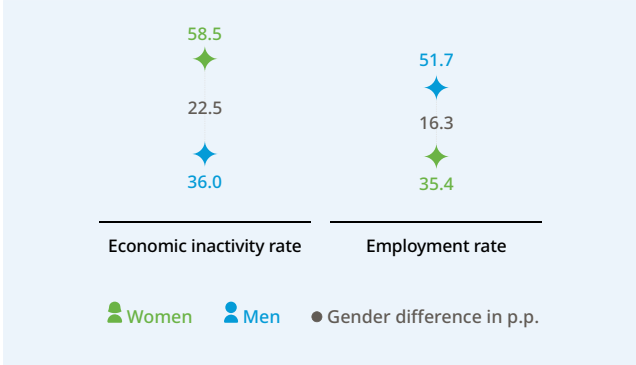
Photo by: Sopho Maghaldadze

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) is a cornerstone for achieving gender equality and fostering inclusive economic growth. Despite Georgia's commitment to gender equality, evidenced by its legal and institutional framework dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as its ratification of several related ILO conventions, significant challenges persist in realizing these ideals fully. Data show that although women and men have equal access to higher education and women often achieve better educational outcomes, these attainments do not translate into women's economic empowerment: Women still face significant barriers to labour force participation, managerial representation, entrepreneurship, equal pay and access to various assets and finance. The persistent gaps are linked to the prevailing gender managerial representation and social norms that support such disparities—including the unequal distribution of care work, as well as the lack of quality social protection and childcare services available in the country—and further limit women's economic empowerment.¹

Women are less likely to be employed or participate in the labour force.

Women continue to have lower employment rates than men, indicating persistent gender disparities in the labour market. As of 2022, the gender gap in employment in Georgia had reached its highest point in recent years, standing at 16.3 percentage points in all working-age groups, with 51.7 per cent of men and 35.4 per cent of women employed. Moreover, the data show that over the past five years, more than **55 per cent** of women have been consistently classified as economically inactive, meaning that they were neither employed nor actively seeking work.² In rural areas, women's participation in the labour force is even lower: **63.9 per cent** of women in rural areas are not economically active, often hindered by restricted mobility.³ The gender gap in the economic inactivity rate reached 22.5 percentage points in 2022 (Figure 1). Moreover, women hold only 39 per cent of managerial positions.⁴

FIGURE 1: Labour force participation and employment rates, 2022 (percentage)

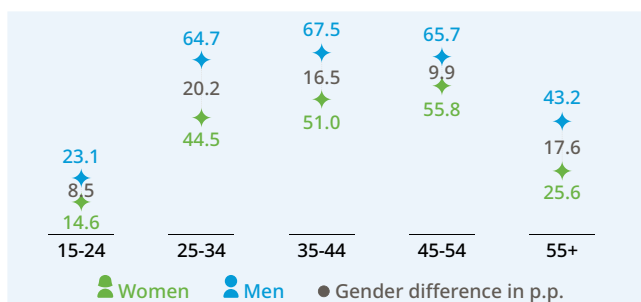


Source: Geostat. 2022. "Labour Force Survey."

The disparity in both employment and economic inactivity between women and men peaks in the 25–34 age group, which is a critical phase of career development, coinciding with women’s reproductive years.

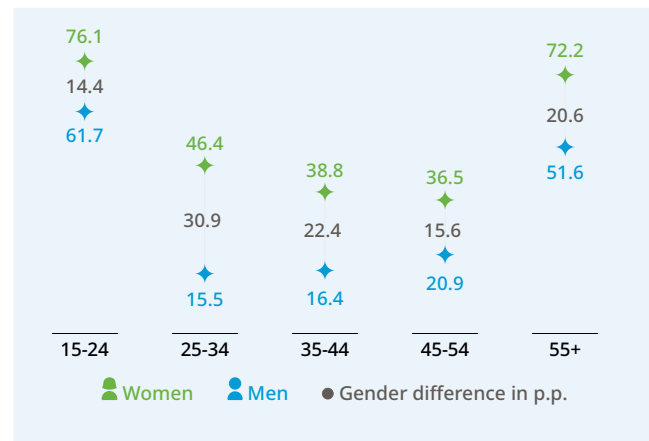
Only **44.5 per cent** of women aged 25–34 were employed, compared to **64.7 per cent** of men in the same age group, with the gender gap reaching a notable margin of 20.2 percentage points (Figure 2). Moreover, **46.4 per cent** of women aged 25–34 were not engaged in economic activities, compared to **15.5 per cent** of men, with the largest gender gap of 30.9 percentage points occurring in 25-34 age group (Figure 3).⁵

FIGURE 2: Employment rate, by sex and age group, 2022 (percentage)



Source: Geostat. 2022. "Labour Force Survey."

FIGURE 3: Economic inactivity rate, by sex and age group, 2022 (percentage of the inactive population)



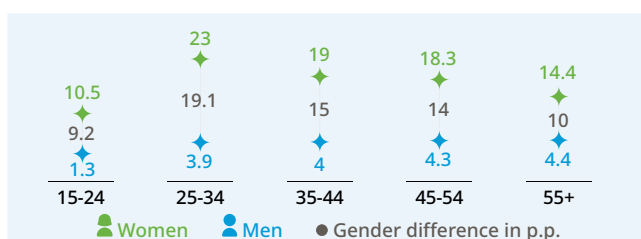
Source: Geostat. 2022. "Labour Force Survey."

However, the gap in economic inactivity decreases in older age groups as caregiving responsibilities diminish, allowing more women to reintegrate into the labour force. This trend has been consistent over the years and could be influenced by factors such as the unequal distribution of domestic and care responsibilities, limited access to childcare support services and inadequate social protection.

Women spend five times more time on unpaid domestic and care work than men in Georgia, significantly impacting their labour force participation and economic empowerment.

This disparity is especially pronounced in the **25–44 age group** (Figure 4), where women bear the heaviest share of these responsibilities, contributing to the peak in economic inactivity rates discussed previously.

FIGURE 4: Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex and age group (percentage)



Source: UN Women and Geostat. 2022. Time Use Survey in Georgia: 2020–2021.

The Time Use Survey (TUS) analysis in Georgia reveals that women face conditions that significantly increase their rates of time poverty.⁶ Women who are caregivers are **58.4 per cent less likely** to be part of the labour force than non-caregiver women and men. Women living with young children (under the age of 10) participate in labour market work on average **9.3 hours less** per week and carry out unpaid care work by **11.2 hours more**. As a result, women are **22–24.6 per cent more likely** to be **time-poor** than men.

The scarcity of quality, accessible childcare and other services, along with prevailing societal beliefs about gender roles, exacerbate these issues. A recent public opinion survey indicates that traditional views persist: A majority of the population (71 per cent) agrees that women should work less and devote more time to their families. Interestingly, 69 per cent of the population

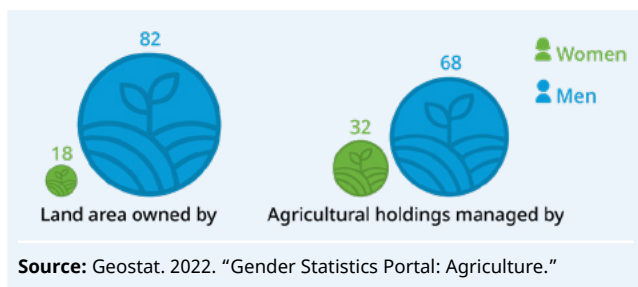
believes that when a mother works for pay, her children suffer, while only 16 per cent agree that children suffer

when their father works.⁷ These factors collectively hinder women's economic participation and advancement.

Access to asset and land ownership, as well as finances, is disproportionately limited for women.

In 2022, women managed 31.7 per cent of agricultural holdings, while men managed 68.3 per cent. Moreover, women held only 18 per cent of the land of agricultural holdings, while men held 82 per cent (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5: Distribution of agricultural holdings and land area, by sex, 2022 (percentage)



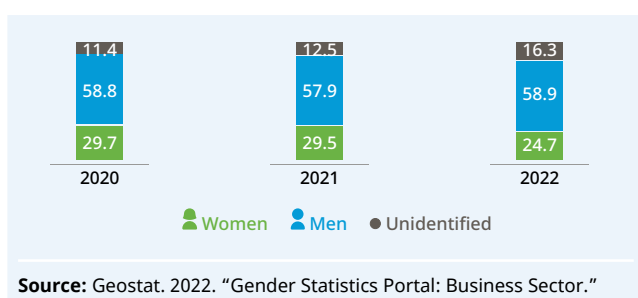
Moreover, **70-80 per cent** of women live in homes not owned by them.⁸ These patterns have been consistent over the past decade. Women's pathways to economic assets are considerably more restricted than men's, influenced by an unsupportive environment for female entrepreneurship shaped by family and community dynamics. This includes barriers like the uneven distribution of family responsibilities and caregiving duties, as highlighted in previous discussions.⁹

Furthermore, public opinion on real estate inheritance further reflects a gender divide. In 2019, **nearly half (49 per cent)** of the Georgian population believed that family apartments should be inherited equally between sons and daughters. However, 45 per cent thought the inheritance should go solely to sons, and only 1 per cent believed it should go solely to daughters.¹⁰

Women are less likely to own or manage an enterprise and if they do, it is more likely to be a small business.

Gender parity in entrepreneurship is too large to ignore, inadequate access to finance, business development services and markets remains a major obstacle for women entrepreneurs. In 2022, only 25 per cent of newly established enterprises were owned by women, and men-founded businesses were more than twice as prevalent (figure 6).

FIGURE 6: Distribution of Georgia's newly established enterprise owners, by sex, 2020-2022 (percentage)



The 2023 Assessment of Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Georgia conducted by UN Women and the ILO found that women own just **one-third (33 per cent)** of economically active enterprises in the country. Women predominantly own and manage small businesses, with less than one fifth of enterprises having a female top manager. This figure drops to a mere 10% among medium and large firms.

59 per cent of women's entrepreneurship tends to be concentrated in sectors that are characterized by the less of growth prospects and markets are already exploited, such as the trade sector, further indicating their smaller scale. 89 per cent women-led businesses are independently initiated and typically operate as sole proprietorships, often employing other women.¹¹

The assessment highlighted number of significant challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in Georgia, including: Obtaining **finances** due to limited access to credit, high interest rates and strict

collateral requirements, the dual responsibilities of **household** and **care work** alongside business duties, limited access to information and insufficient business development services, limited access to

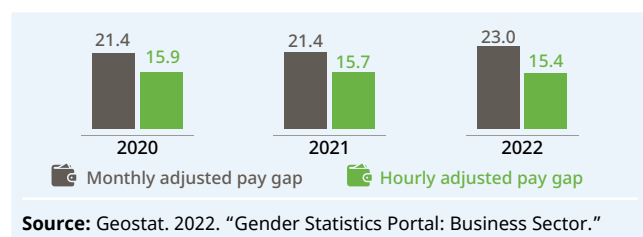
information and **communication technologies** (ICT) and limited **networks**. **Societal norms** and **beliefs** further undermine women's participation in business and restrict their access to inheritance.¹²

Even with equal educational achievements and professional backgrounds, women earn less than men.

In 2022, the adjusted gender pay gap was 23 per cent on a monthly basis and 15.4 per cent hourly (Figure 6).¹³ This calculation accounts for factors like educational achievement, professional background and other personal characteristics, as well as industry and occupational differences between genders. The unadjusted monthly gender pay gap, which does not consider individuals' demographic and job-specific attributes, stands at 31.7 per cent based on the 2022 data.

The in-depth analysis indicates that the sectoral segregation of women into lower-paid sectors accounts for about one fourth of the pay gap. The data show that women's enrolment in STEM and ICT educational programmes, which represent the most highly paid sectors in the labour market, is still significantly low. Most importantly, much of the pay gap remains unexplained by observable factors and therefore may be attributed to discriminatory practices in the labour market.¹⁴ This aligns with previous discussions about systemic barriers faced by women, including to access to financial resources and economic participation, as well as women's involvement in informal employment, reflecting a broader pattern of gender-based disparities in the workforce.

FIGURE 7:
Distribution of Georgia's newly established enterprise owners, by sex, 2020–2022 (percentage)



Key recommendations:

- Implement policies to close the gender employment gap by promoting equal opportunities, enhancing vocational training and encouraging companies to adopt gender-sensitive hiring and family-friendly work policies.
- Invest in transportation infrastructure in rural areas to improve women's access to education, employment, quality care services and other essentials.
- Recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work to help caregivers balance their responsibilities with their professional goals and enhance their workforce participation. Invest in the care economy and in care infrastructure.
- Remove barriers that limit access to finance for women, reduce requirements for collateral and loan co-guarantors and provide gender-sensitive credit lines.
- Promote financial literacy and access to business development services for women, especially those in vulnerable communities, to support their economic independence and empowerment through formal financial systems.
- Ensure the enforcement of the principle of equal pay for equal work, including compliance with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and recognize the principle of equal pay for work of equal value along with associated minimum wage standards.

Endnotes

1. UN Women. 2023. Country Gender Equality Profile of Georgia. <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/02/country-gender-equality-profile-of-georgia-2023>.
2. Geostat (National Statistics Office of Georgia). 2022. "Labour Force Survey." <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/130/labour-force-survey-databases>.
3. Ibid.
4. Geostat (National Statistics Office of Georgia). 2023. "Women and Men in Georgia." https://www.geostat.ge/media/58119/Women_And_Men_In_Georgia_2023_ENG.PDF.
5. Geostat (National Statistics Office of Georgia). 2022. "Labour Force Survey." <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/130/labour-force-survey-databases>.
6. UN Women. 2022. "Time to care: Women's unpaid care work and the inequality crisis in Georgia." Brief. <https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/12/time-to-care-womens-unpaid-carework-and-the-inequality-crisis-in-georgia>.
7. UN Women and CRRC Georgia. 2024 [forthcoming]. Gender Equality Attitudes Survey.
8. Parliament of Georgia, Gender Equality Council. 2020. Thematic Inquiry into Women's Access to Financial Resources.
9. Ibid
10. CRRC (Caucasus Research Resource Center). 2019. "Caucasus Barometer 2019 Georgia." <https://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cb2019ge/APTINHERT/>.
11. UN Women and the ILO, 2023. "National Assessment of Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Georgia". <https://georgia.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/National%20Assessment%20of%20WED%20ENG.pdf>.
12. Ibid.
13. Geostat (National Statistics Office of Georgia). 2023. Adjusted Gender Pay Gap (GPG) 2022. <https://www.geostat.ge/media/57459/Adjusted-gender-pay-gap---2022.pdf>.
14. UN Women. 2021. Country Gender Equality Profile of Georgia, p. 82. https://georgia.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/11/country-gender-equality-profile-of-georgia_georgia.