



Project Brief

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS - AZERBAIJAN



Women's economic empowerment is increasingly considered to be a prerequisite for realizing gender equality, strengthening women's agency and achieving sustainable development for all as agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the aim to reduce inequalities and to "leave no one behind".

The UN Women project "Women's Economic Empowerment in the South Caucasus" (WEESC) was initiated in August 2018 and aims to ensure that women, particularly the poor and socially excluded, in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are economically empowered and participate in relevant decision-making. The project implementing partner in Azerbaijan is UNDP supported by the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs. The project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).



Situation in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In addition, the Law on Equal Rights for Women and Men, adopted in 2006, aims to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres and to prevent gender-based discrimination, and guarantees equal opportunities in recruitment, equal pay, and protection from sex discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace.

According to the 2017 *Global Gender Gap Report*,¹ Azerbaijan ranked 45th among 144 countries with regard to the economic participation and opportunity sub-index² that measures how well they use the "female talent tool based on economic indicators". Social and cultural barriers, gendered division of work and unpaid care work as well as weaker financial incentives for women to work, as reflected in the gender pay gap, constitute the major obstacles preventing women from engaging in income generating activities.³

On average, women earn 50 per cent of men's salary.

Source: AZSTAT (2018), *Women and Men in Azerbaijan*

The female economic activity rate is 68 per cent, falling behind the male economic activity rate by 6 percentage points.

Source: AZSTAT (2018), *Women and Men in Azerbaijan*

Women noted that unequal distribution of unpaid domestic work and insufficient coverage of public services, makes it hard to reconcile family and work responsibilities.

Source: UNDP (2018), *Women in Private Sector in Azerbaijan: opportunities & challenges*

¹ World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report*. Available from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2017/>

² This sub-index contains three concepts: the participation gap, the remuneration gap and the advancement gap (the ratio of women to men among legislators, senior officials and managers, and the ratio of women to men among technical and professional workers)

³ UNDP, *Women in the Private Sector in Azerbaijan: opportunities & challenges*. Gender Assessment Report (2018). Available from <http://www.az.undp.org/content/azerbaijan/en/home/library/UNDP-AZE-Gender-Assessment-report.html>



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Outcome & Outputs

Outcome Women, particularly the poor and socially excluded, use skills, economic opportunities and relevant information to be self-employed and/or to join the formal labour sector in Azerbaijan

Output 1: Women, particularly poor and socially excluded, obtain skills and opportunities to be (self-)employed in Azerbaijan

Output 2: Selected private enterprises are empowered to serve as opinion leaders in terms of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

Implementation Strategy

Informed by UN Women's global experience and programming interventions in the area of women's economic empowerment as well as the long-standing experience of UNDP in Azerbaijan, the project's implementation strategy focuses on the following key areas: (1) social mobilization of excluded groups of women; (2) capacity development for rural women; (3) knowledge sharing, information exchange and network building; (4) awareness-raising; and (5) private sector engagement.

UNDP Azerbaijan has been promoting the economic empowerment of women from rural and peri-urban areas through the establishment of Women Resource Centers (WRC). WRCs provide access to information on women's rights, build skills in starting up businesses, sensitize banks and private companies on gender issues and facilitate participation of rural women in community-based activism through awareness-raising, capacity development and network building.

Additionally, a context-specific awareness-raising campaign targeting both women and men aimed at increasing women's economic activity rates through their engagement in the formal labour sector will be carried out. The project will work with private sector entities to implement the Women's Empowerment Principles and to promote women's engagement in the formal sector both as employees as well as suppliers and distributors.



Target Regions

In Azerbaijan, the project will target 46 municipalities in three regions: Baku-Khazar, Gusar and Sabirabad.