



Project Brief

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS



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 an aim to reduce inequalities and to "leave no one behind".

The first main phase of the 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 is implemented by UN Women Georgia, in close partnership with UNDP (in Armenia and Azerbaijan), and funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

Start Date: August 2018 (duration 36 months)

Budget: USD 3,755,000

Target Regions:

Armenia - Gegharkunik, Shirak

Azerbaijan - Baku-Khazar, Gusar and Sabirabad

Georgia - Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti



Situation

There has been some progress in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in terms of reducing gender inequality in recent years. Yet, several international indices show that work remains to be done to remove gender-based discrimination and achieve the full and equal participation of women in society and in the economy.

Country	Global Gender Gap Report (2017), overall rank out of 144 countries ¹	Global Gender Gap Report (2017), sub-index score: women's economic participation and opportunity ²	Social Progress Index (2018), overall rank out of 146 countries in sub-index: vulnerable employment (men and women) ³
Armenia	97	0.671	94
Azerbaijan	98	0.717	109
Georgia	94	0.669	112

The available statistics on women's labour force participation do not provide a complete picture, given the disproportionate engagement of women in the informal economy and vulnerable employment across the world. Still, data indicates that women in their productive years in the three South Caucasus countries are less likely to participate in the labour force than men. The labour participation rates of the working population (aged 15-64) indicate a gap of between 6 and 19 percentage points in the three countries. Similarly, women, on average, earn less than men in all three countries.

Country	Women's labour force participation rate (%)	Men's labour force participation rate (%)	Gender gap in labour force participation (percentage points)	Women's earnings as a proportion of men's earnings
Armenia ⁴	53	71	18	62
Azerbaijan ⁵	68	74	6	50
Georgia ⁶	58	75	17	64

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, prevent women in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia from engaging in income-generating activities.

Outcomes

Outcome 1: 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 Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (*grass-roots level*)

Outcome 2: Armenia and Georgia implement adequate legislative and policy frameworks to enable women's economic empowerment (*policy and legislation level*)

Outcome 3: Government and public institutions develop and deliver gender-responsive programmes, public services, strategies and plans for women's economic empowerment in Armenia and Georgia (*institutional level*)

Implementation Strategy

In line with the theory of change, the proposed project will bring about transformative change through a holistic approach, enabling linked interventions at three levels: grass-roots, policies and legislation, and institutions. This will be achieved through consistent dialogue and participation of women so that relevant institutions, policies, legislation and services respond to women's needs and enable women with strengthened capacities to empower themselves economically. The project will also support capacity development to mainstream gender in the relevant laws and policies, programmes and services to make sustainable contributions to women's economic empowerment.

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

² A score of 1 would mean absolute equality.

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

³ The Social Progress Imperative (2018), Social Progress Index. Available at <https://www.socialprogress.org/>.

⁴ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia (2018), Women and Men in Armenia. Available at https://www.armstat.am/file/article/gender_2018pdf.

⁵ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2018), Women and Men in Azerbaijan. Available at <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender/?lang=en>.

⁶ National Statistics Office of Georgia (2018), Women and Men in Georgia.