

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECONOMY OF REGIONS

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Gender equality is not only a criterion of social justice, but also one of the main factors of economic growth and stability. According to studies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, equal participation of women in economic life has a significant positive impact on the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and regional development. Studies show that a 10 percent increase in parliamentary women's representation in European and Central Asian countries adds an average of 0.74 percent to GDP growth. EU projections, on the other hand, show a 6.1–9.6 percent increase in GDP per capita as a result of gender equality increases by 2050, with additional economic benefits of € 1.95– € 3.15 trillion.

In the example of Uzbekistan, the World Bank's country Gender Assessment report of 2024 noted that the restriction of women's participation in the labor market significantly reduces the country's economic potential. According to data, if the level of labor activity of women and men is equalized, the national income will increase by 29%, and more than 700 thousand people can get out of poverty. Currently, the salary of women is 34 percent lower than that of men, the NEET (those who do not participate in education and work) rate in young women is 42 percent, and in men only 8.8 percent.

Focusing on the economic mechanisms of Gender equality, first of all, the increase in women's education is an important factor, with each additional year of study increasing their income by 10-20 percent and bringing an additional increase of 1.2–1.5 percent to the country's economy.

The wider inclusion of women in the labor market increases economic diversity, reduces income inequality, and sets the stage for the emergence of new innovative ideas. The increase in the share of women in leadership positions increases the efficiency of corporate governance, the efficiency of ESG and ensures sustainable development.

Among the restrictions in the regional context, patriarchal structures, barriers in labor law and social stereotypes are noted as the main problem. According to the OECD, some areas have economic losses of 10% to 38% due to gender inequality. At the same time, it has been scientifically proven that if women's participation in the labor market increases in the countries of the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia and Central Asia, regional GDP increases by 20-30 percent. Among the political and practical measures to ensure Gender equality, the main areas are increasing quotas for women's representation in Parliament and local governing bodies, supporting STEM-oriented education of girls, expanding child care infrastructure and encouraging women entrepreneurs through credit programs. There are successful experiences of the European Union, IMF, EIB and other international institutions in this regard.

Gender equality is an important strategic resource for regional development and sustainable economic growth. The full-fledged participation of women in economic life not

only increases economic indicators, but also reduces poverty, stimulates innovation and strengthens the social well-being of society.

According to empirical estimates, regional GDP can grow by 20-30 percent as a result of equality. Therefore, the implementation of gender-integrated policies is necessary not only in order to achieve economic, but also social stability.

Below are additional statistics on the importance of gender equality in the economy of Regions and scientifically based economic results:

- Central Asian context (World Bank analysis)

Women's male income difference in Central Asia:

61% (in Uzbekistan,

60 % (in Tajikistan),

75% (in Kyrgyzstan,

78% (in Kazakhstan).

If the salary between women and men in Uzbekistan is equalized, more than 700,000 people will come out of poverty through it, and the national income will increase by 29%.

CV's filed under the female name, for example, required 180% more applications for driving (for a position equivalent to a male name) .

Gender inequality and political reform in Uzbekistan:

With the new labor code of 2022, the "equal salary for equal work" was guaranteed, and the ban on working in industrial or dangerous professions for women was removed .

In 2023, criminal liability for domestic violence was introduced through amendments to the criminal code and the code of administrative responsibility .

According to the WBL (Women, Business and Law) analysis published in 2024, Uzbekistan entered the five most developed countries in 2024 in terms of legal structures regarding gender equality, with an index rating of 82.5 points (at the same level as Singapore, Turkey, UAE) .

Educational and economic efficiency:

Giving women an additional one year of education increases their income by 10-20%, leading to a 1.2-1.5% increase in the country's economy .

This effect is especially relevant for developing countries, and gender education gap has a significant impact on economic growth .

Women's entrepreneurship and trade – UNDP analysis:

Of the 5.2 million entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan in 2024, 2.1 million were women, which represents a 7-fold increase compared to 2020 .

Through the UNDP-sponsored Aid for Trade program, there has been a productivity increase of around 20% since 2018, with export contracts worth \$ 192.6 million being signed and thousands of jobs created (many of them for women).

Economic losses of Gender inequality:

If Uzbekistan promotes gender equality, the potential increase in GDP will be up to 29%, with an estimated 700,000 people coming out of poverty.

In the Central Asian region, in reality, these losses negatively affect annual income, labor efficiency and social well-being .

More current analytical areas

1. Community norms and stereotypes — more than two-thirds of respondents believe that women should prioritize housing and childcare, which hinders women's economic participation .

2. In professions, contrafactual CV experiences-gender names dramatically change the likelihood of applications being called back, suggesting the existence of explicit gender discrimination .

3. Social opportunities in the Soviet era-for example, in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, women actively participated in higher education and professional activities, compared with current norms.

Social companies-necessary to reduce gender stereotypes, raise the economic and political participation of women.

Economic stability can be achieved by expanding the infrastructure for women's education and entrepreneurship (education, financing, mentoring).

As a result, the regional GDP is expected to grow to 20-30%, stimulating gender equality, which puts countries on the path of sustainable economic development.

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