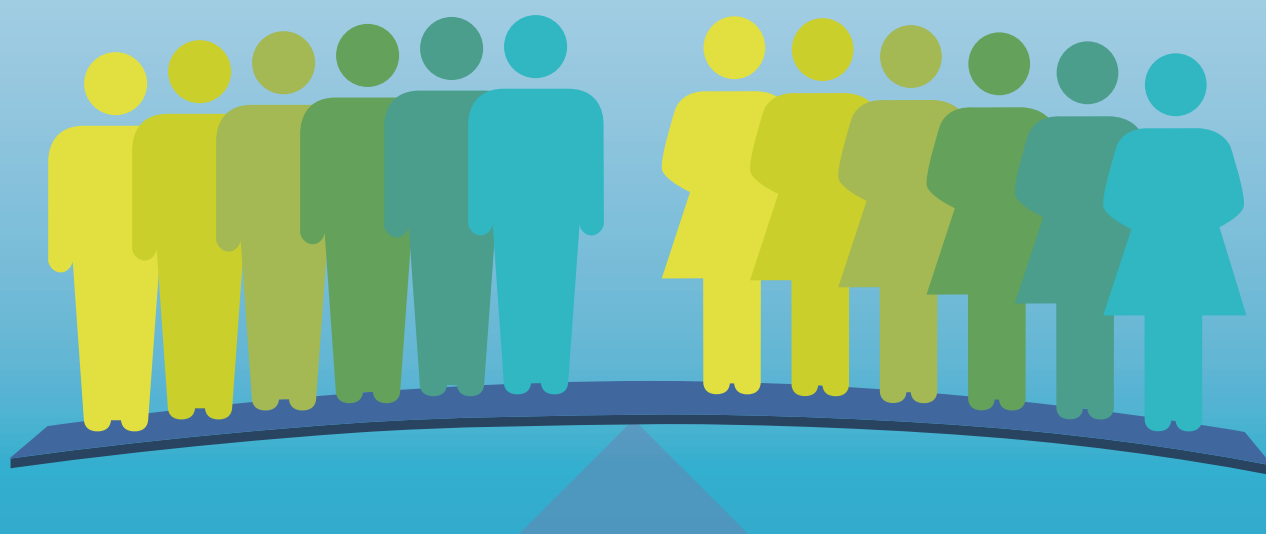


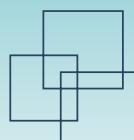


International
Labour
Organization

Gender and Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States



TRENDS AND KEY CHALLENGES



The Decent Work Technical Support Team and
The ILO Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Moscow 2017



Marina E. Baskakova, Irina V. Soboleva, Elena S. Kubishin

Gender and Youth Employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States:

Trends and Key Challenges

**The Decent Work Technical Support Team and
The ILO Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

Moscow 2017

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CONTENTS

Foreword	v
Introduction	vii
List of acronyms	ix
Section 1. THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN.	1
Section 2. OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA	41
Section 3. THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN	91
Section 4. OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC.	125
Section 5. THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.	177
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	223
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS	227
ANNEX	233



Foreword

The study was commissioned in the context of the ILO project “Partnerships for Youth Employment in the CIS” implemented by the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia with financial support of the Russian private company PAO LUKOIL. The study covers selected CIS countries; namely, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Armenia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation. The study reviews the gender dimensions and gaps in employment trends, situations of education and training, as well as employment placements, highlighting disadvantages and discrimination young women and men face in the world of work in these countries. While all countries have established equality in education, training and employment opportunities in national laws, there remain gender differences in the labour market outcomes between young women and men. The study undertakes gender analysis of the reasons behind such gendered patterns of employment and labour market outcomes in various relevant countries where there is also a variation of gender differences in their labour markets.

The ILO promotes gender equality in the world of work as part of fundamental rights and principles at work, which is principally guided by two key equal rights conventions, namely, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (no. 111) and Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (no. 100). Employment Policy Conventions, 1964 (no. 122) also includes a specific clause on equality in employment. Furthermore, the ILO’s International Labour Conference at its 101st session in 2012, adopted a resolution - “The youth employment crisis: A call for action”. The resolution calls upon the governments, employers and workers to take action for promoting youth employment, ensuring that employment policies and programmes are guided by the equal rights principles and gender sensitive. Promotion of youth employment and gender equality are among key priorities of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goal 5 and Goal 8). Moreover, the ILO Centenary Initiative launched by the ILO explicitly calls to address the challenges young women and men meet in the labour market. Gender related challenges definitely belong to this category.

All the countries under review have ratified the relevant conventions. However, given the gender gaps in the patterns of employment for young women and men, it is hoped that the results of the study will not only further stimulate the debate on the relevant issues, but also will inform specific policy and programme measures to be taken to ensure that young women and men have equal opportunities for productive employment and decent work in all the countries.

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INTRODUCTION

High youth unemployment rates remain a major challenge in most countries of the world. At present, the gender dimension of the issue does not raise special concerns since there is no significant difference between the unemployment rates for youths and girls on the global scale. According to the Global Employment Trends for Youth, in 2015 and 2014 gender differences in unemployment rates constituted as little as 1 percentage point (the unemployment rate for youths was 12.6 per cent, while that for girls was 13.6 per cent). However, the indicators may vary across countries of the world, even within the boundaries of one region. The countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are no exception. The specificity of the countries in the region lies in the fact that some 25 years ago, they constituted a single State and by the time of independence, the employment statuses of both men/youths and women/girls had much in common despite the demographic and socioeconomic differences. This was primarily manifested in the unified regulation of labour relations. Labour laws of that time stipulated for the equality of men and women in all areas of life and granted numerous privileges and guarantees to women workers (fully paid maternity and sick leave as well as a partially paid leave to care for a child below 1.5 years of age, etc.), which were strictly observed. Levels of educational attainment in all the CIS countries were high. Moreover, post-secondary and tertiary vocational education was feminized practically everywhere (in 1988/89, girls constituted 44 per cent of students in secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Azerbaijan, 54 per cent in Armenia, 57 per cent in Kazakhstan, 60 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, and 58 per cent in Russia). Another common typical feature was that women were active in occupational employment. Shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union (1990), their share among workers and employees constituted 43 per cent in Azerbaijan, 48 per cent in Armenia, 49 per cent in Kazakhstan, 49 per cent in Kyrgyzstan, and 51 per cent in Russia. In the countries, with their ideology of full employment, the issue of youth unemployment and its gender dimension was relevant only in the labour-excessive Central Asian and Transcaucasian republics, but even there it was latent and controlled by the State. Much has changed since independence. Each CIS member country has formulated its own labour and gender laws, as well as gender policies reflecting its national interests and peculiarities, while the economies of all these countries have become market oriented. However, new gender challenges typical of all the CIS countries to a varying extent have emerged in education and the world of work. Abuse of workers' labour rights has become everyday practice at many non-governmental enterprises, especially those operating in the informal economy. Entitlements to paid temporary disability, maternity, regular or educational leave, etc., although stipulated by many national labour laws, are not always observed in practice. This issue concerns primarily young women workers who, due to biological specificities connected with their reproductive function and maternity, are in greater need of social insurance and privileges associated with pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding and stipulated by law for employed women. Another challenge is the revival of patriarchal gender stereotypes that has led to widespread discrimination, including gender-related discrimination in employment and the labour market. In education, skills mismatch have become a major challenge (by both education levels and occupations). Commercialization of the system has aggravated the situation. Occupational segregation in education has always been and remains a basis for segregation in employment and a cause of a gender pay gap. A sharp increase in unemployment, particularly among youth, is a special issue in the CIS countries. In all of them, girls face both age- and sex-based discrimination during recruitment.

At present, each of the CIS countries is looking for its own way of addressing these issues, sometimes succeeding in the areas where other countries have failed to achieve positive results. Therefore, a comparative study of the gender dimension in the vocational training, job placement and employment of youth in the CIS countries may help reveal main gender challenges in these areas and find the most effective solutions.



Aim of the study: expose gender challenges in the vocational training and job placement of youth in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Russian Federation and, based on their analysis, formulate proposals to improve youth, education and employment policies, with a view to ensuring gender equality.

Subject of study: gender challenges in vocational education and job placement of youth.

Period of study: 2009–2016.

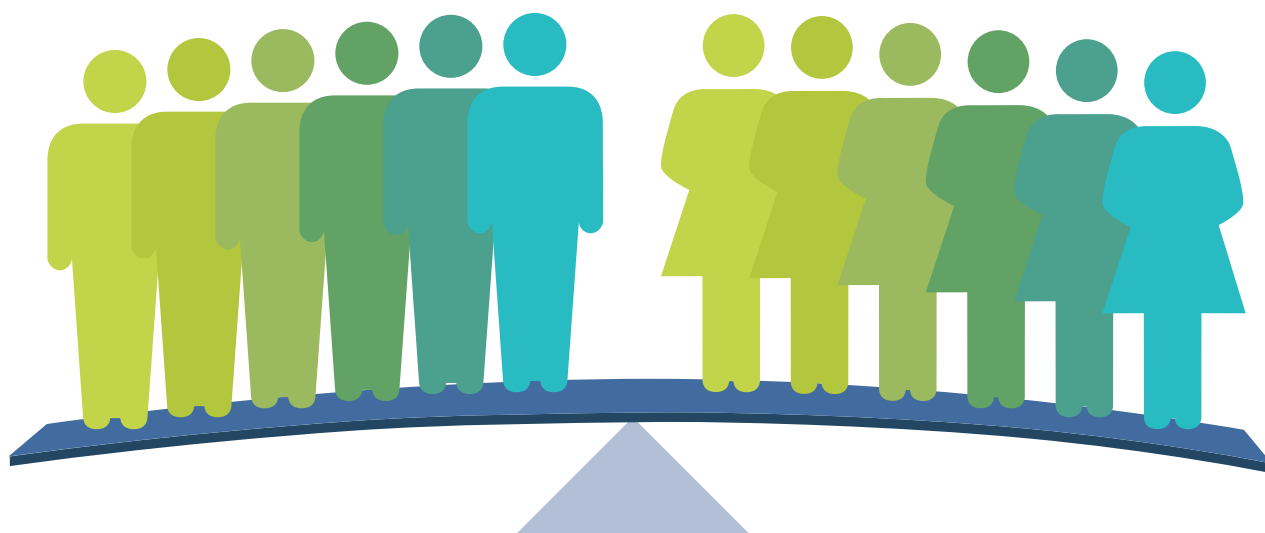




List of acronyms

GDP	gross domestic product
PES	public employment service
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCE	International Standard Classification of Education
NGO	non-governmental organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
PPAN	personal pension account number in the Pension Fund of the Russian Federation
FITUR	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
EAP	economically active population

Section 1. THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN



TRENDS AND CHALLENGES



CONTENTS – SECTION 1

Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities, youth labour regulation in national legislation	4
Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth	7
Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education	15
Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment	20
Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls	28
Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment	32
Conclusions	38
Recommendations	39



The Republic of Azerbaijan is a vivid manifestation of the impact of new trends associated with globalization on traditional oriental values and behavioural stereotypes. This impact makes itself felt in all areas of public life and diverse processes, including the gender dimension of vocational education and employment of the young generation.

The information base of the study includes international conventions and national legal instruments regulating labour relations and gender equality, the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as in-depth interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, the Public Employment Service, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, the Study Centre under the Ministry of Economic Development, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues, the Vocational Education Centre for Unemployed, the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations, the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the university community and women's movements, as well as rapid assessment surveys of students and youth undergoing training at the Vocational Education Centre for Unemployed.



Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities, youth labour regulation in national legislation

1.1. International regulations on gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour incorporated into national legislation (ratified conventions and convention ratification plans)

In the post-Soviet era, the Republic of Azerbaijan put a lot of effort into ratifying international conventions aimed at empowering various population groups, observing their rights, and achieving gender equality. Back in 1992, it ratified the ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) and the ILO Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. In 1995, it ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and in 2001 – the Optional Protocol to it. In 2010, Azerbaijan ratified the ILO Convention No. 156 concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities. Of all post-Soviet countries, only the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation ratified the Convention. The Republic of Azerbaijan also ratified the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention (No. 131), which is very important for strengthening the position of youth in terms of employment.

In the course of the last few years, the Government and its social partners have been actively discussing the possibility of ratifying such extremely important conventions as the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention (No. 168) and the Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183).

Ratification of the ILO conventions has had a certain impact on national legislation. For example, since the adoption of the Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1999, about 200 amendments have been introduced into it, mostly in connection with the ratification of various ILO conventions. After the ratification of Convention No. 156, an amendment extending entitlement to a childcare leave to both parents was introduced into the LC and is now an important part of the legal framework on gender equality.

The Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan states that international conventions supplement national labour laws.

1.2. National regulations on gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour

The fundamental rights of the Republic's population in the world of work, including those related to gender equality, are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted in 1995. Article 25 of the Constitution stipulates for the right to equality of men and women at the workplace. According to Article 35 of the Constitution, all citizens enjoy the right to work, but no one can be forced to work. Labour contracts must be signed on a voluntary basis and may not include terms and conditions leading to discrimination based on nationality, official position, etc. The Constitution guarantees the right to a free choice of a job and a wage in the amount no lower than the officially set minimum. Article 37 stipulates for the right to rest, including an 8-hour working day, a 21-day regular leave and holidays.





The Republic of Azerbaijan was the first post-Soviet country to adopt a new Labour Code in 1999. The Labour Code was formulated with the support of the ILO. ILO experts analysed its articles, provided recommendations and concluded that the resulting document complied with the international standards of observing labour rights.

According to Article 16 of the Labour Code on inadmissibility of discrimination in labour relations, it is forbidden to discriminate between workers on grounds of nationality, sex, race, ethnicity, language, place of residence, property, marital status, political views, affiliation with trade unions and other social organizations, employment status, as well as other factors not related to workers' business qualities, occupational skills and output. No advantages and privileges may be granted to workers, nor may their rights be restricted based on the above factors.

Experts point out that Article 16 does not fully comply with international standards since it lacks the requirement of non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and family responsibilities. The latter often leads to indirect discrimination, which is much more difficult to trace as compared to direct discrimination.

The Law on the Employment of Population in the Republic of Azerbaijan was enacted in 2001. In Article 6 of the Law, the provision on inadmissibility of discrimination based on sex, age, marital status, political and religious convictions and other factors not related to a worker's business qualities and occupational skills places particular emphasis on its inadmissibility in employment.

The Labour Code states that citizens enjoy the right to work starting from the age of 15. However, privileges concerning the number of working hours are granted until the age of 16. It is forbidden to hire youth below the age of 18 for underground work.

In 2006, the Law on State Guarantees of Gender Equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan was enacted with the intention of legalizing equal rights of men and women in all areas of public life, including the world of work and employment. The Law stipulates for the employers' duty to maintain gender equality throughout all stages and in all aspects of labour relations: in recruitment, promotion, remuneration, skills development, working conditions, dismissal and application of administrative penalties.

Experts point out that the wording of the article stipulating for gender equality in wage policies does not fully comply with the provisions of Convention No. 111, since it mentions equal jobs and not jobs of equal value.

• • •

"It is very simple not to discriminate within one enterprise. However, there may be two government-financed enterprises where workers with equal skills receive different wages and the wage gap is large."

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population).

• • •

Article 10 of the Law on Gender Equality specifically points to the inadmissibility of publication of discriminatory job advertisements. It should be mentioned that, initially, the ban on publishing discriminatory advertisements did not produce any special effect on employers' behaviour. Some five or six years ago, advertisements were full of indications of sex, age, appearance and other characteristics of jobseekers not directly connected with the specificity of jobs, despite the legislative ban.¹

In recent years, the number of discriminatory advertisements in the press has decreased. According to representatives of the Ministry of Labour, that may have been caused by the large-scale advocacy campaigns that were conducted among employers and the mass media.

¹ For more detail, see Baskakova M. Young people in Azerbaijan: the gender aspect of transition from education to decent work. ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Working paper #5, pp. 48–49. Moscow, 2012.



• • •

“We have involved labour inspectors in advocacy campaigns connected with discriminatory advertisements. Employers published them without giving it another thought. The number of such advertisements has lately decreased, but they sometimes get through.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population).

• • •

Article 11 of the Law on Gender Equality specifically stipulates for inadmissibility of sexual harassment. According to it, it is forbidden to persecute workers who complained about being sexually harassed by an employer. Besides, in case of harassment a worker may resign immediately, without any notification.

There is a separate article according to which grounds should be provided in cases where men and women are treated differently. For example, the fact that only men are enlisted is not regarded as discrimination, and the same is true of a ban on using women for performing heavy work and work carried out under hazardous conditions. The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan has approved the list of such occupations. However, experts from the ILO and the Council of Europe maintain that the list of occupations forbidden to women is too long and does not meet the requirements of the European Social Charter. A decision of the Cabinet of Ministers has been drafted on revising the list in conformity with the recommendations of the Council of Europe, but the public opinion objects strongly. The majority of the population believes that women must not be allowed to work under hazardous conditions.

Women's organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan are of the opinion that the Law on Gender Equality is not perfect.

• • •

“I conducted a legal review of the Law. It proclaims the need for gender equality and describes its various aspects but does not indicate any mechanisms for achieving it.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women's organization)

• • •

In 2009, a law on youth employment was drafted in the Republic of Azerbaijan, which, according to one of the experts, “is suspended between the two ministries” (the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues) and has not been enacted as a result. Since 2002, the aim of the applicable Law on Youth Policies has been to provide support to youth in all areas of public life, but its focus has not been specifically on either the world of work or the gender dimension of youth issues or youth employment.

In general, when analysing the labour legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan, it should be admitted that it meets, basically, the present-day requirements and international standards.

1.3. National mechanism for the advancement of women

At present, a national mechanism for ensuring gender equality has been *de jure* formed in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The body responsible for the operation of the national mechanism is the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues. According to the regulations on the Committee, it is a central executive body within the Cabinet of Ministers. The Committee Chairman is appointed by the President and is a member of Government. Therefore, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues has the status of a ministry. The Committee's activity is mostly financed from the state budget. At the same time, a number of programmes are financed by international organizations such as the ILO, the UNIFEM and others.





The Committee has established a gender unit in order to achieve *de-facto* equal opportunities for men and women. There is also an inter-ministerial council consisting of representatives of government ministries and women's non-governmental organizations whose primary task is to monitor the implementation of the public gender policies.

In each ministry, there is an official, whose duty is to report on the gender balance in his/her ministry to the State Committee and to the labour statistics unit at the Ministry of Labour on an annual basis. Experts from women's NGOs point out that the reports are generally rather formal and do not reflect many important aspects of gender equality.

It is possibly for this reason that Committee representatives found it difficult to answer the question what challenges are facing women, primarily young ones, in the area of employment, and admitted that they did not analyse gender issues of youth.

In 2015, a new component was added to the national mechanism of ensuring gender equality in the form of a parliamentary committee on gender equality. Thus, now there are appropriate committees in both the executive and the legislative branches.

It should be pointed out in conclusion that policies aimed at advancing gender equality have no special focus on younger age cohorts, and youth policies, in their turn, are implemented without due regard for the gender dimension.

Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth

As it has been mentioned above, national legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan is sufficiently gender-balanced. Moreover, public authorities make efforts to advance women in all areas of public life. In the opinion of experts of women's organizations, in a number of cases a trend towards a positive gender discrimination may be discerned at the official level.

At the same time, the actual position of women, including young ones, is considerably different from what is stipulated by national legislation. The reason is rooted in centuries-old traditions and stereotypes typical of most representatives of the present-day Azerbaijani society regardless of their sex, age, educational attainment and position.

However, the findings of the present study permit a supposition that younger and more educated Azerbaijanis are demonstrating a shift towards egalitarian gender ideas. This creates a basis for a bidirectional model of the economic behaviour of young women, depending on their place of residence, educational attainment and quality of their education.

2.1. Gender stereotypes in the division of gender roles

Несмотря на все глобализационные и модернизационные веяния, захлестнувшие Азербайджанскую
Despite globalization and modernization trends that have swept over the Republic of Azerbaijan over the last decades, the view of a woman as primarily a homemaker and guardian of the hearth and of a man as a breadwinner dominates all population groups and is shared by both men and women.



• • •

“Women’s main occupation is their family, children and household. A woman is guardian of the hearth, a person who provides man with “rear services support” permitting him to develop himself, earn a living and provide for his family and his household. No one has ever disaffirmed it.”

(From an interview with a male representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •

“This is not because of discrimination – women themselves, due to their mentality, do not venture to become entrepreneurs. In Azerbaijan, they have traditionally been guardians of the hearth and childminders. This is a traditional view of the role of women in society.”

(From an interview with a female representative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Issues)

• • •

There are two types of traditional mentality, a soft-line and a hard-line one. According to the hard-line mentality, man’s domination is absolute, and any activity of women outside the family is not encouraged, moreover, it is often forbidden. Such relationship is no longer typical of large cities, but persists in many rural areas of the country.

• • •

“There are no provisions in the Koran restricting women’s rights. However, everyone interprets religion in his/her own way. There are regions, including some areas in the city of Baku where it is not customary to let girls go to school after they have completed nine grades, for religious or psychological reasons.”

(From an interview with the Director of the Study Centre under the Ministry of Economic Development)

• • •

“Girls are often forbidden to work by their fathers, brothers or husbands. Such is our mentality.”

(From an interview with the head of a regional employment centre)

• • •

The soft-line mentality allows, and even encourages women to get educated and work, but only in minor positions permitting them to devote enough time to their family and children. According to the hard-line mentality, the plight of women is unquestioning obedience, whereas the soft one requires their primary devotion to the family, while placing work second in line, which seems to be the free choice of women themselves.

• • •

“In our country, the primary task of a girl is to get married. She may attend a university, get tertiary education and wish to go on improving her knowledge. However, if asked what she will prefer – a career or a family – 90 per cent will choose family. After they are married, give birth to children and bring them up, they will be willing to make a career as well.”

(From an interview with the head of the Public Employment Service)

• • •





The hard-line mentality denies women all rights and leaves them unprotected.

"In villages, fathers believe that they feed an unwanted member of the family – after marriage the daughter will join the husband's family. Therefore, they do their best to get a daughter married as early as possible, at the age of 13–15. No education, no health and no rights, because her husband may simply turn her out of the house with two or three children, and her father may refuse to take her back."

• • •

The ideology of the soft-line model is based on the notion that one cannot hurt the weak. Therefore, man (being stronger) must take care of his woman and protect her from all risks.

"I believe that a young girl must be protected and cared for until you pass her on to her husband; then her husband will protect her honour and dignity."

(From an interview with the head of the Public Employment Service)

"Girls are excessively watched over. Her father may seem to be quite a European-minded person, but he would never let his daughter go anywhere alone."

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry for Youth and Sport)

• • •

Followers of the soft-line model sincerely believe that they act for the woman's benefit.

• • •

"Man must do his best to provide for his family whether he wants it or not, while the emancipation women are striving for is fraught with problems..."

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •

The soft-line and the hard-line models of relationship between man and woman as well as the extent of a woman's freedom may form rather odd combinations.

• • •

"In our country, the attitude to women is rather tolerant as compared to some other Muslim countries. They can even do business. If her husband allows her, why not..."

(From an interview with a representative of the Commission for the Affairs of Youth, the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

• • •

Both the soft-line and in the hard-line models originate from the patriarchal division of gender roles.

• • •

"When getting married, men and women make different choices. When a woman gets married, she understands that the family, the house and the children are her responsibility. When a man gets married, he understands that he must provide the family with everything. He is outside the house, while she is inside it."

(From an interview with the head of the Public Employment Service)

• • •

"Some women find a job where they would be able to take care of their children, while others prefer a job guaranteeing them a normal life. In our country, women mostly work in education or health care where they enjoy more freedom in their time management."

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •



This point of view is generally shared by the older generation and by many representatives of the younger generation.

• • •

"I think it is not that women must not work; they simply should pay more attention to their home, while men must do men's work. I mean he must earn money and bring it home."

(A student's opinion)

• • •

The data of rapid assessment surveys of youth in the Republic of Azerbaijan² show that less than a quarter of youths and as little as a third of girls share egalitarian views of the division of household responsibilities. As was expected, egalitarian views are more widespread among students (this is especially true of the elitist Public Administration Academy under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan where half of those interviewed were of the opinion that household responsibilities must be equally shared between husband and wife) as compared to other, less educated categories of youth.

Only a third of those interviewed (mostly students) acknowledge women's right to choose whether she must devote herself to her family. It should be pointed out, however, that girls are twice as active in upholding this right as youths (about 40 per cent and 20 per cent respectively).

The interviews show that a weak yet a traceable tendency towards a certain shift in, if not revision of, gender roles has started to show in the last decade. On the one hand, girls become more active. A greater number of them seek self-fulfilment not only in the family but also at work as well as economic independence.

• • •

"Gender challenges in rural areas have remained, i.e. girls are forced to marry at an early age and have no right to work. But in urban areas, this is no longer the case."

(From an interview with a university rector)

• • •

"Some changes have taken place in the world of work. Girls may study, choose an occupation and come to the employment service, both girls with tertiary education and without any skills at all. However, it is not often that young girls come here without their parents. Can you imagine that? Whereas my friends, who used to live in the same society that I did, let their daughters go study abroad. Alone!"

(From an interview with the head of the Public Employment Service)

• • •

"Today, girls have become more active; all of them want to work and socialize with other people. Some 10 years ago, there was nothing of the kind."

(From an interview with the head of a regional employment centre)

• • •

On the other hand, men are now more willing to assume some of the household responsibilities and participate in bringing up children.

• • •

"My mother works, and when I come home, I cook for myself. Do you think it is bad?"

(From an interview with a student)

• • •



² Twenty-four youths and 42 girls were interviewed, including students of two Baku universities (a public and a private one) as well as clients of the Vocational Education Centre for Unemployed).



“When I take my children to the theatre, I am surprised that half of the children are with their fathers. Besides, I can see that many fathers take their children for a walk. This is not a ‘man’s duty’, but everything is slowly changing – at least in the city. I cannot say the same about villages.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry for Youth and Sport)

“What was traditional in Azerbaijan? Men used to work earning a living, while women brought up children. Now their roles are changing... In the past, men were main breadwinners in the family, and now they are not.”

(From an interview with a university lecturer)

The above interviews testify to the fact that the trend towards a gradual revision of the traditional division of gender role is primarily based on the economic necessity rather than on cultural or ideological factors, on the penetration of other, more egalitarian cultures across the country’s boundaries, or on the advocacy efforts of the Government and international organization.

“During the Soviet era, men were able to provide for their families. Now there is a greater need for some additional income. This is why women have become more active economically.”

(From an interview with a representative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Issues)

“The current situation is such that every family member must work. Previously, in Soviet time, parents were able to help somehow; everything was more stable. Now this is more difficult.” From an interview with a university lecturer)

“Now the situation requires everyone to work. If a family consists of three members, all of them have to work. Otherwise, it is impossible to provide for the family.”

(An opinion of an unemployed woman)

According to experts, a change in the economic situation not only had an impact on women’s economic activity but also mitigated gender segregation in employment to some extent.

“Some 10 years ago, women were quite satisfied with health care and education. Now wages there are low, therefore, they shift to the private sector. Half of employees in any company are women.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

At the same time, the situation with childcare leave has not practically changed. In 2014, 17,760 women went on such leave, but not a single man did.

“Legislation stipulates for childcare leave for fathers, but I have never heard of anyone taking one.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)



2.2. Gender stereotypes in employment and the labour market

Gender stereotypes in employment and the labour market originate from general stereotypes concerning the gender roles of men and women. Stereotypes concerning gender roles in general, especially if women share them, influence employment preferences.

• • •

“Owing to their mentality that much attention should be paid to the family and children, women prefer part-time work, for example, in health care or services, and there is no discrimination anywhere.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •

“There is no discrimination here. There are specific preferences. Owing to their mentality, girls acquire professions of teachers, physicians... or pre-school educators.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •

Both men and women working at the Ministry consider such specific preferences quite natural and see no problems in it.

• • •

“Please understand that the gender issue is not critical in our labour market. When we turn to international experience – to Latin America or India – there are problems there. In our country, even if there is any difference, it boils down to women’s preferences.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •

“I have a wife and two daughters. My wife works in health care. My daughters are studying and are free to be interested in whatever they want to. I don’t lock them up. Nor do I tell my wife in what polyclinic she should work, but that she looks at what she wants for herself. She wants to work until 3 p.m. or 4 p.m., because then it’s time to go and fetch our children.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population).

• • •

The points of view of employers on the advantages of men and women workers are also traditional. In girls, they appreciate accuracy, industriousness, a feeling of responsibility, gentleness and tactfulness.

• • •

“I know a lot of high-level employers who prefer hiring women. I believe that it is much easier to work with women thanks to their natural complaisance, feeling of responsibility, gentleness, loyalty and ability to skirt sensitive issues... Women are more responsible by nature than men are. A woman will stay at work late until she is done with the job.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •

The data of rapid assessment surveys also show that young people are not free of the traditional gender stereotypes concerning jobs for men and women. Only the majority of students of the elitist Presidential Academy believe that both men and women are equally suited for all kinds of jobs. Among other respondents, there prevails an opinion that work associated with decision-making must be done by men, while women are better suited for paperwork and work with people.





• • •
 “Girls do paperwork better because they are tidier than youths, while youths must take decisions.”

(A student’s opinion)

• • •

Girls demonstrate more egalitarian views concerning jobs suitable for men and women. They select the option “suitable for both” more often than youths do when answering all questions, except the one concerning jobs involving high physical workloads.

Opinions concerning doing big business coincide almost fully in all categories of respondents. Both youths and girls, students and unemployed were sure in two thirds of cases that it is the prerogative of men to manage large businesses. Only one third of respondents saw that occupation as gender-neutral. Instead, such occupations as small business, self-employment and the work of contributing family workers were mostly assigned to women.

Experts pointed out unanimously that university graduates had almost equal chances of getting a job regardless of their sex.

• • •
 “Some five or six years ago, I would have said without doubt that an employer would choose a youth from among two applicants with more or less equal skills... Now employers begin to understand that girls are no less responsible than youths and work even better, and sometimes their knowledge is better. Girls have one shortcoming: they may get married very soon and go on a maternity leave, and the employer will have to look for a new worker.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry for Youth and Sport)

• • •

However, employers are inclined to giving preference to girls when hiring workers for initial positions with a large share of routine work, whereas in case of promotion other considerations are applied.

• • •
 “When a person is hired for an initial position, no preferences are obvious. But when the question concerns promotion to managerial positions, men are given preference.”

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs’ Organizations)

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Azerbaijani employers are also mistrustful of women entrepreneurs. In practice, this mistrust narrows women’s opportunities of receiving a loan for doing business.

• • •
 “We are an oriental nation; we are accustomed to women staying at home, in the kitchen. What are they capable of? Few people trust women in doing business.”

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs’ Organizations)

• • •

“Both men and women are willing to get loans. However, a bank employee will prefer to deal with a man, because there is always a man behind a woman. Such is our mentality. A woman will never come and say, ‘Why are you bothering my husband?’ Right? Whereas when you call a woman and ask why she does not pay back the money, you know that there are several men behind her. That is the problem.”

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs’ Organizations)

• • •



Employers' representatives are also sure that women's increasing independence in conditions of dominating traditional notions about the division of gender roles is a threat to the stability of the family as an institution.

• • •

"The number of economically independent women has been lately increasing. Even families are sometimes broken because of that."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations).

• • •

Chapter 3. Demographic context of emergence of gender challenges in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth

The Republic of Azerbaijan is a country with a relatively young and growing population and a large share of youth. At the same time, while the number of the population is increasing, the share and the number of young people (15 to 29 years old) has decreased from 2,642,800 in 2009 to 2,565,500 in 2015. The greatest decrease took place in the youngest age cohort: from 922,500 persons in 2009 to 724,900 in 2015.

As is clear from Table 1.1 below, the process was more intensive among the female population.

Table 1.1. Share of youth in overall population

	In overall population, %		Youths in male population, %		Girls in female population, %	
	2009	2015	2009	2015	2009	2015
15–29 years	29.7	26.8	30.0	27.4	29.4	26.1
15–24 years	20.8	17.0	21.0	17.7	20.5	16.3

Source: Calculated based on the data of the CIS Interstate Statistical Committee.

The share of girls in the overall population aged 15–29 has decreased from 50 per cent in 2009 to 49.9 per cent in 2015. The decrease in the 15–24 age cohort was even greater, from 49.1 per cent to 48.3 per cent.

The main cause of increasing gender asymmetry in the demographic composition of youth seems to be the increasing number of selective abortions in conditions of better accessibility of ultrasonic diagnostics. In the Republic of Azerbaijan, physicians conducting ultrasonic diagnostics are currently forbidden by law to disclose the sex of the future baby. Such disclosure has resulted in a decreased boys-to-girls birth ratio by 0.2–0.3 percentage points annually.

An important factor reducing economic opportunities of girls as compared to youths is frequent occurrence of early marriages. As it has been mentioned above and repeatedly noted by researchers,³ marriage as such has different effects on the career prospects of youths and girls. However, early

³ See, for example, Baskakova M. Young people in Azerbaijan: the gender aspect of transition from education to decent work. ILO decent work technical support team and country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Working paper #5. Moscow, 2012.





marriages are fraught with additional risks of deterioration of health and impossibility of getting an education and occupational skills permitting one to earn a living.

“In rural areas, the problem of early marriages is acute. Girls are married off early, and this means they do not complete their education. There is little hope that they will find employment and will be able to provide for themselves.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry for Youth and Sport)

Until recently, laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan set different lower age limits for marriage: 18 years for youths and 17 years for girls. It was only in November 2011 that an amendment was introduced into the Republic's Family Code raising the age requirement for the marriage of girls from 17 to 18 years. The Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan has also been amended to criminalize pressure on girls to get married early. If a girl forced to marry has not reached the minimum age for marriage set by law, those guilty will have to pay a fine in the amount of 3,000-4,000 manats⁴ or be imprisoned for a period of up to four years.

Only in exceptional cases, including pregnancy, it is officially allowed to lower the marriage age by one year. Nevertheless, in 2014, according to official statistics, 24.2 per cent of women's marriages fell on the age group of 15 to 19 years, whereas among men the share of marriages registered at the age below 19 years constituted as little as 0.8 per cent. According to the Vice-Chairman of the Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues, early marriages are observed not only in rural areas; the problem covers the entire Azerbaijan⁵. A considerable number of such marriages is not registered officially. The issue is especially acute in the country's southern rural areas. Since 2013 through 2014, the number of children born by mothers aged 15–17 increased by 15.4 per cent. In 2013, the indicator included 2,855 children, while in 2014 teenage mothers gave birth to 3,296 children.

Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education

At present, vocational education in the Republic of Azerbaijan is the subject of increased focus since there are serious challenges related to growing skills mismatch. Both public officials and employers as well as trade union leaders admit the existence of this problem. Experts from the Ministry of Labour lay emphasis primarily on the low quality of educational programmes, their inflexibility and failure to meet the rapidly changing labour market requirements. Trade union representatives are raising the alarm because a considerable number of youth remains outside the vocational education system. Neither the State nor social partners focus their attention on the gender dimension of education challenges.

“The gender issue is not acute in our labour market, nor is it acute in education. Other problems are much more serious.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

Nonetheless, both statistical and rapid assessment survey data show that gender challenges and specificities are present in education, although there has lately been a certain positive shift in some areas.

⁴ At the moment of report preparation, one manat was approximately equal to one US dollar (1 manat = \$1.05).

⁵ <http://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/society/2415738.html>



4.1. Gender composition of secondary school students

As is clear from Tables 1.2 and 1.3, girls constitute a steady minority of general secondary school students. In the last five years, absolute enrolment has been decreasing mostly at the expense of girls. Their share in the student body was constantly falling. It should be pointed out that the trend was discernible in the previous decade as well⁶.

Table 1.2. Dynamics of the number of general secondary school students

Enrolment	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total	1,364,961	1,324,564	1,291,317	1,284,853	1,289,272	1,322,182
Girls	637,015	613,060	597,666	590,394	594,190	606,657
In private schools	7,128	6,441	6,583	7,250	8,196	6,508
Girls	1,638	1,362	1,469	1,776	2,185	2,508

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.

Table 1.3. Share of girls in the total number of general secondary and private school students

Share of girls, %	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Average	46.67	46.28	46.28	45.95	46.09	45.88
In private schools	22.98	21.15	22.32	24.50	26.66	38.54

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.

A positive trend is the increasing number and share of girls attending private schools, which possibly testifies to some positive gender-related changes in the priorities of their parents. At the same time, despite a sudden sharp increase in 2014, which may well be accidental, the share of girls whose parents are ready to pay for their education is considerably lower than that of boys.

It is hard to explain the sudden sharp 2014 increase in the share of girls among private school students considering that the share of girls enrolled in the first grade of private schools remains steady at the level of about 40 per cent, which is somewhat lower than the respective share for all schools. A comparison of Tables 1.3 and 1.4 permits a supposition that boys spend more time in the private education system, while girls stay there mostly in primary grades.

⁶ Baskakova M. Young people in Azerbaijan: the gender aspect of transition from education to decent work. ILO decent work technical support team and country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Working paper #5. Moscow, 2012. P. 16–17.

**Table 1.4.** Dynamics of the number of those enrolled in the first grade of general secondary schools

Enrolment	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Total	118,435	119,851	125,294	135,425	137,493	151,621
Girls	54,536	55,370	57,739	62,340	64,244	70,463
Share of girls, %	46.05	46.20	46.08	46.03	46.73	46.47
In private schools	366	327	399	515	686	937
Girls	148	128	143	226	285	380
Share of girls, %	40.44	39.14	35.84	43.88	41.55	40.55

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan
<http://www.azstat.org>.

Experts point to the problem of increasing opportunities for indirect discrimination of girls in conditions of expanding paid education.

• • •

“Even if a family is not burdened by stereotypes or ideological considerations, there is the economic aspect, when the family simply cannot afford a girl’s education. In some areas, if there is a girl and a boy in the family, preference is given to the boy. But tendencies vary across regions.”

(From an interview with an expert from the United Nations Population Division (UNPD))

• • •

“If there are two children, people prefer to pay for the boy rather than for the girl. It is not obvious discrimination. The girl is not forbidden to study, but she either remains uneducated or will repeatedly try to enter an institution providing free education.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry for Youth and Sport)

• • •

The problem of uncontrolled dropout of girls from upper secondary school is directly associated with the problem of early marriages.

• • •

“In Soviet time, if a child missed school for a fortnight, all relevant bodies raised the alarm. Now, no one is bothered. In rural areas, girls are taken out of school after the fourth or fifth grade. Police should be stirred to activity.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry for Youth and Sport)

• • •

This is not reflected in the official statistics. It contains only gender-neutral data on classes missed by those officially registered at school because of illness or for other reasons, but there are no data on dropout from secondary schools. Meanwhile, if youths mostly leave school after the ninth grade in order to enter a primary or a secondary vocational education institution or, at the worst, to join the labour market, the life of a girl in a similar situation will be limited to doing household chores, and she will totally be dependent on her husband.

Experts are of the opinion that in traditional oriental societies including the Republic of Azerbaijan it is more important for women than for men to get a sufficient education.



• • •
“Education is more important for girls. A girl with tertiary education achieves more than a girl without an education. Youths are trying to be successful even without an education, while uneducated girls stop in their development early.”

(From an interview with a university lecturer)

• • •

4.2. Gender composition of vocational school students

At different levels of vocational education, correlation of youths and girls varies considerably. As is clear from Table 1 in the Annex, youths prevail at the primary level, while girls constitute about two thirds at the secondary level, and the share of girls at the tertiary level is less than half the enrolment.

Such correlation is rather stable and, at the primary and secondary levels, depends mostly on the occupations and skills acquired there. Training in the traditionally “male” professions prevails at the primary level. The secondary level is dominated by occupations that have traditionally been considered as “female” or gender-neutral.

Gender asymmetry is manifested not as much in the correlation of youths and girls as in the volume of resources allocated for their training. Training in the traditionally “male” occupations is, on the average, more expensive, because the cost of engineering equipment in classrooms and workshops is higher. However, this fact harbours a certain advantage for girls, since regional authorities are more willing to finance training in those occupations and skills that are less costly.

At the secondary and tertiary levels, some students have to pay for their education even at public vocational training institutions. Since state statistics contain no data on the share of students paying for their training from family budgets, one can get an idea about the presence or absence of gender-related preferences concerning payment solely from the general situation in private educational institutions.

As is clear from Table 1.5, the share of girls in educational institutions where training requires payment is lower than the average for the entire education system. While at the tertiary level the gap is relatively stable, the secondary level is showing signs of its increase. This may testify to the fact that poorer families are now less willing to pay for the training of girls (at the secondary level, payment for training is lower and more affordable for low-income families).

Table 1.5. Dynamics of the share of girls in secondary and tertiary vocational education institutions, including private ones

Share of girls, %	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
In secondary vocational education institutions	67.46	66.20	65.80	66.30	67.11	67.38
Of this number, in private institutions	67.44	61.19	56.23	53.52	57.89	55.59
In tertiary educational institutions	45.94	46.43	46.47	47.95	48.39	48.48
Of this number, in private institutions	41.30	39.65	39.10	39.00	42.44	42.86

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.



Gender-related peculiarities of access to education and subsequent employment are greatly influenced by a special public programme of training Azerbaijani youth abroad. Within the framework of the programme, youths and girls are educated in foreign countries at State expense provided they return to their home country upon completion and work in the field they were trained for. Youths and girls trained abroad form an elitist segment of the labour market and face no difficulties in employment. The elitist labour market segment is mostly present in Baku and other large cities and does not practically involve rural population.

• • •

“The situation in the area of gender equality depends primarily on the region. In the capital and major cities such as Ganja, the problem is non-existent. Girls have the same access to education as boys. Of course, women prefer positions of physicians, teachers, etc.”

(From an interview with a UNPD expert)

• • •

However, in large cities there are problems associated with broader opportunities for boys and especially with gender-related segregation of education depending on occupations and skills.

• • •

“Large ministries, including the Ministry of National Security, the Ministry for Emergency Situations and the joint-stock company AZAL, have opened their own academies where mostly boys get enrolled. They usually place their graduates in their own structures. This testifies to unequal access to education.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s organization)

• • •

4.3. Gender-related segregation by areas of training and occupations

Statistical data (Annex, Tables 2 and 3) and expert interviews have unanimously proved the availability of pronounced gender-related segregation by areas of training both at the secondary and tertiary levels. It should be pointed out that, along with the traditional ideas about “male” and “female” occupations, economic factors play an important role in perpetuating segregation: wages in the traditionally “female” occupations are generally lower.

• • •

“Men, being main breadwinners, prefer to acquire those occupations where wages are higher. In Soviet time, at least, in rural areas, half of the teachers were men and the other half were women. Now, it is good if there are 30 per cent of male teachers.”

(From an interview with the Director of the Study Centre under the Ministry of Economic Development)

• • •

It is rather illustrative to compare the shares of girls choosing economics and management in secondary and tertiary education institutions. In colleges and technical schools, girls constitute about two thirds of students undergoing training in these fields, which approximately corresponds to the gender composition of students undergoing training in such fields as culture and arts. In tertiary education, the situation is radically different. There, the share of girls studying economics and management constituted from 23.2 per cent in the 2009/2010 academic year to 30.1 per cent in the 2014/2015 academic year, which approximately corresponds to the occupational group “engineering and technology”. In the



authors' opinion, this is explained by the fact that secondary institutions train accountants, clerks and such like, while tertiary institutions train specialists for business and managerial structures. This is a manifestation of a stereotype, according to which small business and paperwork are for women, while big business and managerial positions are for men.

It should be pointed out, however, that the share of girls studying economics and management in tertiary institutions has increased considerably.

As is clear from the tables, the recent years have witnessed a certain increase in the share of girls in almost all occupational groups including the traditionally "male" ones. In tertiary education, a tangible reduction has been detected only in humanities and social sciences testifying to a certain gender-related rebalancing. At the same time, the share of girls choosing natural sciences and engineering has increased.

Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment

Lack of particular interest in the gender dimension of youth employment on the part of officials of the Ministry of Labour affects accessibility of statistical data. Statistics of youth employment with breakdown by gender is confined to most general items making it possible to assess labour force participation, employment and unemployment. Unfortunately, there are no data permitting an assessment of such youth employment aspects as gender differences in employment rates and employment status in urban and rural areas, either in official statistics or in the databases of the labour statistics unit at the Ministry of Labour.

5.1. Economic activity of youths and girls

Economic activity of youth is somewhat lower than that of overall population, which is quite natural considering that a large share of youths and girls aged 15–19 and a considerable part of young people aged 20–24 are studying. Labour force participation of both youths and girls is higher in the older youth cohorts than in overall population.

Experts from the teachers' training community unanimously note very high labour force participation of students, both youths and girls.

• • •

"At teachers' training institutions, even first-year students are trying to work as tutors of junior schoolchildren or entrants."

(From an interview with a university lecturer)

• • •

"You say that many girls make no efforts to find a job? On the contrary, girls even from well-to-do families are trying to find employment and take up any job."

(From an interview with a university lecturer)

• • •

Nevertheless, the share of girls in the economically active population of the relevant age cohorts is lower than their share in overall population (Table 1.6).



**Table 1.6.** Share of girls in overall population and in economically active population, 2014

Age cohort	In overall population		In economically active population	
	Number, 000 persons	Share of girls, %	Number, 000 persons	Share of girls, %
15–19	724.9	47.5	98.2	42.8
20–24	902.7	48.9	486.7	47.2
25–29	936.8	50.5	689.7	47.9

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.

As is clear from Table 1.7, there is a considerable gender gap in the labour force participation of youth, which is increasing with age. At the same time, there is a trend towards an increasing economic activity of both youths and girls. The main factor of the increasing gender gap is that girls leave the labour market when they get married. Besides that, differences in the mentality of students living in the capital, on the one hand, and rural youth with low educational attainment, on the other hand, should be taken into consideration.⁷

Table 1.7. Differences in labour force participation of youths and girls

Age cohort	Labour force participation, %					
	2012			2014		
	Youths	Girls	Difference	Youths	Girls	Difference
15–19	12.8	12.2	0.6	14.7	12.2	2.5
20–24	53.3	49.1	4.2	55.7	52.1	3.6
25–29	76.4	69.3	7.1	77.5	69.8	7.7

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.

5.2. Youth employment, employment of youths and girls

At present, youth constitutes a quarter of overall population in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Youths are ahead of girls in their employment rate even more than in their labour force participation (Table 1.8). This testifies to the fact that girls face more difficulties in the process of recruitment, as described below.

⁷ Unfortunately, statistical data on differences in the labour force participation of youths and girls in urban and rural areas are lacking. Besides, parameters of economic activity in rural areas have their own specificities, which will be discussed later.

**Table 1.8.** Gender-related differences in the scale and rate of employment, 2014

Age cohort	Men		Women		Employment gap
	Number of employed, 000 persons	Employment rate, %	Number of employed, 000 persons	Employment rate, %	
Overall population	2,376.1	68.4	2,226.8	63.90	4.5
15–19	48.1	12.6	34.6	10.1	2.5
20–24	229.1	49.7	193.9	43.9	5.8
25–29	342.2	73.8	302.6	64.0	9.8

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.

One of the salient challenges in the Azerbaijani labour market is the employment status. It is probably more relevant than open unemployment. Today, wagedworkers with official labour contracts constitute as little as 33 per cent of the employed population. This percentage has been relatively stable and varied between 30 and 35 per cent for many years, which is the lowest indicator among the CIS countries. Among young people 15–29 years old, the share of wagedworkers is even lower than in overall population (29.4 per cent). The remaining share of employment is made up of officially registered entrepreneurs and a large informal economy. One of the main tasks of the Republic's labour inspection is to expose informal labour contracts, but this is very difficult.

Starting with July 2014, all labour contracts are entered into the Government's electronic database with the aim of restricting the proliferation of informal employment. Employers are obliged to enter all information about the conclusion and termination of labour contracts and changes therein with an electronic signature into a dedicated portal. The database contains the data on each worker: his/her date of birth, sex, education, position, main functions in accordance with the national qualifications framework, and wages. In other words, the database makes it possible to trace changes in the official labour market, but the Ministry of Labour does not analyse the database yet.

The situation in the area of youth employment differs considerably in urban and rural areas. In rural areas, the majority of population have personal holdings where they do subsistence farming and are automatically regarded as employed.



“In villages, those who are jobless grow some produce and sell it (or are supposed to do so), and they are not considered as unemployed.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

Gender-related segregation in vocational education leads to similar segregation in employment. Girls prevail in the traditionally “female” occupations such as education and health care. However, experts note some positive changes in employment, similarly to education: the share of women is growing among engineers and in the public service.

In the public sector, the introduction of recruitment based on the results of equivalency examinations plays a considerable positive role. Examinations are conducted in the form of anonymous testing, and graduates are recruited by schools, medical and public institutions based on their results.

It should be pointed out, that in the last few years the image of employment in the public service has become more attractive, including among young people living in the capital.



• • •
 “Public service has become prestigious; they offer a good social protection package. And the salary is quite good there.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s organization)

• • •

At the same time, the most prestigious work is employment in large private companies where requirements to employees are stricter yet wages are higher than in public institutions.

A convincing proof of women’s lower competitiveness in the labour market is their lower remuneration. Statistics provides no data on the gender pay gap by age cohorts. On the average, women’s wages constitute only 55–58 per cent of men’s average wages. This correlation has been stable for many years and is one of the lowest in the CIS countries. The causes of the gender pay gap are traditional: vertical segregation (few women in managerial positions), horizontal segregation (women are mostly employed in sectors where wages are low) and women’s shorter working hours.

Challenges in observing labour legislation

Labour inspection has registered no special areas where young people or women are more vulnerable to abuse of labour rights than men are.

• • •

“Complaints are different: no payment for hazardous working conditions, no leave, illegal dismissal... as for maternity leave and such like, there are few complaints. About 40 per cent of complaints prove valid, because people are not familiar either with their own rights or with employers’ rights.”

(From an interview with a labour inspection representative)

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Trade union representatives confirm this opinion.

• • •

“As for the choice of candidates for dismissal... I can see no gender-related differences in the complaints we have been receiving, although we cover 80 per cent of waged workers. I can remember not a single complaint stating that a woman was dismissed while a man remained employed.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •

The data of the rapid assessment survey of youth have confirmed their poor knowledge of their rights. Only about a quarter of respondents indicated that they knew their labour rights well, including those related to childcare, maternity leave, etc. Most young people have only a general idea of their rights, and girls were less informed than youths.

Trade union representatives draw attention to the issue of vulnerability of workers in the informal economy where some young people left outside the vocational education system find themselves almost inevitably.

• • •

“Those who failed to enter a tertiary education institution become mostly general workers. When such a young person who has worked for two or three years after school, earned some money and acquired some skills, tries to get another job it turns out he has nothing – no labour contract, no certificate confirming that he is an electrician, a plumber or a bricklayer, even if he has certain work experience and skills.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •



Besides that, expert interviews have made it possible to reveal an area of “latent” abuse of young women’s labour rights that remains unnoticed by labour inspections and is associated with the so-called “voluntary” (but compulsory in practice) refusal of young mothers to use the full duration of their legitimate childcare leave and privileges women with children are entitled to.

• • •

“In this country, although women are entitled to childcare leave until the child is three years old, practically all women take only a couple of months and then return to work.”

(From an interview with a female representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •

“All women with small children have privileges. They may come to work an hour later or leave an hour earlier. However, women working in the private sector never do so. They know that if they leave earlier or come to work later it will affect her wages and career.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Public Employment Service)

• • •

5.3. Gender-related challenges of general and registered unemployment

As is clear from Table 1.9, open unemployment in the Republic of Azerbaijan is not widespread. As in most post-Soviet countries, only a small number of actually unemployed persons are registered with employment services and receive an official status. However, although unemployment rate is somewhat higher for women, men receive the official status and related entitlements twice as often as women do.

Table 1.9. Gender-related differences in unemployment scale and rate

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Unemployed, total (000 persons)	258.3	250.9	243.1	236.6	237.8
Women	156.0	146.2	139.6	138.1	138.2
Men	102.3	104.7	103.5	98.5	99.6
Of this number					
Registered unemployed	39.0	38.3	36.8	36.2	28.7
Women	17.0	16.5	15.5	15	11.3
Men	22.0	21.8	21.3	21.2	17.4
Unemployment rate, %	5.63	5.42	5.19	4.97	4.91
Women	6.91	6.44	6.09	5.95	5.84
Men	4.39	4.45	4.32	4.04	4.02
Share of unemployed with an official status, %	15.10	15.27	15.14	15.30	12.07
Women	10.90	11.29	11.10	10.86	8.18
Men	21.51	20.82	20.58	21.52	17.47

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.



In 2014, the unemployment rate of youth has dropped to 9.7 per cent against 10.3 per cent in 2012. Gender-related differences in youth unemployment rates are controversial. Higher unemployment rate among urban youth is natural; it is connected with the fact that in rural areas unemployed youth are mostly involved in their parents' subsistence farming. This is manifested especially vividly in the youngest age cohort (Table 1.10).

Table 1.10. Gender-related differences in youth unemployment rates in urban and rural areas

Age cohort	Unemployment rate, %							
	2012		2014					
			Total		Urban areas		Rural areas	
	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
15–19	15.5	16.7	17.6	14.4	40.7	28.6	5.2	10.0
20–24	16.5	11.2	15.6	10.8	11.6	18.8	18.0	5.4
25–29	8.6	5.2	8.4	4.8	11.2	7.5	5.5	1.7

Source: Calculated based on the data of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan <http://www.azstat.org>.

The male unemployment rate exceeds the female one in those age cohorts where girls reduce their economic activity due to the birth of children. In rural areas, it is 20–24 years. Upon graduation, youths enter the labour market willingly, while a considerable part of girls postpone their employment preferring to take care of their families. In rural areas, where early marriages are widespread such a situation is typical of the youngest age cohort of 15–19 years.

It is primarily trade union representatives, who believe that the problem of youth unemployment is serious. Other social partners do not think it is that acute. However, trade union representatives do not lay special emphasis on the gender dimension of the issue.

• • •

“We are so glad when young people find jobs; all we want is that they be recruited. The problem is very serious. Gender is not the primary concern in this case.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •

“There are few unemployed in Azerbaijan. Older people have problems, but young ones are recruited willingly.”

(From an interview with the Director of the Vocational Education Centre for Unemployed)

• • •

First-time young jobseekers are not entitled to unemployment benefits. Nonetheless, those of them who do not have good vocational training turn to employment services willingly in the hope of getting assistance in job search and, primarily, in acquiring occupational skills demanded in the labour market.



Although men are granted the official status of unemployed more often, the need for employment services is higher among women. In 2015, of the 3,444 persons who turned to employment services 1,852 (53.8 per cent) were women. Girls agree to undergo vocational training more willingly than youths; they are more pragmatic in addressing this issue.

• • •

“Out of a 100 girls, 100 will be willing to undergo vocational training provided they are sure that they will definitely acquire the profession of a turner, a baker, a hairdresser or a shop assistant... We have a list of more than 200 occupations, in which we can train people. A girl will find something to her liking, whereas youths are focused on work, on earning money.”

(From an interview with the head of the Public Employment Service)

• • •

Five retraining centres are operating in various part of the Republic of Azerbaijan where employment services refer those who turn to them for assistance in job search. The largest of them is situated in Baku, and it provides training in 25 occupations based on 83 traditional and 53 modular programmes. As at November 2015, 783 women and 593 men were studying there. Eighty per cent of trainees are young people. Duration of training is two or three months depending on the programme. Trainees receive scholarships of 55 manats a month and are provided with travelling fare to the training centre. Retraining is provided in those skills that are demanded in the labour market.

• • •

“With such skills as turners, milling-machine operators and electricians, they will not remain jobless, the same as with some other skills. Approximately 80 per cent of our graduates find employment immediately.”

(From an interview with the Director of the Vocational Education Centre for Unemployed)

• • •

Job fairs are a very popular mechanism of youth job placement. Employment services and training centres arrange them jointly with tertiary educational institutions, and such job fairs are mostly targeting youth. Employment services arrange job fairs for all jobseekers, while tertiary educational institutions – only for students and graduates, but not only for theirs.

• • •

“Last week the State University of Economics arranged a large-scale job fair. It attracted students from all over the country; it was a really big occasion. Booklets were handed out, and employers explained their requirements.” From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

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5.4. Gender-related challenges of youth business

In business, both young people and women face a number of additional difficulties. As far as young people are concerned, this is primarily associated with difficulties in obtaining a start-up capital because they lack property.

• • •

“Adults have some property, as a rule, and they can get a loan using it as collateral, while the number one problem for youth is to find financing. In Baku, it is even more difficult than in the regions because low-interest subsidies for the development of the agrarian sector are provided on the security of land plots.”

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

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On the one hand, employers' representatives point to good prospects for a diversified development of small businesses including those owned by young people. On the other hand, they speak of differences in the roles assigned to youths and girls in this area.

• • •

"Special attention is paid to tourism...two- and three-star hotels are opened, and many of them are owned by young people. They were abroad and saw how these things are done there. A lot of girls work in such hotels as receptionists."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

• • •

That business is a male occupation is a stereotype deeply rooted in Azerbaijani society, especially among employers.

• • •

"Naturally, there are more boys in the private sector. It is them who mostly do business. There are still certain restrictions for girls... Only 19 per cent of women own private businesses. It is very little."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

• • •

The main problem facing businesswomen is difficult access to credits. Interviews with experts have shown that there is direct though latent discrimination against women in this area.

• • •

"Male newcomers with no credit history are more trusted. I worked in a bank for some time, and I know that this is a tacit rule."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

• • •

"At present, we have no quotas for providing loans to women for business development. Since 2001, a total of €92 million worth of loans have been extended to women, while billions have been extended to men."

(From an interview with a representative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues)

• • •

The Ministry of Economic Development has established the National Fund for the Support of Small and Medium-Size Businesses providing soft loans under 5 per cent annually. Young people are one of the main recipients of such loans. Unfortunately, no special measures are stipulated for supporting female entrepreneurship.



Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls

6.1. Common barriers to the job placement of youths and girls

As it has been pointed out above, the overwhelming majority of experts (except trade union representatives) do not refer youth to the category of workers with lower competitiveness in the labour market. They attribute the above-average youth unemployment rate predominantly to their natural need of self-determination, attempts to find their own place in life and excessive expectations.

• • •

“Young people do not accept offered jobs mostly because wages are low. They want higher wages, and this is why they keep choosing.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •

Graduates themselves speak about their excessive expectations.

• • •

“Most of them do not realize what their strong and weak points are. They do not work on self-improvement, but demand that others think highly of them, hence their problems. The problem lies in themselves, and not in the difficulties of finding a job.” (An opinion of a female graduate of a tertiary training institution)

• • •

Trade union representatives agree that expectations of some young persons are sometimes excessive. However, they value young workers' flexibility and their ability to adapt themselves to the changing situation.

• • •

“Young people want good, decent jobs. Although now, in conditions of a crisis, they are willing to take up any job to bring some money into the family.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •

A comparison of wage expectations of young people in the course of the rapid assessment survey has shown that wage expectations of girls are at least 40 per cent lower than of youths. On the one hand, this gives them certain advantages in search of a job while, on the other hand, it is an additional factor of the persisting gender pay gap.

Experts from the employment service are of the opinion that the main barrier to the job placement of young persons is lack of occupational skills.

• • •

“Few of the young people who come to us can be immediately placed. There is no problem with vacancies. Fitters, welders, crane-operators, forwarding agents are in demand, but young people who come to us either lack skills or their expectations are too high as compared to actual wages. Thirty five to forty per cent of them have no skills.”

(From an interview with the head of a regional employment centre)

• • •





Students and graduates themselves name lack of work experience as the main barrier they face in their attempts to find a job.

• • •

“It is clear that students cannot have any work experience. However, for all more or less acceptable jobs they need to have such experience... hence the vicious circle.” (A student’s opinion)

• • •

To address this issue, the State and tertiary educational institutions have taken a course towards increasing the practical component in vocational training. A strategic target is the German dual education model, but so far, actual measures have only been taken to match education with labour market requirements by increasing students’ opportunities of workplace practices.

• • •

“For some three or four years, efforts have been focused on students’ workplace practices. More hours are now dedicated for it, and more attention is paid to the process itself.”

(From an interview with a university rector)

• • •

However, in the opinion of students, workplace practices representatives of tertiary institutions and public authorities pin their hopes on do little to change employers’ attitudes.

• • •

“Honestly speaking, our students are not very enthusiastic about workplace practices. When you come to work in the same sphere, everything is quite different. Workplace practices do not provide a good foundation for future work.”

(A student’s opinion)

• • •

A good way of overcoming the barrier connected with lack of work experience is volunteerism, opportunities for which are plentiful in the Republic of Azerbaijan and are willingly used by more active young people.

• • •

“Those who work as volunteers acquire at least some skills. They know how to operate office equipment and acquire communication skills. They will soon be able to write in their CVs that they have at least a three-month work experience. I always advise my acquaintances to work as volunteers for some time. Although it is free of charge, you will gain some experience. There are a lot of opportunities for it.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry for Youth and Sport)

• • •

In general, youths have higher expectations concerning their future job.

• • •

“Youths, for example, do not want to work as shop assistants; it is mostly girls who accept such positions, although both youths and girls work in boutiques. As for the informal economy, who will accept the job of a domestic worker? Girls...”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •



• • •

"Youths reject vacancies more often. They are mostly dissatisfied with wages: 250 manats is too little for them, they would accept some 700."⁸

(From an interview with the head of a regional employment centre)

• • •

Another factor that reduces chances of a successful placement of young people is unsatisfactory vocational guidance, including at schools.

• • •

"Parents advise children to choose 'fat' jobs... 'Son, choose the road-transport faculty, you'll be a traffic cop upon graduation.' However, the son does not have such inclinations, so, when he graduates he comes to me and says, 'I don't want to be a traffic cop.' There are a lot of such youths and girls."

(From an interview with the head of the Public Employment Service)

• • •

Experts see no particular barriers to the job placement of youths, except for their excessive wage expectations and, in a number of cases, less diligence at work as compared to girls. At the same time, conscription gives youths certain advantages when they return from the army.

• • •

"Boys do military service, and this gives them a certain advantage over girls. Even in public bodies where the main thing is to pass the test, this factor is taken into consideration during the interview."

(From an interview with a representative of a women's organization)

• • •

6.2. Special barriers to the job placement of girls

No obvious preferences in recruitment, let alone direct gender-based discrimination on the part of employers are obvious in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Representatives of the Ministry of Labour are proud of their successful fight against discriminatory job advertisements in the mass media and introduction of the equivalency examination during recruitment to public service.

However, a specific barrier becomes visible if the issue of job placement is viewed from a territorial perspective. The most diverse and attractive vacancies are concentrated in major cities, and they are more accessible to youths who enjoy greater freedom of movement than girls do.

• • •

"The highest unemployment rate is in the central regions. It may reach 20 percent there, where soil is not fertile. This is why people leave for towns. Boys mostly go to Baku. Girls go there only to study."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

• • •

Low territorial mobility makes girls more dependent on the specificities of local labour markets and narrows their placement opportunities.



⁸ At the time of report preparation, one manat was approximately equal to one US dollar (one manat = \$1.05).



• • •
 “In Sumgait, the employment structure is such that local occupations mostly suit men...
 There are more vacancies for men.”

(From an interview with the head of a regional employment centre)

• • •
 “I cannot say that girls and women are discriminated against in wages or recruitment.
 There is no such problem. There are certain jobs that involve business travel, and girls
 have traditionally avoided such jobs.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •
 This barrier can be overcome by increasing girls’ territorial mobility and addressing the employment issue in localities.

It is hard to give an unambiguous answer to the question of who are easier to place, youths or girls. Despite a number of specific barriers, in the initial stage of their careers girls demonstrate a number of competitive advantages due to their more moderate occupational aspirations, greater activity in job search and gender-related stereotypes concerning typical characteristics of workers of both sexes. When recruiting candidates to starting positions, employers value such “female” characteristics as industriousness and neatness more than the men’s aptitude for leadership.

• • •
 “Who finds employment easier, youths or girls? Girls are less capricious about work; that is they mostly accept any wage, while youths are more particular about it. This is why girls find work easier.”

(From an interview with a female university graduate)

• • •
 In the opinion of experts, relatives, friends and acquaintances are the main channel of finding employment. The second one is the Internet. The time when boys were more proficient with the Internet than girls is in the past.

• • •
 “The situation with the internet has changed considerably. The information space has expanded. The country, including villages, is well covered by the Internet. Both boys and girls are at ease there.”

(From an interview with a university lecturer)

• • •
 “In 2000, our gender information centre arranged a series of training events on surfing the web. Now everyone can do it, and such services are no longer needed.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s organization)

• • •
 The data of rapid assessment surveys have shown that girls are now ahead of youths in using the Internet for job search. Approximately half of youths and 60 per cent of girls resorted to it when looking for employment, whereas youths turn to relatives and acquaintances more often. Two thirds of youths and only one third of girls do so. Besides, youths contact employers (about 40 and 20 per cent respectively) and public employment services (about 60 and 40 per cent respectively) more willingly than girls do. As for private employment services, slightly above a quarter of both youths and girls turn to them.



Some measures taken by the State to raise wages and increase the attractiveness of the traditionally “female” occupations have somewhat strengthened girls’ positions in the labour market. Municipalities provide housing and land plots to teachers who go to work in rural areas.

• • •

“Now many people see that it is impossible to settle down in Baku. This is why they participate in motivating programmes. The number of male teachers has slightly increased, but very little.”

(From an interview with the Director of the Study Centre under the Ministry of Economic Development).

• • •

It should be pointed out that the only factor the overwhelming majority of respondents considered important for job placement was education. Over 80 per cent of both youths and girls stressed its importance. Other important factors respondents referred to were health and age (about 50 per cent). These were followed by appearance and connections of relatives. These factors were mentioned by approximately one fifth of respondents. Curiously, appearance was mentioned as an important factor mostly by youths, while connections of relatives – by girls. As for gender, this factor, along with the marital status and availability of children, appeared in the category of less important factors mentioned by as few as 5-10 per cent of respondents. It should be noted, however, that this factor was mostly mentioned by girls, and slightly less than 15 per cent of them considered it important.

Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

7.1. Public programmes and measures aimed at achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

During the entire post-Soviet period, public authorities have been paying much attention to the issues of youth employment and gender equality. At the same time, these two lines of public policies are poorly interlinked in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The age dimension is lacking in public initiatives, programmes and presidential decrees aimed at women’s economic advancement and gender equality, while the gender dimension is barely discernible in the programmes targeting youth.

In 2006-2015, the Republic of Azerbaijan has formulated and implemented its Employment Strategy aimed primarily at achieving quantitative employment indicators including reduction in the unemployment rate. The Strategy included 11 priority lines in addressing youth employment issues, and not a single of them laid special emphasis on the objective of achieving gender equality in employment. Nevertheless, some of the selected priorities may actually equalize the starting positions of youths and girls in employment. These include training young professionals in tourism and taking measures to improve their occupational skills; establishing business centres in towns and villages for promoting youth employment; creating new jobs in borderline and mountainous areas for preventing youth outflow to towns; and providing advisory services in entrepreneurship.





Right now, work is underway on formulating a new employment concept for the period of 2016-2025, with a focus on creating a methodology of forecasting future workforce and occupational needs in the labour market and matching enrolment in tertiary, secondary and vocational education institutions to the current and future labour market needs. Issues of gender equality in the area of employment have not been discussed so far.

However, one of the most salient issues preventing girls from higher economic activity – the issue of early marriages – is generally present in short-term employment programmes.

Simultaneously with the employment concept, a public programme entitled “Azerbaijani Youth” is being developed in the Republic. The previous programme covered the period of 2011-2015, and a new one is in the making.

• • •
 “A new programme of youth policies (a second one) is now being formulated, but the gender dimension is not emphasized either in the previous or in the new one.”

(From an interview with a representative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Issues)

• • •
 It should be pointed out that youth policy issues fall within the competence of two ministries simultaneously, and this fact sometimes hampers their harmonization, as it happened with the draft law on youth employment, for example.

Nevertheless, the country is implementing quite a number of local (mostly pilot) projects and programmes supported by international organizations and aimed at addressing gender issues and promoting youth employment. For example, the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Issues is now implementing two projects on the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship with the support of international foundations.

Projects, where gender and youth dimensions are crosscutting, are implemented rather rarely. Most of them are implemented with international assistance and have generally no follow-up upon termination of funding.

• • •
 “We trained girls who had graduated from vocational and secondary schools within the framework of the ‘Start and Improve Your Business’ programme in 2011 and 2013. Those girls who were trained under the programme share their experience with others and conduct workshops where they share their knowledge.”

(From an interview with a representative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Issues)

• • •
 ILO programmes targeting youth employment, implemented in collaboration with the Republic’s Ministry of Labour, are rather promising: the wage subsidy programme for employers recruiting graduates (subsidies cover 50 per cent of their wages for the duration of six months) and the self-employment programme. In both cases, funds intended for the payment of unemployment benefits are used. Those are small-scale programmes without any gender dimension, but there are girls among their participants.



Project success story

(From an interview with the Director of the Study Centre under the Ministry of Economic Development)

There are areas, including in Greater Baku, where it is not customary, for religious reasons, to let girls attend school after they complete the ninth grade. From conversations with local residents, we have learned that though many girls do not attend school, they attend all kinds of courses: sewing, carpet-weaving, etc. Even if they do not work afterwards, these skills may prove useful in their life.

We repaired a school building and started to teach mostly “female” skills there. Local elders came to me protesting, “What are you doing? You opened this school, and now our girls ask us to let them attend it; they don’t want to remain at home.” I said, “What’s the problem? They are learning a trade, acquiring a profession. I do not insist that they start working afterwards. They will get married and have children. They will have to do something at home anyway. Is it bad that they will be able to cook well or sew?” I persuaded them. Those elders then went to their neighbourhood and started telling other people that it was good to acquire a trade. Of course, not everyone approved of it, but understood that the school was useful. That was how we attracted girls to school, and they started spending more time outside their homes and attending our classes. . . . That was three or four years ago.

Girls from other villages, where people were against it at first, also started coming and being trained. We even collected statistics and traced that many girls/women did not work officially but worked at home, had sewing or cooking skills and took orders – it was their small business. It is an achievement, because it is important for us to raise a generation that could be financially independent, including girls. The main objective of vocational training is to teach people how to earn a living using their knowledge and skills. It is not important if they are employed as waged workers or open their own business. The main thing is that skills will permit them to feel protected.

Situation with pre-school educational institutions

As it has already been pointed out, a serious barrier to a successful job placement of young women is that they are overburdened with family responsibilities. Therefore, availability of pre-school institutions is key to mitigating the problem.

Researchers point out that the development of the network of childcare facilities addresses three gender-related issues simultaneously: 1) it leaves some free time for women’s out-of-the-house activities; 2) creates additional jobs in the “female” areas of activity; and 3) trains girls in socialization skills, preparing them for participation in public life along with representative of the other sex.



In the Republic of Azerbaijan, with its minimal increase in the absolute number of children attending pre-school institutions (mostly private ones), coverage of children of the relevant age decreased from 16.9 per cent in 2009 to 14.2 per cent in 2014. Although the share of girls among the pupils has increased

(From 45.7 per cent to 46.4 per cent), it still lags behind that of boys. Therefore, the general situation has to be described as unsatisfactory.



The Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Issues acknowledges the problem of shortage of pre-school facilities, especially in rural areas and small towns. It points out that the State makes efforts to mitigate it.



“Today, one or two childcare facilities are commissioned in each district annually. The President goes to the regions personally to put into operation such social infrastructure facilities as hospitals, schools, sport and childcare centres. Besides that, on President Aliyev’s proposal, in 2010 private childcare centres were exempted from taxation for a period of 10 years.”

(From an interview with a representative of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Issues)





Issues of gender equality occupy a more than modest place among the priorities of representatives of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' (Employers') Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan. They pay much more attention to youth employment.

In the employers' opinion, the main barrier to job placement is that jobseekers lack the required skills and competencies.

• • •

"Employers need workers with good vocational training. There are a lot of jobseekers but few have skills."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

• • •

Employers believe that the problem is rooted in the fact that the Soviet vocational education system has been destroyed. To build a new system based on the former Soviet vocational schools, it is necessary to develop occupational standards and approve them at the State level. To this end, a vocational education agency has been established with an inter-sectoral status. It includes representatives of a number of ministries and employers that participate actively in developing such standards.

• • •

"Over 300 standards have been developed with the active involvement of employers. There are employers such as the TNK, the British Petroleum and the SOCAR that have their own occupational standards. We are adapting them to comply with the general requirements and preparing model modules."

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour)

• • •

Another line of collaboration in the area of youth employment is establishing contacts with tertiary educational institutions, including lecturing on subjects relevant for certain production facilities and arranging students' workplace practices. There is a commission under the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations for dealing with businesswomen and a commission for young entrepreneurs. The commissions operate along their standard lines and have no common projects.

• • •

"We have separate structures for providing support to young people and to women. There are no programmes, associations, areas of work or committees specifically for young women."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

• • •

The Organization's strategic plans include the establishment of offices based on its regional branches, jointly with the Ministry of Labour (the employment service), through which employers could provide assistance in job placement.

• • •

"We are now discussing a possibility of placing our representative with the employment service on a permanent basis, or at least two or three times a week."

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organizations)

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The Confederation of Entrepreneurs collaborated with the ILO within the framework of the project on subsidizing the job placement of graduates.

• • •

“We had an intern working for us; now she is on the payroll. The ILO paid 50 per cent of her salary under a local programme.”

(From an interview with a representative of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs’ Organizations)

• • •

7.3. Measures of trade unions aimed at observing the rights of youths and girls

In the work of trade unions, protection of youth interests and promotion of gender equality go their separate ways. Their immediate plans include enhancing those structures that already exist, but they are not active enough in dealing with the issues they must address.

• • •

“We have annual projects on establishing a school of gender-related knowledge and technologies. We want to intensify the activity of those commissions that already exist at enterprises. There are about 2,000 of them on gender issues, with approximately 10,000 activists. We want to form a mobile group of trainers.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

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• • •

“The same thing concerns working with youth: we have a project on setting up a school of young leaders. There is a youth council in each sectoral trade union and similar structures at enterprises. We want to systematize their activities. We are now creating a new website and provide links to information on youth policies and measures taken in this area on the existing website.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •

“We have submitted a proposal on conducting classes on issues of gender equality at secondary schools once a week, so that children knew what it is from an early age. We have a school under the Labour Academy and want to open a school of gender equality on its basis.”

(From an interview with a trade union representative)

• • •

Rapid development of volunteerism has become a serious support in the job placement of youth, primarily girls. The best-known volunteer structure is the youth organization “ASAN könülləri”. Today, it numbers several thousand members. Volunteers work in the ASAN centres opened throughout the country for providing information and social services.





Girls use opportunities provided by volunteerism more actively than youths. For example, 70 per cent of ASAN volunteers are girls. Experts attribute it, first, to the fact that youths are orientated towards earning money while girls want to take root in the labour market and acquire some experience and, second, to the specificities of volunteer work.

• • •

“Volunteers deal with people, and girls are better suited for it, they are more sociable.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population)

• • •

It is through volunteerism that many university graduates enter the sphere of regular employment.

• • •

“A friend of mine works for the ASAN full-time. We started working as volunteers together, and she was later recruited full-time, while I said that I was not after the salary, I simply wished to work with pleasure. I continue working as a volunteer and looking for a suitable job.”

(From an interview with a female university graduate)

• • •

“This is how I found my job. At that time, I worked as a volunteer for a youth organization, no time to look for a job. However, my bosses in that organization offered me a job; they said I was well suited for it. I sent them my CV, passed the interview and was hired.”

(From an interview with a female university graduate)

• • •



Conclusions

In general, labour legislation of the Republic of Azerbaijan complies with the present-day requirements and international standards. However, the actual situation of women, including young ones, differs considerably from what national laws stipulate for them due to stereotypes rooted in the majority of the country's population.

At the same time, the study undertaken has permitted a supposition that mental attitudes of more educated and young Azerbaijanis are gradually shifting towards egalitarian gender ideas. However, the process has involved mostly urban population and better educated youth.

An important factor narrowing girls' economic opportunities as compared to those of youths, primarily in rural areas, is a widespread practice of early marriages entailing health risks and impossibility of getting an education or occupational skills permitting to earn a living. The issue of uncontrolled dropout of girls from senior grades of secondary schools associated with the problem of early marriages is still acute.

Neither the State, nor social partners lay emphasis on the gender dimension in education. However, statistical data and expert interviews confirm the availability of gender-based segregation by occupations both in secondary and tertiary vocational education. At the same time, the recent years have witnessed an increase in the share of girls nearly in all occupational groups including the traditionally "male" ones.

Gender-based segregation in vocational education leads to similar segregation in employment. Girls prevail in the traditionally "female" areas such as education and health care.

Youths are ahead of girls in employment indicators even more than in labour force participation. This testifies to the fact that girls face more barriers in job placement. Male unemployment rates are higher than female ones in those age cohorts where girls reduce labour force participation sharply due to the birth of children and their upbringing.

The issue of youth unemployment is considered serious primarily by trade union representatives, while representatives of public authorities do not regard it as acute. They attribute the above-average youth unemployment rate predominantly to their natural need of self-determination, search for their own place in life and excessive expectations.

Expert interviews have made it possible to reveal an area of "latent" abuse of young women's labour rights that remains unnoticed by labour inspections and is associated with the so-called "voluntary" (but compulsory in practice) refusal of young mothers to use the full duration of their legitimate childcare leave and privileges women with children are entitled to.

The main problem facing businesswomen is difficult access to credit. Interviews with experts have shown that there is direct though latent discrimination against women in this area.

The main barrier to youth recruitment is lack of experience coupled, as far as youths are concerned, with their excessive wage expectations. Girls have certain advantages due to lower wage expectations. However, a specific barrier becomes visible if the issue of job placement is viewed from a territorial perspective. Since the most diverse and attractive vacancies are concentrated in major cities, they are more accessible to youths who enjoy greater freedom of movement than girls do.

Some measures taken by the State to raise wages and increase attractiveness of the traditionally "female" occupations have somewhat strengthened girls' positions in the labour market. Municipalities provide housing and land plots to teachers who go to work in rural areas.



A good way of overcoming the barrier connected with lack of work experience is volunteerism, opportunities for which are broad in the Republic of Azerbaijan and are willingly used by more active groups of youth.

Representatives of the Ministry of Labour are proud of:

- 1) their successful fight against discriminatory job advertisements in the mass media, and
- 2) introduction of the equivalency examination during recruitment to public service.

In post-Soviet time, the State has paid much attention to both youth employment and gender equality issues. However, policies aimed at promoting gender equality have no special focus on younger age cohorts, and youth policies are implemented without due consideration for the gender dimension, which may reduce the impact of measures and programmes implemented in both areas.

Recommendations

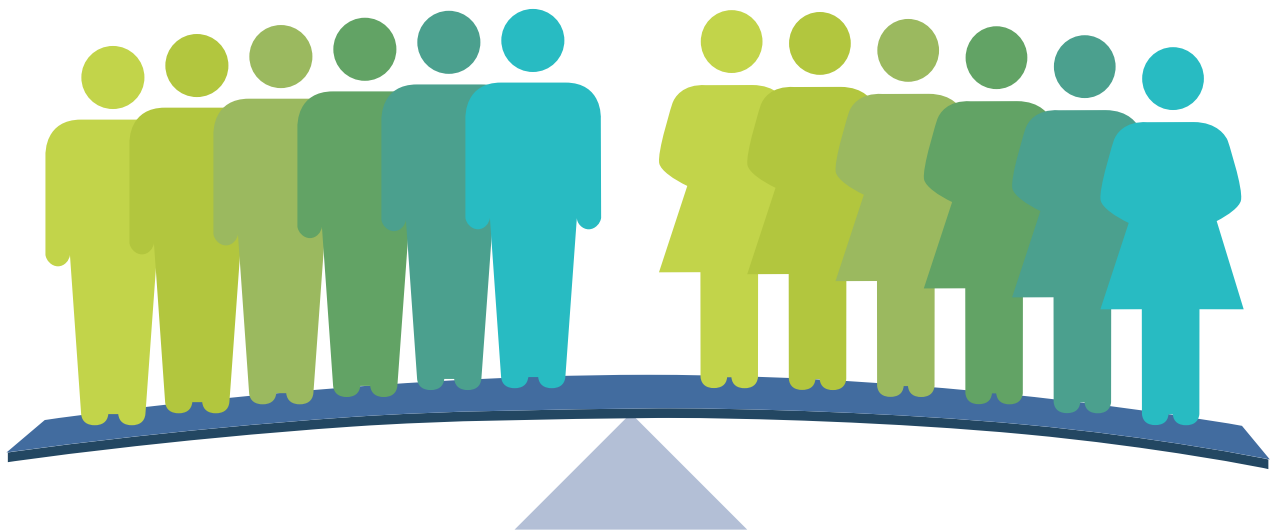
1. When formulating youth policies, attention should be paid to the gender dimension including the gender aspects of youth employment and job placement. Work is currently underway to develop a new concept of employment for 2016-2025 focused on adapting youth to actual and future labour market requirements. It is deemed worthwhile to come out with a proposal on a detailed elaboration of the gender dimension within the framework of the concept and introduction of a special section on measures promoting the employment of girls, especially those living in small towns and rural areas. It would also be worthwhile to lay emphasis on the gender dimension in the new programme of youth policies now under development.
2. In general, labour laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan comply with the present-day requirements and contain international standards aimed at maintaining gender equality, but they are not always applied. The reasons include legal illiteracy of the population and lack of knowledge of labour rights and mechanisms of their implementation as well as insufficient knowledge of labour and anti-discrimination laws among employers, especially owners of small and micro-enterprises. To remedy the situation, it is suggested that a compulsory course on labour law be introduced in senior grades of secondary schools as well as secondary and tertiary vocational institutions, which should include gender equality issues, anti-discrimination laws and issues related to privileges and guarantees for mothers and workers with family responsibilities as well as pension and social insurance schemes. Relevant experience can be provided by the Republic of Kazakhstan where a similar course has been introduced at secondary schools.
3. It should be recommended that the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Issues, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population and trade unions, monitor gender issues of youth employment, with a compulsory coverage of small enterprises in order to map problems facing women, primarily young ones, in employment. The monitoring may rely on the existing trade union gender commissions and youth councils at enterprises as well as employees responsible for gender issues in public bodies and on the volunteer movement, which is rather active in the Republic of Azerbaijan.
4. A series of TV broadcasts should be prepared with the aim of wiping out legal illiteracy of the population in the area of employment and disseminating the ideology of gender equality and elimination of gender stereotypes, including films showing good practices of other countries, Nordic countries among them, in everyday division of gender roles.



5. Stronger economic positions of girls in the area of employment would be promoted by broader employment opportunities (targeted creation of jobs) in rural areas and small towns. Equalization of territorial employment opportunities is very important, especially for girls who, because of the existing traditions, are often deprived of the opportunity to leave their place of residence in search of work.
A network of territorially accessible vocational education institutions and special courses should simultaneously be developed to train personnel for the newly created jobs. In the opinion of a number of experts, including employers, promising areas of such comprehensive development are tourism and farm produce processing.
6. To gradually overcome gender segregation and in education and employment, it is necessary to pay more attention to vocational guidance, primarily among girls. Vocational guidance should begin in junior grades of schools.
7. A system of ensuring access to credit resources for young women wishing to start their own business should be developed. Several small-scale projects on providing businesswomen with credit resources, including those targeting girls, have been implemented in the Republic with the support of international organizations. However, when targeted funding stopped, the projects “died down”. It is believed that a system of state guarantees for lending this target category would be more viable.
8. Along with the further development of the network of preschool institutions, it is also necessary to make extended-day groups available to all junior schoolchildren, which will permit young women to work full-time and make them more attractive for employers.
9. State statistics should be further improved, including the elaboration and publication of statistical spreadsheets characterizing in detail the sphere of economic activity and employment with breakdown by sex and age cohorts, which will provide an objective picture of the gender dimension in the youth labour market.
10. It would be worthwhile to replicate the experience of the Republic of Azerbaijan in developing and supporting the volunteer movement, including its contribution to increasing competitiveness of girls in the area of employment, throughout the CIS countries.



Section 2. OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



TRENDS AND CHALLENGES



CONTENTS – SECTION 2

Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation.....	44
Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth.....	49
Chapter 3. Economic and demographic context of youth employment and emergence of gender challenges	51
Chapter 4. Gender aspects in vocational education	57
Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment of youth...	63
Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls	73
Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment	80
Conclusions	87
Recommendations	89



Armenia is one of the countries where women constitute a vulnerable group of the population requiring protection. The issue also affects youth age cohorts and is manifested in gender inequality in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth.

The data of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, ILO documents and information collected during a visit to Yerevan for conducting in-depth interviews with representatives of public authorities, social organizations and social partners as well as group interviews with Armenian youth informed the present overview.

In-depth interviews were conducted at the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia (the Labour and Employment Department and the Unit for Women, Children and Family Issues), the Public Employment Agency under the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, the Ministry of Education and Science (the Vocational Education Department), the Labour Protection Department (formerly the State Labour Inspection) of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia (the unit for labour market statistics and the migration unit), the “Erebuni” Public Territorial Employment Centre, the “Gorts Bolorin” private employment agency, and the Republican Employers’ Union. Such interviewed were also conducted with private entrepreneurs (“Alvarium” LLC); representatives of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia, the Yerevan State University (with the Vice-Rector for the issues of students, graduates and public relations), Yerevan Regional State College No. 1, the Association of Young Women of Armenia; in the social organization on youth issues “Generation Solidarity” as well as with the Chairperson of the NGO “Association of Armenian Women with University Education”, the ILO National Coordinator and the Executive Representative of UNFPA in the Republic of Armenia.

Group interviews were conducted with representatives of Armenian youth (the Association of Young Women of Armenia, the Republican Employers’ Union and graduate students of Yerevan Regional State College No. 1). Group interviews also included mini-questionnaires (22 questionnaires) filled in by persons aged 15-29.



Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation

Today, Armenia is one of the 18 countries where World Bank experts found not a single provision in legislation restricting women's rights.⁹ However, its way to ensuring legislative equality was long and far from easy.

One of the country's first steps to gender equality was the decision of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on acceding to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to it (April 1991). The next step was ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, under which the country has assumed the following commitments:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women into the Constitution and other legislative acts and achieve its practical implementation;
- to apply, if necessary, special sanctions banning discrimination against women;
- to take measures aimed at amending laws deemed as discriminatory towards women as well as relevant customs and practices;
- to ensure equality for both men and women in exercising all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

In 1992, the Republic of Armenia joined the International Labour Organization and ratified 29 of the 189 ILO conventions in the period from 1994 through 2006.

Of the four conventions directly concerning gender equality issues and work-life balance, the country ratified Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value (1951) and Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) (1958). It also ratified the Employment Policy Convention (No. 122) (1964) and two conventions aimed at eliminating child labour and protecting children and youth (No. 138 and No.182) (the first three mentioned conventions were the first to be ratified in July 1994).

The Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118) is now in the process of being signed.

Conventions that have not been ratified, and whose ratification is not even being considered, include conventions that are of primary importance for promoting youth employment and gender equality such as Conventions No. 77, 78 and 124 concerning medical examination of young persons, three conventions on employment policies (No. 159, 181 and 168), conventions on the protection of workers with family responsibilities and motherhood protection (No. 156 and 183 (Convention No. 103 reviewed in 2000), four conventions on social security (No. 102, 121, 130 and 157), two conventions on vocational training (No. 140 and 142) and a number of conventions regulating certain forms of work (No. 171 and 175) and employment of certain categories of workers (No. 149, 177 and 189) who are most often employed on an informal basis.

⁹ Women, Business and the Law-2016. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. Washington, DC. 2015. P.3. www.worldbank.org. The report summing up the findings of the survey of 173 countries, has measured the extent of legal barriers facing women in entrepreneurship and employment, including the issue of whether women can work in certain jobs, have equal access to credit and face any restrictions in choosing the place of residence or work.





The main reason for the failure to ratify the above conventions is lack of funding for the practical implementation of the stated documents.

With the aim of ensuring gender equality, in 2003 the Republic of Armenia ratified the European Social Charter proclaiming the exercise of social rights without sex-based discrimination as its fundamental principle in its Preamble. In 2004, the country's Government adopted the National Action Programme (NAP) aimed at advancing women in the Republic of Armenia and increasing their role in society for the period of 2004-2010 formulating the principles, priorities and key objectives of public policies in this area.¹⁰ The paramount goal of the document is to raise women's economic status and reduce their unemployment by increasing their employability, including by the development of entrepreneurial skills. It is pointed out in the NAP, among other things, that it sets forth the goal of creating conditions, under which women will be able to earn an income while fulfilling their family responsibilities. However, the document does not mention that men should assume family responsibilities on an equal basis, without which the efforts of the State may result in a double burden on women in the form of paid employment outside the home and unpaid work in the family.

В национальном законодательстве страны закреплены основные аспекты гендерного равенства, National legislation outlines the main aspects of gender equality, motherhood protection and rights of workers with family responsibilities as well as regulation of youth employment. Legislation of the Republic of Armenia proclaims, among other things, the principle of equality of all people before law and bans discrimination on grounds of sex, age and other reasons (see Article 14.1). Article 32 sets forth the right of each citizen to a free choice of work and a just remuneration no lower than the minimum wage specified by law, and bans forced labour and recruitment of children under 16. Article 35 stipulates for equal rights of men and women in married life, bans dismissal on grounds associated with maternity, and entitles each woman worker, in case of pregnancy and childbirth, to a paid maternity leave and a leave to take care of a newborn baby or a leave connected with adoption of a child. Article 39 proclaims the right of each citizen to education. Basic general education is compulsory, and secondary education in public educational institutions is free of charge. Finally, Article 48, among other objectives of the State in economic, social and cultural areas, stipulates for family, maternity and childhood protection; employment promotion and improvement of working conditions; promotion of youth participation in the country's political, economic and cultural life; and assistance in the development of free tertiary and other vocational education. The State undertakes to take measures to achieve these objectives within the bounds of possibility.¹¹

The above constitutional provisions are elaborated in a number of applicable laws of the Republic of Armenia such as the Law on Education No. 3P-297 passed in April 1999, with subsequent amendments; the Law on Wages No. 3P-226 passed in September 2001 and incorporated almost fully into the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia adopted later; the Law on the Minimum Monthly Wage No. 3P-66 passed in December 2003; the Law on State Pensions No. 3P-243 passed in December 2010; and the amended Law on Employment passed in December 2013 and effective as of January 1, 2014 (No. 3P-152), in which Article 8, para. 1, proclaims, among other principles of public employment policies, "the voluntary nature of work and a free choice of occupation free of discrimination".¹²

¹⁰ The first document of this kind for the period of 1998–2000 stipulated for such measures as gender assessment of legislation of the Republic of Armenia; development and implementation of programmes increasing the employment rate of women; improvement of social, psychological and other assistance to women victims of rape and crimes; increased representation of women in public authorities; support to female heads of families and households and, what is most important, statistical elaboration of the gender aspects of social and political life in Armenia. (Women and Men in Armenia 2015. Statistical Booklet. Yerevan, 2015).

¹¹ The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia of 1995 with amendments introduced as a result of the referendum of November 27, 2005 <http://regnum.ru/news/539214.html>.

¹² Law of the Republic of Armenia on Employment No. 3P-152 passed on December 11, 2013 <http://regnum.ru/news/539214.html>.



It should be pointed out, however, that most of the above laws are of a general nature, and the issues dealt with in the present paper are only touched upon in several paragraphs of a few articles.¹³

Issues of gender equality in employment, protection of interests of workers with family responsibilities and labour rights of youth are represented much broader in the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia (No. 3P-124) passed in November 2004 and effective as of 2005. The document contains, among other things:

- a provision on equal remuneration for men and women for the same work or work of equal value (Article 178);
- a ban on the termination of labour contracts on discriminatory grounds such as sex, age, marital or family status (Article 114) as well as termination of contracts with pregnant women and workers taking care of their child under one year old (Article 117);
- a provision setting forth the work-rest schedule including annual and unpaid leave as well as restrictions on overtime and night-time work of pregnant women, workers with family responsibilities, persons under 18 years of age and workers attending general and vocational education institutions in off-work hours (Articles 142, 144, 148, 155, 164, and 176). A separate article (Article 258) bans the work of pregnant women and women taking care of a child under one year old in hazardous and harmful conditions as well as grants breast-feeding mothers additional time for feeding their newborn babies during working hours;
- a provision granting maternity leave to women workers with fully paid wages for a period of 140 days (70 days before and 70 days after the birth of a baby), for a period of 155 days in case of any complications in confinement and for 180 days in case of birth of two or more children. A worker who had adopted a newborn baby or was appointed guardian of a newborn is granted a leave starting from the day of adoption or appointment as guardian until the newborn reaches the age of 70 days (Article 172);
- a provision granting a childcare leave until the child is three years old to his/her father or relative (including guardian) at his/her mother's request (Article 173).¹⁴

Regulation of labour rights of youth by the Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia concerns mostly persons under 18 and persons combining work with studies. The Labour Code stipulates for the minimum age for starting work – 16 years; terms and conditions for recruiting teenagers aged 14–16 (only under a labour contract and with a written consent of their parents, a foster parent or a guardian) and a ban on signing labour contracts with persons under 14 (Article 17). It also stipulates for reduced working hours (24 hours a week for teenagers and 36 hours for workers aged 16–18 (Article 140)) and other restrictions for young persons under 18 concerning their work-rest schedule, including overtime work and work at night time as well as a ban on their work in hazardous, precarious and unsafe conditions (Article 257) and the employer's duty to conduct medical examinations of workers during recruitment and with the set intervals until they reach the age of 18 at his/her own expense (Article 249).

¹³ The Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women (No. 3P-57) passed in 2014 stipulated for guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women in political, social, economic, cultural and public life and regulated relationship emerging therefrom. The Law stipulated, among other things, for a ban on both direct and indirect gender-based discrimination in all areas of public life, i.e. discrimination based on the marital status, pregnancy and fulfilment of family responsibilities; banned gender-based denial of rights; discrimination during recruitment, etc., as well as sexual harassment. The Law interpreted direct gender-based discrimination as worse treatment of a person as compared to the treatment of a person of the other sex under similar circumstances. The Law also reads that a person discriminated against on grounds of sex may defend his/her rights and freedoms and, in order to be reinstated in them, may turn to competent public authorities, local authorities and officials including the Ombudsman of the Republic of Armenia. Actions or omissions of public or local authorities or their officials as well as of organizations and their officials may be appealed against in the administrative authorities or in court. However, the Law met with an ambivalent attitude in society, firstly, due to lack of understanding of the notion of gender and, secondly, due to apprehension lest the law should be mostly aimed at protecting the rights of sexual minorities, which is unacceptable in Armenian society. Evidently, because of this, the law has never been applied and is not listed among the applicable legal acts. <http://regnum.ru/news/1700405.html>; <http://www.equalpowerlastingpeace.org/ru/tag/armeniya/>.

¹⁴ Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia No. 3P-124 (as amended) passed on November 9, 2004, <http://regnum.ru/news/539214.html>.





Article 174 grants educational leave to persons combining work with studies for taking entrance exams, current exams and tests, performing laboratory work, passing graduation exams and defending graduation thesis as well as the conditions and amount of their remuneration (Article 200).

The amended Law on Employment contains no articles dealing with youth employment and the gender dimension. However, Article 22, defining the criteria of non-competitiveness of unemployed persons in the labour market, lists, among other things, factors directly concerning young population groups. They include age, duration of unemployment, place of residence (borderline, mountainous, high-altitude, urban and rural areas), first-time labour market entry, possibility of finding a job or joining vocational training programmes based on the availability of a service record, work experience, job-search activity and availability of relevant demand in the labour market as well as the fact of taking care of a child below three years of age. According to Article 23, a person uncompetitive in the labour market is entitled to:

- priority inclusion into public employment programmes and partial compensation of wages in case of recruitment;
- lump sum compensation for acquiring labour skills and capabilities necessary during recruitment or for starting a small business;
- compensation of expenses on visiting employers with the aim of getting a suitable job;
- assistance in seasonal activity in agriculture.¹⁵

However, the Republic of Armenia is perhaps the only country in the CIS without a framework law on youth and public youth policies. Back in 2005, the Law on Public Youth Policies in the Republic of Armenia was drafted, but its discussion never resulted in its adoption. There is a special public authority in the country responsible for the formulation and implementation of such policies – the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. There is also the Concept of Public Youth Policies of the Republic of Armenia for 2015–2025 and the Strategy of Public Youth Policies for 2013–2017.¹⁶ The latter sets forth the following main priorities:

- studying socio-economic challenges and implementing measures aimed at addressing them; formulating and implementing public programmes;
- developing public youth policies in the regions (ensuring the operation of regional youth centres and establishing, with the financial support of the State, youth centres in communities; implementing measures aimed at developing rural youth and youth living in borderline areas);
- creating conditions for complete self-fulfilment of young people and providing public support to talented and gifted young persons;
- providing youth with necessary information.

When describing the national gender equality promotion mechanism, including equality among youth, it should be pointed out that, as in many other countries, there are no problems in the Republic of Armenia at the legislative level. Legislation guaranteeing equal rights and opportunities for men and women is in place. However, it lacks an effective mechanism of protection of women's rights, and the process of its formation is rather slow, painstaking and contradictory

At the institutional level, formulation and implementation of gender policies is a responsibility of the Council for Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women under the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the Commission on Gender and Demography Issues (Sub-Commission on Gender Issues) under the Public Council of the Republic of Armenia and the Department

¹⁵ Law of the Republic of Armenia on Employment No. 3P-152 passed on December 11, 2014, <http://regnum.ru/news/539214.html>.

¹⁶ The previous document of this kind entitled "National Strategy of Youth Policies" covered the period of 2008-2012.



for Women, Family and Children's Issues under the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues. The Concept of Gender Equality and the Strategic Action Plan on Gender Policies for 2011–2015 were formulated with their active involvement. However, the possibilities of these organizations are rather limited, although they collaborate regularly on this issue with international and national non-governmental organizations.

Within the framework of the Public Council of the Republic of Armenia, various gender aspects are also dealt with by the Commission on State-Legal Issues (the Sub-Commission on Socio-Economic and Cultural Rights of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities), the Commission on Civil Society Development Issues (the Sub-Commission on Human Rights Protection), the Commission on Health and Social Security Issues (the Sub-Commission on Labour and Employment Issues and the Sub-Commission on Groups Requiring Special Social Protection), the Commission on Entrepreneurship and Consumer Rights Protection (the Sub-Commission on Small and Medium Business Promotion, Job Placement and Retraining), and the Commission on Scientific, Educational, Cultural, Youth and Sport Issues. In the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia, there is the Permanent Commission on Human Rights Protection and Public Issues whose responsibilities cover gender equality issues, the Permanent Commission on Health, Maternity and Childhood Issues, the Permanent Commission on Social Issues (labour, employment and demography), and the Permanent Commission on Scientific, Cultural, Youth and Sport Issues.

It should be admitted that today not a single unit in the country's Government conforms fully to the parameters of a national mechanism and can perform its functions of developing and implementing gender policies in all areas in full measure. Instead of establishing one unit responsible for protecting women's rights, the Government preferred to mainstream gender into many structures and government institutions, probably, to ensure a multi-pronged approach to protecting the interests of men and women. This is possibly explained by lack of sufficient understanding of the importance, role and place of gender equality in the country's socio-economic development and, in a number of cases, by negating the existence of inequality.

As a result, as the Asian Development Bank notes in its report, the last five years have witnessed limited progress in ensuring gender equality. Although it may be stated that equality of men and women has actually been ensured in access to education and the educational attainment levels in the Republic of Armenia (even to a certain advantage of women), and noticeable positive changes have been achieved in women's health protection, these achievements are outweighed by limited participation of Armenian women in politics and management and decreased opportunities for their access to economic resources, including employment.¹⁷

The existing situation obviously testifies to the fact that establishment of an effective national mechanism for ensuring gender equality is impeded not only by the impact of stereotypes and a tolerant attitude of women to their actual position in society, but also by insufficient understanding by the authorities of the need to address the issue through creating special tools and mechanisms for advancing and assisting women.



¹⁷ Armenia Country Gender Assessment. Asian Development Bank, 2015.



Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth

Although gender equality has been established by law in the Republic of Armenia, the actual situation is controversial where urban reality differs from rural reality, and the position of youth differs from the position of older people.

Armenian society has retained the traditional notions about men as heirs, bearers of the family name, breadwinners and protectors of their families. Women in this respect represent a lesser value, and their duty is to keep the house and bring up children. This is especially vividly manifested in rural areas where patriarchal traditions prevail and preference is given to men, whereas women are supposed to stay at home and care for their children and do household chores. Little has changed in this respect over the last decades. Despite their employment outside the home, all household and family responsibilities are regarded as women's duty to this day. They do the overwhelming part of unpaid work in the household and in subsidiary farming as well as at small family enterprises. As in many other countries, women are expected to live up to their traditional role in both the family and society at large, and this is one of the causes of the continuing gender-related discrimination in the labour market.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2015, the Republic of Armenia ranks 105th among the 145 countries based on the criteria of women's participation in economic and political life, educational attainment and health, and the situation has not been improving. The country has moved two lines down in the ranking as compared to 2014. At the same time, gender inequality is distributed non-uniformly throughout different areas of public life. As for the educational attainment of Armenian women who surpass the male part of the population in this respect, the country ranks 35th in the world, while their economic opportunities, employment status and possibilities of earning equal wages and income with men as well as career development place the country in the 79th position. The worst case is the political activity of Armenian women (125th position) and their health status (144th position).¹⁸ It is there that gender inequality pulls the country to the end of the list.

“Reason number one is men's higher social mobility. They have better jobs and higher incomes. The second reason is men's priority in society. Men are bearers of the family name. In conditions of a weak social security system, they are guarantors of support in old age. This is the origin of gender inequality. Another factor is stereotypic thinking, according to which working in an office is not proper for a woman. However, modern information technologies offer a possibility of distance work convenient for women with family responsibilities. But public opinion has not reached that level yet.”

(From an interview with the Executive Representative of UNFPA in the Republic of Armenia)

The prevailing stereotype about men as financial supporters and main guarantors of the family welfare has a negative effect on men themselves considering a tense situation in the country's labour market. It is one of the factors that force the male part of the country's population leave abroad in search of a job.

The data obtained from mini-questionnaires testify to the fact that stereotypes concerning the distribution of gender roles in a family prevail even among youth aged 15-29. Forty one per cent of respondents believed that “the husband must do ‘male’ work about the house, while the wife should do

¹⁸ The Global Gender Gap Report 2015. World Economic Forum-2015, The Global Gender Gap Report 2014, <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/>.



‘female’ work”, 18 per cent were of the opinion that “most of the housework should be done by the wife” and, finally, 9 per cent thought that “the husband must take care of the earnings, and the wife – of the family”. However, almost one third of respondents believed that all domestic responsibilities must be divided equally or the one who is less occupied on the job must do most of the housework.

Some respondents also noted positive changes in the distribution of the socially ascribed gender roles as well as the fact that it takes time to overcome the prevailing stereotypes.

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“I cannot say that gender stereotypes have been done with in Armenia. Of course, young people accept European models, but traditional attitudes still prevail in the provinces. Gender stereotypes do exist and have some influence on people, but it is not the most important factor. To overcome stereotypes and gender-related discrimination requires time, and 20 years is not enough. I have been working since 1996, and I can say that there are some changes for the best... If employers refuse a woman a job, they do not say it openly – they name some other reasons. Of course, they ask questions concerning her marital status, its duration and especially the number of children. However, in general it is rather easy for a woman to find a job. Although, if she has children, an employer might think that she will be often absent from work.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children's Issues, head of the unit for women's issues, the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

• • •

Group interviews with youth aged 15–29 and the data of mini-questionnaires have also confirmed certain changes in the gender stereotypes. An understanding that the family is not the only plight of women is spreading among youth. Over two thirds of respondents believe that the issue of the social role of women should be decided either by women themselves or by their families (approximately equal distribution of answers), and less than 20 per cent (mostly young women) believe that it is better for a woman to work part-time. Young women are more assertive concerning gender equality both in family life and especially at work.

The overwhelming majority of answers in the questionnaires testify to the fact that young people believe that both men and women are equally suited for all types of jobs (both connected with decision-making and requiring a high level of education and skills, and work with people and paperwork, often not requiring high skills). Only jobs connected with increased physical workloads were almost unanimously (20 answers from 22) recognized as suitable exclusively for men.

However, many women admit that paperwork and work with people that does not require high skills is more suitable for women.

As for the types of activity, the overwhelming majority of respondents (From 60 to 80 per cent) favoured equal gender opportunities, although big business was mostly viewed as the “kingdom of men” (more often by women than by men). The majority of women considered self-employment more suitable for them, possibly, because it permits them to combine work with family responsibilities more easily.





Chapter 3. Economic and demographic context of youth employment and emergence of gender challenges

Brief description of economy in the Republic of Armenia. Since independence in 1991, the Republic of Armenia has gone through major economic transformations related to transition from a planned to a market-oriented economy. In the 1990s, the country's GDP increased by 3–7 per cent annually. In 2001–2007, the GDP growth rates were expressed in two-digit figures. As a result, the per capita GDP creased from \$636 in 1990 to almost \$4,000 in 2008. However, the global economic crisis of 2008–2009 threw the country back, with the GDP growth rates cut by half in 2008 and demonstrating negative values in 2009. Industrial output declined; unemployment increased; income from business dropped, especially of small and medium-size businesses; and poverty incidence rose to 35.8 per cent in 2010 against 27.6 per cent in 2008.¹⁹

In 2015, the country's GDP increased by 1.5 times against 2009

(From 3,141.7 billion to 4,843.2 billion AMD (Diagram 2.1)). However, the per capita GDP has not yet achieved the 2008 level constituting a little over \$3,200 in 2014.²⁰ According to the World Bank Annual Report, in 2015 Armenia ranked 112th among 187 countries in the per capita gross national income (\$4,020), finding itself between Samoa and Kosovo. As for the former Soviet republics that also appeared in the study, it surpassed only the Kyrgyz Republic (156th) but was behind Azerbaijan (79th), Kazakhstan (60th) and Russia (57th).²¹

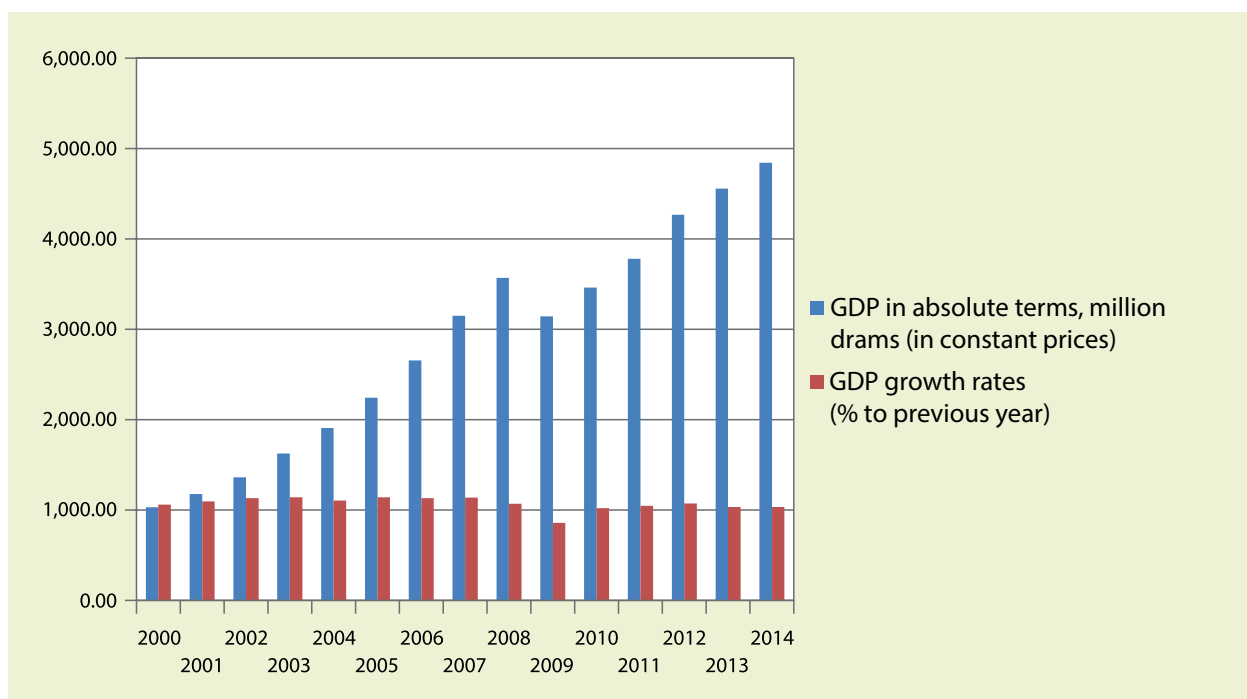
Its economic growth in that period was mostly due to the increase in industrial output (by 49 per cent in comparable prices as compared to 2009), agricultural output (by 23.6 per cent, and in crop farming – by 31.8 per cent) and services (by 36.1 per cent). Another factor of the post-crisis economic recovery was favourable foreign trade opportunities, with demand for the country's export commodities (metals) that ensured an almost 50 per cent increase (48.1 per cent against 2009) in foreign trade turnover in current prices. However, in the period under review, growth in the construction sector was practically non-existent: in 2014, the construction volume index constituted 80 per cent of the 2009 level.²²

¹⁹ Serrière, Nicolas. Labour Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in Armenia. Work4Youth Publication Series No. 21 Geneva, International Labour Organization, October 2014 – P.5.

²⁰ Calculated based on the data of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS.

²¹ <http://gtmarket.ru/ratings/rating-countries-gni/rating-countries-gni-info>.

²² Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2015.

**Diagram 2.1.** Dynamics and rates of GDP growth in the Republic of Armenia in 2000-2014.

Data of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States; Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2015

The following characteristic features are typical of Armenia's economy:

- Poor financial and tax base, budget deficit, limited possibilities for investing in the country's economy;
- Insufficient sectoral diversity represented mostly by the mining industry, light and food industries, treatment of precious and semiprecious stones, metal working, handicrafts and services;
- Microeconomic imbalances, with a low share of small and medium-size enterprises, barriers to the establishment of new firms and growth of small enterprises, which could promote new jobs creation, employment growth and unemployment reduction;
- Substantial role of money transfers from abroad in the economy at large and in the wellbeing of households;
- Substantial share of the informal economy.

The above features are the weak spots of the country's economy preventing effective employment growth and unemployment reduction including their gender dimension.

Throughout the post-Soviet years, the population of the Republic of Armenia has been decreasing. It decreased by more than half a million, or 16 per cent, against 1991, due to both a dropping natural growth rate and a more intensive out-migration from the country. In 2009-2015, the population decreased by 100,000, or 3.2 per cent. As a result, by the beginning of 2016, the country's population dropped below 3 million for the first time in 35 years.²³

The negative dynamics of the country's population was a consequence of, first, a decrease in natural growth rate, which was down by 10 per cent in the period under review (From 17,000 in 2009 to 15,300 in 2014, and still lower in 2012-2013), and, second, rather intensive, although decreasing, out-migration exceeding the natural population growth (with the exception of 2012). However, the gap between the two indicators is also demonstrating a tendency towards a decrease (Table 2.1).

²³ <http://countrymeters.info/ru/Armenia>.



Table 2.1. Population dynamics in the Republic of Armenia and its 2009-2015 component (permanent population, 000 persons at start of year)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	3,076.8	3,055.2	3,018.9	3,021.4	3,026.9	3,017.1	3,010.6
Total increase/loss	-21.6	-20.7	-13.1	5.5	-9.8	-6.5	-6.5
Natural increase	17.0	16.6	15.4	14.9	14.6	15.3	...
Migration balance	-38.6	-37.3	-28.5	-9.4	-24.4	-21.8	...
Share of urban population, %	63.7	63.5	63.4	63.3	63.3	63.4	63.5
Share of rural population, %	36.3	36.5	36.6	36.7	36.7	36.6	36.5

Source: *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia, 2015*.

In the period under view, the urban-to-rural population ratio did not practically change in Armenia. At the beginning of 2015, slightly over one third of the population (36.5 per cent) lived in rural areas. Men constituted 47.5 per cent and women – 52.2 per cent of overall population.²⁴

By the beginning of 2015, 20.5 per cent of Armenia's population were under 16; 66.9 per cent were in the working age; and 12.6 per cent were above the working age. In the period under review, the population below the working age decreased by 4.3 per cent reflecting the trend towards a decreasing birth rate in the country (Table 2.2). The decrease in the working age population was considerably greater – 10 per cent, while the number of persons above working age increased by 1.5 per cent, although the working age limit had been raised several times.²⁵

Table 2.2. Dynamics of the main age cohorts in Armenia's population, 2009–2015 (at start of year, 000 persons)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Overall population, of this number:	3,076.8	3,055.2	3,018.9	3,021.4	3,026.9	3,017.1	3,010.6
under 16	644.3	639.4	609.1	609.8	611.8	616.8	...
working-age population	2,232.1	2,247.1	2,050.2	2,051.5	2,034.0	2,015.1	...
population above working age	373.1	376.1	362.1	365.6	371.3	378.7	...

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2015*; *Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2011*.

By the beginning of 2015, the share of persons aged 65 and older constituted 10.7 per cent of overall population, which testifies to the continuing ageing of the country's population exceeding the lower threshold, set by the United Nations at the level of 7 per cent.

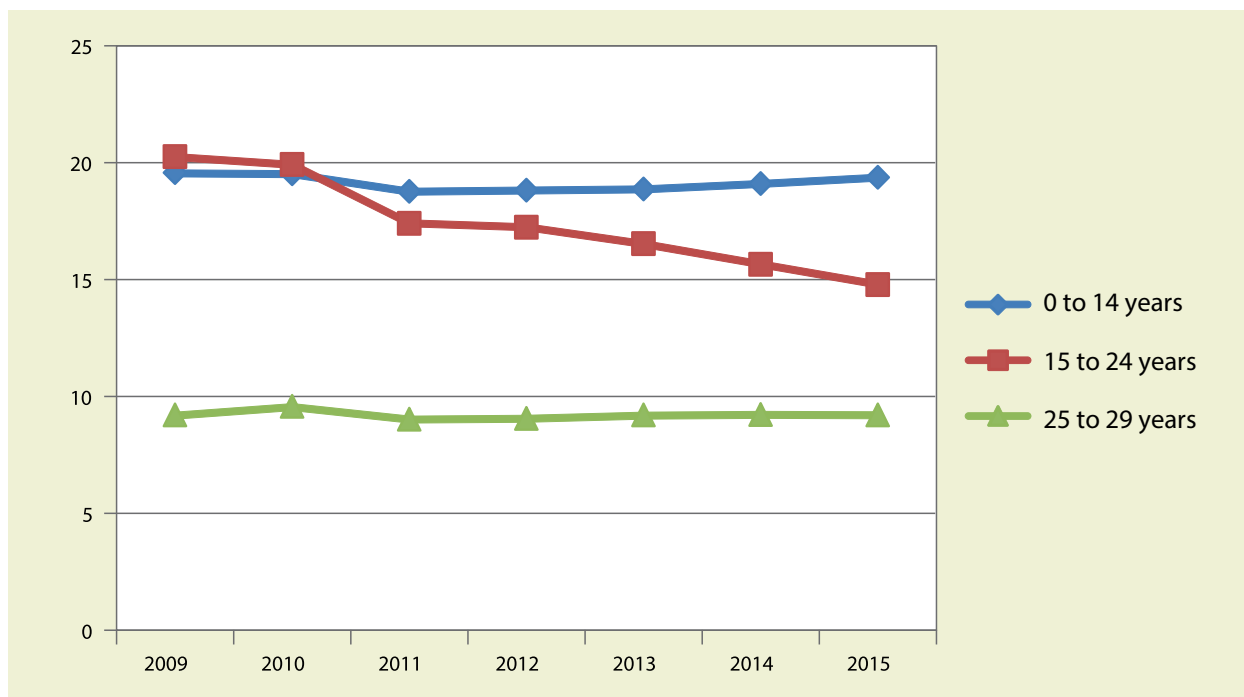
²⁴ The Demographic Handbook of Armenia, 2015.

²⁵ The working age limit was raised several times in Armenia over the last 20 years, from 59 years prior to January 1, 1997, to 62 years by January 1, 2002, for men, and from 54 years to 61 years for women. Since 2012, both men and women from 16 to 62 years old are referred to the working age population.



It should be pointed out that the dynamics of certain age cohorts was irregular and multi-directional (Annex, Table 5). The most substantial decrease that constituted 38 per cent was in the age cohort of 15–19 years, with 20 per cent in the age cohort of 20–24 years, 34 per cent in the age cohort of 45–49 years, and 18 per cent in the age cohort of 40–44 years. Only children's age cohorts below 10 years were an exception (a 9.5 per cent increase in this age group in the period under review) as well as the age cohorts of 30–39 years (+5 per cent) and 55–64 years (+40 per cent).

Diagram 2.2. Dynamics of the share of youth age cohorts in the population of the Republic of Armenia (at start of year, as percentage of overall population)..



Source: *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia, 2015.*

While the share of children and teenagers (0–14 years) remained practically unchanged in the period under review, the share of youth (15–29 years) decreased from 30 per cent to a quarter of the population (24 per cent), mostly at the expense of the 15–24 age cohort, whereas the share of youth aged 25–29 remained practically unchanged (Diagram 2.2).

Important factors influencing women's employability and gender equality are their family responsibilities, marriage age, and subsequent birth of children.

Over the last 20 years, the average marriage age for women in the Republic of Armenia has been steadily increasing, and this trend has been observed in relation to marriage in general and the first marriage in particular both in urban and rural areas. In the period under review (2009–2014), the average marriage age for women increased by almost 2.5 years, and the age of the first marriage – by almost two years. As far as the age of the first marriage for rural women is concerned, this indicator increased by 2.3 years against 1.8 years in urban areas, while remaining almost two years lower (Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3.** Dynamics of the average marriage age for women, 2009-2014

	Average marriage age, years	Average age of first marriage, years		
		Armenia at large	Urban areas	Rural areas
2009	24.9	24.4	25.0	23.2
2010	25.2	24.6	25.2	23.5
2011	25.6	25.0	25.6	23.9
2012	25.9	25.3	26.2	24.2
2013	26.5	25.8	26.4	24.6
2014	27.3	26.3	26.8	25.5

Source: *The Demographic Handbook of Armenia, 2015, P.98; Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.*

However, late marriage has a negative effect on the birth rate as it increases the age of childbirth and eventually reduces the number of children. In the period under review, the average mother's age at childbirth was steadily rising (Table 2.4) and increased by almost 1.5 years (1.3 years at the first childbirth).²⁶

Table 2.4. Dynamics of the average mother's age at childbirth, 2009-2014

	Average mother's age at childbirth, years	Average mother's age at the first childbirth, years
2009	24.7	23.0
2010	25.1	23.3
2011	25.3	23.5
2012	25.5	23.8
2013	25.8	24.1
2014	26.1	24.3

Source: *Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.*

²⁶ The average age of women's first marriage and the average marriage age in general are higher than the average mother's age at the birth of the first child and at childbirth in general because the indicators concerning the age of women in childbirth are based on all facts of birth, while the indicators concerning marriage age are based only on registered marriages, and marriages may be registered after the birth of a child.



On the whole, such trends are typical of demographic transition and are primarily associated with increasing levels of educational attainment of the population in general and women in particular. However, it also reflects the existing stereotypes, to a certain extent.

• • •

“As for childbirth, people no longer plan more than two children. The current reproductive index is 1.4, which is very low. It is now more typical of Armenian girls to complete their studies first, and to get married later. Both youths and girls want to make a career first.

Now girls are the ones that think more about their career than men.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children's Issues, head of the unit for women's issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia)

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The current trends produce a negative effect not only on the birth rate but also on population growth. They also affect women's employability and their careers, which was mentioned in many interviews.

• • •

“It is especially difficult for those women who have families and children to combine their career and family responsibilities. One of the reasons is our traditional mentality, according to which women should bring up children while men should earn a living.”

(From an interview with the head of the Department for Labour and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

• • •

“Segregation of women, both vertical and horizontal, stems not only from family stereotypes; it is also connected with the fact that women, especially those with children, are busy doing domestic work. There aren't enough childcare facilities, and women cannot combine family responsibilities and work, career and the need to take care of children. Besides, childcare facilities are open until a certain hour. Therefore, women cannot work in shifts and in those hours when childcare facilities are closed. However, children attending childcare facilities pose fewer problems compared with junior schoolchildren (starting from the age of six, and there is only one shift at schools). After 12 o'clock someone must take care of them, so women either drop their job or hire a nurse. All this has a negative impact on women's career. Another unit in our ministry prepared recommendations concerning extended-day groups, but there is no money for it because children must be fed and do their homework, and this requires some extra staff.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children's Issues, head of the unit for women's issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

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Chapter 4. Gender aspects in vocational education

Although the Republic of Armenia has one of the lowest indicators of public spending on education among the CIS countries (2.4 per cent of the GDP in 2012–2014²⁷), educational attainment and coverage of youth with educational institutions are rather high. According to the World Bank data, there is 100 per cent literacy among both adult (over 15 years) and young (15–24 years) population.²⁸

The majority of schoolchildren still attend public schools. Private schools are not numerous because of high tuition fees. At the beginning of the 2014/2015 academic year, they constituted only 3.2 per cent of educational institutions of this level, and their student body constituted even a smaller share (2.1 per cent of all schoolchildren).²⁹

There are no evening secondary schools in the country, since under the Law on Education, general secondary education is compulsory and children are guaranteed tuition free of charge. Cases of dropout from schools are under the supervision of relevant authorities responsible for school attendance. On completing eight or nine grades, schoolchildren may continue their education at secondary vocational education institutions that are supposed to provide general upper secondary education as well.

The number of students who graduated from secondary schools in 2014, decreased by 13.5 per cent against 2013, which is a result of a lower birth rate in the country.

Gender composition in the general secondary education system of the Republic of Armenia is obviously not in favour of men. As is clear from Table 2.5, the share of girls attending each secondary education level is higher than the relevant indicator for boys, especially in senior grades where the share of girls is 20 per cent higher.

Table 2.5. Coverage of children and teenagers in the Republic of Armenia with secondary education, by sex, 2014

Education levels	Share of students	Share of girls	Share of boys	Number of girls per 100 boys
	(% of the relevant age cohort)			
Primary school	93.1	93.5	92.6	101
General secondary	92.6	92.9	92.4	101
Upper school	72.4	80.2	65.6	122
Secondary school in general	87.8	89.9	85.9	105

Source: *Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet*.

The vocational education system in the Republic of Armenia is composed of primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. The latter has two levels of training: Bachelor's programme and Master's programme. In recent years, the so-called "network" colleges combining vocational training and secondary education have become widespread in the secondary education system. They train students in a wide range of occupations with different qualification levels demanded in the labour market and provide them with general secondary education. Vocational training is provided by both public and private institutions, but the number of the latter as well as the number of their students is insignificant

²⁷ CIS statistics. Statistical newsletter of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, 2015, issue 3, p.138.

²⁸ Armenia National Education Profile, 2014. World Bank, 2014.

²⁹ CIS statistics. Statistical newsletter of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, 2015, issue 3, p.148.



and tends to decrease not only because of their consolidation or closure, but also due to the fact that public educational institutions have also started to provide paid education. In the 2014/2015 academic year, 48 per cent of students of public secondary vocational education institutions and 70 per cent of students of tertiary educational institutions attended them on a paid basis. The remaining training places (the so-called “government contract”) filled on a competitive basis are available only in those areas of training that the State considers strategically important for the country; they are not available in legal occupations, for example.

Enrolment in secondary vocational education institutions tends to decrease. At the beginning of the 2014/2015 academic year, it constituted 28,500 persons in Armenia, which is 5 per cent less than a year before and 8.4 per cent less than in the 2001/2002 academic year. At the tertiary level, the situation was the opposite: enrolment (94,000 in the 2014/2015 academic year) increased by 16 per cent as compared to the previous year and by more than half (54 per cent) as compared to the beginning of the millennium.³⁰

The desire to give one’s children tertiary education has been traditional for the country’s population and may also be regarded as one of the stereotypes of social behaviour, especially since this issue is not always addressed by young people themselves. It is often the family that makes the decision based on considerations of social prestige without due regard for the wish of the children or the labour market situation. Considering that vocational education is often provided on a paid basis, the decision results in a substantial financial burden on the family.

• • •

“The desire to give one’s children tertiary education is largely based on Armenian mentality. To an Armenian, tertiary education of his/her child is a matter of prestige, especially as far as girls are concerned, for it is a good dowry for them.”

(From an interview with the Executive Representative of UNFPA in the Republic of Armenia)

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“Parents used to tell their children where to enrol because it would be easier to find employment.”

(From an interview with a 16-year-old male student of Yerevan College No.1)

• • •

At the same time, the data of mini-questionnaires have shown that Armenian youth are aware of the importance of education for the present-day economy and society, especially for a successful employment and career development. When asked what qualities of a worker may be important for recruitment, respondents named education as the most important factor (91 per cent of replies).

Despite absence of gender discrimination in education, gender inequality is rather vividly manifested in the levels of vocational education (Table 2.6) and areas of training.



³⁰ CIS statistics. Statistical Newsletter of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, 2015, issue 3, pp.189-191.



Table 2.6. Gender composition of students in vocational education institutions of different levels, start of 2014/2015 academic year

	Enrolment, 000 persons		Share, %		Number of girls per 100 youths
	girls	youths	of girls	of youths	
Primary vocational education institutions	1.8	5.5	25.2	74.8	33
Secondary vocational education					
Public institutions	14.3	12.6	53.3	46.7	113
Private institutions	1.2	0.4	73.7	26.3	280
Total	15.5	13.0	54.5	45.5	119
Tertiary vocational education					
Public institutions	36.8	32.8	52.8	47.2	112
Private institutions	4.8	5.2	47.9	52.1	92
Total	41.6	38.0	52.2	47.8	109

Source: *Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.*

It is rather men who are discriminated against in both vocational and general secondary education, because the share of girls tends to increase at the higher levels of the education system. There is only a quarter of girls in technical schools whereas in secondary and tertiary vocational education institutions there are, on the average, 110-120 girls per 100 youths. Not numerous private educational institutions where the correlation is reverse are an exception. This is probably explained by an easier learning mode and absence of compulsory attendance and strict control of learning achievements (typical of public educational institutions where low learning results are fraught with the transfer from free to paid education). This approach of private educational institutions is convenient primarily for youths who often combine work with studies.

However, the gender gap in vocational education in favour of women tends to decrease. In 2005, girls accounted for two thirds of students in secondary vocational education institutions (against the current 54 per cent) and 55 per cent of tertiary students (against the current 52 per cent).³¹

A typical feature noted by many respondents is also the fact that girls are more knowledge-thirsty and study better than youths.

“Generally, girls are better educated and purposeful. Practically none of them have any problems with learning and show good results. Girls study better.”

(From an interview with the Vice-Rector for Students’ and Graduates’ Issues and Public Relations, Yerevan State University).

Gender imbalance is more strongly manifested in the areas of training. First of all, attention is drawn to a rather narrow range of areas of training in vocational education: 14 at the primary level and 9 at the secondary level.

³¹ CIS Statistics. Statistical Newsletter of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, 2015, issue 3, p.198.



Primary vocational education is not very attractive for Armenian girls (there are only one third of them in educational institutions of this level). Their number is still lower in most areas of training, and in such areas of training as energy, mechanical engineering and transport there are no girls at all. Only in two areas of training (economics and management, and light industry) girls constitute a majority (57 and 77 per cent respectively – see Annex, Diagram 2).

A similar situation is observed in secondary vocational education where the number of girls exceeds the number of youths by 20 per cent according to the 2014/2015 data. But there too they prefer typically “female” occupations (health care and pedagogics) as well as “arts and cinema” where their share constitutes 70, 82 and 61 per cent respectively, whereas youths constituting from 60 to 96 per cent of the student body give preference to law, agriculture, industry, construction, transport and communications. Only in economics and other areas of training, the gender balance is almost equal, although with a slight prevalence of youths (Annex, Diagram 3).

In tertiary educational institutions, where the number of girls exceeds that of youths by 9 per cent, the former are mostly concentrated in seven rather traditionally “female” areas of training out of the 25 available ones. These are health care, education and pedagogics, foodstuffs and technology where their share varies from 60.5 per cent in the food-industry occupations to 84 per cent in social sciences. Men dominate in the other areas of training connected with engineering, economy, state-of-the-art and communication technologies, construction, architecture, etc. The gender gap is closing only in physical and mathematical studies as well as in economics and management, although with a 4 to 8 per cent prevalence of youths (Annex, Diagram 4).

As in most CIS countries, in the Republic of Armenia there is a persisting and increasing imbalance between the output of specialists by secondary and tertiary vocational institutions. In 2014, there were 359 graduates from tertiary educational institutions (121 in 2000) against 100 graduates from secondary ones.³²

At the same time, during the field study many respondents pointed out that tertiary education does not guarantee employment in future. In the situation of the current skills mismatch, graduates of secondary and tertiary vocational institutions experience increasing difficulties with job placement, and lack of work experience makes their search for work even more difficult.



“Parents want their children to acquire tertiary education, whereas there are not enough jobs for university graduates.”

(From an interview with the Vice-Rector for Students’ and Graduates’ Issues and Public Relations, Yerevan State University)



“In Armenia, youth employment issues are the same as in other countries. They include skills mismatch. Education lags behind labour market requirements both qualitatively and quantitatively.”

(From an interview with the head of the Department of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)



³² Ibid, p.169.





“Women’s higher educational attainment is not an advantage, because most of them do not work in the field they have been trained for. The same is true of men. Education and the labour market are very far from each other. Each of them is developing independently. There is possibly no need for such active education development.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children’s Issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

Another cause of difficulties with the job placement of graduates is a weak and practically non-existent vocational guidance system. Work on its formation is in the nascent stage in the educational institutions of the Republic of Armenia. During a meeting with the students of College No. 1 in the city of Yerevan, many of those 25 present said that vocational guidance at school mostly consisted of meetings with representatives of various educational institutions including this college, which invited them to study there. Six persons did not have even that.

“There were talks with teachers who spoke about the labour market situation and skills needed there, and what occupation is better to choose.”

(From an interview with a 17-year-old female student of Yerevan College No. 1)

“But for the most part they said we have to study well, and that was all.”

(From an interview with a 17-year-old male student of Yerevan College No. 1)

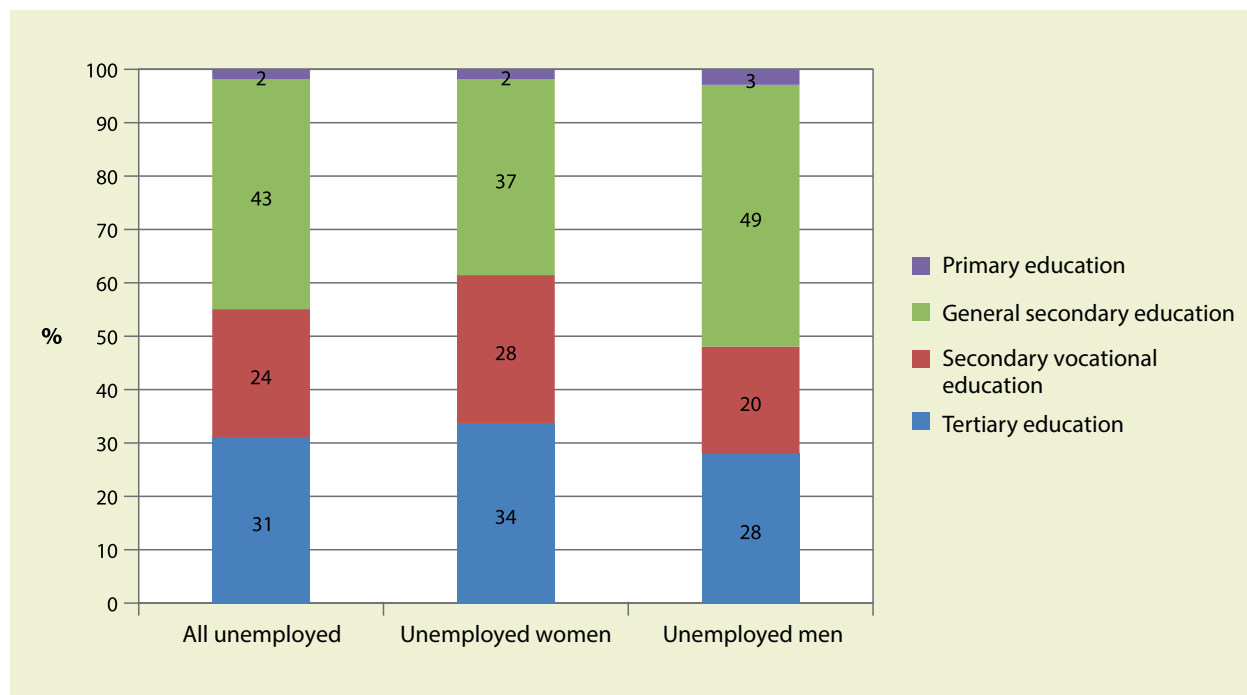
Annually, thousands of young people graduate from school and face the most important choice in their lives – what should be done next. Meanwhile, the Public Education Development Programme for 2011–2015 does not stipulate for any assistance to be provided to school leavers and youth in choosing their career, although the need for urgent measures that will help them make adequate choices is universally recognized. One such measure may be a compulsory course on choosing one’s future occupation in upper school, including a possibility of volunteer internship or practice, which will open up prospects for future employment. The course may be directed at training such highly demanded job-search skills as the ability to speak to potential employers and online search.³³

Imbalances and weak links between the vocational education system in Armenia and labour market realities result in high unemployment rates among graduates of educational institutions. In this area, gender imbalances are not in favour of women either. According to the data presented by the State Employment Agency of the Republic of Armenia, by the beginning of 2016, persons with tertiary and post-graduate education accounted for 13.2 per cent of the registered unemployed (women constituted 9.9 per cent of this number), persons with incomplete tertiary and secondary vocational education accounted for 18 per cent (14.8 per cent were women), persons with primary vocational education accounted for 6.3 per cent (4.2 per cent were women), and persons with general secondary, incomplete secondary and primary education accounted for 61.7 per cent (40.2 per cent were women).

³³ <http://csln.info/original/136ECB2.pdf>.



Diagram 2.3. Distribution of unemployed persons by sex and educational attainment, 2014 (% of the total number of unemployed and breakdown by sex))



Source: *Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.*

Among the unemployed *en masse* (not only those registered), the situation is even worse, and not in favour of educated women either. Among them, the share of unemployed with tertiary and secondary vocational education is higher than among men by 21 and 40 per cent respectively. The share of unemployed men among persons without vocational education is considerably higher than that of women (Diagram 2.3).

It is not surprising that young people wish to emigrate. One third of students of Yerevan College No. 1, half of them – girls, expressed such a wish.

Another weak spot in the vocational education system of the Republic of Armenia is lack of a well-functioning system in vocational education institutions for providing assistance to youth in the job placement and tracing their career after graduation. The Yerevan State University is only beginning to provide such assistance, and it merely boils down to providing them with information, although this is also important for the job placement of graduates. According to the Vice-Rector for Students and Graduates' Issues and Public Relations,

“The University is not particularly tracing its graduates' career. Right now, we are introducing an Italian computer system for this purpose. There is the Centre for Students and Career at the University, which arranges courses and training, often with the involvement of employers. It establishes contacts with them and arranges internships, which is helpful for the subsequent job placement. A web portal entitled 'Internship' has been created for interaction between students and employers where employers may post their job offers.”

(From an interview with the Vice-Rector for Students' and Graduates' Issues and Public Relations, Yerevan State University)



Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment of youth

According to legislation of the Republic of Armenia, the lower age limit of the working population is 16 years, while the category of youth includes persons from 16 to 30 years old, as is stated in official documents and some studies of youth issues.³⁴

The National Statistical Service collects data on employment, unemployment and economic activity of youth aged 15–29 (in a number of cases, for ages 15 to 34). The Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States refers persons aged from 15 to 64 years to the working-age population (in the Republic of Armenia, this category includes persons 15 to 75 years old). Such inconsistencies limit possibilities of using various sources of information for analysing this aspect of the issue. Besides, the CIS Statistical Committee prepares and publishes a much narrower range of indicators than the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, and many items are without the breakdown by age and sex.

Economic activity of youth. The 2008–2014 period, as the previous one, was characterized by two opposite trends, namely, a decreasing number of the economically active population in the country at large and a still more considerable decrease in the number of economically active men, on the one hand, and an increasing economic activity of women, on the other hand. At the same time, labour force participation increased both among overall population and among men and women, although it increased more substantially among women (by 4.8 percentage points against 2.4 percentage points for men). As a result, the share of economically active men decreased by 2 percentage points against the 2 p.p. growth indicator for women (Annex, Table 6). One of the reasons for such dynamics was intensive outmigration of Armenian men, most of them constituting the working-age category of 25 to 49 years.

The highest labour force participation exceeding 80 per cent is observed among men 25–59 years old. As for women, this indicator is some 13–36 percentage points lower than for men.

Table 2.7. Labour force participation of youth in the Republic of Armenia by age and sex, 2012–2014, %

	2012		2013		2014	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Overall population	55.3	72.1	55.9	72.8	55.2	73.2
15 – 19 years	11.4	14.7	13.4	12.2	12.3	14.3
20 – 24 years	44.5	64.2	46.4	65.2	48.8	67.7
25 – 29 years	55.3	87.6	52.2	86.7	53.3	89.1

Source: *Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.*

In 2014, the number of the economically active youth aged 15–29 constituted 334,400 persons, or 24.3 per cent of the total number of the country's economically active population, which roughly corresponds to the share of youth in overall population. Among the economically active youth, there are more men than women – 188,800 persons, or 56.4 per cent.³⁵

³⁴ See, for example: Concept of the Public Youth Policy in the Republic of Armenia for 2015–2025.

³⁵ Calculated based on: Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia, 2010–2014. Statistical Handbook. National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, 2015.



Labour force participation of youth is much lower than labour force participation of the other age cohorts, especially of women, which is natural because more of them are studying (Annex, Diagram 5).

As is clear from Table 2.7, labour force participation increases with age in all youth categories, although considerably slower among women than among men. Meanwhile, the gender gap is widening from 14 per cent among 15–19-year-old teenagers, most of whom are still studying, to 28 per cent in the group of 20–24 year olds and to 60 per cent among those 25–29 years old. As compared to 2012, labour force participation of women in the latter group dropped by 2 percentage points.

Youth employment. In general, the 2008–2014 labour market in the Republic of Armenia was characterized by a decreasing number of employed population (especially manifest among men due to labour outmigration). On the contrary, the number of employed women increased (although there are fewer women than men in the total number of those employed). At the same time, the employment rate of overall population increased in the period under review, and it was more pronounced among women than among men (by 3.5 and 1 percentage points respectively). However, generalized indicators conceal substantial gender and age differences.

Table 2.8. Youth employment rate in the Republic of Armenia by sex, 2012–2014, %

	2012		2013		2014	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Overall employment rate	45.2	60.2	45.8	62.3	44.5	61.6
15 – 19 years	5.9	10.3	7.6	7.1	5.6	10.5
20 – 24 years	27.1	43.8	27.3	45.5	27.8	46.4
25 – 29 years	40.9	69.3	37.7	71.9	39.7	72.5
30 – 34 years	48.6	79.1	47.5	79.0	47.4	74.7

Source: *Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.*

As is clear from Table 2.8, the youth employment rate, gradually rising with age due to the completion of studies, remains considerably lower than the overall population employment rate. Only in the age category of 25–29 years it is close to the indicators of the subsequent age cohorts (30–34 and 35–39 years) where employment rates are the highest. However, in all age categories without exception there is a considerable gender gap constituting 20–25 percentage points not in favour of women. Women's inequality in the labour market is also manifested in the fact that even in the most active youth category (25–29 years) women's employment rate is considerably lower than in all subsequent age cohorts, exceeding only the employment rate of women aged 65–74 (Annex, Diagram 5).

Gender inequality is also manifested in the employment status. There are 47 per cent of women among waged workers, only 19 per cent among employers, 48 per cent among self-employed persons (working on their own account), and 63 per cent among contributing family workers (often unpaid) for whom it is a forced solution of the employment issue.³⁶ According to the findings in the ILO publication *Labour Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in Armenia*³⁷ based on the 2012 data, a similar situation with gender distribution is also observed in the youth age cohorts.

³⁶ Calculated based on the Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Armenia, 2015. For lack of data with breakdown by age, overall data on employed women are presented.

³⁷ Serrière N. Labour market transitions of young women and men in Armenia. International Labour Organization. Work4Youth Publication Series No. 21. Geneva, October 2014. P.24.



Table 2.9. Gender distribution of employed population and youth in the Republic of Armenia by main occupations, %

Occupations	All those employed, 2014		Employed youth aged 15–29, 2012	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
All those employed	100	100	100	100
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	29.6	40.5	18.7	15.8
Manufacturing industry	10.1	6.4	12.5	3.9
Construction	9.5	0.5	10.0	0.9
Wholesale and retail trade	11.9	9.8	19.9	18.1
Transport	6.8	1.0	4.7	2.4
Hotels and catering	1.7	1.8	2.1	1.2
Information and communications	1.9	1.7	4.7	6.5
Finance	1.7	1.5	2.1	4.8
Public and municipal administration	11.1	4.4	12.7	8.2
Education	3.2	15.9	2.1	18.8
Health care and social services	1.7	7.5	1.1	4.4
Culture and arts	1.4	1.8	0.8	2.7
Other services	1.6	2.6	2.4	8.0

Source: Data on overall population – Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2015, data on youth – Serrière N. Labour market transitions of young women and men in Armenia. p.25.

Gender distribution of youth by occupations is mostly a replica of what is observed among overall population (a substantial exception is agriculture where prevalence of women is connected with the availability of older age cohorts). As before, there are few women in industry, construction and transport that have long since been considered as “male” occupations (7.2 per cent and 27.2 per cent of employed youth respectively). Education, health care, culture and arts as well as many types of services are still regarded as “female” occupations among youth as well (one third of the employed young women against 6.4 per cent of young men). However, as far as most other occupations are concerned, gender differences among youth are less pronounced. The current 60 per cent prevalence of young women over young men in such areas as finance, information and communications as compared to the situation among overall population is probably explained by high educational attainment levels and the desire to seek self-fulfilment. Young women are now more active in their desire to work in public and municipal administrations where their share is already twice as high as among the employed population in general. The remaining lag, although a small one, in the share of young women employed in trade and catering may be explained by long working hours, which conflicts with their family responsibilities.



“Women are dissatisfied with the working schedule; they want to work in the public sector, because there are standard working hours there and labour rights are observed. In the private sector, working hours are long and labour rights are not always observed, contrary to legislation.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children's Issues, head of the unit for women's issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

However, discrimination against young women and abuse of their rights is most obvious in the positions they occupy and, consequently, in their wages.

According to the above-mentioned ILO survey *Labour Market Transitions of Young Women and Men in Armenia* (for lack of updated data on the age and sex breakdown), the share of young women among lawmakers and top managers is almost 2.5 times lower than the share of young men (4.7 per cent against 11.4 per cent), whereas their share is twice as high (75.7 per cent) as the share of men (33.9 per cent) in subordinate positions (engineers, technicians, support and office staff, and service workers).³⁸

Naturally, this situation is reflected in wages. According to the country's National Statistical Service, in 2013–2014 men's wages were 1.5 times (51.5 per cent) higher than women's wages. As compared to 2010, the gender gap has decreased insignificantly – by 5 per cent. Of course, the gap also reflects women's underemployment since they account for 63.4 per cent of those working part-time.³⁹ However, the Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia plans to start collecting data on wages with breakdown by age cohorts only in 2017.

According to the 2012 data, presented in the ILO survey, the situation with the gender pay gap among young wagedworkers was comparable to the national one: men earned 50 per cent more than women, while among self-employed persons the income of young men exceeded that of young women threefold. Yet, it is pointed out in the survey that young women wagedworkers are more often than men covered by pension and social insurance, received paid holiday and sick leave, as well as leave for taking care of children, bonuses, severance payments, and compensations of medical and educational expenses.⁴⁰

Eighty six point one per cent of young women and 66.3 per cent of men worked under written employment contracts, while 13.9 per cent of young women and almost 2.5 times more of young men (33.7 per cent) worked under verbal agreements. However, employers hire young men for permanent jobs more willingly. Women constitute more than half (59.7 per cent) of wagedworkers among young people working under short-term contracts (with a duration of less than a year).⁴¹

Another major challenge in the youth labour market is that of informal employment. According to the ILO survey, almost two thirds of young workers (64.2 per cent) were informally employed, and this challenge affects men stronger than women (67.7 per cent of young men are informally employed), although this indicator is alarmingly high (58.9 per cent) among young women as well. Attention is drawn to the fact that over 60 per cent (78 per cent in towns) of informal employment occurs in the formal sector, i.e. at officially operating enterprises where the share of informally employed young women is higher than the share of young men (65.6 against 61.5 per cent), with all ensuing negative

³⁸ 2012 data. Labour market transitions of young women and men in Armenia. P.25.

³⁹ <http://armstatbank.am/>. Interestingly, only 2.6 per cent of women working part-time chose this option of their own free will. To others, such employment is either a forced measure due to the nature of work (seasonal nature, etc. – 69.9 per cent), or because of impossibility to find a full-time job (11.8 per cent) or impossibility to work full time (9.2 per cent), or because of the employer's choice (6.8 per cent). Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia, 2010-2014. Statistical Handbook. National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, 2015.

⁴⁰ Serrière N. Labour market transitions of young women and men in Armenia. P.27, 29.

⁴¹ Serrière N. *Op.cit.* P.26.

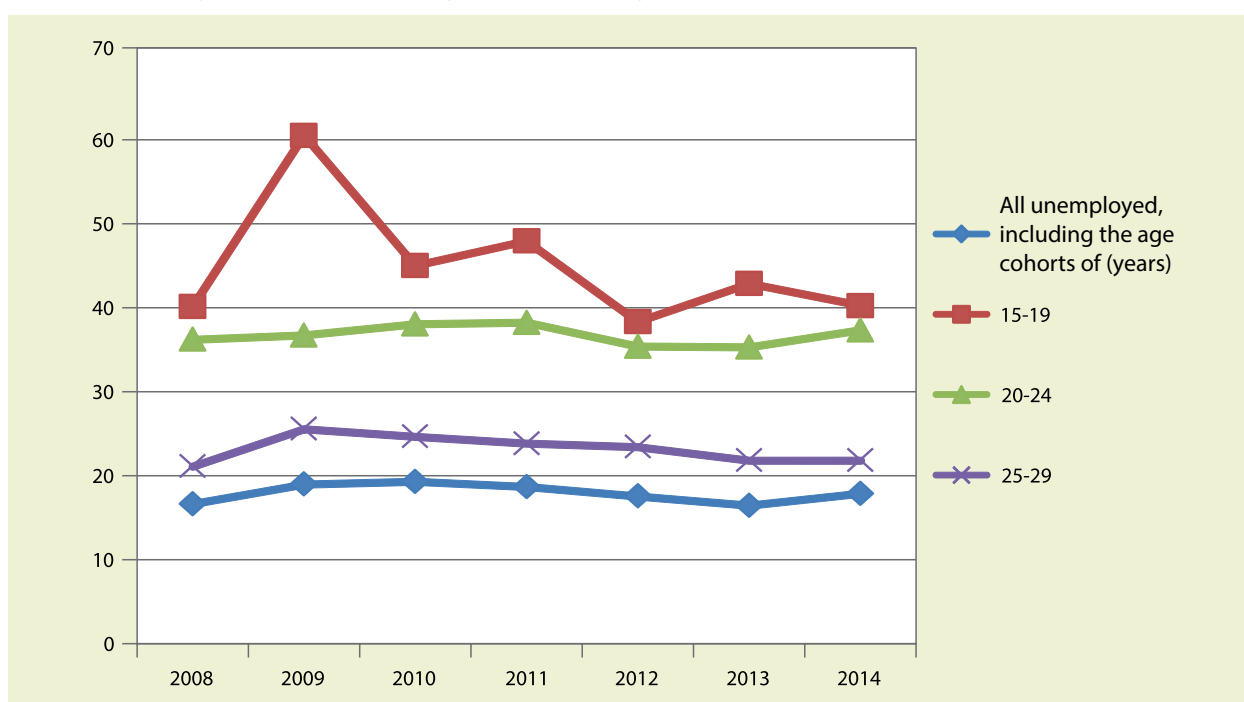




consequences such as abuse of social and labour rights (lack of labour protection, access to social security programmes, etc.).⁴²

Youth unemployment. Imbalances between the demand for and supply of labour persisting in the labour market of the Republic of Armenia, have led to increasing unemployment rates in the country. In 2008–2014, the number of unemployed increased by 4.5 per cent and unemployment rate was up by 7.3 per cent, while the gender gap in unemployment indicators remained and even grew, which resulted in the share of unemployed women up by 1 percentage point due to the continuing outmigration of working age men from the country. The same reason explains the small gap between male and female unemployment rates constituting less than 1 percentage point. Another peculiarity of unemployment in Armenia is the fact that it mostly occurs in towns: in 2014, the unemployment rate in towns was 3.5 times higher than in rural areas (23.2 per cent in towns against 6.6 per cent in rural areas).⁴³

Diagram 2.4. Dynamics of unemployment rates for youth age cohorts in Armenia, 2008–2014, %.



From <http://armstatbank.am/>.

In the period under review, the unemployment rates in youth age cohorts varied, but not very much (with the exception of the leap during the 2009–2010 crisis). However, they were considerably higher than the unemployment rates in the other age cohorts reducing with age. The highest rate was among the 15–19 year olds, which reflected the extent of the problem of the first job placement of persons with limited occupational skills or without vocational training (**Diagram 2.4**).

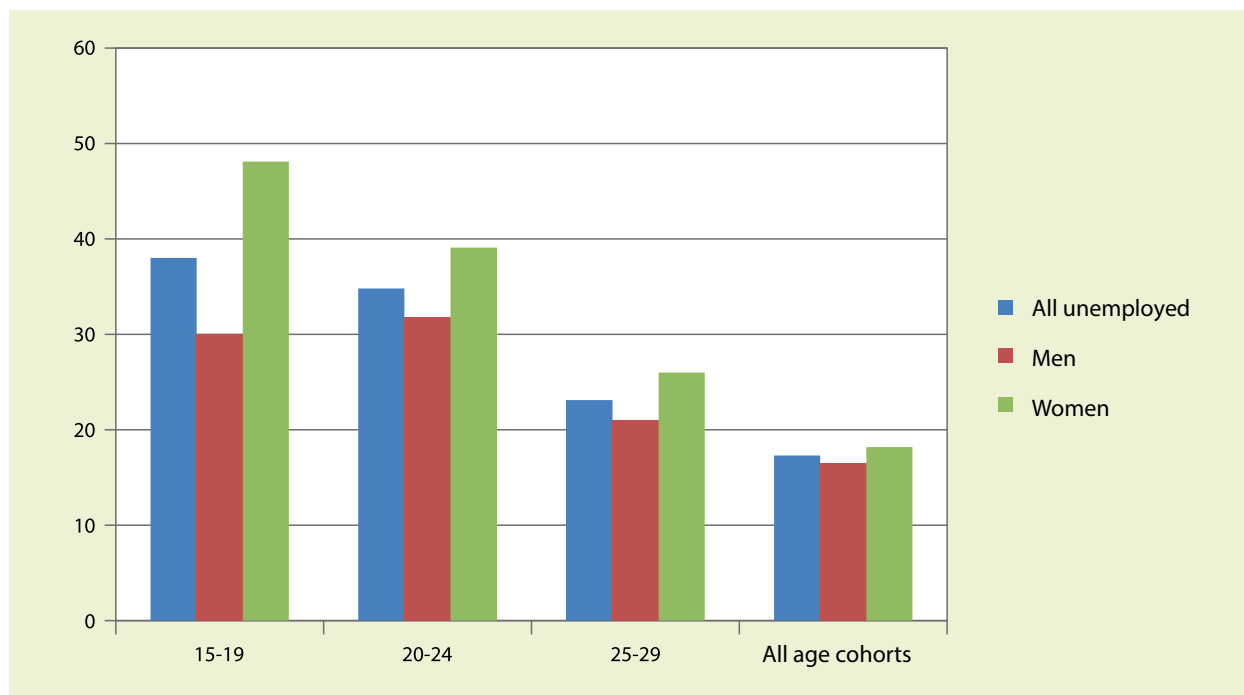
A manifestation of gender inequality in the labour market of the Republic of Armenia is an explicit feminization of unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular. In the age cohort of 15–19 year olds, the unemployment rate for youths is 40 per cent lower than that for girls, and in the youth cohort of 20–24 and 25–29 year olds, it is 20 per cent lower, whereas in overall population the difference is no more than 10 per cent (**Diagram 2.5**).

⁴² Serrière N. Labour market transitions of young women and men in Armenia. P.31.

⁴³ Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia, 2010–2014.



Diagram 2.5. Gender-related differences in youth unemployment rates, 2012, as percentage of the labour force of the relevant sex and age cohort.



Source: Household's Integrated Living Conditions Survey, 2012, National Statistical Survey of RA.

General and registered youth unemployment. Only an insignificant part of unemployed persons is registered in this capacity by the country's Public Employment Service, with an obvious trend towards its reduction. As compared to 2008, in 2014 the share of registered unemployed in their total number decreased from 32.4 to 27.3 per cent, and in some years (2012–2013) it was down to a quarter of all unemployed.⁴⁴ Registered unemployment is characterized by somewhat different and more obvious gender and age differences. Unlike men, women turn to the employment service for assistance more often. Among the registered unemployed, 70 per cent are women whereas their share among overall unemployed is 54.4 per cent. A different situation is observed among youth. There is no more than a quarter of them among the registered unemployed (although this indicator tends to increase as compared to 2008), whereas the share of youth cohorts in the overall number of unemployed constituted 40 per cent and more (Diagram 2.6, Annex, Table 7).

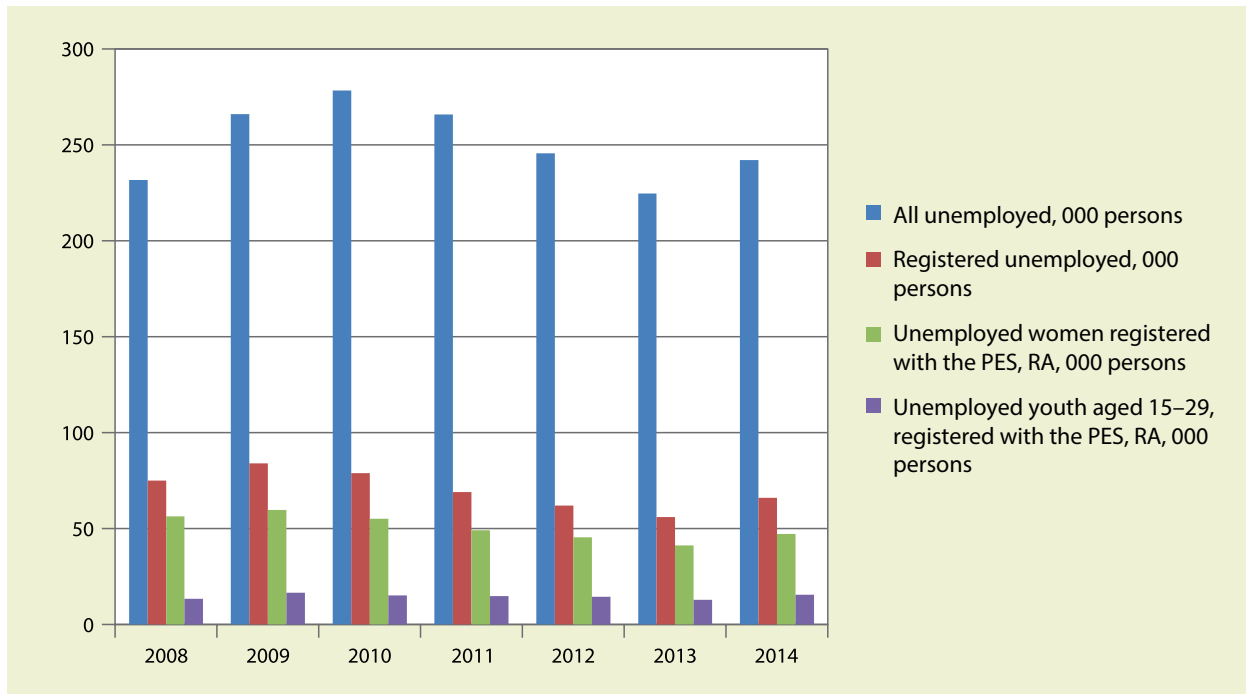
Gender asymmetry in both general and registered unemployment in the Republic of Armenia shows that women face more difficulties in finding and retaining a job than men do. It takes them longer than men to find a job, and they suffer from prolonged unemployment more often. Among those who lost their jobs due to workforce reduction or enterprise liquidation, there are 119 women per 100 men, and 29.9 per cent are young persons. Two thirds of women jobseekers (66.1 per cent) have been looking for a job for more than a year, whereas slightly over half of men – 51.2 per cent – have been doing so. The average duration of job search by women exceeds two years (25.4 months) whereas it takes men 22.3 months. In the age cohort of 15–24 year olds, there are 106 long-term unemployed girls per 100 youths. As for the reasons preventing their employment, one third of women jobseekers indicated lack of vacancies corresponding to their qualifications or skills, age and lack of experience (approximately in equal shares for each reason), whereas less than a quarter (23.7 per cent) of men did so. Attention is

⁴⁴ Calculated based on the data of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS and the Public Employment Service of the Republic of Armenia. It should also be pointed out that any person regardless of his/her age, sex, employment status and availability of work may turn for assistance in job search to the public employment service and receive the status of a jobseeker. However, the unemployment status is granted only to persons aged 16 to 63 who had no employment at the moment of application.



drawn to the sustainably high share of women (66–68 per cent) among the economically inactive population, and among the discouraged persons 15–24 years old, there are 129 girls per 100 youths.⁴⁵

Diagram 2.6. Dynamics of general and registered unemployment rates in Armenia



Source: Pubic Employment Service of the Republic of Armenia, www.employment.am/ru/39/free.html.

Thus, despite gender equality in employment stipulated by law and high educational attainment levels of women, youth unemployment in Armenia, acute as it is, remains largely a female problem.

Any person who turns to a territorial agency of the Public Employment Service of the Republic of Armenia is entitled to free advice, mediation and information concerning registered vacancies as well as assistance in the selection of and placement in a suitable job. He/she may also appeal to a judicial or administrative authority against the actions or omissions of public employment service officials and employers.

Unemployed persons are also entitled to free retraining and skills development (those with an education and skills), free pre-vocational training and craft training (those without an education and skills), participation in paid public works, and financial assistance in case of official registration of entrepreneurial activity. Besides that, unemployed persons are provided with scholarships for the entire duration of training.

During transition to active employment policies in 2014, unemployment benefits were considered an ineffective measure and have not been paid since 2015. They were replaced with payments to unemployed persons in the amount of 2,000 drams (approximately \$4) per one visit to employers with the aim of job placement, but for no more than nine visits per month (which is equivalent to the cancelled unemployment benefit).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Calculated based on: Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia, 2010–2014; Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.

⁴⁶ "Unemployment benefits were cancelled as ineffective. Actually, it was not an employment promotion programme. People received the benefit and did not try to find a job, so the programme addressed no issues. The amount of the benefit was 18,000 drams (\$36.7 at the February–March 2016 exchange rate). It did not compensate for the lost wages. It was a very expensive programme; it consumed 95 per cent of the budget. To get an unemployment benefit, one needed at least an annual service record. Otherwise, he/she was not entitled to one. From 80 to 90 per cent of beneficiaries were persons aged 55 years and older. Low-income categories constituted approximately 3 per cent of those who applied for the benefit. The number of applicants was gradually decreasing." (From an interview with the head of the Department of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)



Along with job placement, the Public Employment Service of the Republic of Armenia is currently implementing (as at December 31, 2015) 14 public employment regulation programmes.

Only one of the current programmes – “Arranging Workplace Practices for the Unemployed with an Occupation but without a Service Record for Acquiring Work Experience in the Their Occupations” that has been implemented since 2014 – is targeting exclusively youth. Its objective is to help unemployed first-time jobseekers gain work experience in the acquired occupation in order to raise their competitiveness in the labour market, place them in suitable jobs and ensure permanent employment in future. Programme beneficiaries are young people who may join the programme during five years after graduation from an educational institution. The programme covers 352 unemployed young persons (82 per cent are women). The programme duration for each beneficiary is three months. Payments to the beneficiaries are two or three times higher than the scholarship. Besides that, mentors are paid some extra money in the amount of 20 per cent of their salaries in the previous year, but no more than the minimum monthly wage set by the laws of the Republic of Armenia. About 30 per cent of programme beneficiaries find employment upon completion.

There are no public employment promotion programmes targeting specifically women. This seems to be a purposeful policy of the Ministry of Labour of the Republic of Armenia.



“Our programmes are equally targeting men and women, although 70 per cent of their beneficiaries are women. Legislation contains all clear-cut criteria without any gender-related preferences. Selection of candidates and its procedure depend mostly on the competitiveness of applicants, duration of their unemployment, their property status (his/her poverty level), age and those circumstances that may affect their employment in future. In any case, preference is given to young applicants, but terms and conditions for men and women are the same. All other things being equal, preference is given to those who applied earlier. Those applicants whose competitiveness in the labour market is lower have better chances of receiving assistance. The same procedure is stipulated for all programmes.”

(From an interview with the head of the Department for Labour and Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia).



Most of the current programmes focus on uncompetitive population groups (persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, etc.), although each of them may include young persons of both sexes.⁴⁷

Prevalence of women among the registered unemployed results in their still higher share among beneficiaries of the PES programmes (74 per cent in 2014).⁴⁸ In a number of programmes, this prevalence was also retained in 2015. A low share of youth among the registered unemployed is reflected in the narrow coverage of this category by employment programmes, and percentage of young people among those placed with the PES assistance in 2015 was as low as 17.5 per cent (Annex, Table 7).

There are no other measures targeting exclusively youth among the PES programmes in the Republic of Armenia. To some extent, labour fairs (similar to Russian job fairs) and labour clubs in territorial employment agencies providing mostly methodological assistance to jobseekers can be regarded as

⁴⁷ According to the new version of the Law on Employment of the Republic of Armenia, the category of persons uncompetitive in the labour market includes unemployed jobseekers incapable of equal competition in the labour market, facing special difficulties in job placement and requiring additional social guarantees in this connection. The category includes persons with disabilities; persons who return from penitentiaries or from institutions applying compulsory medical treatment measures who have applied to the public employment service within six months of their return; children left without parental care who have reached the working age and those who are referred to this category if they have had the unemployment status for at least one year; persons registered by the public employment service after doing their fixed-period compulsory military service who have had the unemployment status for at least one year; persons who have had the unemployment status for over three years; and refugees. To provide this category with jobs, territorial agencies of the Public Employment Service are implementing vocational training and other programmes. Many persons in this category are young, but women are not marked out.

⁴⁸ Women and Men in Armenia, 2015.





such. According to the staff of employment agencies, young persons (including young women) take an active part in these events, but the data on the scale and structure of their participation are lacking.

Since 2010, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs has been providing financial support (through a system of grants in the amount of 500,000 to 2 million drams (an equivalent of approximately \$1,000-4,000) provided on a competitive basis) to youth employment promotion programmes formulated and implemented by youth organizations (for example, job-search, CV-writing and other training programmes). Since 2009, support based on the same principles has been provided to programmes arranging regional job fairs for youth.

It is hard to estimate the effectiveness of the existing programmes, because the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia has started to collect relevant indicators only recently.

Youth business and its gender dimension. Gender inequality is probably most vividly manifested in entrepreneurship where there are 3.5 times fewer women than men.⁴⁹ Among young people, the gap is still wider – 5.2 times (0.5 per cent of the economically active young women against 2.6 per cent of young men).⁵⁰ Considering high unemployment rates among youth, especially among young women, this necessitates greater focus on the promotion of youth entrepreneurship.

Measures taken by the Public Employment Service of the Republic of Armenia include a programme of entrepreneurship support (for start-ups) accessible to both unemployed men and women. In 2014, the share of women covered by it accounted for 30 per cent. The programme includes some initial training and selection, after which initial capital is granted in the amount of 1 million drams (approximately \$2,000). As most other programmes, it is without a gender lens.

Generally speaking, support of small and medium-size businesses is a responsibility of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia, which is implementing a public programme of development of small and medium-size enterprises and allocating funds for this purpose to the National Centre of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development (NCSMED).

NCSMED of the Republic of Armenia, in collaboration with and support of the Asian Development Bank and a number of non-governmental organizations, has launched a programme of providing support to women's entrepreneurship stipulating for a three-month training with a mentor, development of business plans, their assessment, adjustment and selection, financial support (within the framework of the NCSMED Financial Support Programme to First-Time Entrepreneurs) and other incentives to encourage entrepreneurship among women. The programme is planned for 2014-2017.⁵¹

“The Ministry of Economy is implementing a programme of support to small and medium-size businesses extending grants to them. It has informed us that in some localities, grants are extended only to women, but I do not actually know what is going on. They decide themselves that some 30 to 40 per cent of grants go to women. The programme has been implemented for over five years already.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children's Issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ 2012 data. Serrière N. Labour market transitions of young women and men in Armenia. P.24.

⁵¹ In 2013, NCSMED allocated over 150 million drams (approximately \$300,000). In 2015, NCSMED, within the Programme of Development of Small and Medium-Size Enterprises, provided support to approximately 6,000 start-ups and 13,194 existing small and medium-size enterprises, of which 5 per cent are located in Yerevan and 95 per cent are in the districts, mostly in remote and borderline areas. http://smednc.am/am/content/women_support/.



There is an intention at the Yerevan State University to establish an entrepreneurship development centre for students, which will operate within the framework of the Global Innovation Cleantech Programme in the Republic of Armenia for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Programme and financed by the Global Environmental Facility. To translate this intention into life, the Entrepreneurship Development Centre is conducting free 6-week workshops for students, and trainees will be able to take part in a contest and receive grants.

• • •

“The first round of workshops was held in April-May 2015. It was attended by about 100-150 students who were willing to participate (including many girls who were more active during the training). The second round is planned for February-March 2016.”

(From an interview with the Vice-Rector for Students' and Graduates' Issues and Public Relations, Yerevan State University).

• • •

Women's entrepreneurship (including entrepreneurship of young women) is a domain of the non-governmental organization “Association of Young Women of Armenia” established in 2014. The Association's objective, as formulated by its President L. Asatryan, is to “*promote the development of women's entrepreneurship in the country and, through it, the development of the country at large as well as to change the traditional mentality viewing public activity and business as ‘unwomanly’ occupations (. . .) and to achieve Armenian women's leadership in various areas of life.*”

The Association is mostly operating at the expense of grants provided by international organizations and numbers about one thousand members. In 2011, the Association, with the assistance of the US Embassy, established a network of women entrepreneurs of Armenia comprising currently 400 women who are simultaneously Association members. The Association has successfully implemented several projects providing support to women's businesses in the regions, and 50 per cent of those women were young.

At present, the Association is implementing a project on women's entrepreneurship development in the district of Lori with the support of the European Union. The project implementation period is from 2013 through 2016, and it covers 300 women (about a quarter of them are young). The project included one-month business training, preparation of business plans (mostly family production undertakings), their assessment and selection as well as provision of those selected with grants in the amount of €500 to €5,000 for purchasing equipment. In the process of implementation of the selected projects, the Association was acting as a sort of business incubator supporting first-time entrepreneurs by providing advisory, accounting, taxation, marketing and other services.

The project turned out to be more successful than had been expected. At the beginning, 20 successful start-ups were planned whereas it is now obvious that there will be at least 40 of them. If funding is provided further, it is planned to continue the project in Lori and replicate it in five other districts (Shirak, Tavush, Sunik, Kotaik and Gegarkunik) where the issue of female unemployment is especially acute.





Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls

In-depth interviews conducted in the course of the study with senior officials of public bodies and educational institutions, representatives of social partners, non-governmental organizations and private employers and meetings with young people have demonstrated a certain unity of opinion as to what is hampering successful job placement of Armenian youth and causing high unemployment rates among them. The following factors were named (in the order of importance):

1. Complicated economic situation in the country; closure of a great number of enterprises, primarily large ones, or suspension of production leading to limited labour demand and reduced use of labour.

• • •

“Plants and factories have been closed down.”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia)

• • •

“It is difficult to find employment for Armenian youth because jobs are lacking and the economy is weak.”

(From an interview with a 17-year-old student of Yerevan College No. 1)

• • •

“Our economy can provide us neither with good jobs nor with good wages. There is no economic growth.”

(From an interview with an 18-year-old student of Yerevan College No. 1)

• • •

2. Skills mismatch in the labour market, both in quality and quantity.⁵²

• • •

“The cause of low employment rates and high unemployment among youth is skills mismatch in the labour market.”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia)

• • •

3. Failure of the existing vocational training system of all levels to meet the needs of economy, which is manifested in:

a) Skills mismatch in the labour market in terms of both quality and quantity;

• • •

“Tertiary training institutions provide only theoretical education but no practical skills. The biggest problem is the gap between education and practice.”

(From an interview at the Alvarium LLC)

• • •

⁵² As at the end of October 2015, employers notified the PES of Armenia about 2,100 vacancies against 75,700 registered unemployed, i.e. 36 unemployed per one vacant job. www.cisstat.org.



b) Bias towards tertiary education;⁵³

c) Lack of a system in most educational institutions for assisting graduates in finding jobs and tracking their career;

• • •

“There is no system for tracking graduates’ career either in educational institutions or on the national scale.”

(From an interview with the head of the Primary and Secondary Vocational Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Armenia)

• • •

“Starting with schools and ending with universities, educational institutions do not track their graduates who are left to themselves. It turns out that educational institutions are only after money. However, education is a provider of services, and an educational institution must know what happens to its ‘products’, whether they are needed or not, whether they have found jobs or not, and if they have, how long it has taken them, and whether they work in the field they have been trained for or not. If you want to promote your educational institution in order to attract applicants, you must establish some units for tracking careers of your graduates: how many of them found jobs in the field they had been trained for and how many were promoted three years later thanks to their good education, etc.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

• • •

d) Extremely weak links (to be more exact, absence of them) between educational institutions as labour suppliers to the labour market and employers as its future buyers and consumers resulting in lack of awareness among youth about employment opportunities;

• • •

“Collaboration with employers in the process of training skills is the biggest problem. We have not yet reached such a situation when employers contribute some funds and participate in the training process in some way, although there are some examples of this kind in the cooking and hairdressing occupations. However, employers provide no funding.”

(From an interview with the head of the Primary and Secondary Vocational Education Department, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Armenia)

• • •

“There is no system that could establish contacts between employers and potential workers. Large employers post advertisements on their web sites, whereas small ones have no such opportunities. Therefore, people look for jobs using their personal contacts or in a hit-and-miss fashion...”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia).

• • •

⁵³ According to the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, in 2014, there were almost three (2.8) tertiary graduates per one graduate of primary and secondary vocational education institutions in the Republic of Armenia. The Government is aware of the negative consequences of such imbalance and is already taking its first steps towards increasing enrolment in secondary vocational education institutions free of charge.



“In February 2012, the Armenian branch of the Baker Tilly international audit company conducted a survey of how companies fill their vacancies and what sources they use. The most popular means were advertisements in the mass media (44 per cent), personal contacts (34 per cent), the Internet (7 per cent), private agencies (5 per cent), advertisements on companies’ web sites (2 per cent), PES (2 per cent), direct contacts with educational institutions (2 per cent), and other (1 per cent). I think little has changed since then. People look for work exactly in the same way.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)⁵⁴

“We need to speak about the available programmes more often, because people are not well-informed about them.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children’s Issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

4. A system of vocational guidance of schoolchildren is practically non-existent, and it permits neither their parents nor themselves to make an informed choice of the area of training and future occupation based on the knowledge of their personal inclinations and abilities, and an understanding of the actual situation in the labour market and prospects of its development.

“Another cause is a poor vocational guidance system. It is very weak. Vocational guidance is conducted at a very late stage, if at all. A student or an applicant must have a correct idea of his/her future occupation. They usually make their choices based on the advice of their parents who may have a vague idea of this or that occupation. Vocational guidance should also include some information on the labour market situation, so as students knew what to expect upon graduation. As for vocational guidance concerning secondary vocational education, it is completely non-existent, unfortunately.”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia)

“Vocational guidance, which must be present at all levels of education starting from school, is practically non-existent in this country. Vocational guidance should be included into curricula as an optional class with psychologists (who will identify a student’s natural abilities and inclinations) and vocational guidance specialists who will advise students and their parents. A student will take decisions based on the knowledge of his/her potentialities.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

⁵⁴ This position of the leadership of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia is confirmed by the data obtained from mini-questionnaires filled in during the meetings with youth. They showed that not a single respondent was assisted in his/her job placement by the educational institution. The job search method most widely used by youth is the Internet (however, it must be taken into consideration that the survey was conducted in Yerevan). This is followed, in the descending order, by job advertisements, help from friends or relatives, visits to employers or to the public employment service and, finally, private employment agencies. The last two options were only mentioned by girls.



5. Finally, the specificities of Armenian mentality and stereotypes of the older generation trying to give their children tertiary education no matter what.

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“It is in our mentality that all young people must acquire tertiary education despite the fact that it is difficult to find a job later. Although tuition fees are very high, parents keep trying.”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia)

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“Training at a university is expensive, but when the question concerns their children’s education, even the poorest families find the money.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

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A special issue is poor knowledge of labour laws by youth. In the course of the survey of Armenian youth by means of mini-questionnaires, only one third of respondents replied that they knew the general rules and rights of a worker during recruitment (probation period, signing of a contract, etc.). Two thirds of respondents assessed their knowledge in this area as not very good. More than half (57 per cent) replied that they were poorly familiar with the general rules and entitlements to a maternity or a childcare leave. Most of these respondents were women. Only one third of them replied that they know these entitlements very well.

However, the actual situation is even worse. A group interview in Yerevan College No. 1 has revealed that only two girls of those present could name such rights as the right to work and the right to education. None of those attending could name a single legislative act stipulating for labour rights. Only three of the 25 present gave an affirmative answer to the question if they knew how to write a CV.

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“Workers’ rights are poorly protected because of high unemployment rates... No course on social and labour rights is delivered at the Yerevan State University.”

(From an interview with the Vice-Rector for Student’s and Graduates’ Issues and Public Relations, Yerevan State University)

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“Young people are poorly aware of their social and labour rights. I think that at least one hour should be devoted to this subject as well as to job search techniques and ways of introducing oneself to an employer. This should be done both at universities and secondary vocational institutions and schools. Legal education should start at school.”

(From an interview with the Director of the “Gorts Bolorin” private employment agency)

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Besides the above-mentioned general factors hampering youth employment, there are also barriers of a gender-related nature. As far as youths are concerned (especially those with tertiary education), it is overestimation and excessive ambitions. They want to have everything, high wages above all, immediately.

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“They believe that they are well-trained professionals, yet their training fails to meet employers’ requirements. They lack practical skills, and their theoretical ones may also be rather weak, but they believe that their diplomas are sufficient proof of the knowledge required.”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia)

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“Youths want a good salary. They want to have their cake and eat it, although their work experience is worse than that of girls. Generally speaking, they do not know what they want. They mostly refuse to take up a job because of low wages. I offer 80,000-100,000 drams (\$160-200), and this is too little for them. They want more than 150,000 (\$300), but when asked what they can do to receive that money they reply nothing. They are not prepared to start from scratch, show what they can do and then receive a promotion. It is very hard to explain to them that they should work to show their worth. It is impossible to reach out to them.”

(From an interview with the Director of the “Erebuni” Territorial Employment Centre in Yerevan, Public Employment Service, Republic of Armenia)

“I am an employer myself. Young people come after graduation without any work experience but want a salary of 200,000-300,000 (\$400-600). I ask them if they could do anything 50,000 (\$100) worth. If yes, I will hire them willingly. One of my employers who is paid 300,000 drams has been with me for five years, and he knows everything “by heart”. Our universities provide theoretical education, and their graduates are not ready for work. We have to train them, spend money on it and pay them a high salary.”

(From an interview with the Executive Director of the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia)

The desire of youths to receive high wages is partially justified.

“I believe that if a young man wants to start a family he must have high wages because he must provide for his family. But if his wages are low he must not start a family.”

(From an interview with an 18-year-old student of Yerevan College No. 1)

Exaggerated requirements to their first job and wages (although they lack experience and practical skills) largely explain unwillingness of young men to turn for assistance to public employment centres and participate in the programmes offered as well as their inclination to informal activity and intention to leave the country.

“Men get registered with the PES more rarely. One reason is their migration to Russia. Besides, they have some kind of employment somewhere (probably, informal) and are unwillingly to go to the PES.”

(From an interview with heads of the Public Employment Services, Republic of Armenia)

“Young men think of going abroad. They do not look for work here, because wages are very low. Besides, they do not hope to find a job that matches their education. In Russia, construction is carried out on a broad scale, and men have an opportunity to go there using contacts with their relatives. There are a lot of seasonal migrants among them who are waiting for new seasons and do not want to be registered with the local PES.”

(From an interview with the Director of the “Erebuni” Territorial Employment Centre in Yerevan, Public Employment Service, Republic of Armenia)



In the course of the study, executives of both public employment services and private agencies noted unanimously that girls turn to them more often than youths, and it is easier to place them. They are more willing to participate in the PES employment promotion programmes offered (Annex, Table 7), less choosy and particular about jobs and wages, better educated and are employed soon after graduation. Employers, in their turn, are more willing to hire them.

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“Girls trust employment centres more, and they are easier to place. Programmes we are implementing are very helpful. Youths mostly reject skills development and retraining programmes. This is why it takes them longer to find a job. Girls participating in these programmes find jobs faster.”

(From an interview with the Director of the “Erebuni” Territorial Employment Centre in Yerevan, PES of the Republic of Armenia)

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“Education helps girls more. Employers also prefer to recruit girls. For some reason, they believe it is easier to work with girls. We are surprised, but they trust girls more, and it is easier to place them.”

(From an interview with the Director of the “Gorts Bolorin” private employment agency, Yerevan)

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“When we were looking for an employee to do routine everyday work, three persons applied (two girls and one youth). One of the girls seemed too aggressive, the youth failed to explain why he came and what he wanted. We chose the other girl, a fifth-year student, who was willing to learn something new, acquiescent and responsible.”

(From an interview with the “Alvarium” LLC)

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However, there are certain barriers to the job placement of young women connected with the existing gender stereotypes concerning occupations (existence of the traditionally “female” and “male” occupations – the so-called “horizontal segregation”), which is reflected in the areas of training (Annex, Diagrams 2-4), career development and women’s vertical mobility in general (the so-called “vertical segregation”) and, finally, those caused by the need to combine work with family responsibilities and bring up children, which often hinders employment.

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“The areas where women are welcome include, first, services in a broad sense and, second, office work. These areas provide more opportunities to young women. However, it is men who are mostly promoted to managerial positions (most managers are men, because they are more inclined to informal practices in routine work (for example, in settling certain issues in a restaurant, a smoking-room, etc.)). They are better suited for active work requiring mobility.”

(From an interview with the Vice-Rector for Students’ and Graduates’ Issues and Public Relations, Yerevan State University)

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“A survey of women’s participation in the labour market undertaken at our initiative in August-December 2015 in order to find out what kind of barriers women face and why gender inequality, both vertical and horizontal, exists despite their good education and potentialities, showed that, as we had expected, that there were more women in education and health care than in engineering and IT-technologies. In the latter, the number of women has decreased by 40 per cent in the last five or six years. One of the factors why women are not recruited in the IT sector is connected with women’s family responsibilities and maternity. There is a stereotype, according to which IT work requires being in an office, whereas IT-technologies make distance work possible, and this is convenient for women. However, our mentality has so far failed to grasp it.”

(From an interview with the Executive Representative of UNFPA in the Republic of Armenia)

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“Of course, questions regarding women’s marital status, duration of marriage, and especially number of children, are asked. In general, it is rather easy for a woman to get a job, although if she has children, employers think that she may be often absent from work. If an employer refuses a woman a job, he does not say it, he gives a different reason.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children’s Issues, head of the unit for women’s issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

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A mini-questionnaire survey of youth conducted in the course of the study confirms the above opinion: half of the young women respondents were asked no gender-related questions during their job interviews, and the other half were asked such questions rarely (on one or two occasions), and only one fifth of respondents admitted that they often heard questions concerning their marital status.

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“It is especially difficult to combine a career with family responsibilities for women who have families and children. It is a result of our traditional mentality, according to which women bring up children and men earn a living. However, there are also institutional problems preventing gender equality in employment, primarily lack of childcare facilities, but the main problem is combining work with family responsibilities.”

(From an interview with the head of the Labour and Employment Department, Ministry of Work and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

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According to the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, in 2014, 6.2 per cent of children under three and only half (50.9 per cent) of children aged 3-5 attended childcare facilities.⁵⁵

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“There are not enough public childcare facilities. Besides, one has to be placed on a waiting list almost as soon as a baby is born. There are a lot of private childcare facilities, but a monthly fee is approximately \$400 (over 180,000 drams), which is more expensive than tertiary education. There is a trend of hiring a nurse, this is cheaper than a childcare centre (about 100,000 (\$200)), and grandmothers and grandfathers give a helping hand too.”

(From an interview with the Republic Union of Entrepreneurs of Armenia)

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⁵⁵ Women and Men in Armenia, 2015. A Statistical Booklet.



Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

Approach of the State. As it has already been mentioned (Chapter 1), at the legislative level there are all necessary prerequisites for ensuring gender equality in education and employment in the Republic of Armenia. However, practical implementation of the principles stipulated by law remains problematic. When these issues are addressed at the State level, the focus is mostly on the youth and not on the gender dimension, which is regarded as a part of youth policies.⁵⁶

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“Our ministry does not address issues related to young women. The biggest challenge in this country is youth employment, which is confirmed by the two National Reports on Youth Issues in Armenia (2007 and 2011). There is a concept and a youth policies strategy: the Concept was adopted in 2015 for the period of 2015-2025, and the Strategy covers the period of 2013-2017. The two documents provide a legal framework for further work. The Concept outlines five main lines of youth policies. The most important of them is youth employment. However, our ministry, being the responsible body in this area, has no funds for addressing the issue. Some relevant measures are taken by other bodies – the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (labour and employment issues), the Ministry of Education and Science (education issues), and the Ministry of Economy (promotion of youth entrepreneurship). They are provided with some funds for it, although in insufficient amounts.”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia)

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As for access to education where gender equality has generally been achieved (even with a certain prevalence of women), the top priority issue is elimination of imbalances between secondary vocational and tertiary education by training more skills at the secondary level (which are demanded in the labour market) through attracting more young people to secondary vocational education institutions including enrolment of a greater number of girls to engineering faculties (where they have so far been unwilling to study). The issue becomes even more pressing because of the country's transition to compulsory complete secondary 12-year education, beginning with 2017.⁵⁷

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“Many secondary vocational education institutions have been repaired and provided with modern equipment with the assistance of the European Union. Special attention will be paid to agricultural educational institutions. Most of the funds are allocated by the State, although some other organizations also participate in financing. The number of free-of-charge places (the so-called “government contract”) has been increased. There are more of them now than paid ones (the ratio of 70 to 30). Those studying under the “government contract” receive scholarships and are entitled to other privileges. For example, graduates of secondary vocational education institutions may enter universities. This system is called

⁵⁶ This approach is confirmed by the fact that at the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs there is no unit dealing with young women's issues, and it is not planned to establish one.

⁵⁷ In the 2012/13 academic year, there were 97 students of secondary vocational education institutions and 298 university students per 10,000 population in the Republic of Armenia, and 68 and 87 per cent of them respectively paid for their education (Youth in the Commonwealth of Independent States: Statistical Portrait / Statistics Committee of the CIS Countries, UNFPA. Moscow, 2014, pp.108-109.).





“transfer” when those who graduate from colleges with flying colours are entitled to a free-of-charge place in a tertiary educational institution as part-time students and start with the second year.”

(From an interview with the head of the Department of Primary and Secondary Vocational Education, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Armenia)

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The state has lately been paying special attention to such burning issue as vocational guidance. The European Union is helping to implement a programme of establishing career guidance centres providing advice and assistance in choosing an occupation. Such centres are operating in 22 colleges (three of them in Yerevan). Before the end of 2019, it is planned to open such centres in all secondary vocational education institutions, but they will become independent with time.

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“There is no such system at schools, although vocational guidance should start from the 9th grade, because after completing nine grades at school, schoolchildren may enter secondary vocational education institutions. Vocational guidance in colleges has just started, curricula are poorly designed, and no substantial results should be expected so far. Although there is equality in Armenia, it is mostly girls who are involved in these programmes.”

(From an interview with the head of the Department of Primary and Secondary Vocational Education, Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Armenia)

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Below is an example of how the programme of establishment of vocational guidance centres is working in Yerevan Regional Multi-Sectoral College No. 1.

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“In our college, there is a career centre established under a programme sponsored by the European Union. Its employees visit schools. Another function they perform is vocational guidance and job placement of our students. Annually, 150 persons graduate from the college. Youths mostly go to serve in the army (40-50 persons). About 20 persons enter tertiary educational institutions where they pay for their tuition. If there is an agreement with a field-specific tertiary educational institution, a college student who graduates with good and excellent marks may start as a second-year student in such educational institution in the field he/she has been trained for. All other graduates are provided with jobs. Our career centre also maintains contacts with employers, who may submit an application in the middle of an academic year. Accountants are difficult to be placed, whereas it is easy to find mid-level jobs for cooks, jewellers and marketing specialist. Career tracking is also present, as far as is possible, because it is difficult – people leave the country, change telephone numbers, and girls get married and change their family names. The staff of the centre consists of three persons, but they are assisted by our master crafts persons, because the latter have contacts and are interested in placing their graduates in decent jobs, for examples, in restaurants.”

(From an interview with the Director of Yerevan College No. 1)

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Almost all public youth employment promotion programmes involve youth including young women as the most substantial and active part of the registered unemployed. However, only one programme is targeting exclusively youth – the programme of workplace practices aimed at providing work experience to young people who did not work in the field they had been trained in for five years (see Chapter 5 for more details).

The Public Employment Service of the Republic of Armenia is currently discussing with the World Bank a possibility of its financial participation in two large-scale programmes for youth for 2016-2018. The first programme is entitled “Youth Entrepreneurship Promotion”, under which 700 unemployed persons will be trained on how to start and run a business, and 250 of them will receive grants in the amount of approximately \$1,000. The second one entitled “Workplace Training in Crafts Directly at Enterprises” is also intended for 700 young persons.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is designing a programme of extending affordable credits to young entrepreneurs, which will be targeting regional youth with the aim of reducing their migration in search of work.



“Preference will be given to agriculture. The programme will be targeting all young persons, even without an education. In the initial stage, they will be given an opportunity to practice, acquire some knowledge of business and undergo a training. Their training of about two months will wind up with writing business plans to be assessed by a special commission, which will select the most promising ones. The programme will be intended for unemployed persons only. Those who are employed and wish to start a business will not be covered.”

(From an interview with the head of the cooperation and analysis unit, Youth Policy Department, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Republic of Armenia)



There are no public programmes yet targeting specifically unemployed women including young ones, although there is certain progress in promoting women’s employment.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, jointly with the UNFPA, has designed the Strategic Programme of Armenia on Improving the Demographic Situation for 2016-2018, where for the first time ever, emphasis is laid not only on providing financial assistance for raising the birth rate, but also on creating enabling conditions for reconciling work and family responsibilities. It includes such measures as developing skills of young women under 30, preparing them for entering the labour market, paying for the tuition of young mothers at universities, and providing them with possibilities of home-based or distance work and flexible working hours.



“Those are the elements we have included into the programme. It is for the first time ever that we have reached an agreement after many years of discussions. We saw that purely financial support of fertility gets us nowhere, i.e. this time we aim not to raise fertility but to improve the environment for women by developing their skills, in order to prevent negative consequences of childbirth to their career development and help them enter the labour market. The programme raises another serious issue – that of provision of working mothers with kindergartens and childcare facilities. The programme has already been discussed in the Government, and it is to be approved in the nearest future. We already have a draft, but only in the Armenian language.”

(From an interview with the Executive Representative of UNFPA in the Republic of Armenia)





A Government meeting is scheduled for the nearest future where a national gender development programme for 2017-2021 will be designed. In it, the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues is supposed to offer new measures, since the programme will contain a separate bloc on social and labour issues or social and economic issues.

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“First, it will overcome segregation through skills development or retraining, especially of women. Second, it will mitigate or reduce migration. Men migrate, while women remain at home and look for sources of livelihood. Third, it will support the development of small and medium-size businesses, with due consideration for ensuring a gender balance. There is also the problem of helping women to combine family responsibilities and work, but this is only the objective, and recommendations will be developed later.”

(From an interview with a deputy head of the Department for Family, Women and Children's Issues, head of the unit for women's issues, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

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Approach of employers. Involvement of the Armenian entrepreneurial corps in addressing youth employment and vocational training issues remains one of the weakest links, although the last few years have witnessed certain progress. A number of respondents pointed out that some major companies, especially those with Russian capital such as VivaCell (Armenian subsidiary of the MTS mobile communication provider) and Beeline, are responding. However, on the whole, the situation leaves much to be desired.

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“We are trying to establish collaboration with entrepreneurs, with insignificant results so far. A capitalist is a capitalist. He understands the need for developing his business, but does not understand yet that money should be invested into the human capital. Business quarters assume no social responsibilities. They fail to understand that by creating jobs and better working conditions, they raise labour productivity and workers' dedication to their job, and this meets their own interests.”

(From an interview with the Executive Representative of UNFPA in the Republic of Armenia)

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Some employers with a feeling of social responsibility participate in programmes of creating jobs for youth. A call-centre has been opened in the Ministry of Emergency Situations where 100 jobs have been created exclusively for youth in the last two or three years.

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“Financing was provided by the employer (the Ministry of Emergency Situations) at its own initiative. Beeline and VivaCell (MTS) are acting in a similar way. They also arrange six-month internships with payment at the level of minimum wages that are also financed by the employers. The Ministry of Labour welcomes and encourages them, and the employment service refers young people to them.”

(From an interview with the head of Labour and Employment Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Republic of Armenia)

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Issues of vocational training and employment of youth, especially women, find a better understanding in the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia (RUEA) where women constitute a quarter of its leadership and 30 per cent of people working in its regional branches. The RUEA is aware of imbalances in the Armenian vocational education system and intends to achieve changes in the current situation.



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“As in all the CIS countries, our education system is lagging. Our mentality impels us to enter tertiary educational institutions after school as if it were a guarantee of employment. We are now trying to reshape this mentality in favour of secondary vocational education.”

(From an interview at the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia)

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The RUEA has been tackling youth employment issues since 2008, jointly with the ILO. Since 2015, it has been implementing a small business support programme for youth, in collaboration with the Beeline. At first, the programme covered 350 persons with tertiary education, who were trained in starting their own businesses. The trainees were under 25 years of age, and 70 per cent of them were girls. Later, 60 persons were selected for writing business plans. In the final stage, after the selection, there remained 25 persons whom the RUEA will help to start a business (mostly in services, clothes modelling and production, beekeeping, rabbit farming, IT, translation of documents, business consulting, tourism and crafts).

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“It is planned to complete the programme in March 2016, and by that time there will be 15 registered start-ups. Of the 25 persons who remained in the final stage, 80 per cent are girls, very active and purposeful.”

(From an interview at the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia)

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In future, another programme is planned for developing family businesses in the regions, targeting youth aged 25–27, who will be trained at first and then assisted in establishing family-operated vegetable-growing and bread-baking enterprises, because such enterprises enjoy preferential tax treatment.

In November 2015, the RUEA, jointly with the Confederation of Unions of Employers of Germany, launched two youth employment programmes⁵⁸ of a three-year duration. Right now, pilot projects under the programmes are being implemented in 13 selected priority areas that are short of skills (winemaking, jewellery, cognac production, engineering, tourism, diamond production, IT, and mining industry).

Within the framework of the first programme, young people aged 15–29 years (both studying at school and school-leavers) will be studying and acquiring occupational skills at certain enterprises where they will be placed later. Pilots cover two schools and two colleges in Yerevan, Gyumri and Shirak. Training modules are now being designed. The training will involve 300 students and will begin in March–April 2016.

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“There are agreements with certain employers on workplace practices, and the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia will pay them from the programme’s funds. The employers will train workers for themselves. Our objective is to train them in mid-level occupations and not to prepare them for entering a university.”

(From an interview at the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia)

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The other programme is connected with the establishment of assembly (“screwdriver”) enterprises producing items from imported components with their subsequent re-export and stipulates for the development of an apprenticeship system there. Coming to an enterprise, apprentices will sign an apprenticeship contract, under which they will have to either work there for one year or open their own business upon completion of the training. In the latter case, they will be provided with the required equipment at the programme’s expense. There is no quantitative assessment of coverage rates of youth by the programme yet.

⁵⁸ These programmes are underway in the three Transcaucasian states.





To get employers interested, the RUEA suggests that a minimum wage be established for apprentices – first-time entrants to the labour market, which will be 1.8–2 times lower than the existing minimum wage adjusted for taxation.⁵⁹

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“This measure will get employers interested in hiring those who are uncompetitive in the labour market. According to our estimates, this will permit us to place at least 50,000 young people within two years. It is especially important for small businesses, because they lack funds and possibilities to hire people without work experience, train them and pay them even the minimum wage set in the country. For all the scantiness of wages, young people will have an opportunity of entering the labour market. At present, employers have to pay 78,000 drams (approximately \$160) to newly hired workers who do not meet their requirements. The Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Labour have already agreed to our proposal. Now the matter rests with the Government and, possibly, it will be settled this year, especially since amendments are to be introduced into the Labour Code.”

(From an interview with the President of the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia)

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However, not all of the social partners assess the proposal positively. First and foremost, they regard it as a breach of the law on minimum wages and a risk of exploitation and informal recruitment practices.

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“Employers will always find someone who will accept such low wages. There is a risk that the contract will be signed with a young person but someone else will be working for him/her. These risks have to be taken into consideration.”

(From an interview with executives of the Public Employment Service of the Republic of Armenia)

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The approach of trade unions to these issues is rather vague and overly narrow. To a certain extent, their position is explained by unfavourable changes that have taken place in the Armenian trade union movement since independence, when the number of trade union members has decreased five-fold. A serious problem was created by the closure of production enterprises where there were work communities, that served as a foundation for trade union organizations, and individualization of employment (especially since there is no trade union of workers of small and medium-size enterprises, and the trade union of commercial workers is extremely small in numbers). The Confederation of Trade Unions has no power to initiate legislation either. As a result, many young people do not even understand what a trade union is.

Recognizing numerous challenges in vocational education, vocational guidance and youth employability, Armenian trade unions represented by their Confederation, believe that their main functions are to raise issues to be settled by the State, increase people’s awareness of their labour rights, organize trade unions and protect collective interests through collective bargaining.

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“We do not tackle youth issues separately because all trade union members are equal. Youth and gender issues are not emphasized in collective agreements. There should be a common approach to all. However, we do arrange events to familiarize youth with their labour rights.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

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⁵⁹ The minimum wage (adjusted for taxation) is now 78,000 drams (55,000 drams, or \$112, after tax). The RUEA’s proposal (by analogy with Great Britain) is to set a minimum wage of 30,000 drams (approximately \$60) for apprentices (when tax-adjusted, 42,000 drams, or \$85), all payments to be made by employers.



In 2015, some Armenian universities and secondary vocational education institutions arranged classes on labour rights (about the need to sign a labour contract even for the probation period, about the fact that during probation a worker enjoys the same rights as all other workers, about paid leave, employment orders, etc.) for their graduates.

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“However, we do not insist that such classes be included into the curricula.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

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At the same time, representatives of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia are well aware of youth employment challenges and their urgency. These challenges include the need for arranging vocational guidance at all levels of general and vocational education, the need for gradually raising the minimum wage and substantiating its amount by at least basic but clearly defined needs, and not only by the potentialities of the state budget, and introduction of indexation (which is absent in the country, thereby nullifying, in the eyes of youth, the introduction of the contributory pension scheme for those born after 1975).

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“A whole system, including the scale of labour values, is based on the minimum wage. Why should I work, if I get such scanty wages it is impossible to live on. So, a young man looks for opportunities until he finds them outside Armenia, i.e. employment conditions force young people out of the country.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

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Trade unions also deem it worthwhile to restore the system of assigning graduates to jobs, especially to remote areas.

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“One of these days, the Parliament discussed a draft law under which those who studied free of charge (under the government contract) must work for three years where they will be assigned to. If they do not want to, they will have to return twice the cost of their tuition to the State. That was the first discussion, without the voting. The Ministry of Education appears to have submitted the draft law. There has long since been talk about it. There was even a special commission formed by various departments to get young specialists interested in working in remote areas. It was even suggested that cheap credit be made available as one of the measures. The discussion abates from time to time, although the issue is pressing. Remote areas lack teachers and physicians, young people leave them, and only old people remain.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

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Finally, in the opinion of Armenian trade union leaders, after the State labour inspection was actually disbanded, observance, protection and promotion of labour rights, including their gender dimension, have become problematic⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ Under a decision of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, in 2013 the State Labour Inspectorate was disbanded as an independent body under the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and was placed under the Ministry of Health as a department. In December 2014, the Law on Labour Inspection was repealed, and the notion of labour inspection as well as all relevant word combinations were dropped from the Labour Code.





“Given the high incidence of informal employment, there is no body capable of dealing with it now. This is a breach of both the Constitution and the Labour Code. Actually, we have no public body that could, on behalf of the State, address labour market discrimination and regulate issues related to the recruitment procedure, observance of equal rights, and remuneration. In 2005, a law on labour inspection was adopted in the country, and there was the State Labour Inspectorate. Employers reckoned with it; it dealt with the entire range of issues related to observance of labour rights and labour legislation (recruitment, labour protection, remuneration, etc.). Now, every agency tackles the issue of labour rights observance to a certain extent, which means that nobody actually does. I raise these issues at meetings of the tripartite commission time and again.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia)

In case of abuse of labour rights, a worker may turn to court, even if it is a minor conflict.

“We raised the issues of establishing non-judicial bodies, like arbitration, directly at enterprises, to deal with such situations, and proposed the wording of relevant articles for the Labour Code. However, only one article was introduced, reading that trade unions carry out non-state control, but there is no mechanism for them to implement it. We can help a person to file an action with the court, and we have a legal service. If someone turns to us, we can help him/her write a petition.”

(From an interview with a Deputy Chairman of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia).⁶¹

The institution of trade union labour inspectors that used to exist in Soviet time was eliminated during independence. Besides, trade union representatives have no access to enterprises where there are no trade union organizations.

Conclusions

The overview of the gender dimension of youth employment in the Republic of Armenia permits the following conclusions.

1. A rather progressive legislation guaranteeing gender equality has been adopted and is currently applicable, and a number of important international documents, declarations as well as UN and ILO conventions have been ratified in Armenia. However, the existing legislative framework is not backed by an effective implementation mechanism for promoting and protecting the rights of youth in general and women in particular. The development and implementation of youth policy is a responsibility of a special public body – the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, whereas gender policy is less lucky in this respect: it is not represented by a special body at the State level, and relevant issues are addressed by a number of departments and non-governmental organizations, which is bound to lead to fragmentation of funds and efforts.
2. Armenian society is still dominated by gender stereotypes, imposing the traditional role of “guardian of the hearth” on women and thereby limiting their social and economic opportunities. Although some positive changes in assessing and viewing the role of women in society are discernible among youth, especially in urban areas, rural areas are still dominated by patriarchal gender attitudes, despite the increasing economic role of women due to a considerable scale of outmigration of Armenian men.

⁶¹ The Republican Union of Employers of Armenia supports the idea of establishing a body to settle labour conflicts directly at enterprises, because in the event of dismissal of a worker as a result of a conflict it is hard to find a replacement quickly.



3. The country's complicated economic situation is also reflected in demographic processes. Its population is decreasing as a result of both lower natural growth rate and, even more so, due to outmigration depriving the country of a considerable number of working age citizens, primarily men, on an annual basis. Armenian youth including women are trying to get an education and find a job before getting married and starting a family. Marriage and childbirth age increases resulting in a smaller number of children. A prolonged decrease in the birth rate resulted in a lower share of youth aged 15–29 in overall population.
4. The Republic of Armenia has very high educational attainment indicators and coverage of youth with educational institutions. Armenian youth understand the importance of education for the present-day economy and society, and especially for their successful employment and career development. The gender balance in the education system is not in favour of men, however, this gender gap in favour of women tends to decrease. Despite absence of gender-related discrimination in education, women's inequality is vividly manifested in a narrower and rather traditional range of their occupations and areas of training. Major challenges in the education system include an increasing imbalance between the levels of vocational education of youth in favour of the tertiary level, lack of vocational guidance at all levels of education and extremely weak links between the vocational education system and labour market realities, which result in high unemployment rates among graduates of educational institutions.
5. The share of youth in the economically active population of the Republic of Armenia is approximately equal to its share in overall population, but the number of economically active young men exceeds that of young women. At the same time, labour force participation of youth is considerably lower than labour force participation of the other age cohorts, especially of women, which is connected with educational opportunities. However, youth employment rates, although rising with age, remain considerably lower than the relevant indicator for overall population, and in all age cohorts without exception there is a substantial gender gap in favour of men. Despite the legally guaranteed gender equality in the area of employment and women's high educational attainment levels, youth unemployment (both general and registered), acute as it is, remains mostly a challenge facing women. Out of the 14 employment promotion programmes implemented by the Public Employment Service of Armenia, only one – Arranging Workplace Practices – is targeting youth, and none of the programmes target women, nor there are any programmes promoting women's entrepreneurship. The latter issue is addressed only by the non-governmental organization "Association of Young Women of Armenia" operating mostly on foreign grants.
6. Along with general factors preventing the development of youth employment (such as a complicated economic situation, labour market imbalances, shortfalls and imbalances in the vocational education system, lack of vocational guidance among students, and poor knowledge of labour laws), there are barriers of gender-related nature in the country. As for youths (especially those with tertiary education), these are overestimation and excessive ambitions, the desire to have everything, high ages above all, immediately. As for women, these barriers are mostly caused by the existing gender stereotypes concerning occupations (availability of the traditionally "female" and "male" occupations, which is reflected in the areas of training), career development and women's vertical mobility in general as well as those related to the need of combining work with family responsibilities and childcare in conditions of a shortage of preschool childcare facilities.
7. It should be admitted that social partners are aware of the existing youth employment issues and their gender dimension and have been making certain efforts to address them in the last few years. The State has already taken measures to make secondary vocational education institutions more attractive for youth, and intensify vocational guidance. Several programmes promoting youth entrepreneurship have been designed with the assistance of the World Bank, and some promising programmes designed jointly with the UNFPA and aimed at improving the demographic situation and promoting gender development are awaiting the Government's approval. The programmes will create opportunities for women to combine work with family responsibilities.





The Republican Union of Employers of Armenia is also addressing youth employment issues and trying to involve Armenian entrepreneurs in dealing with them. The RUEA has designed (with the assistance of the Confederation of Unions of Employers of Germany) two projects aimed at integrating young persons without occupational skills and work experience into the labour market. Both projects are also awaiting the Government's approval. However, in general the entrepreneurial corps of the Republic of Armenia remains indifferent to the above issues.

The attitude of the country's trade unions is also rather passive. Acknowledging the existence of numerous challenges in vocational education, vocational guidance and youth employment, Armenian trade unions, represented by their Confederation, see their objectives in raising issues to be addressed by the State, conducting awareness-raising activities and protecting collective interests through collective bargaining. However, youth-related issues and their gender dimension are absent from both collective agreements and other trade union documents.

Recommendations

The overview has permitted a number of recommendations that could help address youth employment issues and primarily ensure women's employment through a more even distribution of employment from the gender perspective.

First, it appears that the situation in the Republic of Armenia is ripe for institutionalizing a national mechanism of addressing gender-related issues and implementing the existing gender-progressive legislation by establishing a body responsible for formulating and implementing gender policies. This is even more relevant since the country is about to adopt a national gender development programme for 2017–2021, which is being developed by a number of departments.

Second, since youth policies implemented in the country and represented by the regularly developed concepts and strategies are not gender-oriented, it would be worthwhile to incorporate some lines and measures promoting gender equality in employment into these documents as a separate section.

Third, since employment promotion policies pursued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues of the Republic of Armenia are gender-indifferent and contain no special measures promoting women's employment (although women prevail among the unemployed, and a considerable part of them are young), it would be worthwhile to supplement them by relevant programmes. The ILO could provide substantial assistance in this respect.

Fourth, a pressing necessity, especially for young women, is further development of the network of public preschool childcare facilities, which will improve, along with women's employment, the demographic situation in the country. It would be also worthwhile to develop a system of extended-day groups at primary schools, which will give a possibility to a large number of women to work full-time.

Fifth, it is deemed necessary to introduce amendments into the labour legislation of the Republic of Armenia by incorporating such notions as distance learning, outsourcing and outstaffing. This will make the country's labour market more flexible and promote a wider use of home-based and part-time work in the hours convenient for workers, which will have a favourable effect primarily on women by permitting them to combine work with family responsibilities, especially in conditions of a shortage of childcare facilities and early closure of classes at school.

Sixth, it seems worthwhile to incorporate a compulsory course on labour rights including gender equality issues in employment into the curricula of educational institutions of all levels, which is extremely important both for youth in general, who are poorly familiar with their labour rights, and for young women who are about to join the labour market.



Another necessary measure is intensification of vocational guidance at schools with the aim of attracting youth, especially young women, into secondary vocational education institutions, and giving them an opportunity to acquire skills that have traditionally been considered as suitable only for men. In future, this measure will help reduce horizontal segregation in employment and gender imbalance in vocational education. This issue is currently tackled to some extent only by the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia.

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“We borrowed one more idea from the Germans – the Girls’ Day, when they try to attract schoolgirls to acquiring skills that are not traditional for them (such as IT and engineering). We have sent out a proposal to Beeline suggesting that it arrange workshops at our schools in order to attract girls to “male” occupations, and we count on a positive response, especially since gender stereotypes are already changing. Some girls become rescue workers, policewomen, and sharpshooters.”

(From an interview at the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia)

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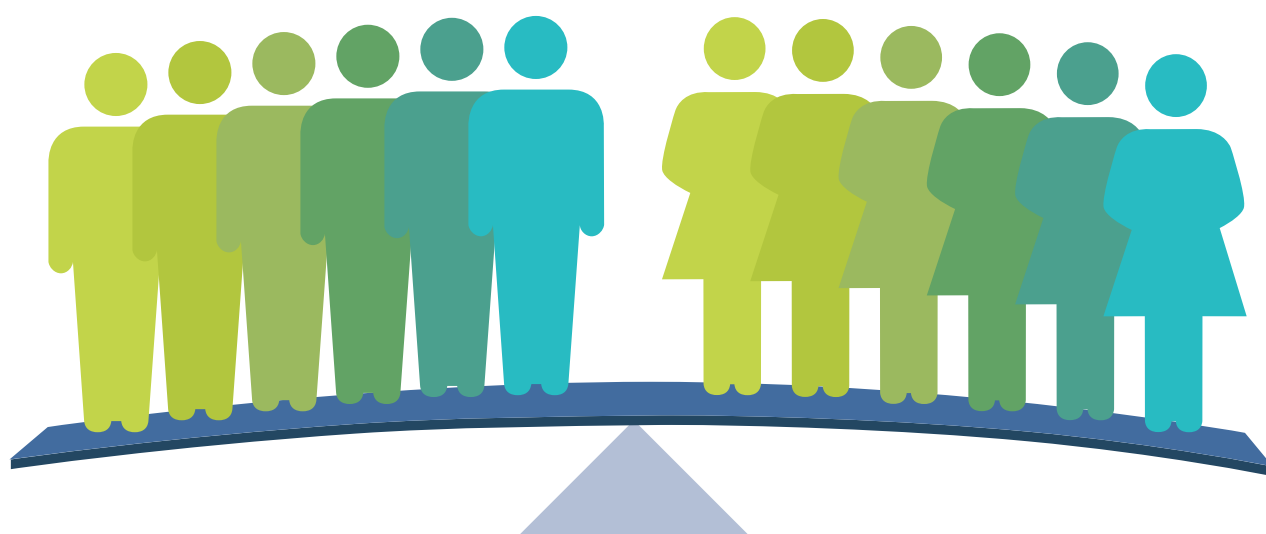
In this connection, it seems highly necessary to advocate the idea of social responsibility of business quarters among the entrepreneurial corps, especially from the viewpoint of observing the labour rights of women workers, and to involve entrepreneurs in active cooperation with educational establishments in training necessary specialists, including young women (not only by signing internship agreements, but also by funding their training).

Finally, Armenian trade unions, worried by the reduction in their numbers, need to overcome their “gender-related indifference” and tackle the issue of protecting labour rights of real workers and not of agamic “trade union members” (especially considering the actual liquidation of the State Labour Inspectorate and its deprivation of relevant functions), which is of primary importance to young workers poorly familiar with labour laws, especially to young women workers.

It is also deemed advisable to form, along with trade union organizations based on the occupational and sectoral principles, territorial trade union branches (following the example of some Russian trade unions) that could be joined by workers of small and medium-size enterprises (including informal ones) where it is impossible and inexpedient to form primary cells. There are a lot of women, whose rights are especially frequently abused, working at such enterprises.



SECTION 3. THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN



TRENDS AND CHALLENGES



CONTENTS – SECTION 3

Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation	94
Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes	99
Chapter 3. Demographic context of emergence of gender challenges in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth	102
Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education	104
Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment	107
Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls	115
Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment	118
Conclusions	122
Recommendations	123



In contrast to the neighbouring Central Asian countries, the Republic of Kazakhstan can hardly be unconditionally referred to the category of oriental countries. The Soviet period, throughout which the national human capital was developing in close collaboration with Russia and the other republics situated in the European part of the USSR, led to the formation of a multi-layered mentality combining both oriental and egalitarian notions, including those concerning the role of women in society. Later on, open borders, democratization and a free inflow of ideas and opinions promoted a gradual advancement of the ideas of gender equality.

The country is currently exerting its effort to create an enabling environment for the development and self-fulfilment of population groups, including youth and women. Special programmes are implemented to increase their competitiveness in the labour market. One of the ways of making such programmes more effective is to reveal the gender dimension of the challenges they are targeted to address.

The information base of the study includes international conventions and national legal instruments regulating labour relations and gender equality, the data of the Statistics Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in-depth distance interviews with representatives of the university community and the women's movement, as well as published findings of national and international studies of youth and gender issues in the area of employment and the labour market of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation

1.1. International legal acts regulating gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour issues incorporated into national legislation (ratified conventions and conventions ratification plans)

In 1992, the Republic of Kazakhstan ratified two of the three ILO conventions that are of fundamental value in terms of ensuring gender equality in the world of work: Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value and Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation). In 1998, it ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and in 2001 the Optional Protocol to that Convention. The Republic of Kazakhstan has also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women.

In 2012, the Republic of Kazakhstan became the fourth CIS country after the Russian Federation, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Ukraine to ratify ILO Convention No. 156 concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities. The Republic of Kazakhstan has also ratified six conventions concerning labour protection (Nos. 148, 155, 162, 167, 182 and 187), two labour inspection conventions (No. 81 and No. 129) and the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention (No. 131).

At the same time, representatives of the women's movement point to the lack of an effective mechanism for applying the norms set out in international conventions and court decisions.

1.2. National legal acts regulating gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour issues

At present, legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan mostly complies with the existing international conventions. People's basic rights are enshrined in the Constitution. It should be pointed out that, in contrast to the other CIS countries, the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan does not contain a separate article proclaiming equality of men and women. However, paragraph 2 of Article 14 contains an indication of the equality of all citizens, stating that "no one may be subject to discrimination on grounds of origin, social or property status, position, race, ethnicity, language, attitude to religion, convictions, place of residence or any other circumstances."

In January 2016, the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted a new Labour Code that grants more rights to employers in labour relations as compared to the previous 2007 Labour Code. The basic rights in the world of work have been retained. The new Labour Code also proclaims the right of each citizen to work, including free use of one's labour capacity and choice of trade and occupation without any discrimination and compulsion to work. It has retained a special article confirming that everyone has equal opportunities to exercise their rights and freedoms in the world of work, and no one may be subject to discrimination when exercising their labour rights on grounds of sex, age, physical handicap, race, ethnicity, language, property or social status, position, place of residence, attitude to religion, political convictions, belonging to a clan or class, and affiliation with public associations. The Code stipulates for equal opportunities during recruitment, including application of the same selection criteria to job applicants, and equal rights and opportunities in signing labour contracts.





The chapter of the Labour Code entitled “Specificities of Regulating the Work of Women and Other Persons with Family Responsibilities” defines the categories of work in which women may not be employed, peculiarities of the work and rest pattern for women and other persons with family responsibilities, and job-security guarantees for pregnant women. A number of amendments have been introduced into the new Labour Code as compared to its previous version. While previously an employer could not employ pregnant women during the night, holidays or on days off, could not engage them in overtime work, send such women on business trips or recall them from paid annual leave, the new version permits the sending of pregnant women on business trips if it is not forbidden for medical reasons. Even so, they may refuse to go. Women with children under age seven and other persons bringing up children under age seven without mothers may be employed during the night, work overtime, be sent on business trips or do rotational work only with their written consent. According to the new Labour Code, pregnant women are to be relieved of unhealthy and hazardous work, while retaining average wages, until they are provided with other work. However, if a pregnant woman refuses to be transferred to another job offered by her employer she must be relieved from doing contraindicated work without retaining her wages until she is on maternity leave. Besides that, starting in 2016, employers are excused from issuing written rejections if they deny a job to a pregnant woman or a woman with children under three years of age.

Employers are obliged to grant unpaid leave for childcare until that child reaches the age of three to the child’s mother, father, relative or the guardian actually bringing up the child. Unpaid leave for taking care of a child until the age of three may be used fully or piecemeal based on a worker’s written application at his/her discretion.

Compulsory social insurance of women workers in the event of pregnancy, childbirth and maternity was introduced in 2008. They receive social transfers from the State Social Insurance Fund in the amount of average monthly wages throughout the entire duration of maternity leave, as well as social transfer for taking care of a child until he/she is one year old in the amount of 40 per cent of their average monthly wages. According to Article 192 of the previous Labour Code, paid annual leave was to be granted to a woman before or after the maternity leave or the childcare leave, at her discretion. However, the new Labour Code deprives women of this entitlement.

In 2009, after lengthy debate, the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women was adopted in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Law was initiated back in 1996 as a follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action. Article 10 of the Law guarantees equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women in labour relations, including the conclusion of labour contracts, equal access to vacant jobs and equal opportunities for skills development, retraining and promotion.

At the same time, representatives of women’s non-governmental organizations are of the opinion that not only is the current version of the Law not perfect, it is worse than similar laws that were adopted previously in a number of the CIS countries and that contain legal mechanisms preventing gender-based discrimination in employment. In contrast to the laws adopted in the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Kazakhstani law lacks an article on sanctions and the rights of workers facing sexual harassment at work (as well as the notion of sexual harassment itself).

The Law adopted in the Republic of Kazakhstan (Article 10, para. 2) forbids employers to demand documents not stipulated by labour laws from jobseekers. Among other things, the ban is aimed at preventing discrimination against women with children and family responsibilities. However, as experts rightly point out, even if a woman is not demanded to produce a document on her family composition, it does not mean that she will not be asked about her marital status, availability of children and matrimonial plans.⁶² In this connection, the wording of the law of the Kyrgyz Republic forbidding employers to demand information from jobseekers about their personal life and plans concerning the birth of children may serve as an example (Article 18). The Feminist League has long insisted on

⁶² Gender Equality Now Also in Kazakhstan, <http://www.zakon.kz/164517-gendernoe-ravenstvo-teper-i-v.html>.



introducing relevant amendments into the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women, but the Parliament has not supported the initiative so far.

Publication of discriminatory advertisements was banned by a number of laws on the mass media in the mid-2000s. Simultaneously with the legislative prohibition, a training on admissible and inadmissible forms of job advertisements was arranged for the officials of the Office of Public Prosecutor of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Office introduced a paragraph into its quarterly report, according to which all units were to provide information of what is being done to prevent the publication of discriminatory advertisements in the mass media.

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“Observance of this paragraph is strictly monitored. The main thing is to include relevant information in the report. If included in the report, it must be monitored.”

(From an interview with a representative of the women’s movement).

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There are no special legislative acts aimed at protecting labour rights and promoting the employment of young people. The Law on Public Youth Policies was adopted in 2015. It covers issues related to providing young people with decent jobs, with a special focus on graduates of vocational education institutions. Besides that, Article 5 of the Law on the Employment of Population, adopted in 2001, singles out young people under age 29 and graduates of tertiary and quaternary education as target groups for whom the State arranges special employment promotion measures.

1.3. National mechanism for the advancement of women

Development of the national mechanism for the advancement of women and gender equality started in 1995, when a council for family and women’s issues and demographic policy was established under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Three years later, the Council was transformed into the National Commission for Family and Women’s Affairs under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In 2006, the name of the body was changed to the National Commission for Family Affairs and Gender Policy, which most probably reflected a gradual dissemination of gender equality ideas in the country. However, in 2008 the Commission’s name was changed again, and it is now functioning as the National Commission for Women’s Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The second change of the Commission’s name and the fact that it has been retained to this day testify to the sustainability of the “second turn” in the gender policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan from the objective of moving towards gender equality to the task of strengthening the institution of the family, protecting maternity and ensuring the best opportunities for women to reconcile family responsibilities with employment (without reconsidering their traditional role of guardians of the hearth). With the aim of achieving equal rights and opportunities, the Head of State now sets forth the priority objective of providing women with economic benefits and preferences, taking measures to improve the health of mothers and children, and increasing considerably legal and social guarantees for women. In his address to the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan, entitled “Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy”, the President stressed the importance of gender equality by stating that, “girls and women have always been equal members of our society, and mothers were the most respected persons. We must restore unconditional respect for the woman – a mother, a wife and a daughter. We must protect motherhood.”⁶³

Although gender equality objectives were slightly pushed aside by the tasks of women’s advancement and, first and foremost, their protection from domestic violence, more understandable to both the

⁶³ Tlenshina, G.M. Implementation of Gender Policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan (based on documents from the Akmola region). *VosposylstoricheskoyNauki:MaterialyTretyeyMezhdunarodnoyNauchnoyKonferentsii* [Issues of Historical Science: Proc. of the Third International Scientific Conference] (Moscow, January 2015), Moscow, Buki-Vedi Publ., 2015, p. 132. (In Russian)





country's leaders and its population,⁶⁴ they were, nonetheless, rather substantially represented in the list of the Commission's main functions. Today, its main tasks are to:

1. prepare recommendations on identifying priorities as well as formulating and implementing a comprehensive public policy concerning family and the equality of women and men within the context of the "Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy: New Political Course of a Successful State", the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006–2016, and international treaties on family issues and gender equality to which the Republic of Kazakhstan is a party;
2. collaborate with public bodies and civil society institutions on issues concerning family protection and the implementation of the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations Organization, and the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006–2016;
3. analyse issues concerning the situation of women, as well as the family and demographic situation, and formulate proposals and recommendations for public bodies on the main lines of gender, family and demographic policies of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
4. promote the achievement of equal opportunities for women and men in the economic area, further development of women's entrepreneurship and higher competitiveness of women in the labour market; create conditions for family members to combine work with family responsibilities and childcare; strengthen the institution of the family and ensure equal opportunities for women and men in family relations; design a set of measures aimed at maintaining and improving people's health, including reproductive health, and improving the quality of life; do away with domestic and workplace violence and apply international experience in combating violence against women, men and children; provide gender education to the population; undertake scientific research, create an information base with the aim of analysing the actual situation of families and equality of opportunities for women and men in the economic, social, political and cultural areas; and improve the demographic situation;
5. review proposals of public bodies, international organizations and public associations on issues within the Commission's competence, and prepare relevant recommendations for the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
6. prepare recommendations and proposals on ensuring observance of the provisions of legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan concerning family issues and gender equality by public officials;
7. collaborate with the mass media with the aim of a fuller reflection of all aspects of family issues and gender equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan;
8. review communications from citizens and mass media reports concerning family issues and failure to observe gender equality;
9. participate in the formulation of concepts as well as public and sectoral programmes concerning women, family and demography issues;
10. participate in drafting and reviewing legislative and other regulatory acts aimed at improving the situation of families and women;
11. initiate and conduct legal review of gender issues;
12. collaborate with public bodies and international organizations, and formulate proposals on implementing international initiatives.

The National Commission is currently a consultative body under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. An advisory panel is being established under the Commission from representatives of research institutions as well as educational and non-governmental organizations, which will operate on a voluntary basis and conduct analytical studies. The Commission will approve the membership of the advisory panel at its meeting.

⁶⁴ The Law on Preventing Domestic Violence was adopted in December 2009 practically simultaneously with the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women.



The Commission has regional branches operating in each region of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the heads of administrations and in the cities of Astana and Almaty. These branches are generally headed by deputy heads of administrations, who are mostly women.

The National Commission is financed from the State budget, but its programmes and projects are not. Funds are allocated only for staff salaries and administrative expenses. At the same time, a number of programmes are financed by international organizations such as the ILO, the United Nations Development Fund For Women (UNIFEM) and others.

The Commission's activity is generally highly appreciated by the President, but criticized by representatives of the women's movement. In their opinion, the National Commission is insufficiently independent and lacks initiative.

Most initiatives and all discretionary decisions in the area of gender policies in the Republic of Kazakhstan come from the President, while the National Commission is only a convenient instrument for implementing them with the support of funds provided by international organizations. Experts from women's organizations suggest that the Commission be granted the status of a permanent executive body with appropriate funding and broader independence. However, these proposals find no support among the National Commission members.

Along with the National Commission, the institutional mechanism for the advancement of women and gender equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan includes a group of Parliament members called "Otbasylar" (Family) and the National Human Rights Centre, which includes a unit on women's and children's rights.

At present, the main focus of the gender policy is women's protection from violence. There is a well-developed network of crisis centres in the country. Advocacy campaigns on combating violence against women and children are arranged. Much attention is paid to promoting women to leading positions. There is no provision on setting gender quotas in the national Law on Gender Equality, but in one of his addresses the President voiced the desired target – 30 per cent. The share of women in all branches of authority has substantially increased in the Republic of Kazakhstan in recent years. The number of women deputies increased two-fold as compared to the previous convocation to reach 20 per cent of the total number of deputies. The number of women deputies of regional, town and district *maslikhats* (local authorities) accounts for 17 per cent of the total number of deputies. The *maslikhat* of the Kostanai Region where women account for 36 per cent is a record holder.



"In the course of 25 years, authorities have started listening to our opinion; they are aware of gender issues and understand that there must be women in public authorities in order to improve their image in the eyes of the international community. They make certain efforts to elect women. True, the target of 30 per cent has not been achieved yet, but they make efforts to increase their share by at least a half per cent."

(From an interview with a representative of the women's movement)



Another important line of gender policies is the development of women's entrepreneurship. There are also special programmes targeting young women.





Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes

2.1. Gender stereotypes concerning the division of gender roles

A typical feature of the national mentality is recognition of the relevance of women's economic independence.

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"I believe that there are equal starting opportunities in Kazakhstan. Historically, our women have always earned their piece of bread. They can provide for themselves, for their children, and their husbands."

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution).

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The most striking difference between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian republics is manifested in gender-based preferences concerning the education of children.

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"If the question arises as to who of the children will acquire tertiary education, and there are not enough means for all of them, preference is given to the girl, and not to the youth. The youth has his hands, and he will be able to find a job even without an education. This is really so, although it is surprising for an Asian country."

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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'As compared to other countries, there is a good tradition in Kazakhstan, according to which families, parents and fathers prefer to give tertiary education to girls. It is believed to be a reliable source of livelihood. If she is divorced later and will have to provide for herself and her child, she will at least have a diploma, which will help her earn a living.'

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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Nevertheless, men still play top roles in the status hierarchy of Kazakhstani society.

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"Girls enter tertiary educational institutions and study better than youths, but, out of the blue, it is men who occupy managerial positions."

(From an interview with a lecturer of a tertiary educational institution)

• • •

"Most girls have tertiary education. However, men find their way to top positions somehow."

(From an interview with a representative of the women's movement)

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One piece of indirect evidence of the relatively high level of economic independence of women in the Republic of Kazakhstan is the approximate parity in the number of households headed by women and men (Annex, Table 8). Households headed by women prevail in seven out of the 16 regions of Kazakhstan. It should be pointed out, however, that the factors increasing the share of households headed by women may also be a greater number of single-parent households headed by women and women's longer lifespan.



Experts point out that in post-Soviet time some positive changes have been taking place in Kazakhstani society, largely thanks to globalization promoting a gradual dissemination of modern values.

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“The State does a lot to support motherhood. If a woman has no husband, she may place her child with an infants’ home and take him/her back home later. Society has become more loyal. Of course, if a woman is not married and gives birth to a baby at the age of 19-20, she might be ridiculed. However, if a woman is older, people will treat her loyally in this case.”

(From an interview with a representative of the women’s movement)

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Another trend that has emerged during the transition to a market-oriented economy is that economic and rational motives always prevail over people’s stereotypic convictions.

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“Fathers take childcare leave very rarely, but they are not mocked. People have become more pragmatic. If a wife earns more than her husband, and he takes such a leave, everyone will understand.”

(From an interview with a representative of the women’s movement)

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At the same time, it is worthwhile quoting the data of a mini-survey on gender issues conducted among residents of the city of Ust-Kamenogorsk in 2006. When asked about the occupations most suitable for men, respondents (50 men and 50 women) placed heavy industry first (50 per cent) and trade second (25 per cent). As for the most suitable occupations for women, 80 per cent of respondents named the family.⁶⁵

The extent of rootedness of gender stereotypes varies considerably across regions. A study undertaken by the Asian Development Bank has shown that rural residents, especially in South Kazakhstan, have more conservative and traditional views of the roles of men and women. There, even educated women are not willing to find a job and are mostly preoccupied with their families.⁶⁶

2.2. Gender stereotypes in employment and the labour market

As far as can be concluded from the small number of interviews, assessments of competitive advantages of the male and the female labour force are for the most part quite traditional and do not carry any national specificities.

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“I do not believe that youths are hired more willingly than girls. Although there exists this ineradicable stereotype among employers that it is unwise to hire a girl – she will get married, have a baby, and take a maternity leave – there is, however, on the other hand, the fact that girls are considered to be more diligent, industrious, and modest – a result

⁶⁵ Lanshakova Yu.S., Mishukava E.S., Tungtarova D.S., Samsonov L.V. Sociological research on gender issues in Kazakhstan, *Vestnik KASU* [Newsletter of the Kazakh-American Free University], 2006. No. 3. <http://www.vestnik-kafu.info/journal/7/235/>.

⁶⁶ Republic of Kazakhstan. Country Gender Assessment. Asian Development Bank, 2013. C.15. www.adb.org.





of their oriental upbringing. When a girl is hired, it is clear that her paperwork will be in order and that her English will be good. However, a girl cannot be involved in talks late at night and one cannot raise one's voice at her, while it is easier with a youth – he can be sent anywhere anytime.”

(From an interview with a representative of the women's movement)

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Experts also note women's stamina and a feeling of responsibility and men's greater ambitiousness. It should be taken into consideration, however, that these assessments come from women.

• • •

“We work at breakneck speed; there are many situations requiring high stress tolerance. Few men work in our office because they cannot endure it, but women do, because they are breadwinners, because they need to provide for their families, because some of them have unemployed husbands who do not wish to take a bad job and are waiting for a good one, etc...”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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“It often happens that well-educated men remain unemployed for several years because they want a prestigious managerial job. They prefer to wait and live off their wife or their own savings.”

(From an interview with a representative of the women's movement)

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A survey undertaken by Kazakhstani television has shown that a considerable part of the country's population regard gender-based discrimination in remuneration quite admissible, believing that is corresponds to the natural status of men and women. When asked whether it was just that men receive higher wages than women who occupy similar positions, 46 per cent of respondents answered in the affirmative. Forty two per cent consider such a situation unjust, while 12 per cent are sure that women must receive more. It should be pointed out that women constituted 68 per cent of those who took part in the survey.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ <http://www.31.kz/video/show/id/11515/show/ib/lang/ru>



Chapter 3. Demographic context of emergence of gender challenges in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth

Until recently, the Republic of Kazakhstan belonged to the “young” CIS countries. Some 10 years ago, the share of youth under 29 was close to 40 per cent. However, the youth population and its share in the overall population have been lately decreasing. The process is especially manifest in junior age cohorts, corresponding to the international definition of youth (Table 3.1). For the moment, youth aged 14–29 exceed other age cohorts in numbers. However, the next few years will witness its further reduction, because it will incorporate age cohorts, rather small in numbers, born in the crisis-ridden 1990s.

Table 3.1. Share of youth in overall population

Year	15–29		15–24	
	Persons	Share in population, %	Persons	Share in population, %
2010	4,508,989	27.83	3,129,373	19.31
2011	4,500,958	27.38	3,081,318	18.74
2012	4,480,960	26.88	2,999,291	17.99
2013	4,432,067	26.21	2,771,850	16.39
2014	4,372,974	25.48	2,779,005	16.19
2015	4,287,562	24.62	2,664,231	15.30

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

The majority of youth (54.9 per cent) live in urban areas. However, about 45 per cent live in rural areas.

The gender composition of the population aged 14–29 testifies to an insignificant, yet increasing, prevalence of male persons (Table 3.2). As at the start of 2014, 1,149,757 young men and 1,208,965 young women lived in urban areas. On the average, there are 2 per cent more of young men than girls. However, prevalence of men is mostly observed in rural areas where it is traced in all age cohorts. The greatest differences – 12 per cent – are observed in the 19–23 age cohort in North Kazakhstan, East Kazakhstan and West Kazakhstan regions. An 8 per cent difference is observed in the Akmola and Karaganda regions. In cities of national significance, there are more girls aged 19–28 than youths: in the 19–23 age cohort, there are 6 per cent more in the city of Astana and 10 per cent more in Almaty; in the 24–28 age cohort, there are 6 per cent more in Astana and 8 per cent more in Almaty.

Table 3.2. Women-to-men ratio by age cohort

Age cohort	Number of women per 100 men				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Overall population	1,074	1,073	1,073	1,071	1,070
15–19	969	961	960	959	957
20–24	1,017	1,016	1,222	996	985
25–29	1,011	1,013	1,015	1,020	1,023

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States.





On the whole, there is a trend towards an outflow of young people from rural to urban areas that experts associate with the educational and employment goals of school, college and university graduates.⁶⁸

According to the Marriage Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the minimum age for marriage is 18 years. However, it can be reduced by two years in the event of the bride's pregnancy and the existence of common children. This opportunity is used rather actively. During eight months in 2014, about 4,000 marriages with girls under 18 were registered.⁶⁹ From time to time, parliamentary deputies (men) submit proposals on reducing the marriage age to 16 years, and in exceptional cases – to 14 years.⁷⁰

The average marriage age for girls is 24 years. In urban areas, it is somewhat higher: 25–26 years.

The highest birth rate falls on the age cohorts of 20–24 years and 25–29 years (147 and 156 live births per 1,000 women respectively), which constitutes 58 per cent of birth rates in the reproductive age.

In the period 2009–2012, the sum total of birth rates for women 15–29 years old has shown that in the Republic of Kazakhstan there were 1.6 children per woman in the period 2009–2011 and 1.7 children per woman in 2012. In 2010–2012, over 50 per cent of all births occurred in the mother's age cohort of 20–24 years and over 40 per cent in the age cohort of 25–28 years. The share of young mothers under 20 accounted for only 8 per cent.⁷¹

As is clear from Table 3.3, the boys-to-girls birth ratio is slightly above the natural level. It has been stable for a number of years and is practically the same in urban and rural areas.

Table 3.3. Boys-to-girls birth ratio

Year	Number of new-born boys per 100 new-born girls		
	Average	Urban areas	Rural areas
2010	106.0	106.1	105.9
2011	106.2	106.4	106.0
2012	105.5	105.4	105.6
2013	106.7	106.8	106.6
2014	106.3	106.6	105.9

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

⁶⁸ National report "Youth of Kazakhstan -2014", p.99.

⁶⁹ http://bnews.kz/ru/news/obshchestvo/s_nachala_goda_v_kazahstane_bolee_4_tis_brakov_zaklucheno_s_nesovershennoletnimi_video-2014_09_08-885085

⁷⁰ <https://www.nur.kz/294054-v-kazahstane-predlozhili-snizit-vozrast-vstupleniya-v-brak-do-14-let.html>.

⁷¹ Bukanova Zh.K., Kalieva K.S. Youth of Kazakhstan: demographic aspect. <http://youthpolicycenter.kz/ru/prikladnye-issledovaniya/molodezh-kazakhstana-demograficheskiy-aspekt-po-materialam-nacionalnogo-doklada-molodezh-kazakhstan.html>; National report "Youth of Kazakhstan -2014", pp.99-100.



Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education

As in a number of other CIS countries, the main challenge in education is currently a growing mismatch between the output of vocational education institutions and workforce needs. At the same time, the Republic of Kazakhstan faces structural imbalances, such as unjustified expansion of the tertiary vocational education system against the background of the stagnating secondary level. Experts point out that the country fails to check the uncontrollable process of establishment of private tertiary educational institutions and the expanding profile of public institutions, which is not always justified.

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“We have 128 tertiary educational institutions now, and a fight is going on to reduce their number. However, the process is painful. Every private institution is someone’s business, which is not so easy to close down.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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“Even in district centres, all kinds of ‘academies’ and ‘institutes’ have been opened, which train lawyers and economists ... In recent years, the Ministry of Education and Science has been firm in displaying its political will and put the question of optimizing private institutions point blank. However, it will take time to put the domestic tertiary education system to rights. To accelerate the process, some political will displayed at the highest political level would not go amiss. There are too many influential people involved in it, and it would not be easy to deprive them of this sinecure.”⁷²

As in Russia, the main factor determining the proportions in the education system is demand from the general public. Tertiary education becomes a social norm for the majority of the population, primarily for girls.

• • •

“As a rule, all families are trying to give their children tertiary education. Kazakhstani children are not too willing to enter colleges after the ninth grade. If they do, they choose occupations connected in some way or other with the IT community or services, but not such ‘serious’ professions as those of a fitter, a turner or a smith. University graduates are either employed outside of their area of training, or do not work, or leave abroad, or are in the state of latent unemployment as if they were looking for a job.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

• • •

As for the education coverage, women prevail at all levels. The coverage of children aged 7–10 with primary education is close to 100 per cent. The coverage of children aged 11–17 with secondary education has swiftly increased in the last five years, and leadership belongs to girls (Table 3.4). At subsequent education levels, all coverage rates are also in favour of girls (Table 3.5).

⁷² With a diploma ... to the ranks of unemployed, <http://camonitor.kz/17462-problema-trudoustroystva-vypusnikov-vuzov-po-prezhnemu-ostaetsya-ostroy.html>.



**Table 3.4.** Coverage with education, by sex, %

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Coverage of children aged 7–10 with general primary education, net					
Girls	99	99	99	99	99
Boys	99	99	99	99	99
Aggregate coverage of population aged 11–17 with general secondary education					
Girls	93	97	98	100	102
Boys	90	95	97	98	100
Aggregate coverage of population aged 6–24 with education					
Women	74	77	79	81	82
Men	71	74	75	76	76

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

Table 3.5. Gross secondary education coverage ratio, %

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Gross secondary education coverage ratio					
Women	101.69	102.60	103.72	104.92	104.57
Men	99.43	100.58	101.08	102.10	102.57
Gross tertiary education coverage ratio *					
Women	55.33	59.70	60.15	57.23	54.70
Men	43.63	46.62	49.16	46.09	42.26

*Gross tertiary education coverage ratio is determined as the ratio between the number of students, regardless of their age, attending technical and vocational (ISCE-5) and tertiary (ISCE 6-8) educational institutions, to overall population aged 18–22.

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

Women slightly lag behind men in their representation at the secondary vocational education level, but their prevalence in tertiary education becomes rather substantial. In 2014, the share of women among tertiary students constituted 57.2 per cent. It should be pointed out that the level of Master's and doctorate programmes (postgraduate degrees) demonstrates an even greater gender gap in favour of women.

**Table 3.6.** Number of students by type of educational institutions at the beginning of the 2014/15 academic year

Types of educational institutions	Number of students, 000 persons		% to total		Breakdown by sex, %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	1,854.7	1,599.5	100.0	100.0	53.7	46.3
General education schools	1,303.5	1,105.8	70.3	69.1	54.1	45.9
Technical and vocational education	256.2	276.7	13.8	17.3	48.1	51.9
Tertiary institutions	272.9	204.5	14.7	12.8	57.2	42.8
Master's programmes	20.8	11.7	1.1	0.7	64.0	36.0
Doctorate	1.3	0.8	0.1	0.1	60.8	39.2

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

Gender stratification is obvious both at the secondary and tertiary vocational education levels. Most girls attending secondary vocational education institutions are concentrated in education and health care occupations as well as economics and services. Technical, construction and agricultural skills remain the domain of men. These areas of training are chosen by only one fifth of girls at this educational level (Annex, Table 9).

A somewhat similar, but slightly different, situation is observed in tertiary education. Both at the Bachelor's level and the subsequent tertiary education levels such areas as humanities, education and medicine are absolutely dominated by women. Owing to a considerably higher representation of girls at this educational level in general, their positions in other fields are sufficiently strong as well. Thus, in the 2014/15 academic year, girls accounted for more than half of students in natural sciences and agriculture (Annex, Table 10).

The trend towards girls' prevalence among students in various areas of training is even more obvious at the Master's level. There, youths are more broadly represented than girls only in two occupational groups: engineering sciences and technologies, and law (Annex, Table 11). It should be pointed out that it is namely law, along with engineering occupations, that is a sustainable area of men's prevalence, and this is true of all levels of vocational education.

Gender-based segregation in education provides a basis for latent discrimination of girls in the phase of competitive selection of applicants for humanitarian and social occupations.

“It is good if there is one or two youths in a group. Groups are small, and youths are always given preference. It does not matter what kind of a youth he is. In schools, boys also enjoy preferential treatment. I have two daughters and a son. It is easier for the son to study. It was more difficult for the girls; requirements for boys are quite different.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)



Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the share of youth constituted 41.1 per cent of the working age population at the beginning of 2013, and 39.2 per cent at the beginning of 2015. Therefore, labour force participation and employment of youth as well as youth unemployment play a strategically important role and form the current labour market situation to a considerable extent.

5.1. Economic activity of youths and girls

Over the last decade, labour force participation of Kazakhstan's population has been stable at about 70 per cent. The gender gap in labour force participation constituted about 10 percentage points. As for youth, their labour force participation is somewhat lower (which is natural, because a considerable part of young people are studying), and the gender gap is smaller (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7. Dynamics of labour force participation by gender

	Labour force participation, %					
	2012		2013		2014	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Overall population	66.8	77.2	66.7	77.3	65.4	76.7
Youth (15–28 years old)	58.2	64.6	56.7	64.1	58.9	66.2

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

It should be pointed out that the Republic of Kazakhstan, like many other CIS countries, is characterized by high indicators of labour force participation of students.

• • •
 “Most students work. They take up any jobs in order to earn some extra money. All postgraduates work.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

• • •
 “Many students understand that the earlier they start working the sooner they will find a job upon graduation. Starting with the second year, students look for work. Their traditional occupations are those of waiters, cleaners and shop assistants. These jobs are temporary, but they help students survive and even pay their tuition fees. However, there are students who understand that they should enter their professional field as soon as possible.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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5.2. Youth employment, employment of youths and girls

The Committee for Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan calculates population employment rates in two ways. In most cases, it is the inverse indicator of the unemployment rate, i.e. the employment rate is calculated as a share of employed persons in the economically active population of the relevant age group. Unfortunately, it is this option that was used in calculating employment rates of young people aged 15–28 years old. As for the overall population, the standard indicator used for international comparisons is also calculated.

As is clear from Table 3.8, the employment gap between men and women is even greater than the labour force participation gap, which testifies to their greater vulnerability in job search. However, it should be pointed out that the difference in employment status is not big, as far as official statistics shows. About 70 per cent of the employed population, both women and men, are wagedworkers, and slightly over 30 per cent are self-employed. Nevertheless, in 2014, women's average wages constituted 67 per cent of men's wages,⁷³ which testifies to a lower quality of women's employment.

Table 3.8. Distribution of employed population by employment status

	Население в возрасте 15 лет и старше		
	всего	в том числе	
		женщины	мужчины
Занятое население, тыс. чел.	8 510,1	4 120,7	4 389,3
Уровень занятости, %	67,1	61,5	73,4
Наемные работники, тыс. чел.	6 109,7	2 976,0	3 133,7
Доля в численности занятого населения, %	71,8	72,2	71,4
Самостоятельно занятые, тыс. чел.	2 400,4	1 144,7	1 255,6
Доля в численности занятого населения, %	28,2	27,8	28,6

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

A comparison of the employment status of youths and girls aged 15–28 (Annex, Tables 12 and 13) has not revealed any substantial differences either. The share of employers, cooperative members and wagedworkers employed on peasant holdings (farms) is somewhat higher among youths, while among girls there is a higher share of those employed in organizations (at enterprises), which may reflect their preference of “soft” employment in the government-financed sector of economy where employment is more stable and workers' rights are better observed.

At the same time, distribution of youths and girls by types of economic activity differs. As is clear from Table 14 in the Annex, girls more rarely than youths give preference to employment in the area of material production, especially in the mining industry and construction – sectors with difficult working conditions. To a certain extent, this is connected with the existence of a long list of occupations associated with unfavourable working conditions where the employment of women is banned by law.

⁷³ The gender pay gap has been gradually decreasing over the last decade. In 2006, women's wages constituted only 62.3 per cent of men's wages.





However, the most important factor is gender-based segregation in vocational education, which lays the groundwork for gender segregation in employment.

Undoubtedly, girls prevail among youths employed in the traditionally “female” sectors – education and health care. Another area where their share is considerably higher is trade. Girls are slightly more likely than youths to choose jobs in finance and science, although the gender composition in these areas has become more uniform over the last three years. In information technologies, girls are gradually catching up with youths in their representation. The share of young people employed in public administration has substantially increased. The process has involved both youths and girls, but representation of youths was growing at a higher pace.

5.3. Observance of labour rights

Workers employed in small businesses where relationship with employers is mostly built on oral agreement face abuse of labour rights more often. Women suffer from failure to observe labour legislation more often because it contains a lot of norms specific to them. Another reason is that certain present-day realities are more meaningful to women than to men, such as the need to go on sick leave to take care of a sick child or relative.

• • •
“Abuse of women’s rights? It happens in small businesses, especially in the informal economy. However, it is not very pronounced: at medium-size and large enterprises, labour legislation is observed and no one will dare abuse it.”

(From an interview with a representative of a social organization)

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• • •
“There are some occupations where sick leave is not practiced. For example, if a woman working in a beauty parlour falls ill, she simply does not come to work and, therefore, will lose the income she could have earned. No one pays her any sick-leave benefits, and there has never been a trace of pensions or vacation bonuses.”

(From an interview with a representative of a social organization)

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The situation regarding the observance of workers’ labour rights at large and medium-sized enterprises cannot be described as absolutely safe either. Young people of both sexes are vulnerable.

• • •
“In banks, they also practice the sweating system. It is very hard to work in lower positions. They can leave you without payment after the probation period.”

(From an interview with a representative of a social organization)

• • •
• • •
“Since our university is a large and well-established organization, the employer pays us both sick-leave benefits and vacation bonuses. However, maternity benefit is paid by the State, and this is good, because there was no order when the employer paid it. Sometimes, nothing was paid. This factor drove women back to work as soon as possible, sometimes two or three months after childbirth.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)



Since work in law enforcement bodies is considered prestigious and well paid, their employers work conscientiously and are rather strict in tracing any violations of legislation by employers in the formal sector.

• • •

“People hold on to good jobs, especially in the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Public Prosecutor – those bodies that are engaged in law enforcement, including women’s rights. After these two laws were adopted, their observance has been strictly monitored.”

(From an interview with a representative of a social organization)

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In their turn, employers representing large and medium-size businesses are trying not to rouse reprimands from labour inspectorates.

• • •

“There is labour inspection in our country, which monitors observance of rights. There was an accident once (a woman fell victim to a traffic accident when on a business trip). Our employer went out of his way to settle the issue to appease the labour inspectorate.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

• • •

However, workers, especially those career-minded, often fail to exercise their lawful rights deliberately.

• • •

“Employers pay all social benefits, and they pay pitifully small amounts. Thus, it is not remunerative to be ill. Ours is a country of employers, and not of waged workers. If you fall ill, you either come to work or ask someone to backstop for you, and then you work it off.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

• • •

It should be pointed out that because of irregular distribution of household duties and the childcare burden, strict corporate culture affects mostly women workers. It may be assumed that it is mainly difficulties with respect to sick leave and highly intense work that are the factors driving a part of the population, especially women, into the informal economy, while the other part chooses career and ensuing hyperemployment. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, high labour intensity is typical of both large corporations and public administration.

• • •

“In administrative structures, wages are low – some \$300–\$400. It is too difficult to survive on this money in Almaty. However, young people work there for the sake of career. Those who want to make a career go to public administration and toil there from morning till night, as in Soviet time, until the chief goes home. They can work even on Saturdays and Sundays. It is a kind of bondage, but one can really be provided with an apartment at a special price. Otherwise, it is unaffordable – it is impossible to earn so much money. It gives them a good start. After that, they can start a business, thanks to the connections they have established. True, it is very difficult to take root there. Not everyone can endure even internship in an akimat (regional administration). Many candidates fail to meet the requirements. However, those who did have made their way, if not to akims (heads of local administration), then to their deputies or heads of units. These are mostly men, while women mostly work in the units.”

(From an interview with a representative of a social organization)

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The gender dimension is also manifested in the following situation: if a girl chooses in favour of a career, either in the public service or in a large company, it will inevitably mean that she gives up the idea of starting a family, whereas for a youth it is not so unambiguous.

• • •

“Both youths and girls are employed in the public service. Interestingly, all youths are married, while no girls are. They are 25-35 years old, beautiful and clever, and toil like galley slaves.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s movement)

• • •

“In Kazakhstan, business culture demands that one must fully dedicate oneself to work. It is a norm to work without days off and stay late at work. Many girls cannot get married because they can see nothing except their job. Youths get married, they somehow manage to do it; their job does not generally stand in their way. However, many girls who are serious about making a career have no time for starting a family, because they spend much time on self-development, self-education, and additional education.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

• • •

According to experts, the situation with legal literacy is relatively good in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

• • •

“Legal literacy classes have been introduced at schools. I remember my children coming home and telling me about children’s rights, how to find a job and not be enslaved. Then, we have a very strong women’s movement – not overly feministic, but advocating women’s rights.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

• • •

“We conduct surveys. Large companies arrange workshops for young women, and young people are well informed and legally literate. Of course, we cannot speak about a 100 per cent, but most people know their rights. Nevertheless, there are violations.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s movement)

• • •

5.4. Gender challenges in general and registered unemployment

The issue of youth unemployment and, first and foremost, unemployment among university graduates is the topic of the day in the mass media and in the focus of public policy.⁷⁴ According to some estimates, from one third to half of graduates of full-time university departments fail to find permanent jobs, and this may become a major social challenge considering the concentration of students in cities.⁷⁵

At the same time, official statistical data of youth unemployment paint quite a plausible picture. Its rate fell from 18 per cent in 2000 to 8.5 per cent in 2009 and 4.2 per cent in 2014. The Republic of Kazakhstan is currently one of the few countries of the world where the youth unemployment rate is lower than the country’s average. It should be pointed out that the unemployment rate for girls is higher than that for youths (Table 3.9).

⁷⁴ With a diploma ... to the ranks of unemployed. <http://camonitor.kz/17462-problema-trudoustroystva-vypusnikov-vuzov-po-prezhnemu-ostaetsya-ostroy.html>; Why is it difficult to place university and college graduates? <https://kapital.kz/gosudarstvo/36952/pochemu-slozhno-trudoustroit-vypusnikov-vuzov-i-kolledzhej.html>; Uruzbaeva G.T., Portnova O. The issue of youth employment in the Republic of Kazakhstan. <http://www.enu.kz>.

⁷⁵ Elzhanova R.K., Zhumatai Zh.Zh., Sarzhankyzy A. University graduate employment issues in Kazakhstan. *Vestnik KazNTU* [Newsletter of the Kazakhstan NTU], 2015, no. 3, p.522.

**Table 3.9.** Youth unemployment, by sex

	2012	2013	2014
Number of unemployed, 000 persons			
Total aged 15–28	130.7	132.7	103.9
Girls	72.7	65.0	56.8
Youths	58.0	67.7	47.0
Unemployment rate, %			
Total aged 15–28	5.4	5.5	4.2
Girls	6.4	5.8	5.0
Youths	4.5	5.3	3.6

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, www.stat.gov.kz/.

As is clear from Table 3.10, the youth unemployment rate is lower than for the overall population, for both men and women.

Table 3.10. Unemployment rate for youth and overall population in the Republic of Kazakhstan (general, by sex, %)

2012				2013				2014			
Overall population		Youth		Overall population		Youth		Overall population		Youth	
women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men
6.5	4.1	6.4	4.5	5.9	4.6	5.8	5.3	5.8	4.3	5.0	3.6

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan. www.stat.gov.kz/.

About a quarter of unemployed youths and one fifth of girls have been in this condition for more than half a year. The others leave the ranks of the unemployed rather quickly (Annex, Table 15). True, statistics do not suggest whether they shifted to employment in formal economy, self-employment or economic inactivity. The last option is more probable for girls who may get married and abandon their attempts to find a job due to childbirth. Possibly, this partially explains a smaller share of long-term unemployed among them, with higher unemployment rates.

In urban areas, the youth unemployment rate is higher than in rural areas. This is explained by the fact that, on the one hand, in rural areas some unemployed population is absorbed by personal small holdings (about 70 per cent of self-employed population lives in rural areas) and, on the other hand, there is intensive outflow of youth from rural to urban areas.⁷⁶

There are various points of view on the youth unemployment issue. For example, the Secretary of the Almaty City Committee of the Communist People's Party of the Republic of Kazakhstan believes that the official unemployment data are understated several-fold. He points out that latent unemployment

⁷⁶ Report of the Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population, the Republic of Kazakhstan. <http://www.zonakz.net/articles/74237>.



in the guise of self-employment, including that of youth, should be taken into consideration.⁷⁷ Representatives of the legislative authority agree with it:

"In 2013, there were 350,000 unemployed young people in Kazakhstan. I think this is not a complete figure; there are also unspecified data – the data on self-employment are especially doubtful."⁷⁸

At the same time, other experts trust the official data and point out that preference of self-employment or voluntary rejection of available jobs offered in the official labour market are connected with excessive expectations of youth.⁷⁹ Here is the opinion of a representative of an employment centre in Almaty:

• • •
"We analyse the situation and can say with full responsibility that in Almaty, for example, there are jobs, but people themselves must be interested. They must become competitive and be able to undergo retraining; we are creating the necessary conditions for it."⁸⁰

Respondents agree with this point of view:

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"There is an abundance of jobs, but wages are low. The existence of a large informal economy is explained by the fact that people are unwilling to work officially for different reasons."

(From an interview with a representative of a women's movement).

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 In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the registered unemployment rate accounts for a trifling 0.4 per cent, which is the lowest indicator among the CIS countries. Experts point out that educated youth prefer not to deal with the employment service.

• • •
"People associate labour exchange with such places where it is not advisable to go. It is considered shameful, because labour exchange offers social jobs and temporary jobs. Young people, especially in urban areas, do not accept them. May be, rural youth accept, those who come to towns. However, they can find simple jobs themselves, without the labour exchange, in canteens, second-hand goods markets or cloakrooms."

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution).

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 A representative of the employment service confirms that its primary task is to create so-called social jobs and integrate the most vulnerable population groups and people in difficult situations: orphans, persons with disabilities and ex-prisoners who are generally offered temporary jobs. Besides that, the employment service supervises free retraining and skills development courses for persons with lower competitiveness in the labour market. Job placement upon graduation constitutes about 70 per cent.

⁷⁷ The current unemployment rate in Kazakhstan is 35 per cent. <http://www.kursiv.kz/>.

⁷⁸ The Senator is worried about youth unemployment rate in Kazakhstan. <http://www.kazpravda.kz/rubric/obshchestvo/senator-obespoena-urovнем-bezrobotitsi-sredi-molodezhi-v-kazahstane/?print=yes>.

⁷⁹ Unemployed Kazakhstan graduates prefer to stay hungry rather than to receive little money. <https://www.nur.kz/840238-bezrobotnye-kazahstanskije-vypuskniki.html>.

⁸⁰ The current unemployment rate in Kazakhstan is 35 per cent. <http://www.kursiv.kz/>.



5.5. Gender-related challenges of youth business (availability of special programmes supporting youth and women's businesses)

As it has already been pointed out, some 30 per cent of the country's population are not waged workers. It should be noted that, in the opinion of experts, employment in the informal economy is not always a forced choice due to unavailability of jobs at enterprises and in organizations. A considerable number of both men and women prefer their own small businesses, mostly informal or semi-formal, to quite accessible wage employment in the formal economy.

• • •

"Those who work informally are not well-off, but they have their bread and butter. Of course, among those working informally there are poverty-stricken and low-income people, but there are not many of them."

(From an interview with a representative of a women's movement)

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"Here, almost everyone has his/her own firm and a kind of a seal."

(From an interview with a representative of a women's movement)

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According to the findings of a study undertaken by the Asian Development Bank, in the Republic of Kazakhstan women start their businesses more often than men out of necessity. They are mostly concentrated in micro- or small business and are often engaged in those types of entrepreneurial activity that can be combined with their household responsibilities. Besides that, women have limited knowledge of business environment and face more difficulties, than men, in accessing credit, especially from commercial banks. Micro-credits extended through special programmes to women wishing to start a business are more accessible to them. In their study, experts of the Asian Development Bank came to the conclusion that, with the exception of microfinance programmes and some training programmes targeting women, most programmes aimed at the development of small and medium-size businesses do not take gender issues into account and make no provisions for eliminating inequality, thereby putting women entrepreneurs into a disadvantageous position.⁸¹

At the same time, in the opinion of national experts, the abundance of special programmes supporting women's entrepreneurship in the Republic of Kazakhstan compensates possible prejudices against women as borrowers and gives them certain advantages over men.

• • •

"As for credit accessibility, women can start a business easily considering that there is an abundance of various programmes. They have even more opportunities than men."

(From an interview with a representative of a women's movement)

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However, there is apprehension that lending programmes for women entrepreneurs do not always achieve their objectives. The Secretary of the Almaty City Committee of the Communist People's Party of the Republic of Kazakhstan points out that, *"there are no data on how many people have actually succeeded in starting a business thanks to lending. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to assess the effectiveness of lending programmes because, possibly, a considerable part of the money is simply spent on food and does not serve the purpose of creating new jobs."*⁸²

During interviews, an opinion was expressed that the causes of insufficient performance of programmes aimed at supporting entrepreneurial initiatives, including the initiatives of young women, lie primarily in insufficient interest and lack of motivation on the part of their beneficiaries.

⁸¹ Republic of Kazakhstan. Country Gender Assessment. Asian Development Bank, 2013. www.adb.org.

⁸² The current unemployment rate in Kazakhstan is 35 per cent. <http://www.kursiv.kz/>.





“Private funds and entrepreneurs’ foundations, the Chamber of Entrepreneurs and international organizations provide support to the businesses started by girls, especially in rural areas, practically on an annual basis. If a person is able and willing to work, especially in the village, there is a real opportunity of starting a business. Everyone helps a lot, both the public sector and the State and the Chamber of Entrepreneurs and international organizations.

“They can buy a cow or arrange a training in national crafts. Yet, girls and women are somewhat passive. Trade unions also arranged training workshops. Everything seemed to be good; prizes were awarded. Yet, some three or five years later, everything stopped. Few women keep up their businesses. Everyone somehow prefers to be self-employed: work in the market, go somewhere or resell something. The State actually allocates funds, but all this training does not assume mass proportions. Nothing of the kind.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s movement)

Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls

The public education development programme of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020 sets forth the objective of increasing job placement of university graduates in compliance with their skills.⁸³ The importance of this issue made the Republic’s leadership pay special attention to its implementation. Today, all tertiary educational institutions are obliged to trace the job placement of their graduates and report to the public authorities.

The Minister of Education and Science is confident that the system of job placement of graduates is already in place at universities and colleges and yields fruit. According to reports of tertiary educational institutions, approximately three quarters of their graduates are successfully placed. However, according to the Commission for Modernization of Tertiary Educational Institutions, the actual share of those placed is no more than 60 per cent.⁸⁴ According to respondents, it may be still lower. Here is how they described how the top-down job placement mechanism actually works.

“The task that faces a graduate and his/her advisor is to bring a paper from an employer confirming that the graduate will be recruited. In 90 per cent of cases, it is a fake. The paper is needed to receive one’s diploma (no paper – no diploma). What we need is to put a check mark that we have placed everyone. Graduates do their best to obtain such papers in every possible way: they ask their acquaintances, etc. This is even worse than in Soviet time. The university is trying to verify these placements by ringing around, but no one monitors it seriously later. There is job placement on paper, whereas in reality there isn’t. There is also, as in the other countries, a very serious issue of a surplus of humanitarian skills.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

“All universities conduct a survey of students closer to graduation and submit these data, generally fake, to the ministry. Each university has a unit for monitoring their graduates. Three months after graduation, the unit must call all graduates and ask them whether they have found jobs and what kind of jobs. I do not believe these surveys, because not

⁸³ Public education development programme of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020.

⁸⁴ Abdykalikova G. Report at a meeting of the Commission on Modernization of Tertiary Educational Institutions. <http://www.inform.kz/rus/search/>.



all graduates tell the truth. Besides, universities themselves practice upward distortion of data – a legacy of Soviet time. Therefore, they report 95 per cent job placement.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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To obtain a more objective picture, the authorities are planning to unite the database of the Ministry of Education with the database of the State Pension Payments Centre. A comparison of reports of universities and colleges on job placement and the data on pension contributions will make it possible to obtain more objective information. If a young person pays pension contributions, it means he/she is placed.

As it has already been mentioned in the section on unemployment, excessive wage expectations are the main barrier to youth employment. They are typical of both young men and women, but are more frequent among the former.

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“Young people have very demanding requirements. When I ask them what wages they would like to receive, they name fantastic figures. I ask them what they can do to be paid so much money. I tell them they must show their worth first. I am trying to bring them down to earth; we start making some calculations.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution).

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Another common barrier, but more pronounced among youths, is inactivity and unwillingness to make efforts, especially if wages are not very high.

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“There are really a lot of self-employed persons in our country... There is a labour market, there are jobs, but they do not want to work there. Why? The answer is, ‘Why should I exert myself for such trifling pay?’”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s organization)

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“I can see the passivity of youths. There are bright persons among girls; there are leaders among them, while youths are inactive and indifferent. They are engaged in some questionable dealings.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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In this case, the situation is ambiguous. On the one hand, students are eager to start working as early as possible. On the other hand, as respondents stated, students often took up casual jobs, mostly for the sake of earning some money, and not for the sake of gaining experience. In their opinion, it is often parents that form their children’s passive attitude to job search and their excessive wage expectations.

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“It often happens that it is difficult to find a job during the first six months after graduation. Parents do not say that one should take up any job just to get started. They usually say, ‘You should not spoil your CV. Send it to a recruiting agency (Headhunter) and wait for a decent proposal. Do not agree to less than \$1,000 (a popular standard).’ Month after month, he does nothing, and no job turns up. Parents start urging him to begin a job search. A girl can get married and thereby smooth over the situation, while a youth cannot. He finally starts looking for a job. A generation of young professionals is entering the labour market with quite a good Kazakhstani education, but they have few chances of finding employment because they behave like princes.”

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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In the Republic of Kazakhstan, gender preferences are present during recruitment in a number of cases, but it is hardly correct to speak of widespread gender-based discrimination. According to the survey of 468 corporate sector employees undertaken in July 2015 with the aim of finding a connection between gender issues and career opportunities in the Republic of Kazakhstan, eight out of the 10 Kazakhstani who were interviewed stated that there is no gender inequality in companies during recruitment. Nevertheless, the remaining 20 per cent confirmed the existence of gender discrimination practices during recruitment.

It is pointed out in a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank that non-governmental organizations of the Republic of Kazakhstan have documented evidence concerning cases in which employers forced young women to sign illegal contracts saying that they would not get married and apply for maternity leave while working for the company.⁸⁵

A comparison of some quotations from an interview with an expert who was trying to be objective will help assess the acuteness of the gender discrimination issue.

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 “I cannot say that, according to statistics, women are discriminated against, but, of course, it is more difficult for women, especially girls, to find employment.

“Employers have their preference; they prefer hiring youths, all other conditions being equal. Yet, there is not much discrimination.

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 • • •
 “There is discrimination when the matter concerns high positions. Facing a choice between a man and a woman, the employer will prefer the man, even if he is five times less knowledgeable than the woman is. However, at the start of a career chances are more or less equal. Many employers prefer girls as more diligent, industrious and obedient workers who will do more work than men and will not demand high wages.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s organization)

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Here is the opinion of a woman, director of a private recruiting agency:

“Against the background of skills shortage, all professionals, both men and women, find employment. Besides that, we observe that contemporary Kazakhstani women are active and successful in their careers. Many of them have achieved a lot thanks to their knowledge, intellect, professionalism and industry. However, when rejoicing at such an obvious trend in the labour market of the present-day Kazakhstan, I would like to remind women once again about the problem of reconciling their career with personal life, family, and leisure.”⁸⁶

As you can see, the respondent, albeit very cautiously, raises a burning issue facing a considerable number of young women in the Republic of Kazakhstan – the issue of overwork due to their double burden and the need to choose between a successful career, on the one hand, and the family, personal life and self-development, on the other hand.

As for the main job search techniques, according to experts, no gender differences can be discerned.

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 “The most widespread job search tool is Headhunter (web site). The next most popular method is through social networks. Both girls and youths use their connections, but they

⁸⁵ Republic of Kazakhstan. Country Gender Assessment. Asian Development Bank, 2013, p.26. www.adb.org. <http://www.31.kz/video/show/id/11515/show/ib/lang/ru>

⁸⁶ https://vlast.kz/jekonomika/elena_grisshuk_direktor_rekrutirovovoj_kompanii_kazahstan_privlekatelen_dlja_zarabatyvanija_deneg_v_kratkosrochnoj_perspektive-4589.html.



mostly rely on their ability to show themselves in the best light during the interview. One more method is to make one's round of firms to hand in one's CV and strike up acquaintances. Finally, one may join the family business. As for using the Internet, there are no gender-related differences there. Everyone is at the advanced level."

(From an interview with a representative of a women's movement)

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"It is difficult to get a good job. Kazakhstan is a collectivist society where the culture of clannish and family ties and protection is strong. Not so long ago, attempts at placing one's child through good connections were usually successful because it was believed that connections are more important than anything else is. However, I notice that it is no longer as important factor as a candidate's abilities or potentialities."

(From an interview with a lecturer at a tertiary educational institution)

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Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

7.1. Public programmes and measures aimed at achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

In December 2012, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan delivered an address entitled "Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy: New Political Course of a Successful State" where elimination of domestic violence and women's advancement were set forth as the main objectives of gender policies. The course outlined by the President is being translated into reality by the National Commission for Women's Affairs, Family and Demographic Policy. This year the National Commission is completing the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2006–2016. Within the framework of the initiative, the Academy of Public Administration has arranged a series of special courses on gender topics for public officials, including the militia, the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the media.

Since 2015, the National Commission has coordinated the implementation of the National Plan on Strengthening Family Relations as well as Moral, Ethical and Spiritual Values for 2015–2020. Thus, according to the line formulated by the President in his address, the focus is shifted from the objective of promoting gender equality to the task of strengthening family values and creating conditions for women's self-fulfilment in various spheres, including the world of work. The National Plan includes a set of measures aimed at creating a society of universal labour, protecting motherhood and childhood, and supporting youth. It stipulates for mechanisms of boosting jobs, enhancing vocational guidance and increasing social responsibility of the business community.

Kazakhstan's policies concerning the family and women relies on a well-developed network of structures providing protection against domestic violence and supporting women in difficult situations.

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"There are 'mother's homes' and crisis centres everywhere. If a woman gets into trouble, she will find shelter and subsistence everywhere. There are various structures, and they will pass her on to the place where she will be provided with help."

(From an interview with a representative of a women's organization)

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It should be pointed out that in the Republic of Kazakhstan the State is assimilating and replicating rather consistently and successfully positive experience accumulated in the course of the implementation of international projects.

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“There are now so many public structures both in the Ministry of Interior and the Office of the Public Prosecutor! They tackle many issues the State did not have the time to address before. At first, these programmes were financed by international organizations. Now the State has taken all these issues under its control.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s organization)

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The most important public programmes aimed at the advancement of women and youth in the national economy and the labour market are the “Business Roadmap 2020” and the “Employment Roadmap 2020”.

In 2013, a unified information portal, Youth Labour Exchange (mbt.enbek.kz), was launched where information on the most in-demand skills and available vacancies is posted. More than 13,000 vacancies registered by employment services and about 14,000 special youth internship vacancies for university graduates are currently available.

The Youth Internship Programme is intended specifically for providing graduates with initial work experience in the selected occupation and is implemented via the employment service. To join the programme, graduates (under 29) are to turn to an employment centre where their data will be incorporated into an occupational database, and the graduates will be referred to employer companies according to their skills. An internship contract is signed for a period of six months and may be followed by an offer of regular employment to those interns who have proved themselves.

Other special programmes targeting university graduates are entitled “With a Diploma – to the Village” and “Staff Reserve”. Within the framework of the latter, the State finances relocation of a specialist to a selected rural populated area, extends him/her a credit for building a house for a period of 15 years and raises his/her salary by at least 25 per cent of tariff rates applicable for the staff of social institutions in urban populated areas. The programme targets graduates of medical and teachers’ training institutions as well as graduates educated in social security, culture, sport and veterinary medicine. Although the programme does not include a specially designed gender component, it is predominantly intended for graduates with “female” skills, i.e. mostly for girls.

Programme beneficiaries are to find a job in a rural populated area (in a rural school, library or hospital) themselves. However, the State helps them in it. Along with a possibility of choosing a vacancy in the information portal “Youth Labour Exchange” or on regional web sites, they can turn for assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan or to officials in the regions. About 25,000 specialists were relocated to rural populated areas within the framework of the programme With a Diploma – to the Village, but there are no published data on the share of girls among them.

The Youth Staff Reserve project has been implemented since 2009 with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is aimed at selecting, training and educating managerial staff. Since then, more than 10,000 young persons have applied to participate, and 372 persons have passed the competitive selection, testing, training and skills assessment. After internships in public bodies and national companies, over 40 per cent of them were promoted from the district or town level to the regional level and from the regional level to the republican one. No data were published on the gender composition of programme beneficiaries; however, from indirect evidence it may be concluded that most of them were men.

The most important aspect of the public employment and gender policies is equalization of potentialities and possibilities of the country’s regions. An active role in addressing this issue is played by international



organizations, which are periodically identifying regions with the most unfavourable situation and focusing their programmes on them. Their activity serves as a guideline in defining public support priorities.

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“The most depressed area is Kyzylorda Region. All international organizations have pooled their resources and implemented 95 per cent of projects there. Public support is also provided to that region. All agencies do their best to help. My students also participated in the project Data Literacy in Villages. They conducted classes in libraries teaching rural residents how to use the Internet, make video clips and post them on web sites...

“This year, international organizations selected Akmola Region. All schools are connected to the Internet. There are media rooms in all libraries.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women's organization)

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7.2. Approach of employers to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

The approach of employers to the issue of gender equality is ambiguous. On the one hand, the sufficiently rigid labour relations in the country lead to recruitment preferences in favour of men, because they are not entitled to any special benefits. It should also be taken into consideration that employers bear some financial costs associated with benefits. Mentality is another factor in favour of men. Today, Kazakhstani mentality acknowledges sufficiently broad limits of women's independence, but at the same time retains conviction in men's superiority. This is why rather egalitarian gender preferences in recruitment to initial positions are replaced by unequivocal preference of men when the question concerns remuneration and, especially, promotion and career development.

On the other hand, there is a sufficiently well-coordinated social partnership system in the Republic of Kazakhstan, within the framework of which employers take an active part in public programmes, including those aimed at empowering women and increasing their competitiveness.

An example of such an initiative is the training programme, entitled: “Coca-Cola Belesteri” launched in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2012. Within the framework of the programme, 5,400 women received basic business training, and 21 of them received grants from the Coca-Cola Company for starting small businesses. Initially, the programme covered urban women, but its focus gradually shifted to rural areas where women wanted to start a business using “green” technologies.

The greatest number of joint projects provided support to women entrepreneurs within the framework of the public-private partnership. In 2015, the National Commission, jointly with the Damu Foundation and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), launched a specialized lending programme, entitled “Women in Business”. The programme has no sectoral limitations. Loans at a rate, which is low due to the volatility of the tenge, may be extended to enterprises with at least a 50 per cent share of women's participation in the authorized capital, i.e. those managed by women. Businesswomen operating both in urban and rural areas may receive such loans. A condition providing access to concessional lending is absence of tax debts and loans from other banks. All in all, the EBRD and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan have allocated 3.7 billion tenge for the development of women's entrepreneurship for a period of five years. The money is extended via the second-level banks where women entrepreneurs can obtain loans in the amount of up to 3 million tenge at an annual rate of 14 per cent. The Damu Foundation defines the main lending terms, while second-level banks select projects according to their internal standards and procedures. Loans to be used as working capital are extended for a period of three years, and loans for modernizing production and purchasing equipment – for a period of five years. At present, 37 “women's” projects have received 64.9 million tenge under this concessional programme in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In the opinion of the Foundation's officials, the





effect from programme implementation will depend on the activity of banks and the interested women themselves who must submit their applications and projects to the banks. Along with funds, the Programme also provides non-financial assistance in the form of advice on managerial issues, introduction of technologies, and access to networks. Workshops on the subject “Women in Business” and online business diagnostics services are planned. Special attention is paid to providing women entrepreneurs in various regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan with a possibility of using the opportunities offered by the programme.

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“Women entrepreneurs with good security and well-established businesses operating in Almaty and Astana are attractive to banks. However, our objective is to bring that money to the country’s regions. So, it was stipulated that at least 60 per cent of the allocated amount was to be distributed among the country’s regions.”⁸⁷

• • •

The EBRD believes that the programme will cover 2,000 women entrepreneurs in the course of three years. According to the estimates of the Damu Foundation, over 100 projects worth 5.5 billion tenge will be implemented during five years. The programme “Women in Business” will help to create over 200 new jobs and provide the budget with 630 million tenge in taxes.

7.3. Trade union activity aimed at ensuring the observance of the rights of youths and girls

As one may gather from press reports, trade union representatives are rather critical about the extent of gender equality achieved in the Republic of Kazakhstan to date. In the opinion of the Secretary General of the Confederation of Labour of Kazakhstan, “gender equality is observed only with respect to workers employed in the public sector. No one else observes it.”⁸⁸

At the same time, no special programmes initiated by trade unions and aimed at achieving gender equality have been identified. Trade unions are following the main line of public policies formulated by the country’s President and are involved, as necessary, in implementing various projects and programmes. One of the areas of responsibility of the Kazakhstani trade unions is advocacy work among male heads of families to persuade them to use childcare leave. The campaign aimed at encouraging fathers to take childcare leave was launched in the Republic of Kazakhstan after the Law on Gender Equality was passed in 2009.

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“After 2010, a campaign started in the regions to find out whether men take childcare leave and receive childcare benefits. Isolated cases were found, and a round-table meeting was arranged to discuss the findings. Trade unions were obliged to monitor this issue and do their best to help, advocate and support in every possible way. Now the Trade Unions Federation reports to the National Commission once a year. The data are collected on a quarterly basis, and men are persuaded to take childcare leave in order to have at least a few cases to report. Those are just isolated cases, but it is good that there are a few of them. When young men are asked this question, they answer that they know they have this right. Fun is fun, but every year each region has at least something to report. I asked regional trade union representatives how they managed to do it. They said it was pain in the neck for them. It happens mostly if a woman earns a lot or a man is jobless, then it works.”

(From an interview with a representative of a women’s organization)

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⁸⁷ From an interview of the Chairman of the Damu Foundation for Forbes Women magazine. http://forbes.kz/woman/jenschin_v_biznese_podderjat_ebrd_damu_i_tsentrkredit.

⁸⁸ <http://www.31.kz/video/show/id/11515/show/ib/lang/ru>.



Conclusions

Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan mostly complies with the ratified international conventions and provides opportunities for achieving actual gender equality in the world of work. It should be pointed out that in January of the current year a new Labour Code was adopted, which expanded employers' rights and reduced women's privileges. At the same time, a number of amendments were introduced (for example, the ban on business trips for women with children under seven was lifted) that could improve their competitiveness in the labour market.

A typical feature of the national mentality is a simultaneous recognition of women's economic independence and men's "natural" right to supremacy. Today, men are in the top ranks of the status hierarchy in Kazakhstan. At the same time, as far as coverage with education is concerned, women prevail at all levels, and the gender gap in favour of women is increasing at the level of postgraduate education.

Gender stratification is obvious both in secondary and tertiary vocational education. Humanities, education and medicine are the areas of unquestionable prevalence of girls. However, their positions are also strong in other areas such as agriculture and natural sciences. Gender segregation in education provides a basis for latent discrimination of girls at the stage of competitive selection for humanitarian and social security occupations.

Gender segregation in vocational education lays the groundwork for gender segregation in employment. Girls are more rarely employed in industry and construction, but prevail in education, health care and trade. Girls choose work in finance and science more often than youths and are gradually catching up with the latter in information technologies.

Labour force participation and employability of students are rather high in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Besides, it is one of the few countries of the world where youth unemployment is lower than the average indicator for overall population. It should be pointed out that the unemployment rate is higher for girls than for youths. As for the employment status, the difference between youths and girls is not big: in both cases, self-employed persons account for approximately 30 per cent.

In most cases, law enforcement bodies monitor abuse of the law by employers in the formal sector rather strictly. Abuse of labour rights occurs more often in small businesses where relations with employers are mostly based on oral agreements. However, the situation with observance of labour rights at large and medium-size enterprises cannot be described as safe. Young workers are a vulnerable group. Being career-oriented, they often fail to exercise their lawful rights deliberately. The rigid corporate culture affects primarily women workers due to irregular distribution of household responsibilities and the childcare burden.

It should be pointed out that if a girl chooses a career in civil service or in a major company, she will have to abandon the idea of starting a family, while for a youth the choice is not as inevitable as that.

In general, girls are more affected by abuse of labour laws because they contain quite a few norms that are more important to women. Since in the Republic of Kazakhstan sick-leave benefits are paid by employers, it is rather difficult to exercise one's entitlement to a benefit in case of temporary disability or absence from work due to a child's illness, which affects women strongly.

Along with lack of work experience, including work in the field one has been trained for, main barriers to youth employment are excessive wage expectations. They are typical of both youths and girls, but are especially strong among the former. Another common barrier, which is, nonetheless, more pronounced among youths, is passivity and unwillingness to exert oneself, especially if wages are not very high. Preference given to self-employment or voluntary rejection of quite accessible jobs offered in the official labour market are mostly explained by excessive expectations of young people. Gender



discrimination during recruitment is not pronounced. However, when the question concerns remuneration and especially promotion, gender preferences are in favour of men.

Family policies and policies concerning women rely on a well-developed network of structures providing protection from domestic violence and support to women in difficult situations. The main focus of gender policies is on women's protection from violence, their advancement to leading positions and promotion of women's entrepreneurship. There are also special programmes targeting young women.

Major public programmes aimed at improving the situation of women and youth in the national economy and the labour market are the "Business Roadmap 2020" and the "Employment Roadmap 2020". A considerable number of measures under the "Employment Roadmap" are aimed at promoting youth employment, but they generally have no obvious gender-related focus.

The State assimilates and replicates positive experience accumulated in the course of implementation of international projects rather systematically and successfully. A sufficiently well-coordinated system of social partnership has been formed in the country, within the framework of which employers take an active part in public programmes, including those aimed at empowering women and increasing their competitiveness. In the opinion of experts, reasons of insufficient effectiveness of programmes aimed at supporting entrepreneurial initiatives, including those of young women, are rooted primarily in insufficient interest and motivation of programme beneficiaries.

Trade unions follow the main line of the public policy formulated by the President and participate, as necessary, in implementing initiatives and projects aimed at promoting gender equality.

Recommendations

1. As in the other CIS countries, gender policies and youth employment promotion in the Republic of Kazakhstan are independent lines of public efforts. It would be useful to coordinate the efforts in the two areas. A considerable number of measures in the Employment Roadmap are aimed at promoting youth employment, but they generally target youth at large. During finalization of the Roadmap and in the subsequent stages of its implementation, it would be worthwhile to take into consideration the peculiarities of barriers facing youths and girls during recruitment and career making, primarily the special problems of girls in rural areas and South Kazakhstan, where gender stereotypes are especially strong and affect the labour market behaviour of young women.
2. Labour legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan generally meets present-day requirements. However, some articles of the Law on Gender Equality passed in the Republic open up opportunities for unequal treatment of men and women by employers. For example, Article 10 of the Law forbids employers to demand documents not stipulated by labour legislation from jobseekers, but does not bar a possibility of asking questions about their family status, availability of children, etc. It would be worthwhile to recommend introducing an amendment forbidding employers to demand from jobseekers not only documents, but any information outside of their occupational and qualification characteristics, i.e. information on their personal life, plans concerning the birth of children, etc. A similar wording is used in the law passed in the Kyrgyz Republic.
3. Reconsideration of the procedure established in the Republic, whereby employers have to pay sick-leave benefits, would strengthen the position of young women in the world of work. The current system creates additional economic incentives for employers to give preference to workers with sufficiently fewer risks of being absent from work for justified reasons (taking care of a sick child or relative), i.e. to men to the detriment of women. The first move in this direction was already made when the State assumed responsibility for paying maternity and childcare leave benefits.
4. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, a considerable number of young women employed in the public service and major corporations face an acute problem of double workload forcing them to choose

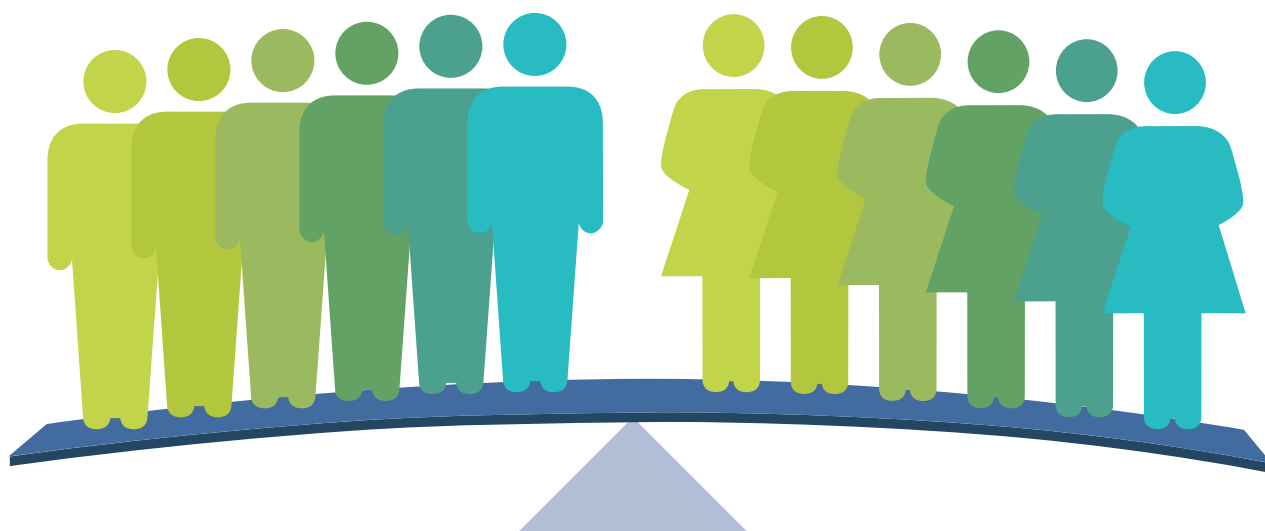


between a full-fledged career, on the one hand, and a family, personal life and self-development, on the other hand. It might be recommended that the National Commission and social partners analyse the situation and look for possibilities of normalizing intensity of work both in public institutions where a considerable share of young women are employed, and in major corporations claiming the status of being socially responsible. This initiative is in keeping with the strategy of strengthening the institution of the family and supporting motherhood proclaimed by the country's President. Optimizing the work-rest schedule in the public sector would possibly encourage corporations to come out with similar initiatives.

5. Today, the Republic of Kazakhstan has one of the best national statistical databases, including labour statistics, in the CIS. Most key indicators are published with breakdown by sex and age cohorts. However, the standard employment rate indicator applied in international comparisons (share of employed population in overall population of the relevant age cohort) is not available. Instead of it, there is the inverse indicator of the unemployment rate, i.e. the employment rate is calculated as a share of employed persons in the economically active population of the relevant age group, and not in overall population. It is recommended that the employment statistics with breakdown by sex and age be brought into compliance with international standards.
6. Many experts point out that abundance of lending facilities for women's entrepreneurship goes along with their low effectiveness. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to undertake a monitoring exercise to assess the effectiveness of such programmes and find out why they are not successful. Possibly, schemes supporting women's entrepreneurship should be reconsidered.
7. The Republic of Kazakhstan has accumulated rich experience of implementing public programmes and supporting initiatives on promoting gender equality and employment and improving competitiveness of vulnerable population groups in the labour market (including those implemented as a follow-up to international projects). This experience can be replicated in the CIS countries. The following measures deserve attention:
 - special public programmes for rural women, participation in which gives them an opportunity to attend free skills development and vocational training and retraining courses, along with financial assistance; such programmes are follow-up to pilot projects financed by international organizations;
 - a network of special courses on gender education arranged by the National Commission, jointly with the Public Administration Academy under the President, for officials of public institutions, including the militia, the Office of Public Prosecutor, and the mass media (based on the experience of workshops on gender issues arranged by international organizations);
 - the "weak link" scheme, under which international organizations find out a region with the most unfavourable situation and move the main focus of their programmes there. Later, the scheme serves as a pattern for identifying territorial priorities of State support;
 - mechanisms of the public-private partnership, within the framework of which employers take an active part in public programmes, including those aimed at empowering women and improving their competitiveness;
 - experience in overcoming legal illiteracy of youth, teaching the fundamentals of labour law to secondary school students and involving corporations in educating people in the fundamentals of legal culture and gender equality;
 - plans of integrating the database of the Ministry of Education and Science with the database of the State Pension Payments Centre. A comparison of university and college reports on the job placement of their graduates with the information on pension payments will provide a more objective picture of the actual employment of graduates (it is assumed that a young person is officially employed if he/she pays contributions to the pension fund).



Section 4. OVERVIEW OF THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



TRENDS AND CHALLENGES



CONTENTS – SECTION 4

Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation.	128
Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth	132
Chapter 3. Demographic context of emergence of gender challenges in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth	134
Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education	136
Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment	142
Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls	154
Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment	165
Conclusions	170
Recommendations	173



Gender challenges of youth employment in the Kyrgyz Republic are emerging, on the one hand, in conditions of extreme labour market tensions, widespread informal employment and a high extent of segregation and, on the other hand, in a very specific national gender-related situation when the legally established idea of gender-equal rights and opportunities goes hand in hand with a widespread traditional division of gender roles and women's high vocational education attainment levels and employment rates.

- The information base of the study includes:
 - International treaties and conventions;
 - National regulations of the Kyrgyz Republic on labour relations and gender equality;
 - Data of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS;
 - Interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Public Employment Service, the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Federation of Manufacturing Employers "Guild of Directors", representatives of the Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan, the Agency for Vocational Education of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Youth Labour Exchange as well as interviews with an independent expert on gender issues, employers, lecturers of tertiary vocational education institutions and Vocational Lyceum No. 10, and students of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after B.N. Yeltsin;
 - Data of a mini-survey of students of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University named after B.N. Yeltsin and Vocational Lyceum No. 10 in Bishkek (31 persons).



Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation

1.1. Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic

The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (July 27, 2010) lays the groundwork for gender equality and development of anti-discrimination legislation.

Article 16, paragraph 2, reads that no one may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, age and other circumstances. Paragraph 4 reads that men and women enjoy equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities to exercise them.

Article 31, paragraph 4, bans the propaganda of gender or any other social superiority calling for discrimination, hostility and violence.

Article 45 establishes everyone's right to education.

Article 6 defines that the international treaties the Kyrgyz Republic is a party to, that have become effective as specified by law as well as the universally recognized international legal standards are components of the country's legal system. The standards of the international human rights treaties are self-executing and prevail over other international treaty standards.

1.2. International legal acts regulating gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour issues incorporated into national legislation

The Kyrgyz Republic is a party to many international conventions and agreements dealing with preventing and eliminating discrimination. Besides that, the Kyrgyz Republic has ratified a number of ILO conventions concerning maternity protection and gender issues at work: the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value, 1951 (No. 100), the Convention concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958 (No. 111), the Convention concerning the Employment of Women on Underground Work in Mines of All Kinds, 1935 (No. 45), the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103) and the Convention concerning the Establishment of an International System for the Maintenance of Rights in Social Security, 1982 (No. 157) as well as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1953), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), and a number of others.

1.3. National legal acts regulating gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour issues

To date, the Kyrgyz Republic has succeeded in developing national legislation on gender equality containing both specialized and general laws that include provisions on gender equality and protection from discrimination in various areas of life.





Specialized laws include primarily the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, 2008 (No. 184), the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Social and Legal Protection from Domestic Violence, 2003 (No. 62), and the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Reproductive Rights of Citizens and Guarantees of Their Implementation, 2015, (No. 147).

The Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women introduces the notions of gender, gender discrimination (direct and indirect), gender policy, gender equality, gender equity, gender stereotypes, gender analysis, domestic work and equal opportunities.

Article 5 of the Law bans direct and indirect gender discrimination in any area of activity. The article outlines the situations regarded as direct and indirect gender discrimination and states that persons practicing discrimination are liable in conformity with the country's legislation. Articles 12 to 17 stipulate for gender equality in economic and social relations and proclaim equal access to all forms of ownership and land tenure, entrepreneurship, establishment of organizations, management of enterprises, social services and social protection.

Gender equality in labour relations is anchored in Article 4 of the Law. Article 18 stipulates for a free choice of occupation and states that employers, regardless of the form of ownership, must take measures to provide equal working conditions for persons of both sexes. At the same time, they may take positive actions aimed at achieving a balance of women and men (does not apply to employers operating without waged workers and to legal entities with less than 10 employees). The article also bans advertisements offering jobs to representatives of only one sex (with the exception of specific work that can only be done by persons of a specific sex).

The Law forbids to demand information of a personal nature and information on plans concerning the birth of children from jobseekers.

The Law obliges employers to provide men and women with opportunities of combining work with family responsibilities.

Article 19 introduces the principle of pay equity. Lower wages or worse working conditions on grounds of sex are considered as a manifestation of gender discrimination.

Article 20 stipulates for guarantees in case of dismissal (staff cuts, including during enterprise reorganization, should be carried out with the observance of equal shares of dismissed persons of each sex).

Article 21 is aimed at preventing and curbing gender-based harassment at work and introducing liability for gender discrimination. The article stipulates for compensating moral and material damage to a worker in case of a proven (in a court of law) fact of gender discrimination. It reads that the court may prescribe an employer to recruit a person who was denied a job as a result of gender discrimination and reinstate the person dismissed as a result of gender discrimination.

Chapter 6 of the Law deals with guarantees of its application. It defines procedures for submitting an application in the event of violation of gender equality, appealing against illegal action, and implementing law enforcement supervision and monitoring. It defines possible consequences of failure to observe the law and states that officials will be liable for its abuse in conformity with the country's legislation.

The main general law regulating gender equality at work is the **Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic (No. 106, 2004)**.



It bans discrimination at work (Article 9). The article reads that everyone has equal opportunities for exercising one's labour rights and freedoms, and no one may be restricted in one's labour rights and freedoms or be entitled to any preferences in their implementation on grounds of sex, age and other circumstances not associated with a worker's occupational qualities and results of his/her work. The article bans unequal pay for equal work and specifies that the establishment of differences, exceptions, preferences and restrictions arising from the requirements typical of a certain job and stipulated by law or explained by the State's special concern for the persons in extra need of social and legal protection may not be regarded as discrimination. As for persons considering that they were discriminated against, the article stipulates for an opportunity of going to court with an application on reinstatement in the rights abused, and compensation of material and moral damage.

Chapter 24 of the Labour Code deals with peculiarities of regulation of the work of women and other persons with family responsibilities. As labour legislation of many post-Soviet countries, it stipulates for privileges for certain categories of workers falling into special risk groups and sets out special working conditions for women protecting their reproductive health. Importantly, many privileges associated with the need to perform family responsibilities are intended not only for women but also for all persons with family and childcare responsibilities.

Article 303 bans employing women to perform heavy work and work under harmful and hazardous conditions and underground work, with the exception of work in sanitary and welfare facilities, as well as work connected with lifting and moving heavy objects exceeding the maximum norms permissible for them.

Article 304 sets limits on the ability of employers to send women with children under three and a number of other workers with special family responsibilities on business trips or to involve them in overtime work, work at night, or work on days off and holidays.

Articles 306 to 309 regulate the work of pregnant women (setting out rules of their transfer to jobs with unfavourable working conditions, duration of maternity leave, and leave for workers who have adopted children, and breastfeeding breaks).

According to the **Provisions on the Procedure of Assignment and Payment of Temporary Disability and Maternity Benefits and Their Amounts (Decision No. 727 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of November 11, 2011)**, funds for paying temporary disability benefits for all the working days missed and maternity benefits for the first 10 working days are provided by employers, sole proprietorships and peasant farms (starting from the eleventh day, maternity benefits are paid out of the State budget).

The maternity benefit for all working days is fully paid by employers, and the amount of the benefit paid starting from the eleventh working day is compensated to them out of the State budget after submission of the relevant report to authorized public social development bodies.

Article 310 bans termination of labour contracts with pregnant women (except in the event of liquidation of an organization and expiration of the labour contract), women with children under three, single mothers with children under 14 (or children with disabilities under 18), and other persons raising the said children without a mother.





Article 137 defines the rules of granting childcare leave until the child reaches the age of three, which may be used by the child's father, another relative or the guardian taking care of the child.

Articles 139 to 143 stipulate for privileges and guarantees for workers combining work with studies, in the form of a system of leave with a duration and periodicity depending on many factors, primarily on the level of the education being acquired.

As in the case of privileges and guarantees intended for women and workers with family responsibilities, privileges and guarantees for workers who combine work with studies should be granted by employers at their own expense.

The main legal act regulating the situation of men and women in education in the Kyrgyz Republic is the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Education, 2003 (No. 92). Article 3 of the Law reads that citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic enjoy the right to education regardless of sex, ethnicity, language and other circumstances. The other articles of the law are formulated in a gender-neutral manner.

Gender equality in the family is proclaimed by the Family Code of the Kyrgyz Republic (No. 201, 2003). Article 3, entitled: "Gender Equality in Family Relations" bans gender discrimination in family relations and reads that men and women enjoy equal personal and property rights and duties in family relations, gender equality in family relations is protected by society and the State, and relations between family members and persons living with them are based on the principles of gender equality as well as respect for personal honour and dignity.

It is important for the further improvement of national legislation on gender equality that the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Regulatory Legal Acts (No. 241) became effective as of July 20, 2009. Article 20 of the Law prescribes a compulsory gender assessment of draft regulatory acts on issues concerning promotion of people's constitutional rights, freedoms and duties, legal status of public associations and mass media, the State budget, the taxation system, environmental safety, struggle against law offences, and introduction of new types of state regulation of entrepreneurship.

In general, gender legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic complies with international requirements to such legislation. Its main shortcoming is insufficient elaboration and adjustment of implementation mechanisms and lack of clearly formulated responsibility for many gender-related offences, which makes its practical application more difficult.



Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth

2.1. Stereotypes concerning the distribution of gender roles

Gender-based division of labour and gender stereotypes concerning the distribution of gender roles remain rather traditional in the Kyrgyz Republic. This is primarily manifested in the way men and women distribute their time, different duration of their working hours, the amount of time they spend on subsistence farming and care for their near ones as well as gender differences in the time spent on paid and unpaid work and leisure.

The findings of the sample household survey undertaken by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic⁸⁹ have shown that men, on average, spend more time on paid work than women do (the duration of a man's average working day is seven hours, while that of women workers is about five hours and 15 minutes). This correlation between the duration of paid employment is one of the pillars supporting the stereotype that men are the main breadwinners in the family.

At the same time, women generally spend more time on doing unpaid domestic work, childcare and care for elderly household members (on average, they spend four hours and 30 minutes a day on it, while men spend a little more than an hour).

A comparative analysis of the duration of men's and women's total working time (the time spent on work plus the time spent on household responsibilities) has shown that the total workload of women is greater both in urban and rural areas. As a result, women's leisure time is almost an hour shorter than that of men.

Interviews with young persons in the city of Bishkek have shown that youth in the Kyrgyz Republic generally share the typical gender stereotypes. It should be admitted, however, that youths were more conservative in their answers than girls were. The latter were more inclined to egalitarian family relations, but there were several supporters of an extremely patriarchal division of family responsibilities among them.

When answering the question "if both husband and wife work, how should they divide their responsibilities, in your opinion?" the overwhelming majority of youths replied that "the husband must earn a living, while the wife must take care of the family" (more often) and "the husband must do men's work, and the wife – women's work" (less often). Only half of the girls were of the same opinion. They preferred equal distribution of family responsibilities more often than youths and replied either "all domestic responsibilities should be equally divided" or "the one who is less occupied on the job must do most of the housework."

Not a single youth chose the extreme options of division of responsibilities between the working couple: "the husband must do most of the housework" and "the wife must do most of the housework". As for girls, not a single one of them considered it possible to dump all housework on to the husband, but several girls were ready to do it all themselves.

Opinions of young people concerning the role of occupational employment in the life of women were also rather patriarchal. Youths assumed the role of guardians of traditions more often. When asked "what do you think of the widespread opinion that a woman must devote herself to the family?", practically half of them chose an answer more or less reflecting the traditional division of roles in the family ("absolutely so", "true, but it is impossible today", or "it is better if a woman works part-time"). The other youths proved to be supporters of equality: they chose the answers "each family must make its own choice" (more often) and "each woman must make her own choice" (less often).

⁸⁹ Findings of the sample time-use survey, Part I, Bishkek, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2015.





However, it was different with girls. Their answers testify to the fact that, in their opinion, a woman's occupational life is an important part of her biography. First, none of the girls believe that "a woman must devote herself to the family" (which was the most popular answer among youths), but none of them thinks that this statement is entirely wrong. Girls support the idea of gender equality and favour the possibility of making a choice. They think more often that "a woman must make her own choice" and less often "True, but it is impossible today", "each family must make its own choice", and "it is better if a woman works part-time".

Interviews with experts have shown that in real life the declared sympathy for the traditional gender roles goes hand in hand with the egalitarian division of labour. Families where women are the main breadwinners and in which men, for different reasons, do domestic work are not so rare.

2.2. Gender stereotypes in employment and the labour market

Interviews have shown that most young people in the Kyrgyz Republic support gender stereotypes at work, and it is more typical of youths than of girls. Two thirds of the interviewed youths believed that work involving decision-making was suitable only for men, and only one third of them replied that such work was suitable for both men and women. The opinion of girls was fifty-fifty. Yet, none of them believed that such work was more suitable for women. Both youths and girls were of the opinion that paperwork was more suitable for women, although some of the girls believed that it suited both men and women. However, in the opinion of all youths and girls without exception, work requiring heavy physical efforts was suitable only for men.

As for the size of businesses more suitable for men or women, the opinions of youths and girls mostly coincided (the larger the business, the more it suited men, and the smaller the business, the more it suited women), although girls believed women must have broader opportunities.

Most youths and girls stressed that big business was the prerogative of men. Only a few girls and not a single youth replied that this type of activity was more suitable for women.

However, the option of being a contributing family worker was recognized as the area of activity suitable solely for women (that was the opinion of most of the girls and half of the youths). The others believed that this kind of employment suited both men and women. None of them thought that it was a purely "male" occupation to be a contributing family worker.

Employers' notions concerning potentialities of men and women workers are also extremely traditional and mostly similar to the stereotypes expressed by young people.

In the opinion of the interviewed employers, almost all occupations are divided into "male" and "female". Occupations and jobs suitable for youths are primarily "technical" ones, including those connected with programming, occupations and jobs involving heavy physical efforts and those better paid. Occupations and jobs more suitable for girls are those that involve dealing with people, requiring good looks and those less paid. Girls are considered more responsible, while youths are more willingly hired for positions with prospects of further occupational development.

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"Girls are good as operators: they are multifunctional and sociable, while youths are more inclined to technical occupations and are hired for such positions. Besides, youths will not accept wages that are accepted by girls. Even if we hired youths for positions suitable for girls, they did their work with a "technical bias", or we added some other functions to them, and their wages were different."

(From an interview with the head of a human resources unit)

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“In rural areas where strong hands are needed, they asked us to send men and youths.
Men are also needed in construction.”

(From an interview with an expert of the Youth Labour Exchange)

• • •

“Well, if I need a man for a certain job and a woman for another one, so what of it?”

(From an interview with an employer)

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“It is preferable to hire a youth, because he may have a car and can drive.”

(From an interview with an employer)

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Chapter 3. Demographic context of emergence of gender challenges in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth

3.1. Dynamics of the youth population and its share in the population

According to its demographic characteristics, the Kyrgyz Republic belongs to the few CIS countries with an increasing population. It has a high share of youth in its overall population, which tends to increase due to a high birth rate. According to the National Statistical Committee, in 2010–2014 alone, the country's population grew from 5.42 to 5.78 million (by 6.6 per cent), while the youth population increased from 1.75 to 1.90 million (by 8.6 per cent). As a result, the share of youth in the overall population was up from 32.3 to 32.9 per cent.

The Kyrgyz Republic is a country with a predominantly rural population, the share of which is increasing (in 2010, rural residents accounted for 65.9 per cent of the population, while in 2014 – for 66.3 per cent). Besides that, the rural population is younger than the urban population. In 2014, the share of youth in the rural population was considerably higher than its share in the urban population (34.5 and 29.9 per cent respectively), and the share of rural youth accounted for 69.5 per cent of the total youth population in the country.

As for the gender composition of youth, the boys-to-girls ratio at birth corresponds to the demographic norm (in 2014, there were 1,051 boys 0–4 years old per 1,000 girls of the same age). With age, the correlation of sexes is gradually evening out, yet the youth population exceeds slightly that of girls up to the upper age limit of youth (29 years).

Considering that girls' opportunities of acquiring an education and getting placed depend on their marital status and availability of children to a greater extent than those of youths, an analysis of such indicators as the average age for marriage and the age of childbirth is required.





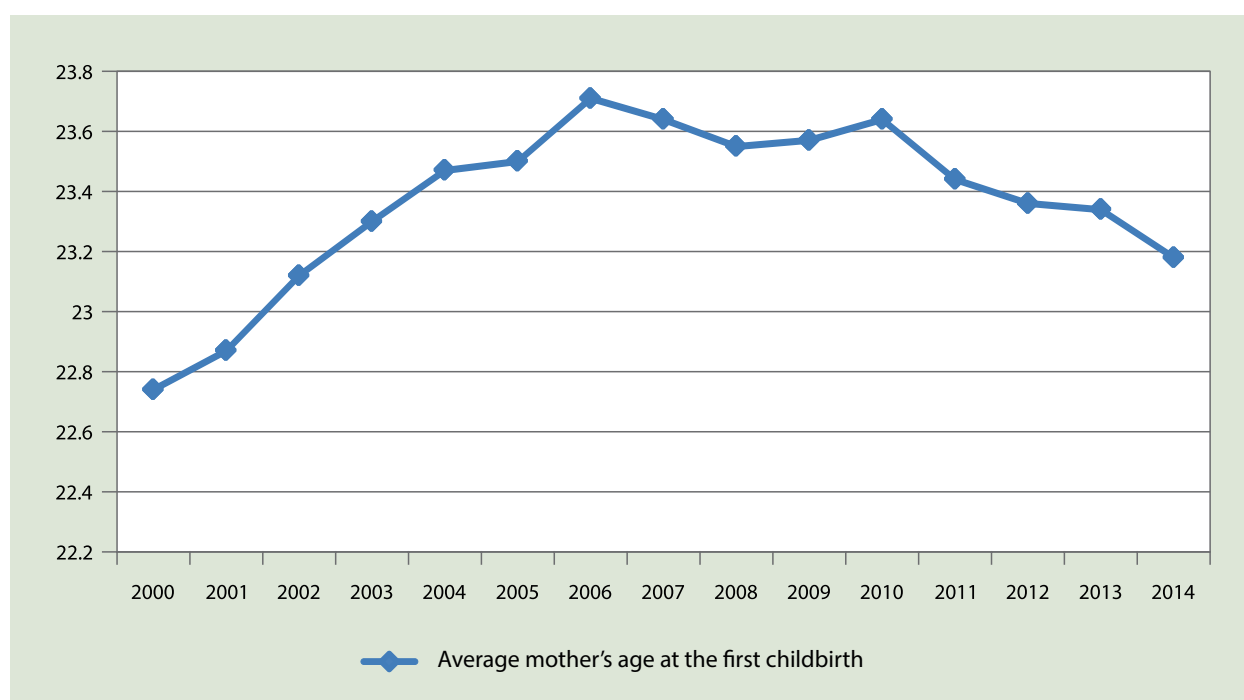
3.2. Dynamics of marriage age

In general, matrimonial customs in the present-day Kyrgyz Republic are not conducive to high educational attainment levels of girls and their career, since the age of the first marriage for women has been stable and rather low, varying between 23.4 and 23.5 for many years. Moreover, in recent years an increasing number of experts have been raising the alarm in connection with prevalence of early marriages, including marriages of underage girls. The issue is more typical of rural areas.

3.3. Dynamics of the age of childbirth

Accordingly, motherhood in the contemporary Kyrgyz society is rather young. The national statistical data show that the average mother's age at the first childbirth that increased considerably in the late 1990s (according to state statistics, from 21.9 years in 1994-1996 to 22.7 years in 2000), has remained at a relatively low level (23.3–23.6 years) in the last few years while demonstrating a slight downward trend.

Diagram 4.1. Average mother's age at the first childbirth (years)



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

**Table 4.1.** Average mother's age at the first childbirth

	2009	2011	2013	2014
Kyrgyz Republic	23.57	23.44	23.34	23.18

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

A steady rise in the birth rate among girls 15 to 19 years old has an unequivocally negative impact on their opportunities to acquire an education and get a decent job. For example, in 2009 there were 5.2 births per 1,000 girls 15–17 years old, whereas in 2013 – as many as 7.9 births, and among girls 18–19 years old the corresponding figures were 68.6 and 88.8 births.

Considering the demographic situation in the country, rural residents may be viewed as the main beneficiaries of the project.

Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education

4.1. Gender composition of students in general secondary schools

Statistical data testify to the fact that today youths and girls in the Kyrgyz Republic follow different strategies of acquiring general and vocational education and achieve different attainment levels.

Only in the first two levels of general schooling (compulsory and free of charge to all citizens) – the primary and the basic ones – the shares of boys and girls actually coincide with their shares in the relevant age cohorts of the country's population. This is true of both the rural and urban population, which testifies to absence of gender discrimination in access to these levels of general secondary education (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Share of girls among students who completed different levels of general schooling in urban and rural areas (at the beginning of the academic years, %)

Share of girls who completed		
Primary schooling	Complete basic schooling	Secondary schooling
Total		
48.3	48.6	52.8
Urban areas		
49.4	49.6	55.0
Rural areas		
47.8	48.2	52.0

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>..



However, at the third level (upper secondary school) the situation is different. Since this level is not a compulsory one, some children drop out of school (some of them – for acquiring vocational education, while others – for entering the labour market). In 2013, the number of upper secondary school graduates accounted for only 57.3 per cent of graduates of basic secondary schools (urban children leave school after completing the compulsory level more often than rural children do, which is possibly explained by a wide choice of vocational education institutions and a livelier labour market in urban areas). Boys leave school upon completing the compulsory level more often than girls do. As a result, the latter constitute a majority in senior grades. In 2013, their share in the country constituted 52.8 per cent.

4.2. Gender composition of students in the vocational education system

The vocational education system in the Kyrgyz Republic is rather extensive, but the increasing range of its services requires payment. In 2011–2012, the share of students at secondary vocational education institutions paying for their tuition increased two-fold (From 41.7 to 81.1 per cent). Tertiary vocational education institutions displayed slower growth rates (From 81.9 to 85.6 per cent) for the sole reason that faster growth took place in the 1990s, and today practically all students pay for their tuition.

Table 4.3. Share of students at secondary vocational and tertiary educational institutions paying for their tuition (at the beginning of the academic year, % of total number)

	Secondary vocational education institutions			Tertiary educational institutions		
	Share of students paying for their tuition, total	Of this number at		Share of students paying for their tuition, total	Of this number at	
		Public	Private		Public	Private
2000/01	41.7	39.8	2.0	81.9	74.3	7.6
2005/06	61.4	58.8	2.6	87.9	80.4	7.5
2012/13	81.1	67.9	13.2	85.6	73.8	11.9

Source: *Youth in the Commonwealth of Independent States: Statistical Portrait*. Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, UNFPA, Moscow, 2014, p. 108.

Despite the actual lack of government-financed places at vocational schools, their services remain in demand by the population. At the same time, the low quality of the present-day education in the country is the main problem of the overwhelming majority of educational institutions of all levels.

Each level of vocational education has a considerable gender asymmetry. Primary vocational institutions (the smallest and a shrinking segment of vocational education) training mostly blue-collar workers are characterized by the greatest gender imbalance among students: over two thirds of them are youths, and their share is constantly increasing.

**Table 4.4.** Number of students at vocational education institutions (at the beginning of the academic year, persons)

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Number of students at primary vocational education institutions, of this number:					
Girls	9,203	9,025	9,584	9,191	8,378
Youths	22,022	22,007	21,457	20,202	20,137
Number of students at secondary vocational education institutions, of this number:					
Girls	37,417	41,831	48,533	52,899	52,260
Youths	26,870	30,492	34,807	38,724	40,290
Number of students at tertiary vocational education institutions, of this number:					
Women	123,769	129,229	126,213	121,261	117,353
Men	106,610	109,979	105,349	101,980	97,057

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

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“When a girl comes from a village, she starts studying. We have a lot of vocational schools where seamstresses are trained, so there are no problems with training. Tuition is both paid and free of charge. However, free tuition is provided under special programmes. For example, there is a special programme for children from dysfunctional families. Employers never pay for such training. They pay if a girl has been hired as an apprentice. However, they pay little. Girls study for only one or two months. At first, they learn simple operations, and then – more complicated ones. Their wages are small at first and are raised later.”

(From an interview with a trade union leader)

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“We train and retrain people in different occupations depending on labour market needs. We conduct special studies. Training is free of charge, and we even pay a stipend of 250 soms. People are put on a waiting list for training. In other places, training costs 3,000-4,000 soms.”

(From an interview with an employee of the Public Employment Service)

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The secondary vocational education system is more extensive than the lower level and is characterized by an obvious trend towards expanding. In 2010–2015 alone, the number of students was up by 44 per cent. This level of education is the most feminized one in the entire vocational education system. Over the last five years, the share of girls among students varied between 57.7 per cent (in the 2013/14 academic year) and 58.2 per cent (in 2010/11, 2012/13, and 2014/15).



“At present, employers do not place orders with educational institutions concerning the skills they need. Educational institutions receive funds from the ministry and train students in those occupations that are easier for them to train. It is all the same to them where their graduates will be placed. At present, educational institutions do not produce professionals; they produce graduates ‘for the market’. And there is one more thing. Previously, one of the children in a family used to acquire tertiary education, whereas the others acquired blue-collar skills. In the past, we used to have one or two universities in the country, while now all educational institutions are universities, and everyone wants tertiary education.

Where will they all work?”

(From an interview with an employer)

The tertiary education system accounts for practically two thirds (!) (64 per cent) of all vocational students in the country. True, the last few years have witnessed a gradual reduction in the number of its students (in 2010-2015, the number of students decreased by almost 7 per cent). Considering the low quality of educational services, their obvious bias towards tertiary education and the critical state of the country's economy incapable of absorbing the huge number of trained (poorly trained) youth effectively, this trend may be considered as positive for the current phase in the country's development.

“It is stuck in the parents' mentality that their child must acquire tertiary education. Even our employees who know the actual situation also wish their children to have one. In our country, tuition at universities is often expensive. Yet parents pay for it all the same. Everyone says, ‘There is no money’. However, they find the money for their children's tertiary education. People generally understand that there are too many people with tertiary education now, yet they want their children to acquire one.”

(From an interview with an employee of the Agency for Vocational Education)

As in many post-Soviet countries, the tertiary education system in the Kyrgyz Republic is rather feminized. The share of girls among students exceeds the share of youths varying between 53.7 and 54.5 per cent in the last few years.

Table 4.5. Share of girls among students of vocational education institutions (at the beginning of the academic year, %)

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Share of girls among students of primary vocational education institutions				
29.5	29.1	30.9	31.3	29.5
Share of girls among students of secondary vocational education institutions				
58.2	57.8	58.2	57.7	58.2
Share of girls among students of tertiary vocational education institutions				
53.7	54.0	54.5	54.3	53.7

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.



Gender asymmetry in the distribution of students between the levels of general and vocational education has long since existed in the Kyrgyz Republic, which is proved by higher educational attainment levels of women in career employment. According to the data of the Integrated Household Budget and Workforce Survey (2013), today only 15 out of 100 employed men have tertiary education (against 23 women), and 59 men have general secondary education (against 51 women).

However, the current asymmetry in vocational education is so great that the gender gap in educational attainment levels will only be increasing in the next few years. Although the share of occupationally employed young men aged 24–29 with tertiary and quaternary education is higher than among men over 15 years of age (20.6 and 15.1 per cent respectively), this indicator is much lower than that for women (37.2 and 23.3 per cent respectively).

Table 4.6. Structure of employed men and women over 15 by age cohorts and educational attainment, 2013 (data of the Integrated Household Budget and Workforce Survey, %)

	Total	Of this number, with						
		Tertiary	Income- plete tertiary	Secondary vocational	Primary vocational	General secondary	General basic	General primary/ no primary
Men								
Total	100	15.1	1.9	6.9	9.0	58.8	6.8	1.5
Of this number, years:								
15–19	100		1.1	1.2	2.1	51.3	36.7	7.6
20–24	100	7.2	5.9	4.5	8.7	64.9	7.1	1.7
25–29	100	20.6	2.8	3.3	4.0	62.6	5.3	1.4
Women								
Total	100	23.3	1.5	13.6	5.0	50.8	5.1	0.7
Of this number, years:								
15–19	100			0.7	1.6	57.4	34.1	6.2
20–24	100	12.3	4.1	11.5	3.1	62.6	5.8	0.6
25–29	100	37.2	1.9	6.4	3.5	46.1	4.9	

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.





4.3. Gender segregation by areas of training and occupations

Another gender challenge in education is a high extent of students' segregation by occupations and areas of training. Girls choose a more limited range of skills and occupations than youths. For example, in the secondary vocational education system three quarters of all female students (75.6 per cent) are trained in only three occupational groups: education, health care, and economics and management. As for youths, they acquire secondary vocational education in a wider range of occupations: only 36.4 per cent of male students are trained in the two most popular occupations (humanities and social sciences, and economics and management). As a result, there are not so many feminized occupations at this educational level. Today, there are only three occupational groups where the share of girls exceeds 80 per cent: health care, education and consumer goods technology. At the same time, the range of occupations youths are predominantly trained in (where their share exceeds 80 per cent) is much broader (mining, energy, electrical engineering, transport, construction and architecture, geodesy and cartography, and instrument making).

The situation in tertiary education is somewhat different, although the concentration of students in certain occupations is rather high there as well: 67.3 per cent of all girls are trained in three occupational groups (humanities, education, and business and management), and 51.5 per cent of youths are also trained in three groups of somewhat different occupations (humanities, business and management, and law). Therefore, prevalence of predominantly "female" or "male" occupations is somewhat lower. The former include education, journalism and information, and the latter include physical occupations and transport.

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"Today, young people are not good at choosing their occupations. After school, they go to universities and are trained in economics and law. After graduation, almost all of them come to us, and we retrain them in blue-collar occupations. There is no vocational guidance now. We are only starting to restore this system. There is vocational guidance at schools, but only in the form of information, and it is very fragmentary. We need a legal framework for this kind of work, and descriptions of occupations need to be prepared."

(From an interview with the head of the Employment Policy Department, Ministry of Labour)

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Thus, the main advantage of girls in the labour market is their high educational attainment, but in a limited range of occupations, where an excessive number of specialists is trained. As for youths, with their lower educational attainment, their competitive advantage is a wider range of occupations.



Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment

5.1. Economic activity of youths and girls

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the economic activity of the population is rather low, and this primarily concerns women. In 2014, women's labour force participation constituted only 50.4 per cent. It is the lowest indicator among the countries that participated in the present study, and one of the lowest indicators in all the post-Soviet states. Labour force participation of Kyrgyz men is 1.5 times higher – 75 per cent (of all the countries who participated in the study, a higher indicator is only in Kazakhstan). Such a big gender gap in labour force participation is generally typical of countries where the traditional division of gender roles is widespread.

The recent years have witnessed a steady trend towards a gradual reduction in labour force participation of Kyrgyz women, which is very low without that. In 2009–2014 alone, it dropped from 53.1 to 50.4 per cent (by 2.7 percentage points). The trend is also observed among men, but it is less pronounced (during the same period, their labour force participation decreased by only 1.3 percentage points from 76.3 to 75.0 per cent).

Table 4.7. Labour force participation of the population above 15, by age, place of residence and sex, %

	Total	Of this number, years of age						
		15–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–69	70 +
Men								
2009	76.3	38.0	84.8	94.5	94.9	85.8	44.6	11.5
2014	75.0	32.4	81.6	95.7	93.1	82.2	39.6	9.9
Women								
2009	53.1	23.2	56.4	68.6	79.0	60.5	19.2	5.5
2014	50.4	19.3	52.0	68.1	73.5	56.8	17.4	4.7

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

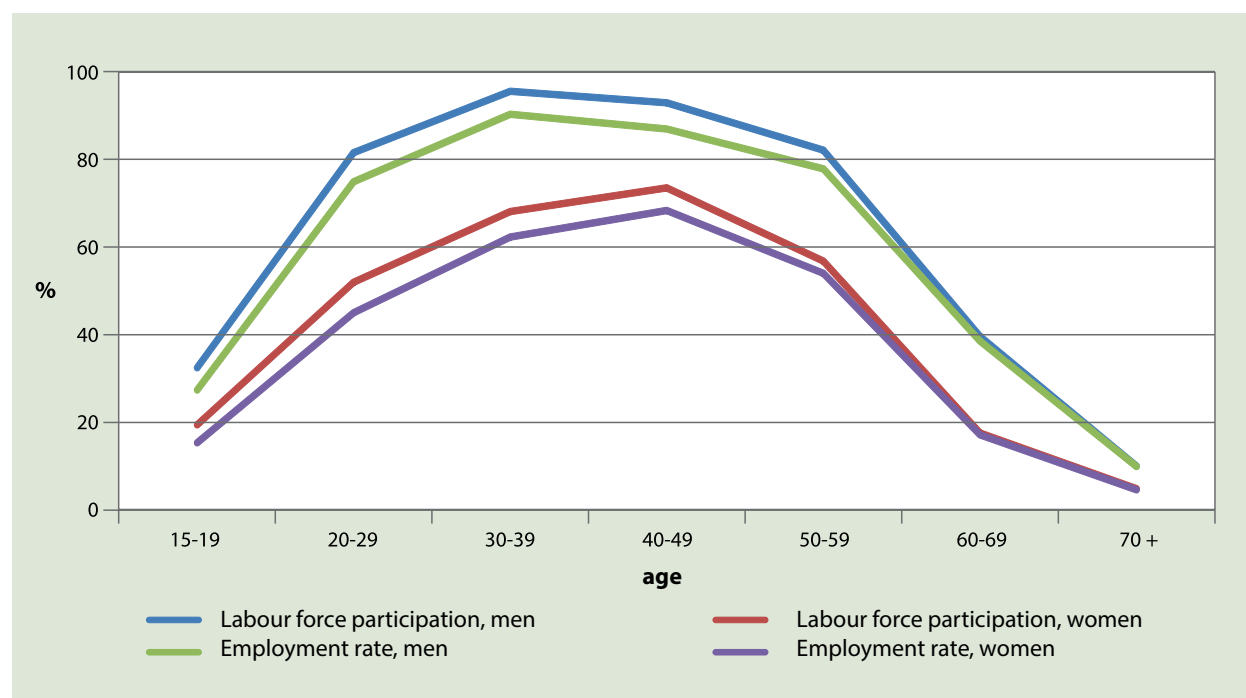
The economic activity of youth is rather high in the country, with its share in the economically active population constituting 35.9 per cent in 2014, but their activity is also decreasing. Besides, it is considerably differentiated by both sex and age. In the younger youth cohort (15–19 years old), labour force participation of youth was 32.4 per cent (in 2009, it was 5.6 percentage points higher), and that of girls was 19.3 per cent (3.9 percentage points higher in 2009). Thus, the gender gap in the labour force participation of youth of this age cohort constitutes 13.1 percentage points.





Labour force participation of youth aged 20–29 is several times higher than in the younger age cohorts, and the gender gap is also bigger. In 2014, labour force participation of youths of this age was 81.4 per cent against 52 per cent for girls. Thus, the gender gap constituted 29.4 percentage points, and this is the biggest difference of all age cohorts. The difference is explained by the fact that it is namely at this age that women shoulder responsibilities for keeping the house and bringing up small children, which has a negative effect on their occupational employment opportunities.

Diagram 4.2. Age profile of labour force participation and employment of men and women, 2014, %



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

Labour force participation of youth varies across places of residence: it is higher among rural residents, both for youths and girls.

**Table 4.8.** Labour force participation of the population by age, place of residence and sex, 2014, %

	Total	Of this number, years											
		15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	70 +
Urban areas													
Men	74.7	20.2	67.9	92.5	95.9	96.6	95.8	89.4	84.5	79.4	51.7	27.6	10.0
Women	48.2	9.6	38.1	51.0	62.8	61.9	75.2	68.5	67.5	57.9	27.5	11.6	6.8
Rural areas													
Men	75.1	37.2	76.6	88.4	95.7	95.0	95.0	91.3	86.2	77.2	49.1	17.1	9.9
Women	51.7	23.3	53.0	60.4	69.9	73.7	74.7	74.2	63.9	38.5	16.4	10.7	3.4

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

The difference is especially substantial in the younger youth cohorts. In 2014, labour force participation of urban youths aged 15–19 was 20.2 per cent, while that of rural youths was 37.2 per cent (1.7-fold difference). The difference was still greater among girls: 9.6 per cent among urban resident and 23.3 per cent among rural residents.

Similar, but less pronounced trends were also observed among 20–24 year olds. Labour force participation of rural girls is higher than that of urban ones in this age cohort as well. Moreover, labour force participation of rural girls is higher than that of rural women in general (Table 4.8).

Labour force participation of the 25–29 age cohort, for both youths and girls and both in urban and rural areas, is close to the indicators typical of the adult population.

A considerable difference in the economic activity of rural and urban youth, especially its youngest age cohort, as well as gender differences, are largely explained by widespread participation of youth in family-run enterprises. Besides, the economic activity of rural and urban youth reflects the peculiarities of education of youths and girls in urban and rural areas. Urban youth more often than rural youth continue their education after graduating from the basic general school and acquire complete secondary or vocational education. This is confirmed by the data of time-use surveys, according to which urban youth spend 1.5 more time on studies and skills development as compared to their peers in rural areas.⁹⁰ Accordingly, claims of urban youth for jobs are more modest. They generally postpone their entrance into the labour market until the last years of their studies or graduation.

Gender differences in economic activity also depend on the strategies of youths and girls in acquiring general and vocational education. Differences in their strategies are illustrated by the duration of time allocated for studies by urban and rural youths and girls. In urban areas, youths spend on studies less time than girls do (an average of 53 and 68 minutes daily respectively). In rural areas, both youths and girls spend less time on studies than urban residents, but the gender correlation is the opposite: rural youths study more than girls do (an average of 49 and 43 minutes daily).⁹¹

⁹⁰ Findings of the sample time-use survey, part I, Bishkek, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2015, p. 46.

⁹¹ Findings of the sample time-use survey, part I, Bishkek, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2015, p. 46.



5.2. Youth employment, employment of youths and girls

In 2014, young people aged 15–19 accounted for 34.6 per cent of the employed population, and the share of youths among its male segment was considerably higher than the share of girls among all employed women (36.9 and 31.3 per cent respectively). In recent years, the shares of both of them in the employed population have been gradually decreasing (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. Employed population by age and sex

	Total, 000 persons	15–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60 and older	Share of youth aged 15–29, %
Men								
2009	1,292.2	98.0	394.2	325.1	278.3	156.4	40.1	38.1
2014	1,364.1	74.5	428.9	358.5	269.2	187.9	45.1	36.9
Women								
2009	924.2	55.8	249.1	231.0	238.6	125.6	24.2	33.0
2014	938.6	40.2	253.5	246.1	223.9	147.7	27.2	31.3

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

The employment rates of youth in the Kyrgyz Republic are relatively high, especially in the younger youth cohorts (the indicators for Kyrgyz youths and girls aged 15–19 are the highest among the countries participating in the present study), but they are decreasing with time, which is in keeping with the general trends.

Table 4.10. Population employment rates by age and sex

	Total, %	15–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–69	70 and older
Men								
2009	70.7	32.2	75.2	90.0	91.1	82.1	43.8	11.5
2014	69.7	27.3	74.9	90.4	87.0	77.9	38.5	9.8
Women								
2009	47.9	18.7	48.1	63.2	73.7	57.5	19.0	5.5
2014	45.6	15.3	44.9	62.3	68.4	54.0	17.1	4.5

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.



There are considerable gender differences in the values of this indicator. In 2014, the employment rate of youths aged 15–19 was 27.3 per cent, and that of girls of the same age was 15.3 per cent (a difference of 12 percentage points). At the same time, the employment rate of youths aged 20–29 was 74.5 per cent, and that of girls of the same age was only 44.9 (a difference of 30 percentage points).

Age profiles of women's economic activity and employment in the Kyrgyz Republic are characterized by one-peak diagrams, with the maximum indicators falling on the age of 40–49 years. This means that most of the occupationally active and employed women leave the labour market for a short period after the birth of a child and try to return to employment as soon as possible without postponing it "until their children grow up".

Informal employment is the least socially protected form of employment prone to the highest discrimination risks. Workers' rights are often abused there. The legally established social benefits are not provided; wages and employment duration are not guaranteed; labour contracts are absent; working conditions are often poor; workers are not entitled to old age pensions, etc. This form of employment does not guarantee protection of labour rights. It is unfavourable for workers of all age cohorts, both men and women, but it is especially dangerous for young women, because they need social protection and protection from discrimination more than others do due to childbirth.

The statistical definition of "informally employed persons" applies to persons who were employed at least in one of the production units in the informal economy during the period under review, regardless of their employment status and of the fact if that job was their regular or additional one. The criterion defining an informal production unit is absence of State registration as a legal entity.

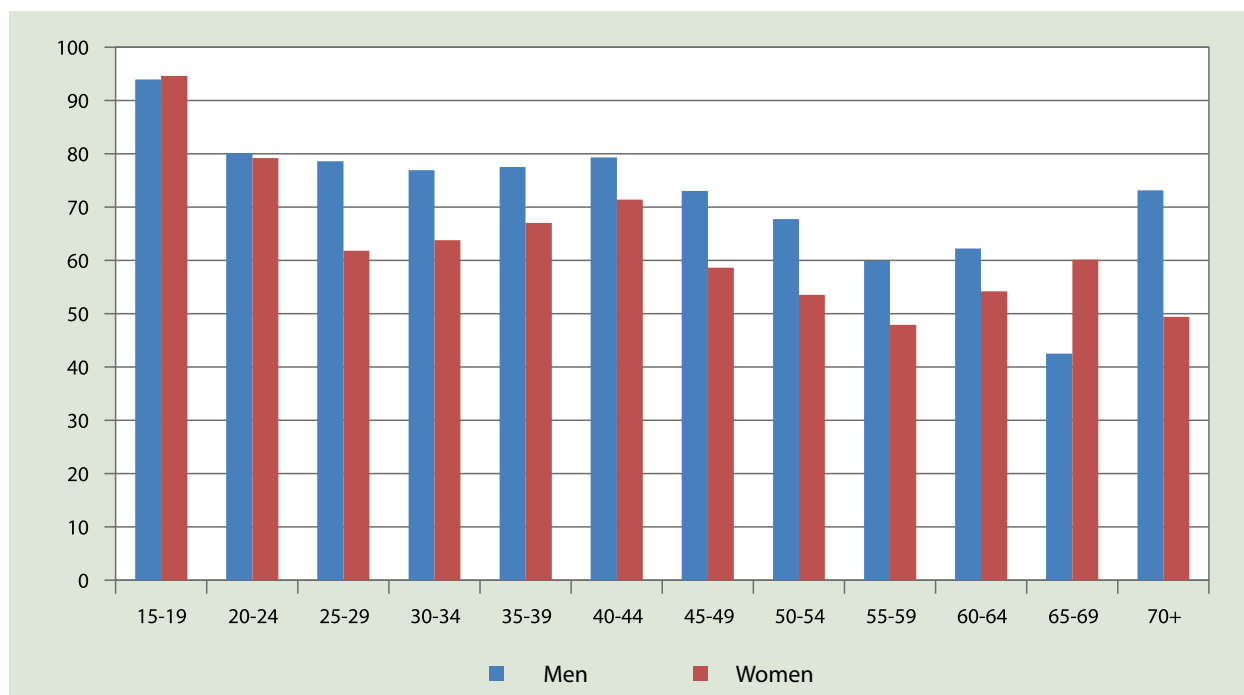
It should be taken into consideration that the notion of "employment in the informal economy" is narrower than the notion of "informal employment" because the latter also includes informal employment in the formal sector.

Since independence, the informal sector in the Kyrgyz economy has acquired huge dimensions. In 2014, it employed 1,653,000 persons – 72 per cent of the employed population. In the Kyrgyz Republic, employment in the informal economy is primarily the plight of rural residents and men. Besides, it is also a youth issue. Young people are employed in the informal economy more often than adult workers are. Young people constitute 36.4 per cent of the occupationally employed population, whereas their share among those employed in the informal economy is 37.8 per cent.





Diagram 4.3. Share of those employed in the informal economy in the total employed population by age and sex, 2014 (percentage of total employed population of the relevant age cohort)



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

“Formal employment is a rare thing. It is unprofitable to employers. They have to pay social contributions amounting to 30 per cent. Apart from paying taxes, employers must provide their workers with wages sufficiently high to retain them. Workers agree to receive the greater part of wages unofficially. They prefer this option rather than to pay taxes to the State. For example, a good accountant is worth 20,000, but I cannot pay taxes from 20,000. I pay from 5,000, and the rest is fully mine.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers' Association)

“Now sick leave is not formalized. Only stable large companies can afford it, and small companies cannot.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers' Association)

“We cannot legalize our business. If we pay all taxes, our products will cost more than Chinese-made goods. For the time being, our clothes sell well both here and abroad.”

(From an interview with an employer)

Representatives of the youngest age cohort, including rural residents, find themselves in the worst position. Persons 15–19 years old employed in the informal economy constitute the highest share of the employed persons of this age. The indicator for girls exceeds the one for youths (in 2014, 94.6 per cent of employed girls and 93.9 per cent of youths worked in the informal economy). These are the highest indicators among all age cohorts. In rural areas, the share of persons employed in the informal economy is even higher. It can be said that all young people aged 15-19 work informally (Table 4.11).



This is largely explained by the specificities of employment of rural residents. In rural areas, enterprises are mostly family-run and are not formalized as legal entities (consequently, all those employed in them are considered as informally employed), and all working-age family members, including the youngest ones, work there.

The situation with the employment of girls and youths 20–24 years old is somewhat better. However, in this age cohort the share of persons employed in the informal economy exceeds considerably the indicators in senior age groups (only younger age groups have worse indicators). Besides, the indicator of informal employment is gender-equal in this age cohort.

The situation in the senior age cohort (25–29 years) is entirely different. The share of workers of this age employed in the informal economy is considerably lower than among younger workers. Besides that, the values of this indicator acquire considerable gender differences. Although the share of youths of this age employed in the informal economy is lower than in the younger age cohorts, it is still higher than the average indicator for all employed men (which is true of both urban and rural areas). However, the situation is entirely different among girls. The share of girls 25–29 years old employed in the informal economy is considerably lower than that of youths of the same age (the gender gap is equal to 21.4 percentage points for urban residents and 15.2 percentage points for rural residents). Moreover, it is also lower than the indicator for women of all age cohorts (also true of both urban and rural areas) (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11. Share of those employed in the informal economy in the total employed population by age, place of residence and sex, 2014 (percentage of the total employed population of the relevant age cohort)

	Total	Of this number, years											
		15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	70+
Overall population													
Men	76.3	93.9	80.1	78.6	76.9	77.5	79.3	73.0	67.7	59.9	62.2	42.5	73.1
Women	65.2	94.6	79.2	61.8	63.8	67.0	71.4	58.6	53.5	47.9	54.2	60.1	49.4
Urban areas													
Men	61.9	82.5	65.7	65.1	61.0	63.4	72.4	62.0	54.9	40.6	37.8	12.9	33.0
Women	46.5	78.9	63.5	43.7	40.6	51.6	60.6	42.7	37.2	32.6	25.9	17.0	21.5
Rural areas													
Men	83.4	96.0	86.0	86.9	84.9	85.2	82.9	78.5	74.1	69.4	75.1	69.3	91.0
Women	75.6	96.9	85.9	71.7	76.7	75.0	78.6	67.9	62.7	63.6	83.0	94.6	85.0

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

The most probable explanations of a sharp decrease in the share of informally employed girls of this age may be, first, the fact that such girls, being in the intensive fertility age, make maximum efforts to find formal employment. Only this form of employment can give them a possibility of obtaining the legally established benefits due them in case of pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, etc. Second, some young women of this age working in the informal economy often leave the world of work because of childbirth and join the category of the economically inactive population.





5.3. Gender pay gap

At present, the gender pay gap as calculated for the economy at large is not big. In 2014, it was equal to 24.5 percentage points. According to the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, of all the countries participating in the study only the Russian Federation has a smaller wage gap.⁹² As in many countries of the world, the gap in men's and women's wages is gradually decreasing in the Kyrgyz Republic, but its dynamics cannot be described as steady.

However, information on the gender pay gap in the Kyrgyz Republic should be treated with some caution, and its interpretation should be limited. According to the National Statistical Committee, these data reflect the situation with wages only in the formal employment sector (but not the whole of it because there are "grey" sectors there), and the formal sector accounts for the smaller part of the country's economy.

The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic publishes the *data on average wages* obtained through sample surveys of organizations (with the exception of small enterprises), and the surveys are conducted every other year. The survey covers organizations operating in most areas of economic activity.

Diagram 4.4. Dynamics of the female-to-male wage ratio, %



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

⁹² Population, employment and living conditions in the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2014, Moscow, Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, 2015, p. 194.



The most important factor of existence of the gender pay gap is undoubtedly segregation, both horizontal (by types of economic activity and occupations) and vertical.

In the formal sector, the gender pay gap is present in all types of economic activity. In 2013, the biggest wage gap was in transport and communications where women's average wages constituted only 68.5 per cent of men's wages. Electricity, gas and water production was the type of activity where the gender pay gap was minimal (women's average wages constituted 96.1 per cent of men's). Only in one type of economic activity (out of 15) women's wages exceeded men's wages. In health care and social services, women's wages accounted for 104.3 per cent of men's wages.

As for occupational segregation, most experts interviewed in the course of the project, admitted the existence of a rather strict division of occupations and jobs into "female" and "male" ones. Experts believe that this division is based on the following two factors: different level of wages in different occupations and jobs, and differences in the physical effort required (the higher the wages, the more physical effort an occupation or a job requires, and it is more probable that this occupation is or will be a "male" one).

In the opinion of one of the experts, this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the number of youths wishing to acquire skills required for work in the catering system has sharply increased along with its development in the country's capital and rising wages. A purely "female" vocational school in the past, which used to exert great effort to attract applicants, has become a popular educational institution with a prevalence of youths in its student body.

Another example often cited by experts is a rigid gender-based division of occupations in the sewing industry (one of the main industries in the national economy). In the present-day sewing industry, there are practically no men among seamstresses while there are practically no women among cutters and ironers. Experts explain this situation exclusively by differences in the physical effort required for the jobs.

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"Now mostly young people are needed in the services. This sector requires good looks, so they hire mostly tall and beautiful girls. In rural areas, where strong hands are needed, men are in demand, and in construction as well."

(From an interview with the head of the Youth Labour Exchange)

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The data of national statistics testify to the existence of vertical segregation in the country (the higher the position, the fewer women). According to them, in 2014 women accounted for only 27.8 per cent of the heads of economic entities owned by the State and 37.4 per cent of the heads of economic entities owned by municipalities.

There are also other factors conducive to gender pay gaps, for example, different working time. Gender-based discrimination is also one of these factors. However, experts who participated in the study were practically unanimous in stating that there is no discrimination in the country. Only a special study can either confirm or disprove this opinion.

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"There is no discrimination in the labour market except, perhaps, that based on the level of skills. There is no age-based discrimination, but there is a problem of integration of older persons into the labour market."

(From an interview with a representative of the Ministry of Labour).

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5.4. Gender issues in general and registered unemployment

Unemployment in the Kyrgyz labour market is a youth issue. Suffice it to say that in 2014 unemployed youth aged 15–29 constituted half (51 per cent) of all unemployed persons in the country, whereas youth constituted only 34.6 per cent of those employed.

Although youth unemployment has varied over the last decade, these trends have been different. During the 2009–2012 economic crisis, there was a spike of unemployment, whereas later the number of young unemployed returned to the pre-crisis level gradually, and this was true of both youths and girls.

There is a gender gap in the scale of youth unemployment. According to the official statistical data, in 2014 the number of unemployed youths was 52,200, while the number of unemployed girls was 50,300. However, in different age cohorts the gender gap is different. In the 15–19 age cohort, the number of unemployed youths is considerably higher than that of girls (14,000 and 10,700 respectively). The situation is different in older age cohorts: the number of unemployed girls exceeds the number of unemployed youths (39,600 and 38,100 respectively).

Table 4.12. Dynamics of the number of unemployed persons by age and sex, 000 persons

	Year	15–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60 and over	Share of youth aged 15–29, %
Men	2005	14.5	41.0	17.4	13.7	8.5	0.5	58.05
	2009	17.7	50.5	16.3	11.3	7.1	0.6	65.89
	2014	14.0	38.1	20.7	18.7	10.3	1.3	50.53
Women	2005	10.9	33.5	20.5	17.1	5.6	0.1	50.63
	2009	13.4	43.2	19.8	17.1	6.6	0.1	56.49
	2014	10.7	39.6	22.8	16.9	7.6	0	51.38

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

Undoubtedly, the general unemployment rate is youth- and women- biased. As is shown in Table 4.13, the highest unemployment rates are for youths and girls of all age cohorts (the top figures falling on the youngest ones). The indicator is considerably higher for girls than for youths. Girls aged 15–19 are in the most difficult position. In 2014, every fifth economically active girl of this age was unemployed.

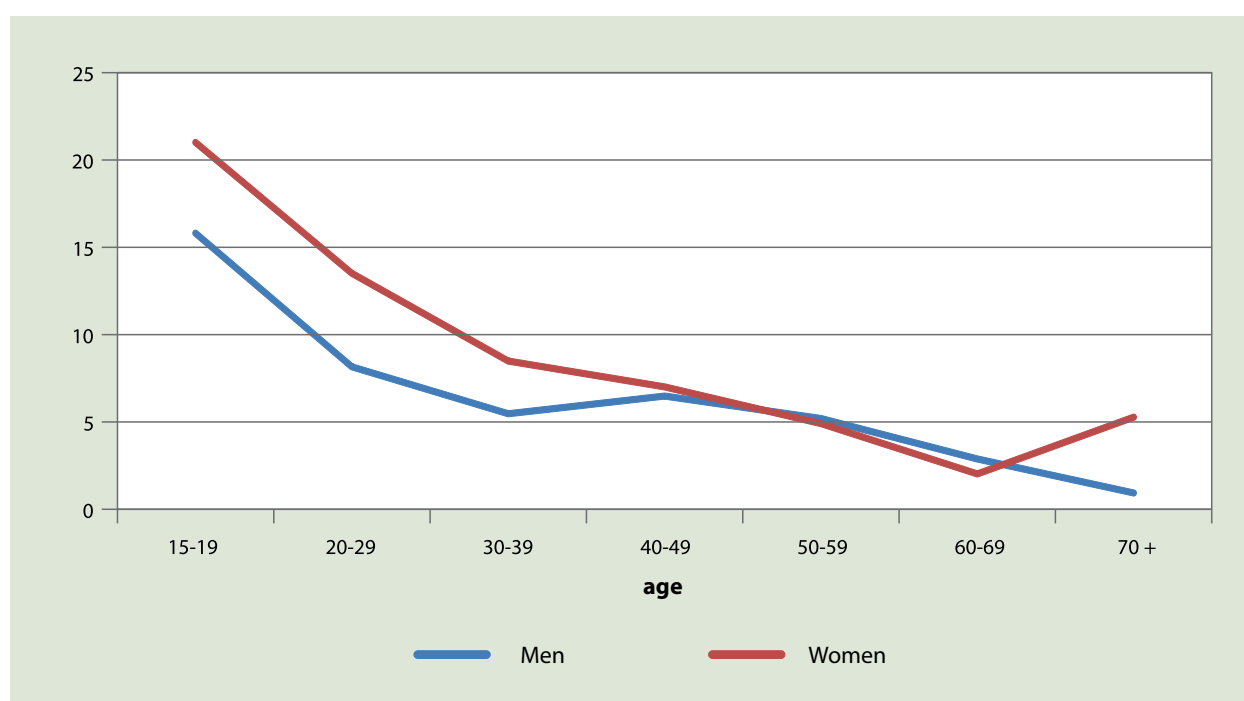


Table 4.13. Unemployment rates from 15 years up, by age and sex, %

	Year	15–19	20–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–69	70 and over
Men	2005	13.7	10.2	5.1	5.0	6.7	1.4	0.5
	2009	15.3	11.3	4.8	3.9	4.3	1.9	0.0
	2014	15.8	8.2	5.5	6.5	5.2	2.9	0.9
Women	2005	16.6	12.6	7.7	6.9	5.5	0.8	0.8
	2009	19.4	14.8	7.9	6.7	5.0	0.7	0.0
	2014	21.0	13.5	8.5	7.0	4.9	2.0	5.3

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

Diagram 4.5. Unemployment rates from 15 years up, by age and sex, %



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, most unemployed persons live in rural areas for the simple reason that rural residents constitute the majority of the country's population. In urban areas, young people are more strongly affected by unemployment. In towns, unemployment rates are considerably higher for both youths and girls (especially the youngest ones, and especially girls) as compared to rural residents (in rural areas, work in family enterprises is an unemployment alternative for many rural residents).



In 2014, the unemployment rate constituted 19.6 per cent for rural girls, 29.5 per cent for urban girls, and 13.9 and 24.7 per cent for rural and urban youths respectively. The same trends are observed among the 20-24 year olds, but they are less pronounced. The unemployment rate for rural girls was 14.9 per cent, and it was 17.8 per cent for urban girls. The respective figures for youths are 8.0 and 14.1 per cent. In the 25–29 age cohort, unemployment rates are lower and closer to the indicators for the adult labour market participants. Girls of this age cohort for whom the unemployment rate remains extremely high (17.6 per cent) constitute an exception.

Table 4.14. Unemployment rates by age, place of residence and sex, 2014, %

	Total	Of this number, years										
		15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69
Urban areas												
Men	8.2	24.7	14.1	6.1	7.7	3.2	6	10.3	7	9.1	6.3	0.7
Women	10.1	29.5	17.8	17.6	9.3	7.6	7.8	5.5	4.6	5.1	5	...
Rural areas												
Men	6.4	13.9	8.9	6.2	4.7	6.3	5.2	6.3	3.9	3.7	1.9	...
Women	9.1	19.6	14.9	8	9.4	7.4	7.7	6.7	5.9	2.8	...	...

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

Thus, it may be concluded that, although most unemployed live in rural areas of the Kyrgyz Republic, the highest unemployment risks affect girls living in urban areas.

The situation among the officially registered unemployed is completely different. As in all of the CIS countries, the number of officially registered unemployed in the Kyrgyz Republic is substantially lower than the number of unemployed calculated according to the ILO methodology. In 2014, the number of unemployed was 201,000, whereas the number of those officially registered was 58,000, i.e. four times less. The main reasons for the substantial differences in the general and registered unemployment rates are sufficiently strict criteria for awarding unemployment benefits established by the State, low unemployment benefits (according to the Bishkek Public Employment Service, the average unemployment benefit at the time of the survey was 300-350 soms a month, and the maximum one was 600 soms, i.e. \$10), and different attitudes of men and women to the very status of an official registered unemployed.

In 2014, the share of youth among the officially registered unemployed constituted 43.4 per cent, which was considerably higher than their share among those employed (34.6 per cent), but lower than among the unemployed according to the ILO methodology (51 per cent).

• • •
 “A young man without work experience will not receive an unemployment benefit from the Public Employment Service, but he will be provided with vocational training.”

(From an interview with an expert of the Public Employment Service)

• • •



In general, the number of officially registered unemployed women is steadily higher than the number of men. National experts explain it by different attitudes of men and women to the very status of an officially registered unemployed. In their opinion, Kyrgyz men, even those who have lost a job and an additional income source are not ready to make this fact public because it deprives them of their proud status as breadwinner. However, women get registered more often because they do not mind this status since they have to feed their children. Besides the possibility of receiving a benefit, even though a small one, they are also entitled to some social privileges.

• • •

“There are fewer officially unemployed men because they are ashamed of it. We are a proud nation, and men prefer to remain jobless rather than to turn to us. Women have to feed children – this is why they are registered. Besides, they are entitled to free coal and a discount on utilities.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Public Employment Service)

• • •

Table 4.15. Dynamics of the number of officially registered unemployed youths and girls aged 16–29, 000 persons

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Youths	13.4	12.8	12.5	13.3	12.1
Girls	12.9	13.0	12.4	13.1	12.7

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.stat.kg/>.

For a number of years, youths and girls have been represented almost equally among the officially registered young unemployed. In the opinion of experts, this happens because young people go to the employment service for acquiring a training and occupational skills rather than for obtaining a status.

Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls

6.1. Common barriers to the job placement of youths and girls

Today, there are a number of barriers in the Kyrgyz Republic young people face during recruitment, and they are of comparable importance for both youths and girls. The number one challenge is an acute shortage of vacant jobs with decent working conditions in the country's economy.

Another extremely important issue that has pestered the country for many years is skills mismatch. Today, the country's economy cannot provide all tertiary graduates, primarily economists, lawyers, sociologists, etc., with jobs matching their skills.

One more issue is the low quality of vocational education that does not permit most graduates of vocational education institutions to be competitive in the labour market either in their own country or abroad.





A fourth challenge both youths and girls face during recruitment is lack of work experience. Students who try to find a job matching their skills during their studies face employers' unwillingness to recruit people combining work with studies. This challenge is to a certain extent a fault of educational institutions, many of whom do not even try to reform the training process for senior students (who need to acquire some work experience according to the occupation they are acquiring) and make it more comfortable for them to combine work with studies.

• • •

"The main issue during recruitment is lack of work experience. This is what a jobseeker is always asked about. However, he/she does not have any. It is not real to start working during your first years of studies because students are overloaded. In senior years, the class schedule is not adjusted so as to allow us to work. We asked [the dean] to adjust the class schedule. We are Bachelors, we have an education and we could work, but our request was not complied with. We understand that if we find a job we will have to miss classes because no one will let us miss work. Thus, we have to choose."

(From an interview with third- and fourth-year university students)

• • •

It is probably expected that employers are supposed to create enabling conditions for persons combining work with studies. However, few employers would agree with it: they do not like workers who often ask for permission to be absent. It is outside their plans to provide privileges to workers combining work with studies in compliance with labour legislation. Moreover, it seems that most employers are ignorant of these legal norms.

• • •

"Employers should be glad that we are students and are improving our skills. However, they are not willing to recruit us. They think we will often ask for permission to be absent because we are studying. During recruitment, I say that studies are my priority. This is why they do not hire me."

(From an interview with a female Master's student)

• • •

Placement in a decent job requires, among other things, knowledge of labour legislation. However, poor knowledge of labour laws is another barrier both youths and girls face during recruitment. As the data obtained from mini-questionnaires show, only one third of students know labour laws and workers' rights (probation, contracting, etc.) at recruitment well, the rest of them know them "not very well". There were certain young persons (mostly girls) who know nothing about such rights.

As for the general rules and rights concerning maternity and childcare leave, matters stand even worse. Youths and girls know this segment of legislation even worse than employment regulations. It is especially alarming that practically one out of every five girls is unfamiliar with the rules of applying for maternity and childcare leave, although this category of workers will face the need of applying for such privileges and preferences in the nearest future with a high extent of probability.

Интервью со студентами высшего учебного заведения – будущими экономистами – показали, что никто из них не знает правила оформления больничных листов, декретного отпуска и отпуска по уходу за малолетним ребенком. Никто не знает, чем эти отпуска отличаются друг от друга, не говоря о продолжительности этих отпусков. Студенты 5-го курса не знают, что такое социальные отчисления и каков их размер. Они путают подоходный налог с пенсионными взносами. Единственным исключением среди этих студентов стала одна девушка, которая, по ее признанию, знает все эти вопросы только потому, что самостоятельно прочитала нужную литературу.



Interviews with tertiary students – future economists – have shown that none of them knows rules of formalizing sick leave as well as maternity and childcare leave. No one knows the difference between these types of leave, to say nothing of their duration. They mix up income tax with pension contributions. The only exception was a girl who read all the required materials at her own initiative.

• • •

“After completing my first year at the university, I found a job in a public institution. I replaced a woman who was on a maternity leave. There were a lot of books on such subjects on her desk, and I read them in my free time. It was interesting.”

(From an interview with a fourth-year female university student)

• • •

In the opinion of experts, there are several reasons for the legal illiteracy of young people. First, insufficient attention is paid to teaching labour laws at vocational schools (to say nothing of general schools). This subject is either absent from the curricula or too little time is allocated for it. But even if this subject is taught in class, students are rarely taught practical skills required for exercising these rights.

• • •

“There is the subject of law in our primary vocational education system, including labour laws and employment regulations, but too little time is allocated for it, only 300 hours in the course of three years. Students are not taught what a labour contract is, how to get placed and what social insurance is. We are planning to do it in future within the framework of vocational guidance.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Vocational Education Agency).

• • •

Second, in conditions of widespread informal employment, which is not regulated by labour laws, students see no practical usefulness for the theoretical knowledge of these laws. Without practical application, this knowledge “evaporates” from their heads quickly.

• • •

“We teach the subject ‘Fundamentals of Law’. We tell students about labour legislation and labour contracts. I conducted a course on how to be placed and sign a contract. However, the problem is that all this is theory, and our students will work for individual entrepreneurs who never sign contracts. So, it is all in vain. As for maternity leave and social security, they know nothing. We tell them about it, but it is useless.”

(From an interview with a vocational school teacher).

• • •

6.2. Gender discrimination in the national labour market

Who finds employment easier in the Kyrgyz labour market, youths or girls? Experts expressed different opinions when answering this question. Some of them believed that it is easier for girls due to the well-developed services sector (traditional area of women’s employment) and “female” industries in the country, women’s personal qualities as workers, etc. Other experts were of the opinion that it is easier for youths considering their greater mobility and absence of family responsibilities preventing occupational employment. Still others replied that gender was not important for employment. Employers are unwilling to hire girls because of the need to provide them with privileges associated with maternity, and most employers are actually ignoring social responsibilities to their workers stipulated by law. This makes the chances of youths and girls during recruitment even.





• • •
 “We are students and are not married yet. Therefore, there are no differences between youths and girls during recruitment.”

(From interviews with third- and fourth-year university students)

• • •
 “Men are not hired willingly. Women are trusted more, especially where money is concerned.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Public Employment Service)

• • •
 “We analysed gender differences in employment. Women are less integrated into the labour market, and this is associated with their reproductive function. Men are more mobile and find jobs quicker.”

(From an interview with a Labour Ministry expert)

• • •
 “It is mostly women who are willing to be retrained. Duration of job search is shorter for women than for men.”

(From an interview with an expert of the Public Employment Service)

• • •
 Most young people who participated in the rapid assessment survey were inclined to believe that gender was not important during recruitment. Both youths and girls mentioned education as the determining factor for job placement more often. Second in importance was the jobseeker's age. The third factor was the status of a local resident; the fourth, status of health; the fifth, appearance; the sixth, kinship ties; and seventh, the sex and the marital status of the prospective worker. Girls indicated the availability of children as the eighth factor, whereas youths did not consider it important. In their opinion, ethnicity and religion are even less important during recruitment.

Public bodies whose duty is to promote employment do not see any gender-based discrimination in the labour market either. The PES arranges all its operations as gender-neutral. Both sex and age are registered when collecting and processing the data on jobseekers and unemployed persons. These data are analysed. In the opinion of PES employees, there is no need to place special emphasis on any of the sexes based on these data. Moreover, experts maintain that girls and women were more active among people turning to their service for assistance; they undergo training more often and are better and more quickly placed. All programmes the PES implements, including the microfinance programme, are gender-neutral. The programme lacks any special components targeting youth or women's businesses, let alone businesses of young women. Nonetheless, this does not prevent women from using the opportunities offered by general microfinance programmes. Moreover, according to the estimates of PES employees, women are more active in these programmes than men are. Loans are extended to them more willingly because it is believed that women are more responsible concerning loans than men are. The following observation of PES experts confirms this opinion. When microfinance beneficiaries pool their microcredit resources (this is more cost-effective because their individual amounts are small), it is usually women who head such pools.

• • •
 “We collect all gender-related data, and we pay special attention to youth for purposes of analysis. However, in our work we do not divide our clients based on sex. As for youth, we do not divide them into youths and girls. All active programmes, all training or retraining, all public works and microfinance – all these measures are intended for all of them regardless of sex.”

(From an interview with a PES expert)



In the opinion of experts, differences in the way microcredit was used by men and women consisted mostly in different types of activities of new entrepreneurs. On receiving microcredit, women mostly open small stalls or sewing workshops. Men also spend the funds on trade, but of “some other nature”, or on opening a car repair shop. However, there are activities that attract both men and women. Both take loans for opening a furniture-making shop, and those who live in the suburbs spend the funds on fattening cattle.

The Youth Labour Exchange targeting young people aged 14–28 (the PES does not work with teenagers 14–16 years old) also carries out gender-neutral activities, training young persons, arranging temporary work for the period of vacations or part-time work, forming students’ construction teams and offering one-off employment opportunities and work for private persons, etc. The main task of the Youth Labour Exchange is to find jobs and sources of income or additional income for youth. The results of operation of the Youth Labour Exchange show that both youths and girls turning to it for assistance receive practically the same range of services (vocational guidance, training or retraining, and job placement).

In general, the survey and the interviews conducted in the course of the project have shown absence of the “traditional rigid forms” of gender-based discrimination against youth, when preference in employment is given only to youths to the detriment of girls. The point is that sustainable horizontal discrimination, both occupational and sectoral, leads to a low level of competition between youths and girls for the same jobs.

• • •

“The problem we faced was connected with maternity leave. It was like this: one girl went on a maternity leave, we hired another one, and she went on a maternity leave as well. Half of our workers were backstopping girls who were on maternity leave. That was a serious problem. We asked ourselves, ‘Do we need young people?’ We started hiring older women.”

(From an interview with an employer).

• • •

One could rather speak of discrimination against women based on the availability of small children (discrimination against women with small children in favour of women without children or with adult children). However, this form of discrimination has a limited scope because, as it has already been mentioned, social privileges and guarantees stipulated by law are not observed in the greater part of the economic space. In case of childbirth, women either leave the labour market for some time or “do not bother” employers with their family problems.

• • •

“All of us are licenced, both my workers and myself. It is simpler this way – less paperwork. If they fall ill or someone’s child falls ill, it is not a problem because our jobs are piecework. If someone does not come to work – no harm done, she gets no pay. Sick leave is not paid. There are some discounts in the hospital but I do not know for sure, we do not use this opportunity. The pension will be small. I hope I will not live to pension age.”

(From an interview with an employer)

• • •

“A worker with many children? It does not matter – we have piecework pay. A woman used to work for us part-time. We did not even apply for a licence for her, but signed an apprenticeship contract each month with her – a trifling paper, just to explain why this person is here, to show it to the tax inspector who may turn up any time.”

(From an interview with an employer)

• • •





Sex-based discrimination emerges mostly when wages in a traditionally “female” occupation begin to increase due to some externalities. According to experts, this occupation becomes gradually “male”.

• • •

“Chefs are paid up to \$2,000 a month, and this is why youths began to choose this occupation. Previously, only women worked in catering, and only girls studied at vocational schools training cooks. Now, when the pay has increased, youths are interested. The same goes for hairdressing. Only girls used to choose this occupation. Now that hairdressers began to earn more, youths started coming to us for training. Now teachers are paid little, and almost all teachers are women. If their wages are raised, men will also work at schools.”

(From an interview with a vocational school director)

• • •

Unfortunately, the attempt to “turn the tide” – to train girls in the traditionally well-paid “male” occupations – did not produce the desired result. In 2012, an experiment was conducted in primary vocational education to train girls in the traditionally “male” occupations in order to overcome gender stereotypes in employment and reduce the gender pay gap. The programme was designed by the Agency for Vocational Education of the Kyrgyz Republic. Girls were trained in such occupations as car mechanics, sheetrockers, and gas welders. The experiment was not replicated, and its results were not traced and analysed.

• • •

“In 2012, we arranged a programme for training girls in the occupations unusual for them (such as gas welders, fitters, etc.). Girls have the right to acquire the same skills as boys. Advocacy was conducted among girls, but the result was insignificant. Some girls were trained, but others were not willing. The idea emerged after the survey, which found out that men are employed in jobs with higher wages, while women are employed in jobs with lower wages. Therefore, it was decided to train girls in the occupations that were better paid.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Agency for Vocational Education)

• • •

However, the entire job placement process in the country is veiled with discrimination because discriminatory terms are present and discriminatory questions asked throughout all of its stages, from publication of job advertisements to recruitment.

The Law on State Guarantees of Equal rights and Opportunities for Men and Women forbids employers to publish vacancy advertisement offering jobs to representatives of only one sex (with the exception of specific jobs that could be performed only by persons of a certain sex). According to experts, most job advertisements contain discriminatory requirements to jobseekers’ sex, age or appearance (or to all of them), but they do not interpret it as abuse of the law but as a manifestation of freedom and democracy.

• • •

“The fact that job advertisements mention sex and age is a manifestation of democracy. People in the Internet find faults with the President, so what?”

(From an interview with an employer)

• • •

Such advertisements are published in the mass media and submitted to the Public Employment Service. The PES offers these jobs to its clients.



Diagram 4.6. Picture of vacancy advertisements at the Youth Labour Exchange, Bishkek.



ТОРГОВЛЯ			
Вакансии, требования	Зарботная плата	Наименование предприятий, организаций	Адрес работодателя
Продавец • 18-35 лет • Девушка	З/П при собеседовании	СУПЕРМАРКЕТ «НАШ»	Южная магистраль пр. Мира
Специалист • По продажам • Опыт работы	З/П при собеседовании	ЗАО «БЕРЕКЕТ»	пр. Чуй, 230 х Фучика
Торговые агенты • Евр.нац • Городская прописка • Опыт работы • Девушки • До 40 лет	З/П договорная	АЗО «ЭЛИТА»	Киевская х Логвиненко
Продавец	З/П 15000 с.	ПРОДАВОЛЬСТВЕННЫЙ МАГАЗИН	Мкр. Джал
Продавщицы • Девушки	З/П при собеседовании	Ч.П.ШАКЕН ЭРГЕШЕВНА	

Diagram 4.7. Picture of vacancy advertisements at the Youth Labour Exchange, Bishkek. (Special mention should be made of the fact that a discriminatory job advertisement is published even by the institution whose mission, judging from its name (Law and Protection Centre), is to support the rule of law).

русского яз.			
Гехничка Посудомойница	З/П договорная	РЕСТОРАН «ДАСМИЯ»	М.Горького Ш.Батыр
Агенты • Девушки • До 30 лет • Можно студентов	З/П % от продажи	Ч.П.ЧЫНТЕМИРОВ	Менделеев
Охранник • Сутки х сутки • Паспорт • Прописка городская • 25-45 лет	З/П договорная	РЕСТОРАН «ДРУЖБА»	Шопоков
Оператор пульта • Девушка • 24-36 лет	З/П при собеседовании	ОсОО «ЦЕНТР ПРАВА И ЗАЩИТЫ»	Шопокова Токтогула
Сотрудники СБ • 24-50 лет			
Автомойщики • Парни • Опыт работы	З/П %	АВТОМОЙКА	Лермонтов Ворошилов (р-н Таатай)
Автомойщики • Парни • Девушки	З/П 40%	ПАРИКМАХЕРСКАЯ «МАРИЯ»	Жаманбаев (р-н Космо)
		КАФЕ	7 мкр.



The situation is the same at the Youth Labour Exchange, which has an extensive database of vacancies that can be offered to youth (including those persons that can only do easy work), arranges job fairs and maintains bulletin boards containing information on vacant jobs, etc. Many advertisements, both in the database and on the bulletin boards, contain unequivocal indications of the desired sex, age and sometimes appearance, ethnicity and place of residence of jobseekers. This does not bother anyone. On the contrary, it is regarded as a norm and as an employer's right to hire a worker he wants to.

• • •

"A girl came to us, an educated one, with two educations, one of them in economics. She was beautiful but limped slightly. She could not find a job because of the limp. Every time we placed her, she was dismissed a month later. We sent her to a hospital where she was operated on and could walk better. She called us to say 'thank you'. An employer has the right to make all sorts of demands as to a jobseeker's appearance. One of them said, 'It is unpleasant for me to see her limp.'"

(From an interview with a representative of the Youth Labour Exchange)

• • •

Requirements for jobseekers not connected with their professional qualities but, nonetheless, expressed by employers contrary to Article 9 of the Labour Code, arouse no negative emotions in either youths or girls. On the contrary, such requirements are viewed as a social norm.

• • •

"Some advertisements read 'Good looking girls are required'. It is a subjective approach. Likes and dislikes are a matter of personal preferences. For example, a bank is recruiting some staff. They want people with a nice appearance. This is understandable; they choose attractive persons to please their clients. Beautiful girls usually work as receptionists who meet clients. They do not work with papers; they just show people where to go, etc."

(From an interview with a fifth-year female student at the Slavic University, Faculty of Economics)

• • •

Employers do not understand why they cannot hire people they like. They are unaware of restrictive legal norms concerning this issue.

• • •

"Employers offering good jobs demand good looks. They have the right to choose."

(From an interview with an employer)

• • •

"Now workers are mostly required in the services sector where mostly girls work. So, employers say, 'We need a tall and beautiful one.'"

(From an interview with a representative of the Youth Labour Exchange)

• • •

It was already said in Chapter 1 that the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women forbids employers to demand personal information and information about jobseekers' plans concerning the birth of children. A mini-survey of students at primary and tertiary vocational training institutions has revealed that this legal provision is abused everywhere, and not a single party to labour relations thinks it is a crime.



During recruitment, both youths and girls are asked questions concerning their marital status, but girls more often than youths (one in two youths, and one in five girls, did not have to answer this question). One in four youths and one in three girls were asked questions concerning children. Employers are never interested in youths' plans concerning the birth of children, but girls are sometimes asked about it.

• • •

"Employers often ask about the family. This is understandable because one will have to ask for permission to leave earlier in order to fetch a son or a daughter from the childcare centre."

(From an interview with a fifth-year female student at the Slavic University, Faculty of Economics)

• • •

"Youths are also asked if they have a family. If they have one, it is good, it is an advantage. If he has a family, it means he will work conscientiously and will not ask for compensatory time-off. If a girl has a family, it means she will often ask for permission to leave the workplace to take a child to or from school."

(From an interview with a fifth-year female student at the Slavic University, Faculty of Economics)

• • •

"I was once asked if I was planning to start a family. I was surprised. I do not think about it yet. I want to complete my studies and work for some time, to make a career, so I could later (after the birth of a child and a maternity leave) find a job easier owing to my work experience."

(From an interview with a fourth-year female student at the Slavic University, Faculty of Economics)

• • •

6.3. Job search techniques

The mini-survey has shown that youths look for jobs more often than girls do. This is primarily confirmed by the fact that among those interviewed, there was not a single youth who had not made at least one attempt to find a job in the previous three years (one third of girls had). Besides that, youths were most active among those who tried to find a job, and each of them made on the average more attempts than girls did.

The survey has also shown that youths and girls use similar job search techniques. Today, they mostly look for vacant jobs via the Internet. The second most popular job search method among young persons of both sexes was by turning to friends and relatives. The third most popular method is looking through job advertisements. The fourth method most popular among girls is "turning to the administration and directly to employers" (this method ranks fifth among youths). The fifth most popular method of finding a job among girls is when it is just "offered" (this ranks fourth among youths).

Similarity in the job search techniques of youths and girls can be found in the fact that neither ever try to find a job with the assistance of their educational institutions or the public or private employment service, nor do they publish job search advertisements in newspapers.

At present, there is one job search method in the Kyrgyz Republic used solely by men. It is the so-called "street labour exchange". This kind of labour exchange offers only one-off jobs (loader and such like) or work for one or two hours or days or, more rarely, for a fortnight (actually, day-work). This kind of employment is exclusively informal, and it is offered by both individuals and organizations. The majority of potential workers are young men because it is mostly heavy physical work that is offered. Neither





women nor, even more so, girls ever try to find a job through this “street labour exchange” (“*girls are ashamed to do so*”).

6.4. Open barriers to the job placement of girls

Peculiarities of the demographic situation in the country (high birth rate and low age of the first marriage and birth of the first child) make it important to develop the early childhood care system in order to ensure effective employment of young women and increase their competitiveness in the labour market. However, an analysis of the current condition of this system in the Kyrgyz Republic shows that it is a factor preventing the development of female employment rather than promoting it.

Back in the 1990s, the Soviet network of public preschool care and education facilities was practically destroyed (the number of preschool facilities decreased practically four-fold in the first 10 years of independence).

• • •
“After the collapse of the Soviet Union, all buildings of childcare facilities were turned over to various public bodies or privatized. We have realized the mistake and passed laws permitting to open private childcare facilities in leased premises. The buildings of former childcare facilities are being returned. It is easier to take care of children in rural areas because there are a lot of helping relatives and neighbours.”

(From an interview with an expert of the Ministry of Labour)

• • •
Now the network is being restored thanks to an increasing number of both public and private facilities (in 2009–2013, the increase constituted 56.1 per cent), but it has not reached the Soviet-time scale yet. The number of children attending such facilities has also increased (by 74.4 per cent), thereby expanding the coverage of children by the preschool system⁹³ (in 2009, 12 out of 100 children attended preschool facilities, whereas in 2013 their number increased to 17). On the other hand, prevalence of growth rates of the number of children attending childcare facilities over the growth rates of the system itself has led to an increased load on each place in the preschool system (in 2009, there were 106 children per 100 places, whereas in 2013 their number increased to 118). It leads to excessive numbers of children attending public childcare facilities. Information obtained in the course of interviews in the city of Bishkek has shown that groups in such facilities included up to 70–80 children.

• • •
“There is a big problem with childcare facilities. The State encourages private childcare facilities but they are very expensive. In rural areas, people help one another. In public childcare facilities, there are 70–80 children in one group, and childminders are not interested in full attendance, so only 30–35 children actually attend the group. Childminders’ salaries are very low, and parents pay them some extra money.”

(From an interview with an independent gender expert)

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In private childcare facilities, the situation is much better, but it is far from ideal either.

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“We could not place our child in a public childcare centre. There are 80 children in a group there, and children often fall ill. Besides, what kind of care can be provided in such overcrowded premises? We sent our child to a private childcare centre. It is new; it has just opened. They promised to us that the group would consist of 25 children. We have been attending it for several months, and the number of lockers has increased. There were

⁹³ Coverage of children with preschool facilities – share of children of the relevant age group (one through six years old) attending preschool facilities, %.



25 of them, and now there are 30. Considering that each child has a separate locker, the number of children has also increased. I do not know what to do if the trend persists. We pay a huge amount of money – 8,000 soms per month.”

(From an interview with the mother of a five-year-old child, Bishkek)

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Table 4.16. Main indicators of development of preschool facilities, 2009–2013.

	2009	2011	2013	2013/2009 (%)
Number of preschool facilities	594	741	927	156.1
Number of children in preschool facilities (persons)	75,955	98,706	132,481	174.4
Coverage by preschool facilities, total (%), of this number in	12.0	14.5	17.4	145.0
Urban areas	27.7	29.9	31.6	114.1
Rural areas	5.4	7.4	10.6	196.3
Provision of children with places in preschool facilities (number of attending children per 100 places)	106	112	118	111.3

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Kyrgyz Republic, www.stat.gov.kz/.

The situation with the development of preschool childcare and education facilities is most complicated in rural areas where the coverage of children is thrice as low as in urban areas despite considerable achievements. A real alternative to placing one's child in a childcare centre is to enlist the assistance of relatives and neighbours.

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“After childbirth, seamstresses resume their work very soon. A month or two, sometimes half a year, and they are back to work. They leave their children with their mothers, relatives or husbands, if the latter do not work. The situation with childcare facilities is bad.”

(From an interview with a trade union leader)

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The only possibility of providing care for a child under three years of age is to turn to relatives and neighbours for assistance because the public childcare system is practically non-existent.

The possibility of using additional unpaid leave for taking care of a child until he/she reaches the age of three, which is stipulated by law, does not work. Interviews have shown that such leave is granted exclusively in public institutions and large private companies. These provisions of labour legislation are never applied at medium and small private enterprises and in the informal sector. It is noteworthy that not a single expert who answered the questions concerning the practice of using childcare leave provided a correct description of the parameters of such.



Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

7.1. Public programmes and measures aimed at achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

At present, the national social policy of the Kyrgyz Republic has no special line aimed at addressing gender-related issues of employment and job placement of youth. It is implied that this issue should be a component of the policies promoting gender equality, on the one hand, and the public policies aimed at developing the education system and the country's human capital, on the other hand.

For a number of years, the Kyrgyz Government has conducted an active public policy promoting gender equality. To make it more effective, on 27 June 2012 the Kyrgyz Government issued Decision No. 443 approving the National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period until 2020 and the National Plans of Action on Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012–2014 and 2015–2017.

The objective of the Strategy is to create an institutional framework for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for the country's citizens regardless of their sex, age, social and health status, gender identity and other grounds for discrimination, with the aim of realizing the full potential of the human capital of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The following priorities were formulated: increasing economic opportunities for women, establishing a functional education system, eliminating gender discrimination and improving women's access to justice, promoting gender parity in decision-making and women's political participation. The Strategy does not incorporate any specific issues of employment or job placement of youths and girls, although the achievement of some of the objectives formulated in the document will undoubtedly be helpful in making youth employment more effective.

For example, implementation of the following policies aimed at increasing economic opportunities for women, such as

- acknowledging women's economic input into public production and social development by taking it into consideration and making it visible;
- raising women's labour force participation rates by expanding sources of livelihood for women and transferring them from informal employment to the formal labour market;
- creating working conditions sensitive to men and women workers' needs;
- creating infrastructures for achieving the work-life balance; and
- reducing the gender pay gap and segregation in the labour market by diversifying male and female occupations will undoubtedly improve girls' (and youths') access to decent jobs.

One of the shortcomings of the Strategy is that it is aimed at addressing women's gender issues while those of men mostly remain outside of its focus.

The section entitled "Increasing Economic Opportunities for Women" in the National Plan of Action for 2012–2014 included several goals and objectives aimed, directly or indirectly, at addressing gender issues in youth employment and job placement.



Goal 1. Improving working conditions enabling a work-life balance.

Goal 2. Reducing segregation in the labour market by diversifying male and female occupations. To achieve the goal, the Strategy stipulated for encouraging youths and girls to acquire non-traditional skills, adopting a package of regulations on granting privileges to youths entering teachers' training institutions, creating conditions permitting women to acquire new promising skills, and involving women with disabilities in economic activity.

Goal 3. Ensuring women's employment by expanding sources of livelihood for women. The goal was to be achieved through an assessment and a cost and benefit analysis of the women's entrepreneurship development strategy based on the microfinance (microcredit) support as well as design and implementation of measures promoting women's entrepreneurship.

The National Plan of Action on Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2015–2017 is a logical continuation of the previous action plan and reiterates the goals formulated therein. Thus, its implementation is expected to have a positive effect on the gender issues of youth employment and job placement.

The situation is somewhat different with mainstreaming youth gender issues into public policy papers on the development of the education system in the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2012, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic designed a concept of education development in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period until 2020, an education development strategy for 2012–2020, and a plan of action on implementing the education development strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012–2014.

An analysis of the above documents has revealed the availability of a considerable gender component in them. Suffice it to say, that one of the strategy goals is to establish an education system that will train citizens who, among other things, will "share the values of human rights and freedoms as well as gender equality and respect cultural, ethnic and political diversity". Its objectives include the establishment of a planning and management system based on information collection and analysis technologies, including those based on gender-disaggregated statistical data.

An analysis of the Plan of Action on Implementing the Education Development Strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012–2014 has shown its overall gender neutrality. However, it includes some elements that are extremely important from the viewpoint of addressing gender issues of youth employment. For example, Goal 4 "Ensuring Access to Vocational Education and Training" contains sub-goal 3.4.2 "Ensuring Gender Equality in Vocational Training", with the target "Share of girls in the total number of graduates". Unfortunately, examples of mainstreaming gender in the document are few.

7.2. Approach of employers to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

Speaking of the approach of employers to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment, observing legally established norms of recruitment and dismissal of workers, implementing the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, providing maternity-related privileges and guarantees, etc., it should be pointed out that their approach is not unanimous. Based on the information obtained in the course of the study, employers can be divided into two groups with substantially different positions on these issues.





The first group includes the State as an employer (public enterprises and organizations) and large private enterprises and organizations operating predominantly in the formal sector. Such enterprises and organizations strive to comply with labour laws, including those regulating gender equality and the provision of privileges and guarantees related to maternity and family responsibilities.

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“Even large private and public enterprises abuse the Labour Code (by making people work longer hours and on days off without pay), to say nothing of small businesses.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers’ Association)

• • •

The attitude of employers at small and medium-size businesses is entirely different. It should be taken into consideration that this economic segment is often informal. The majority of such employers ignore labour law provisions with the assistance of the employment licencing system. Many entrepreneurs owning small and medium-size businesses try to avoid recruiting wage workers based on permanent and even fixed-term contracts because it implies payment of substantial social contributions and imposes considerable obligations on employers connected with providing paid annual, maternity, educational and sick leave, etc. The licence-based system relieves employers of all social obligations and reduces production costs. In this situation, a waged worker actually becomes a self-employed person deprived of all rights. Young women fall into a special-risk category, with their increased need of social protection due to maternity.

At the same time, absence of social privileges and guarantees in licence-based employment “equalizes” the competitiveness of youths and girls in the Kyrgyz labour market to a certain extent.

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“On the one hand, it is bad that contracts are not signed and people are thus deprived of all social protection. However, on the other hand, in absence of social protection girls are not discriminated against because there are no obligations to them.”

(From an interview with a trade union leader)

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This is why employers are sometimes sincere in their failure to understand what gender discrimination is because it is of no importance to them whom to recruit, a man or a woman, no social obligations are assumed in either case.

• • •

“No one will sue them for discrimination, because there are no clear-cut definitions in the laws. If discrimination really entailed punishment (if a penalty was imposed for hiring a man while a woman was refused the job groundlessly), no discrimination would be practiced. However, sanctions for discrimination against women should not be introduced now. More important things need to be done.”

(From an interview with an employer)

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To them, the discrimination issue boils down to age-based discrimination.



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“There is no problem of gender discrimination in our country. We are more anxious about ethnicity- and age-based discrimination. The most important thing is to create jobs.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers’ Association)

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Practically none of the interviewed employers views recruitment of youth in conformity with the traditional stereotypes concerning “occupations suitable for men and for women” as discrimination (see Chapter 2), and there are several reasons for it.

Reason number one is inadequate legislation. It does not qualify some discriminatory practices as discrimination. There is no effective mechanism for implementing anti-discrimination laws. Besides that, international and national anti-discrimination laws are underestimated in court practices because not all the judges are familiar with the essence of gender-based discrimination.

Another reason is legal illiteracy of most employers. In the opinion of representatives of the Employers’ Association, few employers are familiar with labour legislation; it is mostly those who work in public enterprises or large companies, as well as those who used to work during the Soviet era. In the opinion of experts, young entrepreneurs know legislation poorly. Those operating in the formal economy want to know only those legislative provisions that help them to avoid penalties or other sanctions. Those operating in the “shadow” economy know nothing.

It should be pointed out that none of the employers participating in the survey knew the content of the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. Probably, none of them even knew that it existed, but they were simply ashamed to admit it during the survey.

• • •

“Some employers do everything the way they like to and do not even know they discriminate against anyone.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers’ Association)

• • •

“Young entrepreneurs know only what they may be fined for; they have no time for the rest.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers’ Association)

• • •

“Few people know legislation. Only holders of sophisticated licences know legislation well (all conditions of their operation are prescribed in them). Large companies must also know and observe laws because they are subject to inspections. Other companies are not controlled by the State. Older employers and clerks of human resources departments know legislation as well. Young employers who have just opened their businesses do not know it. The only thing they want is money. Legislation does not matter to them.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers’ Association)

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One more reason is a neglectful attitude of employers to the issue of discrimination. Some of them believe that it is not the most important problem the country is facing.





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“All laws concerning discrimination are for civilized countries. What we have is a market. Who is engaged in charity? Those who have some extra money. The same goes for gender equality. We will tackle this issue when business is growing. Now when employers are in the grip of taxes and half of economy is in the shadow, how can we think about gender equality? Discrimination is a topic for politicians, functionaries and non-governmental organizations.”

(From an interview with a representative of the Employers' Association)

• • •

Even those employers who acknowledge the issue of discrimination at work speak only of ethnicity- or age-based discrimination, but are not prepared to admit the existence and importance of gender discrimination. The only thing some of them are ready to admit is the need for gender education, which they regard as a reserve for the future and a possibility of creating a civilized country when they succeed in improving the economy.

• • •

“International organizations speak of discrimination and arrange workshops. This is required for education. It is always necessary to say what is good and what is bad. A person lives under the current conditions. If he can see how his mother and sister are discriminated against he will hardly think differently when our economy is fine. This is what education is for.”

(From an interview with an employer)

• • •

7.3. Trade union activities aimed at observing the rights of youths and girls

Today, gender is mainstreamed into the sphere of interests of trade union organizations. Trade union leaders are well aware of a deplorable state of the national system of maternity- and childcare-related privileges. They understand the negative impact of licence-based employment on this system and the pension system.

At the same time, trade unions pay main attention to the issues they regard as most vital such as insufficient number of jobs in the country's economy, widespread informal and licence-based employment, a deteriorating situation concerning workers' rights, a dismally small scale of practices concerning the conclusion of labour contracts at enterprises, low living standards, attempts at introducing fixed-term employment contracts and dismissing workers without consulting trade unions, a pending problem of establishing a trade union for informally employed workers, etc. In the opinion of trade union representatives, the situation of both women and men in the labour market will improve considerably if these issues are addressed.

The main line of trade unions' work aimed at advancing women is lobbying the ratification of the ILO Conventions Nos. 183 and 156 and recommending primary trade union organizations to incorporate gender issues into collective labour agreements. According to the recommendations, their main tasks are to:

- include gender issues into collective bargaining;
- ensure gender equality at the workplace and in trade union activities;
- develop effective bargaining mechanisms with the involvement of women; and
- ensure conditions for observing the applicable legal provisions on issues concerning women's interests.



The recommendations state that the subject of bargaining may include any issues such as wages and privileges (equal pay for work of equal value, merit pay systems, privileges and benefits); leave (responsibility-related, maternity leave and leave for fathers in connection with the birth of a child, childcare leave for parents, sick leave and educational leave); work schedule (duration of the working day and overtime work, part-time work, flexible schedules, divided rates, work at night, work schedule for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers); occupational safety and health (risk of a harmful environmental impact and other health hazards at work, control mechanisms and individual protection systems, social protection systems and services, working conditions for persons with disabilities, information on HIV, occupational safety committees and representatives of occupational health services); maternity protection (adoption of children, reproductive health protection, employment guarantees, rights of women students and families of students, reproductive health protection services; protection from discrimination and harassment at work); women at work: the right to be listened to (vocational training and retraining, representation at all levels of the enterprise's management, women's councils, representation of women at the local, regional and national levels).

In her interview, a trade union expert explained the absence of gender issues from the General Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Trade Unions Federation of Kyrgyzstan and the republican employers' associations by the fact that *"it is probably irrelevant"*.

"We have women everywhere – in the Government and in all sectors. Non-governmental organizations are tackling gender issues, and all laws undergo gender assessment. Maybe it is our omission, but the issue has never been raised since 1992 during the formulation of the General Agreement. In my opinion, there are no gender issues in the country, except ratification of Convention No. 183. Trade unions never leave gender issues outside of their focus. We want benefits to be raised."

Conclusions

The country has succeeded in formulating national legislation on gender equality, which contains both specialized and general laws, including provisions on gender equality and protection from discrimination in different areas of life.

The Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women stipulates for State guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for persons of both sexes in the political, social, economic, cultural and other areas of people's life and is aimed at protecting men and women from sex-based discrimination and establishing progressive and democratic relations between men and women.

The Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic (2004) bans discrimination at work, stipulates for privileges to certain categories of workers who belong to special- risk groups and sets out special employment conditions for women promoting their reproductive health protection. Many privileges associated with the need to fulfil family responsibilities, take care of children and bring them up are now intended not only for women but for all persons with family and childcare responsibilities.

At the same time, the Code makes employers responsible for the provision of a number of privileges and observance of employment restrictions stipulated by legislation with the aim of maternity protection and intended solely for women. In practice, it means that women of the fertile age are the least convenient and the most expensive workforce for employers operating in compliance with legislation.

Another obvious drawback of national legislation is that sick leave and maternity leave payments are to be financed by employers' (with a partial compensation of expenses on maternity leave from the





republican budget). In a situation of the traditional division of gender roles in most families, this source of financing involuntary absenteeism makes women, especially young ones, unattractive to employers as workforce thereby provoking gender discrimination in the labour market. In the present-day Kyrgyz Republic, the situation is largely mitigated by the actual refusal of employers in the informal economy (which accounts for the greater part of the country's economy) to pay such benefits. This deprives women of their lawful benefits but retains their competitiveness in the labour market.

In general, gender legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic complies with international requirements to such kind of legislation. Its main drawback is insufficient elaboration and adjustment of its enforcement mechanism and lack of a clearly defined responsibility for many gender-related abuses of legislation making its practical application difficult.

Gender division of labour and gender stereotypes remain rather traditional in the Kyrgyz Republic. The official statistics show that, on the average, men spend more time on paid work than women, while women spend more time on unpaid domestic work and on child-rearing and taking care of elderly family members. The total workload on women is heavier.

Young people generally share the gender stereotypes accepted in the country, but youths proved to be more conservative than girls. Youths have patriarchal opinions of women's occupational employment, whereas girls believe that occupational life is an important part of a woman's biography. Girls support the idea of gender equality and the possibility of making a choice.

Employers' notions about the potentialities of men and women workers are extremely traditional and are generally similar to the stereotypes typical of youth.

According to its demographic characteristics, the Kyrgyz Republic belongs to the few CIS countries with a growing population and a high share of youth. The Kyrgyz Republic is a country with a predominantly rural population whose share is constantly increasing. The rural population is younger than the urban population.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, youths and girls follow different strategies of acquiring general and vocational education, with different attainment levels.

At primary and basic general schools, the shares of boys and girls actually coincide with their shares in the corresponding age cohorts, which testifies to absence of gender discrimination in access to this type of education. At secondary schools, girls constitute a majority of students, whereas youths either enter the labour market or continue their education in primary and secondary vocational education institutions.

Despite the actual absence of government-paid places at vocational schools, their services are in demand. However, the currently low quality of education in the country is the main problem of the overwhelming majority of educational institutions of all levels. Youths constitute a majority in primary vocational education, whereas girls prevail at its secondary and tertiary levels. An important gender-related issue in education is an extremely high extent of segregation of students by occupations and skills. Girls choose a more limited range of occupations and skills than youths.

As a result, the main advantage of girls in the labour market is their higher educational attainment levels, while their disadvantage is a limited range of occupations where "overproduction" of specialists is observed. Youths, with their relatively lower educational attainment levels, have the competitive advantage of a wider range of acquired skills.



Youth labour force participation is rather high in the country, but it is gradually decreasing. Besides, it is substantially differentiated by gender (it is lower among girls), age and place of residence.

Youth employment rates are relatively high in the country, especially in the younger age cohorts, and are considerably gender-differentiated.

The economic activity and employment profiles of Kyrgyz women are characterized by one-peak diagrams, with the maximum indicators falling on the age of 40–49 years. This means that the majority of occupationally active and employed women leave the labour market for a short period after the birth of a child and try to return to employment as soon as possible without postponing it “until their children grow up”.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the informal economy has assumed huge proportions. In 2014, it employed 72 per cent of the total workforce. Young people are employed in it more often than adult workers. The youngest ones, especially rural residents, find themselves in an especially difficult situation. Practically all of the rural youth aged 15–19 work informally.

The gender pay gap is not very large in the Kyrgyz Republic – 24.5 percentage points, but this indicator reflects the situation only in the formal sector, which constitutes the smaller part of the economy. An important factor of existence of the gender pay gap is both vertical and horizontal segregation (by economic activity and occupation).

The unemployment issue in the national labour market has a youthful face. In 2014, young unemployed aged 15–29 made up half of all unemployed persons in the country, and youths and girls have the highest unemployment rates among all age cohorts (the youngest ones displaying the highest indicators). Youth unemployment is predominantly female. In the Kyrgyz Republic, most unemployed live in rural areas, but the highest unemployment risks are typical of young women living in urban areas. For many years, youths and girls were equally represented among the officially registered young unemployed. In the opinion of experts, young people go to employment services for acquiring vocational training, but not for certifying their unemployment status.

Today, young people face a number of barriers during recruitment that are of comparable importance for youths and girls. The number one challenge is an acute shortage of vacant jobs with decent working conditions in the country's economy. Another important issue that has pestered the country for many years is skills mismatch. One more issue is the low quality of vocational education that prevents most graduates of vocational education institutions from being competitive in the labour market. A fourth challenge facing both youths and girls during recruitment is lack of work experience. A fifth issue is their poor knowledge of labour legislation. There are several reasons for the legal illiteracy of young people. First, insufficient attention is paid to teaching labour laws. Second, in conditions of widespread informal employment students see no practical use in the theoretical knowledge of these laws.

The study has shown that most national experts and young people do not consider gender discrimination in the labour market to be a major issue. However, it seems that they have in mind the “traditional hardline” gender discrimination when youths are preferably recruited to the detriment of girls. Horizontal segregation typical of the Kyrgyz labour market leads to a low level of competition between youths and girls for the same jobs. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to speak of discrimination against women based on the existence of small children (discrimination of such women in favour of women without children or with adult children). It is the underdeveloped network of preschool childcare facilities that prevents young women from joining the labour market.

A particular challenge in the Kyrgyz employment sphere is the universal failure to comply with those provisions of labour laws that stipulate for privileges and guarantees for women associated with





maternity as well as privileges and guarantees for workers with family responsibilities associated with the need to fulfil them. The situation has emerged due to a widespread informal employment. On the one hand, it decreases women's opportunities to reconcile occupational and family responsibilities, but on the other hand, it facilitates their access to occupational employment.

At present, the national social policy in the Kyrgyz Republic has no special line aimed at addressing gender-related issues of employment and job placement of youth. It is implied that this issue should be a component of the policies promoting gender equality and the public policies aimed at developing the education system and the country's human capital.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is pursuing an active public policy promoting gender equality. It is being implemented within the framework of the National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period until 2020 and the National Plans of Action on Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The following documents are aimed at promoting education: the Concept of Education Development in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period until 2020, the Education Development Strategy for 2012–2020, and the Plan of Action on Implementing the Education Development Strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012–2014. An analysis of the documents has revealed a substantial gender component in them.

The study has shown that employers do not demonstrate a common approach to the issue of gender equality in employment, provision of maternity-related privileges and guarantees and such like. The State as an employer and large private enterprises operating predominantly in the formal sector of the economy generally comply with labour laws, whereas small and medium-size businesses operating predominantly in the informal economy ignore them completely. The main reason for it is inadequacy of anti-discrimination legislation and lack of an effective enforcement mechanism. Besides that, international and national anti-discrimination laws are underestimated in court practices because not all the judges are familiar with the essence of gender-based discrimination.

Gender has been firmly mainstreamed into the sphere of interests of trade unions of the Kyrgyz Republic. Trade union leaders are well aware of the deplorable state of the national system of maternity- and childcare-associated privileges. There is also an understanding of the negative impact of licence-based employment on this system and the pension system. At the same time, trade unions pay great attention to the issues they regard as most vital, such as the insufficient number of jobs in the country's economy, widespread informal and licence-based employment, a deteriorating situation concerning workers' rights, a dismally small scale of practices concerning the conclusion of labour contracts, low living standards, etc. In the opinion of trade union representatives, the situation of both women and men in the labour market will improve considerably if these issues are addressed.

At present, the level of development of gender statistics in the Kyrgyz Republic is high. The main shortcomings of its economic segment are outside the sphere of influence of statistical bodies and are primarily associated with the scale of the informal economy.

Recommendations

An extensive public presentation of the status of implementation of the National Plan of Action on Achieving Gender Equality in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2015–2017 needs to be arranged.

A mechanism for enforcing legislation banning the publication of job advertisements containing discriminatory requirements to jobseekers (Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women No. 184, Chapter 4, Article 18) should be developed using a successful experience of the Russian Federation.



To increase the competitiveness of young women in the labour market, it is worthwhile to consider the possibility of changing how temporary disability benefits are financed and defining the national budget as its main source.

A mechanism for enforcing legislation banning discriminatory questions during recruitment should be developed.

Considering poor knowledge of gender issues among representatives of regional and municipal executive authorities and regional deputies, it is necessary to design a programme of gender education for this category of officials.

Based on this programme, a series of training workshops needs to be arranged for representatives of regional and municipal executive authorities and regional deputies.

Recruitment centres for graduates of vocational education institutions of all levels should take into consideration the fact that youths and girls often face different sets of barriers during recruitment, organize registration of internships passed by students during their studies and trace the job placement of graduates by sex. It is also necessary to teach students and graduates how to write a CV and pass an interview and to familiarize them with the fundamentals of labour legislation and pension and social insurance rules.

A mechanism should be designed encouraging employers to arrange internships and workplace practices for students.

To decrease the extent of segregation by levels of education and skills trained, a network of occupational guidance centres for youth should be established in the country, and vocational guidance should be arranged for girls with the aim of expanding the list of skills and occupations.

Considering the substantially lower level of vocational training of youths as compared to girls, a programme should be designed to attract youths to vocational education institutions.

Considering the existing imbalances between vocational education levels, a set of measures should be designed to upscale vocational training in primary and secondary segments of vocational education, including at public expense.

A course on labour law including gender equality issues, anti-discrimination legislation, privileges and guarantees for women associated with maternity and for workers with family responsibilities, as well as fundamentals of pension and social insurance and taxation should be developed and included in the curricula of general schools.

Methodological booklets with summaries of anti-discrimination legislation, lists of State privileges and guarantees in cases of temporary disability, maternity and childcare, etc. should be designed, published and disseminated in educational institutions of all levels (among senior schoolchildren in general schools and students of vocational schools). (A possible option: a set of booklets "Contracting Procedure", "Legally Established Privileges and Guarantees in Case of Pregnancy and Childbirth of Occupationally Employed Women", "Interviewing Procedure", etc.).

Media walls containing excerpts from labour and gender equality laws should be arranged at the PES branches, the Youth Labour Exchange and units of educational institutions responsible for the job placement of young people, etc.

A series of TV broadcasts should be prepared with the aim of eliminating legal illiteracy concerning issues of employment, gender equality and discrimination.





The development of social infrastructure, social and welfare services, preschool childcare facilities, especially nurseries and kindergartens in rural areas, and extended-day groups at schools should be accelerated. This will address two issues simultaneously. First, new jobs will be created, predominantly for women, and second, domestic work will be streamlined.

Measures should be taken to reduce licence-based employment and increase contract-based employment.

It would be worthwhile to analyse, summarize and highlight the most successful results of the work of the Trade Unions Federation of the Kyrgyz Republic on disseminating recommendations for primary organizations on incorporating gender issues into collective agreements and the experience of primary trade union organizations in addressing gender issues at specific enterprises.

Employers' associations and employers should take a more active part in establishing a national vocational guidance system and improving the vocational education system (by improving training programmes and adjusting areas of training) with the aim of improving the quality of vocational training at vocational institutions of all levels and overcoming skills mismatches.

It seems that, despite the high quality of the national gender statistics, it can be improved further in order to give a deeper insight into the country's gender issues and to increase possibilities for monitoring the implementation of national plans of action on achieving gender equality in the Kyrgyz Republic and other programmes on advancing women and men in various walks of life.

Considering that segregation in employment and youth employment is an acute issue in the Kyrgyz Republic, it is worthwhile to supplement statistics by occupational groups (employed, unemployed, etc.) with breakdown of these data by both sex and age.

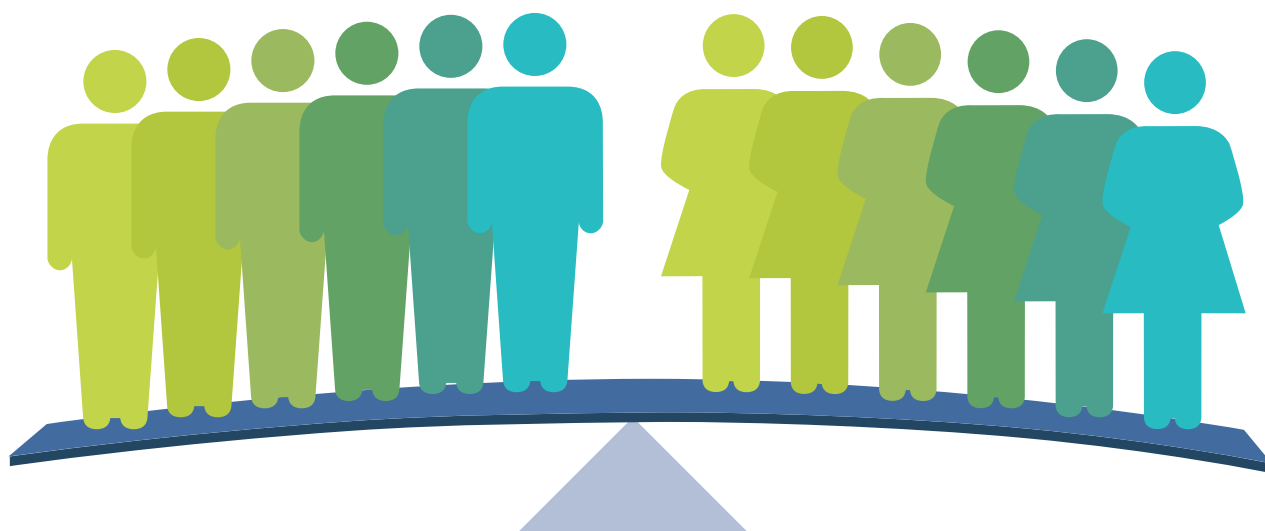
For a fuller analysis of statistical data, it is worthwhile to reconcile youth age cohorts in labour statistics (in the general sections and the section "Youth").

It seems appropriate to assess a possibility of developing indicators describing the actual use of maternity- and childcare-related State privileges and guarantees.

A system of monitoring youth gender issues in employment and the labour market should be established based on State statistical data.

The data on the actual use of the legally established maternity- and childcare-related privileges and guarantees (omitted by the state statistics) could be supplemented in the course of implementation of research projects aimed at highlighting the most acute gender challenges in employment and the labour market (for example, use of maternity- and childcare-related privileges and guarantees, the gender pay gap at enterprises in the informal sector of the economy, the demand for services of preschool childcare facilities, etc.).

Section 5. THE GENDER DIMENSION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



TRENDS AND CHALLENGES



CONTENTS – SECTION 5

Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation	180
Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth	185
Chapter 3. Demographic context of emergence of gender challenges in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth	188
Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education	190
Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment.....	193
Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls	202
Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment	211
Conclusions	214
Recommendations	217



The present section contains an analysis of the gender dimension in education, job placement and employment of youth in the Russian Federation. It presents a gender analysis of national legislation regulating these areas and highlights the approaches of the State and social partners to issues of job placement and employment of youths and girls.

The information base of the study includes:

- International treaties and conventions;
- National legal instruments regulating gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour;
- Data of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (Rosstat) (demographic, labour and education statistics; data of the Sample Time Management Survey conducted by the Rosstat in 2014) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS;
- Data and materials of the Ministry of Labour of the Russian Federation, the Federal Service for Labour and Employment, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FITUR) and national associations of employers;
- Interviews with employers, lecturers, students and graduates of tertiary educational institutions;
- Data of contemporary sociological studies on similar subjects conducted in the Russian Federation (secondary analysis):
 - Questionnaire survey of graduates of tertiary educational institutions in Moscow (350 respondents) and young parents (388 men and women with children from three to five years of age) (the survey was conducted in 2012–2013 within the framework of the project “Gender-Based Discrimination at Work” commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman);
 - Questionnaire survey of employers and youth conducted in 2015 by the Federal State-Funded Educational Institution of Higher Professional Education “Plekhanov Russian University of Economics” and published in the Summary of Services Provided within the Framework of the Comprehensive Study of the Youth Labour Market Situation in Moscow City under Government Contract No. 0Y3/05.2-4/15 of 10 July 2015;
- Findings of the questionnaire mini-survey of students of a non-State tertiary educational institution (51 respondents) conducted in the course of the present study.



Chapter 1. Gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour regulation in national legislation

1.1. International legal acts regulating gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour issues incorporated into national legislation

The Russian Federation is a party to most international conventions and treaties dealing with the prevention and elimination of gender-based discrimination (the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the 1996 Optional Protocol to it, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the United Nations Millennium Declaration and a number of other documents).

The Russian Federation has ratified a number of ILO conventions concerning maternity protection and gender issues at work (the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value, 1951 (No. 100), the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103), the Convention concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation), 1958 (No. 111), the Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981 (No. 156)) as well as conventions regulating teenage and youth labour (the Convention concerning the Minimum Age of Employment, 1919 (No. 138), the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182) and a number of other documents).

The country's legal system has incorporated the universally recognized norms and principles of international law as well as international treaties signed by the Russian Federation. Moreover, international treaties prevail over national legislation (if international agreements ratified by the Russian Federation contain norms other than those in national legislation, international norms shall prevail).

It is not only the ratified ILO conventions that must be applied in the Russian Federation. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (June 18, 1998) published for official application (Rossiyskaya Gazeta, December 16, 1998) establishes that all ILO member States, even if they have not ratified the relevant ILO conventions, have an obligation arising from the very fact of membership in the Organization to respect, to promote and to realize the principles concerning the fundamental rights that constitute the subject-matter of these conventions. The Convention concerning Termination of Employment at the Initiative of Employer, 1982 (No. 158), which was not ratified by the Russian Federation but whose provisions were incorporated into the Labour Code of the Russian Federation, for example, into Articles 82, 178 and 180, may be quoted as an example.

When elaborating its youth policy, the Russian Federation relies on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ratified by the Federal Law on the Ratification of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (No. 55-Φ3) dated 11 April 1998), the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (dated 21 May 2003), the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes (United Nations, 1998), the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (United Nations, 1995), and the Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (United Nations General Assembly, 1965).





1.2. National legal acts regulating gender equality, maternity protection, privileges for workers with family responsibilities and youth labour issues

The Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993) contains articles guaranteeing gender equality. Article 19 states that “men and women have equal rights and freedoms and equal opportunities for exercising them” and that “the State guarantees equality of human rights and freedoms of citizens regardless of their sex, race, ethnicity, language, origin, property status, official position, place of residence, attitude to religion, convictions, affiliation with public associations and other circumstances”. Article 7, part 2, guarantees gender equality. Article 37, part 3, guarantees the right to remuneration for work without discrimination and not lower than the minimum wage established by the federal law, as well as the right to protection against unemployment.

The constitutional principle of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women is reflected in a number of federal legal acts such as the Civil Code, the Labour Code, the Family Code, the Law of the Russian Federation on Citizenship, the Law on Medical Insurance of Citizens in the Russian Federation, the Law on Forcibly Displaced Persons, the Law on Refugees, the Law on the Fundamentals of Public Service in the Russian Federation, the Law on Militia and a number of other laws.

For the gender analysis of labour legislation and issues associated with the situation of women and men in employment and the labour market, it is important that, according to Article 38, part 2, of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, both parents have equal rights and equal obligations in taking care of children and bringing them up.

The present-day Russian labour legislation generally complies with international standards regulating the situation of youth, men and women in employment and the labour market. Moreover, it is more “generous” than international standards. For example, in the Russian Federation the duration of the maternity leave is 140 days (70 days before and 70 days after childbirth). The duration of the leave is cumulative and is available to women in full measure, regardless of the number of days she actually used before childbirth. The Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183), which the Russian Federation has not yet ratified, recommends that countries who have undertaken to implement it provide a maternity leave of 98 days, of which 42 days should be available after childbirth.

The maternity benefit of an insured woman is equal to a 100 per cent of her average monthly wage in the previous two years (considering the established minimum and maximum benefit with a periodical upward adjustment). The mechanism of benefit payment complies with the international standards since it is paid from the Social Insurance Fund (SIF) (Law No. 255-Φ3 dated December 29, 2006, Article 11).

The problem of payment of temporary disability and maternity benefits consists in the fact that they are not directly paid from the SIF. They are paid on the basis of the “offsetting” scheme whereby, in case of a contingency, the benefit is paid to a worker by the enterprise where he/she works from the funds the enterprise has to transfer to the SIF in the form of contributions. If these funds prove insufficient, the enterprise may request the SIF to offset the expenses incurred. After checking the legitimacy of expenses, the Fund either approves or denies compensation of the funds spent by the enterprise. A study of small businesses has revealed that some of them, primarily those practicing “off-the-books” employment, do not formalize contingencies in due manner (they are “invisible” for the SIF). If a benefit (and its amount) paid to a worker for his/her involuntary absence from the workplace is not formalized, both the payment and its amount depend solely on the employer’s will.⁹⁴

In informal employment, a woman generally loses her job in case of a pregnancy. At best, the employer does not pay her the maternity benefit.

⁹⁴ *Sotsialnoekonomicheskayazashchishchennostnaseleniyastolitsyzanyatogovmalombiznese* [Socioeconomic protection of the capital’s population employed in small businesses], Edited by Soboleva I.V., Moscow, OOO IZDAT-Chernozemye Publ., 2015.



An important social guarantee for pregnant women is a ban on termination of the labour contract at the employer's initiative (with the exception of cases of liquidation of a business or termination of individual entrepreneurial activities) (Article 261 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation). If a fixed-term contract was concluded with a woman and it expired during her pregnancy, an employer must prolong the contract until the end of pregnancy based on her written application or upon submission of a medical certificate confirming her pregnancy. Moreover, Article 145 of the Penal Code of the Russian Federation stipulates for a penalty to an employer for dismissing a pregnant woman on grounds of her pregnancy (or for an unjustified denial of employment on such grounds) in the form of a fine in the amount of up to 200,000 rubles or 18 months of wages or other income of the woman in question, or to compulsory community service for a period of 120–180 hours.

Article 3 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation (2001) bans discrimination at work. It reads that everyone has equal opportunities for exercising one's labour rights. No one may be restricted in one's labour rights and freedoms or receive any advantages regardless of one's sex, age and other circumstances not related to one's business qualities. At the same time, the article states that drawing distinctions, stipulating for exceptions and preferences and limiting workers' rights based on the requirements inherent in a certain job and established by federal laws or prompted by public concern for persons in need of greater social and legal protection is not discrimination.

According to legislation, persons considering that they were discriminated against at work may appeal to court for the reinstatement of the rights abused, reimbursement of material damage or compensation for moral harm. However, the burden of proof rests with the worker. Besides, Russian legislation does not yet contain a clear-cut definition of direct or indirect discrimination and does not cite examples of actions that may and must be considered discriminatory, which makes solicitation in cases of discrimination difficult.

It is important for uprooting practices of gender-based discrimination that Russian labour laws be free from the stipulation of any privileges and preferences associated with fulfilling family responsibilities exclusively for women. Chapter 41 in the Labour Code of the Russian Federation is devoted to the specifics of regulating the labour of women and persons with family responsibilities and formulates their rights associated with childbirth and breastfeeding. However, childcare and parenting rights are now granted not only to mothers but to fathers as well. Moreover, partially paid leave to care for a child until he/she reaches the age of 1.5 or unpaid leave until he/she reaches the age of three are now available not only to the child's parents, but also to his/her grandmother, grandfather or another relative or guardian actually caring for the child. During the childcare leave until the child reaches the age of 1.5 years, the person caring for the child and entitled to social insurance is paid a monthly benefit in an amount of 40 per cent of average wages (with the minimum and maximum limits). When the child reaches the age of 1.5, this person is entitled to a monthly benefit. Its amount and the procedure of its assignment, indexation and payment are established by laws and other regulations of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation (Law No. 81-Φ3 dated 19 May 1995). Monthly benefits during the childcare leave until the child reaches the age of 1.5 are paid from the federal budget and the SIF of the Russian Federation. Besides that, Article 256 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation guarantees retention of a job by all persons actually caring for a child, and not only to mothers. However, according to Article 145 of the Penal Code of the Russian Federation, criminal proceedings against employers denying employment to or dismissing workers on the grounds of the existence of children below three years of age may be instituted only if such denial or dismissal concerns a woman. In practice, this gender asymmetry causes no additional problems because such leave is mostly taken by mothers.

Until recently, one of the "blank spots" in the anti-discrimination part of the Russian labour legislation has been lack of provisions banning discriminatory job advertisements. The Federal Law (No. 162-Φ3) on Introducing Amendments into the Law on Population Employment in the Russian Federation (No. 1032-1) dated April 19, 1991 (2003) has changed the situation. The Law bans the dissemination of information on vacant jobs or positions containing information on any direct or indirect restrictions of





the rights or direct or indirect advantages depending on sex, race, colour of skin, ethnicity, language, origin, property, marital or social status, official position, age, place of residence, attitude to religion, convictions, affiliation or non-affiliation with public associations or any social groups as well as other circumstances not related to workers' business qualities, with the exception of cases when the right or the obligation to establish such restrictions or advantages is stipulated by federal laws. Article 25 reads that persons disseminating such information shall be held administratively liable. The Code of the Russian Federation on Administrative Offences (Article 13.11.1) stipulates for administrative fines to be imposed on individuals in an amount of 500 to 1,000 rubles, on officials – in an amount of 3,000 to 5,000 rubles, and on legal entities – in an amount of 10,000 to 15,000 rubles for disseminating such information.

According to the information of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation dated July 24, 2013, not only employers (individuals and legal entities regardless of their organizational and legal form and form of ownership) but also editorial staffs of the mass media and owners of web sites or authorized persons responsible for posting information on vacant jobs or positions that contains restrictions of discriminatory nature, may be joined as a party to the suit and held administratively liable for the very fact of posting information disseminated by third parties. If the editorial staff of a mass medium is neither an individual nor a legal entity, the founder and the editor-in-chief of this mass medium may be joined as a party to the suit and held administratively liable.

An analysis of legislation regulating the functioning of the education system has shown absence of discriminatory provisions in it. Article 5 of the Law on Education in the Russian Federation (No. 273-Φ3), dated 29 December 2012, guarantees everyone's right to education **regardless of one's sex** (race, ethnicity, language, origin, property or social status or official position and other circumstances). Accessible and free vocational education is guaranteed in accordance with the national educational standards of secondary vocational education, and free tertiary education is guaranteed on a competitive basis, if it is acquired for the first time.

In the labour legislation, there are numerous provisions regulating occupational employment of young people. Most of them concern persons below the age of 18. Article 92 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation stipulates for shorter working hours (no more than 24 hours per week) for workers below 16 years of age and no more than 35 hours for workers aged 16–18 (in this case, output quotas are set on the basis of general output quotas in proportion to the number of working hours, while wages in the time-rate system are paid with due consideration for the reduced working hours). Article 265 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation lists jobs with harmful and hazardous working conditions such as underground work and jobs that may be harmful to the health and moral development of young people below the age of 18 (work in the gambling industry and all-night cabarets and clubs) and bans their employment in such jobs. The Article also forbids such workers to carry and move heavy objects exceeding the prescribed limits. Article 267 guarantees a regular annual paid leave with the duration of 31 calendar days for such workers at the time convenient for them. Article 269 stipulates for additional guarantees to workers below 18 years of age in case of termination of labour contracts (termination of labour contracts at the employer's initiative, with the exception of cases of liquidation of a business or termination of individual entrepreneurial activities is only allowed upon consent of the relevant State labour inspection and commission for the affairs of minors and protection of their rights).

Russian labour laws stipulate for a number of guarantees and compensations to workers combining work with studies. Chapter 26 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation reads that employers should grant additional leave with the retention of average wages to workers combining work with studies at various education levels under the programmes with State accreditation they are successfully coping with (when acquiring such education for the first time). The duration of such additional leave depends on the duration and level of education a worker is acquiring, as well as on the form of learning and type of attestation.



1.3. National mechanism for the advancement of women

By signing the Declaration and the Platform for Action formulated and approved at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the Russian Federation has committed, among other things, to create a national mechanism for the advancement of women as an independent public body, which was supposed to have direct influence on the formulation of public policies for women, participate in the law-making process and have its own budget.

The mechanism was supposed to assist the Government of the Russian Federation in implementing the gender equality policy and mainstreaming gender into legislation, the country's socioeconomic policy, programmes and projects of different levels.

The main components of the national mechanism were supposed to be as follows: provision of legal framework, financial resources, and organizational and information support (statistics).

Legal framework. In the Russian Federation, there exists a legal framework for gender equality creating prerequisites for implementing the principle of equal rights and opportunities for men and women and preventing discrimination.

Organizing framework. After the Russian Federation had joined the Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action, several public bodies were established in subsequent years, which were supposed to be components of a national mechanism for the advancement of women. However, in the course of the administrative reform (2004) and change of Government of the Russian Federation, the bodies responsible for addressing gender issues were considerably curtailed. Today, the legislative branch of the national mechanism includes the Public Commission for Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women under the Chairperson of the Federation Council, the Committee for Social Policy and Health of the Federation Council, and the Commission for Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the State Duma.

The public policy component aimed at the advancement of women has been incorporated into the public family and demographic policy, as well as poverty reduction and health care development policies.

Financial resources. Allocation of a special budget for the new structure was supposed to be one of the main conditions of independent and effective operation of the national mechanism. However, appropriate financial resources were never provided for the operation of the national mechanism in the Russian Federation.

Information support (statistics). Gender statistics are supposed to make it possible to monitor the situation of men and women in all areas of life, draw international comparisons, and ensure information control and assessment of the decision-making efficiency and implementation of the policy of equal rights and equal opportunities. Every other year, a statistical handbook entitled "Women and Men in Russia" is published in Russia. The number of indicators it contains is constantly increasing due to the introduction of their regional differentiation and elaboration of new indicators reflecting various aspects in the life of men and women.



Chapter 2. Gender roles and stereotypes widespread among youth

2.1. Stereotypes concerning the division of gender roles

In Russia, most people support the traditional division of roles and responsibilities between men and women. Without questioning gender equality, both men and women are confident that both childcare and domestic work are more suitable for women while earning a living is more suitable for men. Theoretically, many contemporary men and women agree that domestic work should be equally divided between husband and wife. However, in reality the burden of unpaid work connected with caring for family members, bringing up children and doing domestic work is predominantly shouldered by women, while men spend considerably more time on paid work.

A sample daily time management survey conducted by the Rosstat in 2014⁹⁵ has shown that Russian women above 15 years of age spend from three to 18 hours on work in the informal economy, while men spend from four to 44 hours on it. Besides, men have an additional source of income by providing paid services more often than women do.

Women spend more time than men do on “providing unpaid domestic services for their own end use in the household” (women spend from three to 22 hours, while men spend from one to 35 hours on it). Despite the high domestic workload, the overwhelming majority of Russian women are employed, which is proved by the data on their economic activity reviewed in Chapter 5.

2.2. Gender stereotypes in employment and the labour market

In Russia, employment is dominated by persistent stereotypes concerning men and women workers closely correlated with the stereotypes regarding the roles and division of responsibilities between men and women. According to these stereotypes, occupational employment is less important to women. They allegedly think more about their homes than about work and agree to inconvenient working schedules more rarely. What is most important, young women are believed to be unreliable and inconvenient workers because they can go on a maternity or a childcare leave or a sick leave to care for a sick child any time.

Although the Russian legislation grants privileges related to childcare and other family responsibilities not only to women but to men as well, it is mostly women who use them. A survey of young parents conducted in Moscow in 2012⁹⁶ showed that after the birth of a child women expressed their readiness to take leave to care for the child until he/she is 1.5 years old considerably more often than men did (88.6 per cent of female and 5 per cent of male respondents were ready to use this entitlement in full measure, and 7.4 and 3 per cent respectively were ready to use it partially). However, there have been some changes in their attitudes. Back in the 1990s, a man who took childcare leave was generally ridiculed by his superiors, colleagues and neighbours, whereas today, as the survey has shown, not a single man of those who took up such leave faced any barriers in formalizing it.

Another persistent labour market stereotype consists in the conviction that men are better leaders, are more enterprising, have a higher labour productivity, think about work more, and are more inventive and better educated technically. As for women, they are more orderly, efficient, responsible, disciplined

⁹⁵ Calculated based on the data of the Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service, www.gks.ru/.

⁹⁶ The Project on Gender-Based Discrimination at Work, commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman, Government Contract No. 25 of July 23, 2012.



and sociable. Therefore, men are better suited for managerial positions and large-scale entrepreneurship. As for women, they can allegedly run only very small businesses and are better suited for wage work in subordinate positions (or as low-level managers or deputies of senior managers), etc. If a woman runs a big business, she is believed to be under “male” protection.

A survey of graduates of vocational education institutions and young parents in Moscow⁹⁷ has shown that such stereotypes are widespread. Besides, they are more typical of men than of women and of young people than of older ones (Table 5.1). For example, 54.9 per cent of male graduates regard big business as a solely male occupation, and only 1.9 per cent – as a female one (43.2 per cent are of the opinion that this type of activity is suitable for both men and women). Girls are generally of the same opinion as youths but they are somewhat more optimistic concerning their entrepreneurship opportunities. The share of girls who believe that big businesses can well be run by women is higher (2.9 per cent are of the opinion that this is a solely “female” domain, and 45.9 per cent believe that it is “suitable for all”).

More youths are ready to entrust women with running small businesses: 13 per cent of them believe that this type of activity may be regarded as a purely “female” one, and 61.1 per cent are of the opinion that it is suitable for both men and women. Girls are more often than youths inclined to consider this type of activity as an area of their interest (22.9 per cent of them believe that it is more suitable for women, and 64.4 per cent think that it is suitable for representatives of both sexes).

Practically all youths are ready to entrust the lowest level of entrepreneurship to the fair sex, and only one out of every ten of them believes that only men can be self-employed. Girls see themselves in this position more often than youths do. Only one out of every 20 believed that this employment status is suitable only for men.

Both youths and girls rarely consider wage work and work in family undertakings as an activity worthy exclusively of men. At the same time, youths consider this activity suitable only for women more often than girls do, whereas girls believe that it is suitable for both sexes more often than youths do.



⁹⁷ Ibid.



Table 5.1. Distribution of graduates' and young parents' replies to the question "What activities, in your opinion, are more suitable for men and women?" by sex, %

Type of activity	Replies of men			Replies of women		
	To men	To women	To both	To men	To women	To both
Graduates						
Big business	54.9	1.9	43.2	51.2	2.9	45.9
Small businesses	25.9	13.0	61.1	12.7	22.9	64.4
Self-employment	9.9	17.4	72.7	5.4	16.6	78.0
Wage work	13.0	18.5	68.5	8.3	11.7	80.0
Work in family undertakings	3.7	31.1	65.2	3.9	23.2	72.9
Young parents						
Big business	75.0	–	25.0	59.0	2.4	38.6
Small businesses	55.0	7.0	38.0	20.8	15.3	63.9
Self-employment	6.0	38.0	56.0	4.2	33.3	62.5
Wage work	9.0	17.0	74.0	6.9	16.3	76.8
Work in family undertakings	3.0	55.0	42.0	1.4	42.4	56.2

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Project on Gender-Based Discrimination at Work, commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman, Government Order No. 25, July 23, 2012.

Interestingly, the survey of young parents (who have children of three to six years of age and are experiencing difficulties in reconciling work with family responsibilities in full measure) conducted simultaneously produced a more traditional assessment of men's and women's opportunities for engaging in the activities offered. Both young fathers and young mothers are ready to delegate the responsibility of running both large and small businesses solely to men more often than graduates do, leaving less profitable and prestigious occupations (self-employment, wage work and work in family undertakings) to women.

During the survey, men proved to be more radical than women did. Therefore, women are more ready to reconsider the traditional gender stereotypes than men are.

The above gender stereotypes existing in employment and the labour market have given rise to women's "self-discrimination" in wages. Sociological surveys have shown that male and female social norms concerning wages generally differ by 25–30 per cent, i.e. women themselves assess the cost of their labour 25–30 per cent lower than men do.

Young people are no exception in this respect. The survey of graduates has shown that in 2012 average wages described by youths as "good" were 30 per cent higher than the similar indicator for girls.

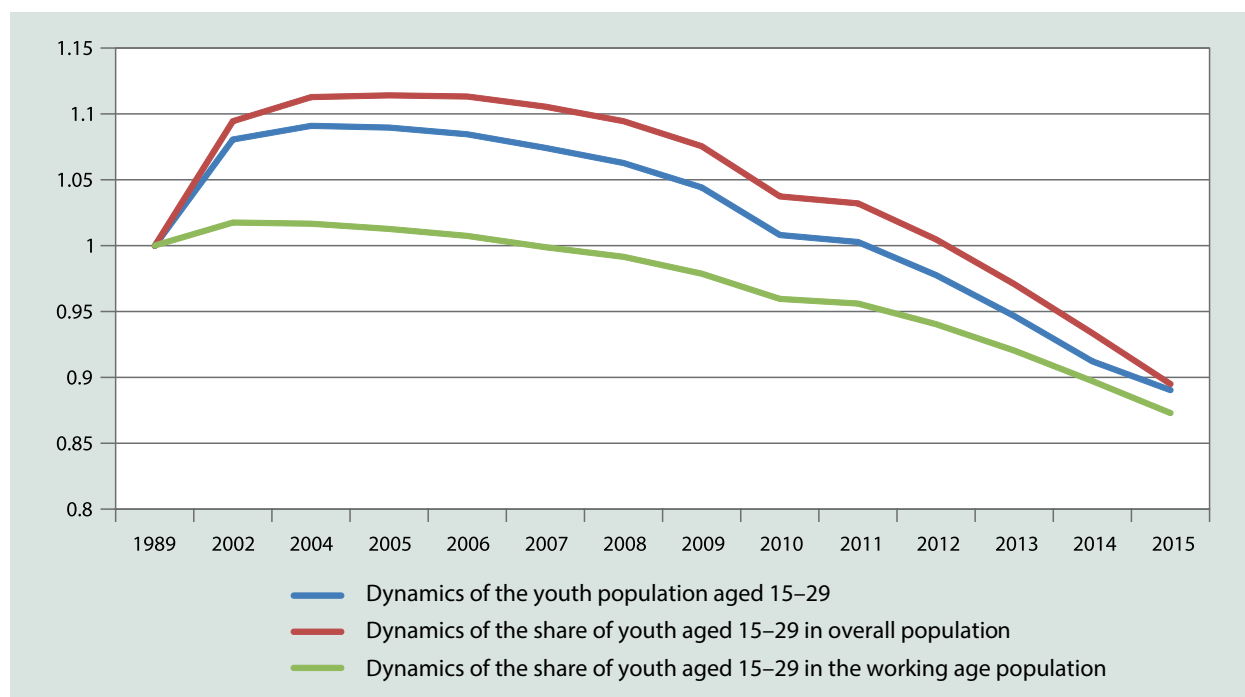


Chapter 3. Demographic context of emergence of gender challenges in vocational education, job placement and employability of youth

3.1. Dynamics of the youth population and its share in the overall population

Despite the low birth rate and population ageing, the share of youth (15–29 years old) in the Russian Federation is rather high. According to the 2015 statistics (including the Crimean population), the number of young people was 21.8 million, or 20.1 per cent of overall population and 33.6 per cent of the working age population. The dynamics of these indicators has remained negative over the last 10 years, which is primarily connected with the demographic decline of the 1990s (the period of the end of the “perestroika” (restructuring) and radical changes in the country’s economy when a sharp decline in the living standards and social protection of the majority of the population, coupled with the effect of the “demographic trough”, led to a catastrophic decrease in the birth rate). The situation is supposed to improve in the nearest future, which is proved by the positive dynamics of the number of children aged 0–14 (in this century, increasing birth rates were initially connected with the peculiarities of the demographic processes and a subsequent improvement in the economic situation, and the trend was supported by appropriate Government measures).

Diagram 5.1. Dynamics of the youth population aged 15–29 and its share in overall population as compared to 1989.



Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

A typical feature of the young population group is the prevalence of men (in 2015, there were 953 women per 1,000 men aged 15–19, 959 women per 1,000 men aged 20–24, and 978 women per 1,000 men aged 24–29), while the situation is the opposite in older age cohorts. In the next age cohort (30–34 years), the number of women exceeds the number of men (there are 1,001 women per 1,000 men). Gender imbalances in the population structure are increasing with age. The older the age cohort, the greater is the prevalence of women (there are 1,278 women per 1,000 men in the age cohort of 55–59).





years). The causes of the situation should be sought not as much in the biological peculiarities of men and women (they exist, but they are not great) as in their behavioural peculiarities and different gender roles accepted in Russia that lead to substantial differences in mortality patterns of the working age men and women.

3.2. Dynamics of marriage age and mother's age at childbirth

Such demographic indicators as marriage age and mother's age at childbirth are important for the present study because they reflect the social norms of marital and reproductive behaviour of the population. At the workplace, these norms largely determine not only the amount of maternity leave used by a typical woman and their distribution along the timeline of her occupational career, but also the amount of childcare leave and the probability of its use by the woman herself or members of her family.

These standards may serve as a reference point for employers in assessing the opportunities of the newly recruited staff to participate in the production process on a more regular basis.

Demographical statistics testify to the fact that the norms of marital and reproductive behaviour of Russia's population are gradually changing. The decreasing number of marriages in both male and female age cohorts below 18 and 18–24 years of age and the increasing number of marriages at the age of 35+ testify to the fact that young Russians now marry at an older age.

Table 5.2. Marriages with breakdown by the age of bride and bridegroom

Year	By bridegroom's age, years				By bride's age, years			
	below 18	18–24	25–34	35+	below 18	18–24	25–34	35 +
2009	1,480	380,613	539,805	277,507	14,062	559,805	428,148	197,399
2011	1,097	380,457	633,360	301,045	11,425	574,707	514,339	215,505
2013	931	300,195	619,534	304,826	9,695	465,626	521,289	228,879
2014 ¹⁾	835	273,994	632,025	319,131	9,180	436,993	534,702	245,110

¹⁾ Including the Crimean Federal District.

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

The mother's age at childbirth is also gradually increasing. In the last 15 years, it has been up from 25.8 to 28.1 years. This may be considered as an indirect evidence of the fact that an increasing number of women postpone the birth of their first child, let alone their second and third child, beyond the youth age range.

Table 5.3. Dynamics of mother's average age at childbirth

Годы	Средний возраст матерей, родивших ребенка в данном году
2000	25.8
2005	26.5
2010	27.7
2014	28.1

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.



Chapter 4. Gender challenges in vocational education

The population census undertaken in the Russian Federation in 2002 showed that in the new millennium the educational attainment of women was higher than that of men. On the one hand, the situation is a result of women's increasing interest in acquiring an education and a declining interest among men. Russian women make full use of educational opportunities guaranteed by the State. They constitute half of all general school students and a majority of vocational school students. Moreover, when acquiring a vocational education, women give preference to its higher levels, while men are mostly satisfied with its lower levels. As a result, young women's educational attainment levels exceed those of young men, and the gap is increasing with time. On the other hand, the generation where men's educational attainment was considerably higher than that of women is gradually passing away.

4.1. Gender composition of general secondary school students

No gender asymmetry exists among students of public general education institutions in Russia (male-to-female ratio is close to 1:1, i.e. practically corresponds to the demographic gender distribution of children in the appropriate age cohorts).

Table 5.4. Number of students by types of educational institutions at the beginning of the 2013/2014 academic year

	Women	Men	Distribution by sex, %	
			Women	Men
Total number of students				
000 persons	10,930.0	10,846.2		
%	100	100	50	50
Of this number, in:				
General education institutions	60.4	61.8	50	50
Vocational institutions training skilled workers and employees ¹⁾	2.2	4.3	32	68
Vocational institutions training mid-level staff	8.8	9.4	49	51
Tertiary educational institutions	27.9	23.9	54	46
Post-graduate studies ¹⁾	0.6	0.6	47	53
Doctorate ¹⁾	0.020	0.022	48	52

¹⁾ As at the end of 2013. Source: Rosstat.

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.



4.2. Gender composition of students in the vocational education system

At present, the vocational education system attracts practically the entire youth cohort. This deters their economic activity thereby reducing general tensions in the national labour market.

Primary vocational institutions training skilled workers and employees constitute the less extensive (in 2013, it covered only 8.3 per cent of all vocational students) and quickly reducing level of the national vocational education system (in 2009–2013, the number of students decreased from 1,035,000 to 705,000 persons, i.e. almost 1.5-fold).

Girls constitute a minority (32 per cent) of students, which is to a certain extent explained by the existence of a list of production facilities and jobs where the employment of women is restricted (workers for such production facilities and jobs are mostly trained at the corresponding educational institutions). Over time, there has been a steady downward trend in the share of women among students at this educational level (in 2011, it accounted for 33.8 per cent of all students, and in 2013 – for 32 per cent), which is associated with an increasing interest of girls in higher levels of vocational education.

Secondary vocational education (training of mid-level staff) is larger in scale, accounting for 24 per cent of all vocational students. The number of students acquiring such education has been changing over the last few years, but the trends were not obvious. Until recently, it was the most feminized level of education: girls accounted for a majority of students for several decades (in 1995, their share reached 60 per cent). In recent years, this kind of training has become less popular. In 2013, their share in the total number of students was down to 49 per cent.

Educational institutions training specialists in health care, education, economics and law have always been the most feminized ones. The smallest number of girls study at educational institutions training specialists in transport and communications.

In the Russian Federation, tertiary education is the most feminized level of vocational education. Women have constituted a majority of their students for many years, although their share has been gradually decreasing (56.7 per cent in 2000, 58.2 per cent in 2005, 55.2 per cent in 2012, and 54 per cent in the 2013/14 academic year).

Although the share of women among post-graduate and doctorate students (trained to be highly skilled brainpower) is somewhat lower than the share of men (Table 5.4), their share has been steady increasing over time, whereas the share of men has been decreasing.

In recent years, preferences have been developed for youths entering vocational education institutions in the Russian Federation. In 2014, the Federal Law on Amending Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation concerning Implementation of Measures Aimed at Making Enlistment More Prestigious and Attractive (No. 170-Φ3) came into effect. According to Article 19, paragraph 5, citizens with tertiary education who have completed military service, all other things being equal, are given preference during enrolment in tertiary educational institutions for economic and management courses and relevant additional occupational training within the framework of programmes and projects approved by the President and the Government of the Russian Federation.

According to Article 59 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and Article 22, para. 1, of the Federal Law on the Military Duty and Military Service (No. 53-Φ3), only male citizens are to be drafted and, therefore, this preference concerns only youths.



4.3. Gender segregation by areas of training and occupations

At the secondary and tertiary levels of vocational education, women are represented among students in all areas of training and occupations, but the extent of their representation varies. The most feminized occupations are those in social sciences, pedagogics, health care, culture and arts, economics and management where the share of women among students varies from 65 to 80 per cent. At the same time, their share in engineering occupations is substantially lower than that of men (in the 2013/14 academic year, women constituted 34 per cent of students studying physics and mathematics, 16 per cent of students studying geology, and 6 per cent of students studying marine engineering).

At military training institutions, women can acquire tertiary education in the limited number of occupations. According to the Rosstat, their share among students acquiring military training accounted for 10.5 per cent in the 2013/14 academic year.

Despite certain progress, distribution of women and men across programmes and areas of vocational training remains stable, which is the most important factor for the reproduction of the existing segregation patterns by types of economic activity and occupational groups in employment.

4.4. Additional education

To enhance the role of women in the country's economic development, an experiment has been arranged to increase women's opportunities to acquire an education. To this end, the Government of the Russian Federation passed Decision No. 756 on arranging free training of women below 23 years of age with one or more children at preparatory departments of 51 tertiary educational institutions in 50 constituent entities of the Russian Federation. At the preparatory departments, young mothers the period of validity of whose unified State exam results has expired prepare for passing the exam once again, which permits them to enter tertiary educational institutions along with school graduates.

Possibilities of replicating this experiment are being reviewed, including the discussion of a draft law stipulating for granting preferences to women with children during enrolment.

Another government initiative aimed at increasing women's competitiveness in the labour market is a programme of vocational training, retraining and skills development for women on childcare leave until the child is three years old. The programme takes into consideration the fact that women on prolonged leave partially lose their occupational skills, and their knowledge becomes outdated.

Within the framework of the programme, women on such leave have an opportunity to acquire free vocational training (retraining) under one of the 500 programmes at a vocational education institution on a referral from the employment service, including through distance learning technologies. The programme covering all constituent entities of the Russian Federation has been operating since 2011. The number of women on childcare leave referred for vocational training is gradually increasing. In 2012, there were 9,800 women; in 2013, their number increased to 13,300 and in 2014, it reached 16,300 persons. An analysis of the programme outputs has shown that the occupations most appealing to women were those of an accountant, a computer operator, a manicurist and pedicurist, a hairdresser, a cook, a shop assistant, a clerk, a nurse, a secretary, a human resources manager, a staff manager and a trade manager as well as the following courses: "IC: Accounting", "IC: Trade and Warehousing", and "IC: Trade Management".

In 2013, the discriminatory component of the programme targeting parents of only one sex, namely, mothers, was eliminated. Such vocational training, retraining and skills development may be currently provided to fathers on childcare leave as well.





Chapter 5. The gender dimension of economic activity, employment and unemployment

5.1. Economic activity of youths and girls

The Russian Federation has been, and remains, one of the world's leading countries in the rate and scale of women's participation in the economy. According to the Rosstat, Russian women actually constitute half of the economically active population (49 per cent). Their labour force participation rate for the age cohorts of 15 to 72 years is 63 per cent (against 74.74 per cent for men) and is still higher for the working age women 16–54 years old – 76.2 per cent (against 82.6 per cent for working age men 16–59 years old).

A different situation is taking shape in the wage employment of youth. In international comparisons, their labour force participation is rather low, especially in the younger age cohorts. In 2013, it constituted as little as 7.6 per cent for 15–19 year old girls and 10.3 per cent for youths as well as 53.6 per cent for 20–24 year old girls and 66.4 per cent for youths, which is lower than the corresponding indicators typical of the industrialized countries and most of the CIS countries. High labour force participation is typical of young people of an “older” age cohort (25–29 years), who do not fall into the category of youth under international standards. In 2013, labour force participation constituted 79.9 per cent for girls and 94.7 per cent for youths of this age cohort (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5. Dynamics of labour force participation of youth, %

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Women				
Total	62.2	63.0	63.3	63.0
Of this number, at the age of, years:				
15–19	9.2	8.6	7.5	7.6
20–24	56.5	55.8	53.1	53.6
25–29	80.2	80.7	81.6	79.9
Men				
Total	73.8	74.4	74.7	74.7
Of this number, at the age of, years:				
15–19	13.9	12.5	11.0	10.3
20–24	68.3	68.3	65.5	66.4
25–29	93.9	94.5	94.5	94.7

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

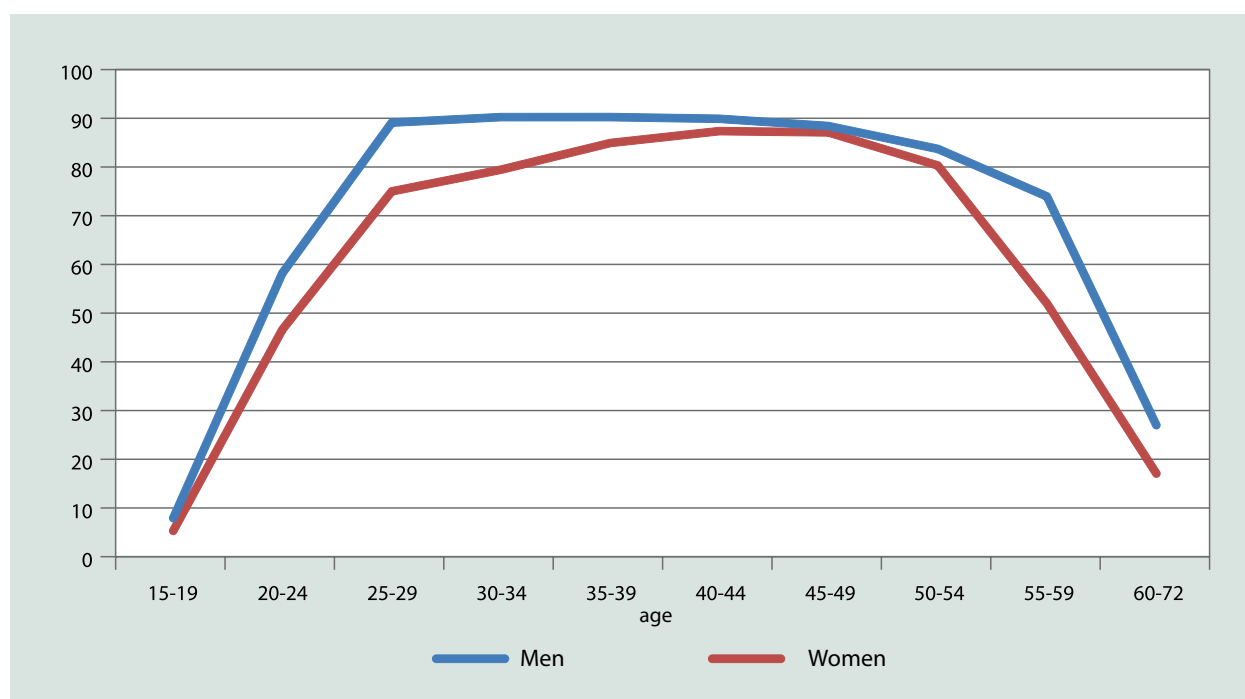


In the new millennium, dynamics of labour force participation of Russia's adult and young populations are different. Until recently, the indicator for overall population tended to increase, whereas they tended to decrease for youths and girls. The most probable explanation of the decreasing interest of Russian youth in wage employment is a wider coverage of this age cohort with education. As far as young women are concerned, the birth of children was an additional factor that reduced their economic activity.

5.2. Youth employment, employment of youths and girls

In the Russian Federation, employment rates are high for both men (in 2013, it was 70.4 per cent for men aged 15–72) and women (58.8 per cent), and women actually constitute half of the country's employed population (49 per cent).

Diagram 5.2. Female and male employment rates by age cohort, 2013, %



Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

However, employment rates vary by age cohorts. The lowest indicators are typical of younger age cohorts (below 25 years of age), and they are lower for girls than for youths. The highest employment rate for women falls on the age cohort of 40–50 years when its values are as high as 90.4–90.7 per cent, close to the male employment rate.

Apart from practically equal participation in occupational employment with men, Russian women have a higher occupational capacity as compared to men and are better educated. Two thirds of employed women have secondary or tertiary vocational education, whereas only one out of every two men has one (Table 5.6).



**Table 5.6.** Employed women and men by educational attainment levels, 2013, %

	Women	Men	Breakdown by sex, %	
			Women	Men
Total	100	100	49	51
Tertiary vocational	35.5	28.0	55	45
Secondary vocational	30.3	21.5	57	43
Primary vocational	14.0	22.9	37	63
General (upper) secondary	17.4	22.9	42	58
Basic secondary	2.6	4.4	37	63
Without basic general education	0.2	0.3	36	64

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

Women are represented in all types of economic activity, but their share among those employed varies. This is largely explained by persistent segregation of students by vocational training programmes and areas (as was mentioned above). The most feminized types of economic activity are education and health care where the share of women is equal to 82 and 80 per cent respectively. The smallest number of women are employed in construction (15 per cent) and fisheries (14 per cent).

In general, the extent of segregation by types of economic activity is currently high (36 per cent). Moreover, it tends to increase with time.

Table 5.7. Dynamics of the segregation index by type of economic activity, 2009–2014, %

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Segregation index by type of economic activity	35	35	35	36	35	36

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

Women are represented in all occupational qualification groups including the highest ones. However, segregation by occupational qualification groups is high and actually unchanging. The relevant index for 2009–2011 did not practically change, but its components were changing and not always positive. For example, in the period under review, the highest position “senior government officials of all levels, including heads of organizations” in the subgroup of high-calibre staff, “male” as it was, became even more so because the share of men in these positions increased considerably more than the share of women. On the contrary, feminization increased in the substantially less prestigious and lower paid position “other high-calibre staff”.

**Table 5.8.** Dynamics of the segregation index by occupational qualification group (% , 2008–2014)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Segregation index by occupational qualification group	47	47	47	47	47	47	48

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

The most feminized occupational qualification groups are currently middle-skilled workers and support staff in natural sciences and health care (where women account for 92 per cent), middle-skilled staff in education (94 per cent), employees in the services (89 per cent), and workers engaged in preparing information, doing paperwork and stocktaking (87 per cent).

The smallest number of women are employed as drivers and mobile equipment operators (3 per cent), workers in the metalworking and mechanical engineering industries (7 per cent), and workers employed in mining, capital mining, civil and erection works, and construction and repair works (9 per cent).

In the subgroup of high-calibre staff, women are represented in all positions. However, the higher the position, the fewer women among its representatives. For example, in 2013, there were 38 per cent of women among senior government officials of all levels and 70 per cent of them among other high-calibre workers.

Despite women's higher educational attainment levels, their wages lag behind men's wages considerably (in 2013, women's wages constituted only 74 per cent of men's wages), although recent years have witnessed a reduction in the gender pay gap, which decreased from 37 to 26 percentage points in 2007–2013.

Table 5.9. Female-to-male wage ratio, 2007–2013

	2007	2009	2011	2013
Female-to-male wage ratio, %	63	65	68	74

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

Reduction in the gender pay gap was facilitated by a rise in the wages of teachers, physicians and social workers (occupations where mostly women are employed) to the levels comparable with average wages in each specific region, implemented under the May Decrees of the President of the Russian Federation. As a result, in 2014, average wages of secondary school teachers exceeded average wages in the economy at large by 8 per cent. Another factor that reduced the difference between men's and women's wages was a 12.9 per cent increase in the minimum wage. In 2012, the number of workers receiving minimum wages (below 5,205 rubles) was 1.3 million (2 per cent of those employed). Half of them were employed in the highly feminized government-financed sphere and, therefore, the rise in minimum wages primarily improved the situation of women.

The gender pay gap is typical of all types of economic activity regardless of the extent of their feminization. Today, its lowest value is observed in highly feminized types of activity such as education, health care and social services where women's average accrued wages constitute 99.0 and 90.8 per cent of men's wages, and its highest value – 26.2 percentage points – is in scientific research.

**Table 5.10.** Female-to-male wage ratio by type of economic activity, %

	2011	2013
Total for economic activities surveyed	64.1	74.2
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	-	83.5
Mining	74.6	76.2
Manufacturing industries	70.1	74.5
Electricity, gas and water production and distribution	82.9	83.2
Construction	85.8	84.5
Wholesale and retail trade, etc.	67.5	79.8
Hotels and restaurants	76.1	80.6
Transport and communication	72.0	75.2
Real estate operations, lease	78.4	80.4
R&D	70.8	73.8
Education	89.0	99.0
Health care and social services	83.3	90.8

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

The gender pay gap is formed under the impact of many factors. First of all, it is segregation – an uneven distribution of occupationally employed women and men by types of economic activity, occupations and positions, as a result of which women more often than men find themselves employed in low-paid economic activities. For example, in 2014, 77.1 per cent of all women workers and only 60.5 per cent of men workers were employed in those types of economic activity where average wages were lower than Russia's average.

A similar situation is observed in employment by types of occupations and positions. There are only 47 per cent of women among heads of organizations and their units and services (well-remunerated category of workers), whereas there are 90.5 per cent of women among the numerous group of workers engaged in preparing information and paperwork whose wages are twice as low as those of the former category of workers.

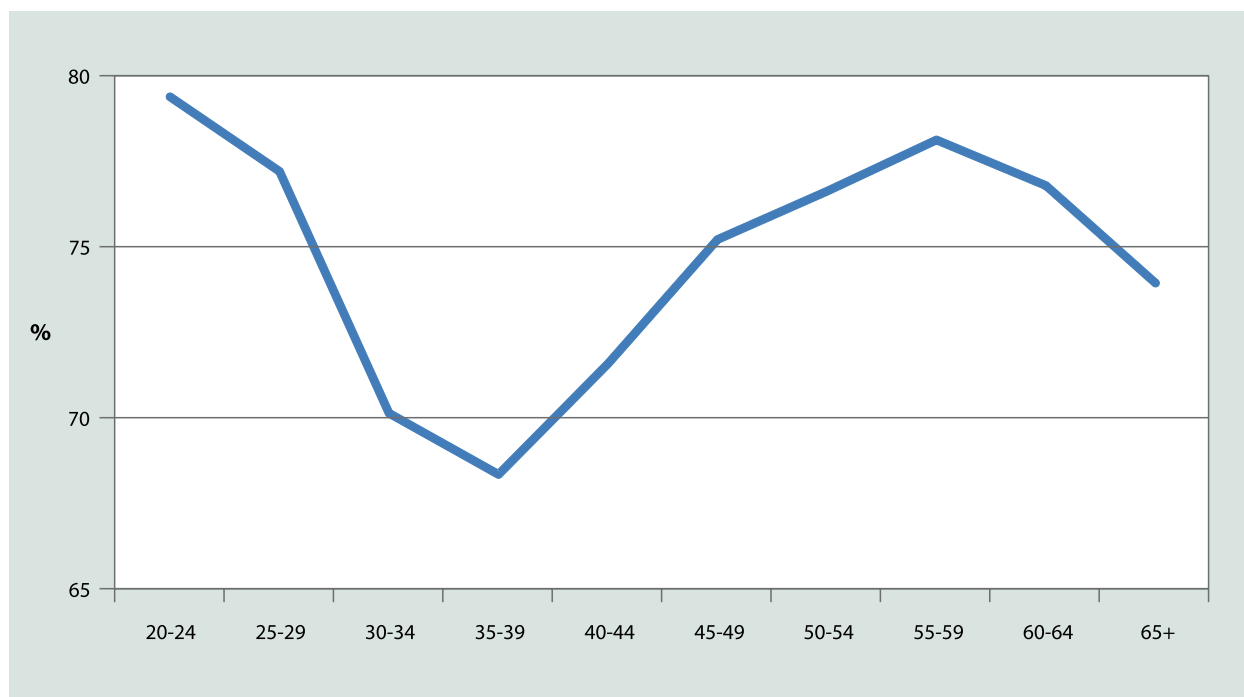
There is also a discrimination component in this gap, but it is relatively small and is assessed by different experts at 7–18 per cent.⁹⁸

The gender pay gap is substantially differentiated by workers' age cohorts. Minimum differences are typical of workers of the younger youth, pre-pension and pension age cohorts, i.e. in those periods of the life cycle when women's workload due to the birth and care of children is minimal (Diagram 5.3).

⁹⁸ Roshchin S., Gorelkina O. *Genderniyerazlichiyavzarabotnoyplate: mycroekonomicheskianalizfaktorovitendentsii. Zarabotnayaplata v Rossii. Evolutsiyaidifferentsiatsia* [Gender wage gaps: microeconomic analysis of factors and trends. Wages in Russia. Evolution and differentiation]. Moscow, SU HSE, p. 283, 292.



Diagram 5.3. Female-to-male wage ratio by age cohort, %



Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

Russians display a rather tolerant attitude to this issue. Both the authorities and the population are inclined to view these differences not as an issue caused by discrimination against women at work but as a natural consequence of women's greater inclination towards childcare and domestic work.

At present, the informal economy accounts for a fifth part of Russia's sphere of employment (it accumulates 19.7 per cent of all those employed) and tends to increase with time.

The statistical definition "persons employed in the informal economy" implies persons who were employed during the period under review in at least one production facility in the informal economy regardless of whether it was their main or additional employment. The criterion for defining a facility as informal is absence of State registration as a legal entity. Persons employed in the informal economy include individual entrepreneurs, wage earners working for individual entrepreneurs and natural persons, contributing family workers, persons working on an individual basis without registration as individual entrepreneurs, and those working in their own household producing farm, forestry, hunting and fishery products for sale or exchange.

Informal employment is more widespread among young people than among adults. The fact that the share of young persons among those employed in the informal economy exceeds its share in the employed population testifies to that. (In 2013, the share of men aged 15–29 constituted 25.3 per cent of all employed men, whereas their share among those employed in the informal economy constituted 27.5 per cent; as for women, the respective indicators were 21.4 and 24.8 per cent).



Another indicator of an adverse situation is the share of those employed in the informal economy in the total number of persons employed. Breakdown of the indicator by age cohorts (Table 5.11) testifies to the fact that employment in the informal economy increases predominantly in younger youth cohorts, primarily among girls. In 2013, the share of persons employed in the informal economy in the total number of those employed accounted for 21.3 per cent, whereas the share of employed youths aged 15–29 working in the informal economy was 43 per cent (in 2009, the indicator was equal to 35.5 per cent).

The situation among working girls of this age is even more complicated. In 2009, 48.4 per cent of them worked in the informal economy, whereas in 2013 their share increased to 58 per cent.

Young people of the next age cohort (20–24 years old) are in a less complicated situation, but all the same, the values of the indicator for the representatives of both sexes are higher than for overall population. In 2013, 24.5 per cent of youths and 24.1 per cent of girls of this age worked in the informal economy, and their shares were growing not so fast over time.

Table 5.11. Share of persons employed in the informal economy in the total number of those employed by age cohorts, %

	Total	Of this number at the age of, years									
		15–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60+
Men											
2009	20.5	35.5	22.6	20.9	21.2	21.3	21.9	20.1	17.8	15.0	20.8
2011	19.6	37.9	21.4	19.9	19.5	20.9	21.1	19.4	17.6	14.9	18.9
2013	21.2	43.0	24.5	21.0	21.5	21.6	21.9	21.9	19.5	16.9	19.8
Women											
2009	18.0	48.4	21.9	18.1	18.1	18.2	17.7	16.4	14.6	14.9	25.4
2011	16.8	52.2	21.7	16.2	16.6	16.7	16.6	15.4	14.3	14.2	23.0
2013	18.2	58.0	24.1	17.7	18.0	18.1	17.6	17.4	15.7	15.6	22.1

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

5.3. Gender challenges in youth business

The majority of persons employed in the Russian economy are wageworkers, and the share of women wageworkers is somewhat higher than the share of men (in 2014, they constituted 93.6 per cent and 91.9 per cent respectively). Women are less active in entrepreneurship than men are. According to the Rosstat, only 0.9 per cent of employed women are employers (against 1.7 per cent for men), and 5.1 per cent are self-employed (against 6.0 per cent for men).

Non-wage employment is less widespread among youths than wage work. The state statistical data show that in 2013, girls in non-wage employment aged 15–29 accounted for 17.9 per cent of all women with such employment status (for the sake of comparison: girls of this age cohort constitute 20.8 per cent of employed women). Whereas youths in non-wage employment aged 15–29 constituted 20.0 per cent of all men with such a status (and 24.8 per cent of all employed men).

**Table 5.12.** Structure of persons employed in the economy, by age and status, 2013, %

	Total	Of this number at the age of, years					
		15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-72
Men wageworkers	100.0	0.7	25.2	26.3	22.4	21.2	4.3
Men in non-wage employment	100.0	2.5	17.5	25.1	26.2	21.1	7.6
Share of men wageworkers		75.7	94.2	92.2	90.6	91.9	86.6
Share of men in non-wage employment		24.3	5.8	7.8	9.4	8.1	13.4
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Women wageworkers	100.0	0.4	21.2	25.9	25.2	22.9	4.3
Women in non-wage employment	100.0	2.9	15.0	21.2	24.7	24.0	12.2
Share of women wageworkers		67.7	95.4	94.7	93.7	93.3	83.7
Share of women in non-wage employment		32.3	4.6	5.3	6.3	6.7	16.3
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

At the same time, the share of non-wage workers is higher among representative of younger youth cohorts (15-19 years old) than among representatives of the other age cohorts, and it is higher among girls than among youths. Every fourth employed youth aged 15–19 and every third girl of the same age were non-wage workers.

The crisis in the Russian economy and an attempt at redirecting it towards reindustrialization and import substitution have revealed challenges connected with the insufficient number of public interventions and programmes aimed at creating enabling conditions for starting and running small and medium-size businesses. In that respect, youth business, to say nothing of female youth business, enjoys practically no preferences. An analysis of public business support programmes has shown that at the federal level young entrepreneurs receive minimal support. Such support is mostly provided at the regional level, if at all. Assistance to women entrepreneurs is provided at the same level. At the same time, the present study has not found a single programme or intervention at any level targeting young women entrepreneurs.

5.4. Gender challenges in general and registered unemployment

In the Russian Federation, the gender asymmetry among the unemployed is rather sustainable. On the one hand, general unemployment (calculated according to the ILO methodology) has been steadily “male” throughout the post-Soviet period. In August 2015, the general unemployment rate constituted 5.1 per cent for women (against 6.0 per cent in 2011 and 5.2 per cent in 2013) and 5.4 per cent for men (against 6.9 and 5.8 per cent respectively). In the same period, the share of women among the unemployed was 46.7 per cent (against 45.5 per cent in 2011 and 45.8 per cent in 2013). Characteristically, prevalence of men among the unemployed calculated according to the ILO methodology was typical of all age cohorts and places of residence (urban and rural areas) without exception.

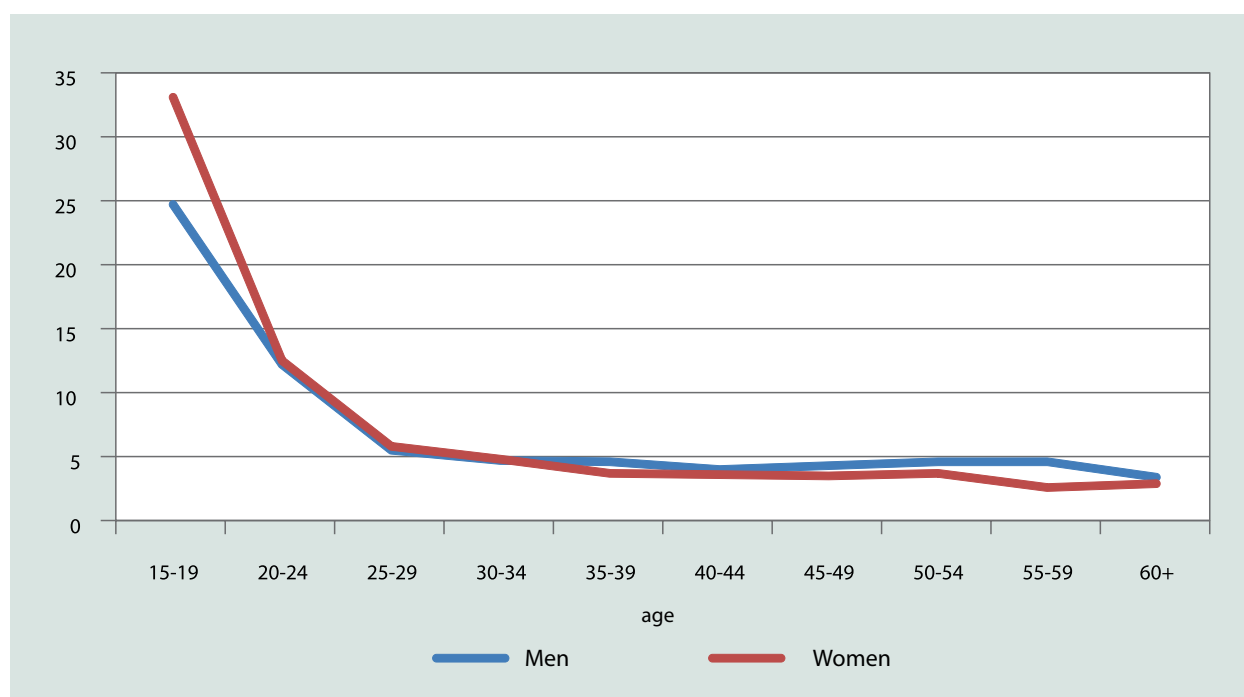
**Table 5.13.** Breakdown of unemployed defined according to the ILO methodology, by age cohort, 2013

	Women	Men
Unemployed total, 000 persons		
Unemployed total, %	100	100
Of this number at the age of, years:		
15–19	4.6	4.1
20–29	36.9	36.9
30–39	21.9	22.2
40–49	18.0	17.2
50–59	15.8	17.0
60–72	2.8	2.6

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

Young people constitute the bulk of the unemployed. In 2013, unemployed girls aged 15–29 accounted for 41.5 per cent of all unemployed women (for the sake of comparison, girls of this age accounted for 20.8 per cent of all employed women). Unemployed youths constituted 41.0 per cent of all unemployed men (youths of this age constituted 24.8 per cent of all employed men). Most unemployed youths and girls are in the age cohort of 20–29 year olds.

An unprecedentedly high unemployment rate is among the youngest participants in the labour market (15–19 years old). In 2014, it constituted 24.7 per cent for youths and even more, 33.1 per cent, for girls. In older youth age cohorts (20–24 and 25–29 years), the problem is less acute, although unemployment rates remain substantially higher than for older population groups.

Diagram 5.4. Unemployment rates by age cohort, 2014. %

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.



The situation is different in the unemployment registered by public employment services. Its rates are several times lower than general unemployment rates (in 2013, the number of the unemployed defined according to the ILO methodology was 4,138,000, whereas the number of the registered unemployed was 918,000). This kind of unemployment has been sustainably “female”. In 2013, women accounted for 54.7 per cent of the unemployed registered by the employment service.

The situation of youth among the unemployed registered by the public employment services is different. According to them, at the end of 2013 the share of girls (15–29 years old) among this category of the unemployed constituted 26.1 per cent, and the corresponding share of youths was 25.9 per cent. The lower share of youth among the officially registered unemployed than its share among the unemployed defined according to the ILO methodology is largely explained by legislative restrictions on granting the status of an officially registered unemployed applicable to young persons.

Table 5.14. Unemployed registered by public employment services, by age cohort, as at the end of 2013

	Women	Men	Breakdown by sex, %	
			Women	Men
Unemployed – total, 000 persons	501.8	415.9		
%	100	100	54.7	45.3
Of this number at the age of, years:				
below 18	0.8	0.9	51.8	48.2
18–24	12.7	13.5	53.2	46.8
25–29	12.6	11.5	57.0	43.0

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/. Federal Service for Labour and Employment.

Chapter 6. Common features and differences in the job placement of youths and girls

6.1. Common barriers to the job placement of youths and girls

Although the scale and rates of youth unemployment are high as compared to the other age cohorts, the unemployment issue is not so acute for them. Young participants in the labour market find jobs faster than their older counterparts do. The Rosstat data show that the indicators of an average period of job search for young men and the share of long-term unemployed are sustainably and considerably lower than for representatives of the other age cohorts (Table 5.15).

These indicators were worse for girls than for youths (Table 5.15). For example, in 2013, the average period of job search by 15–19 year old girls constituted 4.9 months against 4.6 months for youths. As for 20–29 year old girls, the indicator was equal to 6.9 months, and for youths of this age group it constituted 6.7 months.

The situation with the share of long-term unemployed is similar. Among 15–19 year old girls, the share of such unemployed was 13.6 per cent against 12.4 per cent for youths, and among 20–29 year old girls, it constituted 25.5 per cent against 24.7 per cent for youths.





Table 5.15. Average period of job search by the unemployed and the share of long-term unemployed (one year and more), by age cohort, 2013

	Average period of job search, months		Share of long-time unemployed, %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	7.7	7.5	31.8	30.3
Of this number at the age of, years				
15–19	4.9	4.6	13.6	12.4
20–29	6.9	6.7	25.5	24.7
30–39	8.0	7.6	33.6	31.6
40–49	8.8	8.3	39.7	35.5
50–59	8.6	8.7	38.3	38.9
60–72	8.9	8.2	41.3	35.9

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

Information concerning jobs sought by Russian youth is currently collected only within the framework of individual research projects. In recent years, issues of youth employment have repeatedly been objects of research, but their review shows that it was mostly conducted at the regional level according to hardly comparable methodologies, and the gender component was absent from the overwhelming majority of programmes.

The starting point in the study of gender issues of youth employment is to analyse the criteria used by youths and girls when choosing jobs. The survey of graduates of tertiary educational institutions in Moscow⁹⁹ has shown that youths and girls have both much in common and many specificities in their notions of what their future jobs must be like. The data in Table 5.16 show that a common feature is the hierarchy of attributes, according to which they choose their future jobs. Both youths and girls consider it most important that the skills required by the job match the ones they acquired at the educational institution, and the girls are more attentive to it (45 per cent of girls and 43.2 per cent of youths look for jobs matching the skills they have acquired). To both, wages come second, but girls pay much less attention to it when looking for a job (37 per cent of youths and only 27.5 per cent of girls look for jobs with good wages). Twenty per cent of girls and 23.5 per cent of youths look for any job, and this is the third most popular answer.

A convenient working schedule was the fourth most frequent answer concerning requirements of young people to their future jobs. This job selection criterion has always been considered to be a “female” one because it is more typical of women than of men to look for a job (even to the detriment of its content) permitting a flexible work-life balance. The findings of the quoted study were contrary to the traditional ones. Girls much less frequently than youths looked for jobs proceeding from this criterion (18.3 and 23.5 per cent respectively).

Career was only fifth in the ranking for both youths and girls. There were more ambitious youths than girls (22.2 per cent of the former and only 16.7 per cent of the latter were looking for jobs with good career opportunities). This testifies to the fact that, first, young people pay little attention to their career and, second, that causes of vertical segregation are rooted not only in employers’ stereotypes concerning

⁹⁹ Project entitled “Gender-Based Discrimination at Work”, commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman, Government Contract No. 25 of 23 July 2012.



promotion as the lot primarily of men, but also in the fact that few women are willing to do something for the sake of a career.

The wish to work in a prestigious company, in a good team, at home or close to one's home is a criterion that ranks low on the priority list of young people when choosing a job. However, gender-based differences are also discernible here: youths placed "work in a prestigious company" in the sixth position (out of eight), whereas to girls it is the last thing they think of when looking for a job. At the same time, youths do not worry about the remoteness of their job from their home (only 2.5 per cent of youths said, they take into consideration the possibility of working at home or close to their homes), while one out of every ten girls thinks about it.

"A job with a good social protection package" and "a job with a possible provision of accommodation" were the job selection criteria of very few respondents.

Table 5.16. Distribution of answers to the question "What kind of a job did or do you search?," by sex, %

Job search criteria	Youths	Girls
Matching their skills	43.2	45.0
With good wages	37.0	27.5
Any job	23.5	20.0
With a convenient working schedule	23.5	18.3
With career opportunities	22.2	16.7
In a prestigious company	13.6	8.3
In a good team	11.1	10.8
At home or close to home	2.5	10.0

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Project on Gender-Based Discrimination at Work, commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman, Government Order No. 25, July 23, 2012.

As it has been pointed out above, "good wages" is the second important job selection criteria for youth. However, its numerical value is different for youths and girls. As the survey of graduates has shown, youths would like to earn an average of 90,000 rubles. Girls were more modest – the amount of good wages to them constituted 64,000 rubles. Thus, the gender gap in their ideas of good wages was equal to 29.3 percentage points (close to the gender gap in actual wages).

It is also important that at the time of the survey of graduates, average wages in the capital were equal to 46,000 rubles,¹⁰⁰ which is considerably less than the amounts voiced by recent graduates.

There are also gender differences in job search techniques, although the structure of the most popular and effective methods is very much similar for youths and girls. For both of them, the best assistant in their job search is the Internet. Two third of youths and more than half of girls look for jobs on the web. This job search method has proved effective. Twenty-nine point one per cent of youths and 26.6 per cent of girls found jobs in this way.

The second most popular job search method was looking through advertisements (used by 61.7 per cent of youths and 50.8 per cent of girls), which is not surprising considering accessibility of this information in the general and the specialized mass media. However, the effectiveness of this method

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.forbes.ru/news/152689-srednyaya-zarplata-v-moskve-dostigla-46-tysyach-rublei>.





proved to be rather low, especially for girls (23.9 per cent of youths and 16.1 per cent of girls found jobs in this way).

The third most popular job search method is “asking friends and relatives” (46.9 per cent of youths and 44.2 per cent of girls). This method is a most effective one (more effective for youths – 29.9 per cent, and less effective for girls – 23.8 per cent).

The fourth method is “a job offer”. Such offers came to 21.4 per cent of youths and 25.9 per cent of girls, and 13.6 per cent of the former and 17.5 per cent of the latter accepted the offer.

Youths and girls practice contacting administrations and employers in the process of job search even more rarely (19.8 and 15.8 per cent respectively).

It should be pointed out that educational institutions play an insufficient role in placing their graduates. Youths rarely turn to them in the hope of finding a job (13.6 per cent), while girls turn to them sufficiently often, every fourth of them.

The other job search methods (such as turning to public or private employment services, publishing advertisements in the press, and targeted training under contracts) play an insignificant role in the actual job placement.

Table 5.17. Breakdown of youths and girls by job search techniques, %

	Share of graduates who used the technique		Share of those placed with its assistance		Effectiveness (ratio of the share of those placed to the share of those who used the technique)	
	Youths	Girls	Youths	Girls	Youths	Girls
Internet	66.7	53.3	29.1	26.6	43.6	49.9
Job advertisements in the mass media	61.7	50.8	23.9	16.1	38.7	31.7
Personal contacts (friends, relatives, acquaintances)	46.9	44.2	29.9	23.8	63.8	53.8
Job offer	21.4	25.9	13.6	17.5	63.6	67.6
Contacting employers	19.8	15.8	5.1	7.7	25.8	48.7
Assistance of educational institutions	13.6	25.0	4.3	9.8	31.6	39.2
Turning to the PES	12.3	5.0	1.7	1.4	13.8	28.0
Turning to private employment services	9.9	4.2	0.9	2.8	9.1	66.7
Publishing advertisements in the press	8.6	11.7	0.9	1.4	10.5	12.0
Targeted training	1.2	0.8	0.9	---	75.0	

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Project on Gender-Based Discrimination at Work, commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman, Government Order No. 25, 23 July 2012.



A survey of employers conducted in 2015¹⁰¹ has shown that the main barrier young people face in job placement is their excessive wage expectations (20.5 per cent of all answers, Table 5.18).¹⁰² This figure correlates well with the aforementioned ideas of youths and girls about “good wages” and the fact that it is one of the top job search criteria.

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“We recruit students for two reasons. First, we have some relatively low-skilled jobs (third- and fourth-year students have enough knowledge for coping with them part-time). Second, we can pay them little, although it is not so little for a full-time workweek. There is little difference if such work is performed by a graduate or by a senior student because the difference between their knowledge is small. However, as soon as a student graduates his self-appraisal increases and he wants to receive two or three times more money than a student does, even without work experience. However, he is not worth the money he asks. Tertiary educational institutions produce semi-products rather than skilled specialists. Therefore, we recruit a student, train him, and when he graduates and starts working full-time, he will receive normal wages.”

(From an interview with an employer, information technologies)

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“Today, employers want to have a good specialist free of charge. However, it would be normal if they came to our university and selected a few second- or third-year students, recruited them for part-time work and trained them. Then they would have had a skilled specialist by the time he completed his studies.”

(From an interview with a university lecturer with a 40-year service record)

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“If [students] came to the company for workplace practices, we did not promise to pay them, but if they were of benefit, we paid them at the end. Those students who wanted a regular, even a part-time job, we pay them regular wages even if they do not come to work during exams.”

(From an interview with an employer, financial consulting)

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“As for internships and summer practices, some three years ago they used to call us from vocational schools and send students. Now there is nothing of the kind, I don’t know why. I paid those who came for practices, although there was no such agreement. It couldn’t be otherwise because they worked, after all.”

(From an interview with an employer, services).

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The second barrier to the job placement of young specialists most frequently mentioned by employers (21.2 per cent) is the low level of their occupational training. It is the fault not only of the vocational education system, but also of the students themselves, whose aim is often to receive a diploma and not to acquire knowledge.

The next two most frequently mentioned barriers are unwillingness to work and to learn and improve oneself (15.9 and 9.1 per cent). These barriers cannot be removed by facilitating access to decent jobs for young people, nor by improving the vocational guidance system, nor by establishing a youth labour exchange. Unwillingness to work, learn and improve oneself characterized the attitude of young people to life as such, and not to only to work. This attitude should mostly be changed outside the world of work.

¹⁰¹ Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Summary Report on the Provision of Services for Conducting a Comprehensive Study of Youth Situation in the Moscow Labour Market under Government Contract No. 09/3/05.5-4/15 of 10 July 2015.

¹⁰² The questionnaire for employers was not intended to reveal the discrimination component of the job placement issue.





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“Maybe I was unlucky, but I have never met a single person who would like to become a highly skilled professional. I dreamt of becoming a Michelin-starred cook. I often talked to those who came to work for me. It was all the same for them where to work, and they chose this occupational school by chance.”

(From an interview with an employer, catering business)

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“Much depends on the university, but not everything. Two students from one group once came to us to do an internship. The girl was clever, diligent and responsible, and the lad was no good. Nothing could be entrusted to him. When I checked his work, I found only mistakes there. We could barely wait for him to leave.”

(From an interview with an employer, information technologies)

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“Young persons without work experience can be recruited, but it depends on the kind of job they will do. They must not do more or less unsupervised work and should be paid low wages.”

(From an interview with the head of a unit, finance company)

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“I recruit young people willingly, but only those who have work experience. Fresh from college, they know nothing. They need to be taught a lot, and this takes time and money. Where do we get it from if we have a small business? We cannot afford it. Suppose we train them and they leave in a couple of months, and not necessarily to work in the field they have been trained for, but in a shop where there is no responsibility, the working schedule is two days on/two days off, and their only duty is to run errands.”

(From an interview with a café owner)

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One more barrier – ineffective public programmes on providing support to young specialists – was mentioned by 9.1 per cent of respondents. This testifies to the fact that the State does not use all available possibilities for addressing the issue of youth employment and to the low level of professionalism of the officials in charge of it.

Table 5.18. Main barriers to youth employment in Moscow, opinion of employers

Barriers	%
Excessive wage expectations	29.5
Weak vocational training	21.2
Unwillingness to work	15.9
Unwillingness to learn and improve oneself	9.1
Ineffectiveness of public youth support programmes	9.1
Low level of interpersonal and self-presentation skills	7.6
Impossibility of combining work with studies	3.8
Other	3.8

Source: Questionnaire survey of employers and youth conducted in 2015 by the Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics. Published in the Summary Report on the Provision of Services for Conducting a Comprehensive Study of Youth Situation in the Moscow Labour Market under Government Contract No. 0Y3/05.5-4/15 of 10 July 2015..



“On average, eagerness to study has decreased, and students show worse results. The share of those who are incapable of studying has sharply increased. Students often study worse because their secondary education is of low quality. Some of them cannot add up fractions. It is now more difficult to send down underachieving students because there are a lot of those who pay tuition fees. They crib tests and calculations, and it takes them 8–9 attempts to pass an exam. However, not all of them are like this, some 10–12 per cent are very diligent, especially girls.”

(From an interview with a university lecturer with a 40-year service record)

At the personal level, young people often face discriminatory, including gender-based, practices during recruitment. Yet, the main reason for job denial is lack of work experience. Half of youths and girls are denied jobs mainly for this reason. Possibly, the importance of work experience for recruitment is connected with the low quality of education. Recruitment of a graduate who lacks the required competencies and work experience means that the employer will have to teach the new worker the specific skills required in the company (to form a specific human capital). Besides that, he must also complete the student's occupational training (i.e. make the student assimilate the information he/she was supposed to acquire at the educational institution but failed to due to his/her negligence, imperfection of curricula or insufficient competence of the teaching staff).

Table 5.19. Characteristics of jobseekers – graduates of vocational education institutions, undesirable for employers, breakdown by sex, % (the sum total exceeds 100 because each respondent could have had more than one denial)

Characteristics undesirable for job placement	Youths	Girls
Lack of work experience	51.9	52.5
Place of residence or registration	23.5	18.3
Age	19.8	19.2
Existence (expectation) of children and dependents	1.2	8.0
Sex	3.7	5.8
Marital status	3.6	5.9
Health status	2.5	6.4
Appearance	3.7	5.8
Ethnicity	2.5	5.0
Pregnancy	---	4.1
Political views, religious convictions	1.2	0.8

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Project on Gender-Based Discrimination at Work, commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman, Government Order No. 25, 23 July 2012.

The other reasons of job denial to graduates were of openly discriminatory nature: place of residence and registration, existence (expectation) of children and dependents, sex, marital status, health status, appearance, ethnicity, pregnancy, political views and religious convictions. Half of the “reasons” (five out of ten) were closely connected with gender discrimination (existence and expectation of children and dependents, sex, marital status, pregnancy, and appearance). Girls indicated these reasons of job denial





2.4 times more often than youths did (29.6 and 12.2 per cent respectively). This testifies to the fact that gender discrimination affects primarily the former.

The process of job placement is permeated with discriminatory practices. It includes practices of asking questions not related to a jobseeker's competence, including questions concerning his/her marital status. Employers generally explain such questions by their desire to take into consideration a jobseeker's needs in future, when he/she is recruited.

Table 5.20. Breakdown of answers to the questions "Were you asked the following questions during recruitment?", by sex, %

	Men	Women
About the marital status	49.4	56.7
About the availability and age of children	34.6	48.3
About plans concerning the birth of children	7.4	30.8
Did they impose any conditions on you concerning your marital status and plans to have children?	6.2	16.8

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Project on Gender-Based Discrimination at Work, commissioned by the Moscow Ombudsman, Government Order No. 25, 23 July 2012.

As a survey of graduates of Moscow tertiary educational institutions has shown, youths were asked personal questions more rarely than girls were. Forty nine and a half per cent of youths and 56.7 per cent of girls had to answer the question about their marital status, and 48.3 per cent of girls and 34.6 per cent of youths had to answer the question concerning the availability of children and their age. The question about plans concerning the birth of children, the most "sensitive" one to employers, was mostly put to girls (30.8 per cent of girls and only 7.4 per cent of youths had to answer this question). Sixteen point eight per cent of girls and 6.2 per cent of boys answered in the affirmative to the question "did they impose any conditions on you concerning your marital status and plans to have children and how often?"

However, interviews of employers have shown that not all of them keep to discriminatory practices, and not all discriminatory practices are related to family responsibilities of future workers. When recruiting new workers, employers whose business is connected with moving heavy objects prefer youths because they are physically stronger than girls are (handling heavy loads is gender-differentiated by labour legislation). Students are sometimes denied a job for fear lest they should ask permission to miss work to take exams.

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 "I prefer hiring youths. I can ask them to carry something heavy or take it somewhere by car."

(From an interview with an employer, public catering)

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6.2. Special barriers to the job placement of girls

When analysing indicators characterizing the level of development of the network of preschool facilities and their accessibility to the population, researchers lay emphasis on the role of these childcare facilities in the development of the rising generation. However, when studying the situation of men and women in the world of work, greater importance should be attached to a different quality of this system, namely, its ability to help workers take care of their children.

In the 1990s, the preschool childcare system was practically shattered. In subsequent years, the situation began changing for the better. However, it has remained tense to this day. At the beginning of 2014, 2,717,600 children needed placement with preschool educational institutions.

Table 5.21. Preschool educational institutions (PEI) (as at year end)

Year	PEI number, total, 000	Number of children at PEI, total, 000 persons	Number of children per 100 places at PEI, persons
1990	87.9	9,009.5	108
2000	51.3	4,263.0	81
2005	46.5	4,530.4	95
2010	45.1	5,388.0	107
2013	43.2	6,347.3	105

Source: Statistics Committee of the Federal State Statistics Service. www.gks.ru/.

Regions are trying to address this issue not only by building new preschool institutions and reconstructing the old ones, but also by using non-traditional methods such as opening family-based kindergartens. This permits them, on the one hand, to create new jobs and, on the other hand, to address the issue of out-of-home care for small children, thereby making it possible for their mothers to enter the labour market. For example, in Moscow, a mother with three children below seven years of age or a woman caring for two children of her own and one child entrusted to her by another family may open such a kindergarten. In this case, the mother is officially taken on the staff of a preschool educational institution and receives a salary. The Moscow Department of Education arranges distance learning and consultations for such mothers. Such mothers may come to the “parent” kindergarten and use all the facilities it offers such as a swimming pool, a sports ground, and playrooms. Mothers without tertiary pedagogical or psychological education are given a possibility of studying psychology by distance learning. If this is her first vocational education after the secondary school, she may acquire it free of charge, and if it is the second one – for a moderate fee.

In the Russian Federation, there are legally established restrictions for women concerning their placement in jobs with hazardous working conditions. For example, article 253 of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation restricts employing women in jobs with harmful and hazardous working conditions as well as in underground works, with the exception of work not requiring physical efforts and work in sanitary and welfare services. Besides that, the Article bans employment of women in works that require lifting and carrying heavy objects exceeding the maximum permissible norms.



6.3. Special barriers to the job placement of youths

Starting with 2014, Russian legislation has introduced a compulsory condition for being employed as a public servant, namely, performance of active duty in the armed forces (Federal Law on Amending Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation concerning Implementation of Measures Aimed at Making Enlistment More Prestigious and Attractive (No. 170-Φ3)). Moreover, according to the Law, persons who are in the public service must resign if they did not serve in the army without legal grounds.

Since Article 59 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation and Article 22, paragraph 1, of the Federal Law on Military Duty and Military Service (No. 53-Φ3) prescribe that all male citizens are eligible for military service, these restrictions apply only to youth. However, there has been no evidence so far that this Law has had an impact on their employment.

Chapter 7. Approaches of the State and social partners to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

7.1. Public programmes and measures aimed at achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

In recent years, the public policy of the Russian Federation concerning women has radically changed. At the beginning of the new millennium, its objective was formulated as achieving gender equality by establishing equal rights and freedoms for men and women by law as well as by creating a mechanism and equal opportunities that will permit men and women to exercise these rights and freedoms in all areas of life in compliance with the national legislation and international commitments of the Russian Federation.

At present, this policy does not set the single specific objective in achieving gender equality. It is aimed at creating the most enabling conditions for women to combine their occupational, maternal and family responsibilities. The greatest focus is on creating such conditions for women with small children. Gender policies do not constitute an independent line of public policies. They have been incorporated into family, demographic, poverty-reduction and health-care development policies as their separate components.

Some segments of the national social policy have neither women- nor gender-related components. The public youth policy may serve as an example. This is proved by the strategic documents formulated by the Federal Agency for the Affairs of Youth (Rosmolodezh) and aimed at developing youth and youth policies in the country ("Youth of Russia 2000–2005: Human Capital Development",¹⁰³ "Youth and Youth Policies in Russia in the Context of Global Trends",¹⁰⁴ proposals for the project entitled "Strategy of Youth Development in the Russian Federation Until 2025"¹⁰⁵ and other documents). They contain no indications to the fact that either youths or girls have any problems associated with their sex or social roles. The gender component is also lacking in youth employment promotion programmes implemented at the regional level where the need for dealing with only one youth subgroup, those below 18 years of age, is indicated.

¹⁰³ <https://fadm.gov.ru/mediafiles/documents/document/fca58fda2a86220492a7353f136de3d7.doc>.

¹⁰⁴ <https://fadm.gov.ru/mediafiles/documents/document/154e46dc7d4ba9b7105ef8a9ef7b453d.docx>.

¹⁰⁵ <https://fadm.gov.ru/mediafiles/documents/document/98/ae/98aeadb5-7771-4e5b-a8ee-6e732c5d5e84.pdf>.



In labour relations, the present-day policies concerning women (such as creating the most enabling conditions for women to combine their occupational, maternal and family responsibilities) sometimes lead to abuse of men's rights. For example, a possibility of undergoing training or retraining when on a childcare leave was initially granted only to women. It was not until a number of complaints had been submitted that men received such opportunity as well. Until now, one of the ways of using the family capital (previously called "maternal capital", but renamed after a number of complaints) has been to contribute it to the investment part of the mother's retirement pension (regardless of the actual division of responsibilities in a family). Since this way of using the family capital is not highly demanded by the population, no complaints on this rule have been submitted yet.

The Federal Service for Labour and Employment (Rostrud) and its territorial bodies are exercising control over observance of labour laws in order to ensure protection of people's labour rights. To this end, it inspects compliance of legal entities and individual entrepreneurs with legal provisions on labour and labour protection, issuing mandatory injunctions and bringing perpetrators to account in conformity with Russian legislation. In 2012, the total number of such inspections was 135,300. In 2013, there were 131,500 of them, and in 2014 – 132,600 inspections. Inspections regularly include issues concerning labour and protection of labour of women and persons with family responsibilities. Annual inspections of observance of women's labour rights are undertaken. In 2013, 5,200 such inspections were carried out, and 4,800 cases of abuse of labour laws affecting women and persons with family responsibilities were revealed and rectified. In the course of 1,100 inspections concerning pregnant women, women with children below three years of age and other persons with family responsibilities, 1,600 cases of abuse affecting this category of citizens were exposed. Based on these findings, 773 injunctions were issued, 508 fines worth over 1 million rubles imposed, and 11 inspection reports sent to investigating bodies for instituting criminal proceedings (unjustified denial of recruitment or dismissal of pregnant women or women with children below the age of three). No inspections are carried out with respect to gender challenges in youth employment.

However, at the regional level there are some examples of formulation of regional gender equality policies. For example, a Council on Gender Issues was established in Krasnodar Territory under the Governor's decision dated April 15, 2013. One of the main areas of the Council's work will be implementation of the Plan of Action on Ensuring Gender Equality in Krasnodar Territory for 2013-2015, which includes the formulation of proposals on incorporating the gender dimension into socioeconomic programmes, plans and interventions.

Another example is St. Petersburg's Administration where the Committee on Social Statistics is working on gender equality issues as one of the lines of its activity.

As it has already been mentioned, the State is pursuing one-size-fits-all policies for both men and women in ensuring equal access to general and vocational education. At the same time, some limited privileges have been designed and introduced facilitating access to vocational education for some categories of men and women.





7.2. Approach of employers to achieving gender equality in vocational education and employment

There are three major organizations in the Russian Federation representing the interests of the country's business quarters: the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (big business), "Support of Russia" (small and medium business), and "Business Russia" (association of private entrepreneurs). "Business Russia" is the only organization that has established a Commission for Women's Entrepreneurship.¹⁰⁶ It is comprised of representatives of "Business Russia" and major women's associations as well as experts of programmes on entrepreneurship support and development. The strategic goal of the Commission is to assist women entrepreneurs in implementing socially oriented business lines, and its tactical objective is to formulate support programmes and create additional conditions for implementing socially oriented business programmes. The Commission's activities are unrolling along the following four lines: formulating and implementing a plan of action on creating a positive image of women entrepreneurs in society; creating a register of successful projects and initiatives ready for implementation and replication; designing women's entrepreneurship support and development programmes; designing and implementing a plan of measures aimed at popularizing women's entrepreneurship and encouraging women to start their own businesses. The Commission's activities do not envisage any special lines or specific measures related to the support of young women entrepreneurs.

At the grass-roots level – the level of individual employers – there may be a variety of attitudes to youths and girls during recruitment, ranging from clear-cut requirements such as "we only hire youths" to "it does not matter, youths or girls, the main thing is that he/she work well" to "we recruit both youths and girls; mixed teams work better" to "girls are preferable in our work". It largely depends on the enterprise size (all other things being equal, the larger is the enterprise, the lower probability of informal employment and the higher probability of a low extent of sex-based discrimination during recruitment) and production type.

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"It is all the same to me, a youth or a girl – I hire the one who has been recommended. I have my own people in relevant universities, and we try to recruit the best candidates. Yet, we have to teach them a lot so they could become good specialists."

(From an interview with an employer, information technologies)

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"Gender possibly matters during the first phase of selecting candidates, when they bring some 50 CVs. It is impossible to meet them all, so we select five or six persons for the interview. At this phase gender matters, of course, as well as the level of the educational institution the person graduated from, and the type of the vacancy available. If a jobseeker is supposed to take up a position requiring system maintenance, it is better to hire a girl for the simple reason that the share of girls who will be bored by such work is smaller than the share of youths. This is proved by experience. If a vacant job requires the development of something entirely new for the system, it is better to hire youths. They are better suited for something very technical. I met more youths than girls in such jobs. During the second phase – the interview – it does not matter, a youth or a girl, the main thing is who is better. Maternity leave? What of it? Experience shows that they return soon. Salaries are normal, so they hire nurses and are back to work."

(From an interview with the head of a unit in a major finance company)

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¹⁰⁶ <http://www.deloros.ru/komissiya-po-zhenskomu-predprinimatelstvu.html>.



7.3. Trade union activities aimed at observing the rights of youths and girls

Of all Russian trade union associations, only one (FITUR) has a dedicated gender-related agenda.¹⁰⁷ The Permanent Commission on Gender Equality of the FITUR General Council has been operating for 15 years, and gender commissions have been formed in its member organizations. At the regional level, work is under way on creating enabling conditions permitting women to combine their occupational and family responsibilities, training women with children, arranging gender equality education, and implementing research projects on gender-related subjects.

The Federation has formulated and adopted a FITUR Youth Policy Concept (2009) and a FITUR Gender Policy Concept (2001) and is implementing them. These two Concepts are not interlinked (the Youth Policy Concept does not deal with any gender-related issues of the target group, and the Gender Policy Concept does not address any specific youth-related issues).

Gender issues are also a component of the FITUR programme “Decent Work – the Basis of Human Well-Being and Country Development” (new version approved by a resolution of the FITUR’s ninth Congress on 9 February 2015). The programme views the achievement of gender equality as one of the fundamentals for building a social State, promoting the country’s democratic development and modernizing its economy. In this connection, the FITUR considers it necessary to:

- Participate in the formulation of the country’s social policy and conduct gender assessment of public programmes;
- Facilitate the implementation of regional and sectoral programmes aimed at creating productive jobs and ensuring equal access to education, skills improvement, retraining and career development for men and women;
- Promote the incorporation of gender equality issues into training programmes and courses for trade union leaders and activists as well as into policy documents, decisions of collegiate bodies, collective agreements and mass media publications;
- Develop gender audit practices; and
- Ensure a balanced representation of men and women in elected bodies and endeavour to include gender equality issues into collective bargaining and agreements.

7.4. The General Agreement between All-Russia trade union associations, All-Russia employers’ associations and the Government of the Russian Federation

The General Agreement between All-Russia trade union associations, All-Russia employers’ associations and the Government of the Russian Federation for 2014–2016 (as well as the General Agreement for the preceding period)¹⁰⁸ contains no references to the gender equality or discrimination issues. At the same time, the section entitled “Labour Market Development and Population Employment Promotion” reads that one of the country’s priorities is to ensure complete, productive and freely chosen employment of the population. To achieve this priority, the signatories have assumed commitments on collaborating in employment and human resources development along many lines, namely:

- a) increasing job placement opportunities for the most vulnerable population groups, including youth and women with underage children; and
- b) facilitating dissemination of successful experience in implementing corporate social programmes in the interests of these groups.

These lines fully comply with the current public policies for youth and women.

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.fnpr.ru/>.

¹⁰⁸ http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_156312/.





Conclusions

An analysis of the current Russian labour legislation has shown that it generally complies with the international standards of regulating the situation of youth, men and women in employment and the labour market. Legislative standards regulating the situation of youth, men and women in this area are more “generous” than the international standards.

Russian labour is free of formally binding all privileges and preferences related to family responsibilities solely to women. It establishes maternity rights associated with childbirth and breastfeeding, whereas childcare-related rights are granted to both mothers and fathers as well as to other persons directly involved in childcare.

Laws banning the dissemination of information on vacancies containing discriminatory requirements to jobseekers and their enforcement mechanisms have settled the problem of the dissemination of such information in the mass media.

The gender discrimination issue remains vital because of insufficiently complete definitions of the terms “discrimination”, “direct discrimination” and “indirect discrimination” and a poorly adjusted mechanism of enforcing anti-discrimination legislation.

The national mechanism for the advancement of women created in the Russian Federation at the end of the 1990s is functioning in a curtailed form. Some of the public policies aimed at advancing women are incorporated into the family, demographic and poverty-reduction policies.

The study has shown that today most young people still support the traditional division of roles and responsibilities between men and women. Employment and the labour market are dominated by gender stereotypes concerning men and women workers closely correlated with the patriarchal stereotypes concerning the division of responsibilities between them. According to these attitudes, occupational employment is less important to women than to men, and women are worse suited for managerial positions, big business, etc. Youths rely on patriarchal ideas concerning the gender roles more often than girls do. The existence of such stereotypes leads to women’s “self-discrimination” in wages: social norms of youths and girls concerning wages differ by 30 per cent.

Russian women make full use of opportunities of acquiring an education guaranteed by the State. They account for half of all general school students and constitute a majority of vocational school students. Moreover, when acquiring vocational education, women prefer its higher levels, while men often confine themselves to lower levels. As a result, women’s educational attainment levels exceed those of men, and the gap is constantly increasing. This issue may be partially addressed by introducing special preferences for youths entering vocational education institutions after completing their military services.

Distribution of men and women across programmes and areas of vocational education remains irregular and sustainable, serving as a major factor of reproduction of the existing segregation by types of economic activity and occupational groups in employment and, therefore, as a foundation for the gender pay gap.

The Russian Federation has been one of the world’s leading countries in the level and scale of women’s participation in the economy. The labour force participation of working age women is 76.2 per cent (against 82.6 per cent for men). In 2013, this indicator constituted 7.6 per cent for 15–19 year old girls and 10.3 per cent for youths; 53.6 per cent for 20–24 year old girls and 66.4 per cent for youths, which is lower than the relevant indicators not only for industrialized countries but also for most CIS countries.



High labour force participation is typical only of the “older” youth cohort (25–29 years), which is not classified as a youth cohort under international standards. In 2013, labour force participation of girls constituted 79.9 per cent against 94.7 per cent for youths. Similar trends are observed in youth employment, which is explained by high youth involvement in vocational education.

Business is not widespread among youth, but support to youth entrepreneurship is obviously insufficient in the country. The study has failed to find a single programme or measure at any level aimed at supporting entrepreneurship of young women.

Despite their higher educational attainment, women’s wages lag behind those of men, although the last few years have witnessed a reduction in the gender pay gap, which decreased from 37 percentage points in 2007 to 26 percentage points in 2013.

Unemployment is an acute issue among youth, but gender asymmetry in unemployment rates is only typical of the youngest youth cohort. Although the unemployment rates for youth are higher than for the other age cohorts, young labour market participants find jobs faster than adult jobseekers.

The structure of the most demanded and resultative job search techniques is very similar for youths and girls. The Internet is their most frequent assistant in finding employment. The second most popular but less effective job search method is looking through vacancy advertisements. Personal contacts (turning to friends and relatives) rank third and produce one of the best results. Educational institutions do not play an important part in the job placement of their graduates of both sexes, and neither do public or private employment agencies.

During their job search, both youths and girls pay primary attention to whether the skills demanded in a job match the skills acquired at the educational institution, as well as to wages (girls pay much less attention to the latter). However, wage expectations of young people are high. Employers, on their part, consider these expectations as excessively high and, therefore, serving as a major barrier to the job placement of youth. Regardless of a jobseeker’s sex, employers believe that low levels of vocational training of young persons as well as their unwillingness to learn, work and develop themselves typical of many of them, are important barriers to their job placement.

At the personal level, young people face other barriers during recruitment. The most frequent reason for denying a job to a young person is lack of work experience, which equally concerns youths and girls. The other reasons of job denial to graduates such as the place of residence and registration, age, availability (expected availability) of children and dependents, sex, marital and health status, appearance, ethnicity, pregnancy, political views and religious convictions, are of obviously discriminatory nature. Half of these “reasons” are closely connected with gender discrimination. Girls mentioned the above reasons of job denial 2.4 times more frequently than youths did.

The study has shown that discriminatory practices permeate the current recruitment process. They primarily include questions having absolutely nothing to do with jobseekers’ occupational qualities, including issues concerning their marital status, availability of children and plans concerning their birth. Girls are asked these questions considerably more often than youths.

A factor that has a negative effect on the occupational employment of young women is insufficient development of the preschool childcare network.

In recent years, the public policy of the Russian Federation concerning women has deviated from the idea of creating a society of gender equality. Today, it is aimed at creating the most enabling conditions for women (primarily those with small children) permitting them to combine their occupational,





maternity and family responsibilities. This policy does not constitute an independent line of public policies; it is incorporated into family, demographic, poverty reduction, health and other policies as their component. Some segments of the public social policy, for example, youth policy, has neither a female nor a gender component. Such public policies help address women's problems in various spheres of life. However, as a result, the issue of gender discrimination in the labour market, including gender discrimination of youth, has dropped out of the sphere of interests of the State. Besides that, it periodically leads to abuse of the rights of men as workers with family responsibilities.

Among All-Russia organizations representing the interests of the country's business quarters, only "Business Russia" has formulated a gender-related agenda. True, it only concerns women entrepreneurs (without a focus on young women as a separate target). Gender issues of waged workers are not addressed by a single public organization of employers.

Of all Russian trade union associations, only the FITUR is currently pursuing gender policies. The Federation has formulated and is implementing the FITUR Youth Policy Concept (2009) and the FITUR Gender Policy Concept (2001), which are not interlinked. Gender is a component of the FITUR programme "Decent Work – the Basis of Human Well-Being and Country's Development".

The General Agreement between All-Russia trade Union associations, All-Russia employers' associations and the Government of the Russian Federation for 2014–2016 (as well as the General Agreement for the preceding period) contain no references to gender equality or discrimination issues. At the same time, the signatories to the General Agreement have assumed commitments, among other things, on increasing employment opportunities for some most vulnerable population groups, including youth and women with underage children, and facilitating dissemination of successful experience in implementing corporate social programmes in the interests of these groups. The only problem is that such policy formulation will not be conducive to reducing specific gender barriers for youth during recruitment. Moreover, it will only strengthen the stereotypic attitude to women as workers who are not quite competitive for the sole reason that they may have children.

A huge barrier to creating a discrimination-free labour market and employment is a low level of legal literacy of the population, including youth.

The study has also shown that Russian gender statistics are in development, which makes it possible to analyse the most acute problems of men and women in all areas of life.

Recommendations

Public policies for women

Public policies for women should be supplemented by measures reducing discrimination against women, primarily young women with small children, and abuse of the rights of men as workers with family responsibilities.

It is deemed necessary to mainstream gender into the public youth policy, including employment and job placement policies for youth, taking into consideration specific barriers to job placement, career development and self-fulfilment in the world of work both youths and girls are facing.

To overcome the gender-asymmetric attitude of employers and employees to family responsibilities, strengthen the institution of fatherhood and raise the status of fathers, it is necessary to strive for inclusion of all issues concerning creation of enabling conditions for workers (men and women) with family responsibilities into the social dialogue.



Improving legislation

A number of legally established anti-discrimination norms are not currently working. Under such circumstances, it will be possible to mitigate the issue of gender discrimination in the labour market only on condition that the establishment of an adequate mechanism for enforcing the existing anti-discrimination legislation or adjustment of the existing one will accompany its improvement. Today, it requires at least the introduction of clear-cut definitions of “discrimination”, “direct discrimination” and indirect discrimination” into Russian labour laws, with the indication of all situations that may be fraught with discrimination in labour relations (not only recruitment and assignment of or change in wages, but also promotion, referral to studies, skills development, etc.) as well as examples of actions that can and must be considered as discriminatory. Besides that, the burden of proving the existence of discriminatory actions should be shifted from employees to employers.

In order to eliminate discriminatory practices during recruitment, it is necessary to establish a legal ban on collecting personal data from jobseekers falling under the notion of private life (information about their marital status, plans of changing this status, availability of dependents, plans concerning the birth of children, etc.). In addition, a mechanism of its enforcement should be designed.

In order to reduce the number of cases of non-payment of maternity and temporary disability benefits, it is necessary to consider the issue of changing the payment mechanism by replacing the “offsetting” scheme with payments directly from the SIF.

It is also necessary to develop a mechanism for encouraging employers to accept vocational students for workplace practices and internships.

Improving the knowledge of labour and anti-discrimination legislation

Considering the poor knowledge of gender issues among representatives of regional and municipal executive authorities, including regional branches of the Public Employment Service, social security bodies, educational institutions and regional and municipal deputies, it is necessary to design a gender education programme for this category of public authority representatives.

Based on this programme, a series of advocacy workshops should be arranged for representatives of regional and municipal executive authorities and regional deputies.

Russia’s population, primarily youth, is characterized by poor knowledge of labour and anti-discrimination legislation. In this connection, it seems worthwhile to design and publish a dedicated system of measures to address this challenge. Considering that Russian labour laws permit to conclude labour contracts with persons who have reached the age of 16 (in some cases, with persons who have reached the age of 14), while only persons who have reached the age of 18 can act as employers and sign labour contracts with employees (although a number of exceptions are stipulated when a person may receive the employer’s status earlier), it is suggested that due consideration should be given to introducing fundamentals of labour legislation (including specificities of regulating the work of special population categories such as workers with family responsibilities, persons with disabilities and persons under 18) and social insurance legislation (rules of participation in social, pension and compulsory medical insurance, rules of formalizing temporary disability and maternity benefits, childcare leave, etc.) into the curricula of senior grades at general schools.

The subject “Labour Law” highlighting some sections of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation such as “Labour Contract”, “Working Hours”, “Hours of Rest”, “Wages and Regulation of Working Hours”, “Guarantees and Compensations” as well as Chapter 41 of the Labour Code “Specificities of Regulating the Work of Women and Persons with Family Responsibilities” should be included in the curricula of





vocational education institutions. Besides that, students should be informed about anti-discrimination legislation and fundamentals of social insurance in the Russian Federation (rules of participation in social, pension and compulsory medical insurance, rules of formalizing temporary disability and maternity benefits, partially paid childcare leave, etc.). Such subjects are taught at some universities even now, but predominantly at economic and humanitarian ones. Such practices should be replicated in engineering vocational education institutions as well.

Besides that, it is necessary to design dedicated training workshops for different population categories and to prepare, publish and disseminate printed materials (booklets, brochures, information materials to be posted at employment agencies, educational institutions, antenatal clinics and such other institutions as well as on dedicated web sites) briefly describing anti-discrimination legislation and listing State privileges and guarantees in cases of temporary disability, maternity, childcare, etc. All these interventions should increase the number of young persons informed about their labour rights and privileges established by law.

To eradicate illiteracy in labour, gender equality and discrimination issues of the remaining part of the population, a series of TV broadcasts or clips may be prepared explaining certain provisions of labour laws and social insurance rules, for example, concerning different types of labour contracts, rules of payment of temporary disability benefits, application for a personal pension account number, etc.

Improving conditions for combining occupational and family responsibilities

It is worthwhile to replicate the most successful intra-corporate practices of providing support to women workers with children and persons with family responsibilities.

The increasing diversity of working schedules (time of start and end of the working day and shift work) typical of the Russian labour market necessitates reconsideration of the schedule of preschool childcare and education facilities. First of all, it is necessary to identify the need for increasing the number of places in toddler groups. Besides that, options for more flexible schedules of kindergartens at large and some groups in kindergartens should also be examined. Apart from helping young women to exercise their right to occupational activity more fully and effectively, these measures will also promote a more uniform division of family responsibilities.

Improving gender statistics

Despite the obvious and steady development of Russian gender statistics, several suggestions could be made as to its further improvement. Namely, gender statistics of education, wages, and employment status, with breakdown by age cohorts, should be developed further.

Conducting scientific research

Despite the rapidly changing socioeconomic situation in the Russian Federation, no studies of actual issues concerning the work of women and persons with family responsibilities have been conducted in recent years. This fact aggravates considerably the formulation of pertinent public policies in the social sphere, anti-discrimination policies and policies for women, reduces the effectiveness of use of the available human capital, and leads to economic losses. To have a clearer understanding of the extent of issues facing young women and men in employment and the labour market, it would be worthwhile to undertake dedicated studies of discriminatory practices in employment and the labour market concerning young people, especially girls; their socioeconomic protection levels both in the formal and the informal sectors of the economy; observance of legislation defining State privileges and guarantees in case of maternity and the need to care for a small or a sick child; as well as demand for such privileges and guarantees, etc.



Recommendations to trade unions

The FITUR should be more active and practice a more extensive and detailed coverage and advocacy of the results of their activity in achieving gender equality and findings of the undertaken studies of gender issues. It is important to identify the best results that could be offered for replication in the country's regions and enterprises.

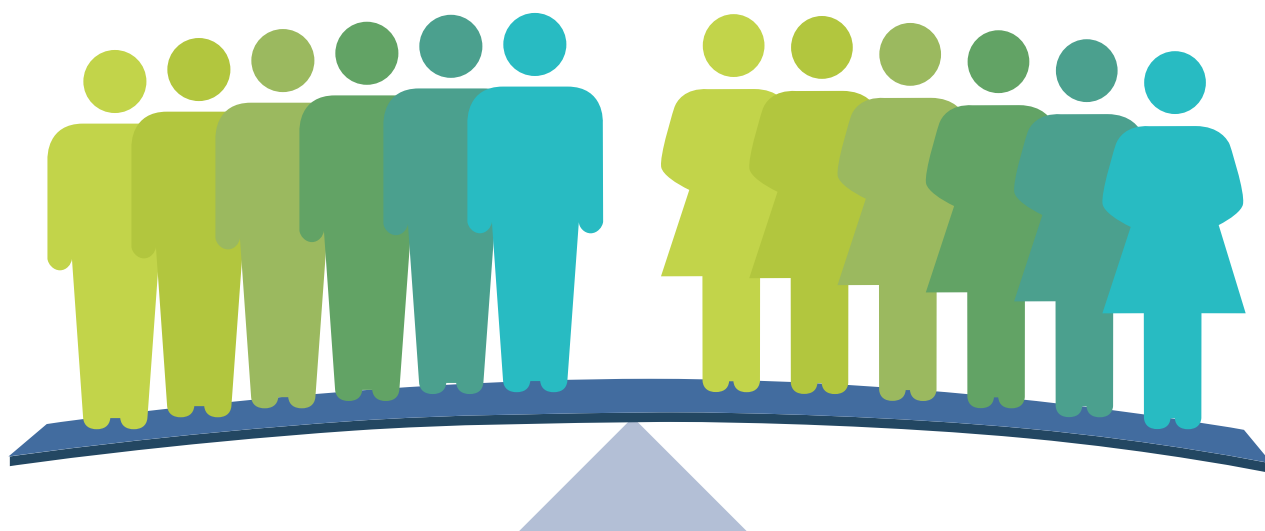
To overcome the gender-asymmetrical attitude of employers and employees to family responsibilities, strengthen the institution of fatherhood and raise the status of fathers, recommendations should be formulated on incorporating issues concerning the creation of enabling conditions for the employment of workers (men and women) with family responsibilities into collective agreements.

Recommendations to public employers' associations of the Russian Federation

Public employers' associations should pay more attention to supporting women's entrepreneurship, including entrepreneurship of young women; promoting replication of the most successful intra-corporate practices of supporting working women with children and persons with family responsibilities (both men and women); facilitating collaboration of employers with educational institutions in arranging workplace practices and internships of vocational students; and taking a more active part in establishing an occupational guidance system.



APPENDICES



TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	223
GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS.....	227
ANNEX	233



GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions and recommendations presented at the end of each overview of the gender dimension of youth employment show that the identified challenges could be divided into two groups. The first group includes challenges with purely national specificities typical of each individual country. Addressing such issues generally requires measures closely linked to the peculiarities of national legislation. The other group unites the crosscutting gender issues, i.e. issues typical of all or most countries in the region. The study has shown that the authorities of some countries have found solutions to some of these challenges, while in some other countries the same challenges have so far remained extremely acute.

The study conducted in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation, has made it possible to draw the following conclusions common for all the countries reviewed, namely:

1. All the above countries have modern national gender legislation providing a groundwork for the further advancement of women in these countries and achievement of actual gender equality. All of them are also parties to many international treaties, as well as United Nations and ILO conventions concerning human rights and protection from discrimination, primarily the ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) and the ILO Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women for Work of Equal Value. All the countries have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
2. In all the countries, labour legislation bans gender- and age-based discrimination.
3. In general, labour legislation is gender neutral. Privileges and preferences associated with childbirth (pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding) are intended for women, whereas privileges and preferences required for fulfilling family responsibilities are available to men and women on an equal footing. At the same time, practices of using privileges and preferences intended for workers with family responsibilities are gender asymmetrical. The percentage of men who use these privileges and preferences varies across these countries, but in all of them, it is women who mostly use them.
4. National legal norms regulating the situation of youth, men and women as workers with family responsibilities in the labour market are more generous than those offered by international standards. None of the member countries makes any efforts at the legislative level to curtail the privileges of women and youth in employment for the sake of increasing their competitiveness in the labour market.
5. At the same time, there is one common problem – an insufficiently effective enforcement of national legislation. For example, although all the countries have banned age- and gender-based discrimination, national statistical data concerning youth employment challenges and gender asymmetry in employment and the labour market indicate that neither direct nor indirect discrimination has been fully eliminated in this area. The study has shown that the insufficiently effective enforcement of national laws is mostly connected with shortcomings in the national enforcement mechanisms, lack of clearly formulated amenability for many gender-related violations of legislation impeding its enforcement, and large-scale incidence of informal employment in the regional countries. Although in most participating countries there is a ban on asking personal questions about a jobseekers marital status, availability of children and plans concerning their birth during recruitment, such practices remain widespread, and techniques of their elimination are non-existent. At the same time, some successful mechanisms for the application of individual provisions of the existing anti-discrimination laws have been created in recent years. For example, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan have



- substantially curtailed, and the Russian Federation has completely eliminated practices of publishing vacancy advertisements containing discriminatory requirements. However, in the Kyrgyz Republic where such publications are forbidden by law, the issue remains extremely acute.
6. Poor knowledge of labour and anti-discrimination legislation among the population remains one of the most important common challenges facing the participating countries. The study has shown that waged workers as well as some of employers, predominantly representatives of small and medium-size businesses, the informal sector and regional and municipal authorities experience a shortage of such knowledge. Only the Republic of Kazakhstan has taken targeted efforts to address this issue.
 7. The study has shown that in all the countries reviewed, traditional ideas concerning the division of roles and responsibilities between men and women prevail among the population, including youth. For this reason, young people in the participating countries do not consider gender discrimination in the labour market to be a serious problem.
 8. A particular challenge in the participating countries is a widespread practice of non-provision of privileges and guarantees to women associated with maternity and to workers with family responsibilities. It often takes the form of allegedly “voluntary” but actually induced refusal of young mothers to use their entitlement to maternity and childcare leave in full measure as well as privileges due to women with children, etc. Such a situation has become possible, first, due to widespread informal employment in the region (labour laws are not practically observed in this segment of the economy) and, second, due to the fact that the responsibility for paying benefits for some mainstream breaks in employment has been shifted to employers. In all the participating countries, employers pay temporary disability, including childcare, benefits fully or partially. In the Kyrgyz Republic, employers also pay a certain part of maternity benefits. Besides that, in some of the participating countries (the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic), mechanisms of financing maternity and childcare leave are periodically failing for various reasons, although they formally comply with international requirements.
 9. In all the countries in the region, the notions about the gender roles have become considerably broader, although the traditional ideas concerning the division of roles and responsibilities between men and women prevail. They go along with the recognition of legitimacy of women’s economic independence (in reality, sympathy for the traditional gender roles in the family sometimes coexist peacefully with egalitarian division of labour). The recent years have witnessed some positive changes in the dissemination of gender equality ideas (primarily among youth, especially in urban areas and among the most educated groups). At the same time, girls are supporters of egalitarian gender relations and alternative choices more often than youths. However, people in some rural areas and population groups with low educational attainment levels stick to the “hard-line” version of the traditional gender stereotypes implying absolute domination of men and the view of a woman as a housewife, a mother, and guardian of the hearth. Any out-of-home activities are not encouraged and even expressly forbidden.
 10. In all the countries, at least primary and general secondary education are compulsory and free of charge. Most schoolchildren attend public educational institutions. Statistics indicate an extraordinarily high coverage of children with primary and general secondary education. In none of the countries are girls discriminated against during enrolment in general educational institutions. The boys-to-girls ratio among schoolchildren at the primary and secondary levels is close to their ratio in the relevant age cohorts. In senior grades of secondary schools, there emerge gender issues in the composition of students, specific to each of the participating countries. In the Republic of Armenia, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation, girls constitute a steady majority in senior grades, while youths leave school either to continue their education at primary or secondary vocational education institutions or to join the labour market. A similar situation is possibly taking shape in the Republic of Kazakhstan (some indirect data permit such suppositions). The situation in the Republic of Azerbaijan remains unclear because of lack of relevant statistical data. However, in the opinion of experts, the country is facing the problem of girls’ dropout from senior grades of secondary schools directly related to the problem of early marriages.

11. The study has shown that in all of the participating countries, a high share of youth, especially in urban areas, wants to acquire vocational education. To the majority of populations in the participating countries, tertiary education becomes a social norm, sometimes failing to take into consideration the actual situation in the labour market. At the same time, a cross-cutting gender challenge is that youths continue to lag behind girls in the vocational education levels. In all of the participating countries, except the Republic of Azerbaijan, youths constitute a majority only among primary vocational students. The secondary and tertiary levels of vocational education remain feminized. In recent years, only the Russian Federation has succeeded in overcoming the gender imbalance at the secondary vocational level.
12. Another common challenge in the national education systems is a high extent of segregation by occupation and area of training among vocational students. Feminization of training in a narrow range of occupations (predominantly humanitarian ones) where overproduction of skills is observed in a number of countries reduces to nil girls' competitive advantages in the labour market such as their higher educational attainment levels. Despite their lower educational attainment, the wider range of skills acquired by youths is their competitive advantage. The existing segregation by occupations and areas of training among vocational students in all the countries provides a groundwork for the reproduction of segregation by occupations and types of economic activity.
13. In the participating countries, the labour force participation of youth varies within a very broad range, but is not generally high, which is largely explained by a wide coverage of this population category by general and vocational education. It should be pointed out that the unemployment rate is higher for girls than for youths. The lowest labour force participation rates are typical of the younger youth cohorts, while the highest ones are observed among young people of older age cohort (25-29 years) that does not belong to youth under international standards. In all the countries, there is a gender gap in this indicator not in favour of girls in all youth age cohorts.
14. In all of the participating countries, youths and girls have the highest unemployment rates among all age categories. The highest ones are in the youngest age cohort. Today, only in the Republic of Kazakhstan the youth unemployment rate is lower than the average indicator for overall population. The unemployment rate for girls is generally higher than that for boys. Only the Russian Federation constitutes an exception where gender asymmetry in unemployment rates is not typical of youth.
15. One of the most important gender challenges in employment in the participating countries remains a high extent of horizontal (sectoral and occupational) and vertical segregation. In all the countries in the region, women and men are represented in all types of economic activity and practically in all occupational groups (with the exception of some occupations involving heavy and hazardous work where it is forbidden to employ women in a number of countries). However, their share in such activities varies. This is largely a consequence of students' segregation by levels as well as programmes and areas of vocational training. The most feminized types of economic activity are education and health care. The smallest number of women is generally employed in construction. At the same time, the most feminized types of economic activity and occupational groups are the less paid ones as compared to the economic activities and occupational groups where mostly men are employed.
16. The gender pay gap varies substantially across the participating countries. The largest gap has been registered in the Republic of Azerbaijan where women's wages constitute only 55–58 per cent of men's wages, and the minimum gap is in the Kyrgyz Republic (75.5 per cent).
17. The most important youth employment challenge is a high prevalence of informal employment in the economies of the participating countries (the share of informality varies within the range of 20–70 per cent of all those employed). In general, informal employment is more widespread among youth than among adult workers. The highest share of informally employed persons is observed among the youngest labour market participants (in the Kyrgyz Republic, such employment is practically the only form of employment for this youth cohort). Girls, especially in older youth cohorts, are more inclined to formal employment than youths (probably, choosing formal employment to the detriment of their wages).



18. The study has shown that in the participating countries there is a number of common barriers facing youth during recruitment, although the extent of these barriers is different for youths and girls. In all the countries, the main barrier young people face during recruitment is lack of work experience, including work matching their skills (gender-neutral barrier).
19. Extremely high wage expectations are another barrier common for both youths and girls in the regional countries. However, it is more obvious among youths. Girls have some advantage during recruitment thanks to their lower wage expectations.
20. For many years, another common challenge in the participating countries has been skills mismatch, coupled with a shortage, and sometimes absence of vocational guidance among students. In all of the participating countries, this barrier is generally higher for girls due to a narrower range of skills they are trained in (along with overproduction of some of the skills).
21. Another common challenge is that not all vocational education institutions, even tertiary ones, provide high-quality training services, which prevents their graduates from being competitive in the labour market.
22. In some of the countries, gender discrimination during recruitment (especially in the younger youth cohorts) is not very pronounced. Discrimination is mostly based on the availability of small children. However, practices of asking personal questions during recruitment having nothing to do with jobseekers occupational qualities are widespread (half of the questions are closely related to gender discrimination), but this challenge faces jobseekers of all age cohorts, and not only youth.
23. A shortage of places at preschool childcare facilities is another common barrier during recruitment mostly facing women, but not necessarily young ones.
24. The study has also shown that practically all of the participating countries are formulating and implementing gender, youth, employment, and education policies practically simultaneously. These policies are, at best, weakly interlinked or not interlinked at all.
25. Gender issues of youth entrepreneurship have so far found no reflection in the public programmes of most participating countries. The only exception is the Republic of Kazakhstan where there is a female component, and special programmes targeting young women are implemented.
26. The study has also shown that there is no single policy in the regional countries pursued by employers in the area of gender equality in employment, job placement of youths and girls, provision of maternity-related privileges and guarantees, etc. The State as an employer and large private enterprises operating in the formal sector of the economy generally comply with the norms of the labour law, including norms regulating gender equality and provision of maternity- and family-related privileges and guarantees. Small and medium-size businesses, primarily those operating in the informal sector of the economy, neglect labour law norms and are indifferent to the gender issues of youth employment.
27. Today, gender and youth issues definitely fall within the sphere of interests of trade union organizations in the regional countries. However, the gender dimension of the job placement and employment of youth is absent from both collective agreements and other trade union documents.
28. The analysis of the gender statistics used during the study permits a conclusion that national gender statistics is currently developing at a fast pace in all of the participating countries and generally permits an analysis of the most acute challenges facing men and women in all areas of life and intercountry comparisons. However, there is a number of gender-related youth issues that can so far be highlighted only on the basis of dedicated research projects (for example, use of maternity- and childcare-related entitlements, the gender pay gap at informally operating enterprises, people's needs in preschool childcare services, etc.).
29. All of the participating countries are actively developing their national social policies by designing and implementing individual measures and packages of measures intended to improve the situation of men, women and youth in employment and the labour market. The problem is that even the most successful national practices are not always summarized, and their outputs are insufficiently highlighted and replicated. It is deemed that summarization of their experience in designing and implementing measures, with their subsequent replication across the countries in the region, will permit them to address the current gender issues in the job placement and employment of youth more effectively..



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Activities of the States in improving national social policies

- All the countries in the region should introduce a comprehensive approach to formulating their social policies, particularly to incorporating the gender dimension into the public youth policies, including youth employment and job placement. In doing so, they should take into consideration the specific difficulties and barriers both youths and girls face in their job placement, career development and self-fulfilment at work and mainstream youth issues into programmes aimed at achieving gender equality. In their employment promotion programmes, they should stipulate for special gender-differentiated measures targeting youth, etc. When planning and designing such measures, they should establish oversight systems to monitor and assess the effectiveness of their implementation, and stipulate for ways of public presentation of their outputs.
- The participating countries should intensify advocacy of egalitarian relations between men and women both at the levels of family and society at large. More efforts should be made to overcome the gender-asymmetric attitude of both employers and workers to family responsibilities and include issues concerning the creation of enabling conditions for the employment of workers (men and women) with family responsibilities into the national social dialogue at all levels.

Activities of the State in improving national legislation and enforcement mechanisms

To eliminate discriminatory practices during recruitment, typical of all the countries in the region, the participating countries need to establish a legal ban on collecting jobseekers' personal data falling under the category of "private life" (such as information on their marital status, plans of changing this status, availability of dependents, plans concerning the birth of children, etc.) as well as to design and introduce a mechanism for enforcing such laws.

To reduce the incidence of cases of non-payment of maternity or temporary disability benefits, they need to examine the issue of improving the mechanism of paying benefits for such periods.

To all of the participating countries, it is more important to adjust their mechanisms of enforcement of national anti-discrimination legislation rather than to improve the legislation itself. Considering that all of the participating countries have successful examples of improving national anti-discrimination legislation and establishing individual elements of its enforcement mechanisms, it is deemed critical to start an intercountry dialogue on exchanging this experience.

More attention needs to be paid to workplace inspections and oversight of compliance with the laws aimed at observing the legitimate rights of pregnant women and youth. A system of incentives and penalties needs to be designed for employers observing and those failing to observe the rights of pregnant women workers, workers with family responsibilities and youth combining work with studies.



Activities of the States in improving the knowledge of labour and anti-discrimination laws

The participating countries should design courses on labour laws including gender equality issues; anti-discrimination legislation' issues concerning maternity-related privileges and guarantees and those for workers with family responsibilities; fundamentals of pension and social insurance and taxation; and incorporate them into the curricula of secondary schools and vocational education institutions. They need to design programmes for dedicated training workshops intended for different population categories, and to develop, replicate and disseminate printed matter with brief outlines of national anti-discrimination legislation and lists of state privileges and guarantees in case of temporary disability due to maternity, childcare, etc. Such printed matter may include brochures, booklets and information materials to be posted at employment services, educational institutions, antenatal clinics and such other institutions as well as on dedicated web sites. All these measures will increase the number of young people informed about their labour rights and privileges stipulated by national legislation.

National television companies should prepare a series of TV broadcasts and clips explaining certain provisions of labour laws, primarily those concerning maternity- and childcare-related privileges and benefits.

Billboards with relevant excerpts from labour and gender equality laws should be arranged at public and commercial employment agencies and units of educational institutions responsible for the job placement of their graduates. The same information should be posted on the official web sites of these organizations without fail.

Considering poor knowledge of gender issues among representatives of regional and municipal executive authorities, including regional branches of law enforcement, social security and educational bodies as well as regional and municipal deputies, it is necessary to design dedicated programmes for improving the skills of these categories of public officials.

Activities of the States in addressing gender issues in the national education systems

More attention should be paid to developing the vocational guidance system. Vocational guidance should begin in primary grades of schools, with special emphasis on attracting youth to secondary vocational education institutions. Vocational guidance among girls should be aimed at expanding the range of occupations and skills, in which they could be trained, including non-traditional occupations regarded as "male" ones so far. Such work will help to gradually overcome gender segregation in education and employment and match the composition of graduates with the requirements of the national labour markets in skills and occupations.

Educational institutions of all levels should be encouraged to monitor the job placement and career development of their graduates, with a compulsory publication of the results. Such work may become a starting point in partial reorientation of the population's demand for educational services from tertiary education to the training in blue-collar occupations.

National networks of vocational education institutions and special courses focused on training skills for the newly created jobs within reaching distance should be developed.





Vocational education institutions should be encouraged to improve the quality of their educational services and bring their content closer to the actual labour market needs.

Activities of the States aimed at reducing barriers to the job placement of youths and girls

Centres for the job placement of graduates and vocational education institutions of different levels should be recommended taking into consideration the fact that youths and girls often face different sets of barriers during recruitment.

It is worthwhile to consider the possibilities of volunteerism as a way of overcoming the barrier connected with lack of work experience.

Nationally oriented mechanisms of encouraging employers to arrange internships and workplace practices of vocational students should be developed.

Methodological booklets briefly outlining the rules of signing labour contracts, preparing a CV, undergoing an interview, etc. should be designed, published and broadly disseminated at educational institutions of all levels (general and vocational schools).

Activities of the States in improving conditions enabling youths and girls to combine their occupational and family responsibilities

The issue of further development of the social infrastructure, the welfare services system, the network of preschool childcare facilities (not only kindergartens but *crèches* as well) remains vital, especially in rural areas. This will make it possible to create new jobs predominantly for women, give many women an opportunity to work full time, increase their attractiveness to employers and promote rationalization of housekeeping and better preparation of children for schooling.

Parameters of operation of preschool childcare facilities and educational institutions should be reconsidered with the aim of establishing flexible schedules. A greater number of extended-day groups at primary schools will make it possible to take into consideration the diverse working schedules (the start and the end of the working day and shifts) in the national labour market, help young women to exercise their right to occupational employment more fully and effectively, and promote a more balanced distribution of family responsibilities.

The development of a system of national social advertising should be encouraged in order to advocate a more balanced distribution of gender roles, involve men in housekeeping and childcare more actively, and stress the importance of occupational employment for women and their families.

Improving gender statistics

National gender statistics, primarily education and labour statistics, should be developed further to take into consideration the latest developments in these areas (including new non-standard forms of employment as well as time and workplace management) and assess the implementation of public gender equality and other programmes on advancing women and men in various areas of life.



It is worthwhile to develop indicators (including techniques of data collection and processing and presentation of the information obtained) characterizing the actual use of maternity- and childcare-related state privileges and guarantees by the population as well as participation, incomplete participation and non-participation of employed and unemployed persons in the public social, pension and medical insurance schemes with breakdown by age, sex and employment status.

A system of monitoring youth gender issues in employment and the labour market should be developed based on the available state statistics.

Proposals on conducting cross-country studies

It is deemed necessary to undertake a cross-country study of issues concerning the use of legally established privileges and guarantees related to maternity and family responsibilities (completeness of and problems in using maternity and childcare leave and childcare-related sick leave as well as problems involved in receiving relevant benefits) and the effectiveness of the benefit payment mechanisms. The aim of the study should be to assess the extent of relevance of these privileges and compensations for the population, identify the best national practices in this area and assess possibilities of their replication in the other countries in the region.

A cross-country study should be conducted to examine the best ways of arranging internships for vocational students.

A cross-country study is needed to analyse programmes on lending women's entrepreneurship in order to identify the most effective of them, reveal causes of lack of success of some programmes and offer, on this basis, cost-effective schemes of supporting women's entrepreneurship.

Recommendations for trade union organizations of the participating countries

Trade union organizations of the participating countries should be more active in giving a more extensive and detailed coverage of the results of their activities in achieving gender equality and creating conditions that enable women to combine their occupational, domestic and family responsibilities, permit to train women with children and arrange gender education as well as the outputs of the undertaken gender-related research projects. It is important to identify the best outputs that could be offered for replication in the countries' regions and enterprises.

To overcome the gender-asymmetric attitude of employers to workers with family responsibilities, strengthen the institution of fatherhood and raise the status of fathers, recommendations need to be prepared on incorporating issues of creating enabling conditions for the employment of workers (men and women) with family responsibilities into the collective agreements of enterprises.

It is deemed worthwhile to recommend that national associations of trade unions develop a system for monitoring gender issues of youth employment, with a compulsory coverage of small enterprises, in order to map challenges facing women, primarily young ones, at work.

It is also worthwhile to form and develop territorial trade union branches in the participating countries that workers of small and medium-size (including informal) enterprises where it is impossible or unwise





to form primary groups could join. There are a lot of women whose rights are especially often abused working at such enterprises.

It is deemed worthwhile to analyse, summarize and highlight the experience of primary trade union organizations in addressing gender issues at specific enterprises in the participating countries, identify the most interesting and promising results of the activities of national trade union associations in addressing gender issues of youth employment and incorporating gender issues into collective labour agreements.

Public employers' associations of the participating countries should:

- Advocate the idea of social responsibility of business among the entrepreneurial community on a broader scale;
- Facilitate replication of the most successful national intra-corporate practices of supporting women with children and persons with family responsibilities;
- Promote collaboration of employers with educational institutions in training the required skills (including arrangement of workplace practices and internships for vocational students);
- Participate more actively in establishing national vocational guidance systems and improving national vocational education systems (as far as improvement of training programmes and adjustment of areas of training is concerned) in order to improve the quality of training of vocational students of all levels and overcome skills mismatch;
- Arrange special events for entrepreneurs, primarily representatives of small businesses, to inform them about the fundamentals of the national anti-discrimination legislation.

Recommendations on arranging exchange of experience

Considering that all of the participating countries have accumulated rich experience in addressing gender issues in education and youth employment, they should establish a cross-country exchange of information about their best solutions.

A series of international workshops could serve as a platform for such exchange where the following experience could be presented:

The experience of the Republic of Azerbaijan in developing and supporting volunteerism as a way of overcoming job placement barriers connected with lack of work experience and a factor of strengthening girls' competitiveness in employment; as well as its experience in introducing and conducting equivalency examinations during recruitment to public service, which has made it possible to mitigate discrimination challenges during recruitment in this area of employment;

The experience of the Republic of Armenia in implementing the programme entitled "Arranging Workplace Practices for the Unemployed with an Occupation but without a Service Record for Acquiring Work Experience in the Their Occupations" and in conducting the Girls Day when they try to attract schoolgirls to non-traditional occupations (IT, engineering) in order to change gender stereotypes in the labour market;



The experience of the Republic of Kazakhstan in overcoming legal illiteracy among youth, teaching fundamentals of labour legislation to secondary school students, and involving corporations in teaching fundamentals of legal culture and gender equality to the population; as well as its experience in integrating the database of the Ministry of Education and Science with the database of the State Pension Payments Centre (comparison of university and college reports on the job placement of their graduates with the information on pension payments will provide a more objective picture of the actual employment of graduates), etc.;

The experience of the Kyrgyz Republic in arranging the operation of the Youth Labour Exchange and disseminating recommendations to primary organizations on incorporating gender issues into collective labour agreements prepared by the Federation of Trade Unions of the Kyrgyz Republic as well as the experience of primary trade union organizations in addressing gender issues at specific enterprises, etc.

The experience of the Russian Federation in establishing a mechanism for preventing the publication of vacancy advertisements containing discriminatory requirements for jobseekers and arranging vocational training and skills development for persons (mothers and fathers) on childcare leave, etc..



ANNEX

Table 1. Dynamics of the number and gender composition of students in various segments of the vocational education system of Azerbaijan

Number of students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
In primary vocational education	25,562	27,330	28,993	30,664	29,234	25,414
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	7,514	7,901	8,399	8,746	8,163	6,912
Share of girls, %	29.40	28.91	28.97	28.52	27.92	27.20
In secondary vocational education	52,765	53,451	54,456	55,954	63,273	60,478
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	35,597	35,382	35,832	37,097	42,465	40,750
Share of girls, %	67.46	66.20	65.80	66.30	67.11	67.38
In private institutions	1,686	1,770	1,220	1,519	2,109	2,729
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	1,137	1,083	686	813	1,221	1,517
Share of girls, %	67.44	61.19	56.23	53.52	57.89	55.59
In universities	139,194	140,241	143,146	145,584	151,274	158,212
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	63,940	65,112	66,521	69,814	73,195	76,695
Share of girls, %	45.94	46.43	46.47	47.95	48.39	48.48
In private universities	21,260	19,753	19,616	19,900	19,883	21,586
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	8,780	7,833	7,670	7,761	8,438	9,251
Share of girls, %	41.30	39.65	39.10	39.00	42.44	42.86

Table 2. Dynamics of the share of girls in secondary vocational education institutions of Azerbaijan by occupational group

Number of students learning the following occupations	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Pedagogics	5,271	11,092	17,029	24,822	21,919
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	4,316	9,258	14,501	21,323	19,097
Share of girls, %	81.88	83.47	85.15	85.90	87.13
Humanitarian and social studies	314	562	973	770	697
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	145	301	430	499	506
Share of girls, %	46.18	53.56	44.19	64.81	72.60
Culture and arts	1,959	4,681	5,072	6,264	6,080
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	1,345	3,203	3,558	4,471	4,244
Share of girls, %	68.66	68.43	70.15	71.38	69.80
Economics and management	3,078	5,588	8,491	10,386	10,635



Number of students learning the following occupations	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	1,923	3,453	5,652	7,059	7,208
Share of girls, %	62.48	61.79	66.56	67.97	67.78
Engineering and technology	2,926	5,529	8,955	12,189	12,754
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	691	1,300	2,495	3,292	3,818
Share of girls, %	23.62	23.51	27.86	27.01	29.94
Agriculture	129	279	482	708	894
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	45	92	199	324	429
Share of girls, %	34.88	32.97	41.29	45.76	47.99
Medicine	2,585	4,373	5,596	6,773	7,459
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	1,754	3,070	3,657	4,765	5,416
Share of girls, %	67.85	70.20	65.35	70.35	72.61

Table 3. Dynamics of the share of girls in tertiary vocational education institutions of Azerbaijan by occupational group

Number of students learning the following occupations	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Pedagogics	8,735	16,976	25,523	35,811	38,561	39,531
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	7,037	13,768	20,781	29,130	31,921	32,604
Share of girls, %	80.56	81.10	81.42	81.34	82.78	82.48
Humanitarian and social studies	3,288	6,945	10,447	14,610	18,030	19,243
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	1,854	3,776	5,173	7,289	8,985	9,733
Share of girls, %	56.39	54.37	49.52	49.89	49.83	50.58
Culture and arts	958	1,951	2,962	4,607	4,612	4,851
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	493	1,029	1,359	2,504	2,773	2,965
Share of girls, %	51.46	52.74	45.88	54.35	60.13	61.12
Economics and management	5,906	12,976	20,593	28,501	33,201	36,312
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	1,370	3,262	5,011	7,380	9,754	11,124
Share of girls, %	23.20	25.14	24.33	25.89	29.38	30.63
Natural sciences	1,276	2,654	4,690	6,478	8,007	8,740
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	681	1,447	2,750	3,977	4,846	5,334
Share of girls, %	53.37	54.52	58.64	61.39	60.52	61.03
Engineering and technology	6,644	12,876	20,941	28,921	32,742	34,929
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	1,377	3,208	5,116	7,551	8,738	9,217
Share of girls, %	20.73	24.91	24.43	26.11	26.69	26.39
Agriculture	422	879	1,253	1,717	1,845	1,764
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	148	341	478	700	800	737



Number of students learning the following occupations	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Share of girls, %	35.07	38.79	38.15	40.77	43.36	41.78
Medicine	2,414	4,605	7,238	10,047	11,563	12,842
<i>Of this number, girls</i>	782	1,461	2,443	3,241	4,046	4,981
Share of girls, %	32.39	31.73	33.75	32.26	34.99	38.79

Table 4. Coverage of preschool-age children with preschool education facilities in Azerbaijan

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of preschool facilities	1,635	1,638	1,666	1,677	1,680	1,706
<i>Public</i>	1,624	1,623	1,629	1,637	1,639	1,650
<i>Private</i>	11	15	37	40	41	56
Number of children at preschool facilities	107,954	112,892	113,517	111,090	107,699	116,049
<i>Public</i>	107,413	112,111	112,268	109,616	106,138	113,805
<i>Private</i>	541	781	1,249	1,474	1,561	2,244
Number of girls at preschool facilities	49,306	51,752	52,368	51,635	50,403	53,839
<i>Public</i>	49,067	51,440	51,830	50,936	49,680	52,778
<i>Private</i>	239	312	538	699	723	1,061
Coverage with preschool facilities (% of the total number of children 1-5 years old)	16.9	16.9	16.	14.8	13.3	14.2

Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, <https://www.stat.gov.az/>

Table 5. Dynamics of age composition of Armenia's population, 2009–2015 (as at year start, 000 persons)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Overall population, of this number:	3,076.8	3,055.2	3,018.9	3,021.4	3,026.9	3,017.1	3,010.6
<i>Under one year old</i>	40.8	44.0	41.4	41.3	42.4	41.7	43.0
<i>1–4 years old</i>	150.5	154.2	166.2	167.4	168.6	170.0	166.9
<i>5–9 years old</i>	182.6	179.9	179.9	181.3	187.4	192.0	199.5
<i>10–14 years old</i>	227.3	217.6	178.6	178.0	172.3	172.0	173.2
Total 1–14 years old	560.4	551.7	524.7	526.7	528.3	534.0	539.6
Total 0–14 years old	601.2	595.7	566.1	568.0	570.7	575.7	582.6
<i>15–19 years old</i>	305.9	292.2	233.1	228.7	214.4	201.2	190.5
<i>20–24 years old</i>	317.0	316.1	292.2	291.8	285.6	271.1	254.6
<i>25–29 years old</i>	282.3	291.9	271.9	273.1	278.0	278.0	276.6
Total 15–29 years old	905.2	900.2	797.2	793.6	778.0	750.3	721.7
<i>30–34 years old</i>	230.6	239.7	223.0	225.3	234.0	242.2	250.0
<i>35–39 years old</i>	199.4	202.1	187.4	188.6	191.9	195.5	201.4



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
40–44 years old	213.8	203.5	177.0	176.5	176.9	175.5	175.8
45–49 years old	267.8	260.3	211.1	209.1	197.6	186.7	176.7
50–54 years old	226.6	238.5	234.5	235.6	235.0	229.3	221.5
55–59 years old	163.8	175.2	177.8	179.1	187.1	198.7	207.0
60–64 years old	91.5	107.3	127.6	128.4	136.2	142.5	150.8
65 years and older	338.1	327.0	317.2	317.2	319.5	320.7	323.1

Sources: Statistical Handbook of the Republic of Armenia, 2015;
Statistical Handbook of the Republic of Armenia, 2011.

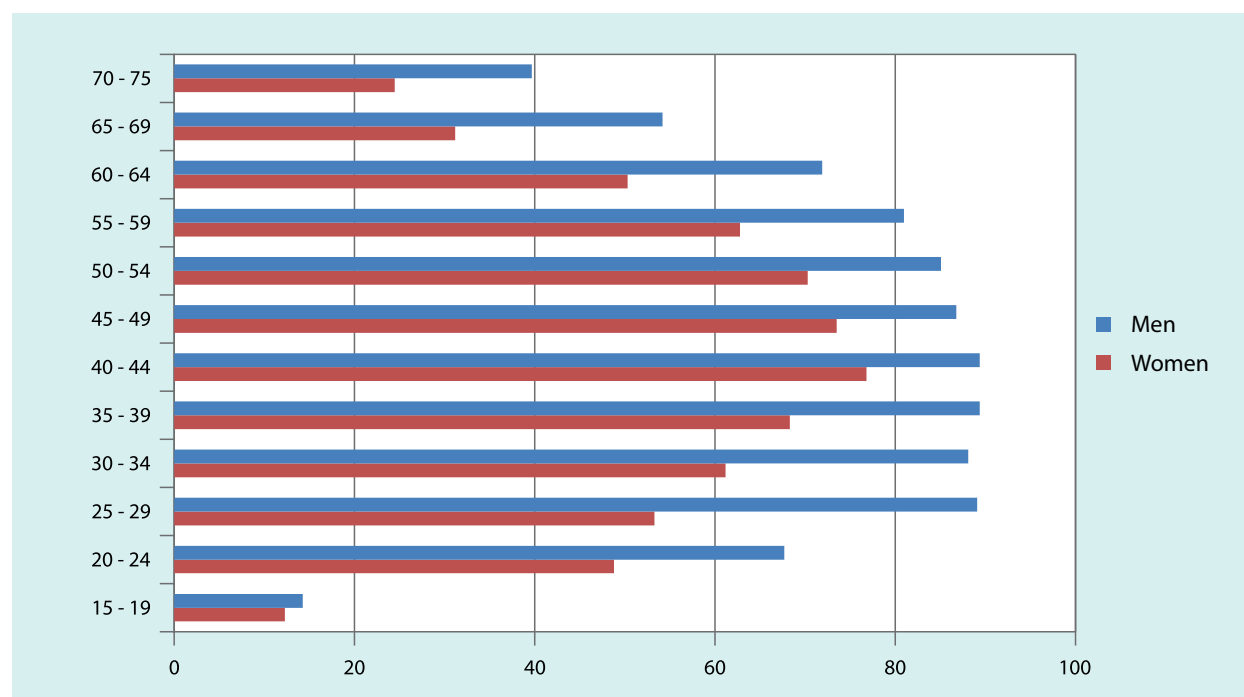
Table 6. Economic activity, employment and unemployment in Armenia, disaggregated by sex, 2008–2014

Year	Economically active population, 000 persons		
	Overall population	Men	Women
2008	1,414.6	753.2	661.4
2014	1,375.7	699.9	675.7
Change during the period, %	-2.75	-7.1	+2.2
Share in the economically active population, %			
2008	100	53	47
2014	100	51	49
Labour force participation, %			
2008	59.5	70.8	50.4
2014	63.1	73.2	55.2
Employed population, 000 persons			
2008	1,183.1	644.8	538.3
2014	1,133.5	589.4	544.1
Change during the period, %	-4.2	-8.6	+1.1
Share in the employed population, %			
2008	100	54	46
2014	100	52	48
Employment rate, %			
2008	49.8	60.6	41.0
2014	52.0	61.6	44.5

Year	Economically active population, 000 persons		
	Overall population	Men	Women
Number of unemployed, 000 persons			
2008	231.6	108.5	123.1
2014	242.1	110.5	131.6
Change during the period, %	+4,5	+1,8	+6,9
Share among the unemployed, %			
2008	100	47	53
2014	100	46	54
Unemployment rate, %			
2008	16.4	14.4	18.6
2014	17.6	15.8	19.5

Sources: *Labour Market in the Republic of Armenia. 2010-2014. Statistical Handbook. National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia. 2015. P.22-23; Women and Men in Armenia. 2015. A Statistical Booklet*; <http://armstatbank.am/>.

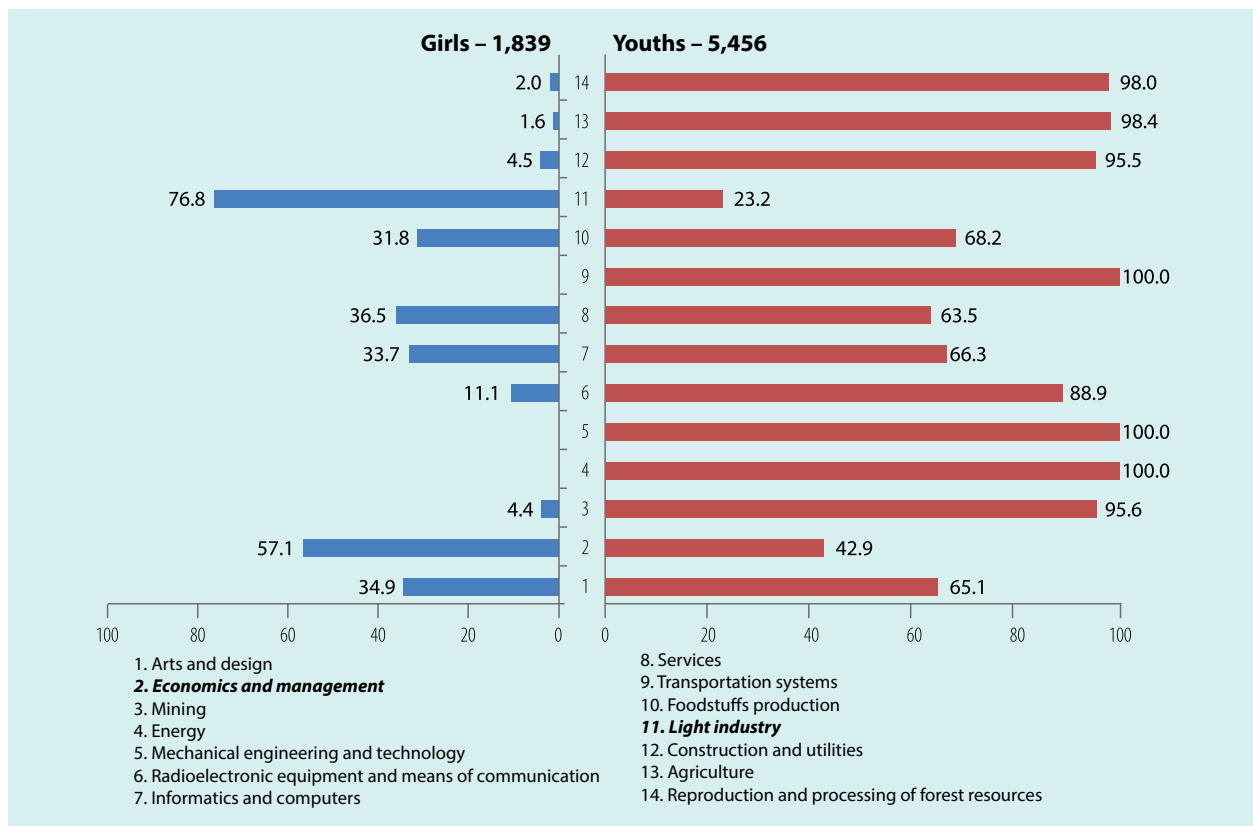
Diagram 1. Labour force participation in Armenia by age and sex, 2014, % .



Source: *Women and Men in Armenia. 2015. A Statistical Booklet*.

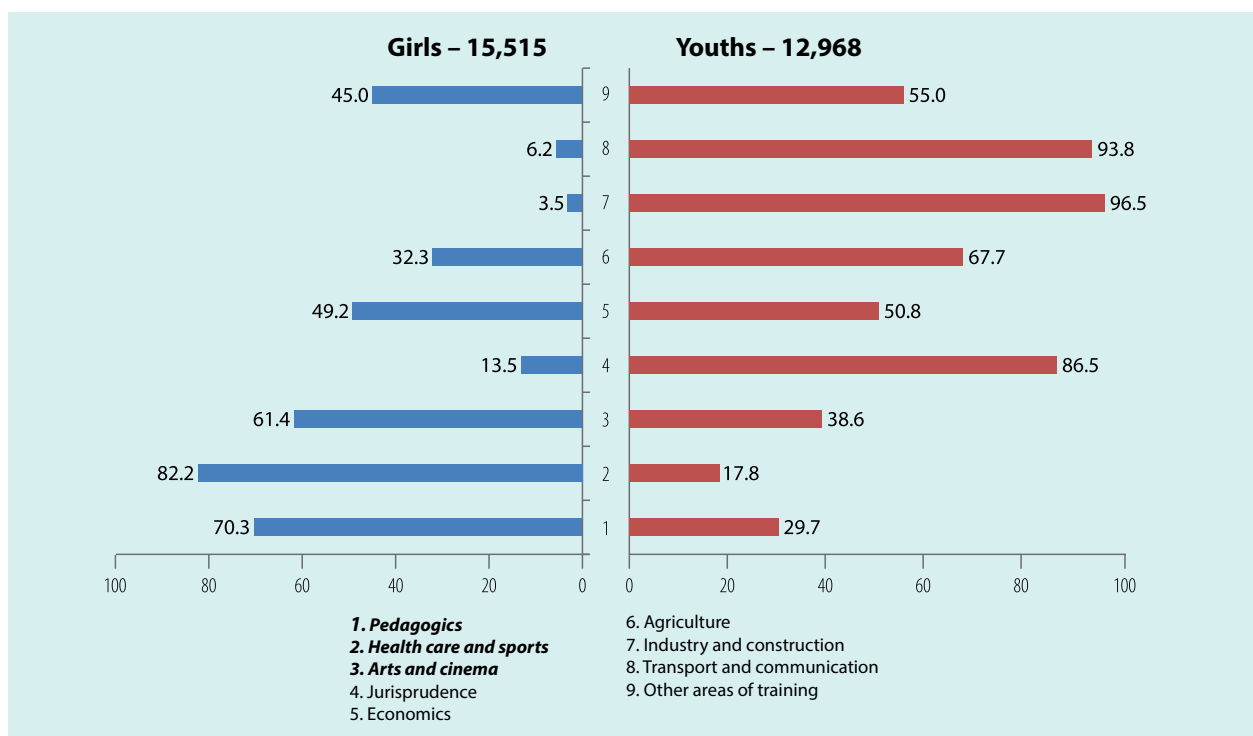


Diagram 2. Gender compositions of vocational students in Armenia by areas of training, 2014/15 academic year (percentage of the total number of students in the relevant area of training). Source: Women and Men in Armenia. 2015. A Statistical Booklet. P.83



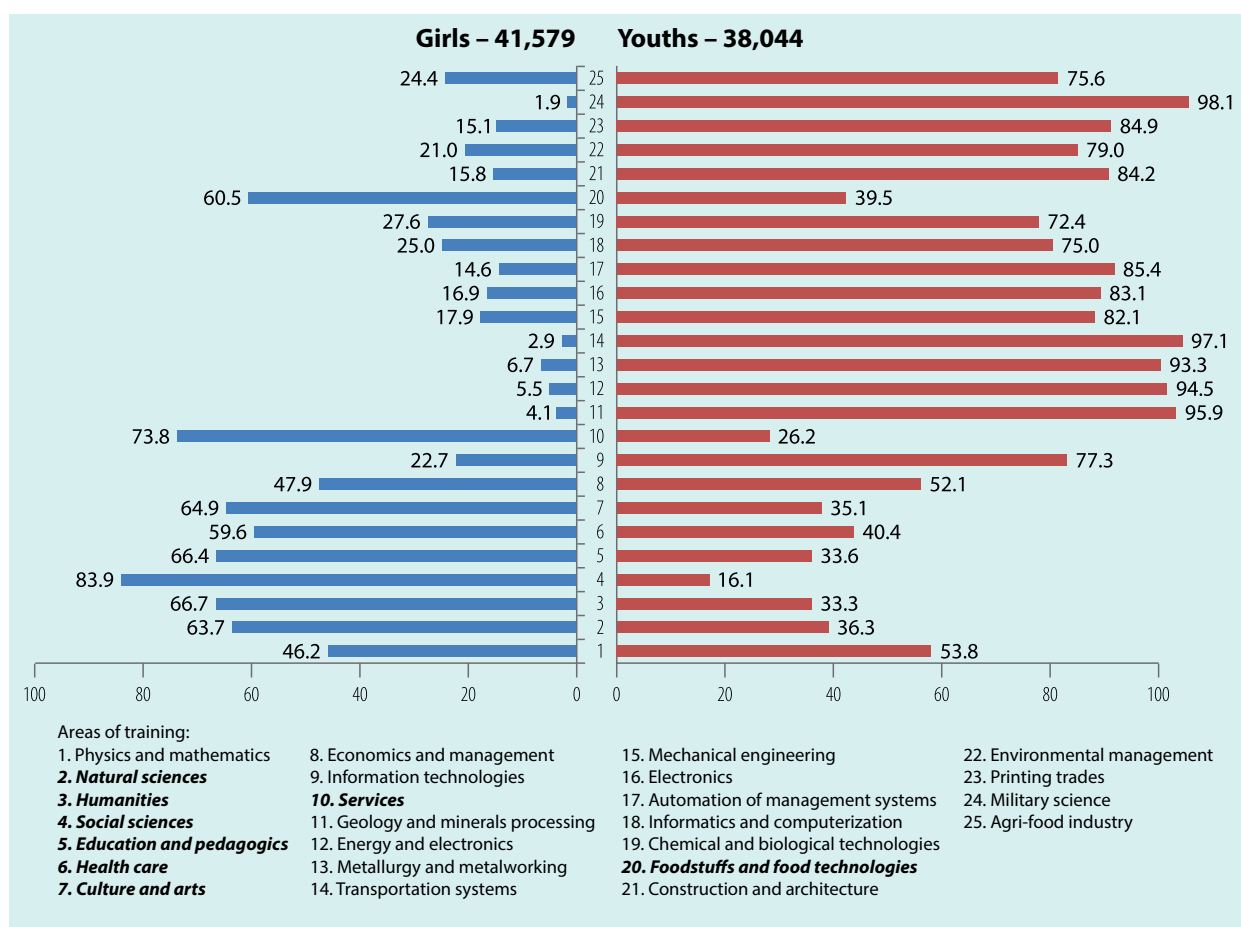
Note: Areas of training with the prevalence of girls are in bold italics in the legend.

Diagram 3. Gender composition of secondary vocational students in Armenia by areas of training, 2014/15 academic year (percentage of the total number of students in the relevant area of training). Source: Women and Men in Armenia. 2015. A Statistical Booklet. P.84



Note: Areas of training with the prevalence of girls are in bold italics in the legend.

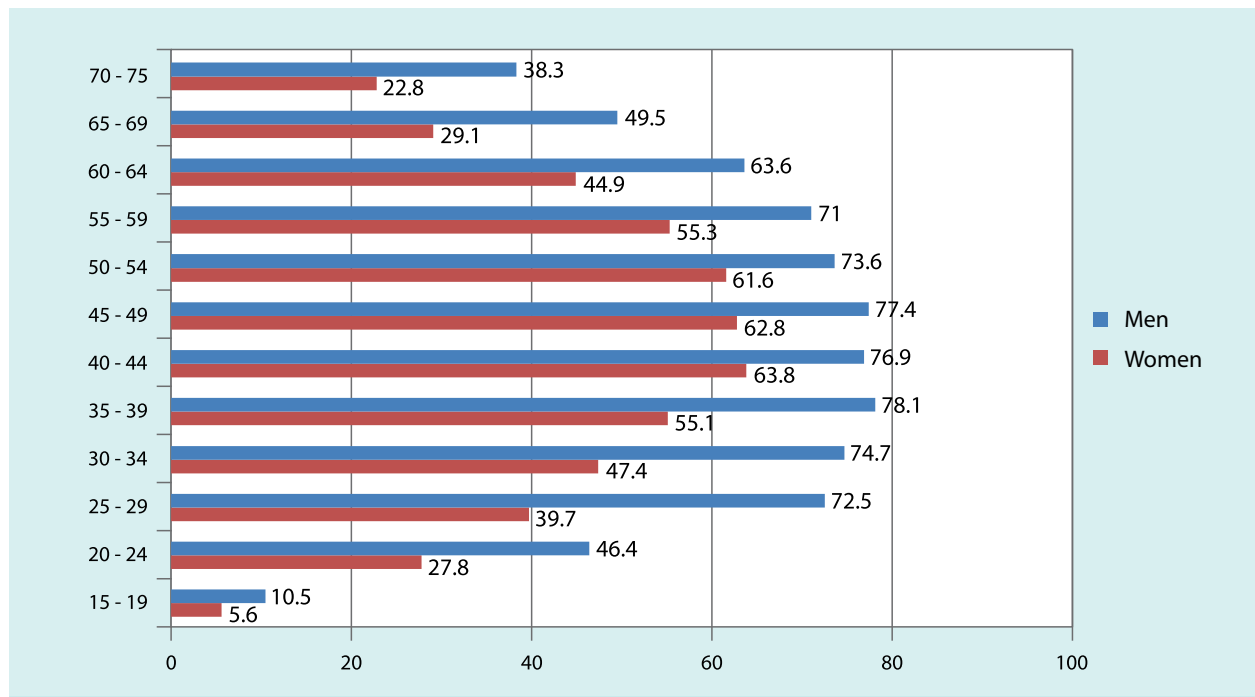
Diagram 4. Gender composition of tertiary vocational students in Armenia by areas of training, 2014/15 academic year (percentage of the total number of students in the relevant area of training). Source: Women and Men in Armenia. 2015. A Statistical Booklet. Pp.87-88.



Note: Areas of training with the prevalence of girls are in bold italics in the legend.



Diagram 5. Employment rates of Armenia's population by age and sex, 2014.



Source: *Women and Men in Armenia. 2015. A Statistical Booklet*

Table 7. Scale and structure of general and registered unemployment in Armenia, 2008 –2015

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	As at 12.31. 2015
Total number of unemployed, 000 persons	231.6	265.9	278.2	265.7	245.5	224.6	242.1	
Unemployment rate, %	16.4	18.7	19.0	18.4	17.3	16.2	17.6	
Unemployed persons aged 15–29, 000 persons	102.4	116.9	117.6	110.6	98.7	91.4	98.1	
Percentage of the total number of unemployed	44.2	44.0	42.3	41.6	40.2	40.7	40.5	
Registered unemployed, 000 persons	75	84	79	69	62	56	66	76.7
Percentage of the total number of unemployed	32.4	31.6	28.4	26.0	25.2	24.9	27.3	
Unemployed women, registered by PES RA, 000 persons	56.4	59.8	55.1	49.2	45.4	41.3	47.3	53.1
Percentage of the total number of registered unemployed	75.2	71.1	69.7	71.3	73.2	73.8	71.7	69.2
Unemployed aged 16–29, registered by PES RA, 000 persons	13.5	16.6	15.3	14.9	14.6	13.0	15.6	19.0
Percentage of the total number of registered unemployed	18.0	19.8	19.4	21.6	23.5	23.2	23.7	24.8

Source: Calculated based on the data of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS and the Public Employment Services of the Republic of Armenia.

Table 8. Breakdown of households by the sex of heads of households in Kazakhstan, 2014

Regions	Share of households (%) where heads of households are:	
	Women	Men
Akmola	64.5	35.5
Aktobe	45.9	54.1
Almaty	73.9	26.1
Atyrau	24.7	75.3
West Kazakhstan	62.4	37.6
Zhambyl	56.0	44.0
Karaganda	38.3	61.7
Kostanay	66.2	33.8
Kyzyl-Orda	24.8	75.2
Mangystau	76.8	23.2
South Kazakhstan	32.9	67.1
Pavlodar	45.0	55.0
North Kazakhstan	61.8	38.2
East Kazakhstan	38.2	61.8
Astana City	32.2	67.8
Almaty City	54.4	45.6
Country's average	49.7	50.3

Table 9. Students of technical and vocational education institutions of Kazakhstan by occupational group as at the start of the 2014/15 academic year

Occupational group	Number of students, persons		Percentage of total		Breakdown by sex, %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	256,226	276,684	100.0	100.0	48.1	51.9
Education	64,078	20,807	25.0	7.5	75.5	24.5
Law	9,522	14,785	3.7	5.3	39.2	60.8
Medicine, pharmaceuticals	62,038	16,870	24.2	6.1	78.6	21.4
Arts and culture	9,399	4,909	3.7	1.8	65.7	34.3
Services, economics and management	50,789	20,939	19.8	7.6	70.8	29.2
Metrology, standardization and certification	845	421	0.3	0.2	66.7	33.3
Geology, mining	1,447	7,065	0.6	2.6	17.0	83.0
Petrochemical and chemical production	3,124	12,220	1.2	4.4	20.4	79.6
Energy	1,842	19,883	0.7	7.2	8.5	91.5
Metallurgy and mechanical engineering	967	4,585	0.4	1.7	17.4	82.6



Occupational group	Number of students, persons		Percentage of total		Breakdown by sex, %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Transport (by sectors)	1,186	28,210	0.5	10.2	4.0	96.0
Production, assembly, operation and maintenance	20,352	41,264	7.9	14.9	33.0	67.0
Communication, telecommunications and information technologies; electronics	16,503	35,167	6.4	12.7	31.9	68.1
Construction and utilities	5,399	23,068	2.1	8.3	19.0	81.0
Agriculture, veterinary medicine and environment	8,735	26,491	3.4	9.6	24.8	75.2

Table 10. Students of tertiary educational institutions of Kazakhstan by occupational groups as at the start of the 2014/15 academic year

Occupational group	Number of students, persons		Percentage of total		Breakdown by sex, %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	271,783	203,058	100.0	100.0	57.2	42.8
Natural sciences	126	,101	0.05	0.05	55.5	44.5
Humanities and social studies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Economics and management	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interdisciplinary occupations	-	-	-	-	-	-
Aviation technology	-	,603	-	0.3	-	100.0
Health care and social security (medicine)	19,096	9,980	7.03	4.91	65.7	34.3
Veterinary medicine	3,110	1,696	1.14	0.84	64.7	35.3
Bachelors						
Natural sciences	9702	5,094	3.57	2.5	65.6	34.4
Humanitarian and socio-economic sciences	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education	88,323	32,628	32,498	16.1	73.0	27.0
Humanities	11,192	4,179	4.1	2.1	72.8	27.2
Law	20,920	31,040	7.7	15.3	40.3	59.7
Arts	10,833	8,332	4.0	4.1	56.5	43.5
Social sciences and business	50,557	26,713	18.6	13.2	65.4	34.6
Engineering and technology	36,979	65,896	13.6	32.5	35.9	64.1
Agricultural sciences	5,554	4,178	2.0	2.1	57.1	42.9
Services	10,012	9,569	3.7	4.7	51.1	48.9
Health care and social security	5,261	1,097	1.9	0.5	82.7	17.3
Other occupations	,118	1,951	0.04	1.0	5.7	94.3

Table 11. Number of postgraduate students in Kazakhstan by occupational group, 2014

Occupational group	Number of students, persons		Percentage of total		Breakdown by sex, %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Total	20,819	11,708	100.0	100.0	64.0	36.0
Education	4,291	842	20.6	7.2	83.6	16.4
Humanities	1,737	613	8.3	5.2	73.9	26.1
Law	1,474	1,676	7.1	14.3	46.8	53.2
Arts	351	197	1.7	1.7	64.1	35.9
Social sciences, economics and business	4,975	3,010	23.9	25.7	62.3	37.7
Natural sciences	1,541	581	7.4	5.0	72.6	27.4
Engineering and technology	3,120	3,330	15.0	28.4	48.4	51.6
Agricultural sciences	518	328	2.5	2.8	61.2	38.8
Services	545	334	2.6	2.9	62.0	38.0
Health care and social security	457	161	2.2	1.4	73.9	26.1
Veterinary medicine	170	77	0.8	0.7	68.8	31.2

Table 12. Breakdown of employed population aged 15–28 in Kazakhstan by employment status, 000 persons

	Girls			Youths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All those employed	1,069.7	1,051.8	1,088.3	1,229.2	1,207.7	1,252.8
Wageworkers	689.9	733.4	780.9	790.3	804.0	893.0
<i>Employed by organizations (enterprises)</i>	<i>558.1</i>	<i>581.8</i>	<i>671.8</i>	<i>619.3</i>	<i>617.1</i>	<i>750.6</i>
<i>Employed by individuals</i>	<i>108.0</i>	<i>103.9</i>	<i>98.8</i>	<i>120.3</i>	<i>126.3</i>	<i>116.3</i>
<i>Employed on peasant holdings and farms</i>	<i>23.8</i>	<i>47.8</i>	<i>10.2</i>	<i>50.7</i>	<i>60.6</i>	<i>26.1</i>
Non-wage workers	379.8	318.4	307.5	438.9	403.7	359.8
<i>Employers</i>	<i>10.3</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>21.7</i>	<i>21.7</i>	<i>19.3</i>
<i>Self-employed persons</i>	<i>360.4</i>	<i>179.9</i>	<i>300.1</i>	<i>400.4</i>	<i>247.1</i>	<i>335.7</i>
<i>Cooperative members</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>3.9</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>7.3</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>0.8</i>
<i>Contributing family workers</i>	<i>4.6</i>	<i>127.9</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>9.5</i>	<i>132.3</i>	<i>4.0</i>



Table 13. Breakdown of employed population aged 15-28 in Kazakhstan by employment status, %

	Girls			Youths		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Wageworkers	64.49	69.73	71.75	64.29	66.57	71.28
Employed by organizations (enterprises)	52.17	55.31	61.73	50.38	51.1	59.91
Employed by individuals	10.1	9.88	9.08	9.79	10.46	9.28
Employed on peasant holdings and farms	2.2	4.54	0.94	4.12	5.02	2.08
Non-wage workers	35.51	30.27	28.26	35.71	33.43	28.72
Employers	0.96	0.65	0.52	1.77	1.8	1.54
Self-employed persons	33.69	17.1	27.58	32.57	20.46	26.8
Cooperative members	0.41	0.37	0.01	0.59	0.21	0.06
Contributing family workers	0.43	12.16	0.15	0.77	10.95	0.32

Table 14. Breakdown of employed population aged 15-28 in Kazakhstan by type of economic activity

	2012		2013		2014	
	girls	youths	girls	youths	girls	youths
Total, 000 persons	1,069.7	1 229.2	1,051.8	1 207.7	1,088.3	1,252.8
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	283.9	362.7	258.7	330.2	200.2	243.7
Industry	73.1	162.8	70.5	155.2	77.9	180.3
Mining and quarrying	12.4	41.0	12.0	38.9	11.8	55.1
Manufacturing industry	49.1	84.6	46.9	84.7	45.6	83.8
Electricity, gas and steam supply and air conditioning	7.2	24.8	7.2	21.0	12.9	29.0
Water supply and sanitation	4.4	12.3	4.3	10.5	7.7	12.5
Construction	45.6	141.3	58.1	136.6	42.9	163.5
Wholesale and retail trade; automobile and motorcycle repair	205.5	148.0	198.1	158.0	214.9	161.8
Transportation and warehousing	29.0	95.3	31.4	106.2	32.8	108.3
Accommodation and catering services	26.9	10.8	32.0	13.6	35.2	16.8
Information and communication	18.4	28.4	18.9	28.5	24.3	30.4
Finance and insurance	33.0	20.2	28.3	20.9	41.4	33.0
Real estate operations	14.0	15.9	14.8	19.1	12.7	14.0
Professional, scientific and technical activities	27.2	22.9	28.3	22.8	25.0	22.8
Administration and support services	21.4	27.6	23.1	24.9	23.4	35.2
Governance and defence; compulsory social security	46.4	65.1	46.3	62.1	52.8	87.4
Education	136.2	56.5	131.1	52.0	167.8	65.5
Health care and social services	58.8	23.2	64.9	24.9	69.3	27.4

	2012		2013		2014	
	girls	youths	girls	youths	girls	youths
Arts, entertainment and recreation	16.5	17.4	19.7	17.6	24.0	22.3
Other services	31.5	29.6	26.1	33.9	42.9	39.5
Activities of households	2.4	1.5	1.6	1.2	0.8	0.8

Table 15. Unemployed population aged 15–28 in Kazakhstan by duration of job search

	2012	2013	2014
All unemployed, 000 persons	130.7	132.7	103.9
Less than 1 month	17.2	13.3	15.3
From 1 to 3 months	34.7	52.4	35.1
From 3 to 6 months	34.7	35.8	29.9
From 6 to 12 months	23.7	22.7	16.3
One year and more	20.3	8.5	6.2
Men	58.0	67.7	47.0
Less than 1 month	7.8	6.3	6.7
From 1 to 3 months	15.1	28.8	15.7
From 3 to 6 months	15.6	16.0	13.1
From 6 to 12 months	10.7	12.9	7.4
One year and more	8.9	3.7	4.1
Women	72.7	65.0	56.8
Less than 1 month	9.5	7.0	8.6
From 1 to 3 months	19.6	23.6	19.4
From 3 to 6 months	19.2	19.8	16.8
From 6 to 12 months	13.1	9.8	8.9
One year and more	11.4	4.8	2.8

Source: Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan. www.stat.gov.kz/.

The ILO Moscow Office

