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COUNTRY GENDER PROFILE AZERBAIJAN

EU4GENDEREQUALITY
REFORM HELPDESK

AUGUST 2021



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[**The project does not provide support to the Government of Belarus; it only supports the EU Delegation and civil society].

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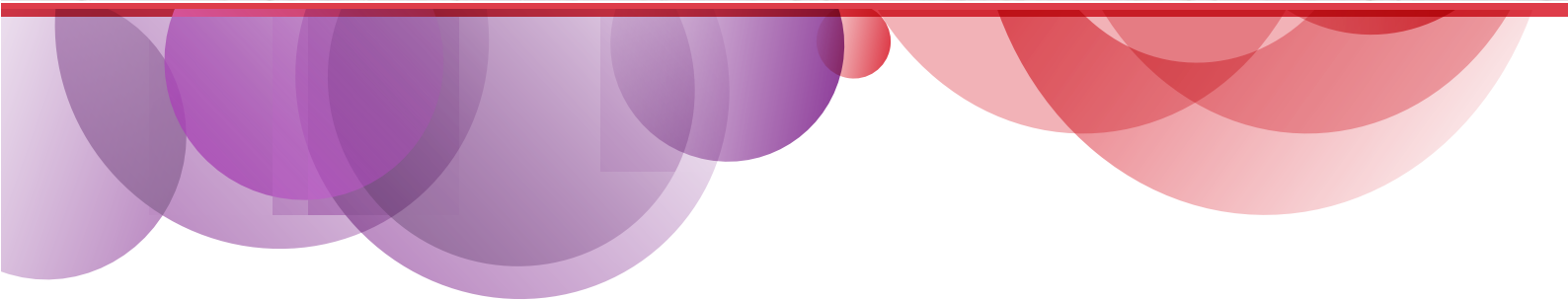
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADY	Azerbaijan Railways
AZN	Azerbaijani manat
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGP	Country Gender Profile
CLIP	Country Level Implementation Plan
CSO	Civil society organisation
EU	European Union
GAP III	European Union Gender Action Plan III 2021–2025
GBV	Gender-based violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GFP	Gender focal point
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GoA	Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting
HDI	Human Development Index
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MIP	Multi-Annual Indicative Programme
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PWDs	Persons living with disabilities

SCFWCA	State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHRH	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SSC	SSC State Statistical Committee
UN	United Nations
UN Women	UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
USD	United States dollar
WPS	Women, peace and security



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Country Gender Profile (CGP) analyses the current situation of gender equality in Azerbaijan, offering data and guidance on integrating a gender perspective into policies, programmes and projects in the country. Its purpose is to provide the EU Delegation with comprehensive information and recommendations to guide decision making and the development of the Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP), in line with the European Union Gender Action Plan III 2021–2025 (GAP III). The methodology used involved a qualitative desk review of existing research, statistics, state programmes and reports.

Azerbaijan's population was 10.067 million in 2020¹ according to the State Statistical Committee. Women account for 50.1% of the population, and over half of the population (52.8%) live in urban centres, while 47.2% reside in rural areas. The country ranked 88th of 189 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2019, with an HDI value of 0.756. With a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.323 in the same year, Azerbaijan ranked 73rd of 162 countries on the index.

Azerbaijan is a country that supports gender equality. It is committed to international norms and is party to various gender equality-oriented international instruments (conventions). The Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan (GoA) has enshrined gender equality in the country's Constitution, adopted in November 1995, and in key laws, including the Law on Guarantees of Gender Equality, adopted in October 2006. In 2019, the draft of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2024 was prepared and submitted to the Government, but it has not yet been approved.² The National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023 was approved by a Presidential Decree on 27 November 2020. The main goal of this National Action Plan is to prevent domestic violence in the country in line with international standards, including by strengthening families, providing comprehensive assistance for the fight against domestic violence, implementing measures provided in normative legal acts and increasing their efficiency.

¹ AZSTAT, 'Demography', 2021, available at: <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography>

² Asian Development Bank, *Rapid Response Support for Strategic Reforms Discussion Paper Azerbaijan: Overview of Gender Responsiveness of the Public Financial Management System*, ADB, Baku, September 2020, available at: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/51355/51355-001-tacr-en_0.pdf

State institutions that implement and regulate gender equality policies include the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, gender focal points (GFPs) within each ministry and agency, monitoring groups for gender-based violence and violence against children within Executive Power Authorities, and the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsperson).

Despite recent measures and programmes to achieve gender equality in Azerbaijan, some discrepancies remain between legislation and implementation, and gender mainstreaming is regularly/accurately aligned with projects and programmes carried out in the country. There are no specific budgetary resources allocated to achieve gender equality goals. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is an approach that can help to bridge the gap between commitments to gender equality and the implementation of concrete measures on a multi-year basis.

The analysis of Azerbaijan's legal and institutional framework, alongside gender analyses by sector, reveal the following key findings:

- Women's representation in public government agencies is limited. Women are not well-represented at the decision-making level and far more men hold civil servant positions than women.
- Despite a strong institutional and legal framework on gender equality – given that the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan ensures equal rights for women and men, the country has signed international conventions on gender equality, and has passed a Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men – women are constrained by low levels of awareness of their rights. Moreover, women are largely unaware of relevant administrative bodies or courts which they can appeal to when their rights are violated.
- Women's status in the labour market is significantly inferior compared to the status of men. Most management positions in the public and private sectors are held by men, while women are over-represented in subordinate positions. The average monthly wages of men are 50%–60% higher than women's wages in most economic activities.
- Significantly fewer women are entrepreneurs compared to men. The constraints that women face to developing agriculture-related enterprises or starting their own businesses include: (i) a lack of financial support, (ii) limited knowledge of rules related to trade and commercialisation, (iii) limited training opportunities for acquiring these skills, (iv) a lack of family support for women entrepreneurs, (v) a lack of access to capital, and (vi) a lack of information about the steps involved in developing a business plan and operating a business.

- On average, women spend six hours per day on unpaid labour, while men spend only two hours on unpaid work. As a result, women bear a greater workload and the gendered differences in time use for paid work economically disadvantage women.
- While men predominantly engage in remunerated work, women are often involved in unpaid work on family farms, where they are categorised as self-employed. A lack of childcare facilities in rural areas obliges many women to remain at home, resulting in their exclusion from the job market.
- Women are underrepresented in jobs in the transport sector, construction and in the civil service.
- Azerbaijan has a long record of the limited use of contraceptives. As a result, induced abortions – which are largely accessible – are often used as a method of contraception.³
- Women face various constraints to accessing health services, including the affordability of these services, a lack of available medical staff, distance, the quality of services, and family situations.
- Cases of domestic violence and violence against women have increased in Azerbaijan in recent years. The financial difficulties prompted by the pandemic, combined with social isolation measures during Azerbaijan's COVID-19 lockdown, have contributed to an increase in domestic violence.
- The number of shelters for survivors of domestic violence is limited and most are operated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
- Women with disabilities face a number of constraints to accessing education, employment and services. Azerbaijan does not have an action plan which specifically addresses the needs of women with disabilities. The country also lacks vocational training programmes and adequate accessible infrastructure, while women with disabilities also face additional barriers to their mobility and physical security due to gender stereotypes and attitudes which limit the opportunities available to them.
- Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic and the armed escalation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020 have had a negative impact on women, increasing the vulnerabilities they experience.

³ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

Recommendations

The Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) for Azerbaijan covers the EU Delegation's political and programmatic commitments for gender equality in the country. This Country Gender Profile provides a basis for completing the Country-Level Implementation Plan, which should focus on the following areas:

- Mitigating the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent armed escalation in 2020.
- Covering the new thematic areas of engagement included in the EU Gender Action Plan III, such as climate change, the green economy, digital transformation, Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and trade.
- Focusing on the issues of domestic violence and early marriages.

The EU Delegation's support for the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan could focus on:

- Supporting the creation of a National Council (board) across ministries that will work on gender policy and gender mainstreaming.
- Supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023, as well as the ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.
- Assisting the preparation and implementation of the National Action Plan on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.
- Supporting gender analysis and the provision of expert advice on gender equality in a wide range of areas, including expertise on gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, assistance for the preparation and revision of strategic/policy documents, promoting the integration of gender equality in these documents, research, and capacity development on gender-related topics.
- Supporting improved access to and the affordability of quality child care and health care services, particularly in rural areas.

The EU Delegation's support for civil society in Azerbaijan should include the following activities:

- Strengthening partnerships between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the EU Delegation.
- Facilitating civil society organisations' participation in law and policy-making processes.
- Supporting the preparation and implementation of a civil society strategy at the country level.
- Supporting and strengthening CSOs working on gender-related issues through capacity building, technical expertise and assistance.
- Supporting CSOs to monitor the situation of gender equality in the country.



1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a core value of the European Union (EU) and a universally recognised human right. To address gender-related issues and inequality, the EU's Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action 2021–2025 (GAP III) aims to accelerate progress on empowering women and girls, while safeguarding gains made during the 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.⁴

Gender analysis, including Country Gender Profiles are a cornerstone of the GAP III's implementation. These profiles also support the preparation of Country Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs), which set the priorities, key objectives and actions for implementing the GAP III in a partner country.

1.1. Context and justification

This Country Gender Profile (CGP) is part of the gender analysis undertaken to guide EU support for gender equality in Azerbaijan, both by the EU Delegation and EU Member States. It reviews and analyses the current situation of gender equality in the country, providing data and recommendations to integrate a gender perspective into policies, programmes and projects.

This Country Gender Profile will help EU actors to better understand gender equality-related issues and gaps in Azerbaijan, as well as their impact on society, social norms and stereotypes. It will also enable EU actors to identify where gender mainstreaming is lacking and how to enhance mainstreaming in state policies and programmes.

⁴ European Commission, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action, {SWD(2020) 284 final}, November 2020, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184

1.2. Goals and objectives

The goal of this Country Gender Profile is to provide the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan with comprehensive information and recommendations to guide decision-making and the development of the Country Level Implementation, in line with the EU Gender Action Plan III.

To achieve GAP III targets, EU Delegations must ensure that gender equality is a significant (Gender Marker 1) or principal objective (Gender Marker 2) of at least 85% of all new in each priority area/sector of the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP).⁵ The GAP III's key thematic areas of engagement are: freedom from all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), strengthening economic and social rights and the empowerment of women and girls, advancing equal participation and leadership, the integration of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda, and harnessing the challenges and opportunities of the green transition and digital transformation.

Therefore, the purpose of the Country Gender Profile is to support developments in Azerbaijan in relation to these key areas of the GAP III. The specific objectives of the Country Gender Profile are to:

1. Assess and document Azerbaijan's legal and political context related to gender equality.
2. Identify and document key gender discrepancies, barriers and challenges.
3. Use a comparative analysis of the current situation of women and men, in all their diversity, with regard to: national policies, laws, social norms and practices, institutional and sectoral practices, and the community and family levels.
4. Collect available gender statistics and gender-disaggregated data in all areas covered by the profile.
5. Identify, through participatory methods, key entry points and opportunities, lessons learned and promising practices to address gender equality.
6. Provide an overview of positive or negative effects on gender equality.
7. Map key actors working on gender equality (national, regional and international), such as national gender equality mechanisms, women's organisations, academia, the private sector and international cooperation partners.

⁵ European Commission, *GAP III Brief No. 1: Gender Country Profile and Gender Sector Analysis*, European Commission, Brussels, February 2021.

8. Propose conclusions and recommendations for EU support for gender mainstreaming.

1.3. Methodology

The methodology used for this Country Gender Profile centred on qualitative desk research. This involved a thorough review of:

- Relevant academic literature and studies, official reports, country reports by United Nations (UN) agencies, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), other international/national institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Relevant national policies, strategies and legislative frameworks.
- Relevant statistical data from AZSTAT, EUROSTAT and World Bank databases, among other sources.

Data limitations

No primary research was carried out during the development of this Country Gender Profile. Moreover, limited gender-responsive analysis is available in some sectors.



2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

This chapter describes Azerbaijan's national context, including gender-related aspects of the demographic situation and poverty, as well as the country's ranking on international gender indices and ratings.

2.1. Gender-related aspects of the demographic situation

In 2020, Azerbaijan's population was estimated at 10.067 million,⁶ 50.1% of whom are women. In terms of ethnic composition, 92% of the population are ethnic Azerbaijanis, while the remaining 8% belong to ethnic minority groups such as the Lezgi (2%), Russians (1.5%), Armenians (1.5%) and others, including the Talysh, Avar, Tat and Georgians. In terms of religion, most of the population (95%) are Muslim. Over half (52.8%) of the population live in urban areas, while 47.2% reside in rural areas.

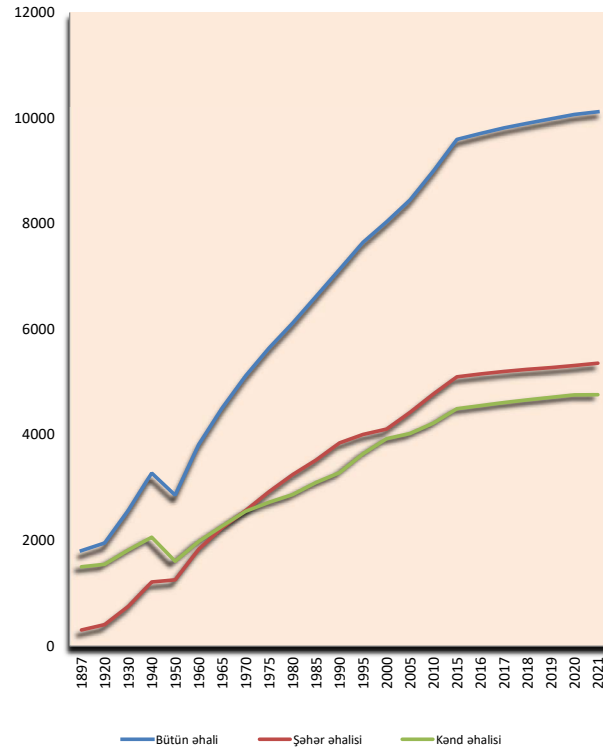
Men predominate in the 19–29 year-old age group due to the high rate of male children born in the beginning of the 1990s. Ultrasound machines, which can detect the sex of a foetus, were popularly used in Azerbaijan after the collapse of the Soviet Union from 1991 onward. As these machines spread, the rate of sex-selective abortions increased.

However, a high rate of death among men over 20 years old, has led to a greater proportion of women in all other age groups. The sex ratio at birth (male births per female births) in Azerbaijan was reported at 1.123 in 2019, according to the World Bank's development indicators, compiled from officially recognised sources.⁷

⁶ AZSTAT, 'Population', 2021, available at: <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en>

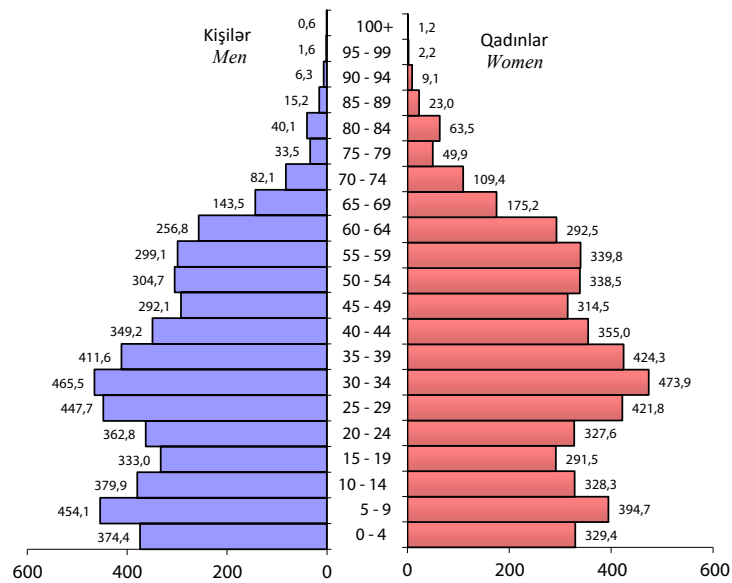
⁷ World Bank, 'Sex ratio at birth (male births per female births) – Azerbaijan', 2019, available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.BRTH.MF?locations=AZ>

Figure 1. Population change as of 1 January 2021 (number of persons)



Source: AZSTAT.

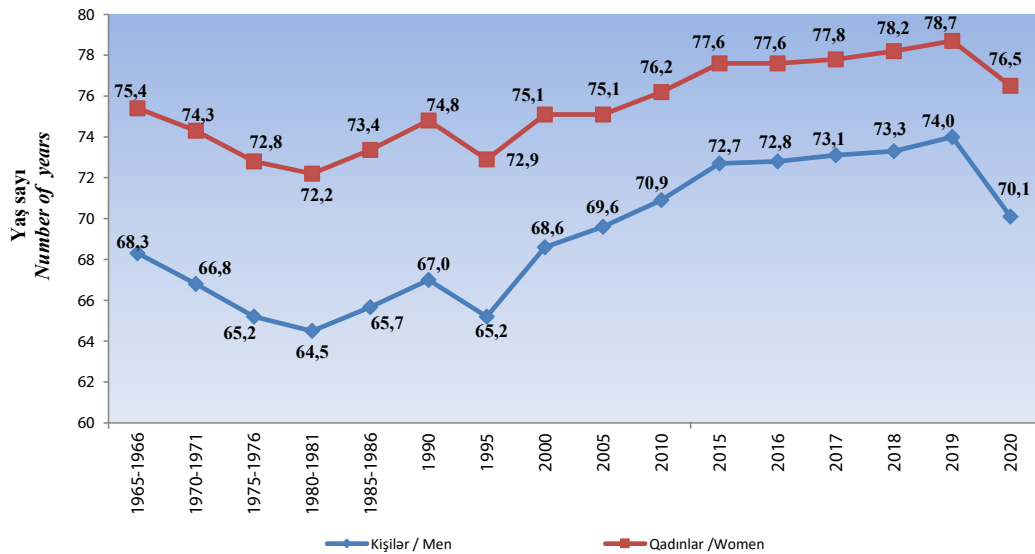
Figure 2. Population pyramid as of 1 January 2021 (number of persons)



Source: AZSTAT.

The female fertility rate increased slightly in 2003, and rose significantly between 2004 and 2012, with the average number of children per woman reaching 2.1 in urban areas and 2.3 in rural areas. Since 2012, Azerbaijan's fertility rate indicator has decreased, falling to 1.7 in urban areas and 2 in rural areas in 2019. Child mortality has also decreased, while life expectancy has increased in the country in recent years. The child mortality rate fell to 13 in 2019, down from 30.5 in 2000.⁸ The life expectancy of women living in rural areas (78.9 years) is slightly higher than the life expectancy of women in urban areas (78.5 years). Similarly, men have an average life expectancy of 74.6 years in rural areas, compared to 73.5 years in urban centres. Overall, women live longer than men, with women's life expectancy at 78.7 years, compared to 74 years for men.

Figure 3. Life expectancy at birth, 2020



Source: AZSTAT.

Compared to women, men in Azerbaijan are at greater risk of death due to diseases related to the circulatory system (361.3 cases of death among women, vs 378.4 among men),⁹ the digestive system (26.5 cases of death among women, vs 33.9 among men) and the respiratory system (15.4 cases of death among women, vs 17.5 among men). However, women face reproductive health risks. Azerbaijan has the highest rate of abortions among its regional neighbours, including Turkey and Central Asian countries.¹⁰

⁸ Child mortality among children under five years old, per 1,000 live births.

⁹ Deaths per 100,000 people.

¹⁰ United Nations Population Fund, *Azerbaijan Country Profile*, UNFPA, Baku, 2018, available at: https://azerbaijan.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_Azerbaijan_country_Profile_ENG.pdf

This is largely due to a lack of information on contraceptive methods and the prevalence of sex-selective abortions. While the use of any method of contraception increased between 2006 and 2011, rising to 54.9%, the use of modern contraceptives remained low, at just 13.9% in 2011.¹¹ The number of marriages has decreased since 2006, when the rate was 9.4 marriages per 1,000 people, falling to 6.4 in 2019, while the number of divorces has increased inversely to 1.3 in 2019, up from 0.7 divorces per 1,000 people in 2000. The average age at marriage has also increased since 1990, rising to 24.7 years for women and 29.4 years for men. Educational attainment reached 99.8% of the population in 2009. Most men and women in Azerbaijan have at least completed their secondary education.

2.2. Gender-sensitive country poverty profile

Poverty is the state of being unable to meet basic consumption needs in terms of food, non-food items and services necessary for survival, as well as the maintenance of working capacity. Poverty is a relative concept which depends on the general living standards in a particular society. In Azerbaijan, the most commonly poverty is defined with regard to per capita consumption expenditure. The subsistence minimum amount of such expenditure is established annually by law for key social-demographic groups of the population. The subsistence minimum is determined based on average market prices for products, goods and services included in the consumer basket. For 2020, the general monthly subsistence level in Azerbaijan was defined as AZN 190 countrywide, AZN 201 for able-bodied citizens, AZN 157 for pensioners and AZN 170 for children.¹² The nominal lines in 2018 and 2019 referred to AZN 175 and AZN 185 per month, respectively. Individuals whose per capita consumption is below the poverty (nominal) line are considered 'poor'.

In 1995, 68.1% of Azerbaijan's population was living under the absolute poverty line. Since the early 2000s, Azerbaijan has achieved remarkable success in reducing poverty. Over the past 15 years, the poverty rate decreased from 49% of the population living below the national poverty line in 2001, to 4.8% in 2019¹³ (see Table 1). According to the World Bank, poverty reduction has been driven by strong economic growth, a rise in wages and successful social protection measures.¹⁴ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also notes that poverty decreased because of high levels of public spending in the construction and service industries.¹⁵

¹¹ United Nations Population Fund, *UNFPA Country Programme Evaluation Report (Period covered 2016–2018)*, UNFPA, Baku, 2019.

¹² 'Minimum subsistence level for 2020 defined in Azerbaijan', *APA*, 29 November 2019, available at: <https://apa.az/en/finance-news/Minimum-subsistence-level-for-2020-defined-in-Azerbaijan-298259>

¹³ State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *Statistical Yearbook of Azerbaijan 2019*, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 2019, available at: https://istmat.org/files/uploads/62736/statistical_yearbook_of_azerbaijan_2019.pdf

¹⁴ World Bank, *Azerbaijan: Country Economic Memorandum*, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

¹⁵ Asian Development Bank, *Poverty Analysis Summary: Country Partnership Strategy Azerbaijan 2014–2018*, ADB, Baku, 2018.

Table 1. Poverty levels, 2005–2019

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Poverty line, Azerbaijani manat (AZN)	42.6	58.0	64.0	78.6	89.5	98.7	107	119	125	130	136	149	166	175	185
Poverty level (%)	29.3	20.8	15.8	13.2	10.9	9.1	7.6	6.0	5.3	5.0	4.9	5.9	5.4	5.1	4.8

Azerbaijan is committed to integrating gender equality goals into national action plans and programmes to ensure that women benefit from initiatives to diversify and grow the economy. The Government has taken steps to integrate gender equality into the State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development 2008–2015, the State Programme on Socio-Economic Development of the Regions of Azerbaijan 2009–2013, and Azerbaijan 2020: Vision to the Future. Azerbaijan endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 and initiated actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including promoting gender equality. The State Statistical Committee (SSC) has begun publishing gender-disaggregated data on some sectors, including health, agriculture, employment and education. Nevertheless, gender data on poverty is still missing. A report on social protection and social inclusion in Azerbaijan reveals that the groups who are most vulnerable to poverty include people over the age of 65, single-parent households and internally displaced persons (IDPs).¹⁶ These groups contain a higher proportion of women than other demographic groups.

2.3. Country ranking on international gender indices

Azerbaijan ranked 88th of 189 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2019, with an HDI value of 0.756. When the country's HDI value is 'discounted' for inequality,¹⁷ it falls to 0.684, reflecting a loss of 9.5% due to inequality. The human inequality coefficient for Azerbaijan is equal to 9.4%. Azerbaijan's HDI value increased between 2000 and 2019, largely due to improvements on the indicators of life expectancy at birth (which increased by 8.2 years), mean years of schooling (which rose by 0.4 years), expected years of schooling (which rose by 2.2 years), and gross national income (GNI) per capita (which increased by 79.4%).¹⁸

¹⁶ European Commission, *Social Protection and Social Inclusion in Azerbaijan*, European Commission, Brussels, 2011.

¹⁷ The inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI) combines average achievements in health, education and income with how these achievements are distributed among the population by 'discounting' (adjusting) each dimension's average value according to the level of inequality. The difference between the IHDI value and the HDI value is the overall loss to human development due to inequality.

¹⁸ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2020 – The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene. Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report: Azerbaijan*, UNDP, New York, 2020, available at: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/AZE.pdf

Azerbaijan ranked 73rd of 162 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) in 2019, with a GI value of 0.323. The adolescent birth rate is 55.8 births per 1,000 women and girls between 15 and 19 years old. For every 100,000 live births, 26.0 women die from pregnancy-related causes. Overall, 93.9% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education, compared to 97.5% of men. Women's participation in the labour market stands at 63.4%, compared to a rate of 69.7% for men. Moreover, women held 16.8% of parliamentary seats in the country in 2019, and 18.2% in 2020.¹⁹

The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Report 2014 introduced a new measure, the Gender Development Index (GDI), based on the gender-disaggregated Human Development Index, defined as the ratio of the female HDI to the male HDI. The GDI measures gender inequalities in the achievement of three basic dimensions of human development: health (measured by female and male life expectancy at birth), education (measured by female and male expected years of schooling for children and mean years for adults aged 25 years and older) and command over economic resources (measured by female and male estimated GNI per capita). In 2019, Azerbaijan's female HDI value was 0.730, compared to 0.774 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.943. As such, it was placed in Group 3 of the 167 countries included in the index. This group comprises countries characterised by 'medium equality' in terms of HDI achievements between women and men (with an absolute deviation of 5%–7.5%). In terms of the dimensions of human development, the greatest difference between women and men exists in GNI per capita, with the value for men in 2019 (USD 18,664) more than twice the value for women (USD 8,919).²⁰

According to the recent gender equality survey conducted by the World Economic Forum, Azerbaijan's Global Gender Gap Index 2021 value was 0.688, and the country ranked 100th of 156 countries on the index. It achieved better performance on educational equality (with a high number of women receiving higher education) compared with other countries in the region. However, Azerbaijan fared worse in terms of political equality, as fewer women are represented in the political system. According to information from the Azerbaijan State Statistical Committee, the country's Gender Empowerment Measure Index value increased until 2015, before declining in recent years. This index measures women's and men's ability to actively participate in economic and political life, and to take part in decision-making.

Table 2. Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), 2009–2019

Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
GEM	0.414	0.450	0.514	0.576	0.581	0.593	0.597	0.548	0.487	0.409	0.427

Source: Estimates based on data from the State Statistical Committee, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

¹⁹ AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

²⁰ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2020 – The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene. Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Report: Azerbaijan*, UNDP, New York, 2020.



3. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Azerbaijan is a country that supports gender equality and is committed to international norms on gender equality. In May 2018, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, underlined the nation's commitment to ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women in a statement to the participants of the 5th Women's Forum. The event commemorated the centenary of women's suffrage in the country.²¹

The past decade in Azerbaijan has been characterised by a shift from an 'imbalanced' perception of gender roles to a new understanding of gender as part of the broader discourse on human rights. Both the government – through legislation, reforms and its readiness to sustain its policy – and civil society are engaged in supporting gender equality in the country.

3.1. International and regional commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment

Azerbaijan is party to several international instruments (conventions) related to gender equality that have a direct impact on the country. Annex 1 presents the complete list of conventions, laws and regulations which establish the basis of the principles of gender equality in the country.

²¹ Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 'Statement of President Ilham Aliyev to the participants of the 5th Women's Forum dedicated to the centenary of granting suffrage to Azerbaijani women', 30 May 2018; 'First VP Mehriban Aliyeva: Ensuring women's active participation in all spheres - a priority task of Azerbaijan', *Trend News Agency*, 30 May 2018, available at: <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/2910316.html>

Azerbaijan ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1995 and submits regular reports to relevant agencies on the convention's implementation. The country also committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Government has taken steps to align the SDGs and their targets with the national development agenda, including assigning responsibilities to national agencies, building the capacity of state officials to execute related policies, and created working groups for SDG focus areas. It also established the National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development of the Republic of Azerbaijan to coordinate the task of contextualising the SDGs and their indicators.²²

Azerbaijan has not yet signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). Signing and ratifying the Istanbul Convention is especially important as it sets out measures that countries must take to ensure equality between women and men, as well as to protect women and girls from all forms of violence.

3.2. National legal framework on gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender equality is enshrined in Azerbaijan's Constitution, adopted in November 1995, and national legislative framework, including the Law on Guarantees of Gender Equality, adopted in October 2006.²³ This law defines gender-based discrimination and establishes that any distinction or preference that restricts or prevents the equal realisation of a person's rights on the basis of sex constitutes gender-based discrimination (Articles 2–4). It also provides for the adoption of special measures to accelerate de facto equality for women, as well as positive discrimination measures in favour of women in certain areas. Article 25 stipulates that *"men and women possess equal rights and liberties."*

²² Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

²³ The adoption of the Law on Gender Equality in 2006 was the outcome of a process of strengthening the legal and policy framework in Azerbaijan to eliminate discrimination against women. The first document, the Order on 'Increasing Women's Role in Azerbaijan' was signed on 14 January 1998 by the President of the Azerbaijan. It established obligations on the preparation of plans to strengthen women's social protection, including of the protection of refugee and internally displaced women. Two years later, on 6 March 2000, the President signed a Decree on the 'Implementation of Women Policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan'. Its objective was to improve the protection of women's rights, including by reviewing existing legislation and bringing these in line with gender equality norms, especially with respect to the representation of women in decision-making positions. It also confirmed the obligation for the State Committee for Women Affairs to submit annual reports on the decree's implementation to the Cabinet of Ministers.

These rights are:

- The right to adequate food and to be free from hunger.
- The right to adequate housing.
- The right to social services and access to basic public services.
- The right to protection against poverty and social exclusion.
- The right to water.
- The right to sanitation.
- The right to live in a healthy environment.
- The right to equal participation in cultural activities and to participate at all levels in the determination of cultural policies.
- The right to equal participation in recreational, leisure and sporting activities.
- Authors' rights.

Other laws in Azerbaijan also guarantee women's political, economic and social rights, such as the Election Code, the Labour Code and the Family and Marriage Code. After the adoption of the Law on Guarantees of Gender Equality, other laws were amended to align them with this law on gender equality. First, the Law on Non-governmental Organisations (public unions and foundations) was amended to stipulate that membership of NGOs must be on equal terms for women and men. It also specified that equal opportunities must be created to facilitate the process of acquiring membership, except in cases where an NGO focuses on protecting the rights of either men or women. The Law on Political Parties was also amended to specify that membership of political parties must be based on equal opportunities for women and men.

Furthermore, the Labour Code of 1 February 1999 stipulates that *"discrimination among employees is not permitted on the basis of gender or other factors unrelated to the aptitude for work, professional skills and job performance of the employees, or in order to establish privileges and benefits or directly or indirectly limit rights on the basis of these factors."* The Employment Act of 2 July 2001 reaffirms this in its sixth article, noting that one of the main aims of the state's employment policy is to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunities to exercise the right to work and to freely choose their employment.

In 2019, a draft of National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2024 was prepared and submitted to the Government, which has yet to be approved.²⁴ During an online meeting with EU4 Gender Equality Reform Helpdesk, representatives of the State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs (SCFWCA) confirmed that the approval of the National Action Plan was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the armed escalation in 2020.

The implementation of the Combatting Gender-Based Violence in Azerbaijan project by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs has contributed to the development of state policies and legislation on gender-related issues and domestic violence. The project conducted legal assessments and worked to “bring national legislation in compliance with the best practices.”

The Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence was approved by Azerbaijan's parliament and officially endorsed by the President in October 2010. It is envisioned to support the efforts of the State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs and the Milli Mejlis (parliament) to develop comprehensive laws addressing the complexity of domestic violence issues in Azerbaijan.²⁵ The law also describes preventive actions (social, legal and informative) for the protection of victims of domestic violence.

In 2011, Azerbaijan's parliament amended the Family Code and set the legal age for marriage at 18 years old for both women and men. The Criminal Code was changed to reflect the provisions of this law and introduce sanctions for non-compliance. Since 2006, low-income families, including women-headed households, have been entitled to targeted social assistance programmes. The Law on the Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted in 2005. A National Plan of Action for 2020–2024, approved by a Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan,²⁶ contains a number of measures to address survivors of human trafficking. Therefore, the National Plan ensures the fulfilment of Azerbaijan's obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

²⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Rapid Response Support for Strategic Reforms Discussion Paper Azerbaijan: Overview of Gender Responsiveness of the Public Financial Management System*, ADB, Baku, September 2020, available at: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/51355/51355-001-tacr-en_0.pdf

²⁵ United Nations Population Fund, *Combatting Gender-Based Violence in the South Caucasus Project/Azerbaijan: Project evaluation report*, UNFPA, Baku, 2011.

²⁶ President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Decree No. 2173, National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020-2024, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 22 July 2020, available at: <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/45470>

3.3. National gender policies

The National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023 was approved by a presidential decree on 27 November 2020. The National Action Plan's main goal is to prevent domestic violence in the country, in line with international standards, by strengthening families, providing comprehensive assistance in the fight against domestic violence, implementing measures specified in normative legal acts and increasing their efficiency.²⁷

3.4. Gender dimensions of national development strategies

On 2 February 2021, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, signed a decree approving Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development. In line with this national strategy, five national socio-economic development priorities will be implemented in the coming years:

1. Steadily growing a competitive economy.
2. A society based on dynamic, inclusive and social justice.
3. Competitive human capital and space for modern innovations.
4. A great return to regained territories.
5. A clean environment and green growth.

These national priorities are particularly relevant for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals in Azerbaijan. Within nine months, the Cabinet of Ministers will prepare a draft Strategy of Socio-economic Development for 2021–2025 and submit it to the President for approval.²⁸ The second priority of the new draft strategy mentions the creation of greater economic opportunities, effective employment and decent work for all groups of the population, and improving women's access to economic opportunities in particular.

²⁷ President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020-2023*, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 27 November 2020.

²⁸ President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development*, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 2 February 2021, available at: <https://president.az/articles/50474>

On 6 December 2016, President Ilham Aliyev signed a decree launching the Strategic Road Maps on the National Economy Perspective and Main Sectors of the Economy. The national plan comprises 12 road maps: the Strategic Road Map on the National Economy Perspective and 11 sectoral road maps.²⁹ These road maps outline the government's strategy for inclusive economic development for 2016–2020 (short-term) and proposed targets until 2025 (long-term) and beyond.

The long-term objective of the Strategic Road Map on the National Economy Perspective is to ensure that the economy becomes more diversified and to advance economic development through new drivers of non-oil growth. The 11 specific road maps for sectors of economic development are:

1. Strategic Road Map on the Oil and Gas Industry, including Chemical Products;
2. Strategic Road Map on the Production and Processing of Agricultural Products;
3. Strategic Road Map on the Production of Consumer Goods in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises;
4. Strategic Road Map on the Development of Heavy Industry and Machine-Building;
5. Strategic Road Map on the Development of a Specialised Tourism Industry;
6. Strategic Road Map on the Development of Logistics and Trade;
7. Strategic Road Map on the Development of Affordable Housing;
8. Strategic Road Map on Vocational Education and Training;
9. Strategic Road Map on the Development of Financial Services;
10. Strategic Road Map on the Development of Telecommunications and Information Technologies; and
11. Strategic Road Map on the Development of Communal Services (Electricity and Heat Energy, Water and Gas).

²⁹ President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Decree No. 1138, Strategic Road Map on the National Economy Perspective, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 6 December 2016, available at: https://mida.gov.az/documents/%C4%B0qtisadiyyat_Yol_%20xeritesi.pdf

Overall, these road maps are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. However, only two of the 11 road maps – namely the Strategic Roadmap for Manufacturing and Processing of Agricultural Products and the Strategic Road Map on the Production of Consumer Goods in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises – contain references to women and girls.³⁰ The latter includes activities for the development of women's entrepreneurship. It also proposes to:

- increase women's access to credit, taxation services and other benefits for women entrepreneurs, especially rural women;
- enhance women's access to information;
- create business incubators for women; and
- establish associations and professional organisations of women entrepreneurs.

However, the road map does not allocate a specific budget to these activities. Instead, it states that these activities will be integrated into other projects listed in the road map. In addition, the Strategic Road Map on the National Economy Perspective describes activities for addressing gender inequities in the civil service, one of the key sectors in which women are underrepresented.

The State Programme for the Socio-Economic Development of the Regions for 2019–2023 is another current development programme in Azerbaijan.³¹ Its main goal is to ensure the sustainable and balanced development of the country's regions, as well as to create a favourable environment based on the principles of sustainable development, social welfare that meets high standards, the efficient use of natural resources and reliable environmental protection. Overall, the programme is not gender-sensitive, although some objectives and activities focus on increasing the role of youth and women in regional development. These activities include the development of women's entrepreneurship associations, continuing measures to increase women's employment and develop small businesses, strengthening vocational training, increasing financial literacy and information technology skills, supporting the sale and exhibitions of women's handicrafts and consumer goods, and encouraging the active participation of socially vulnerable groups in rural areas. These groups include low-income families, women, youth and people with disabilities, taking while into account potential opportunities for them.

³⁰ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

³¹ President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Decree No. 500, On the approval of the State Programme for the Socio-Economic Development of the Regions for 2019–2023, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 29 January 2019, available at: <http://www.e-qanun.az/framework/41320>

3.5. Institutional framework/machinery

In 1996, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan established the State Committee on Women's Issues (SCWI). Its aim was to protect women's rights and empower women. In February 2006, the committee was transformed into the Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, which is a central executive power body implementing and regulating state policy on family, women and children's issues.³² Its work is guided by the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan, decrees and orders of the President, decisions and orders of the Cabinet of Ministers, and international treaties supported by Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's state structure for gender equality also includes gender focal points (GFPs) assigned to each ministry and state agency, based on Decision No. 176 of the Cabinet of Ministers, signed on 26 September 2000. The role of gender focal points focuses on addressing women's issues in accordance with the requirements of gender policies within the various ministries and committees. However, gender focal points' work is largely ineffective due to a lack of knowledge about their roles and duties. In recent years, the Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs has conducted a series of trainings to address this issue and provide clearer guidance to gender focal points on how to perform their assigned functions.

In 2015, the heads of Executive Power Authorities in all districts signed decrees to establish monitoring groups for gender-based violence and violence against children. These are composed of representatives of relevant executive authorities in the districts.³³ As a reliable monitoring mechanism for gender-based violence and violence against children, local monitoring groups coordinate functions in terms of assessing the situation, checking the effectiveness of the measures undertaken, identifying vulnerable families and providing them with relevant support, studying and analysing the causes of violence, ensuring the protection of survivors and providing them with relevant assistance. In addition, the State Social Services Agency was established in June 2020 under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, which includes a Unit for the Prevention of Domestic Violence.

The other institution with jurisdiction over gender equality issues is the Commissioner for Human Rights (or Ombudsperson). Women who face violations of their rights may bring their complaints to the Ombudsperson, who oversees the implementation of human rights provisions. The Ombudsperson can receive and investigate complaints of human rights violations by individuals and legal entities.³⁴

³² State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 'History of the Committee', n.d., available at: <http://scfwca.gov.az/en/page/komitenin-tarixi>

³³ According to the sixth periodic report submitted by Azerbaijan in 2019 under Article 18 of the Convention.

³⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

3.6. Accountability framework of gender policies and national machinery

Azerbaijan regularly submits national reports on its international obligations. In 2019, Azerbaijan prepared its sixth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The report was developed by a Working Group, established by Decree 504 signed by the President in 2018 on 'Increasing the Effectiveness of Cooperation with the UN Human Rights Mechanisms on the Basis of Data Provided by Relevant Ministries and Committees'. Periodic reports on the implementation of CEDAW and the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations are usually discussed within local communities among representatives of NGOs and active women groups in municipalities, and sent to public agencies. The State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs also prepares and publishes annual reports on implemented activities.³⁵

3.7. Financing for gender equality: Gender-responsive budgeting

Despite the measures and programmes recently undertaken to advance gender equality in Azerbaijan, discrepancies remain between legislation and implementation, and gender mainstreaming is not regularly/accurately aligned with projects and programmes carried out in the country. There are no specific budgetary resources allocated to achieving gender equality goals. Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is an approach that can assist in bridging the gap between commitment to gender equality outcomes and the implementation of required measures on a multi-year basis.³⁶

The Asian Development Bank's Country Gender Assessment 2019 identified gender-responsive as a key entry point for more effective gender mainstreaming in government operations. The bank is working in this direction by preparing a discussion paper on the gender responsiveness of the country's public financial management system,³⁷ developing a gender-responsive budgeting handbook for the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, and planning a series of capacity building events for relevant ministries.

³⁵ See: <http://scfwca.gov.az>

³⁶ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

³⁷ Asian Development Bank, *Rapid Response Support for Strategic Reforms Discussion Paper Azerbaijan: Overview of Gender Responsiveness of the Public Financial Management System*, ADB, Baku, September 2020, available at: https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/51355/51355-001-tacr-en_0.pdf

Supporting gender-responsive budgeting in key ministries is one of the priority areas of the UN-Azerbaijan Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025.³⁸

3.8. Non-state actors working on gender equality and women's empowerment

An assessment by UNDP in 2016 identified that only 6.7% of registered NGOs – among a total of 4,500 NGOs – work on women's issues. Most of these NGOs are based in the country's capital, Baku. The assessment also found that women in regional centres and villages are seldom engaged in community activities and other types of social activism.³⁹

Restrictive legislation introduced in 2014 deprived local civil society organisations (CSOs) of access to foreign funding. This has seriously impacted the CSO operations in the country, including the activities of women's organisations.

Very few shelters for women exist in Azerbaijan. These 10⁴⁰ shelters are run by CSOs/NGOs, and some also serve as refuges for survivors of trafficking. To address gender issues, in 2015 the CEDAW Committee recommended improving the implementation of Azerbaijan's Law on Public Participation of 2014. This law stipulates the importance of civil society organisations' participation in public councils to monitor the work of central and local state administrations. The Public Committee under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs, established in 2017, is regarded as *"an important step in boosting the participation of women and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in law formulation, implementation, and monitoring."*⁴¹

The EU-funded project, 'Promoting the role of civil society in gender sensitive SDG implementation' – implemented by UNDP with the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs from 2018 to 2020 – aimed to promote confidence-building and dialogue between civil society and the government around SDG-related issues. The project also sought to improve the understanding and knowledge of CSOs, to apply a gender-responsive approach to the SDGs' implementation, and to increase CSOs' participation in the implementation of gender-sensitive SDG initiatives.⁴²

³⁸ United Nations, *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025*, UN Azerbaijan, Baku, 2021, available at: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Azerbaijan-UNSDCF-2021-2025_1.pdf

³⁹ United Nations Development Programme, *Promoting Rural Women's Participation in Economic and Social Life: Project Document of the Technical Assistance Project*, UNDP, Baku, 2016.

⁴⁰ According to other sources, there are only six shelters.

⁴¹ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

⁴² United Nations Development Programme, 'Promoting the Role of Civil Society in Gender-sensitive SDG implementation', available at: <https://www.az.undp.org/content/azerbaijan/en/home/projects/UNDP-AZE-SDG.html>

The former Council of State supported NGOs periodically provides grants and finances projects on combatting gender-based violence, preventing girls from dropping out of school, seeking to curb early marriage, promoting equal rights and duties in family life, and advancing women's empowerment and leadership, among other issues. On 19 April 2021, President Aliyev signed a Decree establishing a public legal Agency for State Support to NGOs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This agency is established on the basis of the Council of State Support to NGOs under the President of Azerbaijan, which had been operational from 2008 till 2021.

In addition to the organisations mentioned above, the office of the Ombudsperson also conducts regular awareness raising campaigns on women's rights.



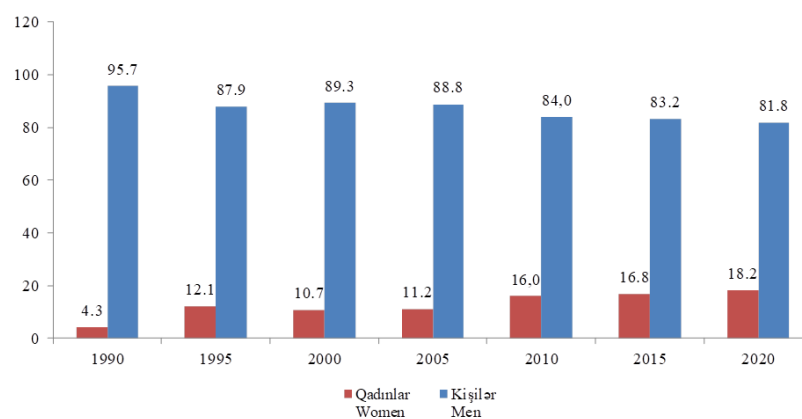
4. GENDER ANALYSIS BY SECTOR

This chapter provides gender analysis by sector, highlighting differences in women's and men's access to resources, power, needs, opportunities and the constraints they face. The sectoral analysis is in line with the key priorities of the EU Gender Action Plan III.

4.1. Women in decision-making and leadership

Women's representation in government agencies is limited. Since 1919, women in Azerbaijan have had equal rights to vote in political elections; however, women remain underrepresented at the decision-making level. Among the heads of 39 state ministries and committees, there is only one woman – the head of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs. Among members of parliament, there were 22 women (18.2%) in 2020.⁴³

Figure 4. Parliamentary composition, 2020



Note: Data for 2005 indicates the state of parliamentary composition on 6 November 2005, data for 2010 indicates the state on 7 November 2010, data for 2015 indicates the state on 1 November 2015, data for 2020 indicates the state on 9 February 2020.

Source: AZSTAT.

⁴³ AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

More men hold positions in Azerbaijan's civil service than women. Overall, the share of women in management positions in the civil service is 9.8%. Previous gender-based projects and awareness raising campaigns have contributed to increasing the proportion of women represented at the municipality level – from 4% in 1999 to 35% in 2014. Women are also represented as deputy ministers (holding eight positions), chairpersons of state committees (holding two positions), and as deputy heads of local executive authorities (holding 76 positions, compared 178 positions held by men).

Table 3. Number of women in managerial positions, 2016–2019

Position	Number of women			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Vice-president	-	1	1	1
Minister(i)	1	1	1	1
Deputy minister	3	3	6	8
Chair of state committee(ii)	2	2	2	2
Deputy chair of state committee	2	3	3	3
Head of local executive authority(iii)	1	1	1	1
Deputy head of local executive authority	79	77	79	76
Ombudsperson(iv)	2	2	2	2

Notes: (i) The Minister of Culture and Tourism of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

(ii) State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

(iii) Head of the Local Executive Authority of the Absheron region.

(iv) Ombudsperson of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic.

4.2. Gender and economic and social rights

Equal rights for women and men are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 1995 (Article 25). The Constitution also affirms that all persons may engage in free enterprise or other types of economic activities not prohibited by the law, alone or jointly with others, through the free use of their abilities and property in the manner prescribed by the law (Article 59).

As noted above, Azerbaijan has signed international conventions on gender equality and passed a Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men in 2006, which establishes the legal foundation for gender equality.

This law aims “to guarantee the equal rights status for women and men in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres, to ensure equal opportunities in enjoyment of the above listed rights and to prevent gender-based discrimination.”⁴⁴ It explicitly bans all forms of gender-based discrimination and defines women’s equal rights in terms of property, education, state services, the labour market, and their equal rights as entrepreneurs and consumers.

According to the Constitution, every person, having attained the age established by law, has the right to social insurance in cases of illness, disability and unemployment (Article 38).⁴⁵ Moreover, the Law on Guarantees of Gender (Men and Women) Equality of 2006 affirms that the state will provide equal opportunities for men and women in terms of exercising their right to social insurance, as well as receiving targeted social assistance and other social benefits (Article 15.2).

In terms of labour-related activities, employers are obliged to guarantee equality for men and women. The Labour Code of 1999 establishes that pregnant women on maternity leave are free from ‘job attestation’ until their child is three years old and they return to the same profession within a year after their maternity leave ends (Article 66). It also guarantees that working time for pregnant women and women with children under one and a half years old cannot exceed 36 hours per week (Article 91).

The Family Code of 1999 establishes that spouses have equal personal and property rights in family relations (Article 29.1), in accordance with the principle of equality established by the Constitution. Property purchased during a marriage is considered to be the joint property of a husband and wife.

Despite this strong legal framework, women are constrained by low levels of awareness of their rights. Most women are unaware of relevant administrative bodies or courts that they can turn to when their rights are violated. The majority of rural women believe that men have more rights according to customs and tradition, and that systems in place to defend rights favour men.⁴⁶ The CEDAW Committee notes that the small number of cases related to gender-based discrimination is indicative of women’s lack of knowledge of their rights and how to claim them.

⁴⁴ Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan of 10 October 2006, No. 150-IIIIG about providing gender (men’s and women’s) equalities (as of December 21, 2010), available at: <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=14452>

⁴⁵ United Nations Development Programme, *Social and Economic Rights of Women in Azerbaijan*, UNDP, Baku, 2012, available at: https://www.az.undp.org/content/azerbaijan/en/home/library/womens_empowerment/gender_publications2.html

⁴⁶ E. Gasimova, *Gender Mainstreaming: The Role of Civil Society Monitoring of the National Gender Mechanism*, Gender Equality and Women Initiatives Public Union, Baku, 2010.

4.2.1. Gender and employment

Women's labour market participation rate in Azerbaijan is 48.2%, compared to 51.8% for men.⁴⁷ The rate of unemployment is higher among women (57.4%) than men (42.6%).⁴⁸ Overall, women's status in the labour market is significantly inferior than the status of men. Men hold most management positions in both the public and private sectors, while women are better represented in subordinate positions. There are several reasons for this. One relates to patriarchal attitudes towards women in Azerbaijani society – the view that women should be connected only with their family, address household issues and should not take part in social activities in which other men are engaged. Another reason relates to family obligations. Women bear a disproportionate burden of family and child care work, leaving them little time for social activities.

Women are also in a more disadvantaged position due to lower wages in various sectors of economy, as they are often hired as cheap labour without proper contracts, which makes them ineligible for social benefits. Men's average monthly wages in most economic activities are higher than women's wages, usually by a factor of 50%–60%. In 2019, the average monthly wage for women was AZN 443.40 – that is, 58% of the average monthly wage earned by men (AZN 764.80).⁴⁹ Women are heavily concentrated in lower-paid public sector activities such as education (in which 74% of workers are women), health and social services (where 78% of workers are women). Women are also more actively involved in the arts, entertainment and recreational industries compared to men.

Table 4. Number of employees by type of economic activity, 2019 (percentage of the total and by sex)

Economic activity	Percentage		Gender distribution	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1.9	4.2	22.9	77.1
Mining	0.7	3.1	13.3	86.7
Manufacturing	4.6	9.3	25.0	75.0
Electricity, gas and steam production, distribution and supply	0.5	2.8	10.5	89.5
Water supply, waste treatment and disposal	1.6	2.0	34.6	65.4
Construction	1.2	11.3	6.7	93.3
Trade and the repair of modes of transport	11.0	22.5	24.7	75.3
Transportation and storage	1.9	6.4	16.3	83.7

⁴⁷ AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

⁴⁸ Based on the methodology of International Labour Organization.

⁴⁹ According to AZSTAT, 2019.

Economic activity	Percentage		Gender distribution	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Accommodation and food service activities	1.2	1.9	30.1	69.9
Information and communication	1.3	2.0	29.2	70.8
Financial and insurance activities	1.5	1.8	36.3	63.7
Real estate activities	0.8	1.2	31.3	68.7
Professional, scientific and technical activities	3.8	3.2	44.3	55.7
Administrative and support service activities	3.7	4.5	35.1	64.9
Public administration, defence and social security	4.6	8.4	27.1	72.9
Education	37.6	8.9	73.8	26.2
Human health and social work activities	15.9	3.1	77.4	22.6
Art, entertainment and recreation	5.2	2.1	61.9	38.1
Other service activities	1.0	1.3	33.9	66.1
Total	100.0	100.0	40.1	59.9

4.2.2. Women's entrepreneurship

According to the statistical book, *Women and Men in Azerbaijan 2020*,⁵⁰ far fewer entrepreneurs are women (21.7%) than men (78.3%). Most women entrepreneurs are involved in the economic sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. According to the Asian Development Bank's Country Gender Assessment 2019, women face a number of constraints to developing farm-related enterprises and starting their own business. These include: (i) a lack of financial support, (ii) a lack of knowledge of rules related to trade and commercialisation, (iii) limited skills training opportunities, (iv) a lack of family support for their decisions, (v) a lack of access to capital, and (vi) a lack of information about the steps involved in developing a business plan and operating a business. Women face difficulties in starting businesses on their own as they may not own registered property, or because family properties are registered in the name of another family member.

Within the scope of social development programmes, many efforts by the Government and NGOs focus on rural women's entrepreneurship. For instance, through the National Fund on Assistance to Entrepreneurship Programme, women entrepreneurs received business skills trainings and credit to create additional jobs and boost income generation. The Entrepreneurship Fund allocated approximately USD 612.5 million to 16,232 entrepreneurs between 2014 and 2018 in the form of 'privileged loans', including approximately USD 33.9 million to 2,117 businesses owned by women.

⁵⁰ AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

The Azerbaijani Agrarian Credit and Development Agency provided 448 women entrepreneurs with loans worth AZN 4.4 million (USD 2.6 million) and benefits worth AZN 2.3 million (USD 1.3 million) in 2020 despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EU-funded Rural Development Support Programme also targets women entrepreneurs in Azerbaijan's regions. It provides training on small-scale credit management and supports small-scale income generation activities.⁵¹ Limited data is available on men's and women's access to credit opportunities or gender-disaggregated data on credit borrowers.

4.2.3. Gender and the care economy, unpaid care and domestic work

Women allocate an average of six hours per day to unpaid labour, compared to two hours allocated by men. These differences yield increased workloads for women.⁵² The difference in time allocations for paid work economically disadvantages women. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, rural women's employment has switched from formal, permanent employment to more informal temporary (seasonal) employment.

Due to job scarcity and a lack of child care facilities, women are more involved in domestic work within the household. In 2020, the World Bank conducted a study⁵³ in the villages of eight *rayons* (districts) involved in the Irrigation Distribution System and Management Improvement Project, covering 400 men and women farmers. The study reveals clear divisions in women's and men's roles and responsibilities in rural households. Traditionally, many tasks have are gender-specific and the gender division of labour is clear in many regions of the country.

Women are traditionally responsible for the following tasks:

- Household work (food preparation, cleaning, washing, etc.).
- Child care.
- Small livestock and poultry rearing.
- Production on household plots (growing and gathering vegetables and fruit).

⁵¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Gender Assessment in Agriculture and Rural Development in Azerbaijan*, FAO, Baku, 2014.

⁵² Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

⁵³ Rita Merkle, *Gender Survey: Enhancing the role of women in WUAs in Azerbaijan*, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2010.

Men are typically responsible for:

- Seasonal work.
- The irrigation of farmland.
- The maintenance and use of machinery.
- Keeping large livestock animals.
- Marketing.

In women-headed households – including when a woman's husband is either away, has migrated, or has passed away – women perform all of these tasks with the exception of heavy agricultural work, which is performed by hired workers or close male relatives. The gender division of labour is less pronounced in the north-western *rayons* of Azerbaijan, where more women are involved in agricultural production and managing household budgets. This may be because there are more ethnic minorities in these regions, and the fact that these regions border with Russia and Georgia, which are less conservative in terms of gender relations. By contrast, Azerbaijan's southern regions are more conservative.

Previous studies of gender equality confirm that, in general, men are considered to be heads of households with control over many household-related matters. They are regarded as the 'main' figures in families – especially fathers, whose approval is required for most important family decisions. Unmarried women usually remain with their parents until they marry; when they do, they move to their husband's household. The findings of a previous socio-economic and gender relations study in rural households finds that, in most cases, men have authority in the household "*due to earning money, being the head of household and being more self-confident.*" Men often do not allow women to work.⁵⁴ While men usually formulate the household budget, it is managed and controlled by men and women together. In some young families, men appear less reluctant to help women with household work and child care, and decisions are often taken by both partners together.

4.2.4. Social protection of women and men

Azerbaijan has developed social assistance programmes to ensure social protection for its population. Since 2006, low-income families, including women-headed households, are entitled to targeted social assistance programmes.

⁵⁴ Senem Elcin, *Socio-economic research report for Agdash and Goychay rayons in Azerbaijan*, ADB, Baku, 2011.

The country has also ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention concerning Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers. This convention involves gender equality-related guarantees in economic and social relations, including equal opportunities for men and women in terms of property rights, entrepreneurial activities, the administration of agricultural entities, and land tenure. The country also ratified the ILO Maternity Protection Convention in 2010, according to which women are eligible to 126 calendar days of paid maternity leave. Women working in agriculture are entitled to 140 calendar days of maternity leave, while leave extends to 156 calendar days in cases of abnormal births. Men are only entitled to 14 days of unpaid paternity leave.

Pensions are available for women from the age of 60 and for men from the age of 65. These ages were adjusted in 2016 and raised from 59 to 60 years old for women and from 63 to 65 years old for men. In January 2021, Azerbaijan increased the amount of average monthly pensions by 10%, bringing it to AZN 330 (USD 194.10).⁵⁵ While the amount of an average monthly pension is the same for both women and men, the structure of pension system rates – based on years of service and earnings – creates inequalities for women.⁵⁶ Women's lower average earnings affect their pension rate, as does the fact that they tend to engage in fewer years of paid labour due to family responsibilities.

4.3. Gender and agriculture

The agricultural sector is a key component of Azerbaijan's non-oil economy. The second largest economic sector in the country, agriculture employed 36% of the labour force in 2019.⁵⁷ Women account for more than 20% of officially employed workers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Roughly 46% of Azerbaijan's population live in rural areas, with an almost equal number of men and women. As discussed above, women in rural areas traditionally carry out domestic work (child care and household work) and small-scale agricultural work. Men, by contrast, bear the principal role of providing an income for the family. While men predominantly work for cash, women are often involved in unpaid work on family farms, where they are categorised as 'self-employed'. A lack of child care facilities in rural areas obliges many women to remain at home, excluding them from the job market. Only 8% of children in rural areas attend pre-school facilities, compared to 28% of children in urban centres.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ayya Lmahamad, 'Azerbaijan raises average monthly pensions by 10 pct', *Azernews*, 4 March 2021, available at: <https://www.azernews.az/nation/176807.html>

⁵⁶ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

⁵⁷ AZSTAT, 'Labour Market', 2019, available at: <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/labour/?lang=en>

⁵⁸ International Labour Organization, *Work and Family Relations in Azerbaijan*, ILO, Baku, 2010.

UNDP's study⁵⁹ found that "women willing to shift from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented farming encounter two major obstacles: lack of funds and shortage of options for the realization of agricultural outputs." It also identified women's limited access to loans and credit. Local banks' loan policies are largely perceived as 'not friendly', as they involve high interest rates, short payback periods and agreements in complicated language that many rural women find difficult to understand.

Various studies have noted that the younger generation of rural women choose specialties that fit gender-based social roles (norms) and make them easily employable in rural areas, for instance, as teachers and medical personnel. The World Bank study mentioned above identified the lack of irrigation and agricultural machinery, the poor quality of fertilizers and pesticides, and limited access to markets as the main obstacles to increased agricultural production in rural parts of Azerbaijan.⁶⁰

4.4. Gender, infrastructure and public transport

Women are underrepresented in jobs in the transport sector, construction and in the civil service. In 2019, the transport sector employed 4.6% of Azerbaijan's labour force.⁶¹ Women represented 16.3% of the sector's workers, while men accounted for 83.7%. Women's average monthly wages in the transportation sector in 2019 were AZN 585.70, significantly lower than men's average wages of AZN 909.60.⁶² This pay gap is attributed to high levels of vertical segregation in the labour market.

According to the State Statistical Committee, an annual average of 7,006 employees were engaged in railway transport in 2017, compared to 12,997 in 2010. Based on data from Azerbaijan Railways (ADY), it had 19,819 employees in February 2019, of whom 15,241 are men (77%) and 4,578 of whom are women (23%). Many of these women workers are not in decision-making positions or managerial roles. According to an order in September 2018,⁶³ ADY is taking measures to involve at least 30% of its women employees in a capacity development programme within the organisation. In the context of the Railway Sector Development Programme 2017–2022, ADY conducted a gender study, based on which it prepared a Gender Action Plan.

⁵⁹ Aysel Vazirova, *The Assessment of Needs and Concerns of Rural Women in the Pilot Area: Community and Economic Participation*, UNDP, Baku, 2011.

⁶⁰ Rita Merkle, *Gender Survey: Enhancing the role of women in WUAs in Azerbaijan*, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2010.

⁶¹ AZSTAT, 2017.

⁶² AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

⁶³ ADY Order N 98S, article 2.21.

The programme's outputs seek to have positive impact on women through certain benefits, such as reduced travel time and easy access to public and business facilities, additional employment opportunities, improved safety with the reconstruction of overpasses and bridges, the installation of safety fences and lighting, rest areas with separate toilets for women and men, and a community safety awareness campaign.

Safe public transport is a key gender issue in the transport sector. A study by the Asian Development Bank on women's safety on public transport identified instances of women in Baku experiencing inappropriate behaviour from another passenger on public transport.⁶⁴

4.5. Gender and the health sector

The State Statistical Committee's publication, *Women and Men in Azerbaijan*, covers reproductive health and includes sex-disaggregated data on the main causes of morbidity among women and men. Information about women's and men's specific health needs, access to services, and attitudes towards health services is not available. Azerbaijan has achieved considerable progress in improving maternal and child health outcomes. For instance, the mortality rate for children under five years old has decreased substantially, as has infant and maternal mortality.

Table 5. Trends in maternal and child health indicators, 2010–2018

Indicator	2010	2015	2018
Maternal mortality (for every 100,000 live births)	15.7	14.4	12.2
Infant mortality (for every 1,000 live births)	11.2	11.0	11.1
Mortality rate of children under five years old (for every 1,000 live births)	14.2	13.3	13.1

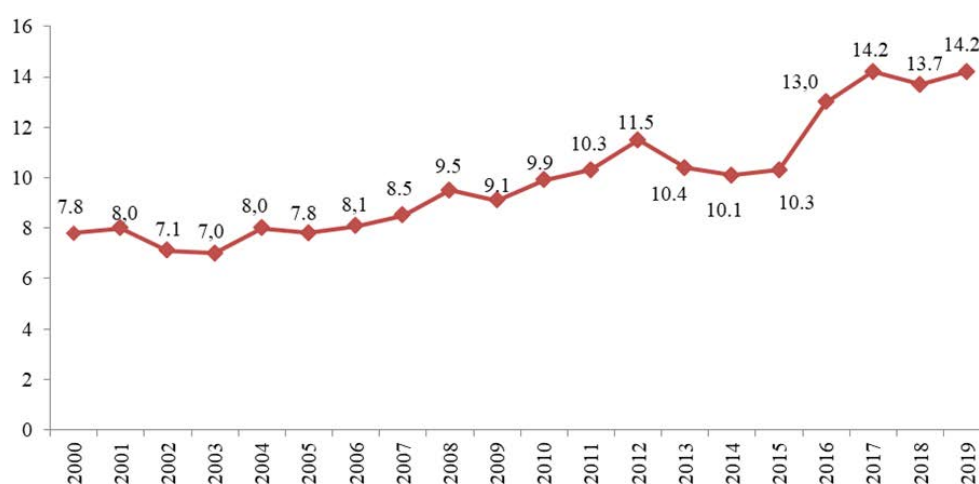
Source: Estimates based on data from the State Statistical Committee.

The Government is working to achieve further progress through the State Programme on the Improvement of Maternal and Child Health for 2014–2020. The programme sought to enhance the quality of treatment and preventive care provided to women and children, in order to improve their health status.

⁶⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Policy Brief: A Safe Public Transportation Environment for Women and Girls*, ADB, Manila, 2015.

Azerbaijan has a long record of low levels of contraceptive use. As a result, induced abortions are frequently practised as an accessible method of contraception.⁶⁵ The number of abortions in 2000 was 7.8 per 1,000 women, compared to 14.2 in 2019.⁶⁶ Azerbaijan's fertility rate has declined dramatically over the past 50 years. The total fertility rate – the average number of births per woman – decreased from 3.7 in 1975 to 1.8 in 2019.

Figure 5. Abortions in Azerbaijan, 2000–2019



Source: AZSTAT.

Figure 6. Fertility rate in Azerbaijan, 1975–2019



Source: AZSTAT.

⁶⁵ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

⁶⁶ AZSTAT, 'Health care', 2019, available at: <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/healthcare/?lang=en>

Life expectancy in Azerbaijan is increasing year on year, and currently stands at 76.4 years overall.⁶⁷ On average, women in the country have a higher life expectancy (78.7 years) than men (74 years). Cardiovascular disease and cancer are more frequent causes of death for men and women between the ages of 30 and 70. Women are more at risk of obesity than men, while men's health is more at risk of diseases associated with tobacco use. Previous social and gender studies have identified various constraints that limit women's access to health care, including the affordability and quality of health services, a lack of available medical staff, distances and family situations. In rural areas, health care facilities – such as clinics – are either insufficient or non-existent.

The State Agency for Compulsory Health Care Insurance was established in February 2016 as part of health sector reforms to improve access to health services. The system for mandatory health insurance is currently being introduced in Azerbaijan's regions and capital city.⁶⁸ It is expected that this programme will have a positive impact on the population's access to affordable health care, including women's access to health services.

4.6. Gender and education

The educational attainment of Azerbaijan's population reached 99.79% in 2019, in terms of the percentage of persons who have at least completed primary education.⁶⁹ Most men and women in the country, in roughly equal numbers, have at least completed their secondary education. More women work as teachers in state-run general educational institutions (accounting for 76% of teaching staff), while more men work in non-state higher educational institutions (accounting for 63% of teaching staff).

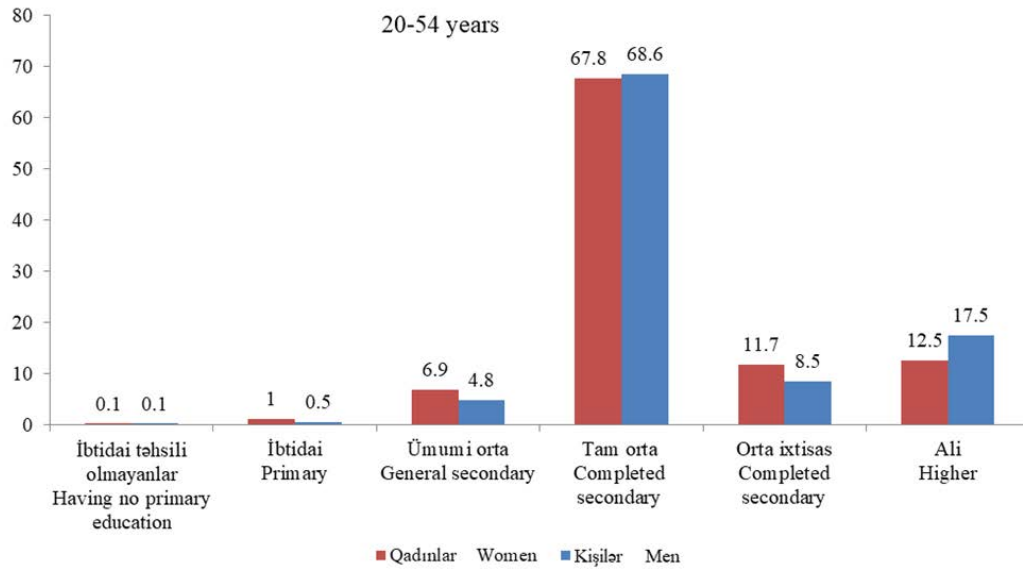
In terms of access to education, almost all settlements and villages have at least one school. As noted above, a lack of child care facilities in rural areas obliges women to remain at home to care for young children, which excludes these women from the job market. In 2019, only 28.5% of children between one and five years were enrolled in pre-schools.

⁶⁷ AZSTAT, 'Population', 2021, available at: <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/demography/?lang=en>

⁶⁸ See: <https://its.gov.az/page/baku-central-office>

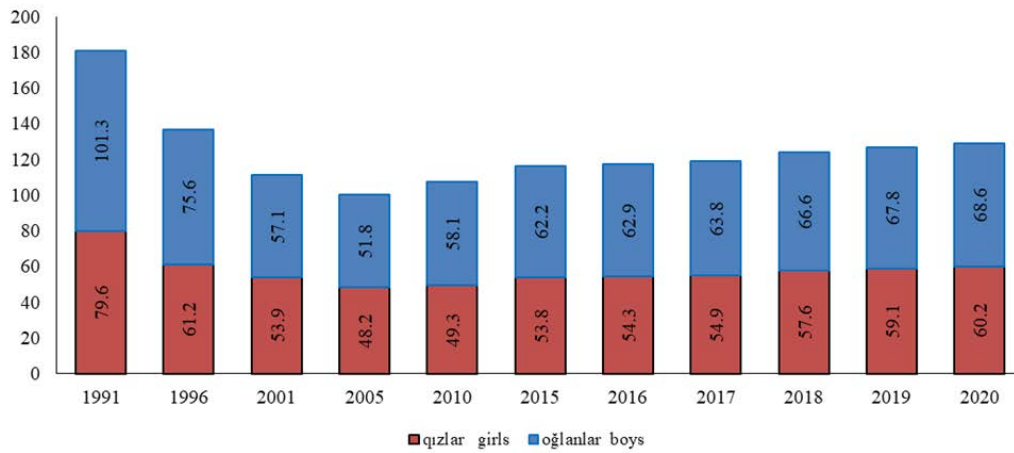
⁶⁹ Data from the State Statistical Committee.

Figure 7. Educational attainment of the population based on the 2009 census, sex distribution (%)



Source: AZSTAT.

Figure 8. Number of girls and boys in pre-school educational institutions, 1991–2020



Source: AZSTAT.

According to the findings of past reports, women's decisions about education and employment are strongly influenced by cultural norms regarding the types of labour and the places of work that are considered suitable or appropriate for men and women.

Working hours, the nature of their responsibilities, the presence of male colleagues and proximity to male customers are factors that can impact women's employment and educational choices. Most women prefer to specialise in subjects related to education, culture, art and the natural sciences.

Table 6. Distribution of students at state higher educational institutions by field of study at the beginning of 2019/2020 academic year (%)

Field of study	Percentage distribution		Sex distribution	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Education	39.8	11.8	76.0	24.0
Humanitarian and social	12.7	10.7	52.7	47.3
Culture and art	4.6	2.6	62.4	37.6
Economics and management	13.8	25.2	34.0	66.0
Natural sciences	6.2	3.3	64.1	35.9
Technical and technological	12.0	33.0	25.5	74.5
Agriculture	1.6	3.1	33.1	66.9
Health, welfare and services	9.3	10.3	45.9	54.1
Total	100.0	100.0	48.5	51.5

Note: As in the previous year, the share of women in state higher educational institutions at the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year was 48.5%, while men's share was 51.5%.

Source: AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

A recent World Bank report shows that girls' lower secondary school completion rate dropped from 90% in 2007 to 86% in 2015.⁷⁰ Early marriage may be a contributing factor; however, this has not yet been comprehensively studied.

⁷⁰ World Bank, *Data: Girls Lower Secondary Completion, 2007 and 2015*, World Bank, Washington, DC, 2017.

4.7. Women, peace and security

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its partners, including Azerbaijan,⁷¹ recognise the disproportionate impact that conflict and post-conflict situations have on women and girls, as outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in October 2002. In September 2018, NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller visited Baku. She met with senior government officials and addressed a major international conference on women, peace and security (WPS) held in Azerbaijan.⁷²

The country's National Action Plan on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security for 2019–2023 is awaiting the approval of the Cabinet of Ministries. As the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025 for Azerbaijan notes, the programmes within the cooperation framework will deepen the UN's capacity for engaging with the Government and civil society on conflict recovery normative frameworks, including women, peace and security, as well as youth, peace and security.⁷³

4.8. Gender-based violence

Azerbaijan's Law on Domestic Violence, passed in 2010, enshrines women's right to seek justice when they experience violence in the home. However, women face a number of cultural, social, and economic barriers to exercising their right to live free from violence. The National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023 was approved by a Decree of the President on 27 November 2020.⁷⁴ Although this National Action Plan is gender-sensitive, there remains room for further gender mainstreaming. This could involve, for instance, strengthening support for families and the Women Resource Centres of the State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs, strengthening the gender-sensitivity of service providers and trainers, ratifying of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), and improving relevant legislation and the Criminal Code.

⁷¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Women, Peace and Security Policy and Action Plan 2018*, NATO, Brussels, 2018, available at: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_09/20180920_180920-WPS-Action-Plan-2018.pdf

⁷² North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 'NATO Deputy Secretary General visits Azerbaijan for major Women, Peace and Security Conference', 20 September 2018, available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_158191.htm?selectedLocale=en

⁷³ United Nations, *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025*, UN Azerbaijan, Baku, 2021, available at: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Azerbaijan-UNSDCF-2021-2025_1.pdf

⁷⁴ President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023*, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 27 November 2020.

In March 2021, a series of online meetings with stakeholders in Azerbaijan sought to support the development of a national campaign on ending violence against women and domestic violence, while raising awareness of the Istanbul Convention in the country.⁷⁵ These meetings engaged international organisations, civil society and independent human rights lawyers working the field of women's rights, violence against women and domestic violence.

Approximately 14% of women in Azerbaijan between 15 and 49 years old have experienced (physical and/or sexual) intimate partner violence at least once in their lifetime.⁷⁶ In recent years, cases of domestic violence and violence against women have increased. In 2019, 1,358 cases of domestic violence were recorded, compared to 1,031 cases in 2017. Of these cases in 2019, 1,038 (76.4%) were reported by women and 320 by men (23.6%).⁷⁷

Table 7. Gender distribution of domestic violence victims, 2019

Type of crime	Percentage distribution		Percentage	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Premeditated murder	3.6	2.2	84.1	15.9
Attempted murder	2.3	4.1	64.9	35.1
Intentional infliction of a grave injury affecting the health of the victim	2.2	5.6	56.1	43.9
Intentional infliction of a less grave injury affecting the health of the victim	9.0	11.2	72.3	27.7
Intentional infliction of a light injury affecting the health of the victim	80.1	72.8	78.1	21.9
Torture	0.8	0.3	88.9	11.1
Other	2.0	3.8	63.6	36.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	76.4	23.6
Total (number)	1,038	320	-	-

Source: AZSTAT, 2020.

⁷⁵ Council of Europe, 'Focus groups to develop a campaign on violence against women and domestic violence in Azerbaijan', 18 March 2021, available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/-/focus-groups-to-develop-a-campaign-on-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence-in-azerbaijan>

⁷⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 'UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women: Azerbaijan', available at: <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/azerbaijan#2>

⁷⁷ AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

The financial difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with social isolation measures during the lockdown, contributed to a further increase in domestic violence cases in Azerbaijan.⁷⁸ According to the head of the Clean World Women's and Children's Shelter, Mehriban Zeynalova, "since the pandemic began, the number of domestic violence cases has doubled, if not tripled". By contrast, according to the State Statistics Committee, in 2020 the number of victims of domestic violence (1,300) decreased by 4.3 percent compared to the previous year, 75.9% of whom were women and 1.2% were minors.⁷⁹ However, compared to 2019, the number of deaths caused by these crimes increased by 34.1% to 59 people, 41 of whom were women (69%). Measuring the true extent of domestic violence is challenging as survivors and witnesses do not always report instances of violence. As a result, many cases remain hidden, as survivors fear stigma or reprisal from their abuser. In many cases, women are especially reluctant to report violence to the criminal justice system.

According to World Bank data, the suicide mortality rate in Azerbaijan was 4.1 per 100,000 people in 2019, with a rate of 1.6 for women and 6.6 for men.⁸⁰ According to a WARD study, 121 women committed suicide and 69 women attempted to commit suicide in 2016, which is significantly higher than in 2010, when the figures were 89 and 37, respectively. There is evidence that many instances of suicide and attempted suicide are caused by being continuously subjected to violence.⁸¹

The issue of forced and early marriages (of girls who are under 18 years old) is also an emerging issue in Azerbaijan. According to a study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than one in 10 girls in Azerbaijan are married before the age of 18.⁸² The State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs reports that "despite the important work done, unfortunately, there is still a problem of early marriage in society." Early marriages, and marriages between close relatives, have a range of negative consequences, such as hereditary diseases and other problems.

Various research reports suggest that early marriage in Azerbaijan is the result of a combination of cultural attitudes and norms, alongside socioeconomic factors. These need to be addressed not only with young people, but also more broadly with families and communities, as well as through policies and programmes. There are a limited number of shelters for survivors of domestic violence in Azerbaijan. Most are operated by NGOs because the State Committee on Family, Women and Children's Affairs lacks the resources to provide services that address the extent and complexity of violence against women.

⁷⁸ Gulnur Kazimova, 'Domestic violence and violence against women have increased in Azerbaijan', *OC Media*, 5 August 2020, available at: <https://oc-media.org/features/domestic-violence-and-violence-against-women-have-increased-in-azerbaijan>

⁷⁹ 'Pandemiya dövründə məişət zorakılığı ilə bağlı statistika açıqlanıb', *Report AZ*, 25 September 2020, available at: <https://report.az/hadise/pandemiya-dovrunde-meiset-zorakiligi-ile-bagli-statistika-aciqlanib>

⁸⁰ World Bank, 'Suicide mortality rate (per 100,000 population) - Azerbaijan', 2019, available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.SUIC.P5?locations=AZ>

⁸¹ Women's Association for Rational Development, *Violence Scale: Femicide in Azerbaijan*, WARD, Baku, 2017.

⁸² United Nations Children's Fund, *The State of the World's Children 2016: A Fair Chance for Every Child*, UNICEF, New York, 2016.

For instance, the committee's budget is not large enough to fund shelters. As a result, its actions are largely limited to awareness raising, rather than providing services to survivors of violence. However, committee recently launched a major new four-year project entitled 'Stand Up for Women and Girls'.⁸³ This project will provide survivors of abuse with safe spaces, protection and counselling, while improving women's access to essential services such as health care, legal aid and social support. It will also implement wide-ranging measures to help women gain financial independence by training them in employable skills and providing support for women to set up their own businesses.

In line with decision No. 337 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, dated 30 July 2019, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population opened a shelter and social rehabilitation facility for vulnerable groups, situated within the State Social Services Agency. Moreover, the Department of Social Rehabilitation of Victims of Domestic Violence was recently established within the context of this shelter and agency.

4.9. Gender in the green transition

Several environmental strategies are in place in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, there is an urgent need to better coordinate actions on 'greening' the economy across different economic sectors. In recent years, the Government has taken various steps to modernise traditional sectors and embrace green growth.⁸⁴ Two Strategic Road Maps approved in late 2016 – on the production and processing of agricultural products, and on the production of consumer goods at the level of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – also reflect the issue of a gradual transition to a 'green economy'. These reforms have some gender-related components. However, they do not include a specific budget allocated to gender-related activities. Instead, they state that these components will be integrated into other projects listed in each road map.

The Asian Development Bank's Country Gender Assessment 2019 states that,

"ADB is a lead development partner that finances private sector investment in green growth technologies and enterprise initiatives. Within its green growth portfolio, ADB could set up pilot programmes to support women entrepreneurs to learn new technologies and start micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in the renewable energy and green growth sector. Training in various renewable energy enterprises could be provided for enterprising women under ADB's SMEs programming to help women to position themselves in this strategic sector."

⁸³ State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 'Ending violence against women is everyone's business: it's time to stand up for women and girls!', n.d., available at: <http://scfwca.gov.az/en/post/2217/qadinlara-qarsi-zorakiliga-son-qoymaq-her-kesin-vezifesidir-qadinlara-ve-qizlara-destek-olmaq-vaxtid>

⁸⁴ EaP Green Partnership for Environment and Growth, *Greening Economies in the EU's Eastern Partnership Countries*, OECD Environment Directorate, Paris, 2015, available at: <http://www.green-economies-eap.org/resources/EaPGREEN-country-note-Azerbaijan-Jun2015.pdf>

4.10. Gender in digital transformations

In recent years, the coverage of information and communications technology (ICT) has expanded in Azerbaijan. As of 2020, the third generation of wireless mobile telecommunications technology (3G) covers over 97.6% of the country's populated territory, while fourth generation technology (4G) covers 93% of its populated territory. As of early 2020, 81% of Azerbaijan's population used the internet.⁸⁵

Table 8. Gender distribution of internet users, 2008–2019

Year	Total (%)	Gender distribution	
		Women	Men
2008	17.2	12.6	21.6
2009	27.4	23.0	32.0
2010	46.0	36.5	55.6
2011	65.0	55.9	75.8
2012	70.0	62.2	78.1
2013	73.0	67.2	78.8
2014	75.0	71.2	78.9
2015	77.0	72.0	78.0
2016	78.0	76.1	79.9
2017	79.0	76.8	81.2
2018	79.8	76.0	83.7
2019	81.1	78.4	83.9

The biennial United Nations E-Government Survey ranked Azerbaijan 70th on the E-Government Development Index and 73rd on the E-Participation Index among 193 countries in 2020.⁸⁶ The Global Innovation Index 2019 ranked Azerbaijan 84th of 129 countries, based on the development of its innovation ecosystem. The implementation of the 'Smart City' pilot project in 2020–2021 – as part of the National Action Plan on the Promotion of Open Government for 2020–2022 – aims to accelerate the implementation of high-tech solutions and stimulate the application of innovative solutions in regions across Azerbaijan.

⁸⁵ AZSTAT, 'Gender Indicators', 2020, available at: <http://www.stat.gov.az/source/gender>

⁸⁶ United Nations, *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025*, UN Azerbaijan, Baku, 2021, available at: https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Azerbaijan-UNSDCF-2021-2025_1.pdf

The Strategic Roadmap for the Development of Telecommunications and Information Technologies was developed in 2016. It considers the challenges and opportunities that the telecommunications sector faces, with a view to enhancing the development potential of ICT, improving ICT infrastructure in order to digitise the economy, meeting the demand for ICT services efficiently through domestic sources, and increasing productivity by using ICT in the government sector. By covering short, medium and long-term perspectives, the roadmap lays out a strategic vision and action plan until 2020, a long-term vision until 2025, and a target vision for the post-2025 period.⁸⁷ However, this reform is not-gender sensitive and does not contain references to women or girls.

Women in Azerbaijan are actively involved with ICT in society and the digital economy. They are active users of information technologies, but they are rarely producers. Men continue to occupy the highest level positions in the ICT sector.⁸⁸ Greater access to ICT is important, especially for the development women's entrepreneurship which, in turn, would feed into the goal of diversifying the economy through private sector development. According to recent report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *"Barriers to access, education and skills, as well as ingrained socio-cultural biases, are driving a digital gender divide that is holding back women's participation in the digital economy."*⁸⁹ Women are also less likely to pursue, and have more limited access to, ICT-related educational opportunities, which limiting their options for careers in the sector.

The European Union's EU4Digital Initiative supports the digital reform agenda in Azerbaijan. It involves a range of actions to promote key areas of the digital economy and society, in line with EU norms and practices, in order to advance economic growth, generate more jobs, improve people's lives and help businesses.⁹⁰

4.11. Groups living in vulnerable conditions and social inclusion

Despite recent declines in poverty, many low-income households (65% of Azerbaijan's population in 2012) can be classified as vulnerable.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, *Strategic Roadmap for Development of Telecommunications and Information Technologies in Azerbaijan Republic*, Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku, 2016, available at: <https://monitoring.az/assets/upload/files/6683729684f8895c1668803607932190.pdf>

⁸⁸ European Union, 'EU4Digital – Digital growth: working towards gender equality in IT in Azerbaijan', 2020, available at: <https://eufordigital.eu/digital-growth-working-towards-gender-equality-in-it-in-azerbaijan>

⁸⁹ Organisation for International Co-operation and Development, *Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate*, OECD, Paris, 2018, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/going-digital/bridging-the-digital-gender-divide.pdf>

⁹⁰ European Union, 'EU4Digital: Azerbaijan', 2021, available at: <https://eufordigital.eu/countries/azerbaijan>

⁹¹ Such as internally displaced persons, refugees, women, minorities and low-income households.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are one of the most vulnerable groups in the country, whose displacement is the result of conflict in the early 1990s. They comprise about 6.5% of Azerbaijan's total population and most of these persons are women and children.⁹² While internally displaced persons have the same rights as other citizens, they face a range of problems. These include poor housing and a lack of basic services, such as water and sanitation.

After the armed escalation and the ceasefire agreement signed on 9 November 2020, internally displaced persons have the chance to return to their homes. Preparations for the return of internally displaced persons to these areas are contingent on the progressive transfer of territory and other preparations to ensure the sustainability of returns.⁹³

Persons living with disabilities (PWDs) are another particularly vulnerable group. The total number of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Azerbaijan is estimated at 6% of the population – that is, 625,000 people among the total population of 10 million. Official statistics do not indicate the number of women with disabilities. However, the Union of Disabled People's Organisations estimates that there are approximately 200,000 women with disabilities in Azerbaijan, accounting for one-third of all persons with disabilities. A total of 383,590 people receive a disability pension, 161,500 of whom are women.⁹⁴

According to research on the situation of women with disabilities,⁹⁵ they face a number of constraints to accessing education, employment and services. Azerbaijan lacks an action plan specifically addressing the needs of women with disabilities. Moreover, the country lacks vocational training programmes and adequate infrastructure for women with disabilities. Additional barriers to mobility and physical security also exist due to gender stereotypes and societal attitudes that limit the opportunities available to them.

Other groups in Azerbaijan who are vulnerable and at higher risk of poverty include families living in rural areas, large families with many children, single-parent households, children between one and 15 years old, adults over the age of 50, persons with low levels of education, and women who suffered economically during the transition period. Despite high employment rates in the country, many of these women have been pushed into low-paying sectors and informal work.⁹⁶

⁹² World Bank, *Country Partnership Framework for Azerbaijan for the period FY16–FY20*, World Bank, Baku, 2015.

⁹³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Key Considerations for Returns to Nagorno-Karabakh and the Adjacent Districts*, UNHCR, Geneva, November 2020, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5fc0e1e24.pdf>

⁹⁴ Asian Development Bank, *Azerbaijan Country Gender Assessment*, ADB, Baku, 2019.

⁹⁵ G. Burchell, *Women with Disabilities in the E&E Region, Report on Research Findings: Azerbaijan*, USAID, Washington, DC, 2016.

⁹⁶ Asian Development Bank, *Poverty Analysis Summary: Country Partnership Strategy Azerbaijan 2014–2018*, ADB, Baku, 2018.



5. IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND OTHER CRISES ON WOMEN AND MEN

5.1. Gender-related aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2020, UNFPA, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan published a joint *Rapid Gender Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on the Lives of Women and Men in Azerbaijan*.⁹⁷ Its findings reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the socio-economic security of women and men in the country, including in terms of employment and livelihood resources.

Men tended to lose their jobs or close their businesses, while women were most affected by a reduction in paid working hours. Many women were forced to work from home during the pandemic or were sent on leave without pay. This is because women predominately work in the sectors of education and service provision, workplaces that were closed by quarantine and lockdown restrictions. The disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic work on women increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially due to the closure of schools and child care facilities. Women's mental and emotional health has been adversely affected by the pandemic.

⁹⁷ United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *Rapid Gender Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 in Azerbaijan: EU4Gender Equality*, UNFPA/UN Women, Baku, 2020, available at: <https://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eca/attachments/publications/2020/11/rapid%20gender%20assessment%20eng-min.pdf?la=en&vs=3700>

The rapid assessment by UNFPA, UN Women and the EU Delegation, alongside other studies, reveal that cases of domestic violence increased during the pandemic.⁹⁸ A high proportion of the women interviewed for the rapid assessment reported that they did not know where to seek help in cases of domestic violence.

5.2. Gender-related aspects of the humanitarian situation

The COVID-19 pandemic and the armed escalation between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020 have increased the vulnerabilities of women and girls in Azerbaijan. Humanitarian and financial crises are among the most direct outcomes of the war, which impact communities directly affected by the armed escalation, as well as the population in general. Internally displaced persons, and people affected by the conflict, have been deprived of their homes, assets and sources of income.

In such circumstances, women's burden of work and the roles they must perform in households has increased. A recent study by peace-builders in Azerbaijan notes that "*women reported the lack of gender-sensitive humanitarian assistance*" during the armed conflict.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Gulnur Kazimova, 'Domestic violence and violence against women have increased in Azerbaijan', *OC Media*, 5 August 2020, available at: <https://oc-media.org/features/domestic-violence-and-violence-against-women-have-increased-in-azerbaijan>

⁹⁹ Claudia Ditel, 'Armenia and Azerbaijan: women peace-builders on the post-conflict scenario', *Observatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa*, 8 March 2021, available at: <https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Armenia/Armenia-and-Azerbaijan-women-peacebuilders-on-the-post-conflict-scenario-208542>



6. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING FOR THE EU DELEGATION

This chapter highlights the key findings of this Country Gender Profile and presents recommendations for the EU Delegation for the development of a Country Level Implementation Plan, as well as support for the Government and civil society in Azerbaijan.

6.1. Key findings

Women's participation in decision-making in Azerbaijan is limited. Overall, this is due to social, economic and cultural factors. Women's duties tend to focus on household work and child care. As women bear a disproportionate burden of care work in their households, including child care, most have little time left for social activities. The lack of child care and health care facilities are among the greatest challenges to accessing adequate services in most rural areas in the country. The lack of child care facilities in particular obliges women to remain at home, which leads to their exclusion from the job market.

The report submitted by Azerbaijan to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (the CEDAW Committee) in 2015, outlines progress on gender equality achieved since its previous periodic report in 2009, particularly in the areas of legislative reforms and improved institutional and policy frameworks.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Azerbaijan, CEDAW/C/AZE/CO/5, 12 March 2015, available at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?TreatyID=36&DocTypeID=5

However, the CEDAW Committee expressed concerns that there is still “no national plan of action to promote gender equality”¹⁰¹ to address “the gaps between *de jure* and *de facto* equality.” It notes the existence of discrimination, as women are largely involved in informal and low-paid (or unpaid) jobs compared to men. As the Committee states, “the absence of women’s rights and gender equality as mandatory subjects in school curricula and in professional training for teachers.” It also highlights the underrepresentation of women in national and local legislative bodies, as well as in the Government, particularly in senior and decision-making positions.

The work of Azerbaijan’s national machinery for gender equality and gender focal points in each ministry requires improvements. Specific budgetary resources are also needed to achieve goals targeted on gender equality and should be included in the state programmes/reforms’ budgets.

Although the National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023 was recently approved, there remains room for further gender mainstreaming. Early marriage and domestic violence are urgent issues that must be addressed in the country. Cases of domestic violence increased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic-related lockdown and other factors. The number of shelters for domestic violence victims is limited and most are operated by NGOs, which also have limited resources. In addition, women lack knowledge of their rights and where to turn in cases of domestic violence and other violations of their rights.

Challenges to women’s entrepreneurship also exist. These include a general lack of knowledge among women on how to develop and operate a business, their lack of access to capital, and limited training opportunities through which women can acquire or improve their business skills. In addition to these constraints, women with disabilities face further barriers to accessing education, employment, adequate (accessible) infrastructure and services.

Overall, the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent armed escalation include increased vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls.

¹⁰¹ In 2019, the project on the National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2024 was prepared and submitted to the Government. It is currently awaiting approval.

6.2. Recommendations for CLIP development

The Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) covers the EU Delegation's political and programmatic commitments related to gender equality in Azerbaijan. The findings of this Country Gender Profile provide the basis for completing the CLIP. Based on these findings, the CLIP should focus on the following areas:

1. Mitigate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the armed escalation in 2020

The EU Delegations' actions can focus on the gender dimensions of post-conflict reconstruction. Despite women's important role in peace-building and conflict resolution, they are often excluded from formal decision-making and policy-making structures in post-conflict situations. The specific experiences and competencies of women should be taken into account in the elaboration of projects on reconciliation and reconstruction. Gender issues should be included in the analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of post-conflict reconstruction work. This can be undertaken within the new strategy, 'Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development'.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all segments of the population financially and economically, including women. Lower-income, lower-skilled, older and unmarried women are at greater risk of poverty. Given the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, there is need for further research and analysis on the gendered impacts of COVID-19. Specifically, there is a need for gender mainstreaming policies that focus on women's employment, preventing and addressing domestic violence, and improving health care services, among other issues.

2. Cover the new thematic areas of engagement included in the EU Gender Action Plan III, including climate change, the green economy, digital transformation, women, peace and security (WPS), and trade

The green economy and digital transformation are relatively new areas for Azerbaijan. Therefore, the EU Delegation's initiatives should focus more on these areas. Information and communication technologies have been extremely useful during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping people to stay connected and keep businesses afloat. To ensure that women have ICT-related knowledge and skills is important for advancing gender equality across a number of sectors. Women especially stand to benefit from using the internet to access business information, services and education. In the area of the green economy, programmes need to be developed to support women entrepreneurs to learn how to use new technologies and start businesses in the renewable energy and green growth sectors.

Both urban and rural areas would benefit from these programmes. The capacity of women's enterprises in rural areas should be increased through improved access to credit and markets, better management, and strengthened infrastructure. The terms and conditions of bank loans should be revised to enable rural women to access the funds they need to start their own businesses.

In terms of women, peace and security, the EU Delegation can support the Government to prepare and implement the National Action Plan on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security. Actions in this priority area should include integrating a gender perspective, identifying the obstacles to women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction processes, proposing strategies, and ensuring women's participation and decision-making in all conflict, post-conflict and security-related contexts. As the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has argued, *"creating and supporting research centres on women in conflict affected regions promotes the human security and rights of women in these regions and ensures that there is a base of knowledge and policy-oriented research produced which will empower women to participate in conflict resolution and also in post-conflict reconstruction."*¹⁰²

3. Focus on the issues of domestic violence and early marriage

The EU Delegation's contribution should focus on strengthening the response to violence against women and girls, including strengthening support systems. The numbers of safe spaces and shelters for survivors of violence should be increased. These shelters should also provide skills training and support for employment and livelihood activities to enable women to become economically independent from their abusers. It is especially vital to raise awareness among women of their rights, available services and safe spaces.

The issues of early marriage and sexual harassment, including harassment at work and in public places, also require urgent attention. The lack of relevant policies addressing harassment in the workplace, coupled with the existence of cultural stereotypes, prevent women from sharing information on sexual harassment or seeking legal assistance. Therefore, more systematic attention is needed to combat the issue of sexual harassment through laws, human rights provisions, and human resource policies in organisations.

The EU Delegation should support the implementation of the National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023, as well as Azerbaijan's ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention).

¹⁰² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Gender and Post-Conflict: Promoting the Participation of Women in Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, UNESCO, Paris, 2011, available at: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/gender_confreport_22062011.pdf

Ratifying the Istanbul Convention is especially significant as it is the first legally-binding instrument which “creates a comprehensive legal framework and approach to combat violence against women”, with a focus on preventing domestic violence, protecting survivors and prosecuting offenders.¹⁰³

6.3. Recommendations on supporting the Government

The EU Delegation’s support for the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan should focus on the following areas:

- Supporting the creation of a National Council (board) across government ministries to work on gender policy and mainstreaming.¹⁰⁴ The effective implementation of gender policies requires raising the competence of specialists in the field of gender expertise, while strengthening the capacity of the National Council and gender expert working groups.
- Supporting the implementation of the National Action Plan for Combatting Domestic Violence in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2020–2023, and Azerbaijan’s ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). More initiatives are needed to address domestic violence across all areas, including reducing the incidence of cases of violence, increasing reporting, ensuring access to social services and shelters, and improving the capacity of the criminal justice system to prosecute cases of violence against women.
- Supporting the preparation and implementation of the National Action Plan on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security.
- Supporting gender analysis and expert advice on gender equality in a wide range of areas. These include expertise on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive budgeting, assistance for the preparation and revision of strategic/policy documents and promoting gender equality in these documents, alongside research and capacity development on gender-related topics.

¹⁰³ Jasmin Bauomy, ‘Istanbul Convention: What is the domestic violence treaty and has it had an impact?’, *Euronews*, 22 March 2021, available at; <https://www.euronews.com/2020/07/27/istanbul-convention-what-is-the-domestic-violence-treaty-and-has-it-had-an-impact>

¹⁰⁴ The recent bilateral meeting with the representatives of government officials of various ministries have identified a lack of Board (council) of gender focal points from different ministries

- Assisting improved access to affordable, quality child care and health care services, particularly in rural areas.

6.4 Recommendations on supporting civil society

The EU Delegation's support for civil society in Azerbaijan should involve:

- Strengthening partnerships between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, civil society organisations and the EU Delegation.
- Assisting and supporting civil society organisations' participation in law- and policy-making processes.
- Supporting the preparation and implementation of a civil society strategy at the country level.
- Supporting and strengthening gender-related CSOs through capacity building, technical expertise and assistance.
- Supporting efforts to monitor the situation of gender equality in Azerbaijan through CSOs working on gender issues.



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ANNEX 1.

List of conventions establishing the basis of the principles of gender equality in Azerbaijan

Conventions

- Convention against Discrimination in Education (ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan through decision No. 146-IIIQ of 2 October 2006).
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (ratified by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan through the law No. 847-IQ of 24 March 2000).
- Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages (ratified by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan through the law No. 107-IQ of 31 May 1996).
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan through decision No. 1074 of 30 June 1995).
- Convention on the Political Rights of Women (ratified by the National Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan through decision No. 255 of 4 August 1992).
- The International Labour Organization Convention on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers, as well as revisions to the Maternity Protection Convention in 2011.



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