



INSPIRED

PARTICIPATORY POLICY ASSESSMENT

Women Labor Rights in Armenia



Government Offices of Sweden

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1 CONTEXT AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

Gender analysis of the labor and employment area in Armenia demonstrates that despite the high educational level of women, their input to the economic development of the country is significantly lower than their actual potential. In reality, women hardly have influence on political decision-making and are, overall, not engaged in the governance and development processes to the necessary extent. Such a situation is characterized as inefficient use of human resources and has a direct impact on the country's development processes and competitiveness.

A direct link between gender imbalance and the country's competitiveness is revealed through application of **Gender Gap Index**, which is calculated by the World Economic Forum in four key areas: economic participation and opportunities, politics, education and healthcare,¹ reflecting the existing difference between women's and men's opportunities in each of the noted areas. In 2017, according to Gender Gap Index, Armenia occupied the 97th place among 144 countries of the world.² In among four areas of gender gap, Armenia comes out the worst in the healthcare sphere (143rd place).

Although from the perspective of gender equality the situation is the best in the **education area**, Armenia has undergone a major regress in comparison with 2016³ shifting from the 27th place in 2016 to the 42nd place among 144 countries in 2017. This is conditioned by gender difference in enrolment in basic education, which can be a consequence of deviation from the natural difference between the number of girls and boys in the republic. In addition, of concern are the indicators for the proportion of children from socially insecure layers of society that do not go to school, which also reveal certain gender differences and pave the way for worsening of the situation with employment in the country.

In the economic activity area, by its gender imbalance indicators (the ratio of men's and women's employment levels, equal remuneration for equal and equivalent work, the proportion of men and women among specialists and technical staff), Armenia worsened its position, occupying the 71st place as compared to its 69th place in 2016 and 24th place in pre-crisis 2007. In the structure of this indicator, especially large is the gender gap in the Employment (84th place), Labor force participation and Estimated earned income (PPP US\$) (97th place) areas.

¹ The Global Gender Gap Report measures the size of the gender inequality gap in four areas: Economic participation and opportunity (salaries, participation and leadership), Education (access to basic and higher levels of education), Political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures), Health and survival (life expectancy and sex ratio)

² http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf

³ <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=ARM>

In Armenia, the labor market problems are clearly manifest when observing the 2017 **Human Capital Index**. According to the Global Human Capital Index -2017 report of the World Economic Forum⁴, Armenia came 49th in the list of 130 countries of the world having developed 64% of its human capital. The indicator is characterised by four dimensions: the existence of potential/education, potential realization, development and know-how. Although by its indicators for enrolment in education, Armenia comes 3rd, by its potential realization indicator, which includes gender gap in the employment area and unemployment, it occupies the 114th place, which demonstrates non-efficient use of human capital

1.1 CURRENT SITUATION (BASELINE)

Barriers to women's participation in the workforce result in an underutilization of valuable human capital and economic losses not only for women and their families, but for the entire society.

Only half of women population participate in the labor market in Armenia. This is more than 15 percentage points lower than men in Armenia.

One reason for these gap is the persistence of gender norms emphasizing women's roles as household caretakers. Key barriers to work are often related to the conflicting demands of their time for care and work activities. These barriers produce a vicious circle of low labor participation and employment, reduced earnings and higher inequalities.

Gender discrimination by employers plays an additional role in limiting workforce participation by women. Anti-discrimination principles are enshrined in Armenia's Constitution and Labor Code, but are not always working. Indeed, discrimination may explain in part the persistence of gender gaps in Armenia.

Employment

Women's proportion among the labor resources stands at 55%, however, economically active are 52.5% of women, and 71.2% of men. The gender gap of women's and men's economic activism is 40% in the 25-34 age group, which is largely determined by women's family duties (pregnancy, child birth, child care, etc.).⁵

Women make up 47.5% of the total number of the employed, and men 52.5%. Thirty point three per cent of the employed women and 28.1% of the employed men have higher or postgraduate education.

⁴ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-human-capital-report-2017> - considered are more than 50 indicators, which are united in four main groups: education (higher education, secondary, elementary) and professional preparedness; health, physical and psychological well-being; work placement and employment; infrastructure, legal protection, social mobility.

⁵ Women and Men of Armenia, 2017, the RA National Statistical Service, <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

Both women and men are primarily hired workers. The largest part of employers and the self-employed are men, whereas among family members working without remuneration women exceed the number of men two times. More women than men are employed in the state sector of the economy. 39.2 % of women and 21.6% of men work an incomplete working day, which is largely conditioned by the nature of work and seasonality. Another prevalent reason, in case of women, is the absence of possibility to work full day due to family responsibilities and reasons, and, in case of men, the reason is that they have simply been unable to find work with full-day duration.

Agriculture in the country is the largest employment area where approximately 34% of the employed are working. 52 % of them are women, which makes women a most important participant of agricultural development. Moreover, agriculture makes up 31% in the men's employment structure, and 37% in the women's employment structure. In essence, the greatest part of the agricultural produce is created by women and they are the main guarantors of food supply and household survival in rural areas. At the same time, women's employment in the agricultural area is primarily informal by its nature, which allows to characterize women farmers as representatives of the socially unprotected and lowest-paid segment of the labor market. According to the agricultural census, 25% of the agricultural farms are headed by women. Women-headed households are most vulnerable due to the absence of agricultural equipment, difficult access to land plots, and problems connected with irrigation opportunities and financial means.

Unemployment

The unemployment level is highest in Armenia among the CIS countries.⁶ It is 17.8% among women, and 18.1% among men. At the same time, there are essential gender differences in the duration of unemployment and reasons for not working. Women make up 67.8% of the officially registered unemployed, and, moreover, the level of long-term unemployment is especially high among women, making up 62% of the unemployed women.⁷

The young (16-30 year olds) continue to remain a stable vulnerable group in the labor market with 47.9% of economic activism, the low 30.3% level of employment and, respectively, high 36, 7% level of unemployment. According to the 2016 data, in the age group of 15-29 almost 47% of female youth and 23% of male youth did not study or work.⁸

Salary Differences (Gender Pay Gap)

Overall, the gender situation in Armenia's labor market is characterized by presence of vertical (unequal opportunities for career growth) and horizontal (according to

⁶ <http://www.cisstat.com/>

⁷ Labor Market in the Republic of Armenia, 2017, <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1994>

⁸ Women and Men of Armenia, 2017, the RA National Statistical Service, <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

professions and employment areas) discrimination, which leads to an essential gender wage gap.

According to the 2016 data, women's average monthly nominal salary /earnings/ in the Republic of Armenia made up 66.4% of the men's earnings or the gender gap in remuneration stood at 33.6%. Over the past ten years, this difference has been reduced by 7.2%. Due to the existing difficulties for women's professional progress, a high educational level does not always mitigate the gender wage gap. Vertical discrimination is maintained even in employment areas traditionally deemed as feminine: healthcare, education, culture, agriculture. Men holding managerial positions exceed the number of women in these position by 2.4 times. Women are more engaged in work requiring high (59%) or medium-level (58%) qualifications than men.

Polling conducted in the republic revealed that public opinion justifies salary differences of women and men, believing that in the case of a working woman, the amount of the man's salary must be necessarily larger than the woman's since, if otherwise, women can use this circumstance displaying "disobedience" in family relations.⁹ The authorities do not carry out any advocacy or awareness raising campaigns in this direction, which contributes to the preservation of gender stereotypes.

There are also gender differences in the amounts of pensions, although the RA Law on State Pensions sets 63 as a common pension age for both women and men. In 2016, the average pension amount for women stood at 39,165 drams, and for men at 42, 313 drams.

Economically inactive population

Thirty-three per cent of the economically inactive population are men, and 67% women. The gender gap is especially large in the 25-49 age group (64.9%-71.5%), which is also primarily conditioned by women's family duties: pregnancy, child birth, child care, household chores, etc.¹⁰

The greater part of the economically inactive women are housewives. In 2016, 47% of women in the 15-75 age group did not have jobs and did not seek one being primarily busy with household duties. Women perform the greater part of household unpaid work, which is not assessed in terms of its value and is not reflected in the national accounts system. At the same time, approximately 40% of the economically inactive women has higher or vocational education.¹¹

Research demonstrates that if more women worked in Armenia in accordance with their speciality, and were not limited by the status of a housewife by their own choice or against their will, the GDP of Armenia's economy would be at least by 50-60 million

⁹ Center for Gender Research and Leadership, Armenia's Gender Barometer, Yerevan, 2015

¹⁰ Women and Men of Armenia, 2017, the RA National Statistical Service, <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

¹¹ Labor Market in the Republic of Armenia, 2017, <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1994>

dollars more.¹²

Obstacles to Finding Work

According to the data of the time budget study carried out by the RA National Statistical Service in 2008, women spend on unpaid work (household duties and family care) five times more time than men. Paid work does not free up women from household work to the same extent as it does in case of men. As a consequence, women perform a bigger scope of work as compared to men. Men spend on paid work three times more time than women and have 30% more free time than women.

Both women and men note first of all lack of workplaces among obstacles to finding jobs. As a second obstacle they mention not sufficient work experience in case of women and low salary in case of men. This fact indirectly proves that women's expectations in terms of work remuneration are lower than those of men. Women make up a significant majority (70%) among the "discouraged to find a job", i.e. among those people that do not have any hope for finding a job and do not look for one. The intention to leave the country is more stressed among the reasons for not working in case of men.

The state's support measures for combining family responsibilities and career are insufficient, which is attested by the fact that 98% of those not working for family reasons are women.

Children's enrolment in preschool institutions (from the number of the 0-5 years of age population) makes up 28.9%, in urban areas 35.6% and in rural areas 17.2%. The level of enrolment in preschool institutions is especially low among 0-2 year old children making up just 5.2%.

Table 1: International Gender Indexes

Source	Index	Score
2016 Human Development Report	Human Development Index	0.743
	Gender Inequality Index	0.993
	Estimated GNI per capita ¹³	Female 5,535 Male 11,258
	Labor force participation rate	Female 54.9 Male 73.6
SIGI Brochure	Social Institutions and Gender Index	0.236
Global Gender Gap Report	Gender Gap Index	0.677

¹² Diagnostic Study of Discriminatory Manifestations against Women, UNFPA, 2016, <http://armenia.unfpa.org/hy/node/7000>

¹³ Derived from the ratio of female to male wages, female and male shares of economically active population and gross national income (in 2011 purchasing power parity terms).

	Economic opportunity and participation	0.671
Social Watch Report 2017	Gender Equity Index	61/168
World Economic Forum 2017	Human Capital Index	49/130 countries

Other sources: Women and Men of Armenia, 2017,
<http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

Poverty

In 2016, the poverty level in Armenia was 29.4%, out of which 1.8% were extremely poor and 8% very poor.¹⁴ Fifty-six point six per cent of the poor are women, and 43.4% are men.

The poverty level of women-headed households (they make up 33% in the republic) is higher (32%) than that of men-headed households (29.5%). Thirty-nine point eight per cent of women-headed households with children is poor, and 4.1% is extremely poor, which exceeds the average indicator by almost two times.

Entrepreneurship

The RA Government views a progressive development of the private sector of the economy, specifically of small and medium-sized businesses, as an effective means to address employment and social problems. According to the assessment of the Republican Council of Armenia's Entrepreneurs, the proportion of women in large, medium-sized and small businesses does not exceed 10%. The proportion of women engaged in microbusiness is higher and makes up 20-25%.¹⁵

Gender perspectives of private entrepreneurship in Armenia are not always taken into account by organizations operating in that field and assisting business development. Meanwhile, to start a business women have to overcome the following obstacles: lack of practical skills and preparedness, a feeling of uncertainty and absence of a desire to take risks, absence of business links, and presence of stereotypes regarding women's participation in economy and business. Some of the objective reasons for this situation are limited accessibility of finances, difficulties to get loans, absence of financial means and owned property to secure a credit, high interest rates, unfavorable business environment, and unofficial corruption payments.¹⁶

¹⁴ Below the upper general poverty line – 40, 867 drams (or 85.1 US dollars); below the lower general poverty line for the very poor – 33, 418 drams (or 69.5 US dollars); below the food poverty line for the extreme poor –in 2016, it was 23, 313 drams (or 48.5 US dollars).

¹⁵ Gender policy in Armenia and the right of women entrepreneurship
<http://employers.am/News.aspx?NewsId=39&lang=eng>

¹⁶ Gender Assessment USAID/Armenia

Table 2: Indicators on Workforce participation and Economic Leadership

Source	Indicator	Measurement		
		female	male	value
Global Gender Gap Report	Workforce Participation			
	Non-discrimination laws, hiring women			no
	Unemployed adults	19.2	17.4	1.11
	Discouraged job seekers	82.0	18.0	4.56
	Workers in informal employment	19.1	32.4	0.59
	High-skilled share of labour force	15.0	13.9	1.07
	Workers employed part-time	41.0	22.2	1.84
	Contributing family workers	10.5	4.4	2.38
	Own-account workers	32.0	36.9	0.87
	Economic Leadership			
	Law mandates equal pay			yes
	Advancement of women to leadership roles			0.68
	Firms with female (co-) owners			0.34
	Firms with female top managers			0.24
	Employers	0.3	4.4	0.08

Women Employment at Decision-Making Level

The republic's governing system is also characterized by not sufficient involvement of women, which is clear violation of women employment rights and inefficient use of human resources.

The political appointments in the executive branch of the power include only one female Minister (5.5%), and the discretionary positions two female Deputy Ministers (3.6%).¹⁷ There are no women among the Advisors to the RA President and the Prime Minister. There is only one woman among the seven unpaid Advisors to the RA Prime Minister. Women average 47% among the staff of the Ministries. At the same time, women's representation in five out of 18 Ministries reaches 60-70%.

Overall, 54% of the civil servants are women, however only 17% of them are occupying top positions. Seventy per cent of civil servants in junior positions are women, which is a striking example of vertical discrimination.¹⁸

Within the system of the territorial administration, there are no women Governors, and only two out of 22 Deputy Governors are women.

Women hardly participate in decision-making concerning their communities, thus being deprived of the opportunity to express their interests. There are no women among

¹⁷ According to the RA legislation, the hierarchy of positions within the system of the public service implies three categories of positions: political, discretionary and civil servants.

¹⁸ Women and Men of Armenia, 2017, <http://www.armstat.am/am/?nid=82&id=1976>

elective positions of 49 mayors at the local self-governance level. Only seven of 502 rural communities are headed by women (1.4%). According to the 2016 data, 12.1% of the municipal councilors were women, however, according to the results of the community consolidation elections conducted in 2017, this number was reduced by two times.

Thus, the governance pyramid being primarily biased towards men does not give the opportunity to provide for women's employment and participation in formation of state policies and by that hinders the democratization of society.

An analysis of the gender situation demonstrates that the basis of inequality between women and men lies in the inequality in the economic area, as well as in the traditional division of gender roles maintained and even reinforced in society. It is obvious that the problem of maintaining gender equality is determined by the extent to which the gender component is integrated in the country's economic, political, social, and national security systems.

A successful development of Armenia depends also on efficient and balanced use of women's and men's potential and capacities in the socio-economic life of the country.

1.2 ADEQUACY OF THE STATE RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM

Although the gender policy documents of the Republic of Armenia incorporate certain measures to mitigate gender inequality in different areas and even endorse and propose gender indicators¹⁹ to evaluate the situation, the gender component is either not included in the national programs on socio-economic development at all or is very weakly expressed, which can cause the enrooting and aggravation of gender inequality in the process of implementation of these programs.

Even **the RA Government's 2017-2022 program**²⁰ cannot be evaluated as a gender-sensitive one, with the exception of some provisions. The few references associated with women's issues are included in the program's one chapter – *Work and Social Policy*, which also incorporates the most important provision connected with gender mainstreaming of all socio-economic programs, namely “by the end of Year 2022, for the purpose of expanding equal rights and opportunities for women and men, to integrate the gender component in the RA socio-economic development programs, to introduce tools for situation assessment and monitoring.”

The other important provisions of the Chapter on *Work and Social Policy*, which relate to “ensuring conditions for dignified exercise of the right to work”, do not make any reference to issues associated with women's employment. The creation of conditions for combining family and work responsibilities by women is not mentioned even within the context of the *Long-Term Strategy for Improvement of the RA Demographic Situation*, despite the fact that the Government views this approach as one of the prerequisites for ensuring the increase in child birth.

The program also envisions “to define the criteria for complex services provided to persons subjected to domestic violence and to expand the network of these services during 2018-2021...”

Women are also mentioned in the program's Chapter on *Defence*, where, to realize the Nation-Army Concept, the RA Government envisions ... “to ensure the participation of every citizen liable for military service in the defence of the Republic of Armenia by the Year 2020 through reinforcing the principle of justice in the conscription system and to expand the opportunities for women's participation in the military service, on a voluntary basis, viewing the military service as a favourable opportunity for education and professional development.”

The 2011-2015 Strategic Program on the RA Gender Policy adopted for the purpose of implementing **the Gender Policy Concept paper** endorsed by the RA Government back in 2010 has not continued after its completion. Among the six priorities of the

¹⁹ “Gender-Sensitive and Disaggregated Indicators” endorsed by the decision # 93/A-1 of the RA Minister of Labor and Social Issues (October 19, 2012).

²⁰ The RA Government's 2017-2022 program http://www.arlis.am/banners/HH_kar-cragir.pdf

2017-2021 *Policy to Ensure Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Armenia* developed a year ago, the noted first priority is “overcoming gender-based discrimination in the socio-economic area and expanding economic opportunities for women,” as a result of which, it is expected:

- To identify issues related to women’s and men’s equal rights and equal opportunities in the socio-economic area;
- To provide opportunities at the workplace for acquisition of working skills by young mothers who do not have a profession and cannot compete in the labour market to ensure their stable employment;
- To expand opportunities for persons on leave taking care of a child under the age of three to return to the labor market;
- To defend the work and employment rights of women with disabilities;
- To ensure the participation of beginner female entrepreneurs in programs supporting entrepreneurship;
- To overcome gender-based stereotypes among civil servants.

It should be noted that six of the 15 strategic objectives outlined in the socio-economic section of the preceding 2011-2015 program were one way or another concerned with improvement of the situation in the labor market, and the remaining objectives targeted to expand women’s entrepreneurship and gender mainstreaming of the area.

It is exactly within the framework of this program that the RA Government, over the past years, has been conducting annual competitions on *the Best Urban and Rural Community in terms of Implementation of the Gender Policy* and *the Best Woman-Entrepreneur* for the Prime Minister’s Prize.

At the same time, according to the evaluation report on the 2011-2015 program implementation²¹, the main goals and objectives in the socio-economic area envisaged by the program were not accompanied by output and outcome indicators necessary for evaluation of their performance, which renders the assessment of the level of the program implementation almost impossible. The reason for this lies partly in the shortcomings of the gender statistics. Although since 2008 the RA Statistical Service has been issuing the statistical booklet *Women and Men of Armenia*, according to the expert assessments, it does not include all the necessary data for a full analysis of the gender situation and needs improvement.

It is important to mention that over the past two years, due to the absence of a new strategic program and factual lack of a gender equality national mechanism²², certain regress has been recorded in the perception and implementation of gender policies.

²¹ The Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the 2011-2015 Strategic Program on Gender Policy and the 2011-2015 National Program against Gender-Based Violence, http://un.am/up/library/Assesement_2011-2015_Gender%20Policy_arm.pdf

²² In December of 2012, as suggested by the RA Government, the Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of Armenia was created adjunct to the RA Prime Minister and it is

Due to the absence of the national mechanism, the realization of gender policies is endangered in the republic, **gender commissions** created in all Ministries and all the marzes (provinces, territorial-administrative units) of the republic back in 2011 on the basis of the Government's decision are operating with low efficiency, the strategy of integration of the gender component in political activities is not fully carried out, and, therefore, the commitments made to *the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* and other documents and conventions are not being fully implemented in the country.

The focus-group discussions carried out within the framework of this research demonstrate that awareness of discrimination against women continues to remain a problem in the socio-economic area.

Meanwhile, certain provisions for elimination of discrimination against women in the labor market were already introduced in *the RA Law on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*²³ adopted back in 2013, which incorporates, to the maximum extent, a number of requirements stipulated in *the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. The law, specifically, confirms the concept "gender discrimination", regulates the problem of ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men in the areas of politics, public administration, work and employment, entrepreneurial activities, healthcare, and education, provides for the possibility and procedures for protection of citizens from gender-based discriminatory manifestations, as well as for liability for discriminatory actions. However, after going into effect, it collided with the discrediting "anti-gender" advocacy campaign²⁴ unfolded by conservative extremists, which impeded the implementation of this law. Due to the absence of informational explanatory activities among the public at large, part of the population perceived this misinformation about the adopted law as the truth.

That is to say, no proper and consistent efforts were exerted in the country to raise the awareness of the population, as well as of all levels of the executive power, of the representatives of the judicial power, leaders of political parties and non-governmental organizations and activists on the issues of discrimination against women and the necessity of achieving gender equality. The research shows that even stakeholders, which make use of the EU's *Generalized System of Preferences* (GSP+) are completely unaware of 27 international conventions operating within this context and Armenia's commitments within their framework, including those directly related to women's rights.²⁵

viewed as a national mechanism for gender equality. However, over the past year, this Council has not convened any session and is de facto not functional.

²³ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/94756/111303/F-402212553/HO-57-N.pdf>

²⁴ The initiators of the campaign against the law were trying to distort the terms "gender", "gender equality" used in the law, presenting it as propaganda for sex alteration and sexual perversion.

²⁵ *The Status of Women's Socio-Economic Labor Rights in Armenia*, the Republican Union of Employers of Armenia, Oxfam, 2017

Although *the RA Law²⁶ on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* stipulates legal and organizational means, as well as the necessity of applying temporary special measures for ensuring gender equality, no temporary special measures are used to increase the representation of women at decision-making levels of the executive power and local authorities and within the civil servant system. The state justifies this by market factors characteristic of the private sector and private organizations. The quota system is legislatively secured only for parliamentary elections and local elections in the capital city of Yerevan, and Gyumri and Vanadzor through the proportional electoral system. At the same time, public opinion polls²⁷ on women's quotas reveal that at least 65.9% of respondents are in favour of applying quotas in the business sector and in executive power positions important in terms of decision-making.

The programs implemented in the republic, which target to ensure employment opportunities for women, to expand women's entrepreneurship and financial crediting, are not sufficient for eliminating the vertical and horizontal gender segregation existing in the labor market, to mitigate the high level of unemployment among women, and to overcome the concentration of women in the informal sector and low-paid workplaces. In its *Concluding Observations²⁸ on the RA 5th and 6th periodic reports*, the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* expressed concerns about low representation of women in leadership positions and the existing gender wage gap. The Committee is also "concerned by the existence of a list of professions declared dangerous for women, which reinforces discriminatory stereotypes and occupational segregation." Moreover, the absence of legislation on sexual harassment and, for that reason, the absence of disaggregated data on sexual harassment in the workplace are also among the concerns of the Committee.

Although **the amendments to the RA Labor Code²⁹** undertaken by the RA Government, and, specifically, the Addendum envisaged by Article 1 on any form (nature) of forced labor and prohibition of violence against employees include also "actions or threat of an action aimed at physical and (or) psychological and (or) sexual immunity," this is not enough to implement the recommendations of the Committee. Specifically, the recommendation contained under Point 25 (e) of the Committee observations implies not only to "adopt legislation to define and prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace," but also to "include in the next periodic report data on the number of reported cases of sexual harassment, investigations, prosecutions and sentences imposed on perpetrators." This implies that the implementation of the proposed addendum should also be subjected to oversight in the future.

²⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/94756/111303/F-402212553/HO-57-N.pdf>

²⁷ The sociological survey *Men and the Problem of Gender Equality in Armenia*, UNFPA, 2016, <http://armenia.unfpa.org/hy/publication>

²⁸ Concluding Observations of the RA 5th and 6th periodic reports by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6&Lang=En

²⁹ <https://www.e-draft.am/projects/494>

In the meantime, the functions of the repealed Article 34 of the RA Labor Code (the state control and oversight over the implementation of the labor legislation and collective contracts) are, in essence, not performed by any body and there is a necessity of either restoring the Labor Inspectorate ensuring its efficiency through relevant functions that are in line with the requirements of *ILO Convention No. 81 on Labour Inspection* or creating a regulatory body, which will oversee the implementation of the labor legislation.

The issue of equal division of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men is also foregrounded and actualized within the context of the changes to the RA Labor Code. Men hardly make use of the provisions³⁰ stipulated in the RA effective Labor Code, which envisage a parental leave for fathers and the opportunity for young women's entry into the labor market. The proposed draft does not envision any additional measure for implementation of the recommendation of the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* under Point 25 (c), where the state is recommended to "create more opportunities for women to gain access to formal employment, including by promoting the equal sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between men and women, providing sufficient and adequate childcare facilities and strengthening incentives for men to exercise their right to parental leave."³¹

With the amendments to **the RA Law on Employment** adopted in December of 2017, the RA Government made the first step towards creating opportunities for women to combine family and work responsibilities. Specifically, the noted amendments to the law will be reflected in programs that will be implemented to organize the care of young children and to enhance the competitiveness of young mothers. The state is trying to create opportunities for women with children under the age of two to return to the labor market, offering to reimburse the mothers the pay for a baby-sitter of their child under two on the basis of the co-payment principle and in the amount of up to 55 thousand drams per month. However, details that surfaced during the presentation of the program reduced the initial enthusiasm for the idea of "a baby-sitter at the state's expense" since it came to light that in the initial stage the state was prepared to take care of a part of the pay for baby-sitters of 200 women, and, moreover, the mechanisms associated with realization of this extremely important idea are not specified yet. In addition, the working woman will pay more than the half of 55 thousand drams reimbursed by the state in the form of a tax, and thus, it is not unequivocal that the program will motivate the young woman receiving average salary to return to work since after paying the baby-sitter taxes she will be left with a very insignificant sum received from the compensation.

This is attested by the research³² data of the *National Institute of Labor and Social*

³⁰ Article 176 of the RA Labor Code <http://www.irtek.am/views/act.aspx?aid=150003>

³¹ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the RA 5th and 6th periodic reports CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/5-6&Lang=En

³² *Analysis of the Situation with Equal Rights and Availability of Equal Economic Resources for Women and Men in the Labor Market in the Republic of Armenia*, National Institute of Labor and Social Research SNCO, 2015

Research of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Issues, according to which, 40% of working women with children under three are working in the state sector, another 40% in the private sector, 19% in the NGO sector, and 1% in international organizations. The salary amounts of women with children under three years of age are as follows: 41% receive up to 66, 000 RA drams, 45% within the range of 60, 000 -120, 000 RA drams, 12% within the range of 120, 000-200, 000 RA drams and 2% within the range of 200, 000 – 400, 000 RA drams. Thus, the greater part of women receive salaries below the average. In addition, almost every fourth of women with children under three years of age (about 22%) are not registered workers. Formerly, 56% of women taking care of a child under three were working. The reasons for giving up jobs include: family circumstances (35%), low pay (35%), and work schedule (overtime work) (17%).

It is apparent that the income of mothers receiving salaries below the average will not suffice to hire a baby-sitter even with the state’s partial participation, and the availability of nurseries is more topical for women of this category. The latter issue is overlooked in the upcoming programs of the Government and communities, including those of the capital city.

All of the above noted issues were pointed out during focus group discussions and expert interviews.

2 POLICY LANDSCAPE

2.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The principle of equality between sexes is enshrined in the Armenian Constitution and is reflected in the national legislation. In the amendments made to the Armenian Constitution in 2005 that principle was formulated as a ban on discrimination on a number of grounds, including on the grounds of sex, while in 2015 a special article on equality between sexes was included. However, the de jure equality does not necessarily translate into the de facto gender equality. Therefore, the need for a special gender policy remains acute. Formulation of a gender policy in Armenia goes back to the late 1990s and is due to a combination of factors, first of all three world conferences³³ and prospects of European integration.

The Armenian Government has been taking certain steps to harmonize national policies with the gender equality principle and with international requirements in that field.

Table 3: Ratifications of international conventions and treaties on Women Labor Rights

CONVENTION/ TREATY	RATIFICATION
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948	1992

³³ Vienna Conference on Human rights (1993), Cairo Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) particularly stressed the importance of gender equality and relevant policies to achieve it.

CONVENTION/ TREATY	RATIFICATION
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966/1976	1993
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ,1979	1993
ILO C29 Forced Labour Convention, 1930	2004
ILO C81 Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	2004
ILO C97 Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949	2007
ILO C100 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value	1995
ILO C111 Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1995
ILO C122 Employment Policy Convention, 1964	1995
ILO C131 Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970	2006
ILO C132 Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970	2005
ILO C160 Labour Statistics Convention, 1985	2006
ILO C182 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2006
The Beijing Platform for Action, 1995	1995
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015	2016
European Social Charter (Revised) 1996	2004

Table 4: National Laws and regulations related to Women Labor Rights

RELATED LEGISLATION	KEY PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS // HIDDEN AGENDAS BEHIND THE LEGISLATION
<u>The RA Constitution 2015</u>	<p>Article 30. Equality of Rights Between Women and Men Women and men shall have equal rights.</p> <p>Article 86. The Main Objectives of State Policy The main objectives of state policy in the economic, social, and cultural spheres shall be ...: 4) To promote factual equality between women and men.</p>
<u>The RA Labor Code 2004</u>	<p>Article 98. Employment contract with home-based workers <i>COMMENT: This field is not regulated; if regulated, it could create the opportunity for combining professional and family duties.</i></p> <p>Article 114. Prohibition on rescission of employment contract</p>

	<p>upon the initiative of employer</p> <p><i>COMMENT: Employers bypass this prohibition dismissing employees from work on other grounds and justifications. There is no body besides the Court where women or persons taking care of a child can apply to restore their rights.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Article 132. General requirements for processing of personal data of employee and guarantees for protection thereof.</p> <p><i>COMMENT: When interviewing young women for employment, they are asked about their family status and conditions, about the existence of children or possible pregnancy, although it is prohibited by this legal article.</i></p> <p>Article 141. Incomplete working time.</p> <p>3) upon request of a pregnant woman or an employee taking care of a child under the age of one.</p> <p><i>COMMENT: Although this provision is unwillingly accepted by employers, this right of the employee can be exercised if appropriate claims are raised.</i></p> <p>Article 142. Working time regime</p> <p>5. The employee raising a minor under the age of fourteen without a husband (wife) shall have the right of priority to choose a shift where the employer has such an opportunity.</p> <p><i>COMMENT: Child raising parents might not exercise this right due to high levels of unemployment in the republic. A focus group with participation of employers has demonstrated that any privilege which is granted to women of reproductive age is accepted with difficulty and lack of willingness even by organizations with a healthy corporate culture.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Article 144. Restrictions on overtime work.</p> <p>4. Pregnant women and employees taking care of a child under the age of one may be engaged in overtime work only upon their consent.</p> <p>Article 148. Night work</p> <p>Article 155. Weekly uninterrupted rest</p> <p>Article 156. Non-working holidays and commemoration days</p> <p>Pregnant women, employees taking care of a child under the age of one may be engaged in work on non-working holidays and commemoration days only upon their consent.</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The above noted articles envision good opportunities for pregnant women and women having young children, however, there is no available official statistics on violations of these provisions. In some cases, these privileges are viewed by employers as a “basis” for not hiring women of reproductive age.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Article 164. Procedure for granting annual leave</p> <p>Article 171. Types of special purpose leave</p> <p>Article 172. Pregnancy and maternity leave</p> <p><i>COMMENT: Since the main burden of paying for pregnancy and maternity leave is carried by the state, employers do not bear any</i></p>
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	<p><i>financial losses in connection with that; however, they note that they have cadre losses, including in terms of training time for and investments in new cadre, due to which when having to select between young male and female employees, they prefer male candidates.</i></p> <p>Article 173. Leave granted for taking care of a child under the age of three</p> <p><i>COMMENT: In practice, only singular cases have been recorded in the republic of fathers requesting a leave for taking care of their child.</i></p> <p>Article 176. Unpaid leave</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The article provides an opportunity to fathers too to use the stipulated unpaid leave (two months) for taking care of a child, however, experts have made some suggestions to make this leave paid to encourage fathers to make use of it and to ensure the entry of young mothers into the labor market.</i></p> <p>Article 178. Salary</p> <p><i>COMMENT: In reality, the provision of equal remuneration for equal work can be bypassed by employers through labeling differently the same type of work, in which case there can be differences in salary levels; for example, using the option of assistant/secretary.</i></p> <p>Article 251. Sanitary-hygienic rooms of the organization</p> <p>1. In accordance with the procedure prescribed by regulatory legal acts on ensuring the safety and healthcare of employees within the organization, sanitary and personal hygiene rooms or corresponding separated places (sinks, showers, bathrooms) shall be furnished for rest, dressing and keeping clothes, shoes and observing individual safety measures.</p> <p><i>COMMENT: In reality, this provision is not upheld, though it is a very welcome one.</i></p> <p>Article 258. Protection of motherhood</p> <p>1. Engaging pregnant women or women taking care of a child under the age of one in heavy, harmful, especially heavy and especially harmful works established by the legislation of the Republic of Armenia shall be prohibited.</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The list of harmful works is in the process of review. According to the CEDAW approaches, any prohibition is regarded as discrimination.</i></p>
<p>The RA Employment Law 2013</p>	<p>Article 22. Determination of Competitiveness in the Labor Market</p> <p>5) place of residence (borderline, mountainous, high mountainous, urban, rural);</p> <p>10) the fact of taking care of a child under the age of three.</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The recent changes made to the law aim to introduce new employment state programs targeting to increase the competitiveness of young mothers in the labor market, including support for professional training of young mothers that are not competitive in the labor market and lack professional skills and organization of child care concurrently with work.</i></p>
<p>The RA Law on Provision of</p>	<p><i>COMMENT: Upon its adoption, the law was unjustifiably</i></p>

<p>Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2013</p>	<p><i>discredited by the “anti-gender” movement, which has complicated the implementation of the law in almost all directions.</i></p> <p>Article 6 Prohibition of Gender Discrimination</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of marital status, pregnancy and household duties, different remuneration for the same or equivalent work, any change in work remuneration (increase or decrease) or deterioration of working conditions on the basis of sex, as well as sexual harassment and sexism.</i></p> <p>Article 13 Gender Equality Guarantees in Public Service</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The article stipulates that in case of violations women can pursue the protection of their rights only through judicial procedure, i.e. it attest to and documents the fact that there are no extrajudicial means for protecting the employee rights.</i></p> <p>Article 18 Gender Expertise of Regulatory Legal Acts</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The article requirement is hardly applicable in the condition of the absence of a National Gender Equality mechanism.</i></p>
<p>The RA Law on State Benefits 2013</p>	<p>Article 23. Right to Maternity Benefit Article 27. Entitlement to the Benefit for Taking Care of a Child under the Age of Two</p> <p><i>COMMENT: The compensation provided by the state for child care, the so called “child benefit” is granted only to a working parent and its amount of 18, 000 drams does not cover even the necessary minimum of costs associated with child care. It should also be noted that in practice fathers do not apply to receive this benefit.</i></p>
<p>The RA Law on State Pensions 2010</p>	<p>Article 46 Data Included in the Database The database includes: h) the amounts of the paid benefits for maternity and temporary work incapacitation, and the day, month, and year of payment of these sums.</p> <p>Article 31 Time Periods Included in the Military Service Record and Peculiarities of Their Calculation b) the service period of military service women in special divisions in accordance with the list of positions defined by relevant bodies.</p>
<p>The RA Law on Temporary Incapacitation and Maternity Benefits 2010</p>	<p><i>COMMENT:</i> <i>The recent changes have introduced “maternity benefit”, which is granted to also non-working mothers during the prenatal and postnatal periods; at the same time the 100% compensation of the maternity benefit given to hired employees have been limited for women having income of more than one million drams.</i></p>
<p>The RA Law on Civil Service, 2001</p>	<p>Article 11. Persons Having the Right to Hold a Civil Service Position</p> <p><i>COMMENT: In reality, the number of women occupying top civil service positions does not exceed 14%.</i></p>
<p>The RA Law on Remuneration of Civil Servants, 2002</p>	<p>Article 5. The Main Principles for Remuneration of Civil Servants</p>
<p>The RA Law on Remuneration of</p>	<p>Article 4. The Main Principles for Remuneration of Persons</p>

Persons Occupying State Positions, 2013	Holding State Positions <i>COMMENT: Discrimination manifests itself in the existence of a gender pyramid, which is visible in the data of the RA Statistical Service.</i>
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2.2 RELATED GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Table 5: Policies related to Women Labor Rights in Armenia

Policy	Description
Gender Policy Concept Paper 2010 ³⁴	<p>Gender Policy Concept paper served as a basis for development of legislation targeting gender equality. It introduced those conceptual provisions, which were necessary for legislative design of gender equality in all areas of public life. It envisaged carrying out gender expertise of the legislation regulating work relations and developing and applying the principle of equal remuneration for equal and equivalent work/equal remuneration for equal work is stipulated by laws. However, up to date, no work has been done to determine the value of work and, as a consequence, men’s work areas are higher paid than those of women/. The Conceptual Framework envisioned ruling out sex-based discrimination. It envisioned to strengthen the state’s oversight in this direction and to provide punishment for discrimination. It was envisioned to carry out an assessment of conditions of harmful and hazardous work, to take into account the necessity of developing women-dominant and women-staffed employment areas when working out state economic policies, and to increase remuneration for work in these areas.</p> <p>It also envisaged development of legislative acts, which will stimulate employers to hire people with family responsibilities, including through introduction of an incomplete work day, flexible work schedules or home-based work.</p> <p>The Conceptual Framework envisaged promotion of small and family business development programs through teaching women the basics of entrepreneurship, introduction of a system of preferential loans, development of criteria for evaluation of working conditions and recreational time in organizations of all kinds of ownership, as well as creation of conditions for professional retraining and qualifications advancement of women engaged in child care upon their return to the labor market after pregnancy. The Conceptual Framework also provided for refinement of area-relevant gender statistics.</p>
2017-2021 DRAFT Policy to Ensure Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Armenia	<p>The policy developed a year ago a first priority noted “overcoming gender-based discrimination in the socio-economic area and expanding economic opportunities for women”. Unfortunately it is still as a draft version.</p>

³⁴ RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper (2010) http://www.gov.am/u_files/file/kananc-xorh/Gender-hayecakarg.pdf

3 IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS

3.1 ENFORCEMENT FRAMEWORK

Table 6: Agencies Responsible for Implementation

Organization/ Agency	Role
Government of the Republic of Armenia Social Affairs Department	The areas of the department' s work include social protection and assistance, employment, salary and pension, as well as gender equalit and territorial development issues
RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA)	The Republic of Armenia Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is a republican body of executive authority, which elaborates and implements the policies of the Republic of Armenia Government in the labor and social security sectors.
MLSA Department on Labor and Employment	The department is responsible for the development and implementation of the policies and programs of the Republic of Armenia in the labor and employment areas
MLSA Department on Family, Children and Women issues	The department is responsible for the development and implementation of the policies and programs of the Republic of Armenia connected to families children and women.
State Employment Agency	State Employment Agency provides employment-related services in the field of public employment regulation functions, national and regional programs for employment.
First Instance Courts of General Jurisdiction	All criminal and civil cases, are under the jurisdiction of the Court of General Jurisdiction. The Court exercises supervision towards pre-trial proceedings (as well as solves the issues related to choosing the detention as a precautionary measure, permitting the search in the apartment), as well as it examines other cases on merits stipulated by the Criminal Procedure Legislation.
RA Human Rights Defender Department for Protection of Civil, Social-Economical and Cultural Rights	The department for the protection of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia ensures the proper and effective implementation of the powers of the Human Rights Defender in the sphere of protection of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights, provides legal advice to citizens on their rights and freedoms, as well as on the legal measures and procedures for the effective protection of those rights and freedoms, ensures the procedure of studying and handling the complaints on the violations of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights, organizes visits to places where there are alleged or factual violations of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights and freedoms.
State Healthcare Inspectorate of the RA Health Ministry Staff	Due to the interruption of the activities of the Labor Inspectorate (2013), most of the functions of this structure were transferred to the jurisdiction of the State Healthcare Inspectorate; however, in August 2017, the Inspectorate was dissolved and the State Health Inspectorate of the RA Health Ministry was created, as a result of which the inspectorate should deal only with problems related to healthcare and safety. In essence, this means that the functions of the

	Labor Inspectorate have not been transferred to any other body and the rights of women/as well as those of men/ working in the conditions of weak trade unions and formidable unemployment levels are not protected. The practice of appealing to courts is very limited and costly.
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Comment:

State Labor Inspectorate³⁵

The recent situation with the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI) of the Republic of Armenia have shaped a new situation and introduced new challenges for realization of women labor rights.

The changes began by the RA Government decree 857-N³⁶ dated 25 July, 2013 based on which the State Hygienic and Anti-Epidemic Inspectorate of the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia and the State Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia were reorganized, by being merged into the State Health Inspectorate (hereinafter referred to as Inspectorate) of the Staff of the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia.

During the next stage of inspection reforms, amendments and supplements were made in the above mentioned RA Government decree, and a number of important powers entrusted to the Inspectorate were reduced based on the RA Government decree N 572-N³⁷ dated 4 June, 2015.

Subsequently, the Health Inspection Body (Inspection Body) of the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Armenia was formed and its charter (hereinafter - Charter) and structure were approved based on the RA Government decree N 444-N³⁸ dated 27 April, 2017. As a result of the above mentioned, and other related legislative and sub-legislative amendments, there is no longer a **separate** state body exercising state control and supervision over the requirements of the labour legislation, other normative legal acts containing norms of the labour code and normative provisions of collective agreements. The functions of the labour inspection system (LIS) are significantly

³⁵ Extract from ILO report 2017

³⁶ RA Government decree 857-N dated 25 July, 2013 “On introducing amendments and supplements to RA Government decree No. 1300-N as of 15 August, 2002, introducing amendments to RA Government decree No. 1821-N dated 14 November, 2002, introducing amendments to RA Government decree No. 1319-N dated 30 September, 2010 and invalidating decree No. 1446-N dated 29 July, 2004, decree No. 1893-N dated 6 October, 2005, decree No.1724-N dated 25 November, 2004 and decree No. 1316-N dated 15 August, 2002”, <http://goo.gl/BNkWrJ>

³⁷ RA Government decree 572-N dated 4 June, 2015 “On making amendments in RA Government decree N857-N dated 25 July, 2013” <https://goo.gl/6ReA9f>

³⁸ RA Government decree 444-N dated 27 April, 2017 “On establishment of Health Inspection of Ministry of Healthcare of the RA, approval of the charter and structure of Health Inspection of Ministry of Healthcare of the RA, on making amendments and supplements to RA Government decree N1300-N dated 15 August, 2002, making amendments in RA Government decree N857-N dated 25 July, 2013 and invalidating decree N1293-A dated 14 november, 2013”, <https://goo.gl/N6GUUP>

reduced, which entails concerns among the stakeholders in terms of protection of employees and ensuring guarantees stipulated by law.

In general terms, since the first stage of amendments in 2013, inspections on labour issues have been suspended until now (December 2017). ***Therefore, the state no longer has any inspection obligation³⁹ for the prevention and remediation of violations of the Labour code and other legal acts containing labour right norms and for the control over enforcement of relevant requirements.***

The restoration of the Labor Inspectorate is topical within the context of other changes envisaged by the RA Labor Code. Specifically, the idea of shifting to contractual relations between the employer and the employee, which lies at the basis of the changes, works only in case of real equality of work partners and on the basis of mutual benefit. In Armenia, in the conditions of apparent inequality, when employees, confronting the threat of losing their jobs, are ready to work even under humiliating conditions, there are certain risks from the perspective of creating grounds for the worker overexploitation and exerting of additional pressure by the employer.

The inequality between work partners is most striking in case of women, especially, when the employee is a woman with children, who needs to combine performance of professional duties with motherhood. At present the existing system of labor rights protection in the republic does not allow to fully defend the worker's interests in an extrajudicial manner. In these conditions a Labor Inspectorate can be the best solution.

The necessity of a regulatory body carrying out oversight over the implementation of the labor legislation also stems from a number of other recommendations in the area of *Employment and Economic Empowerment* of the Concluding Observations of the *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* on the RA combined 5th and 6th periodic reports under Point 25, including Points (a) and (g), i.e:

“a) Apply the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, as well as gender-neutral analytical job classification, evaluation methods and regular pay surveys, in line with the Committee's previous recommendations”

“g) Develop a confidential and safe system for filing complaints relating to gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and ensure that victims have effective access to such means of redress.”⁴⁰

RA Human Rights Defender's Department for Protection of Civil, Social-Economic and Cultural Rights

In the situation of non existence of the State labor inspectorate the RA Human Rights Defender's office with its department on Protection of Soci-Economic rights becomes

³⁹ With some above mentioned exceptions in terms of separate groups of employees (children, pregnant women, child care-givers).

the only structure available for citizens and responsible to examine and solve the issues of violation of human rights.

3.2 RELATED PROGRAMMES AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Table 7: Programs and Projects to ensure women labor rights

Government's Program and Projects	Description
National Plan for the Improvement of Women's Status and Enhancement of Their Role in the Society for the Period 1998-2000 in the Republic of Armenia	The First National action plan on women issues adopted after independence.
National Action Plan on Improving the Status of Women and Enhancing Their Role in the Society for the Period 2004-2010.	The National Action Plan laid out the principles, priorities and main directions of the Republic of Armenia's State policy carried out to solve problems faced by women. It is unfortunate that during their implementation those two plans experienced problems related to inadequate Government funding, as a result of which the first plan was suspended, while the second one was implemented incompletely.
Action Plan for 2008-2012	In its Action Plan for 2008-2012 ⁴¹ the Armenian Government recognized gender equality as an equal enjoyment of rights and opportunities by men and women in economic, social and political life and as a policy direction. The Action Plan recognized also the necessity of safeguarding equal conditions and equal opportunities for men and women to use their potential, of ensuring equal participation of men and women in all aspects of public life in order to foster the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the country, of eliminating discrimination on the grounds of sex and achieving equality for men and women and ensuring equal treatment of and equal attitude toward both sexes.
Republic of Armenia Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 ⁴²	The action plans aimed to secure gender equality in power and decision-making, socioeconomic, education, health, and culture and public information sectors as well as to prevent gender-based violence and human trafficking. As the monitoring of the implementation of the action plans demonstrated while certain progress has been made in achieving
National Action Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence for 2011-2015	the goal and objectives set forth in the action plans, there are still significant problems remaining in the area of gender equality ⁴³ .

⁴⁰ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the RA 3rd and 4th periodic reports (CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/4/Rev.1, para.33)

⁴¹ *Republic of Armenia Action Plan for 2008-2012*. Annex to the RoA Government Decree N380-A of 28 April 2008 (ՀՀ Կառավարության ծրագիր, Հավելված ՀՀ կառավարության 2008 թվականի ապրիլի 28-ի N 380-Ա որոշման) pp.43-44

⁴² http://www.un.am/res/Gender%20TG%20docs/national/2011-2015_Gender%20Policy_NAP-Eng.pdf

⁴³ *Assessment of the Implementation of 2011-2015 Gender Policy Strategic Plan and 2011-2015 National Action Plan to Combat Gender-based Violence*. Yerevan: UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, 2015 (in Armenian).

http://un.am/up/library/Assesment_2011-2015_Gender%20Policy_arm.pdf

Republic of Armenia Government's program 2017-2022	The program includes chapter on <i>Work and Social Policy</i> , special provisions to the creation of conditions for combining family and work responsibilities by women as well as "to define the criteria for complex services provided to persons subjected to domestic violence and to expand the network of these services during 2018-2021..."
Donor Programmes and projects	
Since 2008 ILO in cooperation with RUEA implemented the following issues elated programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decent Work Country Program • Strengthening the role of RUEA in tripartite social dialogue • Towards a national strategic plan for youth employment in Armenia • Women Entrepreneurship Development (WED) Assessment in Armenia • Occupation Safety and Health (OSH) (including HIV/AIDS) • Strengthening of the Role of Private Employment Agencies • Work Improvement in Small Enterprises (WISE) • Reduction of Forced Labour and Trafficking
ILO Research	Labour market transitions of young women and men in Armenia, 2014
EU Armenian Young Women's Association	EU delegation to Armenia and partnership with Armenian Young Women's Association (AYWA) in 2013-2016 implemented "Social and Economic Empowerment of Women in Armenia" Project in Lori region in 2013-16. The goal of the project was to promote the development of social and economic capacities of women in Lori region for the improvement of the social and economic situation of women. The project was funded by the European Union.
USAID/Save the Children	Livelihood Improvement through Fostered Employment for People with Disabilities (LIFE) Program was implemented in 2012-2016 in partnership with Activa International Foundation, Unison NGO, Human Dignity and Peace (HDP) Foundation, and Full Life NGO. The program's strategic objective was to establish an effective model for provision of employment services to PWDs in Armenia through: 1) Personal development of PWDs through assessments, skill enhancement and job placement; 2) Capacity building of service providers, DPOs, public/private employers, and TVET institutions to meet the needs of PWDs; 3) Use of mass media, internet and conferences to increase public awareness and outreach to PWDs; and 4) External technical support to the GOA in developing, implementing and monitoring employment services for PWDs and related strategies and policies.
Asian Development Bank	The Asian Development Bank within the scope of its operations In Armenia supported the implementation of the following research and study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Informal Sector and Informal Employment in Armenia (2011) - Gender Statistics in the Southern Caucasus and Central and West Asia: A Situational Analysis (2012) - Armenia: Country Gender Assessment(2015)

OxYGen/ Oxfam	<p>The following issue related project were implemented by OXFAM and OxYGen organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project "Equal: from Economic Empowerment to Political Participation", 2016 • Public information (PI) campaign «Equal», OxYGen in cooperation ProMedia-Gender NGO and "Family Academy" NGO , 2016-2017 • Project "Improvement of Regional Food security in South Caucasus through National Strategies and Small Productions", 2012-2016 • Project on "Improving Small Holder Farming through Agricultural Cooperatives and Value Chain Development in Tavush Marz, Armenia" • Research on "The Economic Activity of Men and Women in Armenia, Oxfam and YSU Center for Gender and Leadership Studies, 2016
Informal Initiatives	
Pro Media Gender	<p>The following issue related projects were implemented by ProMedia-Gender NGO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research on "The role and potential of women in agricultural value chain", ProMedia-Gender NGO in cooperation with BSC. Baseline study by support Oxfam-Armenia, 2012 - Gender Mainstreaming of 2012-2015 RA TavushMarz Socio-Economic Development Program, ProMedia-Gender NGO by support Oxfam-Armenia, 2013 - Gender Mainstreaming of RA Rural and Agricultural Sustainable Development Strategy for 2015-2025, ProMedia-Gender NGO by support Oxfam-Armenia , December 2015 - Policy Brief on Improving Gender Mainstreaming of Agricultural Area Development Strategies. ProMedia-Gender NGO by support Oxfam-Armenia , July 2014 - The Guide to Gender Analysis and Mainstreaming Gender into Socio-Economic Development Programs, ProMedia-Gender NGO by support Oxfam-Armenia , 2015 - Public information (PI) campaign "THE FEMALE ECONOMY"on the website WomenNet.am
Area related research and analysis	<p>Bibliography of Studies and Surveys focusing on Gender and/or Women's Issues or that have a Gender component ARMENIA, UNFPA 2015 http://www.un.am/up/file/Studies%20and%20Surveys%20focusing%20on%20Gender%20Issues%202015_FINAL.pdf</p>

4 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Table 8: Key Stakeholders

Name	Description
1. Government Institutions	
Government of the Republic of Armenia Social Affairs Department	The areas of the department's work include social protection and assistance, employment, salary and pension, as well as gender equalit and territorial development issues
Inspection Reforms Team	The Government of the Republic of Armenia has initiated inspection system reforms, approving government decree № 1135 on the inspection reform program from September 17, 2009. The reforms are coordinated by the Inspection reform secretariat headed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. The main goal of the inspection reforms in Armenia is transaction to a risk-based inspection system to perform business inspection, regulation of the existing gaps in the inspection system, creation of transparent inspection system, reduction of inspection process overlaps, prevention of corruption in the inspection sphere. Inspection reform activities are carried out by the secretariat of the inspection reforms team.
RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA)	The Republic of Armenia Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is a republican body of executive authority, which elaborates and implements the policies of the Republic of Armenia Government in the labor and social security sectors.
State Employment Agency	«State Employment Agency provides employment-related services in the field of public employment regulation functions, national and regional programs for employment.
MLSA National Institute of Labour and Social Research	MLSA National Institute of Labour and Social Research is the state non profit organization aimed to conduct issue related research and study as well as vocational education of the specialists in the area
National Statistical Service of Armenia	The National Statistical Service of Armenia is a republican body of executive authority, with the mission: to collect, publish and disseminate official statistics for public use.
RA Human Rights Defender Department for Protection of Civil, Social-Economical and Cultural Rights	The department for the protection of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights of the Human Rights Defender of the Republic of Armenia ensures the proper and effective implementation of the powers of the Human Rights Defender in the sphere of protection of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights, provides legal advice to citizens on their rights and freedoms, as well as on the legal measures and procedures for the effective protection of those rights and freedoms, ensures the procedure of studying and handling the complaints on the violations of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights, organizes visits to places where there are alleged or factual violations of civil, socio-economic and cultural rights and freedoms.
2. Regional/ Province Structures	

Departments on Protection of Women and children's rights within the province authorities	These departments are responsible for the implementation of the policies and programs of the Republic of Armenia connected to women and children and women as well as protections of Women's rights
3. Private Sector	
N/A	
3. Political Organizations	
"Armenian Revolutionary Federation" Party	All this parties are in the Natioanl assembly and expressed its rediness to cooperate with the project to kintroduce necessary changed for OWmen lar rights protection
Way out parties alliance	
"Prosperous Armenia" Party	
"Republican Party of Armenia" party	
Erkir tsirani party	This party as well as above mentioned two parties: Way out parties alliance and "Republican Party of Armenia" are participating in the Yerevan City Council(Yerevani Avagani)
4. Civil Society	
Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia (CTUA)	The objectives of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia are the development of the social partnership, Representation and Protection of Labour Rights and Interests of Workers, as well as Healthy and safe work conditions. CTUA protects the decent work conception proposed by the International Labour Organization which comes to be the basic idea of social, economic and ecological development of the countries.
Republican Union of Employers	Republic Union of Employers of Armenia is a self financing, self-governing, non-profit organization with the mission to be a powerful and influential structure assuring improvement of business environment and advocacy of business community.
OxYGen	OxYGen is an independent advocacy and development foundation driven by its vision of an Armenia free of poverty and suffering, in which women and men can exercise their rights and influence decisions that affect their lives.
Pro-Media Gender	ProMedia-Gender is an independent think tank, with the mission of promotion and popularization of ideas of gender equality and protection of rights and interests of women. Promedia-Gender" is well known by its "Woman and Politics" newspaper insert and WomenNet.am informational-analytical portal http://womennet.am
"Youth Cooperation Center of Dilijan" NGO	The main target group of our NGO is the young men and women aged between 13 and 30, who are living in the rural communities of Armenia, especially in the Northern regions (Tavush, Lori and Shirak) and have different educational, social, family and professional background. The main activities of the YCCD NGO include the spheres of Non formal education, Civic Participation and gender Equality
Community Mobilization and Support Center NGO	The main aims of the organization is to promote the development of civil society organizations, to support participatory management processes and balanced socio-economic development.
Gyumri "Youth Initiative Centre" NGO	Youth Initiative Centre iNGO's Mission is to assist in the development of the civic activism of the youth through promoting youth initiatives and active participation.

Armenian Progressive Youth NGO	APY is aiming to support, inspire and engage young people from Armenia and all over the world to develop their social leadership skills, to take their civic responsibility and to act as change-makers. Through different projects, initiatives and non-formal education tools we help young people to succeed, ensuring that they develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and competences to fit to the modern world .
Armenian Young Women Association	AYWA's missions to lead social change and to achieve equality of opportunity and reward for all Armenian women, is an integral element in transforming into a just and productive society for all. The overall goal of organization is to strengthen the role of young women in all aspects of Armenian society. The activity of “Armenian Young Women’s Association” is particularly directed to young women, and concentrates on their problems both in Yerevan and in the regions of the Republic of Armenia.
Women’s Forum NGO	The main goals of the organization are following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support women in entrepreneurship and leadership • Enhance the creation of necessary favorable conditions for the promotion of women in social, business and professional fields • Advocate for women's rights' in different spheres of social and civil development.
The Non-Discrimination and Equality Coalition (NDEC)	NDEC unites organizations and individuals aiming to contribute to the realization and protection of human rights and to promote respect for equality and human dignity in Armenia. The coalition aims at streamlining the efforts of NGOs having expertise and experience in different areas of discrimination towards develop of a comprehensive and effective approach to combat systemic discrimination. The goal of the Coalition is to reduce manifestation of discrimination in policies, laws, societal norms, and practices by advocating for adoption and enforcement of an effective anti-discrimination legislation, by challenging the dominant discourse of inequality, exclusion and institutionalized discriminatory practices, as well as by empowering the groups subject to discrimination.
Disability Info NGO	“Disability Info” is an information NGO with the mission to contribute to inclusion of people with disabilities in the Republic of Armenia. NGO is implementing actions to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities to search for, receive and share information by preferable and accessible resources.
Yerevan State University Center for Gender and Leadership Studies	The main goal of the Center is to promote gender equality and leadership in the Armenian society. YSU Center for Gender and Leadership Studies provides comprehensive research, training, and outreach functions engaging Armenian higher education institutions, local NGOs and international agencies in training women for career promotion and professional leadership.
Helsinki Citizens’ Assembly Vanadzor Office	HCA Vanadzor is a non-political, non-religious, non-profit, NGO, which unites individuals who support the supreme principles of Democracy, Tolerance, Pluralism, and Human Rights, as values. The Vision of HCA Vanadzor is a society formed with the supreme values of Human Dignity, Democracy and Peace. The Mission of HCA Vanadzor is the promotion and support of Civil Initiatives, the strengthening of Human Rights Protection, and Peacebuilding Activities on national and

	regional levels.
Armenian Lawyers' Association (ALA) NGO	<p>The "Armenian Lawyers' Association" (ALA) NGO was founded in 1995, by a group of students from the faculty of law at Yerevan State University with other young lawyers.</p> <p>The organization was established having the aim of coordinating the efforts of its members and supporters, as well as of the new generation of lawyers, to promote the establishment of Armenia as a sovereign, democratic, legal and social state. After its establishment, ALA rapidly started to realize its goals and objectives and actively got involved in the public life of Armenia. The association initially implemented activities aimed at clarification of Armenian law, as well as carrying out advocacy activities. The organization realized several projects aimed at the establishment of the legal field, which would then regulate the NGO sector. It also provided legal assistance to NGOs. Later ALA implemented projects to support socially vulnerable groups by providing free legal services and further protecting their rights and interests.</p>
5. Other Key- stakeholders	
ILO	<p>The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a UN specialized agency which seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights. The ILO has four principle strategic objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; - To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment; - To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all; - To strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.
Eurasia Partnership Foundation	<p>Eurasia Partnership Foundation's (EPF) mission is to empower people to effect change for social justice and economic prosperity through hands-on programs, helping them to improve their communities and their own lives.</p> <p>EPF is implementing a broad portfolio of programs. In the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights and Democracy • Anti-Corruption and Conflict of Interest • European approximation • Peace-building and Conflict Transformation • Civil Society capacity building and Youth • Empowerment
Open Society Foundations – Armenia	<p>The Open Society Foundations – Armenia was established in 1997 to assist democratic transformations and promote the values of an open society, the one characterized by rule of law, democratically elected government, respect for minorities and their rights, vigorous civil society. Towards this end, the OSF – Armenia has been supporting numerous projects and activities in the field of civil society, law, education, mass media, information, including publishing, electronic communication, support for libraries, public health, women's rights, arts and culture. Like all other Soros foundation throughout the world, the OSF – Armenia seeks to collaborate</p>

	and partner with other international organizations, local NGOs and governmental structures in implementation of its projects in order to ensure the efficiency and consistence of its operations.
GSP+ monitoring commission	The reformed GSP Regulation requires enhanced monitoring of the GSP+ beneficiaries' compliance with their commitments made when entering the arrangement. Once a country is granted GSP+ benefits, the Commission monitors that it abides by its undertaking, namely to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain ratification of the international conventions covered by the GSP+ arrangement; • ensure their effective implementation; • comply with reporting requirements of the monitoring bodies; • accept regular monitoring and review of its implementation record in accordance with the conventions; • cooperate with the Commission in its monitoring role and provide all necessary information.
Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)	In the South Caucasus, the FES: Builds and maintains a network of partners and key individuals in all branches of government, academia, think tanks, NGOs, trade unions, international organizations and the media. Develops, implements and supports a wide range of projects in its three priority areas in cooperation with local and international partners. Observes and analyses political developments in all three countries for its vast network of local, German and European experts as well as politicians and partners and the interested public.
Transparency International Anti Corruption Center	TIAC mission is to promote good governance in Armenia through reducing corruption and strengthening democracy. The Goals are” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to support effective anti-corruption policy and transparent and accountable governance; - to support holding of free, fair and transparent elections and the establishment of electoral institute; - to promote reasonable, transparent and accountable public resource management, including the management of state and community property and financial resources; - to foster democratic processes, including protection of human rights and public participation in the governance processes of the country.
AGBU	The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) is the world’s largest non-profit organization devoted to upholding the Armenian heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs. Through the vision of its leaders and the generous support of devoted donors and members over the years, AGBU has played a significant role in upholding Armenian traditions and values by adapting to the needs of the worldwide community and the demands of the times.
KASA/ Swiss Humanitarian Foundation	KASA supports Armenians who aim for the sustainable development of their country by engaging democratically in the economic, social and cultural life of Armenia. KASA invests in 5 sectors: humanitarian, training, tourism, agriculture, construction.
Asian Development Bank	The overarching goal of ADB's country partnership strategy, 2014–2018 for Armenia is to help integrate its economy into the region, and to rebalance it toward more resilient, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable growth. Efforts to realize these goals include improving domestic and cross-border transport links, upgrading secondary towns based on integrated urban development plans, and improving the

country's energy security.

4.2 COORDINATORY MECHANISMS

Table 9 Mechanisms to coordinate government efforts on Labor Rights and Gender Equality

Coordinating body	Role/description
The Tripartite Commission	The Tripartite Commission comprised with the representatives of the RA Government, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia and the Republican Union of Employers has been established for the enforcement of the agreement chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the RA. According to the republican collective agreement ⁴⁴ among the RA Government, the, the parties ensure settlement and sustainable development of the social-labour relations within their social partnership to be accompanied by increased employment level and strengthened social solidarity. The agreement envisages partnership in regard with occupational safety and health, protection of wages and employees' welfare, labour market and employment, gender equality, social insurance and social protection, etc.
Council on Affairs of Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities between Men and Women in the Republic of Armenia	The Council has the task of coordinating any such processes as may be related to the implementation of strategic and short-term programs dealing with gender equality, as well as sex-based discrimination and violence-related issues in the Republic of Armenia in all fields of public policy and at all levels of public governance. The Council is composed of the most prominent figures representing the executive, legislative and judicial authorities. Secretariat activities are coordinated by the Government Staff's Department of Social Affairs.
Inspection Reforms Team	The Government of the Republic of Armenia has initiated inspection system reforms, since 2009. The main drivers of the change is the Inspection Reforms Team, who are implementing the reform. Although the inspection reforms were basically aimed at strengthening the function of occupational safety and health, absence or imperfection of relevant legal norms questions effective implementation of the mentioned objective. As a result of the RA Government decree 857-N dated 25 July, 2013 there is no longer a separate state body exercising state control and supervision over the requirements of the labour legislation, other normative legal acts containing norms of the labour code and normative provisions of collective agreements.
Gender Commissions	Gender commissions are created in all Ministries and all the marzes (provinces, territorial-administrative units) of the republic of Armenia in 2011 on the basis of the Government's decision.

The Tripartite Commission

The Republican Tripartite Commission could include, among other topics of its agenda,

⁴⁴ Republican collective agreement, <https://goo.gl/eewqao>

discussions related to the activity of the State labor inspection, and within its capacities, could contribute to improve the effectiveness of SLI activity, but only within the limitations of the actual legal framework. At the same time, the latter has submitted regular annual reports to the Republican Tripartite Commission.

However, the Commission is not a specialized body for the labor inspection; its mission includes a wide range of tasks. Therefore, the Commission has a tripartite consultation format, where as necessary, SLI issues are also discussed.

Previously, the CTUA and RUEA have cooperated with the SLI through joint seminars and discussions, development of legal drafts, etc.

Council on Ensuring Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Republic of Armenia

The *Council* which is adjunct to the Prime Minister and which has also been declared to be a national mechanism for ensuring gender equality, has not convened since October 2016, and it is obvious that relevant state policy issues have not been properly presented and discussed.

Gender Commissions

Gender Commissions in the Ministries and Provinces are operating with low efficiency, thus the strategy of integration of the gender component in political activities is not fully carried out, and, therefore, the commitments made to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other documents and conventions are not being fully implemented in the country.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account the Participatory assessment and analysis of the gender situation in the labor market done within the framework of this research, as well as the results of the focus group discussions and expert interviews, we can conclude the existence of the following main problems in the area:

- Discrepancy between de jure rights and the facto situation with women labor rights in the Republic of Armenia
- Discrimination against women in the labor market;
- Impossibility to combine work and family duties;
- Lack of opportunities for women's entrepreneurship;
- Lack of the labor rights protection mechanism in the country;
- Gender blind laws and programs related to the area.

Hence, in discussions with stakeholders held within the project the following solutions to the identified problems were prioritized:

1. To implement the recommendations made within the framework of the *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the RA 5th and 6th periodic reports* by refining and adjusting the new Strategic Programs and Action Plans for the RA gender policies, prioritizing the targets set for the socio-economic area:
 - Create more opportunities for women to gain access to formal employment, including by promoting the equal sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between men and women, providing sufficient and adequate childcare facilities and strengthening incentives for men to exercise their right to parental leave, and adopt a time-bound plan to implement the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), of the International Labour Organization, with a view to facilitating women's access to the formal economy;
 - Provide a regulatory framework for the informal sector and ensure that women in this sector have access to social protection, maternity protection and childcare support;
 - Adopt legislation to define and prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace and include in the next periodic report data on the number of reported cases of sexual harassment, investigations, prosecutions and sentences imposed on perpetrators;
 - Reinforce measures to expand women's access to microfinance and microcredit at low interest rates, enabling women to engage in income generating activities and to start their own businesses;

- Guarantee the access of rural women to economic opportunities, including income-generating projects and credit facilities, on an equal and equitable basis with men and with their urban counterparts;
2. To implement the provision on gender mainstreaming⁴⁵ of the socio-economic development programs envisaged by the RA Government's Program;
 3. To carry out gender expertise and mainstreaming of the labor legislation to ensure the exercise of their labor rights by women;
 4. To establish a structure responsible to oversight over the labor rights
 5. To conduct research and awareness-raising activities to highlight the problem of gender pay gap in the labor market;
 6. To carry out awareness-raising activities regarding the *RA Law on Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men as it contains* a serious tool in the struggle against discrimination.
 7. To focus attention on the processes of professional orientation in high school and selection of specialities in the system of higher education to mitigate the horizontal discrimination
 8. To ensure the proper and adequate participation of women in socio- economic decision making, through introduction of gender quotas for managerial positions in the state executive power;
 9. To set quotas for the upper levels of management of private and state organizations for the purpose of ensuring sufficient involvement of women in the councils of companies with state and community participation;
 10. To develop special programs stimulating women's entrepreneurship aimed at perfection of investment policies, priority development of those branches of the economy which will help to solve the economic development problems in a most effective way, taking into account creation of those auxiliary production facilities, which are envisioned for women's employment, including home-based work and work with the use of information technologies;
 11. To carry out such measures that will actually guarantee women's and men's equal rights when receiving bank loans and credits, to encourage those financial institutions which offer preferential loans to women or service women-headed small and low-profit enterprises;
 12. To develop and implement certain measures, within the framework of social partnership and with involvement of NGOs and mass media outlets, that target to increase women's economic and legal literacy to eliminate discrimination in the employment area and support gender-based resource distribution.

⁴⁵ "By the end of 2022, to integrate a gender component in the RA socio-economic development programs, to introduce tools for situation assessment and monitoring in order to expand equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men," The RA Government's 2017-2022 Program, http://www.arlis.am/banners/HH_kar-cragir.pdf

6 ANNEXES

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS



Focus Group Discussion with Members of Parliament Discrimination in Labor Market –Issues, Solutions, Recommendations

National Assembly, Yerevan

19 Oct. 2017



The Participants of the focus group – 12 women Members of Parliament

The issues revealed during the discussions

- ✓ Gender situation in politics and labor market; The direct link between women's economic and political participation
- ✓ Challenges that hinder the economic activity of women are caused by the lack of women in the labor market. worrying statistics, killer facts
- ✓ Expansion of women's economic participation in the context of "Women's Agenda" presented by OxYGen to political parties before the parliamentary elections
- ✓ Problems related to discrimination against women in the labor market; why many women suffer from discrimination and still there is no public awareness on this
- ✓ The reasons behind the difference between salaries of women and men

- ✓ Women's entry into the labor market is hampered by gender stereotypes, including "obstacles" created by spouses.
- ✓ The lack of motivation to work among young women
- ✓ The gaps in the legislation of the Republic of Armenia on the provision of women's employment rights, the existence of a significant gap between de jure rights and their de facto implementation
- ✓ Lack of awareness of population and especially women about labor legislation;
- ✓ State policy towards the creation of opportunities for child care and specialization for young mothers with up to three-year-olds children, for creating easy access for them.
- ✓ Continuous education of young women with children under the 3 years, the need for increasing their competitiveness in the labor market
- ✓ State initiatives for boosting women's employment, in particular, the opportunities for textile industry development in the regions
- ✓ Ensuring and expanding women's employment as a key component in the poverty reduction state strategy.

Recommendations presented by participants.

1. Development and promotion of legislative initiatives aimed at boosting women employment opportunities and allowing to combine family and career development;
2. Ensure state support for continuing education of women with children under the 3 years old and their competitiveness in the labor market.
3. Implementation of programs aimed at raising women's awareness on labor rights;
4. Ensure the state monitoring and control of cases of violations of labor rights, ensuring the normal functioning of relevant institutions.
5. Parliament should lead the various initiatives related to promotion and protection of women's employment, including the expected amendments to the RA Labor Code.
6. Post-election cooperation of all political forces represented in the Parliament around the "Women's Agenda".

**Focus Group Discussion with Business Representatives
Discrimination in Labor Market –Issues, Solutions, Recommendations**

20 Oct. 2017

RUIA office, Yerevan Armenia



The Participants of the focus group – 9 representatives of businesses.

The issues revealed during the discussions

- ✓ Businessmen do not see a problem in horizontal segregation in the labor market (according to employment spheres).
- ✓ There are also professions in the labor market that are not desirable for women.
- ✓ There are problems with perceiving gender discrimination among entrepreneurs. Many of them consider that discrimination is related to the violation of workers' rights irrespective of the employee's gender.
- ✓ Cases of labor rights violations are explained by low awareness of employees or fear of losing their jobs
- ✓ Employers are well aware of labor legislation and social guarantees women and entitled by law.
- ✓ Discrimination against women is justified by the interests of the employer to use employees work as much as possible
- ✓ Women of reproductive age are not in favor among the employers, as employer suffers from both human, time and financial losses when they leave for a maternity, it is not preferable.
- ✓ Sexual harassment at workplace is a fairly common practice

- ✓ One of the reasons for the difference in wages between men and women is self-confidence. Women agree to work with lower wages, which is profitable for any employer.
- ✓ The role of trade unions is minimal in cases of violations of labour rights for non members, the only way is court, but workers rarely apply to court to restore their rights
- ✓ There is a need for a regulatory body dealing with the implementation of the labour code. The elimination of the labor inspection negatively affected the exercise of labor rights.
- ✓ The regulatory role of the state in the business sector should be setting minimum standards of labor remuneration, and other allowances and work conditions.
- ✓ Discrimination in Labor market, corruption, shady economy, oligarchy hamper development of competent business
- ✓ The amendments to the Labor Code creates certain risks, especially by eliminating the state control over the contractual relations between the employer and the employee, it creates risks for extreme exploitation of the workers
- ✓ Discrimination is especially manifested in relation with women of reproductive age as women employee of that age is considered a risky worker, who can leave the job for maternity.

Recommendations presented by participants.

1. It is necessary to recreate the Labor Inspectorate to ensure the rights entitled by the Labor Code are protected;
2. It is necessary to raise the awareness of workers and employers on labor rights through organizing appropriate training or organizing appropriate campaigns in the media;
3. Implement programs to promote women's entrepreneurship.
4. Strengthen the role of trade unions
5. Expand the network of kindergartens, for creating opportunities for women to combine career and child care.

**Focus Group Discussion with Media Representatives
Discrimination in Labor Market –Issues, Solutions, Recommendations**

25 Oct. 2017
Article 3, Yerevan



**The Participants of the focus group – 11 representatives of small and experienced media.
The issues revealed during the discussions**

- ✓ There is discrimination against women of reproductive age and adult women. In the interest of the employer, he often does not accept women of that age as a result of which women's unemployment is rising.
- ✓ Young mothers are unable to re-engage in labor market, because of lack of easy access to kindergartens.
- ✓ Public kindergartens are especially over-loaded in Yerevan, while private kindergartens are very expensive, so women should have a very high salary to be able to pay for the private kindergartens. As a result many husbands make their wives to stay at home and take care of their children.
- ✓ Sexual harassment creates a chain of distrust and public attitude that make many husbands forbid their wives to work - just one example may be the reason for the generalization leading to limiting women access to labor market.
- ✓ Women are ashamed to raise the issue of sexual harassment fearing to lose the job, to be condemned by public, and fearing that their spouses will no longer allow to work.
- ✓ Women become passive, their self-esteem decreases, they do not use their knowledge, which causes losses at the state level.

- ✓ Women also mostly discriminated when there is a promotion opportunity. Employers prefer men to occupy high positions.
- ✓ Women apply for job, if they are convinced that they can do it, but this is not the case with men. Women are less risky, they are less likely to be exposed to minor, aggressive rules.
- ✓ Sexual harassment at work hampers women's access to labor market. Starting from the job announcement, you can easily see the discrimination, sexism.
- ✓ Stereotypes about motivation on wage and career are also an obstacle to women seeking career development. There is an idea that wages and career are important for a man, not for women.
- ✓ There is a stereotype, that a woman who works is a bad mother, a bad wife. There is a public misperception that employed women cannot manage to do all housework.
- ✓ There are problems of motivation, many girls in the provinces do not even try to work, and after school they want to get married.
- ✓ There is high rate of migration from Armenia. Even if there is some job available, the existing stereotypes about the professions that women can do hinders some girls and women to work. There is a common sense, that if you are a girl you must work in a school or in a kindergarten, the only respected profession is the teacher, and if the girl works in the store and is forced to go home at night, this is a subject of various gossips
- ✓ Often women are not informed about their rights. A special work should be done on this. There are no discussions on domestic violence, discrimination against women in the faculties of journalism, there are no training sessions.

Recommendations presented by participants.

1. Women should be aware of the discrimination existing in the labor market.
2. Implement gender education among young people, motivating girls to build career.
3. Raise the issue of sexual harassment in the media, conduct research in that direction, develop mechanisms to eliminate impunity
4. Introduce special gender training courses in journalism faculties to ensure the future journalists' sensitised and informed about gender equality and ways to fight discrimination against women.
5. Promote more active coverage of issues related to women's access to the labor market, examples of successful protection of labor rights in media.
6. Support all media initiatives aimed at expanding opportunities for women career development.
7. Raise the need for the equal distribution of family responsibilities between husbands in the media through successful stories.

**Focus Group Discussion with LSG representatives
Discrimination in Labor Market –Issues, Solutions, Recommendations**

*31 Oct. 2017
Ibis Hotel Yerevan*



The Participants of the focus group – 11 representatives of Local Self-government from 6 regions of Armenia, including members of Councils of Elderly, heads of Regional departments on Gender issues.

The issues revealed during the discussions

- ✓ Young women and girls who have been educated in the city have difficulty to find the job in the village, and often they leave the village
- ✓ The lack of jobs for women after the age of 40, creates a major difficulties for women who decide to enter the job market, after their children grow up.
- ✓ Women working in the agricultural sector are considered as informal workers, because of which they are deprived of social pensions and state protection, they have the opportunity to receive only old-age pensions; with is miserable amount, their involvement in agriculture is not taken into account; they cannot benefit from insurance.
- ✓ Women engaged in agriculture have serious problems with selling their products and suffer losses
- ✓ Bad conditions of intercommunity and intra-community roads and transport limits women's employment opportunities
- ✓ In many small towns, many women work without a contract, with low wages, do not enjoy the holidays they are entitled to, they get thousand drams per day, working overtime, without any additional remuneration. People are forced to work.
- ✓ Most of the working women are not in favor of being registered as they will lose access to sate social benefit system (poverty allowance) as the wages are very low.
- ✓ Gender stereotypes are particularly strong in rural areas, which affects women's economic and political participation. Women candidates to Local self-government bodies face serious challenges consequently, does not participate in in decision-making in their communities.
- ✓ Additional problems arise in enlarged/ merged communities, where the voices of smaller communities are almost not heard, and women's representation is much lower than previously in the same location.

- ✓ In small towns, men are mainly engaged in business, it is consider to be unusual women engagement in business.
- ✓ In the case of migrant men, loans are hardly available for women who do not have property pledges.
- ✓ Lack of pre-school institutions in most rural communities hampers women's access to labor market
- ✓ People are often vulnerable to violations of their economic rights; the only way to protect them is the court. Poor people and people in rural areas do not apply to court not only because of culture, mentality and close relationship with other community members, but also because of the lack of knowledge, money to hire advocate and lack of trust to judicial system in Armenia.

Recommendations presented by participants.

1. Settlement of infrastructures, intercommunity roads and pre-school facilities is a priority for community development programs.
2. There is a need to increase women's participation in the community level decision making, their representation in the community elderly councils. There is also need to introduce mechanisms, such as quota, to ensure the representation of women in community councils in merged communities,
3. Capacity building for women to get acquainted with the specifics of the business sector, to increase access to credits for women in rural areas.
4. Restoration of the body responsible for the elimination of the labor rights, in particular the Labor Inspectorate, which will ensure the protection of the labor rights in case of infringement.
5. There is need to address the issues of social protection of non-formal workers involved in agricultural sector

**Focus Group Discussion with Yerevan Municipality members
Discrimination in Labor Market –Issues, Solutions, Recommendations**

11 Nov.2017
Ibis Hotel Yerevan



The Participants of the focus group – 9 elected members of Yerevan Municipality, who represent Ruling “Republican Party”- 1 representative, , “Yelk” Coalition – 3 representatives, “Yerkir Tsirani”- 3 representatives

The issues revealed during the discussions

- ✓ Urban infrastructure dissipated development and especially unresolved public transportation issues are the obstacles for working women and mothers.
- ✓ The lack of kindergartens, and lack of access to affordable preschool facilities especially for kids under 3 year is the main obstacle for women to go to work
- ✓ The main obstacle to women's entrepreneurship is the rules of the game dictated by men in every and each sector.
- ✓ Widespread discrimination against women during the employment selection process
- ✓ Existence of practice of spouse forbidding housewife to work. Women decide to quite the job, because of being overloaded by unpaid work.
- ✓ Gender stereotypes, which are the cause for lack of motivation to work with young girls and women
- ✓ Existence of self-discrimination, uncertainty, lack of self-confidence, as a result women even can reject the job promotion or do not ask for more remuneration, because of fear from failure and low self-esteem.

Points of concern

Wide spread misperception about the key causes of women low representation in labor market. The main reason according to them is the lack of willingness among women to work. The economic undeveloped economic and social conditions in the country has been highlighted as key drivers for women discrimination in the labor market. Participants assumed that country economic development will lead to elimination of gender discrimination in the labor market.

Recommendations presented by participants.

6. Raising awareness and political literacy as a means to overcome stereotypes.
7. 2. Creation of equal opportunities and conditions for women and men in the labor market through introduction of special mechanisms, laws and regulation, including but not limited to expansion of the network and improved access to pre-school facilities and kindergartens.
8. 3. Improvement of urban infrastructure and transport, which will greatly simplify the lives of women and their access to the labor market.
9. 4. Implementation of projects aimed at involving women with disabilities in labor market.
10. 5. The need to advertise a successful women entrepreneurs for breaking the stereotypes both in business and politics.

7 ABOUT THE PROJECT PARTNERS



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ProMedia-Gender is an independent think tank, with the mission of promotion and popularization of ideas of gender equality and protection of rights and interests of women. Promedia-Gender” is well known by its “Woman and Politics” newspaper insert and WomenNet.am informational-analytical portal <http://womennet.am>

OxYGen is an independent advocacy and development foundation driven by its vision of an Armenia free of poverty and suffering, in which women and men can exercise their rights and influence decisions that affect their lives. www.oxygen.org.am

The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) is an independent European non-profit organization supporting the development of democracy outside the European Union. As a network of European civil and political society organisations, EPD advocates for a stronger presence of democracy support on the EU’s agenda and facilitates the exchange of knowledge among practitioners. EPD is the first Community of Practice on democracy assistance operating at the EU level. As such, its added value lies in its capacity to bring together and to connect the work of organisations focusing on a wide range of themes and stakeholders. In this way, EPD seeks to contribute to the effectiveness and the quality of the programming and implementation cycles of democracy support at the EU level.

<http://www.epd.eu>