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# Gender inequalities in labour markets in Central Asia

Tamar Khitarishvili

The collapse of the Soviet Union has initiated an unprecedented social and economic transformation of the Central Asian economies. Their experience has demonstrated that the changes in the gender balance triggered by economic shifts are far from obvious. Whereas during the Soviet years, women in Central Asia experienced considerable advances in economic and social well-being, during the post-Soviet period these advances were in many cases reversed, in part due to the economic shifts experienced by countries in the region, including private sector growth and significant migration flows, and to some degree due to the strengthening of patriarchal traditions. This paper establishes the current state of various dimensions of gender inequalities and their recent dynamics in the five countries of Central Asia and proposes steps aimed at reducing them to advance inclusive growth, decent job creation and economic empowerment.

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## Background

The Central Asian countries<sup>2</sup> represent a heterogeneous group that includes energy-exporting countries (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan); agriculture-dependent small economies (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan); and the more industrialized economy of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have the largest populations, at over 30 and 17 million, followed by Tajikistan with over eight million, and Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan with almost six million each. Kazakhstan is the most affluent Central Asian country with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of \$20,867, and Tajikistan the poorest with GNI per capita of \$2,517 (UNDP 2015).

Based on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Gender Development Index (GDI), the Central Asian region is characterized by moderate levels of gender inequality (Figure 1). According to the GII, which gauges reproductive health and gender gaps in empowerment and economic status, the region performs better than the world average on measures of gender equality (Table A1). This is largely driven by relatively strong gender indicators in education and below average maternal mortality rates (even though they remain considerable).

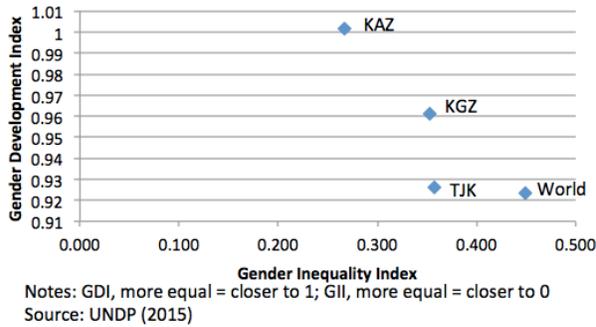
A similar conclusion emerges using the GDI, which measures gender gaps in human development achievements focusing on health, education and living standards and places the Central Asia countries above the world average (Table A2). However, in the case of the GDI, this outcome can be explained in part by poor health outcomes of men, in particular, and the relatively low levels of gender-disaggregated estimated gross national income per capita (with the exception of natural-resource-rich Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan). Turkmenistan stands out as a Central Asian country with the lowest life expectancy for women and men and the lowest expected years of schooling. On the other hand, Kazakhstan performs the best out of its fellow Central Asian countries and is the only Central Asian country classified by the UNDP as a country with high level of human development. The other four countries of the region fall into the medium human development category (UNDP 2015).

Kazakhstan also performs better than its regional neighbors based on the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI), an OECD-produced measure of discriminatory social institutions, which assesses formal and informal laws, attitudes and practices that restrict women's and girls' access to rights, justice and empowerment opportunities. In fact, it is the only Central Asian countries categorized as having low degree of discriminatory practices, with the SIGI value of 0.1196. Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan are part of the medium degree group with the SIGI values of 0.1393, 0.1475, and 0.1598, respectively (OECD SIGI database).

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<sup>2</sup> The Central Asian region includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

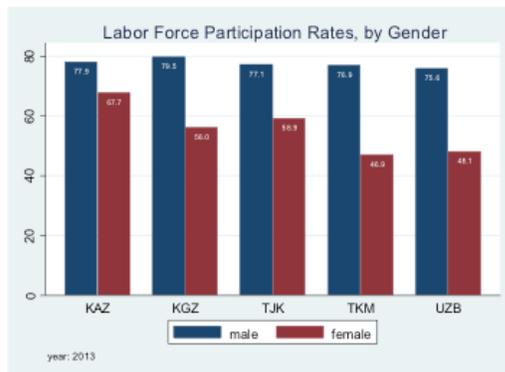
**Figure 1.** Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Inequality Index (GII).



## Labour markets

Despite the region’s positive performance relative to the rest of the world, gender inequalities in labor markets are pervasive in the Central Asian region. They emerge already at the level of labour force participation (Figure 2). It is notable that male participation rates across Central Asian countries are similar. The gaps are present due to the considerable variation in female labour force participation rates, which range from 46.9 percent in Turkmenistan to 67.7 percent in Kazakhstan in 2013. As a result, the gender gap in labour force participation in the Central Asian region varies from about 10.2 percentage points in Kazakhstan to 30 percentage points in Turkmenistan

**Figure 2.** Labour Force Participation Rates, by Gender.



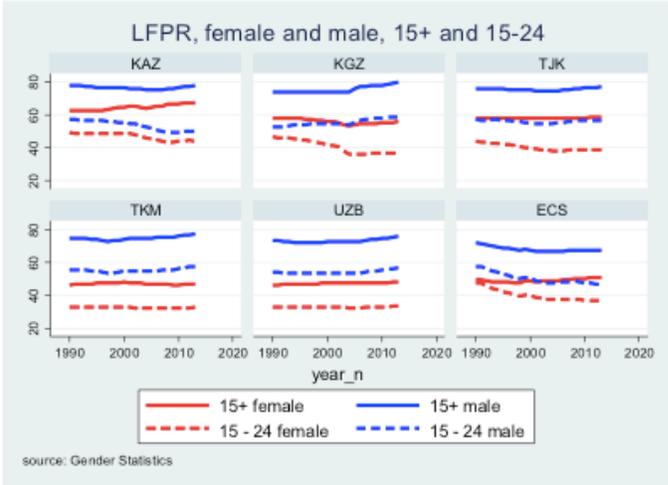
Source: Gender Statistics Database.

Over the last 20 years, the overall labour force participation rates in Central Asia have not changed considerably however their gender dynamics have varied. In Kazakhstan, the gender gap contracted, as the female labour force participation rate increased considerably from 70.1 in 1991 to 75.1 percent in 2013

whereas male rate went up only slightly from 81.9 in 1991 to 82.4 in 2013.<sup>3</sup> The increase in the female rate is particularly noteworthy because it was the highest in the region to begin with and has risen even more. On the other hand, the gap appears to have widened in other countries of the region. In Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, this happened (albeit only marginally) due to the slight increase in the male participation rate without the accompanying increase in the female rate. The widening of the gap was much more pronounced in Kyrgyzstan because women’s rate fell from 64.5 percent in 1991 to 59.6 percent in 2013 while men’s participation rate increased from 78.1 percent to 82.5 percent during the same period (the World Bank Gender Statistics Database).

The gender wage gap widens as women enter prime child-bearing years. This is to a large degree due to their domestic and care burdens (Maltseva 2007). In fact, as many as 61 percent of Tajik women not in the labour force cite domestic responsibilities as the reason for their inactivity (Figure 13). At 11 percent, this share is much lower in Kazakhstan, possibly due to the better state of social infrastructure provisioning. Notably, the youth female labour force participation rate declined in Kazakhstan from 48.9 percent in 1991 to 44.4 percent in 2013 even as it increased among working-age females. However, this could be partly attributed to more women going for higher education: the decrease was accompanied by a rise in the ratio of female to male tertiary enrollment from 114.1 in 1999 to 129.5 in 2013. On the other hand in Uzbekistan the ratio of female to male tertiary enrollment fell from 82.4 in 1999 to 64.7 in 2011.

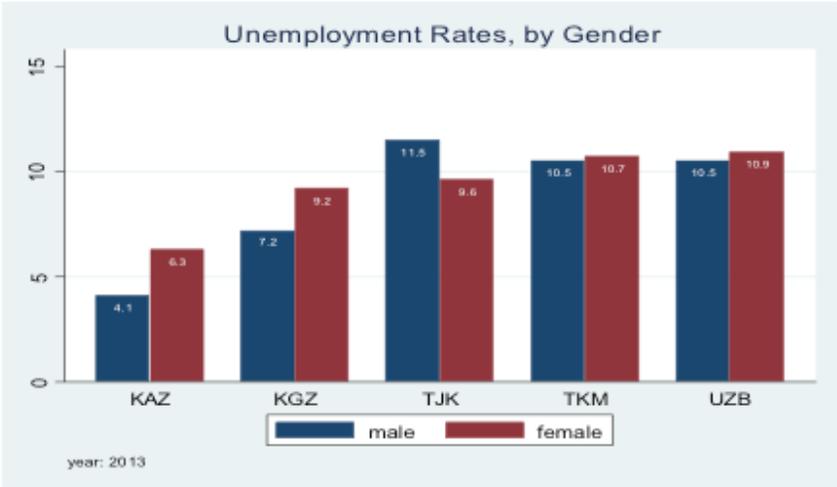
**Figure 3. Labour force participation rates of working age individuals and youth, by gender**



<sup>3</sup> Source: WB Gender Statistics, series SL\_TLF\_ACTI\_MA\_ZS

In the environment with low labor force participation rates, low unemployment rates are commonly interpreted with caution because the low rates may simply be a reflection of a large portion of inactive population. However, in the Central Asian region, this is not the case: countries with higher labor force participation rates tend to have lower unemployment rates. Moreover, in these countries, considerable gender gaps in the unemployment rates benefitting men are present, unlike the gaps in labor force participation rates, which are small in these countries. This is the case in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Figure 4). On the other hand, in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, where female labour force participation rates are very low, the gender gap in the unemployment rate is less than one percentage point. Hence, in stronger labor markets proportionately fewer men than women are unemployed whereas in weaker labor markets, the shares of men and women seeking jobs are similar.

**Figure 4. Unemployment rates, by gender.**



Source: Gender Statistics

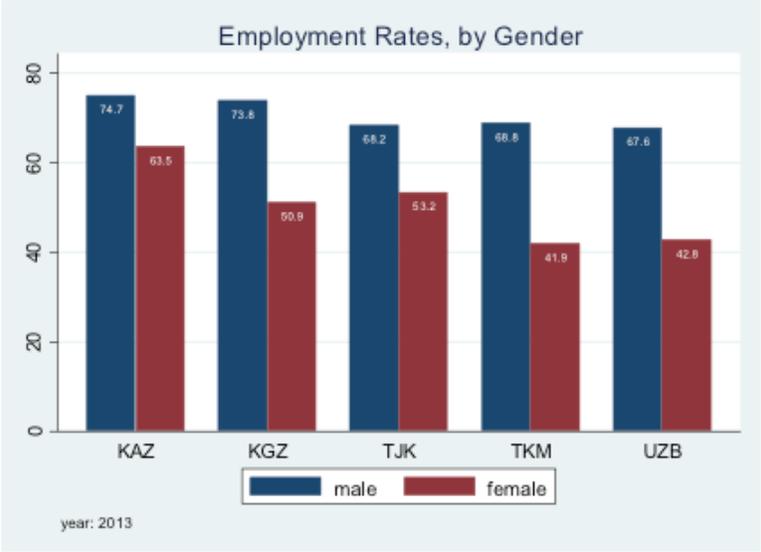
Gender gaps in employment largely mirror the gaps in labour force participation rates (Figure 5). They are the lowest in Kazakhstan at 11.2 percentage points and the highest in Turkmenistan at 26.9 percentage points. Next, we shed more light on the factors that likely explain this picture by analyzing the employment composition by type and sector of the economy.

In particular, smaller gender gaps in the employment rate are observed in the countries with a higher share of wage employment, which also tend to have higher female employment rates. This potentially suggests that wage employment contributes to higher female employment rates, generating

more gender-equal outcomes. Hence understanding the factors that contribute to the expansion of wage employment in the Central Asian region may yield insights into contracting gender gaps in the employment rate.

Indeed, wage employment is a considerably more dominant form of employment in Kazakhstan, which has better overall gender indicators compared to other Central Asian countries, with a wage employment share of over 60 percent among both men and women, followed by Tajikistan with about 53 percent and Kyrgyzstan with the share that varies between 47 and 48 percent (Figure 6).

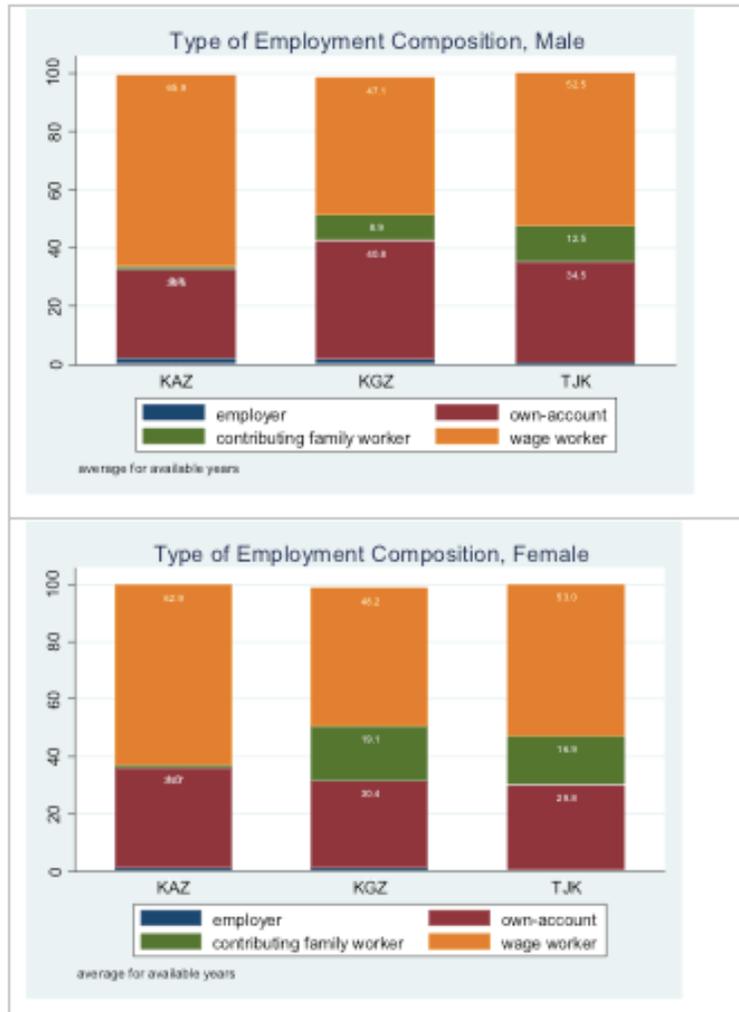
**Figure 5. Employment rates, by gender.**



Source: Gender Statistics

Countries with higher shares of wage employment also demonstrate smaller gender differences in the composition of their self-employment. On the other hand, in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, for example, in which wage employment shares are about 50 percent or lower, proportionately more women are contributing family workers than men, reflecting a pattern in which women are more likely to be involved in unpaid activities.

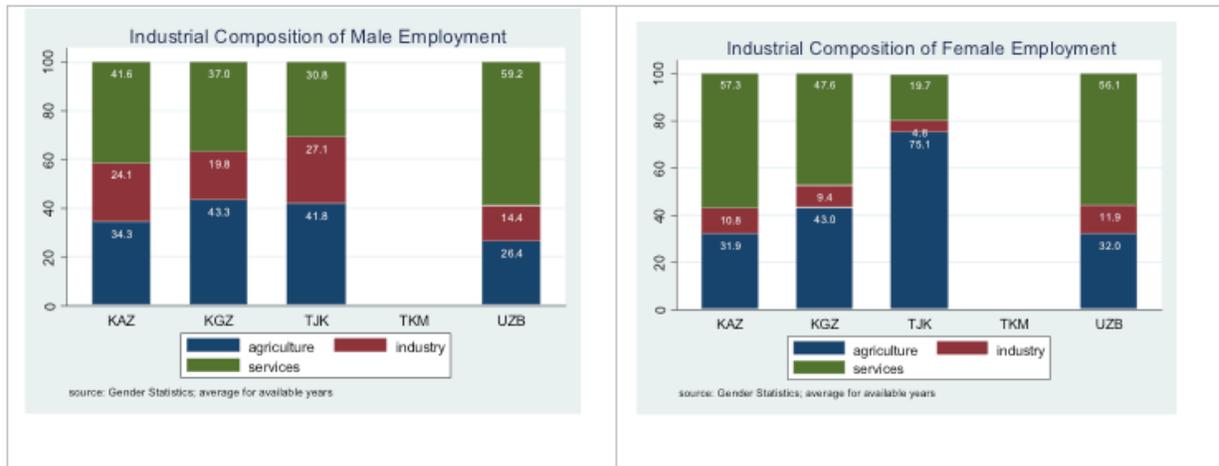
Figure 6. Type of employment composition, by gender.



Source: Gender Statistics; Note: no data available for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

These country- and gender-based differences can be linked to the sectoral structure of the Central Asian economies (Figure 7). More than a quarter of the employed population in this region is employed in agriculture and, with the exception of Kazakhstan, the share of agricultural employment among women is very close to or higher than this share among men. The gender gap is particularly striking in Tajikistan, in which 75.1 percent of women work in the agricultural sector compared to 41.8 percent of men.

**Figure 7. Industrial composition of employment, by gender.**



The high proportions of contributing family workers in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan appear to be tied to the predominance of relatively small-plot based agriculture, in which women tend to participate. In particular, 16.9 percent and 19.1 percent of female workers but only 8.9 percent and 12.5 percent of male workers in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, respectively, are contributing family workers. On the other hand, in Kazakhstan, despite more than a third of workers employed in agriculture, less than two percent of both male and female workers are contributing family workers. This is likely due to the larger-scale nature of agriculture, especially in the northern part of Kazakhstan. Indeed, Petrick et al. (2013) argue that large-scale farming based on hired labour will continue to be the main mode of land cultivation for the foreseeable future in the Kazakh grain region.

High shares of own-account workers in the overall employment are also linked to non-agricultural private sector development although gender patterns vary by country. In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, proportionately more men are own-account workers. In contrast, in Kazakhstan, 34.7 percent of female workers as opposed to 30.5 percent of male workers are own-account workers. Although data from Turkmenistan is limited, ILO (2010b) indicates that self-employment in Turkmenistan is female-dominated with 62 percent of self-employed individuals being women. Further linked to gender gaps in the private sector development and entrepreneurship is the higher share of employers among men compared to women (Figure 6). For example, in Kazakhstan, proportionately twice as many men as women were employers in 2013 (1.1 percent of employed women and 2.5 percent of employed men). Expressed in other terms, only 15 percent of employers in Tajikistan and 30 percent of employers in Turkmenistan are female (ILO 2010b; World Bank 2013).

As useful as these labour force classifications are, they may not accurately represent labour force participation. For example, the boundary between inactivity and unemployment reported in household budget and in labour force surveys can be very blurry, especially for rural women. Moreover, these classifications do not necessarily reflect the quality of the engagement in labour force. For example, agricultural employment tends to be concentrated in low-productivity subsistence activities and, among females in particular, is dominated by contributing family workers who are unpaid. Furthermore, a large share of agricultural production takes place informally, without any social protection, and the same applies to the non-agricultural private sector. On the other hand, informal activities may provide better remuneration and higher standards of living than employment in the formal sector. Indeed, despite its relative stability and social benefits, public sector employment is typically poorly remunerated. These distinctions are important and we address some of their gender dimensions in Central Asia in the context of rural development, agriculture and private sector development.

## **Rural development and agriculture**

Close to half of the population in Central Asia lives in rural areas, as much as 66 percent of the population in Kyrgyzstan and 55 percent of the population in Turkmenistan. This is the case even though over the last two decades, the rural share in population has been consistently declining. For example, in Uzbekistan it dropped from 64.2 percent in 2007 to 48.8 percent in 2011 (Stulina 2004; ILOa 2010), with internal and external migration contributing to the decline. Indeed, migration from and within Central Asia has transformed the labour market landscape of rural areas in particular, with complex consequences for families and communities left behind, an issue we discuss in the migration section of the paper.

Agricultural sector is the main employer in rural areas. Female share of agricultural employment is more than half and stands at 54 percent and 53 percent, in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, respectively (FAO Gender and Land Rights Database<sup>4</sup>) and at 53 percent in Uzbekistan (Alimdjanova 2009). However, women are underrepresented among workers responsible for decision-making, such as specialists and managers, and tend to be concentrated in seasonal and unskilled jobs. For example, among unskilled wage workers this share varies between 36.7 percent in Kyrgyzstan and 59.3 percent in Tajikistan (TC ICWC 2006). WECF (2014b) gives an even higher estimate of 80 percent in Tajikistan. On the other hand, among specialists, the female share in Tajikistan is below 16 percent (it is zero in Turkmenistan) and among farm managers it is only 12 percent. In Uzbekistan, only 4.2 percent of managerial positions in agriculture are held by women (ADB 2014).

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<sup>4</sup> This database does not include data on Kazakhstan.

Evidence from Tajikistan also suggests that fewer women participate in decision-making in individual or family *dehkan* farms than in large collective farms. For example, in Khatlon and Sughd regions of Tajikistan, TJICCA data indicate that women participate in decision-making for farming decisions, such as the choice of a crop or the sale of agricultural produce, in less than 25 percent of the households and this is especially the case among small farms. Even in large farms, women have little bargaining power and are trapped in low-wage, low-productivity work. It is remarkable that this picture is prevalent even among female-headed households, indicating that male extended family members continue making decisions with respect to farming (WB 2014a). Hence, despite their considerable presence in agriculture, women in Central Asia are concentrated in low-skilled jobs with little decision-making power.

Gender asymmetries in agricultural employment are also linked to gender gaps in land ownership and lease holdings. Although laws generally do not discriminate against women, in reality, women rarely hold land titles, reflecting strong patriarchal customs and attitudes. Only 17.1 percent of farm owners in Tajikistan in 2007 and 12.4 percent of land holders in Kyrgyzstan in 2002 were women (FAO 2011). In Uzbekistan, only 7.2 percent of leasehold farms were led by women<sup>5</sup> (Alimdjanova 2009). In fact, during the implementation of the land reform and the distribution of land use rights, families with only daughters received less land in Uzbekistan (FAO Gender and Land Database). Difficulties of transferring ownership to women present particular problems in female-headed households with migrant male members, rendering women unable to participate in critical land transactions required for sustaining the livelihood of their households, such as renting or mortgaging land. More generally, this situation constrains the development of female-owned micro and small businesses in agriculture due to women's inability to obtain credit without collateral.

The restrictions on land access are also translated into water access challenges because membership in water users' associations is commonly linked to land ownership (WB 2014a). Water irrigation issues are particularly challenging for individual and family *dehkan* farms, which employ proportionately more women (Alimdjanova 2009). This situation contributes to the use of low-productivity agricultural practices among female-headed farms, affecting their living standards. Women-headed households are also less likely to adopt sustainable land management practices, especially in small farms because women tend to have relatively weak knowledge-sharing networks. Conditional on having this knowledge, however, they are as likely to adopt sustainable land management practices as male-headed farm households (World Bank 2014a).

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<sup>5</sup> Land ownership laws vary by country. In Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, land can be privately owned and is transferable. In Turkmenistan, private farmers get land use rights, but land ownership is not transferable. In Uzbekistan, there is no private land ownership (FAO Gender and Land Database).

Another factor contributing to lower agricultural productivity of female-headed households is the plot size. Similar to nonagricultural enterprises, in the agricultural sector, women tend to own and manage smaller land plots than men. In Tajikistan, in 2007 the average plot size was 0.22 acres in female-headed (not necessarily female owned) farms/households and 0.37 acres in male-headed households (State Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan on Statistics 2010, p.18). These numbers are consistent with data based on land ownership. In Tajikistan, in 2007 the average size of female-owned land plots (based on official ownership documents) was 0.27 acres, as opposed to 0.31 acres for male-owned plots (Kieran et al. 2015). In Kyrgyzstan, the overall female share in land holdings is 12.4 percent, but only 5.5 percent of farms with 100-1000 hectares of arable land were female held and women held only 5.4 percent of the total land area (FAO Gender and Land Rights Database). These findings emphasize the importance of disentangling the complex factors that underlie gender gaps in agricultural productivity.

This picture of gender disparities in rural areas and in agriculture reveals that women are more likely to engage in low-value-added agricultural production compared to men. As in non-agricultural sectors, women operate on a smaller scale compared to men. Moreover, in countries with a small share of wage employment in agriculture, women are more likely to work as contributing family workers. For these countries, in particular, the challenge lies in improving income-earning opportunities of women. Impact evaluation studies indicate that female farmers in countries with small-scale agriculture benefit from an integrated suite of services that targets production, marketing, and social constraints and from the creation of farmer groups and collectives to establish and strengthen networks (Buvinić et al. 2013). Providing women with agricultural education services and training in the use of seeds, fertilizers and livestock has also been effective in raising the productivity of female farming (Manfre et al. 2013). Finally, improving women's access to credit through alternative financing mechanism and to land tenure through legal advice and information on land tenure arrangements can help in alleviating the barriers encountered by women in rural areas and in agriculture.

## **Entrepreneurship and private sector development**

For a lasting impact on gender inequalities in the labour markets of Central Asian economies, agricultural sector reforms have to take place in conjunction with shifts in the structure of non-agricultural private sector employment. Private sector expansion has been viewed as key to generating robust employment growth in the region (World Bank 2012) and its current GDP share ranges from only 25 percent in Turkmenistan to 75 percent in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Due to a stronger representation of women in the public sector of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, female shares in private employment in these countries are lower than male shares. In Tajikistan, on the

other hand, the female share in the private sector is higher than male share, reflecting a very high proportion of women employed in agriculture (Figure 8).

A large proportion of private sector activities, especially small and medium enterprise and own-account business activity, in Central Asian countries takes place in the informal sector, especially in agriculture. In 2006, the size of the informal economy in Central Asian countries was around 40 percent (Schneider et al. 2010). In 2007, 36 percent of wage workers and 47 percent of all employed individuals in Tajikistan worked in the informal sector, with the majority being women (World Bank 2013). This indicates the considerable magnitude of informal activities among the self-employed in Tajikistan. In Turkmenistan, informal sector employs about 14 percent of workforce, among whom 57 percent are female (ILO 2010b). In Kyrgyzstan the female share in informal employment in 2009 was 36.2 percent, whereas it was 41.7 percent of total employment, likely reflecting the stronger position of women in formal public-sector employment (Laboursta).

Women employed informally in agriculture are primarily engaged in the sale of agricultural produce grown on own garden plots. Women in informal nonagricultural activities, in turn, are engaged in garment production, shuttle trade and local market trade (Ishkanian 2003; ADB 2014; ADB 2006). For example, ADB (2014) reports that between 70 and 80 percent of bazaar vendors and 50 percent of bazaar-based shuttle traders in Uzbekistan are female. There also appears to be a gender pattern with respect to the direction of trade as female shuttle traders are much more likely to shuttle to and from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan than to Kazakhstan (ADB 2014). These patterns reflect the often precarious nature of private sector employment in the region.

Indeed, informal activities often represent a coping strategy to address the lack of employment opportunities in the formal sector and its high costs due to regulations and corruption. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that informal activities are a preferred option to migration. Indeed, migration is often the last-resort coping strategy – for example, unlike professional workers, low-skilled workers in Tajikistan are more likely to migrate than to be informally employed (Abdulloev et al. 2012).

The presence of a large informal economy also does not necessarily rule out the presence of strong entrepreneurial elements in the formal private sector. In Kazakhstan, the established formal business ownership rate<sup>6</sup> is 7.4 percent and the entrepreneurial intention rate<sup>7</sup> is 3.9 percent (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor survey). The corresponding rates were 7.3 and 8.1 percent and 16 and 2.4 for

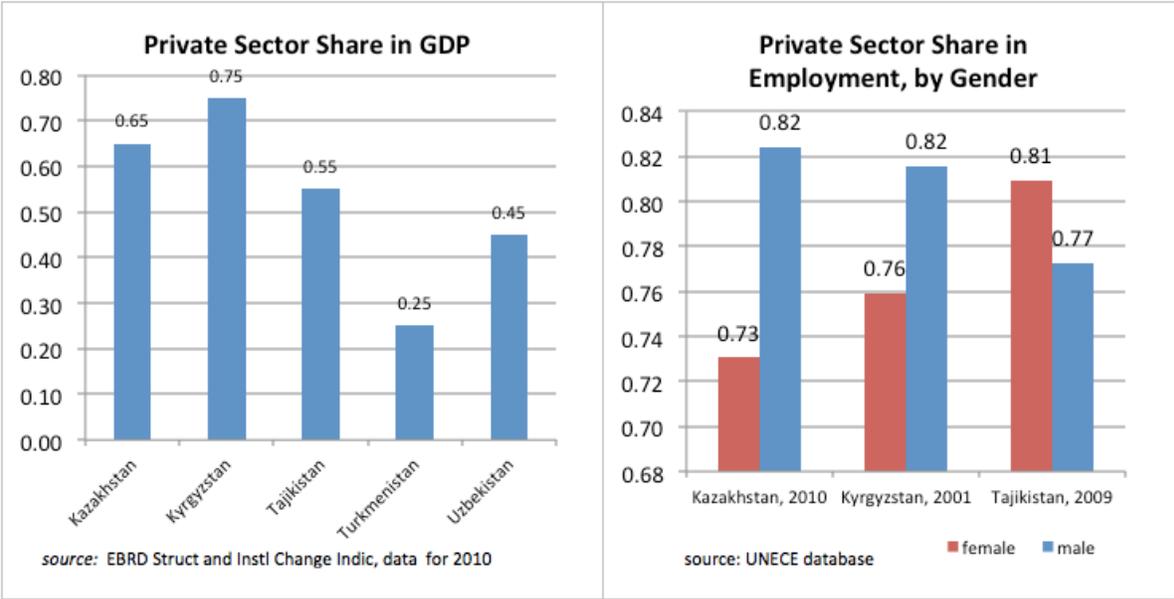
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<sup>6</sup> Business ownership rate is the percentage of the population aged 18–64 who are currently an owner-manager of an established business, i.e., owning and managing a running business that has paid salaries, wages, or any other payments to the owners for more than 42 months.

<sup>7</sup> Entrepreneurial intention rate is percentage of the population aged 18–64—individuals involved in any stage of entrepreneurial activity excluded—who are latent entrepreneurs and who intend to start a business within three years.

Georgia and Russia, respectively, the only other former Soviet countries in which the survey was conducted. By comparison, in the United Kingdom, these rates were 6.5 and 6.3 percent. Hence, the established formal business ownership rate, in particular, suggests comparable levels of entrepreneurial activity. Nevertheless, during the last decade, about 28 percent of formal entrepreneurial activity in Kazakhstan was necessity-driven, compared to only 16 percent in the United Kingdom. This compares to the 2006-2014 average of 30 percent in Russia and the 2014 value of 49 percent in Georgia. The key question remains whether the entrepreneurial intention and activity, even when necessity-driven, can become a seedbed for innovation and job growth and whether women can play a prominent role in this process.

**Figure 8. Private Shares in GDP and Employment**



Indeed, women can play different functions in entrepreneurship. As firm owners, their ownership participation rates in the Central Asian countries currently stand at about one-third or higher (Figure 9). They have increased over the last decade. For example, in 2005, the female share varied from only 14.4 percent in Tajikistan to 29.4 in Kazakhstan. In the same year, the female share in enterprise ownership was 11.2 percent in Turkmenistan (UNDP 2008). However, by 2013, the rates ranged from 28.3 in Kazakhstan to as high as 49.4 percent in Kyrgyzstan, in line or above the OECD average of about 30 percent (World Bank Enterprise Survey).

There was a pronounced increase in the female ownership rate during 2008 and 2009, perhaps due to the high turnover of firms in these countries. However, the sharp increase in 2008 and 2009 across the

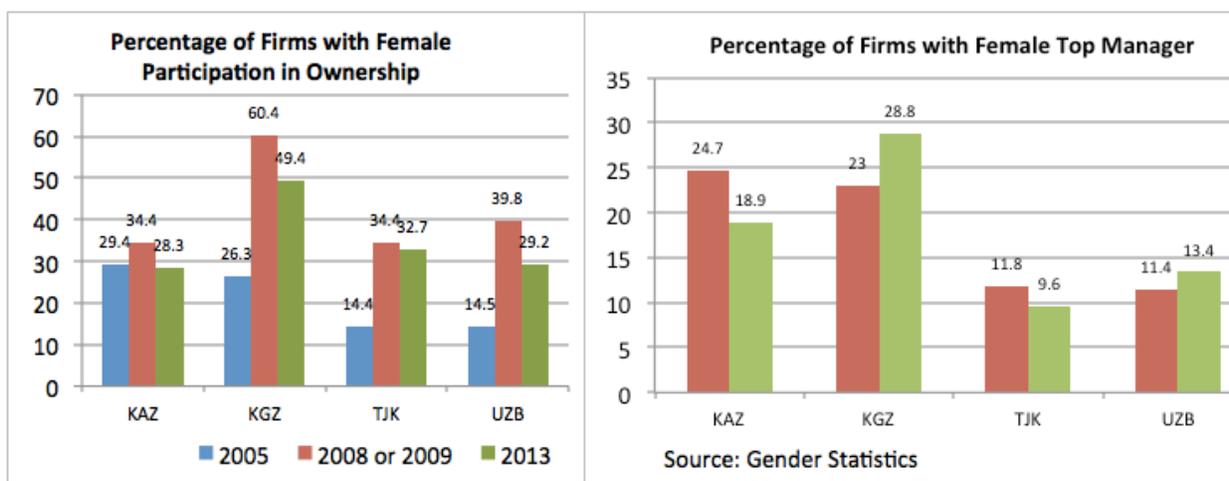
board may also be due to the disproportionately strong impact of the recession on male-dominated industries, such as construction and transport, which reduced the number of male-owned businesses.

Whereas female ownership rates are relatively high, the proportions of being a top manager are much lower (Figure 9), especially in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Top managers exert strong influence on the daily operations of firms as well their long-term development. In some cases, the female share in top management may be a better indicator of female participation in decision-making than the female share in ownership. In Tajikistan in 2013, 32.7 percent of firms had female participation in ownership but only 9.6 percent had a female top manager. Similarly, in Uzbekistan, 29.2 percent of firms had female participation in ownership but only 13.4 percent had a female top manager. It is noteworthy that despite the decrease in the proportion of firms with female ownership after the recession, in Kyrgyzstan and, to some extent, in Uzbekistan, the percentage of firms with female top managers increased and in the Kyrgyz case reached one-third of managers of formal SMEs in 2013. This indicates the increased involvement of women in the formal private sector in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Other sources confirm these estimates of female managerial engagement in the private sector, but also indicate that they tend to be below the female shares in the management of state and municipal (self-government) entities, highlighting a more active female engagement in the public sector. For example, whereas in 2011 23.7 percent of enterprises in the Kyrgyz Republic had female managers, the female share was 23.6 percent for private enterprises (in line with the evidence from the World Bank Enterprise Surveys), 21.1 percent in state entities and reached 34.1 percent in municipal (self-government) entities ((National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012), p.97). In Kazakhstan in 2010, 25.6 percent of enterprises had female managers, and this proportion was 24.6 percent in private enterprises, 18.8 percent in foreign enterprises, and as high as 38.2 percent in state enterprises (Women and men in Kazakhstan, 2011, p. 98).

**Figure 9. Percentage of Firms with Female Ownership and Female Top Manager**



Reflecting typical industrial segregation patterns, there are considerable differences in the female ownership share by industry. For example, in 2005, whereas the overall female share of managers in Uzbekistan was 27.3 percent, in the healthcare, education and culture sectors it stood at 36.1, 45.7, and 44.6 percent, respectively (State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics 2007). Women are also more than proportionately represented in retail trade, food and garments production in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (WB Enterprise Surveys). This is also confirmed by the findings of the female entrepreneurship survey in Uzbekistan (UNECE 2009) and in Turkmenistan (UNDP 2008).

There is substantial regional variation in the female ownership share. In Kyrgyzstan, the proportion of female managers varied from 24.5 percent in Batken region to 55 percent in Bishkek region (which incidentally also has a lower gender wage gap than the average for Kyrgyzstan) (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012). In Uzbekistan, it varied from only 9.7 percent in Andijan region to 37.9 percent in Namangan region (State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics 2007).

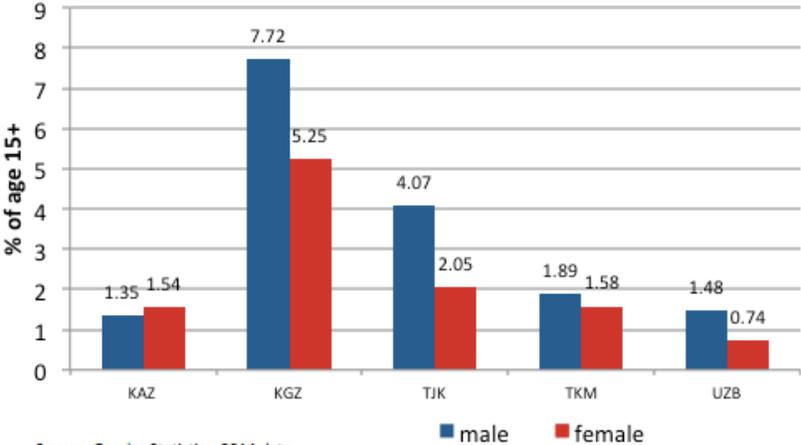
Female-managed firms differ from male-managed firms in a number of ways. Female-owned firms tend to be smaller than male-owned firms, typical of the gender differences in firm size across the transition region. For example, in Kazakhstan the average firm size of male-owned firms is 50 workers, compared to 30 workers in female-owned firms. This is the case even though female-owned businesses tend to have greater scale economies due to the industries in which they predominate, which implies that they would benefit from expansion more than male-managed firms. The smaller size of female-managed firms has been found to be largely responsible for their weaker financial performance (Sattar 2012). It is notable that female-managed firms tend to hire proportionately more full-time female workers. For example, in 2013 in Uzbekistan, 59.9 percent percent of full-time workers in firms with female participation

in ownership were female compared to 23.9 percent in firms without female participation in ownership. Findings of the female entrepreneurship survey indicate that female employment share in female-owned firms is 68 percent in Uzbekistan (UNECE 2009). Similar relationships hold in other Central Asian countries. These findings imply that alleviating obstacles to the establishment and expansion of female-owned firms can contribute to the shrinking of gender gap in the employment rates.

Some of such obstacles have to do with women’s lack of networks and expertise in navigating the “racketeer and corrupt public officials” (Ishkanian 2003), which explains women’s engagement in informal and small-scale activities that require low initial capital. Female networks also tend to be less useful than male networks for business development (Welter et al. 2006). In addition, women face greater regulatory barriers and lack business knowledge relative to men (Sattar 2012).

Access to credit is another factor that potentially hinders the establishment and growth of female-owned businesses. It is in general relatively rare in Central Asian countries to borrow money to start, operate or expand a farm or a business, with fewer than 8 percent of individuals reporting having done so. (Figure 10; Global Findex survey, 2014). This is especially the case among women. Female entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan specifically cite access to credit as a key barrier to expansion, instead depending on limited savings or the network of family and friends. Only 40 percent of the surveyed female entrepreneurs in Samarkand and 54 percent in Tashkent sought credit from commercial banks. Out of the women who sought credit, only 38.2 percent in Samarkand and 78 percent in Tashkent received it (UNECE 2009). Women also tend to be more risk averse than men, potentially contributing to the gender gap in business-related borrowing, although the evidence linking women’s risk aversion to the smaller size of operations is inconclusive (Sattar 2012).

**Figure 10. Proportion of Individuals Who Borrowed to Start, Operate, or Expand a Farm or Business**



Source: Gender Statistics. 2014 data

More work is needed to understand why women are less likely to establish firms with employees, be larger in size, and function in the formal sector compared to men and, more generally, how to turn necessity entrepreneurship into opportunity entrepreneurship. Access to credit, weaker networks, and the lack of business knowledge are some of the constraints that female-headed businesses face. Alleviating these constraints can increase the potential for employment growth and for contracting the gender gaps in labor markets via the expansion of female-owned businesses. Indeed, impact evaluation studies suggest a strong positive effect of business and financial literacy programs on the performance of female-owned businesses. These studies also suggest the importance of utilizing multi-pronged methods. For example, providing financial capital alone has impact on the performance of female-owned businesses when combined with income-generation training and follow-up activities (Buvinić et al. 2013). Moreover, larger sized female-owned businesses benefit from in-kind capital injections because they are more likely to be invested in the business (Buvinić et al. 2013). The expansion of female-owned businesses may have a particularly strong impact on female employment because the female employment rates are higher in the firms owned by women, as the findings of the World Bank *Enterprise Surveys* demonstrate (Sattar 2012).

## **Industrial and occupational segregation**

Industrial and occupational segregation by gender is a typical feature of labour markets and Central Asian countries are no exception. Women's employment tends to concentrate in health, education and social services, a pattern established in Central Asia during the Soviet times. For example, the proportion of women working in education and healthcare in total female employment varies from 27 percent in Tajikistan to 58 percent in Kyrgyzstan. As a result, despite the lower female employment rates, women's presence in these sectors is considerable. For example, in Tajikistan women constitute 45 percent of total employment in education and 57 percent of total employment in healthcare. In Kyrgyzstan, these proportions are even higher at 72 percent and 78 percent. Similarly, in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan the female shares in education are 69, 74, and 64 percent and in healthcare 78, 77, and 70 percent of wage workers, respectively.

These sectors are predominantly state-financed and women's presence in them is often connected to the prevalence of women in the public sector. Indeed, whereas the share of women in the private sector employment stands at about 45 percent in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, their share in public sector employment varies from 39 percent in Tajikistan, to 50 percent in Kyrgyzstan, and 59 percent in Kazakhstan (UNECE database). However, even within the public sector there is variation. For example, in

state organizations in Tajikistan the female share is 55.4 percent in social assistance provisioning, but only 19.8 in the customs department (State Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan on Statistics 2010).

Despite its considerable size, the female share in state sector employment has decreased since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This development has been accompanied by the increase in the female presence among NGOs (Ishkanian, 2003), reflecting a duality in the nature of female involvement in the public sector in the Central Asian countries. On the one hand, women are actively involved in the civil society, but, on the other hand, there seems to be very low awareness of the importance of participating in civil society, in particular in local budget processes, among women that are not in the labour force (Esenaliev and Kisunko 2015).

Conversely, women's presence in the private sector has increased over the last two decades. This increase was in part driven by the expansion of the trade sector and the predominance of women in certain subcomponents of it, such as shuttle trading (USAID 2010). Women's role also increased in the hotel and catering sectors. For example, women constitute 61 and 55 percent of workers in trade, hotels and catering in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The corresponding female shares in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are 45 and 34 percent (Women and Men publications).

In addition to industrial segregation patterns, vertical segregation patterns tend to be prevalent as women are underrepresented in decision-making positions such as legislators, senior officials and managers (Table 3). We have discussed the presence of vertical segregation in agriculture. It is also evident in other sectors with considerable female presence, such as education and healthcare, and in the public sector. For example, whereas 48 percent of deputy directors of secondary schools are women, the female share is only 31 percent at the director level (State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics 2007). In Kyrgyzstan, in 2011, despite having higher skill level, only 29.1 percent of managers at state institutions, organizations and enterprises were females (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012, p.88). They are also underrepresented among plant and machine operators and assemblers (Table 1). To some degree, the latter finding may be due to the legislative constraints on the engagement of women in certain occupations and industries in Central Asian countries. For example, in none of these countries are women allowed to work in construction, factories and mining the same way as men do (World Bank 2015).

On the other hand, women are overrepresented among professionals and technicians in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Table 1). Reflecting their growing role in services and trade, they are also overrepresented among clerks and service workers and shop and market sales workers.

**Table 1. Female share in each category (total employment)**

	Kazakhstan (2008)	Kyrgyzstan (2006)	Kazakhstan		Kyrgyzstan	
	Female share in each category		Share in female employment	Share in male employment	Share in female employment	Share in male employment
Total	0.49	0.42	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Legislators, senior officials and managers	0.38	0.35	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.03
Professionals	0.68	0.62	0.18	0.08	0.14	0.06
Technicians and associate professionals	0.65	0.63	0.12	0.06	0.10	0.04
Clerks	0.73	0.74	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	0.67	0.57	0.19	0.09	0.22	0.12
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	0.49	0.41	0.16	0.16	0.33	0.35
Craft and related trade workers	0.23	0.19	0.04	0.14	0.07	0.21
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	0.11	0.03	0.02	0.16	0.00	0.11
Elementary occupations	0.48	0.46	0.20	0.21	0.08	0.07

Source: Laboursta

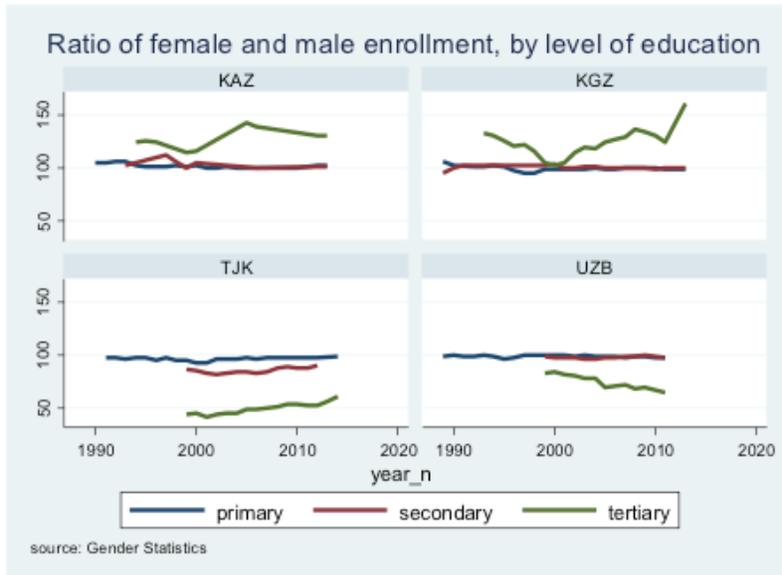
## Education

These patterns of industrial segregation are closely linked to the gender specialization of women at the tertiary education level, itself a vestige of the Soviet legacy. At the primary level, school enrollment rates have been generally high among boys and girls, according to the World Bank data (Figure 11). However, other sources reveal the emergence of worrisome gaps favoring boys already at the primary level. For example, in 2006, the gross enrollment rate was 95.1 percent for boys but only 88.5 percent for girls in Kazakhstan (van Klaveren et al. 2010). The enrollment rates drop with age, and more so among girls than boys. In Tajikistan, the boy to girl ratio increases from 99 for 10 year old to 120 for 16 year olds. By 21 years of age, the enrollment rate of boys is 17 percent and for girls it is only 5.2 percent. The gender gap is especially wide in rural areas. It is also wider among children from affluent families because boys from well-off households are more likely to stay in school compared to girls whereas in poor households enrollment rates drop with age for both boys and girls. Evidence indicates that military conflicts may have also played a role contributing to the widening of the gender gap in enrollment rates. For example, Shemyakina (2011) finds that the Civil War in Tajikistan led to a decline in the educational attainment of girls. Re-emergence of traditional norms may too have been a factor. Despite these differences in the educational attainment and the worsening sex ratio, however, there is no evidence that girls are discriminated against boys in consumption expenditures (Pena 2012).

Notably, test results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that girls tend to outperform boys in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, with the gap being smaller in mathematics and

larger in reading and science. However, the gap varies across the performance distribution: it is large favouring girls at the lower end and either disappears or favours boys among the top-performing children, especially in mathematics. If it is the case that top-performing children are more likely to achieve positions of power, the relatively stronger performance of boys at the top of the distribution can play a role in perpetuating male dominance in the public and private spheres (Stoet and Geary 2015).

**Figure 11. Trends in the Ratio of Female-to-Male Enrollment**



At the tertiary level, women currently represent the majority of students in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, similar to other countries of the former Soviet Union and the female to male enrollment ratio has increased in recent years. This increase has been particularly sharp in Kyrgyzstan, as the ratio increased from parity at 101.4 percent to 161.3 between 2000 and 2013. Complementing this observation, Brück and Esenaliev (2013) find that, compared to older cohorts, young women in Kyrgyzstan are more likely to obtain higher levels of education than their parents.

Unlike the rest of the former Soviet Union, in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, it is young men who represent the majority of students at the tertiary level although in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan the ratio of female to male enrollment has moved closer to parity in recent years. In Tajikistan, it increased from 44.8 to 61 percent between 2000 and 2014 (World Bank 2013). In Turkmenistan it went up from 47 percent during 2000-2009 to 64 percent in 2014 (ILO 2010b). On the other hand, in Uzbekistan, it fell sharply from 83.9 to 64.7 percent between 2000 and 2011, a worrisome development. Hence, there is

considerable variation in the changes in the female to male enrollment ratio, highlighting the importance of understanding country-specific context.

In all countries of the Central Asian region, women are concentrated in education and healthcare subjects, and somewhat less so in economics and social sciences. For example, in Kazakhstan, about 80 percent of graduates in education and healthcare are female (Women and Men publications). In Kyrgyzstan, these percentages are 80 and 66 (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012). In Uzbekistan, the female share of graduates in education is about 60 percent, in healthcare it is about 50 percent, and in economics and social sciences it is only 24 percent (these shares have been decreasing in Uzbekistan). Reflecting the overall low females share in tertiary education, in Tajikistan, women constitute only 39 percent of graduates in education, about 30 percent of graduates in healthcare, and only 24 percent of graduates in economics and social sciences<sup>9</sup> (State Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan on Statistics 2010). These gender patterns largely mirror industrial and occupational segregation patterns. The importance of this fact is underscored by the well-established finding that gender differences in the fields of study translate into gender differences in labour market outcomes in the form of industrial segregation and gender wage gaps (Flabbi 2011).

One of the most pressing labour market challenges in the Central Asian region lies in low youth labour force participation (Figure 3) and high youth unemployment rates. In this context, facilitating school to work transition is seen as a key step to addressing this challenge. In Kyrgyzstan, young men are more likely to complete the school to work transition whereas young women are more likely to withdraw from school and from the labour force right after graduating to start families and take care of their households (Elder et al. 2015). Over 40 percent of employed youth works as contributing family workers primarily in agriculture, with higher shares among young women than young men and much higher than the 8.9 percent among working-age men and 19.1 percent among working-age women (Figure 6). In addition, more young workers are engaged in irregular than in “regular” work, i.e. work for pay with a contract of at least one year in Kyrgyzstan with sharp gender differences. In fact, only 14.3 percent of young women as opposed to 25.4 percent of young men are employed in regular work, the largest gap among the former Soviet Union countries (Elder et al. 2015). Moreover, proportionately more women work fewer hours: 64.6 percent of men compared to 50.6 percent of women work more than 30 hours. Finally, a larger proportion of young women than men are neither employed nor in education or training (NEET): 7.5 percent of young men and 22.7 percent of young women, the second largest gap after Armenia (Elder et al. 2015). These

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<sup>9</sup> Refers to the proportion of currently enrolled students.

patterns present a picture of a highly underutilized young generation, in which labour-market-related gender gaps are perpetuated.

## Pay gaps

The patterns of industrial segregation by gender and gender specialization in tertiary education have contributed to the presence of gender wage gaps<sup>10</sup> in Central Asian countries. There is considerable variation in the estimates depending on the earnings measure and the data source. For example, in Tajikistan, the UNECE database indicates the gap of 50.9 percent in 2013 (Table 2). However, for the same year, its value is 46 percent when using the gender earned income gap (WEF 2015). According to Johnes (2002), the gender wage gap contracted from 55 percent to about 51 percent between 1999 and 2003. The UNECE database suggests that it decreased further to 38.7 percent in 2008, before increasing to 50.9 percent by 2011 (UNECE data). We note that the 2003 value of 51 percent in Johnes (2002) is substantially higher than the value of 27.2 percent reported in the UNECE database (Figure 12).

**Table 2.** Gender Pay Gap and Gender Earned Income Gap

	Gender Pay Gap (UNECE data; most recent year)	Gender Earned Income Gap (WEF 2015)	Wage Equality for Similar Work, F/M ratio (WEF 2015)
Kazakhstan	6.8	42	.71
Kyrgyz Republic	26.7 <sup>1</sup>	46	.72
Tajikistan	50.9 <sup>2</sup>	37	.71
Turkmenistan		33	
Uzbekistan		34	

Notes:<sup>1</sup> 2012; <sup>2</sup> 2013; <sup>3</sup> 2011

According to the UNECE dataset, Kazakhstan stands out as a country with a very low and declining gender wage gap that reached 6.8 percent in 2012 (Figure 12, UNECE data). However, a number of other sources find the gender wage gap in monthly wages is above 30 percent and that it decreased from 39.3 to 31.4 percent between 2003 and 2008 (van Klaveren et al. 2010; Men and Women in Kazakhstan, 2011). Using hourly wages the gap was 47.8 percent in 2003 (Staneva et al. 2010) and 19.4 percent in 2009 (Blunch 2010).

<sup>10</sup> We define the gender pay gap as the difference between men's and women's average earnings from employment expressed as a percentage of men's average earnings.

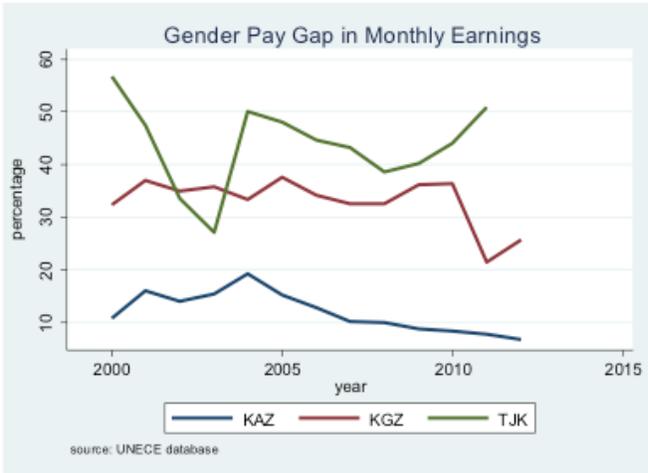
On the other hand, the relatively stable gap observed in Kyrgyzstan between 2000 and 2010 is confirmed by all available sources (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012; UNECE database; WECF 2014). The gap increased from 32.4 percent in 2000 to 36.4 percent in 2010, after which it sharply dropped. More recent evidence from Kyrgyzstan from 2013 points to the further lowering of the gender earnings gap (including self-employed workers) to about 19 percent (Anderson et al. 2015).

There is paucity of data on wage gaps in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Data based on a survey of Turkmen self-employed individuals, which includes small business employers and own account workers, indicates that the income gap among own-account workers is about 36 percent (UNDP 2008). On the other hand, among small business owners, women’s earnings are 30 percent more than men’s earnings.

It is notable that the gender wage gap appears to be smaller among young workers in the region. For example, Baumann et al. (2013) find that the gap among young wage and salaried workers in Kyrgyzstan is 23 percent and Elder et al. (2015) indicate that it is negligible. Hence, even though labour-market-related gender gaps among young workers remain substantial, there might be some indications of changing gender dynamics.

There is also variation by firm size. For example, in Kazakhstan, the gap is narrower at small enterprises than at large enterprises, 66.3 percent versus 89.8 percent, which is mainly explained by men’s wages in small enterprises being substantially lower than in large and medium enterprises. In addition, there are large regional differences in the magnitude of the gap from 15.6 percent in North Kazakhstan to 50 percent in Mangistauskaya region (Men and Women in Kazakhstan, 2011). Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, the gap varies from 26.6 percent in Bishkek to 47 percent in Jalal Abad in 2010 (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012).

**Figure 12. Gender Pay Gap**



Gender wage gaps in the Central Asian countries also vary by industry. For example, in Kazakhstan the gap ranges from 59 percent in accommodation and food services to 91 percent in education. Moreover, industrial segregation has been shown to contribute to the presence of the gender wage gap in Kazakhstan (Van Klaveren et al. 2010). Similarly, in Turkmenistan UNDP (2008) attributes the gender gap among entrepreneurs to different industries in which men and women operate. Anderson et al. (2015) find that in Kyrgyzstan in 2013 the higher proportion of women in wage employment contributed to widening the gender earnings gap, likely to women's stronger presence in the lower remunerated public sector.

In Tajikistan, not only industrial segregation but gender differences in education and occupations also contributed to the gap. On the other hand, in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the greater proportion of women with tertiary education has a contracting influence on the gap. In fact, in Kazakhstan, gender differences in endowments (e.g., industry, occupation, education, and experience) jointly reduce the gender wage gap (Blunch 2010) and occupational segregation does not contribute to it (Van Klaveren et al. 2010).

Beyond the analysis of the gap at the mean of the distribution, the gender wage gap is the highest at the right tail of the distribution, potentially indicative of the glass ceiling effect (Anderson et al. 2015).

Despite considerable variations in the gender wage gaps and their trends, the common finding is that the majority of the gap in Central Asian countries is unexplained, arguably due to unaccounted factors and discrimination in the labour markets (Anderson et al. 2015; Anderson and Pomfret 2003; Sattar 2012).

There are several important caveats that must be taken into account when interpreting the evidence on the gender earnings gaps. For example, gender gaps in monthly earnings are a common measure of gender pay gap. However, this measure can overestimate the magnitude of the gap to the extent that women work fewer hours (Brainerd 1998). Moreover, gender pay gaps are commonly measured using wage income of employees. As such, the analysis of gender pay gaps provide only a partial picture of the gender earnings gaps in countries in which wage employment is not the dominant form of employment, as is the case for most Central Asian countries (with the exception of Kazakhstan). Furthermore, agriculture plays a sizable role in employment, employing more than a quarter of the workforce, and its role is especially large in self-employment, for which the measurement of income is particularly problematic.

## **Unpaid work and care**

One factor that has played a role in influencing women's ability to engage in labour markets as wage workers and entrepreneurs is unpaid work constraints. Similar to other countries in the world, women in

Central Asia carry most of the burden of domestic and care responsibilities. This is clearly demonstrated by time use surveys, which shed light on the gender distribution of unpaid and paid work time. Women spend between 1.5 and 4 times as much time as men on unpaid work, with the gap being the lowest in Kazakhstan and highest in Uzbekistan (Table 3). On the other hand, men spend more time than women on paid work and the gender gap in paid work time is similar across the Central Asian region. In total, women and men in Kazakhstan spend about the same amount of time working in paid and unpaid activities, whereas in Kyrgyzstan, women spend between 10 and 20 percent more time working than men, higher than the OECD average of five percent.

**Table 3. Paid and Unpaid Work Time, Daily Hours**

Time Use	Men	Women	FM Ratio
<i>Paid work and study</i>			
Kyrgyz Republic (2005)	6	4	0.67
Kyrgyz Republic (2010)	5	3.6	0.72
Kyrgyz Republic (2010) only employed and only paid work (p.85)	5.1	4.6	
Kazakhstan (2006)	5	3	0.60
Tajikistan (2003)		3	
OECD 28	5.5	3.6	0.65
<i>Unpaid work</i>			
Kyrgyz Republic (2005)	2	5	2.5
Kyrgyz Republic (2010)	2.2	4.8	2.2
Kazakhstan (2006)	4	6	1.5
Tajikistan (2003)		11.2	
Tajikistan (2007)		4.6	
Uzbekistan (2006)	1.02	3.98	3.9
OECD 28	2.3	4.6	2.0
<i>Childcare, main activity</i>			
Kyrgyz Republic (2010)	0.6	1.4	2.3
Uzbekistan (2006) [care]	0.37	0.98	2.6
<i>Total work</i>			
Kyrgyz Republic (2005)	8	9	1.1
Kyrgyz Republic (2010)	7.2	8.4	1.2
Kazakhstan (2006)	9	9	1
Tajikistan (2003)		14.2	
OECD 28	7.8	8.2	1.05

**Note:** These values correspond to average time spent on activities, which is the product of the participation rate and the average time spent by those undertaking the activity.

**Sources:** OECD 2011; Tajikistan: Meurs and Slavchevska (2014) for 2003 and State Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan on Statistics (2010) for 2007; Kyrgyzstan National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012, p.120, includes Off-work time/hours related to a job, unpaid work includes Work on small holdings, summer cottage, garden; Uzbekistan: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics (2007).

Perhaps not surprisingly, rural men and women spend more time on unpaid work activities than their urban counterparts (except for Kazakhstan) but gender gaps in rural areas are lower (Table 4; Meurs and Slavchevska 2014). This finding does not necessarily imply a more equal sharing of household responsibilities in rural areas but rather may be a reflection of the greater degree of gender specialization in unpaid work activities (Walker et al. 2014) as women tend to spend more time on cooking, cleaning and care whereas men engage in house and property maintenance.

Similar to rural/urban differences in other domestic responsibilities, rural women in Kyrgyzstan and, to some extent, in Uzbekistan spend more time on childcare. However, the opposite holds in Tajikistan (Table 4). This may be because poor infrastructure constrains their non-care related time use (hence they spend more time on non-care activities), but, as a result, their care time suffers (Meurs and Slavchevska 2014). We note however that urban/rural comparisons in childcare have to be made with caution, especially when considering primary childcare time. This is because the share of secondary childcare (i.e., childcare that takes place while parents are primarily involved in other activities) may be higher in rural areas if mothers are engaged in activities, such as tending to a garden plot, which better allow for supervisory childcare (Short, et al. 2002).

**Table 4.** Rural/Urban Breakdown of Time Use, Daily Hours

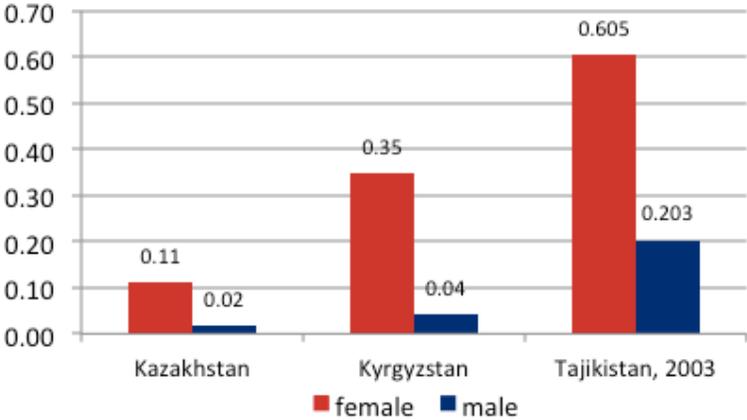
	rural			urban		
	Men	Women	FM ratio	Men	Women	FM ratio
<b>Kazakhstan</b>						
Kazakhstan (2005) GWANET						
Paid work, no study	4.6	3.9	0.85			
Unpaid work, including care	1.3	2.9	2.23			
Care	0.2	0.95	4.75			
Total	5.95	6.8	1.13			
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>						
Kyrgyzstan (2010)						
Paid work and study	4.2	2.8	0.7	5.7	4.1	0.7
Only paid work, only employed (p.85)	4.6	4.0	0.9	6.1	5.8	0.95
Unpaid work, including care	3.0	5.5	1.8	1.6	4.3	2.7
Care	0.8	1.9	2.0	0.5	1.1	2.2
Total	7.2	8.3	1.2	7.3	8.4	1.2
Kyrgyzstan (2005)						
Paid work, no study	3.3	1.52	0.46			
Unpaid work, including care	2.3	4.97	2.16			
Care	0.1	.89	8.90			
Total	5.6	6.5	1.16			

<b>Tajikistan</b>						
Tajikistan (2003)						
Paid work (employment, excluding subsistence agriculture)	3.5			1.8		
Unpaid work (housework only)	5.5			6.5		
Care	4.0			5.8		
Total	9			8.3		
Tajikistan (2007)						
Unpaid work (housework, including care)	4.6			4.6		
Care	0.9			1.6		
Tajikistan (GWANET, 2005)						
Paid work (no study)	4.8	1.9	0.40			
Unpaid work, including care	1.6	5.3	3.31			
Care	0.01	2.0	200			
Total	6.4	7.2	1.1			
<b>Turkmenistan</b>						
Turkmenistan (2005) GWANET						
Paid work (including domestic plots)	5.7	3.2	0.56			
Unpaid work, including care	0.8	4.9	6.15			
Care	0.1	1.35	13.1			
Total	6.5	8.1	1.3			
<b>Uzbekistan</b>						
Uzbekistan (2006)						
Unpaid work, including care	0.95	4.02	4.2	1.1	3.93	3.6
Care	0.37	1.00	2.7	0.37	0.93	2.5

**Sources:** Tajikistan: Meurs and Slavchesvka (2014) for 2003, GWANET (2005) for 2005, State Committee of the Republic of Tajikistan on Statistics (2010) for 2007; Kyrgyzstan: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2012), p.120; Kazakhstan: GWANET 2005; Kyrgyzstan: GWANET for 2005 and workshop presentation for 2010; Turkmenistan: GWANET survey for 2005; Uzbekistan: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics (2007); GWANET surveys were conducted in selected rural areas and are not representative of rural populations in these countries.

The extent to which care and domestic responsibilities constrain women's engagement in employment and entrepreneurship in the countries of the Central Asian region needs careful assessment. The available evidence from the Central Asian region reveals that the share of inactive women who report domestic responsibilities as the primary reason for their inactivity varies from 11 percent in Kazakhstan to 60.5 percent in Tajikistan (Figure 13). On the other hand, except for Tajikistan, this share is negligible for men. Even once employed, women continue to face domestic and care responsibilities. This is evidenced by their higher number of lost working days due to temporary disability, such as taking care of sick children (see Maltseva 2007 for the evidence on Tajikistan).

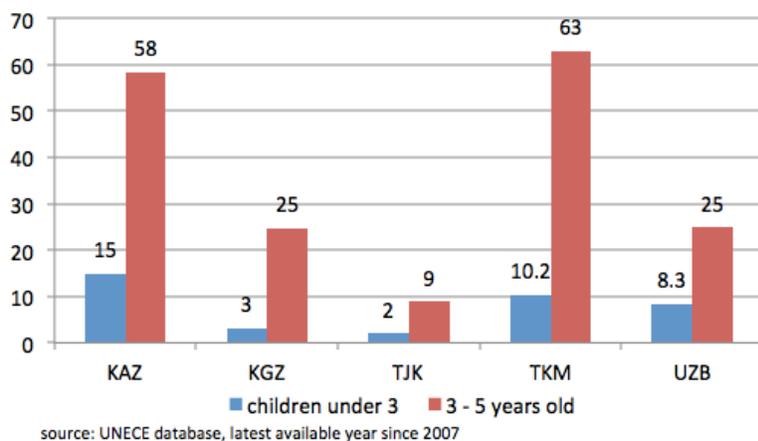
**Figure 13. Share of Inactive Population due to Domestic Responsibilities.**



source: Falkingham and Baschieri (2004) and UNECE database, for 2012

Some of the country-based variation is likely due to the differences in the available social infrastructure and the affordability of market substitutes. For example, OECD (2012) finds that the “lack of support for motherhood is hurting women’s career prospects, despite gains in education and employment” and “[c]ountries with the smallest gender gap in unpaid work are those which have the highest female employment rates” (OECD 2012). One way of interpreting this finding is that by alleviating women’s responsibilities and reducing the gap in unpaid work, social infrastructure may be contributing to raising women’s employment rates. Indeed, there appears to be a positive relationship between the female labour force participation and the availability of childcare in Central Asia. For example, a steady increase in pre-school enrollment rates for children under three from the low of 4.5 percent during 2001-2002 school year to 15 percent in 2012-2013 in Kazakhstan has been associated with an increase in the female labour force participation rate. Nevertheless, this relationship is not clear-cut. In fact, Turkmenistan stands out as a country with some of the lowest labour force participation rates in the region but some of the highest enrollment rates for pre-school children (Figure 14).

**Figure 14. School Enrollment Rates, by Age**



The coverage also varies within the countries. For example, in Kazakhstan, whereas the overall coverage rate for 1-6 year-olds was 26 percent in 2010, it was only 7.6 percent in Almatinskaya region and as high as 54.4 percent in Pavlodarskaya region (Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics 2011, p.64). In Kyrgyzstan, the coverage of 1-6 year-olds in 2010 was 14.5 percent and was higher in urban areas at 29.9 percent and under 8 percent in rural areas (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012). The latter finding may appear to contradict the lower female labour force participation of women observed in urban areas. However, the lack of social infrastructure in rural areas is less likely to negatively influence female involvement in the labour market. This is because agricultural self-employment, which is a dominant form of employment in rural areas, may allow women to combine work with supervisory childcare, something that may not be possible with the more dominant wage employment in urban areas (Short et al. 2002). Nevertheless, rural women in Central Asia feel that improvements in social care infrastructure and the “creation of kindergartens would create more opportunities for them” (WECF 2014a).

Indeed, a comprehensive review of policies aimed at raising women’s economic empowerment finds that programs providing access to affordable and reliable childcare, childcare subsidies, and public childcare provisioning are an effective approach for improving women’s labour market outcomes and earnings in developing and transition economies (Buvinić et al. 2013). Evidence is also supportive of the employment-increasing impact of publicly provided pre-school programs (Haeck et al. 2015). Such programmes have the additional benefit of direct employment creation and the accompanying increase in the demand for supporting jobs. İlkkaracan et al. (2015) and Antonopoulos and Kim (2011) investigate the direct and indirect effects of social care sector expansion and find that it supports decent employment creation, generates pro-women job allocation, and reduces poverty. The effect of childcare provisioning is

positive not only on paid female employment, but also on female entrepreneurship, as it allows women to expand their businesses and hence address the small size constraint, which is one of the main reasons for the weaker performance of female-owned businesses (Johnson 2005, cited in Kabeer 2012). Therefore, policies supporting the development of the childcare support network can play a considerable role in increasing female wage employment and entrepreneurship.

## Migration

A crucial coping strategy for dealing with the lack of income-earning opportunities, migration has fundamentally shifted the labour market landscape of Central Asia countries and affected its gender balance. Initially, the collapse of the Soviet Union was associated with the movement of ethnic Russians out of Central Asia and forced migration triggered by military conflicts. But over the last two decades, labour migration has become its dominant form, with the Russian Federation the main recipient country, followed by Kazakhstan. These flows can be explained by growing populations combined with limited employment opportunities in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and contracting populations together with labour shortages in some sectors of the economies of Kazakhstan and Russia. Within countries, regions with higher poverty tend to have higher migration rates, underscoring the push nature of migration. Net migration from Kazakhstan is relatively small because of large migrant in-flows from other Central Asia countries. The net migration rate in 2009 was 3.3 per 1,000 of population (55,000 out-migrating) (van Klaveren, et al. 2010). On the other hand, in Uzbekistan, by some estimates, 7-8 percent of the labour force are migrants working abroad. In Kyrgyzstan, 14 percent of households in 2007 had at least one migrant household member, primarily in the southern part of the country. In Tajikistan, 37 percent of households had at least one migrant member, with 98 percent of migrants working in the Russian Federation (Golunov, 2008). As a result, remittance flows have become a lifeline sustaining domestic economies, a fact that became all too visible during the 2008 financial crisis, during which remittance flows dwindled, worsening the recession in these countries. The current volume of remittances remains considerable, at 49 percent of GDP in Tajikistan, 29 percent in Kyrgyzstan, and 13 percent in Tajikistan (Anichkova 2012).<sup>11</sup>

Until recently, labour migration from Central Asia has been primarily viewed as a male phenomenon, due to the nature of demand in host countries and the dominant “male breadwinner” family model in Central Asia. For example, about 40 percent of migrant workers in Russia were employed in the male-dominated construction in 2007, followed by 19 percent in trade, and 14 percent in agriculture and food processing (Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation). As a result, by some estimates, 95.3

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<sup>11</sup> Data for Turkmenistan is unavailable.

percent of migrants from Tajikistan to Russia are male (Golunov, 2008; Abdulloev et al. 2014). Among Tajik migrants to Russia and Kazakhstan, by some estimates, 88 percent are men, often seasonal workers leaving in the spring and returning in the winter, and the majority of Kyrgyz migrants are men (WECF 2014).

However, official estimates for 2010 indicate that 49.6 of migrants were women (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012, p.56). The 2008 crisis contributed to the rise in the proportion of female migrants. In particular, as remittance flows to Tajikistan fell by 30 percent, the share of women among Tajik migrants almost doubled from 6.61 percent in 2007 to 13.01 percent in 2009 (Danzer and Ivaschenko 2010). This has been in part attributed to the increased household need to diversify income sources.

In addition, recent trends show the increased feminization of migrant flows due to the rising demand for service-sector jobs and the recession-induced drop in construction employment. In particular, the demand for domestic and care workers increased with women being their overwhelming majority – 90 percent in Russia and 74 percent in Kazakhstan (Karachurina et al. 2014), including both internal and foreign migrants. A large proportion of migrant domestic workers are undocumented. For example, the share of migrant domestic workers with valid migration cards was 61 percent in Russia and only 42 percent in Kazakhstan.

In part for this reason, female shares in total stock of migrants are believed to be substantially underestimated. For example, official estimates suggest that women comprise 14 percent of migrant flows in Russia (Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation), but other sources put the figure closer to 30 percent (Tyuryukanova 2011). Women are more likely to be employed informally without official contracts not only in domestic work but in all occupations. Evidence suggests that whereas migrant Tajik women in Russia are more likely to register than men (83.3 percent versus 74.7 percent), they are less likely to engage in employment with a written contract (73.3 percent of females do not have a contract, compared to 25.6 percent of men) (ILO 2010a). Women are also more likely to be victims of human trafficking, remaining largely invisible in official statistics. Therefore, different analytical tools are needed to better capture their situation (UNIFEM 2009).

Migrants from Central Asia tend to be engaged in unskilled occupations. This can be in part explained by the nature of labour demand in the recipient countries and, increasingly so, by the lower skills composition of migrants. In recent years, the proportion of migrants with tertiary education dropped from 21 percent in 2002 to only 12 percent in 2011 (EDB and UNDP 2015) Indeed, studies demonstrate that migration is the more likely outcome for low-skilled workers in Tajikistan whereas professional workers are more likely to engage in informal activities (Abdulloev et al. 2012). However, the characteristics of the

labour demand in recipient countries play a crucial role. For example, even though many female migrants have higher or vocational education, they are employed in low-skilled occupations in domestic work (UNIFEM, 2009). Indeed, domestic workers are among the most educated labour migrants in Russia and Kyrgyzstan (Karachurina et al. 2014). At the same time, there appear to be particular niches in high-skilled occupations that migrants have successfully entered. For example, labour migrants from Kazakhstan tend to be high-skilled workers, many of whom work in the manufacturing sector in Siberia (Golunov, 2008). Kyrgyz doctors have increasingly migrated to Russia in search of better earnings opportunities (Mambetalieva, 2007).

Although migration has been a coping response to poor labour market environment, it has in turn profoundly affected labour markets in Central Asian countries and their gender balance. For example, migrant remittances in Tajikistan have been shown to increase the probability of male self-employment, without any impact on female employment. This potentially implies that men are better able to capitalize on remittances than women (Piracha et al. 2013). At the same time, however, male labour force participation rates and work hours in Tajikistan decrease due to migration more so than their female counterparts (Abdulloev et al. 2014; Justino and Shemyakina 2012).

Migration has also had implications for household dynamics. For example, women have picked up a greater share of the household responsibilities previously carried out by the migrant household member (as evidence from Moldova suggests, Görlich et al. 2007). Due to migration, women in Central Asia take on tasks such as “fieldworks, animal care, children upbringing, and household chores” (WECF 2014a) and women in households abandoned by migrants are more involved in unpaid work activities than other women (OSCE 2012).

The impact of migration on individual and household well-being has been multi-faceted. On the one hand, it has played a substantial role in reducing poverty. For example, migrant remittances have reduced poverty rates in the Kyrgyz Republic by 6-7 percentage points (UNDP 2015) and played a positive role in child growth in Tajikistan by improving the nutritional intake of households (Azzari and Zezza 2011). In Tajikistan women in households with migrants have achieved higher levels of education (Abdulloev et al. 2014).

However, migration has also had disruptive effects on family life, with asymmetric gender impact on migrants and family members who stay behind. Between 230,000 and 288,000 households in Tajikistan can be considered economically abandoned and live at or below the poverty line, and more than 70 percent of them consist of married women with children (OSCE 2012). Up to 30 percent of married migrant men from Tajikistan do not return home (IOM 2009). The majority of abandoned women report being

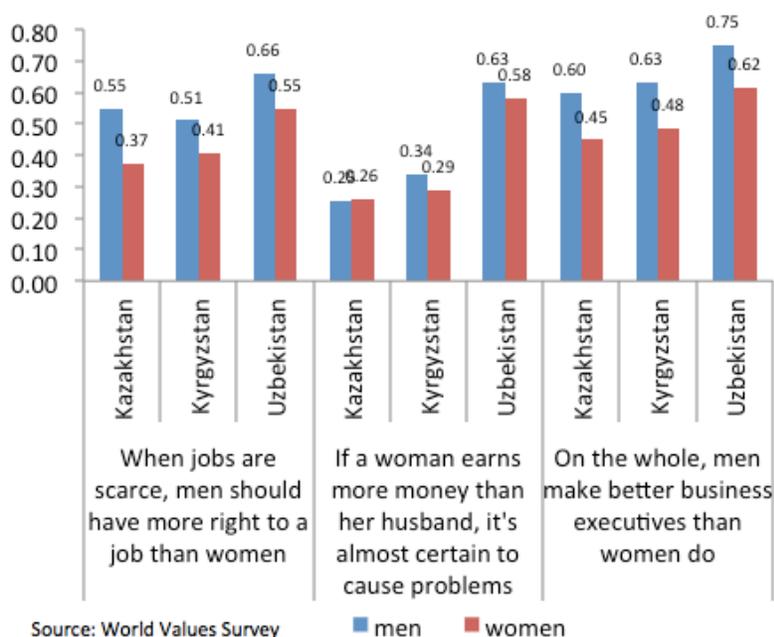
worse off as a result of their spouses' migration and are twice as financially vulnerable as other women (OSCE 2012). Even in households that economically benefit from migration, children's psychological well-being has been affected by the absence of a parent (UNICEF 2011).

This evidence highlights the complexity in the way in which migration has influenced the gender dynamics of labor markets and household well-being in Central Asian countries.

## Social Institutions, Legislative Framework and Policy-Making

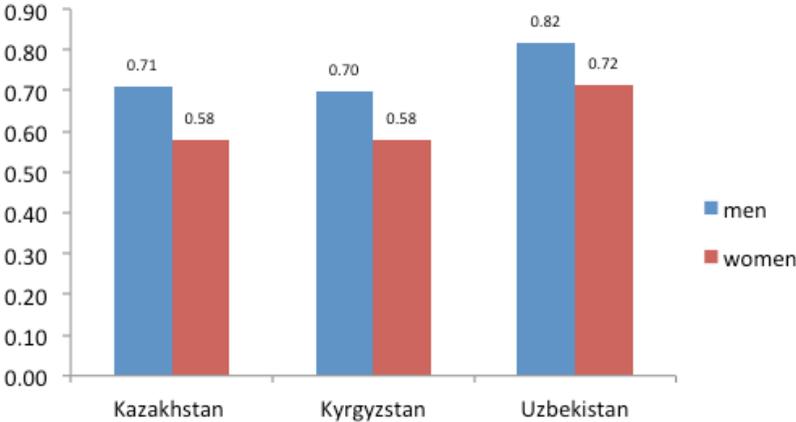
Underlying the gender inequalities in labour markets are social norms and customs. Norms on female role in the household and male role as breadwinners affect women and men's labour market participation choices, the types of jobs they seek, and their ability to establish and run firms. For example, more than half of men and more than a third of women in Central Asian countries believe that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women (Figure 15). Close to a third or more of men and women believe that if a woman earns more than her husband this may cause marital strife; close to half or more of men and women believe that men make better business executives. Notably, women tend to hold less conservative views than men. These proportions are substantially higher in Uzbekistan than in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, indicative of its more traditional norms. Such attitudes towards gender roles in society are bound to influence men and women's labour market choices as workers and entrepreneurs, potentially reinforcing gender inequalities demonstrated in this analysis.

**Figure 15. Gender Norms with Respect to Engagement in Labour Markets.**



Addressing these inequalities will require strong political will and greater female involvement in public life. As already indicated, women have been active participants in the non-governmental sector of Central Asian societies, taking on causes such as maternal healthcare, business training, and climate change (Ishkanian, 2003). But implementing these changes will necessitate greater female participation in the political process, which women have eschewed in part due to social norms, as politics are viewed to be “men’s work” and corrupt (Ishkanian, 2003). Most people also believe that men make better political leaders than women – for example, about 70 percent of men and 58 percent of women hold this view in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In Uzbekistan, consistent with other observed patterns, these proportions are even higher, 82 percent of men and 72 percent of women subscribing to this view (Figure 16).

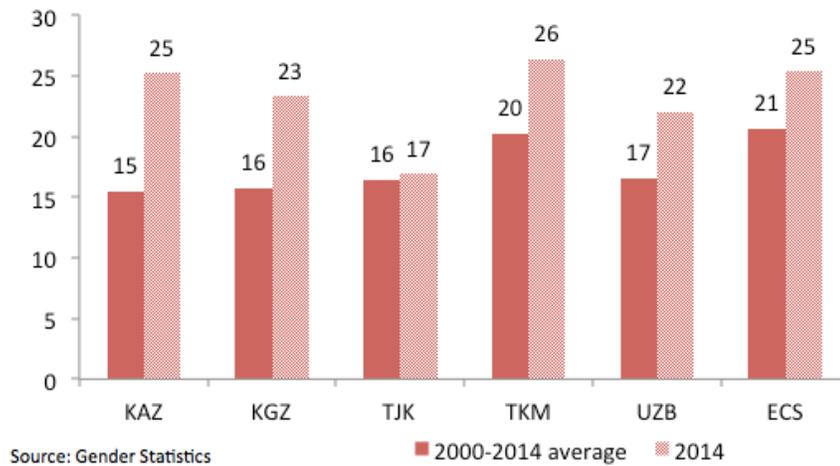
**Figure 16** Percentage that agree that on the whole, men make better political leaders than women do



Source: World Values Survey

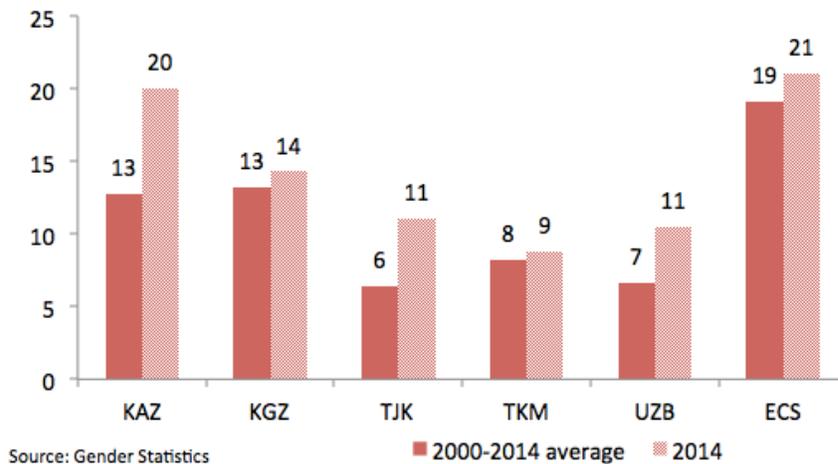
As a result, although no legal restrictions exist, during 2000-2014 the proportion of seats held by women in parliaments was below the average for the Europe and Central Asia region (Figure 17). Nevertheless, this figure increased and, by 2014 it was at or above the ECA average in two out of the five countries. At the ministerial level, the proportion of women is considerably below the ECA average. However, similar to female parliamentarians, the proportion of female ministers has increased in all countries of Central Asia (Figure 18). These are positive development although it remains to be seen how sustainable they will be.

**Figure 17. Proportion of Seats Held by Women in National Parliaments.**



In state structures, the types of positions that men and women hold vary. For example, in 2011, in Kyrgyzstan, the female share of civil servants in the state sector was a respectable 39.8 percent. But 40.6 percent of these women were in administrative positions and only 25.5 percent in political and special positions (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012). At the municipal level, the female share is 33.1 percent – with only 4.2 percent of women in political municipal positions and 34.8 percent in administrative municipal positions. Out of 48 ministries and agencies, 26 had no women in political and special positions (National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic 2012, p.105). In Tajikistan, in 2008, out of 23 ministries and agencies, the female share in supervisory/managerial positions was less than 10 percent in 11 of them and five had no women at all.

**Figure 18. Proportion of women in ministerial level positions (%)**



Further reinforcing gender inequalities in Central Asia is gender-related discriminatory legislation in the labour market, which itself can be shaped by perceptions about gender roles and in some cases is a remnant of the Soviet past (Tables 5 and 6). Uzbekistan is the only Central Asian country, which has the law that mandates equal remuneration for work of equal value and nondiscrimination based on gender in hiring (Table 5). Furthermore, all countries of the region contain legislation that place restrictions on the type of jobs in which women work in all Central Asian countries as women cannot do the same jobs as men or do the same job-related tasks as men. These restrictions are linked to the Soviet-era labour regulations preventing women from engaging in “unsuitable” and hazardous occupations. World Bank (2016) finds that they have contributed to lowering women’s earnings potential in the region and, as a result, to the gender wage gap in earnings.

**Table 5. Gender-related legislation in the labour market**

Economy	Does the law mandate...	
	...equal remuneration for work of equal value?	...nondiscrimination based on gender in hiring?
Kazakhstan	No	Yes
Kyrgyz Republic	No	No
Tajikistan	Yes	Yes
Uzbekistan	No	No

Source: Women, Business and Law 2016 database.

**Table 6. Gender-related legislation in the labour market**

Economy	Can nonpregnant and nonnursing women											
	Work the same night hours as men?	Do the same jobs as men?	Work in jobs deemed hazardous in the same way as men?	Work in jobs deemed morally or socially inappropriate in the same way as men?	Work in jobs deemed arduous in the same way as men?	Work in mining in the same way as men?	Work in factories in the same way as men?	Work in construction in the same way as men?	Work in the same occupations as men?	Work in metalworking in the same way as men?	Engage in jobs requiring lifting weights above a threshold in the same way as men?	Do the same job-related tasks as men?
Kazakhstan	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Kyrgyz Republic	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Tajikistan	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Uzbekistan	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: Women, Business and Law 2016 database.

Finally, incorporating a more nuanced and evidence-based understanding of gender dynamics into policy-making can be crucial in more effectively reducing gender inequalities. For example, household-based analyses of poverty often overlook gender asymmetries in resource allocation within households.

Using the case of Tajikistan, Falkingham and Baschieri (2009) demonstrate that, if traditions allow men to retain even a portion of their wage income, gender gaps in poverty rates widen: a 20 percent retention of men's wage income results in women experiencing a poverty rate 10 percentage points higher than that of men. Hence, poverty-reduction strategies would need to broaden their target population to increase their effectiveness. Moreover, changing gender dynamics will require a comprehensive approach that accounts for household dynamics in decision-making. For example, Meurs and Giddings (2012) highlight that is fairly common in Central Asia for the eldest woman in the household to be influential in choosing healthcare services that expectant mothers receive. Therefore, policies aimed at improving maternal health outcomes must target not only pregnant women but their households as well.

## Social protection systems

Gender inequalities in labour markets are integrally connected with gender differences in access to social protection systems. Large informal shares of the economies of Central Asia coupled with strong migration outflows have put considerable strain on contributory pension schemes and have led to large parts of the population not being covered by social protection schemes. In fact, the coverage of social assistance and social insurance programmes in Central Asia has been limited compared to other countries of the former Soviet Union. It is the highest in Kazakhstan, with 31 percent of population covered by social assistance programmes and 28 percent covered by social insurance programmes (e.g. pensions). However, in Kyrgyzstan, these proportions are only 8.5 percent and 30.5 percent, and in Tajikistan, they are 10 percent and 34 percent, respectively. In addition to the large size of the informal sector, the low coverage is also due to agricultural workers in *dehkans* being outside of the social protection system (Mikkonen-Jeanneret et al. 2016). Furthermore, the poverty and inequality-reducing impact of social assistance and social insurance programmes in Kazakhstan and especially in Tajikistan has been small. The small impact in Tajikistan has been attributed to both inadequate resources and poor targeting (World Bank 2014b). On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan achieved a modest 41 percent reduction in the poverty headcount ratio from social insurance schemes (World Bank Aspire database).

Migration remittances have buffered the poor state of social protection infrastructure, as have traditional informal safety nets, such as *mahalla*. However, these arrangements must not serve as a substitute for a formal social protection system whose mandate is to ensure effective and targeted coverage.

Women and men in Central Asia face different constraints in accessing and utilizing resources and in participating in labour markets. In particular, their pensions are affected by their lower labour force

participation rates, involvement in low-remunerated service industries, and high rates of self-employment in agriculture as contributing family workers. Furthermore, limited childcare provisioning in Central Asian countries may be another contributing factor, preventing women from participating in formal wage employment and further limiting women's access to social protection (FAO 2015). Therefore, the design and implementation of social protection programmes should acknowledge these constraints.

## Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated that gender inequalities in labour markets remain pervasive and, in some cases, have worsened in Central Asian economies. Proportionately fewer women participate in labour markets and they are more likely to engage in precarious forms of employment. In countries with a high share of agricultural employment, women are over-represented as contributing family workers. They are also substantially less likely to be entrepreneurs and to hold land titles. They face greater barriers in accessing credit and have weaker networks. Migration in Central Asia has been a male phenomenon, but recent evidence points towards its increased feminization.

Reducing these gender inequalities must become a priority for all countries in the region if they are to achieve inclusive growth, human development and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The achievement of these goals will require a comprehensive evidence-based strategy that expands human choices and capabilities by complementing supply-side interventions with demand-side measures aimed at creating equitable and gainful employment opportunities. Indeed, active measures to enhance women's economic empowerment should be of central concern to the policy dialogue aimed at inclusive growth and poverty and inequality reduction (Çagatay 1998). Such a strategy should include the following elements:

- 1. Improve the productivity and working conditions of agriculture and rural economy:** a large proportion of the workforce in Central Asia is employed in agriculture and in rural areas, working long and unpredictable hours, in unsafe conditions of typically low wages and productivity. Women in rural areas are proportionately more likely to be [unpaid] contributing family workers. They are also less likely to hold land titles and have limited decision-making power. Improving the agricultural productivity, wages and working conditions, and women's access to land will be a key to changing the gender gaps in employment composition in rural areas (SDG 2).
- 2. Address gender gaps in education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels and high specialization by subjects in tertiary education:** Investments in girls' education and nurturing a

- gender-balanced system of tertiary education will be vital for reducing gender-based industrial and occupational segregation (SDG 4; SDG 8).
- 3. Improve women's access and skills for entrepreneurship:** all countries of Central Asia will benefit from efforts that promote women's access to networking opportunities; facilitate women's access to credit through innovative financing and to market information and training in new and digital technologies; and improve women's skills and capacities to start and develop their businesses (SDG 8).
  - 4. Remove legal and regulatory barriers to women's economic empowerment:** although substantial progress has been made, pervasive gender-based occupational restrictions remain, preventing women from engaging in employment and entrepreneurship (SDG 10).
  - 5. Implement policies to address women's care and domestic responsibilities to promote decent employment opportunities, increase productivity and earnings:** reducing women's burden of unpaid care to promote their participation in the labour market and in entrepreneurship has to be an integral part of a strategy to reduce gender inequality (SDGs 5, 8).
  - 6. Place labour migration and remittances, and their gendered implications at the center of the national policy making agenda** (SDGs 5, 8, 10, and 17).
  - 7. Rebuild social protection systems able to play a transformative role in accompanying women's participation to the formal economy.**
  - 8. Support efforts to ensure that an equitable proportion of women are elected and/or appointed to government leadership positions throughout the region.** Ensuring that women participate proportionately in the political process and in leadership positions is essential to addressing gender disparities in the region. In addition, efforts should be made to invite the participation of women in elected and/or appointed positions who reflect the demographic composition of the constituencies they serve.
  - 9. Strengthen national capacities to generate and use sex- and age-disaggregated data for gender analysis:** this is necessary to design gender-responsive macro-economic and social policy and programmes. It is particularly important to address the gaps on data on time use. National statistical agencies must improve data collection to allow full mainstreaming of gender in macroeconomic policies and make the data accessible (SDGs 5, 17).

**10. Include a strong impact evaluation element in proposed policies:** impact evaluation elements (environmental, social and gender) need to be incorporated into policy design. Impact evaluations are key to providing new evidence-based policy frameworks for gender equality.

**11. Address and combat gender stereotypes:** fostering trust in women’s capabilities and building their confidence is key to gender-transformative social change. It is important to support cultural campaigns against sexist stereotypes of women as well as men to generate behavioural patterns that transcend traditional gender roles and result in a more equitable distribution of responsibilities and leadership between the sexes in the workplace, at home and in the community. Promoting women in visible positions of seniority and decision-making in public and private spheres, as well as encouraging men in traditionally female professions, are key to changing social norms and eliminating gender biases in social, economic and political spheres.

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## Appendix

**Table A1. Gender Inequality Index and its components, 2014**

Country	Gender Index	Inequality	Maternal mortality ratio	Adolescent birth rate	Share of seats in parliament	Population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older)	Labour force participation rate (% ages 15 and older)		
	Value	Rank	(deaths per 100,000 live births)	(births per 1,000 women ages 15–19)	(% held by women)	Female	Male	Female	Male
	2014	2014	2013	2010/2015	2014	2005–2014	2005–2014	2013	2013
Kazakhstan	0.267	52	26	29.9	20.1	95.3	98.8	67.7	77.9
Uzbekistan	..	..	36	38.8	16.4	..	..	48.1	75.6
Kyrgyzstan	0.353	67	75	29.3	23.3	94.5	96.8	56.0	79.5
Tajikistan	0.357	69	44	42.8	15.2	95.1	91.2	58.9	77.1
Turkmenistan	..	..	61	18.0	25.8	..	..	46.9	76.9
World	0.449	—	210	47.4	21.8	54.5	65.4	50.3	76.7

Source: UNDP (2015)

**Table A2. Gender Development Index (GDI) and its components, 2014.**

Country	Gender Development Index	Human Development Index (HDI)		Life expectancy at birth (years)		Expected years of schooling (years)		Mean years of schooling (years)		Estimated gross national income per capita (2011 PPP \$)	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Kazakhstan	1.0015	0.7865	0.7853	74.1	64.6	15.4029	14.6539	11.3300	11.5400	15408.17	26746.30
Kyrgyzstan	0.9614	0.6379	0.6635	74.6	66.6	12.6894	12.3371	10.4802	10.5500	2122.02	3991.84
Uzbekistan	0.9451	0.6404	0.6777	71.8	65	11.2728	11.7433	9.5000	9.9000	3810.68	7341.85
Tajikistan	0.9260	0.6000	0.6479	73.2	66.2	10.4981	11.9683	9.5650	11.1904	2014.24	3016.66
Turkmenistan	..	..	..	69.9	61.5	10.5543	11.0472	..	..	8725.06	17551.53
World	0.9236	0.6697	0.7250	73.66637	69.45568	12.1858	12.3960	6.2084	7.8544	10296.19	18372.57

Source: UNDP (2015)