

**UNDP Report “CLOSING THE GAP”**  
**AN OVERVIEW OF UNDP RESULTS IN GENDER EQUALITY**  
**IN EUROPE AND THE CIS in 2014**

Gender equality, women’s empowerment and the realization of women’s rights are critical to sustainable human development. UNDP recognizes the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment across the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. UNDP’s integrated approach tackles the connected issues of multidimensional poverty, inequality and exclusion of both women and men, while enhancing knowledge to reduce vulnerability and sustain development gains. With this in mind, UNDP released a report, which draws on information from UNDP Country Offices in the region (Europe and the CIS) and extensive analysis of reports and documents. The selection of good practices was based on the criteria of measurable, transformative change achieved as a result of UNDP interventions, with potential for replicating and scaling up.

UNDP has achieved tangible results in all thematic areas. It has increased the participation of women in the economy by skills-building and mentoring initiatives, ensuring gender parity in job creation programmes and adopting innovative approaches to stimulate growth. UNDP has promoted women’s access to and control over economic and environmental resources and helped to increase the presence of women in green businesses and energy enterprises. UNDP has championed structural changes to eliminate discriminatory laws and practices in society, such as early marriage. Thanks in part to UNDP interventions women have a stronger representation in decision-making from local councils to national parliaments. This was achieved by enhancing women’s leadership skills and supporting quotas for women in electoral cycles at all levels of government. UNDP has also improved the access of women and girls to basic services by working with government institutions and women’s groups and ensuring the adoption of gender-responsive laws and policies. UNDP has fostered local partnerships that led to the adoption of legislation explicitly addressing sexual and gender-based violence. Finally, UNDP is strengthening its efforts to improve women’s engagement in crisis prevention and building resilience.

As the first such overview in recent years of UNDP initiatives in the region, the report underlines the need for accelerated efforts to overcome the many challenges to gender equality in Europe and CIS through strengthened partnerships with governments, development partners and diverse civil society and women’s organizations. The report includes case studies from Kyrgyzstan, highlighting existing challenges and achieved results in a variety of areas.