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Summary Gender Assessment and Emerging Priorities for Collaborative Projects in Azerbaijan: Final Report

Nuket Kardam, Monterey Institute of International Studies

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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
AZERBAIJAN

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Consultant: Nüket Kardam, Ph.D
INTRODUCTION
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
II. SUMMARY ASSESSMENTS, MEASURES TAKEN, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

1. Gender and Poverty Reduction
   A. Income, employment and wage levels
      1. Employment
      2. Social Pensions
      3. Privatization
   B. Education
   C. Health Care

2. Special Topics
   A. Refugee and IDP women
   B. Trafficked women

3. Democratization, Good Governance and Gender
   A. Civil Society building - Capacity Building for NGOs
   B. Public Sector Reform – Institutionalization of Gender
   C. Rule of Law – Women’s Rights and Gender Equality under the law
      1. Gender based violence
   D. Political Participation in Governance

III. Donor Meeting
IV. Recommendations and lessons learned
V. Project Proposals
VI. Annexes
I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary objective of this mission was to identify areas for potential collaboration among donors/development partners for the promotion of greater gender equality in Azerbaijan. To that effect, bilateral and multilateral donors (embassies and international organizations) located in Baku were visited. (The list of interviewees and organizations are in the annex). During these visits, I inquired about their policies and programs/projects related to gender, as well as future plans in this area, including interest in collaborative projects. Furthermore, gender specialists on the Government, as well as NGO representatives working on gender issues were met and interviewed. These interviews and document reviews form the basis of Section II of this report: Summary Assessments, Measures Taken, and Suggestions for Collaborative Projects. This section addresses three major areas: Poverty Reduction, Special Areas (Refugees and IDPs, and Sex Trafficking), and Good Governance and Democratization. Each of the components within these areas is discussed from a gender perspective, providing a brief assessment of the current situation and measures taken to alleviate any problems. This discussion is not, by any means, comprehensive as that would require much broader and extensive research. But rather the objective is to provide a framework within which new collaborative initiatives may be discussed and planned. After a brief assessment of the situations and existing measures, I provide a section on potential areas for collaborative activities for donors and ideas for new projects and programs.

After the individual interviews were completed and a draft of the above assessment was written, the donors were invited to a meeting where I presented the emerging priority areas. The ensuing discussion led to an agreement to proceed with forming small groups of interested participants in three areas: a) small and medium enterprise development for women, b) food security and c) social pensions and the situation of orphans. These smaller groups had further meetings. The result is three collaborative project proposals in small and medium enterprise development elaborated in Section V of this report.
II. SUMMARY ASSESSMENTS, MEASURES TAKEN, AND EMERGING PRIORITY AREAS FOR DONOR COLLABORATION

1. Gender and Poverty Reduction

The World Bank is currently in the process of assessing the poverty levels in Azerbaijan which will form the basis of the country assistance strategy. The discussions with the government are ongoing and fifteen working parties have just finished drafts of their respective sectoral programs. It is imperative that such research and analysis on poverty reduction be a “gendered” one as it is clear that in all the above areas, women and men are affected differently and they may face a different set of opportunities. To that effect, a gender consultant has been assigned to work with the participants of the poverty reduction process.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (the Interim Report) of the Azerbaijan Republic (May 2001) indicates that the per capita GDP is $664 and in terms of this indicator Azerbaijan is in 98th place among the 189 countries in the world, and in terms of the UN classification, it is among the poor developing countries. The following criteria for evaluating the poverty level have been adopted by international institutions: basic education, health care, nutrition, safe drinking water and sewer systems, as well as income, employment and wage levels. Azerbaijan has a high level only in basic education but lags significantly behind in others. According to the same report, it is necessary to “above all determine and establish the minimum critical poverty line and by means of a large scale survey identify those categories of the population among whom the per capita money income, average monthly wages, pension and subsidies for educational, medical and municipal services falls below this critical line.”¹ This points to a gendered analysis of poverty.

A. Income, Employment and Wage Levels

1. Employment

Situation:
In Azerbaijan, women and men face unequal opportunities in earning incomes, even though the constitution and all other laws treat women and men equally and confer on them equal rights. The HDI for women is lower than for men, mainly because of differences in income.¹ Women’s employment is concentrated in the lower-paying sectors of the economy and their average wages are lower than those of men in all sectors. The employment crisis has hit sectors where women are primarily employed: health, education, social welfare and agriculture. Furthermore, the lack of availability of adequate and affordable childcare may have forced women to drop out of the labor force.²

The labor legislation makes no discrimination on a gender basis. It prohibits refusing to employ women or reducing their wages on grounds of pregnancy. The dismissal of pregnant women or women with young children is prohibited. However, in practice,

² DP/CCF/AZE/2, p. 3
many private businesses prefer to employ men, and in a number of cases laws regulating women’s rights are not observed.

Even in the public health and education spheres where women constitute the majority, average salaries of women are lower than that of men. Women’s wages make up 64.8% and 70.1% of men’s wages respectively. Furthermore, women constitute 33% of those engaged in management positions. Regarding the informal sector, even though there is no statistics, there is evidence that women participate in this sector - in the “shuttle” trade and selling of clothing, fabrics, perfume and other consumer goods.

The HDR Report for Azerbaijan claims that the economic decline between 1991-1994 affected women more adversely than men and that the reduction of employment in many sectors has resulted in the growth of unregistered and hidden unemployment among women. The “new” poor include the youth, the unemployed, refugees and IDPs, employees whose salaries are not paid, and those on indefinite leave. Women constitute the majority of these groups. Among the working age population, 22.1% of women are unemployed, in comparison to 16.2% among men.

Measures Taken:

♦ UNDP/GID project has sponsored research and publications on gender issues in the economy, and women’s employment situation, including statistical information.
♦ A new law was adopted in 1999 on employment further prohibits gender discrimination.
♦ Job fairs were held
♦ Training programs for women’s employment in non-traditional sectors, such as training women bodyguards (IOM) are under way.

Areas of potential collaborative activities:

Policy Process:
♦ Support for Gender mainstreaming in all aspects and stages of the Poverty Reduction Process (this has been under way)
♦ Work with government to initiate affirmative action programs in recruitment and job screening for public sector employees and for private firms with government contracts (as in the United States)
♦ Work with government to provide subsidies for out-of-home care, including vouchers for early childhood development and other child care facilities

Institutional Support:
♦ Establishment of Child Care Centers (to facilitate women’s employment opportunities)
♦ Establishment of employment centers focusing on women’s unemployment and/or expanding service for women addressing specific gender issues in existing employment centers

Research and Analysis:
A gendered analysis of the economy based on systematic data, including an overview of the unemployed women and men who are not covered in official statistics (only those who register with the government’s employment service receive the status of unemployed)

Education and Training:
- Professional retraining for women for potential employment in the private sector – offering job retraining programs that account for gender differences in education, skills, and placement in the labor force

Interested donors/development partners:
World Bank, IOM, ILO

NGOs who work in this area:
Symmetry, Institute for Peace and Democracy, Women in the Oil Industry Society

2. Social Pensions

Situation:
The existing system of government social expenditures does not provide sufficient targeting of support to those who are in need of it. The amount and standards for this assistance are still extremely low.³

Under the law, women, mothers of many children and mothers of disabled children enjoy a number of benefits, determined according to the number of children, the age of the woman, and the length of the employment period. These privileges are in proportion to the number of children, age and work experience. There is some evidence that these privileges may have disadvantaged women in finding employment as employers may have preferred men.

Measures taken:
According to the PRSP, social protection and pension security for the population is one of the government’s priorities in the poverty reduction process and one of the key elements of pension reform is a more equitable differentiation of pensions and increased targeting.⁴

Potential areas for collaborative activities:
Research:
- A gendered analysis of the social security system;
- Designing or retrofitting pension systems to account for gender differences in employment histories and life expectancies, including
  - eligibility requirements that account for women’s briefer employment histories
  - joint annuities and survivor’s benefits
  - minimum pension guarantees or other redistributive mechanisms
  - appropriate price indexation
  - statutory retirement age

Interested donors/development partners:
World Bank, European Commission

⁴ Ibid., p. 23
NGOs who work in this area:
Azerbaijan Women’s Meclis “Sevil”

3. Privatization

Situation:
Privatization indicators are not disaggregated by gender but according to the available data, privatization has acquired a “male image” – that is, men have become the owners in 90% of the privatization cases. There is tentative evidence that the privatization process has discriminated against women, promoting another kind of gender inequality – that of ownership inequality. There is a lack of clear and precise regulations on ownership and property rights.

According to one report, one of the main factors restricting women’s participation in economic life is their isolation from economic reforms and particularly from the private sector and the privatization process. It is also interesting that a survey of unemployed women revealed that more than half of them are not trying to get a job because of the low pay offered by state enterprises and organizations. Yet, the same survey showed that only 3% of the women who work in the private sector own their own business and that no woman applied to credit institutions to set up a business. The results of the same survey indicate that 86% of women did not want to establish a private business citing the following reasons: lack of capital, failure to find an appropriate sphere of activity, registration difficulties, fear and lack of belief in oneself, and lack of experience and necessary knowledge to establish a business.

Measures taken:
♦ According to the PRSP report, the Government will strengthen its support of the development of entrepreneurship within the framework of the Program for the development of small and medium-sized businesses. This program provides for the establishment of favorable economic, procedural and organizational conditions for the development of entrepreneurship, the establishment of small enterprises and small artisan-based businesses, the creation of modern new production capacities and job opportunities and a significant expansion of the delivery of various services. It is not clear if the government has given special attention to the encouragement of women entrepreneurs.
♦ Donor supported activities to support the development of women owned small and medium sized businesses (IOM)

Potential Areas for Collaborative Activities:
Education and Training:
♦ Microenterprise development, business training and marketing for women in areas such as silk production and marketing, carpet production or food production
Financial Resources (Savings and Credit):
♦ Providing direct and indirect state (or donor) support for NGO or private sector efforts to promote female access to financial intermediation (as in Bangladesh);
Policy Process:
♦ Working with government to reform financial institutions (especially rural crediting institutions) to give women access to savings and credit (such as

Ibid., p. 26
allowing substitutes for traditional collateral requirements, simplifying procedures, reducing travel distances, as in Bangladesh and Ghana)

**Interested donors/development partners:**
IOM, Switzerland/SDC), Shell Oil, Germany/GTZ, Turkey/TIKA(?), TACIS(?), EBRD (?)

**NGOs working in this area:**
Business Women’s Association

**B. Education**

**Situation:**
While the educational level of the population is greater than 97 percent, and there is an extensive network functioning in Azerbaijan, the PRSP report indicates that there is need to improve the quality of the educational process and administrative structure, as well as to incorporate new technologies. However, over the past ten years almost no schools have been built and it has not been possible to purchase new and up to date equipment due to limited resources.

The percentage of women working in the educational sector in 1998 was 66.9 compared with men (33.1 percent); therefore, they are especially affected and vulnerable as educational resources have declined. In spite of this, men outnumber women as educational administrators and managers by a factor of 6:1.

Literacy rate of the population is decreasing fastest among women and girls. Statistics showing a decline in girls’ attendance have been collected from rural and settlement schools and from schools in camps established for refugees and IDPs in recent years.

The pre-school system of the Soviet period, comprised of kindergartens and day nurseries – have practically been destroyed affecting women in both in terms of potential employment as teachers, and in terms of balancing home and work responsibilities for mothers with young children, and their ability to work outside the home.

**Measures taken:**
- An education reform program has been prepared with World Bank support. This program calls for increasing the availability of free textbooks, of computer and other equipment, introduction of modern curricula, revision and rationalization of administrative structures, and reforming the system of higher education among others.
- UNICEF has just finished a study on girls’ education (not yet made public) – of the problems at the secondary education. The study has not yet been made public but the tentative conclusions show that decreased access of girls to secondary education may be linked to poverty (families ask girls to help out with house tasks) and to early marriages in rural areas, especially in southern regions, and to social stereotypes.
Areas for Potential Collaborative Activities:

Research:
♦ A gendered analysis of the education system in Azerbaijan that identifies the inequalities as Amartya Sen has defined them: a) basic facility inequality – opportunities of schooling for girls, encouragement to cultivate their natural talents to fair participation in rewarding social functions of the community; b) special opportunity inequality – is there gender bias in higher education and professional training?; c) professional inequality – is there gender bias in progress to higher levels of employment and occupation?⁶

Policy:
♦ Promotion of Girls’ Education, especially in areas where there is a decline
  - “Retrofitting” school facilities and teaching staff to address cultural concerns about sending girls to schools
  - Providing targeted subsidies including a) grants, stipends, fellowships, vouchers for tuition and other costs (as in Bangladesh); b) capitation grants, subsidizing girls’ schools or girls’ places in schools (as in Pakistan)

Institutional support:
♦ Establishment of Youth Centers for girls and boys

Interested donors/development partners
UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank, Japan, Germany

NGOs working in this area:
University Women’s Society, Gender and Human Rights Research Union

C. Health Care

Situation:
The health care system suffered from the general socio-economic crisis as well, and funds allocated from the budget for medicine were cut to a fraction of their previous level. There was also a steep decline in attention given to preventive care and a general overall decline in the population’s health. Women constitute 74.4% of all public health workers. Out of 30,000 doctors in the country, 56.2% are women and women make up about 30% of hospital and polyclinic managers.⁷

Maternal mortality rate increased from 37 to 44 per 100,000 live births. It dropped to 31.0 in 1997 but then increased again to 41.0 in 1998. This indicator is 3-5 times higher than in European countries. Furthermore, percentage of pregnant women with anemia has increased from 9% in 1991 to 18% in 1999.¹⁰

Over time, there has been a decline in the number of maternity welfare clinics, dispensaries and children’s polyclinics. The fertility rate has dropped for all age groups except the 15-19 bracket. A fertility explosion in this age group occurred in 1998: during that year, the fertility rate for this age group 294% of what it was in 1980. This new factor probably points to more early marriages and less education for young women and needs to be further investigated. Growth in early fertility is both a

social problem and negatively influences the health of mothers and babies. There is also some evidence of sex-based abortion to the detriment of female fetuses. A further factor of concern is blood related marriages, which have affected children born out of those marriages negatively.

Measures taken:

♦ The health care system reform program has been prepared with support from the World Bank. The objective of this program is to improve the quality of medical care and to provide access to medical services, especially for poor segments of the population. According to the PRSP, the government intends to pay particular attention to improving the health of mothers and children. Under a special program effective measures will be implemented that are directed at lowering maternal and infant mortality, and improving family planning and reproductive services, with the aim of improving the health of mothers and children.11
♦ Publication and dissemination of health promotion, safe motherhood pamphlets
♦ Establishment of family planning/reproductive health services

Areas for Potential Collaborative Activities:
Services:
♦ Expansion of services to ensure access to a basic package of reproductive health services, including family planning inputs

Campaigns:
♦ Expansion of information, education, and communication campaigns on reproductive rights and family planning targeted at both men and women

Interested donors/development partners:
Area of interest for: UNFPA, World Bank, Britain/British Council, Japan

NGOs working in this area:
Institute for Peace and Democracy, Symmetry, Women and Development Center

2. Vulnerable Groups

A. Refugees and IDPs

Situation:
♦ Number of women refugees and IDPs are higher than men: (119,000 female and 101,000 male refugees and 304,000 female and 265,000 male refugees).12 The Report on Women in Azerbaijan indicates that the withdrawal of girls from school after completing primary school in the refugee and IDP camps has increased significantly. Their parents explain this phenomenon by citing factors such as the large distance between school buildings and the tents, the reluctance to send girls to school alone, and their lack of warm winter clothing.13 According to the PRSP report, the government will create the necessary conditions that will enable
refugees and IDPs to achieve economic self-reliance, in particular by providing micro-credits and other forms of assistance.\(^8\)

**Measures Taken:**
- UNDP/GID project has sponsored the compilation of statistical data on IDP women and children
- SME Development: Women Producers and Marketing Cooperatives in Nakhchivan, a joint UNDP-IOM project. The objective of this project is to support rural women form low-income families in starting up sustainable business activities through the provision of group formation, training and financial assistance. They received training on how to set up businesses, prepared business plans and applied for loans. Women have set up enterprises to produce and sell yogurt, lavash bread, and pickles.
- Reproductive health counseling and family planning
- Training: skills development workshops, literacy classes, leadership training and vocational training.
- Primary education program

**Potential areas for Collaborative Activities:**
Promoting greater economic reliance:
- Microenterprise development for women IDPs and refugees in areas such as carpet making and silk production and their marketing with a view to self-sustainability
- Expansion of food for work programs

Training and education:
- Training, capacity building and participation of women in the peace building process; development of a curriculum, build a team of trainers
- Leadership training for Women
- Training in socioeconomic rights and legal literacy

**Interested donors/development partners:**
UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, UNIFEM, OSCE, WFP, IOM, Turkey (TIKA), Britain

**NGOs working in this area:**
Women and Development Center, Symmetry, “Without You” Charitable Society

**B. Trafficked Women**

**Situation:**
Even though there is no legal code that specifically addresses trafficking in women, article 120 of the Criminal code does point out that illegal deprivation of liberty is punishable by imprisonment or corrective labor for a period of up to one year. The Ministry of Internal Affairs issued an order in 1998 on “Reinforcing the Methods of

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Struggle against Illegally Forcing Minors to Work, Sexual Activity and Sexual Exploitation.  

There is no official data on trafficking in women but an unofficial pilot survey has found that trafficking in women does occur in Azerbaijan, even though it is not widespread. Women are offered restaurant or bar jobs and taken for prostitution in Turkey, Iran, and Dubai. There is tentative evidence that women go to the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Russia and from those locations may be transferred to Europe and other places.

Measures taken:
- IOM has just begun to conduct a study on trafficking in human beings in Azerbaijan which will include Azeri Women affected by sex trafficking.
- Studies on trafficking has been undertaken by NGOs.
- A Migration Resource Center by Hayat NGO is in operation.

Areas for potential collaborative activities:
Public Campaigns:
- Awareness raising activities in the mass media, information campaign in the media, TV shows and posters
Institutional Support:
- Migration Information Service and hotline
- Programs for Reintegration of rejected asylum seekers to return/employment opportunities

Area of interest for:
IOM, USAID, Open Society Institute/Soros, Norway, Britain, UNFPA

NGOs: D. Aliyeva’s “The Defense of Women’s rights in Azerbaijan”, Symmetry

3. Good Governance and Democratization

A. Civil Society Empowerment/NGO Capacity Building

There is now about 40 women’s NGOs working in Azerbaijan. Some are particularly and actively focused on gender issues, while others work on charitable causes or other non-gender related issues. In 1999, an NGO forum was established, and women’s NGOs are among its active participants. The UNDP/GID project has been effective in supporting the development and activities of women’s NGOs. As is the case in many developing countries, women’s NGOs in Azerbaijan can also benefit from greater capacity development, resources, networking opportunities and sharing of best practices with NGOs from other countries in order to establish their own priorities and visions, and become full-fledged partners with the government and donors.

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10 Ibid., p. 60.
Measures Taken:
♦ The UNDP/GID Project provided technical support to women’s NGOs
♦ Establishment of Gender Study Center at Baku State University, Gender Research Center at the Academy of Science and a Gender Psychological Rehabilitation Center in Baku.
♦ Conferences, seminars, publications and general research, information and awareness raising activities, radio and television programs on gender issues
♦ Cooperative activities between women’s NGOs and the government – e.g. with the State Committee on Statistics and Ministry of Labor and Social Protection

Areas for potential collaborative activities
Networking:
♦ Support for the production of a Journal/Bulletin of all Women’s NGOs that incorporates news, local and international activities on gender
♦ Support for building local, national and international networks and alliances for particular policy positions
♦ Support for sharing best practices of NGOs from neighbor countries/ countries with similar cultures (for example, there are some very effective women’s NGOs in Turkey who could share their practices and experiences

Institution Building:
♦ Expansion of capacity building activities for NGOs – in organizational management, establishing mission, effective leadership and organizational structure and advocacy, strategies for public advocacy, and budget literacy
♦ Support for increased technological sophistication such as website construction; information technologies etc.
♦ Support for continued and new activities of established women’s research, education and cultural centers mentioned above

Interested donors/development partners:
Norway, Japan, Britain, Soros/OSI

B. Institutionalization of Gender Issues

Situation:
In January 1998, a presidential decree on strengthening the role of women was issued and this decree also established the State Committee on Women. This committee, based on the Beijing Platform of Action, developed a National Platform for Action approved by the government. This document identifies the responsible ministries for the implementation of each of the items in cooperation with the State Committee on Women. As the evaluation report of the UNDP/GID project indicates, the National Plan of Action now needs further work in order to be implemented:

“A review of this plan reveals that while a solid understanding of the gender dimensions across a wide spectrum of sectors is demonstrated, the plan is presented as more of a “wish list” (i.e. all possible and desirable actions’ rather than as a strategic, results-based document, clearly highlighting priorities,
resource (human and financial) implications, links to other policies, and targets for their achievements. Strategic objectives are formulated as areas of focus (e.g. women and economy) rather than concrete short, medium, or long term objectives (for example, it might read “eliminating disparities between women and men in the labor market”, etc)

Measures Taken:
- UNDP/GID project has provided technical assistance to the State Committee on Women
- After the UNDP/GID project ended, the GID Unit was incorporated into the Department of Science, Culture and Education in the Cabinet of Ministers
- A gender network has been implemented with local executive power offices throughout Azerbaijan (24 regions) and gender centers have been established in the regions, providing courses in computer literacy, English language, and gender issues.
- Gender statistics has been published by the State Statistical Committee

Areas for potential collaborative activities:
Engendering Policy: Policy Level support:
- Support for the implementation of the National Plan of Action – establishment of a Coordinating Committee/Secretariat for this purpose. This committee can be made up of the Gender Unit in the Government, members of the SWC, gender focal points, NGOs. Donors and international experts can also participate in relevant policy areas. This committee can be charged with identifying specific strategies, a gendered budget analysis in each area, targets, expected outcomes and responsible parties to achieve those outcomes. This committee can work in close cooperation with the PRSP team.
Engendering Policy Implementation:
- Support for the implementation of gender mainstreaming (capacity building and training programs) all across the public sector and sectoral policy making processes
Engendering Institutions: Institution building:
- Support for capacity building of the State Women’s Committee: training of specialists in each of the sectors identified in the National Plan of Action
- Establishment of a Gender Commission or a Women’s Caucus in the Parliament to provide leadership in the implementation of the National Action Plan

Areas of interest for:
World Bank (?), Germany/GTZ (?)

NGOs active in this area:
Gender and Human Rights Research Union

C. Rule of Law – Engendering legal frameworks and Women’s Rights as Human Rights

Situation:
The Constitution of Azerbaijan states that all citizens enjoy inviolable, undeniable and inalienable rights and freedoms and prohibits discrimination against women. It states
that women and men enjoy equal rights and freedoms. CEDAW was signed in 1995. In 1998, a presidential decree was issued aimed to strengthen the role of women. A National Plan of Action (in line with the Beijing Platform for Action) was approved. Gender focal points were appointed in ministries, and relevant ministries were made responsible for implementing the plan of action together with the State Committee for Women’s Affairs. Azerbaijan has also signed the European Human Rights Treaty, and entered the Council of Europe as a member.

**Measures Taken:**

♦ New law on employment prohibiting gender based discrimination; in 1998 a presidential decree was issued to strengthen the role of women; a draft law on family and marriage is under consideration


♦ Conference on “Women’s Rights – Human Rights: women in conflict” with representatives of 13 countries held in Baku in may 1998

♦ Awareness raising and information dissemination activities women’s rights: Brochures on women’s rights, seminars and conferences

♦ Training for police on women’s human rights and gender based violence

**Areas for Potential Collaborative Activities:**

**Research:**

♦ A gender sensitive analysis of the entire legal system and of legal reforms and new legislation under consideration, as well as gaps in implementation

**Training, Education and Capacity Building:**

♦ Women’s human rights, citizenship and legal literacy courses across the country, (for example social workers can be trained to open classes across the country, as was done in Turkey)

♦ Expanded training programs for the police, lawyers and judges on gender sensitive implementation of laws, and on women’s human rights

**Interested donors/development partners:**

Britain, Germany, OSCE, UNHCR, UNIFEM

**NGOs that work in this area:**

Institute for Peace and Democracy, Symmetry, D. Alieva society/Defense of the rights of women, Gender and Human Rights Union

1. **Gender Based Violence**

   **Situation:**

Under articles of the Criminal code violating the equal rights of women is subject to criminal penalties. Furthermore, Azerbaijan has ratified all human rights instruments since 1995.

   **Measures taken:**
UNDP/GID project has sponsored a survey on violence against women and children which revealed that violence occurs in 36% of all families.

UNICEF has just conducted a study on forms of domestic violence.

Activities (seminars and training) and publications by NGOs on women’s rights, and gender based violence are ongoing

Establishment of a Center for Psychological Rehabilitation with a lawyer, doctor and psychologist on duty

Training programs for the Police on domestic violence in Baku

Areas for Potential Collaborative Activities:

- Expansion of the Baku Center for Psychological Rehabilitation to the regions
- Expansion of public awareness campaigns and production of videos/TV programs on gender based violence
- Establishment of a national system of Hotlines for victims of violence
- Establishment of women’s shelters for victims of violence

Area of interest for:

Norway, Britain, USA, UNFPA, Germany, OSCE,

NGOs who work in this area:

Institute for Peace and Democracy, D. Alieva society, Symmetry, Azerbaijan Women and Development Center

D. Political participation

Situation:

Women represent 12% of the members of Parliament, (13 out of 125 deputies) 20% of the Executive Office of the parliament and 7% of management positions in ministries and committees. There are currently 2 women ministers, 3 deputy ministers in the government and a deputy chairman of 17 regional government authorities. Though some female participation exists in political parties, for example 40% of the members of political parties are women, they usually occupy only secondary, technical positions. Political parties create “women departments” or ‘women councils’ within them, which is based on Soviet experience and in reality serve as a tool to keep women away from political decision making. There are a number of organizations working on women’s problems, but the solution of these problems depends on the legislative and executive branches of government and therefore can be better achieved if more women hold positions in those structures. There may be a series of factors and reasons for women’s low participation in political processes. These are lack of education on their political rights, or voter education, knowledge on how to succeed in a political career, lack of strong and well-organized institutions supporting and educating women, and socio-cultural constraints.

Measures taken:

- GID project supported seminars and information dissemination on women’s political participation
- GID project also supported voter education - awareness raising activities to encourage women to vote during elections.

Areas for Potential Collaborative Activities:
Training and education:
♦ Expanded leadership workshops for young women leaders from NGOs, political parties, mass media, and other institutions to increase their political participation in decision making (perhaps also to be held at the regional level)

Area of interest for:
UNIFEM, USAID

NGOs active in this area:
E. Aliева society, Symmetry

III. DONOR MEETING
A donor meeting was held on …where the areas for potential collaboration were presented. The list of participants can be found in the annexes. The following issue areas were identified as possible areas for collaboration: small and medium enterprise development, food security, social protection with a particular focus on institutionalized children.

IV. PROJECT PROPOSALS

Project One: (proposed to the Swiss Development Corporation)

Project title: Microenterprise development for women: business training, credit and marketing
Country: Azerbaijan
Duration: 15 months
Required Funding: 90,000 USD
Contribution of UNDP: 45,000 USD
Beneficiaries: Selected regions of the country
Implementing Agency: Local NGO

Background:

Privatization indicators are not disaggregated by gender but according to the available data, privatization has acquired a “male image” – that is, men have become the owners in 90% of the privatization cases. There is tentative evidence that the privatization process has discriminated against women, promoting another kind of gender inequality – that of ownership inequality. There is a lack of clear and precise regulations on ownership and property rights.

One of the main factors restricting women’s participation in economic life is their isolation from economic reforms and particularly from the private sector and the privatization process. It is also interesting that a survey of unemployed women revealed that more than half of them are not trying to get a job because of the low pay offered by state enterprises and organizations. Yet, the same survey showed that only 3% of the women who work in the private sector own their own business and that no
woman applied to credit institutions to set up a business. The results of the same survey indicate that 86% of women did not want to establish a private business citing the following reasons: lack of capital, failure to find an appropriate sphere of activity, registration difficulties, fear and lack of belief in oneself, and lack of experience and necessary knowledge to establish a business.

Justification
Poverty reduction is a priority of the Government, and it will strengthen its support of the development of entrepreneurship within the framework of the Poverty Reduction Program for the development of small and medium-sized businesses. This program provides for the establishment of favorable economic, procedural and organizational conditions for the development of entrepreneurship, the establishment of small enterprises and small artisan-based businesses, the creation of modern new production capacities and job opportunities and a significant expansion of the delivery of various services. It is not clear if the government has given special attention to the encouragement of women entrepreneurs. Yet, there is extensive research that demonstrates that increasing women’s share of cash income in the household significantly increases the share of the budget their households allocate to food, appears to have greater impact on child welfare and nutritional status.

There is already some microenterprise development programs under way in the country. One example is the Women Producers and Marketing Cooperatives in Nakhchivan, a joint UNDP-IOM project. The objective of this project is to support rural women form low-income families in starting up sustainable business activities through the provision of group formation, training and financial assistance. This project would expand on existing successful microenterprise development projects to other regions.

Objectives
To provide business opportunities to women, to expand existing microenterprise development projects to all regions, and to promote women’s participation in the privatization process.

Activities
♦ Training in how to establish and run a small business
♦ Additional training in areas not directly related to microenterprise, but areas intended to help women improve their living standards and quality of life
♦ Purchase of the necessary equipment and the provision of portion of initial investment for participants who have successfully completed the business training course and developed a viable business plan

Expected Output
Approximately 50 new businesses owned and operated successfully in selected regions
Cost estimates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Costs in USD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of training manual – national specialists and international expert (1)</td>
<td>3-4 months</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of the Training Programs – Local NGO</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement of equipment and payment of portion of initial investment</td>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and Monitoring</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>90,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 90,000 USD

**Project Two**

Project title: Development of Women Entrepreneurs Project in Nakhichevan  
Country: Azerbaijan  
Duration: 24 months  
Required Funding: $400,000  
Contribution of UNDP:  
Beneficiaries: 20 of the current project villages  
Executing Agency: International Organization for Migration

Background:
Poverty Reduction is a priority among donors in Azerbaijan. In terms of income poverty, the World Bank Poverty Assessment for Azerbaijan (1996) classified 60% of the households in Nakhichevan as very poor (using regional prices). The UNDP Human Development Report 1998 indicates that Nakhichevan constitutes one of the “lowest levels of HDI” regions in the whole Azerbaijan.

Justification:
IOM is executing the Community Development and Microcredit Project in Nakhichevan. It is, under a tripartite agreement with UNDP and Government of Nakhichevan, implementing this project since November 1998 in 27 villages of the
Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic. The results so far do not show an equal participation of women in this project. Women hardly participate in the village meetings organized by the project team. There has also been a sharp increase in the number of women married below the age of 19, as well as a sharp fall in the number of women attending to higher education. The female project staff met with the women in the villages separately and had discussions about the participation of women. These consultations suggested engaging female facilitators at the village level as a separate effort to promote the women’s participation.

Objectives:
The purpose of the project is to reduce poverty while increasing self-sufficiency among women from the low income groups, migrant and refugee families, through the utilization of their existing and potential skills. This will be achieved by assisting individual women and small women groups in developing, establishing and managing small-scale business activities. The project will assist 400 primary beneficiaries by providing them with training, management and financial support to create viable micro-enterprises. This training will include information on the legal environment and on how to approach government institutions. Preference will be given to female-headed households.

Activities:
- To create a network of female facilitators at the village level, who will address the socio-economic issues affecting women to enhance group formation
- To provide skill training to women on product improvement and processing of the primary agriculture and horticultural products backed up with credit for working capital and marketing support

Expected Output:
- 20 women with leadership qualities will be trained as project facilitators in the villages
- 400 women will be trained on product improvement and processing of the primary agricultural and horticultural produces
- 400 women from the low-income groups will be assisted to establish micro business through provision of credit and marketing support for their products
- Rise of annual income for 400 women by at least USD 500 per person
- Development of a membership based organization from project participants to manage the legacy of the project in the future

Cost Estimates:

Project Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project title:</th>
<th>Preservation of Cultural Heritage and Development of Artisanship through Women’s Entrepreneurship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country:</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration:</td>
<td>24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Funding:</td>
<td>USD 500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Potential donors: Turkey (TICA), World Bank, Norway, Eurasia Foundation, Shell Oil
Beneficiaries: Women in urban areas
Implementing Agency

Background:
World Bank Cultural Heritage Project – renovating historical monuments

Justification:
Loss of artisanship – need to regain and continue lost arts and crafts of Azerbaijan in areas such as silk production

Objectives:
Promote small businesses in culturally specific areas that Azerbaijan is known for such as a) food stalls and/or small restaurants and cafes selling food, desserts, and fruit juices specific to Azerbaijan; b) production of silk scarves, tablecloths and other silk items

Activities:

Expected Output:

Cost Estimates

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

VI. ANNEXES

LIST OF DONORS (met individually and/or attended donor meeting)

Embassies

Italy
H.E. Ms. Margherita Costa, Ambassador
France
H.E. Ms. Chantal Poiret, Ambassador
Japan
Ms. Bayaz Zeinalova, Assistant to the Second Secretary
Turkey
H.E. Unal Cevikoz, Turkey
Mr. Fikret Ozer, TICA Representative
Norway
Ms. Heidi Olufsen, First Secretary, confirmed
United Kingdom (British Council)
Ms. Fern Horine, Second Secretary, confirmed
Sweden
Ms. Aybeniz Khudatova, Assistant to the Consul, confirmed
Germany
Mr. Christofer Fuchs, Press & Culture, confirmed

International Organizations

WFP
Ms. Hae-Won Park, Programme Officer

IOM
Ms. Meryam Haji-Ismaylova, Project Coordinator

UNICEF
Ms. Leyla Hasanova, Gender Focal Point

UNHCR
Ms. Benedicte Petersen, Service Officer

UNFPA
Mr. Faris Mirsalayev, Project Officer

UNIFEM
Patricia McPhillips, Chief Technical Adviser

World Bank
Ms. Saida Bagirova, Operations Officer

GTZ
Mr. Marcel Schwikert, Head of office,

SOROS
Ms. Gulnara Mamedova, Coordinator of Woman Programme, confirmed but did not attend

SHELL
Mr. Kamran Agasi, External Affairs

OSCE
Mr. Lutz Leychtfuss, Democratization Officer

ADB
Mr. Faraj Liaxon Officer

Swiss Development Corporation
Mr. Octay Gulmaliyev (phone interview)

EU/Food Security Program
Mr. Philippe Bernard

PRSP
Ms. Nazy Sadaghat, Consultant

PRSP
Ms. Gula Nadjafova, Consultant,

List of gender experts, Government and NGO representatives met:

Novella Gafarova, Chairwoman, D. Aliyeva Society “The Defence of Rights Of Woman”

Asmet Mamedova, Chairwoman & Member of Parliament
“Kamillik” Women’s Charitable Society

Kamilla Dadasheva, President Azerbaijan Gender Association “Symmetry”

Rena Mirzazade, Chairwoman
“Gender and Human Rights” Research Union

Elmira Suleymanova, President and Hasanova Lale, Member of “young leaders”
“Woman and Development” Center
Hanmamedova Kamila, Representative “University Women” Society

Hajiyeva Matanat, Representative, Woman Crisis Center

Ahmadova Gular, Member of Parliament & Chairwoman of the Azerb. Republic Child Organization

Zahra Tahir gizi Guliyeva, Chairperson, State Committee for Women’s Issues

Rena Ibrahimbekova, Deputy Head of the Department of Science, Culture and Education

**Documents Reviewed**


Post Beijing Period in Azerbaijan Republic, UNDP, Draft


Sen, Amartya, “Many Faces of Inequality”, Frontline, Oct. 27-Nov. 9, 2001


Azerbaijan Progress Report submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 16 September?

Women 2000 – An investigation into the Status of Women’s rights in Central and South-Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights


Documents produced with UNDP/GID project support:

Women and Violence, Prepared by Symmetry, Baku, 2000
Gender and Economy, Sigma Research Center of Development and International Collaboration

GID – Gender Azerbaycanda, Bulletins

Genderology, Zerbaijan International Scientific Popular Journal

Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Azerbaijan, - women and children – statistical data


Yeni Qadin Psixologiyasina Dogru, by Cin Beyker Miller, Baku, 2000.

Cender trening ucun vesait – Cender tadrisi uzra rehberlik, UNDP and UNFPA, Baku, 2000

Azerbaycan Respublikasi Qanunvericiliyi ve Gender Problemleri, Baku, 2000


Gender Tadqiqatlari, Gender ve Insan Huququ Arastirma Birliyi, Baku, 2000.


2 Ibid., p. 34
5 Women of Azerbaijan, UNDP, 1999, p. 33
6 Gender and Economy, UNDP, 2000, p. 73
7 Ibid., p. 73
8 Ibid., p. 28
9 Ibid., p. 46
11 PRSP, p. 21