



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY FACT SHEET

USAID programs empower women and girls in Central Asia

At USAID, **gender equality and women's empowerment** are at the core of our development work. We strive to reduce gender disparities, gender-based violence, and ensure women's equal access to economic, social, decision-making processes and can reach their full potential in society.

Our **entrepreneurship programs** bring women into the workforce by providing technical assistance and mentorship to start or grow small businesses as well as address challenges related to women labor force by developing market-driven solutions. USAID helps women gain access to finance, establish connections, build skills, and strengthen the capacity of women-owned businesses to access new markets. For example, in Kazakhstan, USAID teamed up with the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs and Kazmicrofinance to train women entrepreneurs on strategic planning, time management, and setting business goals.

Our programs promote **gender equity in climate change mitigation**. Water management is one of the more complex challenges in the region. Women are important actors in natural resource management and water usage, they have limited voice and agency to influence management and use decisions to their benefit. USAID works to strengthen women and girls' capacity to ensure that they can engage fully as managers, partners, and entrepreneurs in water-related activities. USAID includes women and girls in technical training on efficient use of water, maintenance of water infrastructure systems, and monitoring of water quality.

Our **energy programs** improve women's participation in the energy sector by providing training, demonstrating career opportunities, addressing gender inequality, and ensuring women's leadership and improved capacity in this sector. Other activities include promoting more young women attending science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs in universities and institutions.

Our **governance programs** are working together with local governments to increase women's participation in decision-making at local and national levels and to improve governments' response to issues concerning women. USAID works with partners to advance the protection of human rights in Central Asia, both as an issue of public policy and civic culture. USAID also assists public institutions, businesses, and civil society organizations to reduce disparities between women and men in accessing, controlling, and benefiting from economic, social, political, educational, and cultural resources, opportunities, and services.

Media in Central Asia rarely features the voices of women and minorities as decision-makers and narrators of their own stories. Women are also affected by information inequality. Our **media programs** aim to develop a more balanced information environment in Central Asia to increase openness among youth and adults on a broad range of ideas, opinions and perspectives and create inclusive media environments for women and girls.

Our **anti-trafficking program** in Central Asia assesses the experience of different genders in relation to vulnerabilities to internal and external trafficking; cultural perceptions and stigma; social, political, and economic barriers for women's leadership and engagement. USAID collaborates with private employment agencies to disseminate information in the region to increase information to domestic and foreign migrant women on employment opportunities.

Our **health programs** support a gender sensitive, multi-prolonged approach to confront epidemics such as TB and HIV/AIDS. Efforts include reducing gender-related barriers to TB and HIV services by implementing gender-responsive outreach and service models, enhancing the capacity to advocate for and lead policy change that advances gender equality in TB and HIV response, and enhancing the well-being and rights of TB and HIV patients. To meet the rapidly changing **COVID-19 outbreak** situation in Central Asia, where possible, a gendered approach will be applied, to address the specific exposure risk factors and health care access constraints facing women, men, and other vulnerable groups such as rural or disabled populations. For instance, USAID will monitor the impact of COVID-19 on female healthcare workers who may be disproportionately at risk of contracting the virus due to their ongoing work-related exposure.