

25th anniversary

**Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the
Beijing Declaration, Platform and Plan of Action (1995)**

**REPORT
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE
BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION,
BY NGO - NONGOVENMENTAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OF
UZBEKISTAN**

Tashkent – 2019

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
RUz	- Republic of Uzbekistan
NGO	- Nongovernmental nonprofit organization
WCU	- Women's Committee of Uzbekistan
CISC	- Civil Initiatives Support Center
RC SED «SABR»	- Republican Center for Social and Economic Development "SABR"
OSCE	- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
IOM	- International Organization for Migration
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
ACTED	- Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development of France
HL	- Hot Line
HTV	- Human Trafficking Victim

BWA	- Business Women Association
AIDS	- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
LDC	- Local development centers

INTRODUCTION

This document is a parallel report on the implementation of “Beijing + 25” in the framework of the implementation of the Beijing Platform and the Plan of Action (PPA), prepared by a group of experts, consultants and leaders of non-governmental non-profit organizations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, members of partner NGOs under the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

In 2018, a group of non-governmental non-profit organizations of the Republic of Uzbekistan united in the “**NGO Club**” under the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan to address socially significant programs and projects within the framework of a social partnership aimed at enhancing the role and status of women in the framework of priority areas of the PPA and prepared a parallel report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration, Platform and Plan of Action on two issues: *Women's employment and the Prevention of violence against women*

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The following members of the *Club of partner NGOs* participated in the preparation of the report, based on their own independent reporting process on progress made, problems and recommendations:

- Civil Initiatives Support Center *CISC, Organization in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC*
- Center for Development and Support of Initiatives "**NIHOL**", Tashkent region;
- Center for Social Protection of the Family “**Oydin Nur**”, Bukhara region;
- Society "**Rakhmdillik**", Samarkand region;
- Republican Center for Social and Economic Development "**SABR**";
- NGO "**Imkoniyat**", Navoi region
- NGO “**Istiklol Avlodi**”, Jizzakh region;
- Information and consulting resource center "**Yuksalish**", Kashkadarya region;
- Center for social and legal support for women and their families “**Kalb Nuri**”, Ferghana region;
- Republican Social Information Center “**ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD**”;
- Center for social and legal support for women and their families “**Mehrimiz sizga**”, Andijan region;
- Civil Initiatives Support Center **CISC**, Ferghana Regional Branch

The NGOs listed above are designated in the text as women's NGOs, since the charters of these organizations have goals and objectives aimed at promoting the rights and interests of women in Uzbekistan, they are actively working in the sphere of prevention of gender-based violence, providing a wide range of social services to various categories of women.

To prepare a parallel report, the participants of the **NGO Club** presented materials on the activities of these NGOs in a wider range than in the State report. The authors of the parallel report had the opportunity to discuss their opinions and evaluate the performance during numerous working meetings with the leaders of NGOs, experts, representatives of the government, and civil society.

This parallel report is limited to topics in which the participants of the preparation process had significant knowledge, experience and access to information. In addition, the selected topics are the most relevant at this stage of promotion of the rights and interests of women in the Republic of Uzbekistan, not only for the State, but also for the civilian sector.

The following two priority directions of the Beijing Platform and the Plan of Action were selected as priority topics for writing a parallel report.

- ***(D) violence against women;***
- ***(F) women and economy***

The report reflects data on the work carried out by female NGOs of Uzbekistan in the framework of the implementation of the State Programs, projects and social orders, to prevent violence against women, and to ensure the labor rights of women in Uzbekistan

I. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is a global problem in its scope. It applies to all countries of the world, regardless of the standard of living and the format of democratization. Unfortunately, Uzbekistan is not an exception country. In this regard, Uzbekistan is actively working to eradicate violence against women in accordance with the international legal acts, such as:

- Beijing Declaration, Platform and Plan of Action (PPA);
- UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW (Articles 5, 6, 11);
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Goal 16)

1.1. Situation Review

Harmonized with international legal instruments, the approaches to defining Uzbekistan's national priorities in the sphere of supporting the rights of the women let to improvement of the assistance system for victims of family and domestic violence, as evidenced by the adoption of a number of government documents.

1.2. State measures to prevent violence against women

The Decree of the President No. 5325 of February 2, 2018 ***“On measures to radically improve activities in the sphere of supporting the women and strengthening the institution of the family”*** is aimed to improve the activities and increase the capacity of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, establishment of the SCRC, Scientific and Practical Center “Oila” under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic Uzbekistan, aimed at research and practical assistance to families of the Republic.

The Resolution of the President No. PP-3827 of July 2, 2018 ***“On measures to Improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, as well as prevention of family-domestic violence”***, this document draws attention to the early prevention of family and interpersonal conflicts, as well as depressive situations that can lead to suicide.

The assistance system organized as part of the implementation of the Resolution made it possible to unite the state bodies and civil society institutions. In particular, the Resolution sets a large role to the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. The Women's Committee, in its turn, initiated the establishment of the "*Club of partner NGOs*", which combines the efforts of women's NGOs in solving the problems women face, especially gender-based violence.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Mediation", adopted by the Legislative Chamber on June 12, 2018, was approved by the Senate on June 28, 2018. The Law provides for the application of mediation to disputes arising from civil legal relations, including in connection with disputes arising from family legal relations.

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-5430 dated May 4, 2018 "*On measures to radically increase the role of civil society institutions in the process of democratic renewal of the country.*" The Decree contributed to the activation of NGOs in Uzbekistan, especially those working on women's empowerment. This Decree simplified reporting procedures and attracted grant funds, provided social protection for NGO workers. The Advisory Council on the development of civil society under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been created. The Advisory Council includes representatives of Uzbekistan's NGOs.

"The National Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on CEDAW based on the consideration of the next Fifth periodic report of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women." The NPA was approved by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan (No. 10-11-17 of October 11, 2017). This document defines strategic directions for increasing the socio-political and social activity of women, creating conditions for their self-realization in various spheres and sectors, ensuring the unconditional observance of the rights and legitimate interests of women, comprehensive support for motherhood and childhood, as well as strengthening the institution of the family as part of the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on CEDAW on the Fifth periodic report of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the Convention.

In order to radically improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, prevention of domestic violence, as well as taking into account the tasks identified by the *Action Strategy for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017 - 2021*, there was a wide involvement of civil society institutions in the early prevention of conflict situations, first of all, by providing targeted support to individuals and families from "risk group".

This year, the country's Parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, according to which criminal liability for bringing women to suicide is strengthened. One of the reasons for tightening up for such a crime was the problem of domestic violence, which today is quite acute in Uzbekistan.

Civil society institutes have been active in making suggestions and recommendations in the process of development of draft laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan **"On guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men"** and **"On protecting of women from oppression and violence"**. **These laws were adopted in the framework of the twenty-first plenary meeting of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan held on August 23-24, 2019 in Tashkent.**

II. CONTRIBUTION OF NONGOVERNMENTAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SPHERE OF RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The main attention in the activities of women's NGOs in Uzbekistan is focused on programs for the prevention of domestic violence, early detection, response to provide emergency psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance, as well as rehabilitation of victims of violence. For this purpose, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan *No. PP-3827 dated July 2, 2018 "On measures to improve the system of social rehabilitation and adaptation, as well as the prevention of family-domestic violence"*, a Republican center for rehabilitation and adaptation of persons affected by violence and prevention of suicide was established. The purpose of the Center is to provide emergency medical, psychological, social, pedagogical, legal and other assistance to victims of violence in an anonymous order.

A particularly high activity of women's NGOs in the sphere of combating domestic violence and human trafficking has been observed in 2017-2019 in Uzbekistan. This is reflected in the launch by many NGOs of the "hotlines", various "Bureau of Social Services", on-site consultations of lawyers and psychologists in rural and remote areas of the Republic, the opening of shelters and mini-productions in the format of social enterprises, the launch of professional courses for especially vulnerable segments of the population (victims of domestic violence arriving in temporary shelters; victims of trafficking in persons; women granted on parole from places of detention; women in difficult situations).

This is due to the fact that in the process of public appeals to NGOs, problems began to be identified, which are also one of the causes of gender-based violence. These are the problems of women who belong to socially vulnerable groups and, for various reasons, have found themselves in difficult life situations. Today, 47,000 women across the country need to improve their social status. On the part of women's NGOs working in this direction, it is possible to assist them in providing them with temporary housing, necessary material, psychological and medical assistance and, most importantly, to provide employment, thereby increasing their self-esteem and standard of living.

To provide social services to women, NGOs independently attract grant and sponsorship funds. In particular, these are the funds of the Public Fund for Support of NGOs and other civil society institutions under the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In addition to the funds of the Public Fund under the Oliy Majlis, many NGOs have capacity that allows them to attract funds from the UN and its Agencies, international funds and foreign organizations accredited in Uzbekistan. They actively work with vulnerable groups of population, studying the problems on the ground, assessing the needs of women for help.

Thanks to the active work of individual NGOs, in particular the NGOs that participated in the preparation of this parallel report, internships of the NGOs' employees and volunteers in Korea, Germany, Austria, Italy and other close and far abroad were organized with the support of UNPFA, UNDP, IOM, OSCE and other partners in Uzbekistan.

In addition, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development of France (ACTED), as part of a project to strengthen the role of women through protection of the rights and increase their labor activity in Uzbekistan with financial support from European Commission, provides assistance to the activities of social shelters (shelters) in the premises of functioning NGOs "Oydin Nur" (Bukhara region) and "Rahmdillik" (Samarkand region).

The NGOs of Uzbekistan studied the world experience in combating violence against women and launched projects to create rehabilitation centers (in the format of temporary founding homes - shelters) in each region under the auspices of the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan.

It is assumed that the Rehabilitation Centers will be strengthened at the expense of the **Women and Family Support Fund** under the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, local khokimiyats, as well as the Public Fund for Support of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations and other civil society institutions under the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Some of these rehabilitation centers are being opened on the basis of existing regional NGOs.

At present and in the future, the problem of financing already functioning and newly established rehabilitation centers is becoming urgent, since the lack of constant funding can affect the quality of services.

At present, women's NGOs are engaged in capacity building of the employees of shelters and their personnel who work in these centers. A methodology for interaction with families is being developed, and the training of specialists working in them is being conducted.

Uzbekistan's NGOs are actively conducting information campaigns that any case of violence should be punished in the manner prescribed by law, explanatory work is being carried out to prevent similar situations among risk groups (*women with an insufficient level of education, without a profession, with a lack of strong willpower and not self-confident*).

Each year, a number of NGOs take the initiative and take part in the International Action "**16 Days Against Violence**", held worldwide at the initiative of the UN General Assembly, which proclaimed November 25 as the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**.

Public awareness campaigns with participation of the NGOs are critical in prevention of violence against women and making it unacceptable. As a result of the events organized by NGOs within the framework of the annual campaign "**16 days against violence**", intolerance of violence against women is formed in the minds of the population, the public condemnation of discriminatory approaches that give rise to violence against women is emphasized, and approaches when the survivor of violence is exposed **stigmatization**.

The measures taken are also an important tool to inform the women, victims of violence about their rights, laws in force and the tools of legal protection envisaged in those laws. In our country, non-governmental organizations play a key role in raising awareness of unacceptability of the violence against women.

NGO - Civil Initiatives Support Center, CISC, Organization in Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, since April 2016. Works at the national level since August 2004.

Main mission of the organization is to increase the gender sensitivity of the State, public organizations, the media and NGOs. Implementation, reporting and monitoring of **CEDAW** - the UN Convention on **the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** and **the PPA - the Beijing Declaration, the Platform and the Plan of Action**.

In recent years, the CISC at the national level has focused on facilitation of dialogue and enhancing the effectiveness of interaction between gender NGOs and government partners in decision-making on gender issues and creating an ongoing dialogue between the State, public and international organizations. Main efforts of the CISC were aimed at increasing the capacity of women's NGOs, especially regional ones, in matters of cooperation with the State partners, within the framework of the Law on Social Partnership, as well as increasing the gender sensitivity of society.

The CISC together with other national NGOs took an active part in the development, discussion and promotion of laws adopted by the State in the sphere of women's rights and the development of civil society.

Many issues of development of the NGO's capacity and timely support of socio-psychological and legal assistance to women in difficult situations, especially from rural areas, were implemented through interaction with national and international partners in the framework of projects and programs, **UNFPA** - United Nations Population Fund, **ADB**- Asian Development Bank Mission in Uzbekistan, **OSCE** - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, **UN WOMEN** - United Nations Organization for Gender Equality as well as the empowerment of women, the **EU** - the European Union and other international organizations accredited in Uzbekistan.

Large diverse work was carried out to strengthen the legal culture and increase capacity of the women's NGOs of the Republic in the framework of three projects of the European Union, best practices of countries were studied and published in the booklet "**Best Practices of NGOs**". Work within the framework of projects supported by international donors provides an opportunity not only to get acquainted with international experience, but also to show the achievements and capacity of national NGOs to our international partners, sisters and friends.

- Participation in international, regional and global meetings on promotion of gender equality in all spheres of public and political life (participation in regional and global meetings on **Beijing + 5, +10, +20, UN Commission on the Status of Women, 2013, 2017, 2018, UN Department of Social and Economic Development, 2017, 2018**), allowed the CISC, in the course of its daily work, to bring to the regional NGOs the priorities for which foreign organizations work and help to integrate the women's movement of Uzbekistan into international women's movement.

At the regional level, the NGO CISC paid particular attention to piloting and disseminating international best practices in the sphere of prevention of the violence against women.

Since 2009, the CISC has initiated large-scale campaigns, together with the State and public organizations, international organizations accredited in Uzbekistan, the media and regional NGOs, the International Action "**From Peace at Home to Peace on the Planet**", as part of the UN International Campaign "**16 days without violence**" .

The action was held annually at the level of all regions of the republic, including remote rural areas, and covered such significant days as: **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25), World AIDS Day (December 1), International Day for People with disability (December 3), Constitution Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan (December 8), International Human Rights Day (December 10)**.

The main objective of the events organized by the CISC together with national and international partners was to attract public attention to the promotion and protection of women's rights and establishment of a **non-discriminatory environment and a society without violence against girls, girls and women** in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

NGO, RC SED "**SABR**" along with other NGOs also takes an active part in the media campaign "**16 days without violence**" within the framework of the UN International Campaign, thereby contributing to the prevention of violence and improvement of the quality of life in the family.

The specialists of the Center "**SABR**" provided consultations to 24,416 respondents who found themselves in difficult situations only within the framework of the media campaigns, conducted more than 100 informational meetings and trainings on this topic.

Printing materials and publications with a total circulation of more than 3,000 copies (calendars, brochures) have been prepared and issued. These materials contribute to the prevention of crimes against women and children in close collaboration with the youth organizations and local governments. Over the years, 84 participants - winners of the drawing and poster contest were awarded memorable gifts.

NGO “SABR” provides assistance to the victims of violence through the provision of consultations with psychologists, a lawyer and a doctor, together with the law firm “**Komus**”, free legal protection is provided for women victims during the consideration of their issues in court.

More than **200 field seminars- trainings** have been held over the past five years with the aim to increase the legal literacy of women in **rural regions on the issues of the impact of ill-treatment** on the health of women and children in the family, and prevention of offenses against children in families.¹

At the same time, it is worth to note the activities of 2 regional NGOs working as shelters in our country.

The Bukhara Center for Social Protection of the Family “Oydin Nur” began its activities in 1999 and provides psychological and legal support to women - victims of domestic violence, providing them with temporary shelter. The NGO "**Oydin Nur**" has been actively working for almost 17 years. During the year, on average, up to 500 women apply to the Centre specifically on the issue of domestic tyranny. The employees of the Center tried to work so that the abuser was punished.

In 2017, they managed to complete the precedent when a rapist, a husband who brought his wife to suicide, was sentenced to 7 years. For 2018-19, the Center held 58 meetings, round tables, and training seminars on protection of the rights of women from domestic violence. The participants in the meetings are mahalla citizens representatives, inspectors for the prevention of strongholds of the internal affairs departments, representatives of the Women's Committee of the region, women who suffered from domestic violence, NGOs of Bukhara region.

More than 673 psychological consultations were conducted for women in crisis situations. *(This service has been provided since 2000);*

About 964 free legal consultations were provided *(the Center has been providing legal support since 2004);*

The Center provided 776 psychological consultations and assistance from social workers for free.

The Center paid for a lawyer to participate in the courts for the protection of the rights of victims of domestic violence for 48 women who suffered from domestic violence. *(This service is available since 2009).*

475 people found shelter in the Center. Of these, 236 women and 240 children. *(This service has been provided since 2007).*

Center for social rehabilitation of women in difficult life situations "Rahmdillik" from Samarkand. One of the main goals of the Center is to increase public awareness of the rights of rural women, violence, moral and psychological support for families in difficult situations. There is a temporary founding home according to the type of shelter in the Center.

According to the **NGO "Rakhimdillik"** there are cases of complaints from women about violence by their husband. Employees of the Center always take effective measures to protect the rights of such women.

Example: *Dilorom, runs away from home twice a year due to domestic violence. She has 1 child, the family was against the birth of the second baby and she was forced to do an abortion. The doctors did not do abortion. The woman runs away for the third time without a child, as*

¹ The information was provided by the Republican Centre of Social-Economic Development “SABR”, 2019.

the husband threatens. She realized that it was impossible for her to run away with a child, and therefore she ran away without him. On the third day, when she heard from a relative about the Center "Rahmdillik", she comes to the Center. Makhalla, the prophylactic works inspector, wants to reconcile her and return her home. The Center began rehabilitation work for Dilorom. The Center receives a letter from the court that she must pay child support allowances. The husband's relatives and the husband himself found the organization's phone and they started threatening her and even the Center's employees. Because of the threats, the woman said that if she would be forced to return home, she would commit suicide. The Center wrote appeals to all instances, law enforcement agencies, the Women's Committee of the Samarkand region. At present, the Center's employees, actively cooperating with interested organizations of the Samarkand region, are working to assist the woman in getting divorced from her husband, returning her child, and purchasing public housing.

What is the problem of domestic violence connected with? According to the experts of the NGO "Kalb Nuri", Ferghana Region, "Istiqlol Avlodi", Jizzakh Region, "Oydin Nur" Bukhara Region, "Rakhmdillik" Samarkand Region, based on their observations when working with victims of domestic violence, violence occurs most often due to male aggression: the husband beats his wife for the slightest mistakes and shortcomings. Often the mother-in-law and other family members of the husband are involved in it. They exert pressure on the woman together, proving that the daughter-in-law is a poor mistress, wife, mother.

In Uzbekistan, domestic violence is often seen as an individual particular problem that people prefer not to submit to public discussion. The victims try to keep silent, because they do not want their problem to become known to relatives, neighbors, or work colleagues. In this case, the activity of the NGOs in the makhalla (*local community*), at the place of residence of women, enables such women to seek help and speak openly about their problem, to feel that they are not alone, that they always have the opportunity to seek help and support.

In 2018, in the framework of the project "**Strengthening the capacity of women and the youth to solve socially significant problems in the Kashkadarya region**", *the Information and Consulting Resource Center "Yuksalish" in Kashkadarya Region*, with the support of DVV (DVV International) in Uzbekistan, developed and implemented a model of social technologies for the formation and development of the women's human rights initiatives at the local level.

This goal was carried out through legal education of potential leaders of women's groups in the areas of the Kashkadarya region and through them the wide dissemination of legal knowledge for the population. During the project, 148 specialists of the Women's Committee were trained in working with women and strengthening spiritual and moral values in the families of the region.

A manual has been developed and an action program has been introduced to prevent violence against women, round-table meetings are held in local communities with mediators, lawyers, psychologists, social workers to discuss problems of domestic violence and ways to prevent conflicts. From 2015 to 2018, the Center provided legal, psychological counseling and social assistance to about 300 women - victims of human trafficking and other forms of violence.

The Center for Social and Legal Support for Women and their Families "Kalb Nuri" in the Ferghana Region.

The Center's employees have developed training programs for students of the faculties of psychology and social work: on international legislation in the field of women's rights, human trafficking, conflict, and family relations. Over the period of its activity, the staff of the Center

has achieved certain results in strengthening the capacity of the State bodies, public organizations and local community in solving the problems of domestic violence.

The work was carried out to inform the population about harmful effects of domestic violence, prevention of offenses in the field of family-domestic relations, by strengthening vertical and horizontal ties with interested environment and creating a single information and learning space on this issue. The Center is actively working to develop the skills and knowledge of rural women, to ensure their active participation in socio-economic life, as well as to increase the livelihoods of their families and communities as a whole.

NGO "Istiklol Avlodi" of the Jizzakh region. Since 2017 there is a **hot line** in the NGO "Istiklol Avlodi" to combat human trafficking and domestic violence. The hot line received **4393** calls, of which **2571** were men and **1822** women.

124 cases of women victims of human trafficking were redirected to the Center from law enforcement agencies, of which **44** were VHT, (**35** returned) for legal advice from partners - **83**, victims of domestic violence **136**.

With the financial support of IOM, within the framework of the information campaign in Uzbekistan on the prevention of human trafficking and domestic violence, the Forum Theater "**Don't Be Indifferent**" was organized. The theater traveled with performances to 13 districts of the Jizzakh region and the show was watched by about 6,000 women, men and youth.

A plan of joint actions was signed with the Internal Affairs Directorate of the Jizzakh region to increase the capacity of internal affairs officers in prevention of domestic violence and combating trafficking in persons, identifying victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

More than **560** participants of the seminars were trained, among them: inspectors of preventive activities, criminal investigation operational officers, prosecutors, employees of the State Security Service and juvenile inspectors, as well as judges, customs officers, local authorities, members of the Interagency Commission on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the media and others.

***EXAMPLE** "After I came to the shelter, I was asked about my interests and what I like, as well as what I would like to do in the future. I said that I dream of becoming a cook. The Center funded a three-month culinary course, which I attended in one of the best training centers. I learned everything fast. After completing the course, I also completed an internship at the workplace. Then they helped me to find my first job, and, I began to work. I registered as a private entrepreneur. Today I run my own business. I moved to a separate apartment with my children and work at home. I prepare cakes and deliver to organizations on a contractual basis. "*

In 2017-2019, more than 400 women applied to the lawyers of the Center alone, about 400 - for psychological help. The NGO accepted applications from 155 women victims of domestic violence.

*"Saodat was in the shelter when she became 18 years old. She became a victim of domestic violence because of her father, who forced her to get married. As she said, she didn't want to get married and asked for help from everyone she could: **"I was 15 years old when I was engaged, and I told my teacher that I did not want to get married. I wanted to study and then get married a man whom I will love. When the police found out about this, my father was asked to write a statement that he would not make me get married"**. When I was 16 years old, they set a wedding date and I asked for help from a journalist working in our area. He brought me to a shelter. The lawyers of the Center talked with my parents, a month later my father forgave me and I returned home and continue to study in college."*

The NGOs are actively working on programs to inform the community about legal rights of women, using new information technologies.

The Center for Development and Support of the Initiatives "NIHOL" of the Tashkent region carried out work to *ensure equal access to legal information and support for women and* to create conditions for unhindered access to legal information. The Center developed an **“Android”** application based on the results of a needs assessment among women in the Tashkent region (*with a special focus on women in remote rural areas and unemployed women*) to identify typical legal issues and problems. The **“Android”** application included legal information and legal acts on the issues such as labor relations, domestic violence, harassment, access to resources and others.

(https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.nihol.o_cure.android)
AppsonGooglePlay

Nihol -

The Women's Rights App is an assistant for women who need legal assistance and information.

Using the application, you can get information on:

- about labor rights
- about family legal relations
- about the property of a woman
- on disability issues, etc.

In recent years, a large-scale work has been carried out in the Republic to protect the rights and legitimate interests of citizens, and to reform the judicial system. Comprehensive measures are being taken for the early prevention of crime and the fight against crime, including in such a priority area as **combating trafficking in persons** and eradicating forced labor.

Effective measures are being taken to identify, protect and socially rehabilitate victims of trafficking in persons, provide medical, psychological and other assistance to victims of such crimes, conduct investigations and hold accountable those involved in trafficking in persons, as well as eliminate the conditions that create the possibility of their commission. Child labor has been eradicated, unprecedented measures are being taken to stop the use of forced labor by adults during agricultural work, landscaping and gardening.

The work is underway to ensure interaction with representatives of civil society and foreign non-governmental organizations in this sphere in order to guarantee the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of citizens and increase the image of the State in the international arena.

The NGO “ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD” and its branches in 10 regions of the country are implementing gender aspects of the initiatives related to sexually transmitted diseases, HIV / AIDS and sexual and reproductive health.

As part of the Global Fund project, preventive work is being carried out on social diseases - HIV and infection. The Center works on HIV prevention among a target group of girls and women who provide intimate services for a fee.

During the period of 2014-2019, the organization covered a target group of **28,082 women**

- Escort to friendly rooms for taking an HIV test -**7485**
- Mini-sessions on prevention of HIV were conducted -**175 807**
- The means of protection were distributed -**1 283 014**
- Distribution of the information materials- **34 100**

Violence and human trafficking in regards to women

Eliminating trafficking in women and assisting women victims of violence as a result of prostitution and trafficking. In the framework of reintegration assistance to girls and women affected by trafficking in persons, assistance and a package of services were provided from 2014-2019:

- Legal consultations have been provided to **1078** women
- The assistance has been provided to return home from destination countries to **173** women
- Psychological assistance has been provided to **295** women
- Support has been provided to receive health care to **195** women

The organization also dealt with the elimination of discrimination against girls in education, skills development and vocational training.

During the period of 2011-2017 the project “***New Opportunities - New Skills***” was implemented to provide skills in additional classes that operate on the basis of the Center, in the areas of cooking, clothes modeling, cosmetology and massage, hairdressing, computer skills. As part of this project, in 2018, psychological assistance was provided to 232 girls, 103 girls were trained in various professions. Girls and women from vulnerable sectors of the population (children from dysfunctional families, pupils of orphanages) were attracted and trained in the additional classes.

More than 557 girls received professional skills in culinary and sewing skills, computer skills, hairdressing. The Center conducts educational and preventive work to improve the literacy of the population, youth, including paying special attention to the awareness of girls and women.

So, for example, in July 2017. in “**Ankhor-Lokomotiv**” Tashkent Park, with a total coverage of more than 300 people, a large-scale action “**The Future Generation of Independent Uzbekistan**” was held, dedicated to the World Anti-Trafficking Day. Awareness raising of modern youth and the population about the global problem of human trafficking, as well as increasing the vigilance of young people when traveling abroad, raising awareness of citizens.

In August 2018 within the framework of the International Youth Camp “**Together Against Violence**” for partner NGOs from the regions of Uzbekistan, and with the participation of partners from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The program and work of the camp contributed to the development of the volunteer movement and the training of young people in conducting information events aimed at raising awareness and legal literacy.

2.1. Recommendations on combating the violence against women

The problems in the sphere of prevention the violence are mainly related to:

- stereotypical ideas among the population and even among law enforcement officials about the role of men and women in society;
- incorrect interpretation and understanding of the problem of family-domestic violence and its causes and consequences;
- a complicated divorce procedure between spouses (in which in the disputes over children, finances or property, a woman is often left without funds);
- lack of the protocols to identify the facts of family-domestic violence;
- lack of necessary knowledge and skills to work with the victims of violence among the employees of functioning rehabilitation centers.
- lack of intersectoral collaboration to respond to the violence against women.

To successfully address the issue of the violence against women, the following measures are required:

- building the capacity of the workers (*social workers, psychologists, lawyers, hot line operators and other specialists*) of newly created rehabilitation centers;
- development of the standards for procedures (protocols) to respond to the violence against women;
- organization of the work in health institutions to identify domestic violence;
- organization of interaction between the public sector and NGOs on the issue of violence, through the creation of an Intersectoral Group and special rules on procedures.

III. EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

3.1. Situation Review

Today, Uzbekistan is affected by demographic growth, which has led to increase of unemployment, especially in rural areas.

The labor market in the country demonstrates clear gender segregation by sectors of the economy. The women are widely represented in the social sector (education, healthcare, social services, culture and art), while men dominate in the spheres with higher salaries (construction, finance, transportation, communications, industry).

Women, both in rural and urban areas, are often employed in the informal sector, which plays an important role in terms of contributions to the family budget. Informal employment is often associated with lower salaries, with the result that women contribute less to the household budget.

Many years of ignoring gender issues, the ideological position of “resurrecting” lost national traditions has led to the formation of a socially vulnerable class of women and girls who need special state protection policies.

A Public Fund to Support Women and Family has been operating in the country since 2018. The Fund’s assets are used to increase the share of female entrepreneurship in the economy, provide women with soft loans (7%) for organization of family and private entrepreneurship, as well as cooperation in material and organizational support for comprehensive development of female entrepreneurship. The country's legislation provides² for the free use by a person of his/her abilities and property for entrepreneurial and other economic activities not prohibited by law and provides social guarantees to entrepreneurs.³

3.2. Vocational Education

One of the causes of poverty among women and girls in Uzbekistan is the low level of vocational training due to limited access to vocational education (*professions in demand on the labor market*). The formal and informal sphere of vocational education does not allow women and girls, especially those living in rural areas, to access training for a number of reasons:

²The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan «About guarantees of freedom of entrepreneurship activities in the Republic of Uzbekistan»

³Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan

- the cost of the training to obtain professions still remains expensive for families, and training for a highly paid profession is much more expensive than training, where in the future the level of wages is relatively low compared to other professions;
- despite the trends in the economy and expanding opportunities for learning, gender stereotypes that exist in families are an inhibiting factor in creating the conditions for the education of boys and girls in preschool, school and secondary vocational education. Preference is still given to education of boys, who are traditionally considered the guardians of parents in the future;
- educational infrastructure, contributing to the mastery of new popular professions, is poorly developed or even absent in small towns and rural areas with high population density;
- gender stereotypes still continue to influence in the sphere of informal education, that is, professional courses mainly offer training to women and girls in such areas as cooking, sewing, and hairdressing.

3.3. State measures on job placement and employment of women

Over the past five years, the Government of Uzbekistan has adopted a number of important regulatory documents in the sphere of employment of women and girls, especially in rural areas:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “***On additional measures for wide involvement of the population in entrepreneurship and development of family entrepreneurship in the regions***” March 7, 2019, No. PP-4231. State Program “***Every Family is an Entrepreneur***”.
2. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “***On measures to further strengthen the guarantees of the labor rights and support for women's entrepreneurial activity***” of March 7, 2019, No. PD-4235. The lifting of the ban on certain activities for women.
3. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “***On additional measures to ensure the further development of the economy and increase the efficiency of economic policy***” January 8, 2019, No. UP-5614
4. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “***On measures to radically improve activities in the field of supporting women and strengthening the institution of the family***”. February 2, 2018, No. UP-5325. Public Fund under the Women’s Committee (small loans for home-based employment of unemployed women).
5. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “***On additional measures to eradicate forced labor in the Republic of Uzbekistan***” of May 10, 2018, No. 349
6. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “***On measures to implement the National goals and objectives in the field of sustainable development for the period until 2030***” of October 20, 2018, No. 841. To recognize and value unpaid care work and household chores, providing utilities, infrastructure and social protection systems and to encourage the principle of shared responsibility in housekeeping and in the family, taking into account national conditions. (National SDGs Article 5.4, 5.5.)
7. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “***On additional measures to improve the activities of farmers, dekhkan farms and owners of personal land***” of April 26, 2018, No. PP-3680. Additional measures of women's employment in rural areas. Labor book for women entrepreneurship, farming and animal husbandry, gardening and vegetable growing, and in household plots.

8. The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On approval of the provision of affordable comfortable houses for women in difficult social situations, including women with disabilities, low-income mothers raising a child (children) in an incomplete family and in need of better housing conditions,” and the provisions on the procedure for their provision” of April 12, 2018, No. 285 (soft loans for the purchase of houses for socially vulnerable layers of women).
9. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Concept on Improvement of the Tax Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan” of June 29, 2018, No. UP-5468. Tax reform in the country, protection of entrepreneurship and benefits to them. Reduction of the shadow economy, where women are more employed.
10. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “**On additional measures to strengthen social support for pensioners and increase the effectiveness of the pension system of citizens**” of December 12, 2018, No. UP-5597. Retirement benefits for working women. Pensions for women in entrepreneurship.
11. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan “*On the organization of the activities of the Public Works Fund under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan*” on October 5, 2017, No. 799. Temporary employment for unemployed women by involving them in community service in mahallas.
12. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “*On measures to improve and increase the efficiency of work to ensure employment*” of July 14, 2018, No. PP-3856
13. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “*On measures to organize the activities of the Association “Uzbekipaksanoat”*” Tashkent, March 29, 2017, No. PP-2856. The provision of seniority to persons who provided care for the silkworm.

IV. CONTRIBUTION OF NON-STATE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

The non-governmental sector of Uzbekistan on the issues of socio-economic development of women's capacity and their employment is currently represented by public organizations at two levels: national /country and local / regional levels.

For example, the Association “Tadbirkor Ayol” of Business Women implemented a project supported by the OSCE, “*Improvement of the System of Business Education for Girls and Development of Female Youth Entrepreneurship in Uzbekistan*”.

The project aims to:

- empowering girls to carry out successful entrepreneurial activities;
- promoting gender equality, as well as empowering girls by motivating interested girls and young women to start their own business and supporting them

The Association of Business Women provides assistance in the implementation of business projects of girls, graduates of educational institutions, on modern greenhouse facilities based on methods of hydroponic growing of vegetables and berries in the Khorezm, Navoi and Surkhandarya regions; creation of modern preschool institutions using innovative teaching methods for children under 6 years old in the cities of Tashkent and Namangan regions.

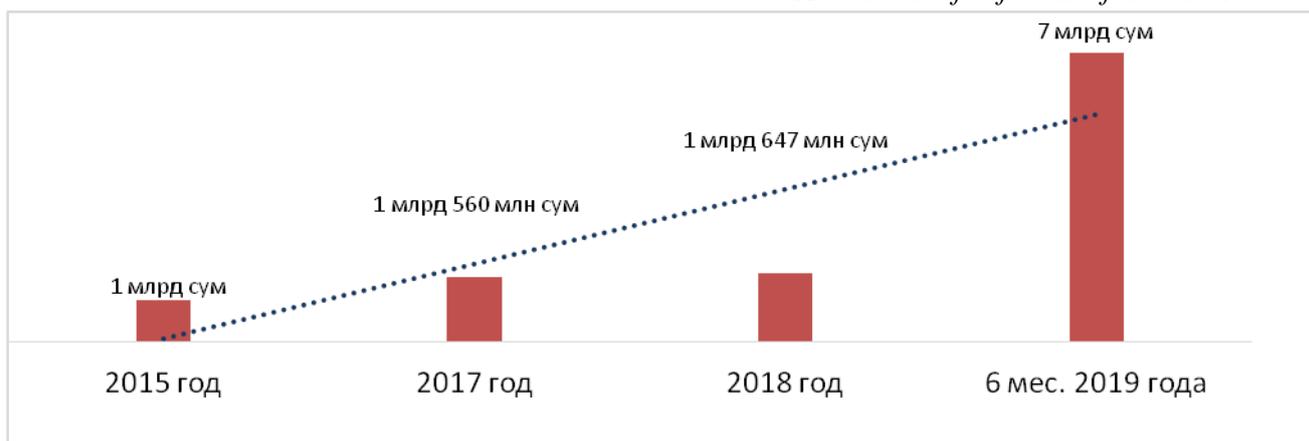
As a result of the cooperation of the Association of Business Women with the Central Bank of the Republic, special preferential credit lines were opened for women entrepreneurs by the country's banks. The Association “**Woman Entrepreneur**” together with the regional branches of Xalq Banki and Microcredit Bank in each region of the country are implementing projects titled “*A prosperous life in our hands*” and “*Woman entrepreneur: the prosperity of family business*”.

In Samarkand, Namangan, Jizzakh, Ferghana, Andijan, Sirdarya, and Surkhandarya regions, the projects give their positive results. As part of this project, to date, more than 300 women have been introduced to the initial secrets of entrepreneurship.

In accordance with the partnership agreement between the Association of Business Women and Microcreditbank, soft loans are allocated for the development of women's entrepreneurship. Over 1,000 new jobs for women have been created.

According to the results of the Association's activities in the first half of 2019, soft loans in the amount of 1.35 billion UZS were allocated for the development of women's entrepreneurship in remote regions of the country by commercial banks of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, in the Khorezm region in the amount of 712 million 500 thousand UZS. This indicator in the Tashkent region amounted to more than 2.5 billion UZS. Women entrepreneurs have been allocated loans worth 7 billion UZS in the Republic over the past six months.

Allocation of soft loans for women



At the local level, issues of employment and creation of economic opportunities for women and girls are partially covered by grant projects of regional NGOs. In Uzbekistan, NGOs, as the main strategy in working with their target groups of socially unprotected women and girls, are implementing programs for training in professional skills, their further support in organization of business or their employment. In parallel with this, legal support and advice is provided in obtaining soft loans.

For example, the **RC SED "SABR"** developed and introduced a pilot microfinance program to increase the incomes of low-income families from target districts of the Samarkand region, by creation of conditions for doing business. Women who undergo a full course of vocational training and express a desire to start their own business are provided with microloans at preferential interest rates. If necessary, business consultations are also provided, assistance is provided in preparation of a package of documents required for state registration of an economic entity.

The active loan portfolio as of August 1, 2019 is 2 billion 196 million UZS; the number of active customers is 631.

From 2014 to 2019, the microfinance program issued over 4,461 microloans on which 10 billion 379 million 466 thousand UZS were issued, more than 400 informational meetings, social and business trainings on the basics of entrepreneurship and financial literacy were held.

Another no less significant area of activity of the NGO "SABR" is the training of professional skills of women from various socially vulnerable groups in order to earn additional income, which allows them to improve their socio-economic status and increase the activity of their participation in the life of local communities through the creation of Local Centers of Development (LCD).

Over the five years of work of the LCD, more than 2,800 people from vulnerable groups received professional skills in cutting and sewing, computer literacy, hairdressing and

confectionery, national crafts, web design, as well as knitting and manicure / pedicure, of which 750 women received preferential microloans in the amount of 712 million UZS.

In 2017, the NGO "Imkoniyat" of the Navoi region, as part of the *"Young Entrepreneur-Reliance of the People"* project, trained 140 young women and girls in the basics of business planning, and together with the *"Durdona"* Psychological Center conducted psychological trainings to overcome the fear of starting a small and family business.

The Ferghana Regional Branch of the Civil Initiatives Support Center, within the framework of the program *"Single Window of Social Services for Women"*, promotes employment issues through the provision of business development consulting services. Within framework of this program, 143 women got access to loans for individual entrepreneurship, the total amount of which amounted to 2 billion 145 million UZS, 70 women were employed in various state and commercial organizations.

Another area of activity of the Ferghana branch of CISC is the training of girls, college and lyceums graduates in professional skills. So, on the basis of the *"sewing laboratory"*, girls are trained in cutting and sewing, as well as in business planning. Over the past 5 years, **400** girls have studied this skill, of which **312** have started their own business and *got registered as individual entrepreneurs*.

V. RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES, RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

1. Of particular concern is the reform of the secondary specialized vocational education system in the country. Until 2018, the country had a 12-year compulsory education system, where 9 years were allocated to primary and secondary education, and 3 years of vocational education. The country switched to 11-year compulsory education, in which vocational training took the form of optional training.

After-school vocational education is no longer compulsory, and, accordingly, girls' access to this type of educational resource will entirely depend on social preferences and economic opportunities of the family. It is also expected that girls not enrolled in education will get married immediately after school.

2. Despite the reforms in the tax sphere and the reduction of the tax burden on private business and entrepreneurship entities, the transition of informal labor relations between employers and workers to official employment also remains relevant. The employment of women and girls in the informal economy remains as high as in previous periods. This is primarily due to factors such as the continued existence of gender segregation in the labor market, the education of the employee being employed and employee's reproductive characteristics, controlled by women's mobility.

The government's attempts in the short term to solve the problem of female employment are aggravated by the forced one-sided choice of women and girls in favor of low-income professions, thereby concentrating labor resources in only one or several areas of the economy. The government needs to develop a strategy for ensuring women's employment, which would create conditions for training and further employment in highly profitable and technological sectors of the economy.

3. The access of women and girls to financial and other types of resources should be a separate topic for recommendation to the government in matters of economic development. The country's banking and financial policy needs gender expertise in two important aspects: financial literacy and access to credit. These two aspects are interrelated, since often a low

level of financial literacy is the reason for inability of women and girls to use state resources and loans of international projects in the development of their own business.

Access to resources is complicated by a lack of business skills and women's lack of property or guarantees for collateral. As experience in the past has shown, the practice of microfinancing is one of the best ways to increase the economic potential of women and girls and to form their own initial capital, which is the guarantor for the implementation of their subsequent business ideas and business projects.

4. The government's protection policy regarding the employment of women and girls and access to resources should be based on an in-depth analysis of the situation and, taking into account international best practices, expand programs to support women in realization of their rights and interests in the socio-economic sphere, with the goal of narrowing the gender gap in all areas of life support.
5. More actively use high-performance technologies, in particular, information and communication, to create the conditions for representation of women and girls in high-tech sectors of the economy. Using the example of the "*Technovation*" project, to multiply experience at all levels of education and training.
6. Significant changes in the field of economic and social strengthening of women and girls, first of all, depend on the understanding of the gender by the government, therefore it is important to integrate the principles of gender equality in the process of adoption of the State programs at different levels of government.