

# WOMEN AGRIpreneURSHIP IN ARMENIA

## CURRENT SITUATION AND OBSTACLES

FINAL REPORT

Yerevan, Armenia  
May, 2023



## Contents

|                                                                                                      |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Abbreviations .....                                                                                  | 3  |
| List of Tables .....                                                                                 | 5  |
| List of Figures.....                                                                                 | 5  |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....                                                                                 | 8  |
| Executive summary .....                                                                              | 9  |
| Introduction.....                                                                                    | 13 |
| Methodology .....                                                                                    | 16 |
| Chapter 1. Socio-Economic Overview of Armenia .....                                                  | 18 |
| 1.1 Economy of Armenia .....                                                                         | 18 |
| 1.2 Population of Armenia .....                                                                      | 21 |
| 1.3 Labor Participation and Salary Gap.....                                                          | 26 |
| 1.3 Gender Aspects in Education.....                                                                 | 30 |
| 1.5 Opportunities from Gender Perspective.....                                                       | 34 |
| Chapter 2. Gender Equality Performance of Armenia and International Comparisons.....                 | 35 |
| 2.1 SDG – Gender Equality Performance in Armenia .....                                               | 35 |
| 2.2 Armenia in the International Rankings.....                                                       | 36 |
| 2.2.1 United Nations’ Gender Inequality Index.....                                                   | 36 |
| 2.2.2 World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index.....                                            | 38 |
| 2.2.3 United Nations’ Gender Development Index.....                                                  | 40 |
| 2.2.4 World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law Index.....                                            | 42 |
| Chapter 3. Gender Policy, GBV Situation, and Women Entrepreneurship in Armenia .....                 | 45 |
| 3.1 Gender Policy Framework in Armenia.....                                                          | 45 |
| 3.2 GBV Situation in Armenia .....                                                                   | 48 |
| 3.3 Women Entrepreneurship in Armenia .....                                                          | 50 |
| 3.4 Women Access to Finance .....                                                                    | 53 |
| Chapter 4. Agricultural Sector Overview.....                                                         | 58 |
| 4.1 Output and Value Added of the Sector .....                                                       | 58 |
| 4.2 Agricultural Overview by Regions .....                                                           | 63 |
| Chapter 5. The Economic Engagement of Women in the Rural Settlements of Armenia .....                | 67 |
| 5.1 Women’s Engagement in the Agripreneurship .....                                                  | 67 |
| 5.2 Assessment of the Women’s Economic Engagement .....                                              | 76 |
| Chapter 6. Main Obstacles for Women in the Agripreneurship Sector of Armenia .....                   | 79 |
| 6.1 Economic Engagement and Gender Stereotypes Among Women in the Rural Settlements of Armenia ..... | 79 |

|                                                                                                                        |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 6.2 Economic Engagement and Gender Roles and Time Use among Women Living in Rural Settlements of Armenia .....         | 83  |
| 6.3 Economic Engagement and Access to Assets and Finance.....                                                          | 88  |
| 6.4 Economic Engagement and Social Interaction and Networking Among Women Living in Rural Settlements in Armenia ..... | 94  |
| 6.5 Economic Engagement and Women’s Mobility .....                                                                     | 99  |
| 6.6 GBV issues in Rural Settlement of Armenia .....                                                                    | 104 |
| Chapter 7. International Best Practice in Women Agripreneurship Development .....                                      | 106 |
| Main Findings and Conclusions .....                                                                                    | 110 |
| Recommendations Matrix .....                                                                                           | 115 |
| Bibliography .....                                                                                                     | 119 |
| Appendices.....                                                                                                        | 122 |
| Appendix 1. Methodology .....                                                                                          | 122 |
| Appendix 2. List of Key Informants.....                                                                                | 134 |
| Appendix 3. Key Characteristics of Study Population .....                                                              | 135 |

## Abbreviations

|         |                                                                                   |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ADB     | Asian Development Bank                                                            |
| Armstat | Statistical Committee of Armenia                                                  |
| CAPI    | Computer-assisted personal interviewing                                           |
| CARD    | Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development                                     |
| CARMAC  | Community Agricultural Resource Management and Competitiveness                    |
| COSII   | Composite Openness to Social Interaction index                                    |
| DF      | Degrees of Freedom                                                                |
| DV      | Domestic Violence                                                                 |
| ENPARD  | European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development initiative |
| EU      | European Union                                                                    |
| FAO     | Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations                          |
| FFDC    | Freedom of Family Domination Concept                                              |
| FGD     | Focus Group Discussion                                                            |
| GBV     | Gender-based violence                                                             |
| GDI     | Gender Development Index                                                          |
| GDP     | Gross Domestic Product                                                            |
| GEM     | Global Entrepreneurship Monitor                                                   |
| GGGI    | Global Gender Gap Index                                                           |
| GII     | Gender Inequality Index                                                           |
| GNI     | Gross National Income                                                             |
| HDI     | Human Development Index                                                           |
| HEA     | Household Extension Agents                                                        |
| HH      | Household                                                                         |

|         |                                                                                     |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HHH     | Head of household                                                                   |
| IFAD    | International Fund for Agricultural Development                                     |
| IFC     | International Finance Corporation                                                   |
| JP RWEE | Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment |
| MoE     | Ministry of Economy                                                                 |
| NEET    | Not in employment, education or training                                            |
| NGO     | Non-governmental organization                                                       |
| OECD    | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development                              |
| PPP     | Purchasing Power Parity                                                             |
| PSU     | Primary Sampling Unit                                                               |
| RA      | Republic of Armenia                                                                 |
| RED-NEO | Rural Economic Development – New Economic Opportunities                             |
| SD      | Standard Deviation                                                                  |
| SDA     | Strategic Development Agency                                                        |
| SDG     | Sustainable Development Goals                                                       |
| SHG     | Self-help group                                                                     |
| SME     | Small and medium enterprise                                                         |
| TAWA    | Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity                                           |
| UN      | United Nations                                                                      |
| USAID   | United States Agency for International Development                                  |
| WB      | World Bank                                                                          |
| WBL     | Women, business and the law index                                                   |
| WEAI    | Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index                                            |
| WEE     | Women's Economic Engagement                                                         |
| WEF     | World Economic Forum                                                                |
| WFP     | World Food Programme                                                                |

## List of Tables

|                                                                                                                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Table 1. Gender gaps in HDI 2019, in Armenia .....                                                                                | 40  |
| Table 2. Current, potential, and past engagements in entrepreneurial activities among women in rural settlements of Armenia ..... | 67  |
| Table 3. Interest towards agriculture sector per confounding factors .....                                                        | 72  |
| Table 4. Main motivational factors to start a business for women living in rural settlements ....                                 | 75  |
| Table 5. WEE assessment through 10 questions .....                                                                                | 77  |
| Table 6. Women economic engagement per confounding factors .....                                                                  | 78  |
| Table 7. Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles per confounding factors .....                   | 80  |
| Table 8. Who mainly does the following in your household? .....                                                                   | 84  |
| Table 9. Perceived Division of Household Labor Scale per confounding factors .....                                                | 85  |
| Table 10. Average daily hours spent on HH chores and on unpaid agricultural work (n=780)..                                        | 85  |
| Table 11. Average daily hours spent on household chores that do not include farm work per confounding factors .....               | 86  |
| Table 12. Average daily hours spent on unpaid agricultural work within the household per confounding factors .....                | 86  |
| Table 13. Time management and control over time per confounding factors.....                                                      | 88  |
| Table 14. Contribution to family support per confounding factors .....                                                            | 90  |
| Table 15. Access to virtual and physical space and women's economic engagement index .....                                        | 93  |
| Table 16. Openness to Social Interaction per confounding factors .....                                                            | 95  |
| Table 17. Access to Networks index per confounding factors.....                                                                   | 99  |
| Table 18. Women's mobility per confounding factors.....                                                                           | 101 |
| Table 19. Indicators related to women's mobility and women's economic engagement index..                                          | 102 |
| Table 20. Indicators of domestic violence in the last 3 years .....                                                               | 105 |

## List of Figures

|                                                                                                                |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1. GDP and real growth rate of the GDP of Armenia, 2013-2021 .....                                      | 18 |
| Figure 2. Structure of GDP by economic activity, % of total, 2021 .....                                        | 19 |
| Figure 3. Structure of GDP of Armenia by region and Yerevan city, 2019, % of total.....                        | 20 |
| Figure 4. Distribution of de jure population by sex, 1995-2021.....                                            | 21 |
| Figure 5. Average age of population and number of people ages 15 and older, 1991-2021 .....                    | 22 |
| Figure 6. The number of permanent population of Armenia, 1995-2022 .....                                       | 23 |
| Figure 7. Distribution of de jure population of Armenia by regions and city Yerevan as of 1 January 2022 ..... | 24 |
| Figure 8. The change in the population of regions of Armenia between 2011 and 2022 .....                       | 25 |
| Figure 9. The natural growth of population in Yerevan city and regions of Armenia in 2021....                  | 26 |
| Figure 10. Structure of working-age population in Armenia by gender, 2020.....                                 | 27 |
| Figure 11. Labor force participation rate in Armenia, 2012-2020 .....                                          | 27 |
| Figure 12. Labor force participation rate by age, 2020 .....                                                   | 28 |
| Figure 13. Employed Persons by Types of Economic Activity, 2020.....                                           | 29 |
| Figure 14. Raw gender pay gap (hourly) in Armenia by sector.....                                               | 30 |
| Figure 15. Gender Parity Index in Armenia in 2020 .....                                                        | 30 |
| Figure 16. Gross enrollment ratio by gender and level of education in Armenia, 2020 .....                      | 31 |

|                                                                                                                                            |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 17. Students in higher educational institutions by the specialization, 2021/2022.....                                               | 32 |
| Figure 18. Students studying agricultural sciences and veterinary in higher and vocational education in Armenia, 2021/2022 .....           | 33 |
| Figure 19. The positive effect on the long-run GDP from closing the gender employment gap, as of 2022 .....                                | 34 |
| Figure 20. Armenia's Gender Inequality Index in 2010-2019.....                                                                             | 37 |
| Figure 21. Gender Inequality Index 2019 in Armenia and selected countries .....                                                            | 37 |
| Figure 22. Armenia's Global Gender Gap Index in 2010-2021 .....                                                                            | 38 |
| Figure 23. Global Gender Gap Index 2021 in Armenia and selected countries .....                                                            | 39 |
| Figure 24. Armenia's Gender Development Index in 2010-2019.....                                                                            | 40 |
| Figure 25. GNI per capita in Armenia and selected countries in 2019 .....                                                                  | 41 |
| Figure 26. Gender Development Index 2019 in Armenia and selected countries .....                                                           | 41 |
| Figure 27. Armenia's WBL score in 2010-2022 .....                                                                                          | 42 |
| Figure 28. Armenia's WBL Index indicators for 2010 and 2022.....                                                                           | 43 |
| Figure 29. Women, Business and the Law Index 2022 in Armenia and selected countries.....                                                   | 43 |
| Figure 30. Ever-partnered women who experienced domestic violence by their partners .....                                                  | 49 |
| Figure 31. Early stage and established entrepreneurial activity rates by gender in Armenia, 2020 .....                                     | 51 |
| Figure 32. Self-employed persons in Armenia by gender in 2016-2020 .....                                                                   | 52 |
| Figure 33. Borrowing money in Armenia among women and men aged 15 and higher, 2021 ....                                                    | 54 |
| Figure 34. Gender gap in borrowing money in Armenia and selected countries, 2021.....                                                      | 55 |
| Figure 35. Saving money in Armenia among women and men aged at 15 and higher, 2021 .....                                                   | 56 |
| Figure 36. Ownership of a credit card or debit card and making utility payments in Armenia by women and men aged 15 and higher, 2021 ..... | 56 |
| Figure 37. Share of women and men received payments for the sale of agricultural products, livestock, or crops, 2021.....                  | 57 |
| Figure 38. Agriculture value added and contribution to GDP of Armenia, 2013-2021.....                                                      | 58 |
| Figure 39. Agricultural output in Armenia in 2013-2021.....                                                                                | 60 |
| Figure 40. Number of livestock in Armenia, 2017-2022 .....                                                                                 | 61 |
| Figure 41. Sown areas under agricultural crops in Armenia, 2017-2021 .....                                                                 | 62 |
| Figure 42. Harvested area of fruit and berries in 2020, ha .....                                                                           | 62 |
| Figure 43. Total agricultural output in Armenia by regions in 2021, AMD billion.....                                                       | 64 |
| Figure 44. Number of livestock in Armenia by regions as of 1 January of 2022, thousand heads .....                                         | 65 |
| Figure 45. Sown areas under agricultural crops in Armenia by regions in 2021.....                                                          | 66 |
| Figure 46. The structure of entrepreneurs by type of economic activity .....                                                               | 68 |
| Figure 47. Engagement in entrepreneurial activity by age groups.....                                                                       | 68 |
| Figure 48. Structure of entrepreneurs by the period of starting the operations.....                                                        | 69 |
| Figure 49. Structure of entrepreneurs by the number of permanent employees.....                                                            | 69 |
| Figure 50 . Women prone to start a business by the sex of the head of the household .....                                                  | 70 |
| Figure 51. Women prone to start a business by the region .....                                                                             | 70 |
| Figure 52. Structure of potential entrepreneurs by planned start date of activity .....                                                    | 71 |
| Figure 53. Structure of potential entrepreneurs by the number of planned permanent employees .....                                         | 71 |
| Figure 54. Main reasons of women in rural areas for doing business in agriculture .....                                                    | 72 |
| Figure 55. Receiving family support during business establishment and operation .....                                                      | 73 |
| Figure 56. Main reasons for doing business in agriculture among women who plan to start a new business in coming years.....                | 74 |

|                                                                                                                                                                            |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Figure 57. Do you believe you have sufficient knowledge for establishing and managing a business? .....</b>                                                             | <b>74</b>  |
| <b>Figure 58. The distribution of the scores for Women's Economic Engagement .....</b>                                                                                     | <b>77</b>  |
| <b>Figure 59. Attitude toward gender equality and support for traditional gender roles .....</b>                                                                           | <b>79</b>  |
| <b>Figure 60. Who has the right to inheritance in the family according to surveyed women? .....</b>                                                                        | <b>81</b>  |
| <b>Figure 61. To what extent do you agree with the following idea: in a family, a daughter should give up her right to inherit the land or house to her brother? .....</b> | <b>82</b>  |
| <b>Figure 62. Decision makers by the type of purchases .....</b>                                                                                                           | <b>83</b>  |
| <b>Figure 63. Management of free time and control over time among women living in rural areas in Armenia .....</b>                                                         | <b>87</b>  |
| <b>Figure 64. The status of business and agricultural loan applications of women living in rural areas in Armenia .....</b>                                                | <b>89</b>  |
| <b>Figure 65. Women's contribution to household expenses .....</b>                                                                                                         | <b>90</b>  |
| <b>Figure 66. Access of women in rural settlements to personal items, physical and virtual space .....</b>                                                                 | <b>91</b>  |
| <b>Figure 67. Access to items and personal space by age group .....</b>                                                                                                    | <b>92</b>  |
| <b>Figure 68. Access to items and personal space per education .....</b>                                                                                                   | <b>92</b>  |
| <b>Figure 69. Access to items and personal space per economic status of the families.....</b>                                                                              | <b>93</b>  |
| <b>Figure 70. How likely is it that women will do the following? .....</b>                                                                                                 | <b>94</b>  |
| <b>Figure 71. Women who have acquaintances or organizations they can turn to personally in case they need help or have problems .....</b>                                  | <b>96</b>  |
| <b>Figure 72. Access to network for getting professional training in any field by women's age group .....</b>                                                              | <b>96</b>  |
| <b>Figure 73. Access to networks for solving the following problems by women's level of education .....</b>                                                                | <b>97</b>  |
| <b>Figure 74. Access to networks by the HH economic status in order to solve the following problems .....</b>                                                              | <b>97</b>  |
| <b>Figure 75. Access to networks for getting professional training in any field by type of the family .....</b>                                                            | <b>98</b>  |
| <b>Figure 76. The number of social networks women can apply in case of need .....</b>                                                                                      | <b>98</b>  |
| <b>Figure 77. Women's mobility in the last year .....</b>                                                                                                                  | <b>100</b> |
| <b>Figure 78. Who possesses and manages the car in the HH.....</b>                                                                                                         | <b>102</b> |
| <b>Figure 79. The share of women who have driven passenger a car alone outside of their community .....</b>                                                                | <b>103</b> |
| <b>Figure 80. Women's transport use by women's level of education .....</b>                                                                                                | <b>103</b> |
| <b>Figure 81. The share of women who have experienced displays of domination, control, and power towards them by a family member in the last year .....</b>                | <b>104</b> |

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the United State Agency for International Development (USAID/Armenia), which has contracted Modex LLC to develop a research on Economic Policy Paper in the frame of “Women Leading Rural Entrepreneurship in Armenia” project, which is a component of “Rural Economic Development – New Economic Opportunity” project financed by the USAID and implemented by the CARD foundation.

The given research paper was prepared by a team of experts from Modex LLC: Haykaz Fanyan, Armine Petrosyan, Sonya Msryan, Sevan Petrosyan, Anahit Hakobyan. The quantitative data collection was implemented by the “IPM” Research Consulting LLC: Vanine Yerosyan and Satenik Davtyan. The study was reviewed and provided recommendations by Tatevik Mkrtchyan, Gender Development Project coordinator at CARD foundation.

“Women Agripreneurship in Armenia ” research study was developed by the group of experts and the context belongs to the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the USAID and/or US government.

## **Executive summary**

### **Armenia has improved its performance in different aspects of gender equality**

Over the last decade, Armenia has registered improvement in several areas regarding gender equality (e.g., legislation, women in politics and education), however, there are still key aspects such as economic opportunities, employment, and pay, that need to be improved. This is demonstrated by a number of international metrics of gender equality. However, in several international rankings such as United Nation (UN) Gender Inequality Index (GII) and World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) it still lags behind several peer countries.

### **Increasing women's participation in the workforce becomes more critical**

In 2012-2020, the participation of women aged 15-74 in the labor market fluctuated between 47.9%-55.9%, while in the case of men, it was around 70% or more. Moreover, only 41% of women of working age (15+ years old) are employed and the number of employed women over the last decade is declining. Increased participation of women in the labor market becomes more critical in the light of a challenging demographic situation. According to the latest UN Population Fund forecast, Armenia's population is projected to decline to 2.8 million by 2050, and the percentage of people aged 65 and older is expected to increase from 12.6% in 2021 to 21.4% in 2050. The aging population and shrinking size of the working age cohort will continue to drag down the economic growth; therefore bringing more women to the workplace can help to reduce the intense demographic pressure on economic growth.

**By closing the gender gap in employment, Armenia can increase its GDP by about 13.5%**

The gaps between men and women in such dimensions as economic opportunities and employment means there is a significant economic contribution from women that remains untapped. In 2022, the World Bank estimated that Armenia has opportunities to increase its GDP by about 13.5% in the long run by closing the gender employment gap.

### **There is a significant gender gap in entrepreneurship**

Over the last decade a number of programs have been implemented with a focus on the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, which contributed to the increase in the number of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) owned by women. However, despite the efforts to increase the involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities, there are still much less female-owned than male-owned businesses in Armenia. Namely, the share of adults owning and managing a sustainable business (that has paid wages for 3.5 years or more) among men is 2.3 times higher than among women (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019/2020).

### **Nearly 16% of women in rural settlements are active agripreneurs**

According to a survey conducted among women aged 21 to 63 years old in rural areas of Armenia, nearly 28% of women in rural settlements have been involved either in agripreneurial activity within the last 2 years or intend to start a business in coming years, while 2% were engaged in other types of entrepreneurial activities. Currently, 16.4% of women living in rural settlements in Armenia are active agripreneurs, primarily focused on crop growing and animal production, as well as the manufacturing of food products and the retail sale of flowers, plants, and seeds.

### **About 13.1% of women in rural settlements plan to start a business**

The survey shows that 13.1% of women from the rural settlements have plans to start a new business. The vast majority of women who plan to start a new business (about 76%) do not have prior experience in business and plan to start a business in 2023. Women intending to start new businesses are primarily interested in the agriculture sector (80.6%) where, according to their perception, they have general or specific knowledge that might contribute to their success (81.8%). However, women's knowledge in agriculture is mostly experience-based as women's enrollment in formal educational institutions in the related specializations is relatively low (21.6%). Most of the potential entrepreneurs (59.0%) believe that they have comprehensive or some knowledge for establishing and managing a business, while only 13.3% of them have attended courses in business management, marketing or related subjects or received online training on similar topics. This may indicate that there is a significant gap between their perceived and actual capabilities. Worth mentioning that every agripreneurship business established by women in the rural settlements of Armenia may create 2.6 permanent and 2.8 seasonal jobs by significantly contributing to employment in those settlements.

### **Access to finance and moral support of the family are the main motivational factors for starting a business**

According to the survey, the main motivational factors for starting a business are the provision of affordable finance (61.0% of respondents mentioned this factor), moral support of the family (31.0%) and assisting in the organization of sales (28.0%), followed by organization of general business courses (21.0%) and courses on agricultural topics (19.0%). Moral support is especially important since the vast majority of active entrepreneurs (90.0%) received or continue to receive support from their families at any stage of their business. Moreover, it is a significant contributor to women's economic engagement as women receiving support from their families demonstrated higher economic engagement than women lacking such support.

### **The level of economic engagement of women in rural settlements is very low and insufficient**

To reveal the overall economic engagement of women in rural areas, the research team designed the Women's Economic Engagement (WEE) score based on 10 dimensions measuring different aspects vital to women's economic engagement, such as women's engagement in business activities, access to financial and non-financial assets and resources, as well as their knowledge and capacity. The average WEE score is 1.71 on a scale from 0 to 10 (the median score was 1) indicating women's very low and insufficient economic engagement and empowerment. Additionally, our assessment shows that the level of women's economic engagement is associated with their educational background and the economic status of their families: women with higher education, and the women from upper-income families have higher economic engagement scores compared with women who have only basic and secondary education, and women from low- and middle-income families.

### **Women's perception of different gender-sensitive situations is highly affected by stereotypes and beliefs**

The study shows that women mostly support gender equality; however, their perception of different gender-sensitive situations is highly affected by stereotypes and beliefs. Certain gender stereotypes primarily relate to women's potential economic activity, for example, the

roles of men and women in decision-making at the HH level, division of HH labor, women's prime responsibility for raising children, and men's role in providing financially. Additionally, young, highly educated women or women from upper-income families or from southern regions are supportive of gender equality compared to women from other groups. The cultural norms and stereotypes may significantly restrict women's entrepreneurial activity, thus women living in families supporting gender equality are more economically active than those from families supporting traditional gender roles.

### **Household chores do not significantly restrict women's economic engagement**

The survey shows that there is a clear tendency to divide household work between male and female family members. Particularly, on average women daily spend 4.2 hours for household chores and 2.6 hours for unpaid agriculture work. However, neither the perceived division of household labor nor women's burden with unpaid HH work are not barriers to economic engagement. Moreover, most women (68.4%) living in rural areas still have free time that they do not know how to manage.

### **Women living in rural areas have limited experience applying for and receiving agricultural and business loans**

According to our study, only one-fifth of women have applied for agricultural and business loans to banks or credit organizations. This share is also low among women who are currently engaged in entrepreneurial activities (27.2%). It must be also mentioned that 21.6% of women who have applied for agricultural or business loans have been always rejected. The main reasons for rejection are bad credit history (36.1% of the cases), insufficient income or collateral (33.5%), absence of credit history, or being overburdened with credits (27.4%). One of the main reasons for women not applying for loans is the lack of awareness about funding opportunities.

### **Nearly 9% of women living in rural areas reported being subject to some kind of violence**

Gender Based Violence (GBV) issues and family dominance remain concerning issues for women living in rural settlements in the country. Approximately 9.2% of women living in rural areas reported being subject to some kind of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal violence. While no significant interrelations have been found between women's economic engagement and family dominance, women's right to participate in the labor market was primarily violated by other family members who prevented them from working outside the home (12% of women).

### **The research team proposes 13 recommendations to overcome the challenges regarding women's agripreneurship**

Based on research results, the research team identified four main directions for intervention and formulated 13 recommendations. Those directions are access to finance, capacity building, access to market and promoting a shift in cultural attitudes, and empowering women's agripreneurship.

**The results of statistical tests for the 12 hypothesis formulated by the research team in this study are as follows:**

| N  | Hypothesis                                                                                                                                                        | Test result   |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1  | Women who have support from their family members demonstrate a higher level of economic engagement compared with women who do not have support from their family. | Confirmed     |
| 2  | Women with vocational and higher educational backgrounds are more inclined to be economically active compared to women with lower educational backgrounds.        | Confirmed     |
| 3  | Women prone to gender equality have higher economic engagement compared to women resistant to gender equity values.                                               | Not confirmed |
| 4  | Women with higher economic engagement are more aware of their inheritance rights compared to those with lower economic engagement.                                | Not confirmed |
| 5  | Women with higher economic engagement are more involved in HH decision-making processes compared to women with lower economic engagement.                         | Confirmed     |
| 6  | There is a positive correlation between women's economic engagement and the perceived division of household labour.                                               | Not confirmed |
| 7  | Women overburdened with HH unpaid work are less inclined to have high economic engagement compared to women free of HH unpaid work.                               | Not confirmed |
| 8  | Women free to use their time as they want are more inclined to have high economic engagement compared to women who are not.                                       | Not confirmed |
| 9  | Women's contribution to family support positively correlates with the women's economic engagement index.                                                          | Confirmed     |
| 10 | Women who are open to social interaction have higher economic engagement compared to women with limited social interaction.                                       | Confirmed     |
| 11 | Women more prone to networking have higher economic engagement compared to women with limited networking capacity.                                                | Confirmed     |
| 12 | Women's mobility is positively associated with their economic engagement.                                                                                         | Confirmed     |

## Introduction

Women's empowerment and promotion of economic engagement are key development objectives for various policies and programs. Various research demonstrates that women's involvement in the economy and participation in agriculture contributes to improving the productivity and efficiency of the sectors<sup>1</sup>.

Over the last decade, several studies have been undertaken about gender inequality in Armenia, including on female entrepreneurship and the gender pay gap, to identify the main barriers that deny female labor force participation. However, as of today, no such detailed studies have been undertaken about the challenges faced by specifically female agripreneurs, while agriculture is the main provider of employment (21.8% of total employed persons in 2020), a major contributor to GDP (annual average of 14.8% in 2013-2021), and one of the main sectors of export for the country (7.5% share in 2020) .

Based on the initial plan in the frame of Women Leading Rural Entrepreneurship in Armenia (WoLeRE), which is the component of Rural Economic Development – New Economic Opportunities (RED-NEO) program funded by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) a study dedicated to developing Economic Policy Paper. The goal of the WoLeRE component is to advance women's leadership and entrepreneurship in the Armenian agricultural sector. To this end CARD Foundation, which is the implementing organization of the RED-NEO project, contracted Modex LLC to conduct a study on women agripreneurship in rural settlements of Armenia. The main task was to identify and highlight the obstacles female agripreneurs face and what can be done to advance women's contribution to the economy through agripreneurial activities and based on the study to develop the above-mentioned economic policy and action plan.

According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Armenia National Report 2019/2020, there are 2.3 times more male-owned sustainable businesses and 1.5 times more male-owned early-stage businesses than that of female-owned ones in Armenia. Over the recent years, the WoLeRE in Armenia team, being actively engaged in the agripreneurship sector of Armenia, identified that there is gender inequality in this sector too. Based on the discussions with the WoLeRE team, the following research problem was identified: ***Why women's agripreneurship level is relatively low in Armenia, and how it can be improved***

The given study addresses the following research questions:

- What is the level of agripreneurship of women in rural settlements of Armenia? (Main Findings and Conclusion N 15)
- What are the obstacles female agripreneurs face in Armenia? (N29, N 35, N 36, N 37)
- How do cultural norms, beliefs, and gender stereotypes affect women's participation in economic activity, particularly in agripreneurship in Armenia? (N 27, N 28, N 29)
- In which way do the gender roles, responsibilities, and time use affect the participation of women economic activity in rural areas? (N 32)
- To what extent do ownership, access, and control over assets and resources for women and men differ in rural areas of Armenia, and how does it influence women's participation in economic activity? (N 30)
- What factors hinder women's access to markets, finance, and control over the decision-making process? What factors influence women's ability to exercise control over the

---

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, "World development report 2012: Gender equality and development", 2011

material, human, intellectual, and financial resources, in the family, community, and country? (N 35, N 36, N 37)

- How does GBV, especially domestic violence, restrict women's participation in the economic activity in Armenia? Does women's entrepreneurship cause more instances of GBV? (N 38)
- How do the laws, policies, regulations, and institutional practices in Armenia influence the context in which men and women act and make decisions? (N 12)
- Do the legislations and regulations in Armenia support women's participation in agripreneural activities? Are the policies gender-inclusive? (N 12)
- How do other countries promote agripreneurship? (N 39)
- How much is female participation in the GDP in Armenia? How much will the GDP of Armenia increase if the gender employment gap is closed? (N 9)
- What is the current structure of the economy of Armenia and Agriculture in particular? (N 1)
- What could be done in Armenia to advance women's contribution to the economy through agripreneural activities? What policies and practices can be implemented to support women's participation in the economic activity in Armenia? (Recommendations Matrix)

The present report presents the results of the study and consists of seven chapters, Executive Summary, Introduction, Methodology, Abbreviations, List of tables, figures and diagrams, Conclusions, Recommendations Matrix, Bibliography, and Appendices.

**Chapter 1.** Socio-Economic Overview of Armenia gives an overview of the country's economy, and demographic situation, and presents gender dimensions in the labor market and education. The chapter presents the main demographic problems of the country including the declining birth rate, aging population, and migration. It reviews the gender gap in employment, women's participation in the labor market, as well as the educational attainment gap, gender segregation in education, etc.

**Chapter 2.** Gender Equality Performance of Armenia and International Comparisons gives an overview of Armenia's implementation of sustainable development goals on gender equality, as well as the country's performance in different international gender indexes compared over the years and with peer countries. The chapter reviews Armenia's progress toward the implementation of SDGs related to gender equality, and evaluation of country's performance in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI), World Bank's Women, Business, and the Law Index (WBL index), UN's Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Gender Development Index (GDI).

**Chapter 3.** Gender Policy, GBV Situation and Women Entrepreneurship in Armenia presents the gender policy framework of Armenia, gender-based domestic violence in the country, gives an overview of the state of women entrepreneurship and reviews access to finance as one of the most common obstacles for starting a business for women in the country. Particularly it reviews the main components of legislative and institutional sub-frameworks of Armenia's gender policy framework, as well as national gender policies, strategies, and action plans.

**Chapter 4.** Agricultural Sector Overview provides information about the country's agricultural sector, its output and value-added, gives an overview of animal husbandry and plant growing subsectors of agriculture, as well as the overview of the sector by country's regions.

**Chapter 5.** The economic engagement of women in the rural settlements of Armenia provides an overview of women's current economic activity and engagement in the agripreneurship based on quantitative survey data.

**Chapter 6.** The main obstacles for women in the Agripreneurship sector of Armenia present women's economic engagement through the lens of potential barriers, including gender stereotypes and roles, time use, participation in decision-making, access to assets and finances, social interaction and networking capacities, women's mobility, family dominance, and GBV issues.

**Chapter 7.** International Best Practice in Women Agripreneurship Development presents several international good practices aimed at mobilization of the potential productivity of women from rural settlements in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Georgia.

In addition to these chapters, the “Executive Summary” section presents the main findings of the study, “Recommendations Matrix” section presents the main problems/risks/opportunities and relevant recommendations as the basis for economic policy and action plan development.

The report consists of 136 pages.

## **Methodology**

The research team developed a research framework presented in more detail in Appendix 1. Methodology to address the research problem and questions comprehensively.

Taking into account the lack of a widely recognized definition of agripreneurship, the research team defined agripreneurship based on the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's definition of entrepreneurship. It is stated that any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business in the agriculture or related fields is considered as agripreneurship. In order to precisely identify women agripreneurs the scope of the agripreneurship sector was defined by NACE rev 2 and included the following activities: agriculture, forestry and fishing, agritourism, manufacture of food products, beverages, wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco, retail sale of flowers, plants, seeds, fertilizers, pet animals and pet food and other related activities.

To present a socio-economic overview of Armenia from gender perspectives, agricultural sector overview, Armenia's performance regarding relevant SDG goals, international comparisons, and international best practices regarding women agripreneurship development, the study gathered data and reviewed literature from several national and international sources, including USAID, UN, WB, ADB, WEF, IFC, and RA Statistical Committee.

In order to address comprehensively the research questions, the research team conducted a survey, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Overall, 8 in-depth interviews have been carried out with regional NGOs, development organizations with gender development project portfolios, financial institutions with the focus on agriculture, and representatives of the Ministry of Economy. In total, three focus group discussions among women involved in agripreneurial and non-agripreneurial activities were held with 6-8 participants in each group in Ararat, Shirak, and Tavush regions.

The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews among the rural female population aged 21 to 63 from 07 January to 02 February 2023. The data was collected through a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) tool using tablet devices through a survey platform. The survey was conducted among 780 participants (confidence level - 95%, confidence interval/marginal of error - 3.5%) using a multistage probability sampling technique. Stratification was done by age groups and regions following the Proportionate to Population Size (PPS) approach.

Based on the ToR review, literature review, exploratory research, the results of the results of the survey in the frame of the study the research team formulated and tested 12 hypotheses in order to understand the main aspects of women's engagement in the agripreneurship and the main obstacles for women in the agripreneurship sector of Armenia.

Based on the literature review and considering research questions, as well as country context, the research team has employed and adopted several concepts and scales related to gender equality and women empowerment, in order to assess the level of women's economic engagement, attitude toward gender equality and support for traditional gender roles. The perception of the division of household labor, involvement of women in HH decision-making, openness towards social interaction and access to networks, women's mobility, and freedom of family domination.

Based on various definitions and measurement tools, the research team developed a special metric and assessed Women's Economic Engagement (WEE) across ten questions and

three domains, including engagement in business activity, which considers women's current, and past entrepreneurial activities and intentions to start a business, access to assets and resources, knowledge and capacities. The composite index is a variable ranging from 0 to 10 score, where 0 means no economic engagement at all, and 10 means a high level of economic engagement.

Attitude toward gender equality and support for traditional gender roles has been measured through a combination of several variables employed in two well-known gender-equity scales: Attitude Towards Gender Equality Scale and Support<sup>2</sup> for Traditional Gender Roles Scale (Male dominance). The internal reliability of the scale has been assessed through Cronbach's Alpha test. The final value of the index ranges from 1 to 5, where "1" means that women are for gender equity and do not support traditional gender roles, and "5" means they support traditional gender roles.

Perceived Division of Household Labor was measured through the Perceived Division of Household Labor Scale, which is originally based on eleven questions, but for the purposes of our study five questions have been selected asking who typically performs a variety of household tasks<sup>3</sup>. The consolidated index ranges from 0 to 2, where "0" means women mainly cover all HH tasks, and "2" means other HH members cover proposed HH tasks.

The involvement of women in HH decision-making has been assessed through women's participation in decision-making regarding 1) major household purchases and 2) everyday household shopping. The final score ranges from 0 to 4 points, where "0" means women are excluded from the decision-making regarding HH purchases, and "4" means that women alone make decisions.

The research team employed two concepts to explore the interrelation of women's capacities for social interaction and access to networks with their economic engagement: Openness towards Social Interaction and Access to Networks. Openness to Social Interaction measures to what extent women are prone to social interaction employing five hypothetical situations primarily related to entrepreneurial activities in the agriculture sector. The research team also designed an Access to Network Index to find out whether women have acquaintances or organizations they can turn to personally in case they need help or have problems.

To measure women's mobility and the freedom of family domination, the study employed and adopted Women's Mobility and Freedom of Family Domination subscales measured under the Women Empowerment scale<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> Link to source: <https://www.indikit.net/indicator/3805-attitudes-towards-gender-equality>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Vannoy, D. & Cubbins, L. Relative Socioeconomic Status of Spouses, Gender Attitudes, and Attributes, and Marital Quality Experienced by Couples in Metropolitan Moscow. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. 2001; 32(2): 195-217; <https://gendermetrics.popcouncil.org/scale/perceived-division-of-household-labor-scale/#>

<sup>4</sup> Source: Schuler, SR, SM Hashemi, and AP Riley. 1997. The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh's fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use. *World Development*, 25(4): 563–75.

## Chapter 1. Socio-Economic Overview of Armenia

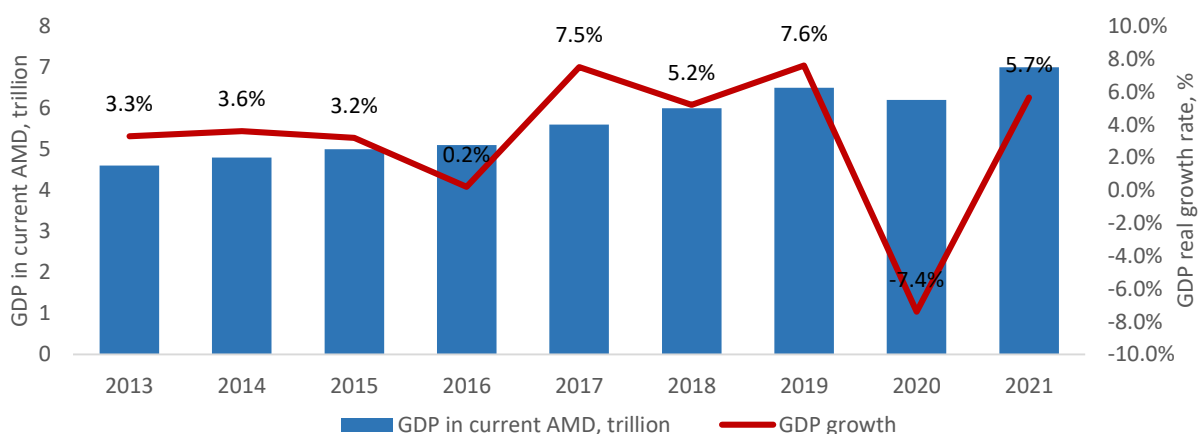
### 1.1 Economy of Armenia

According to the World Bank's classification Armenia is a small upper-middle income country, with agriculture as a main provider of employment. Over the last, decade the agriculture sector with manufacturing and trade sectors are leading contributors to Armenia's GDP. Being a landlocked country with a transition economy Armenia mainly exports copper ores, and gold and imports petroleum, natural gas and oils, consumer goods, and raw materials.

**Over the last decade, Armenia's GDP has been growing at an annual average 3.2% growth rate and amounted to USD 13.8 billion in 2021<sup>5</sup>.** Between 2013 and 2021 Armenia's GDP grew from AMD 4.6 trillion (USD 11.1 billion) to AMD 7 trillion (USD 13.8 billion). In 2013-2021, the economic growth rate slowed down in 2016 (0.2%) mainly conditioned by the economic downfall in Russia caused by the collapse of oil prices and Western sanctions and the decline in global metal prices. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) Armenia's economy deteriorated significantly in 2020 by recording a 7.2% decline compared to the previous year. The pandemic spread widely and significantly affected many sectors of the Armenian economy, especially "Accommodation and Food Services" (-46%).

**Armenia's economy is highly dependent on Russia's economy. The 2015-2016 economic slowdown once more demonstrated this dependence.** For example, in 2016 money transfers from Russia to Armenia through the banking system declined by 42% compared with 2014<sup>6</sup> directly affecting the private consumption in the country, the remittance-financed construction sector fell by 10.8% from a year before and was one of the main contributors to the economic slowdown (-1.0 percentage point<sup>7</sup>).

**Figure 1. GDP and real growth rate of the GDP of Armenia, 2013-2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee

**Although agriculture is still one of the most important sectors in Armenia's economy with an 11.1% share in GDP, 21.8% share in employment, and 7.5%<sup>8</sup> share in**

<sup>5</sup> RA Statistical Committee, Statistical databases: National Accounts, <https://bit.ly/30OUexF> (accessed 01.08.2022)

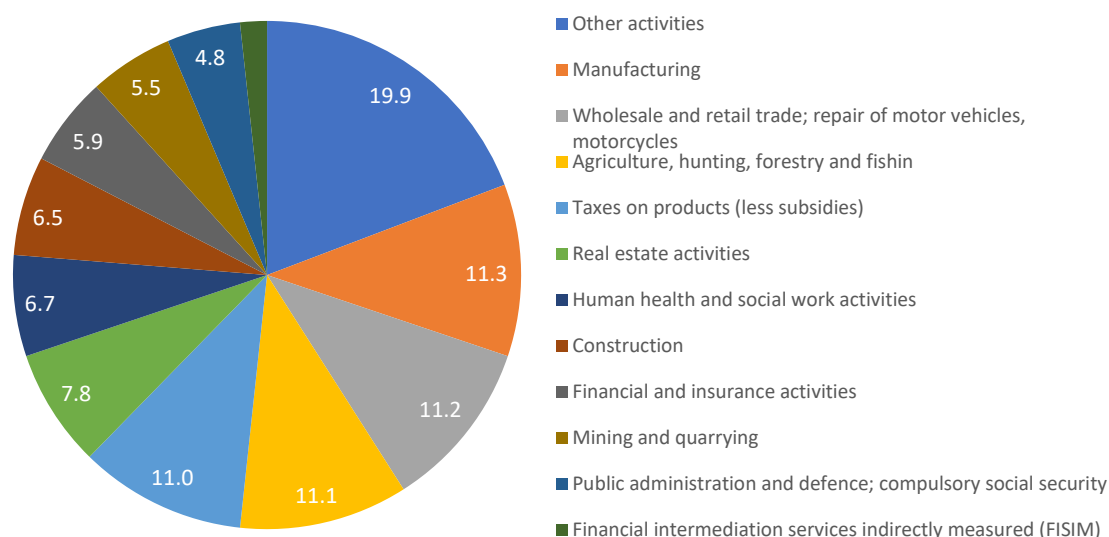
<sup>6</sup> CBA, <https://bit.ly/3aCWD07>

<sup>7</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-March 2017", <https://bit.ly/3MFlqOm>

<sup>8</sup> Eurasian Economic Commission, <https://bit.ly/2M2Fuyw>

exports (2020), over the last decade the country has been transitioning from this sector to non-agricultural sectors. The highest shares in GDP belong to Manufacturing, Wholesale and retail trade, Agriculture, and Real estate sectors with more than 11% contribution from each sector. In 2021, the manufacturing sector recorded the highest share in GDP structure (11.3%) and for the first time slightly outperformed agriculture which accounted for 11.1% of GDP as demonstrated in Figure 2. The RA government plans to enhance the role of the manufacturing industry and increase its contribution to GDP by at least 15% by 2026<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 2. Structure of GDP by economic activity, % of total, 2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee

Over the last two decades Armenia's gross national income per capita increased significantly, transitioning the country from lower-middle-income to an upper middle-income nation in 2018. Although, based on World Bank's Atlas method, the national income per capita increased notably from USD 660 in 2000 to USD 4,560 in 2021. It remains significantly lower than the average for upper middle-income countries, which is USD 10,363 in 2021, including the level of such peer countries of the same income group as Bulgaria (USD 10,720), Belarus (USD 6,950), and Moldova (USD 5,460)<sup>10</sup>.

One of the primary socio-economic issues in the country has been income inequality. Between 2011 and 2018, the Gini index, a measure of the distribution of income across the population, increased from 29.4% to 34.4%<sup>11</sup><sup>12</sup>. However, in recent years the Gini index has been on the decline (25.2 in 2020), which suggests potential equality improvements. Geographic disparities of Armenia, with more remote rural areas having poor access to

<sup>9</sup> RA Government, "Government Programme 2021-2026", <https://bit.ly/3zgEygY>

<sup>10</sup> World Bank open data, <https://bit.ly/3ovyFYh>

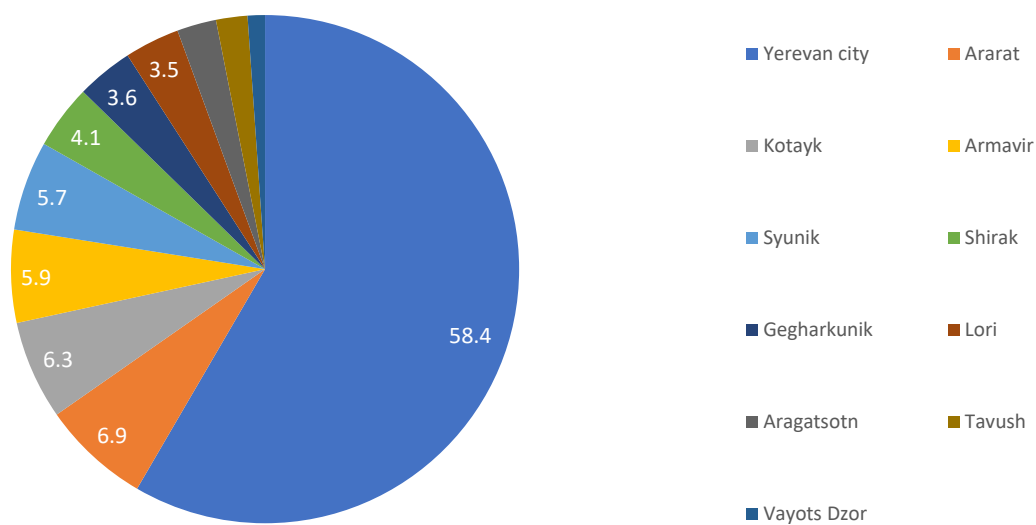
<sup>11</sup> World Bank open data, <https://bit.ly/3RXUdtU>

<sup>12</sup> The Gini index ranges from 0% to 100%, with 0 representing perfect equality and 100 representing perfect inequality. A higher Gini index indicates greater inequality, with the high-income population receiving much larger percentages of the population's total income.

essential healthcare or social services provided by the state and economic opportunities, explain a large part of the inequality<sup>13</sup>.

**The disproportionate regional development of the country is demonstrated in the contributions of regions to the country's GDP.** According to the latest 2019 official figures, 58.4% of Armenia's GDP is generated by Yerevan city, followed by significant differences by Ararat (6.9%), Kotayk (6.3%), Armavir (5.9%) and Syunik (5.7%) regions<sup>14</sup>. Particularly, Armavir and Ararat are leading producers of agricultural output with 22.6% and 15.1% shares respectively (2021)<sup>15</sup>, Syunik and Kotayk are major producers of industrial output with 22.4% and 11.7% shares respectively (2021)<sup>16</sup>, while the Kotayk region is a leading contributor to electricity production.

**Figure 3. Structure of GDP of Armenia by region and Yerevan city, 2019, % of total**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, National Accounts Of Armenia

**Agriculture and trade are the two main sectors for entrepreneurship activity in Armenia.** According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor study for Armenia, in pre-COVID and pre-war years of 2019, 28.8% of the adult population in Armenia was engaged in entrepreneurship, which was the sixth highest indicator among 50 countries<sup>17</sup>. However, the main motivation to start a business in Armenia was found to be “to earn a living because jobs are scarce”, which means that people engage in entrepreneurship forced by unfavorable socio-economic conditions and the lack of large opportunities for employment in rural and urban settlements. The majority of Armenian entrepreneurs are engaged in only two sectors - agriculture and trade- with 32.5% and 35.9% shares respectively. There is more to that, unlike most of the countries in the 2019 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, Armenia has the highest

<sup>13</sup> ADB, “Armenia: Country gender assessment”, December 2019 <https://bit.ly/3PJ1dcz>

<sup>14</sup> RA Statistical Committee, “National Accounts Of Armenia, 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3PZTmr4>

<sup>15</sup> RA Statistical Committee, “Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-December 2021”, (Agriculture) <https://bit.ly/3J17y0H>

<sup>16</sup> RA Statistical Committee, “Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-December 2021”, (Industry) <https://bit.ly/3BjiPYf>

<sup>17</sup> Global entrepreneurship research association, America Advisory, “Global entrepreneurship monitor: Armenia national report 2019/2020”, <https://bit.ly/3Vn52aD>

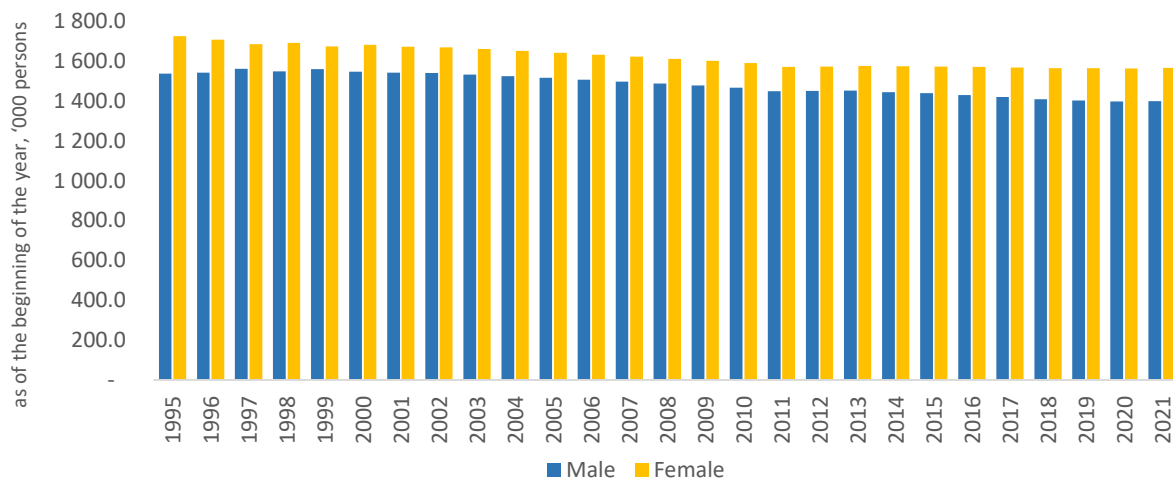
share of the extractive sector (mainly agriculture) in entrepreneurship, the sector, which has the lowest productivity among others, while Armenia is in the bottom-10 countries by share of most productive Business services sector in entrepreneurship.

## 1.2 Population of Armenia

**The demographic situation in Armenia has been deteriorating since the 1990s.** The main demographic problems include a declining birth rate, an aging population, and migration. In 2022, the budget for programs aimed at improving the demographic situation by the Armenian government has doubled compared to 2019, and over the years, the government has implemented programs with a view to increase the birth rate in the country, however, the downward demographic trends continue.<sup>18</sup>

**A central issue in demography is the country's shrinking and aging population.** As of the beginning of 2022, the population of Armenia is 2,961 thousand, which is 9.2% less than in 1995. Figure 4 shows that by the beginning of 2021 the female population made up 52.8% of total the population. Compared with 1995, in 2021 both the female and male population decreased by around 9%, particularly, female population decreased by 159.4 thousand and reached 1.56 million, and the male population decreased by 137.7 thousand and reached 1.39 million.

**Figure 4. Distribution of de jure population by sex, 1995-2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee ArmStatBank <https://bit.ly/3bRCZxL>

Note: Data for 2002-2011 are represented by the re-estimated permanent population based on RA Population Census 2011.

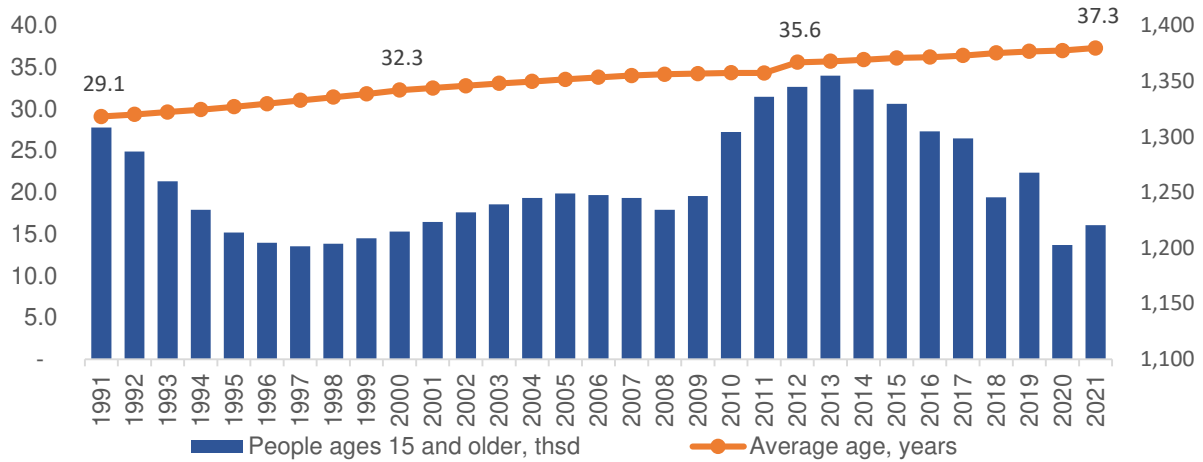
**The average age of the population in Armenia is increasing, while the size of the working-age population is shrinking.** Namely, official statistics and our calculations indicate that the average age of the population in Armenia increased from 29.1 years at the beginning of 1990s to 37.3 years in 2021<sup>19</sup>. The driving forces behind these trends are low fertility and

<sup>18</sup> RA Government, "The budget for demographic improvement programs has doubled in 2022 compared to 2019. A Council meeting takes place", 10 June 2022, <https://bit.ly/3oj4ljr> (accessed 21.07.2022)

<sup>19</sup> RA Statistical Committee, Authors' calculations and estimations

out-migration. It should be mentioned that on average, women in Armenia have 1.7 children, which is below replacement level<sup>20</sup>.

**Figure 5. Average age of population and number of people ages 15 and older, 1991-2021**



Source: World Bank database, <https://bit.ly/3JjCauv>, RA Statistical Committee and

**Population projections indicate that Armenia's population will continue to deteriorate.** According to the latest UN Population Fund forecast, Armenia's population is projected to decline to 2.8 million by 2050<sup>21</sup>, and the percentage of people aged 65 and older is expected to increase from 12.6%<sup>22</sup> in 2021 to 21.4% in 2050<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, bringing more women to the workplace can help to reduce the intense demographic pressure on economic growth.

**Despite the shrinking population, the level of urbanization in the country is still very high.** As of the beginning of 2022, urban areas hold as many as 63.9% of the population (Figure 6), while migration from rural to urban settlements leaves numerous rural districts in extreme situations of low demographic density. Particularly, in seven of 10 regions of Armenia, the population density is below the national average level (100 persons per sq. km). Moreover, in Gegharkunik, Syunik, and Vayots Dzor, which are the least densely populated regions, the population density is less than 45 persons per sq. km. The most densely populated regions are the three closest regions to the capital-Ararat, Armavir and Kotayk.

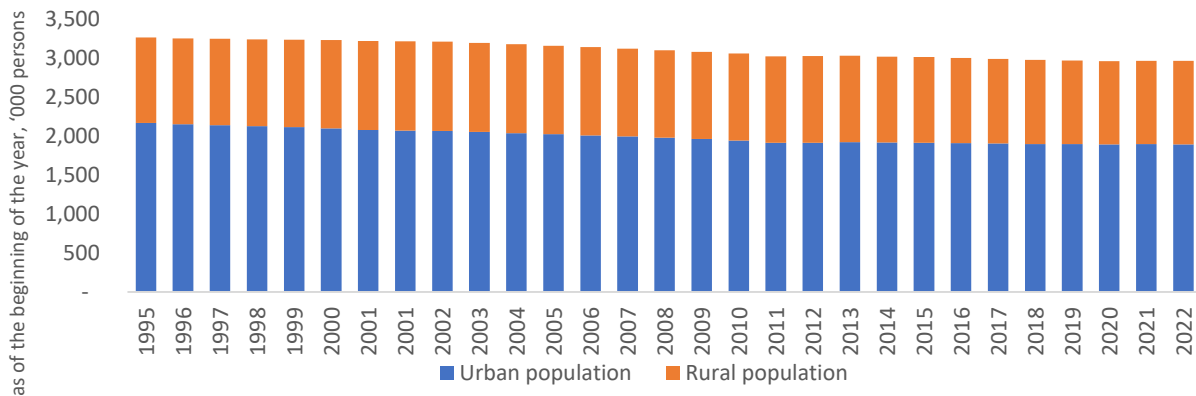
<sup>20</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "The Demographic Handbook of Armenia-2021", <https://bit.ly/3yWNfN9>

<sup>21</sup> (First citation) UN, World Population prospects 2019, <https://bit.ly/2zrWmYB> [accessed 14.06.2022]

<sup>22</sup> Authors' calculations based on the Demographic Database of the RA Statistical Committee, <https://bit.ly/3mI4Bb3> [accessed 14.06.2022]

<sup>23</sup> (Subsequent citation) UN, World Population prospects 2019

**Figure 6. The number of permanent population of Armenia, 1995-2022**



Source: RA Statistical Committee ArmStatBank <https://bit.ly/3bRCZxL> , "Number of Permanent

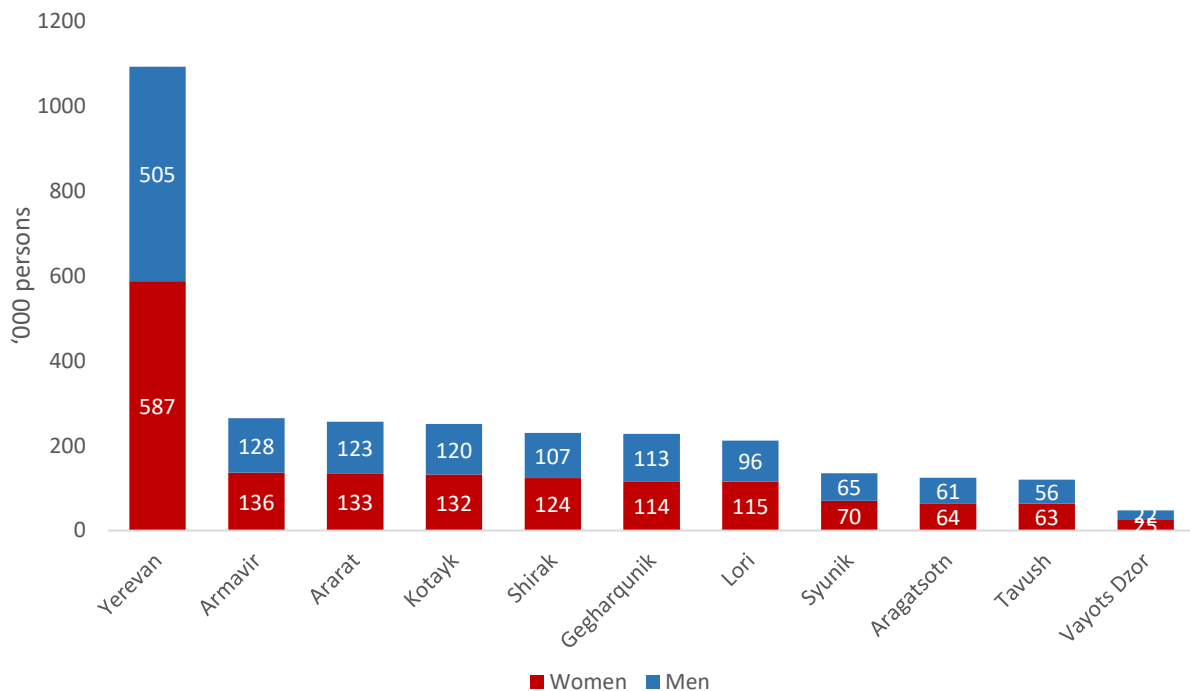
Note: Data for 2002-2011 are represented by the re-estimated permanent population based on RA Population Census 2011.

**At the beginning of 2022, more than 60% of the total population resided only in four regions, which are city Yerevan, Armavir (with 264.4 thousand), Ararat (256.6 thousand) and Kotayk (251.1 thousand) regions.** Yerevan holds 37% of the population in Armenia or 1.1 million people, while regions of Aragatsotn (124.6 thousand), Tavush (119.8 thousand), and Vayots Dzor (47.6 thousand) have the smallest amount of population.

**In all 10 regions of Armenia, the female population exceeds the male population.** The biggest difference among the regions is observed in Lori, where 54.6% of the population is female and 45.4% is male, and Shirak with 53.6% female and 46.4% male population. The main reason for these differences may be the outmigration of the male population for work-related reasons. Particularly, according to 2015-2020 official statistics Lori and Shirak are the two regions where the involvement of households in migration recorded the highest level (15.5% and 16.9% of total household members respectively)<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank, <https://bit.ly/3PnvPQM>

**Figure 7. Distribution of de jure population of Armenia by regions and city Yerevan as of 1 January 2022**

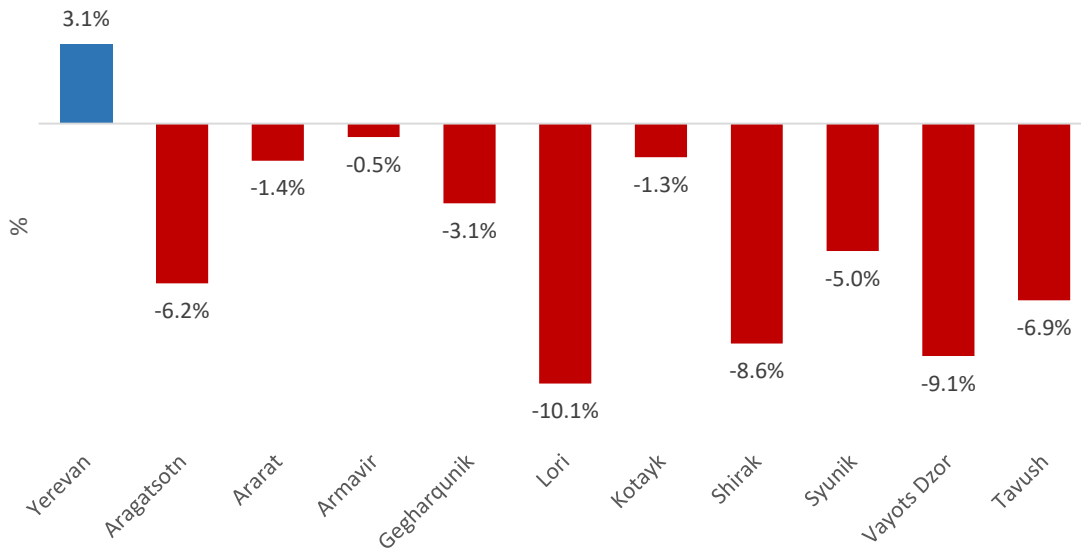


Source: RA Statistical Committee, Demographic Database, <https://bit.ly/3ABFrmp>

**Overall, over the years, all the regions of Armenia, except for Yerevan, experienced a decline in population, albeit at varying rates.** In particular, between 2011 and 2022 the most affected regions were Lori (-10.1%), Vayots Dzor (-9.1%), and Shirak (-8.6%) and the least affected regions were Armavir (-0.5%), Kotayk (-1.3%), and Ararat (-1.4%)<sup>25</sup>. Much of the growth in Yerevan may be explained by internal migration from other regions to the capital city. Armavir and Ararat are in the fertile land of the Ararat Valley and are the major producers of agricultural output in Armenia. Kotayk is one of the major producers of industrial output, meaning that these sectors provide employment in the regions and help to weaken the socioeconomic adversity, which can partly explain the slower deterioration in population and the higher than country average population density.

<sup>25</sup> Calculations based on the RA Statistical Committee database, <https://bit.ly/3ABFrmp>

**Figure 8. The change in the population of regions of Armenia between 2011 and 2022**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, Demographic Database, <https://bit.ly/3ABFrmp>

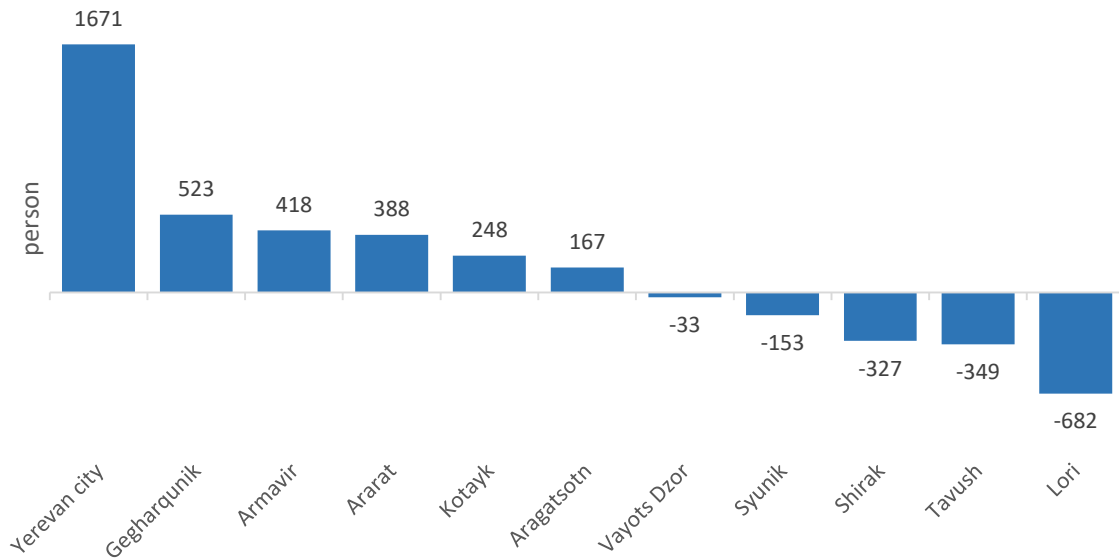
As already mentioned, the decrease of population in the regions is driven both by the migration of the population and declining birth rates. Supposedly, one of the main reasons for migration from the regions is the socio-economic situation and the inequality between the regions and Yerevan. Over the 2015-2020 period, nearly 10% of households in Armenia had members involved in internal and external migration and the main reason for migration is the need to or search for a work<sup>26</sup>. On the other hand, the birth rate in Armenia over the last decades has declined significantly from 15.0 crude birth rate in 1995 to 12.3 per 1,000 people in 2020; in rural areas, the fall is even more dramatic (from 18.1 in 1995 to 10.3 in 2020)<sup>27</sup>.

Before 2012, in Armenia, more children were born in rural areas than in urban areas, while over the last years, the trend has reversed. Moreover, for the first time in 2020, the difference between births and deaths in rural areas (natural growth) was negative and this trend in depopulation continued in several regions in 2021 too. As Figure 9 shows, in the Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Shirak, Tavush, and Lori regions in 2021 there were more deaths than births. The creation of favorable socio-economic conditions in the regions may contribute to increasing fertility and preventing the villages from being emptied.

<sup>26</sup> RA Statistical Committee, “The Demographic Handbook of Armenia-2021”, <https://bit.ly/3IAzTdV>

<sup>27</sup> RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank, <https://bit.ly/3PnvPQM>

**Figure 9. The natural growth of population in Yerevan city and regions of Armenia in 2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, <https://bit.ly/3AlgMN7>

**Armenia is a small country with a relatively isolated geography, and current demographic challenges threaten its economic outcomes.** The aging population and shrinking size of the working-age cohort will continue to drag down the economic growth unless some solutions are found. Improving the socio-economic conditions of the regions while bringing more women into the workforce may be one of the solutions.

### 1.3 Labor Participation and Salary Gap

Although the legislation of Armenia guarantees equality between the sexes, including equal access to employment opportunities, women's participation in the labor market is still lower than that of men. The occupations are segregated by gender with the majority of women working in only three sectors- agriculture, education, and trade- and there is also a notable gender pay gap. Moreover, women in Armenia are more likely to work in part-time positions and also less likely to hold managerial positions.

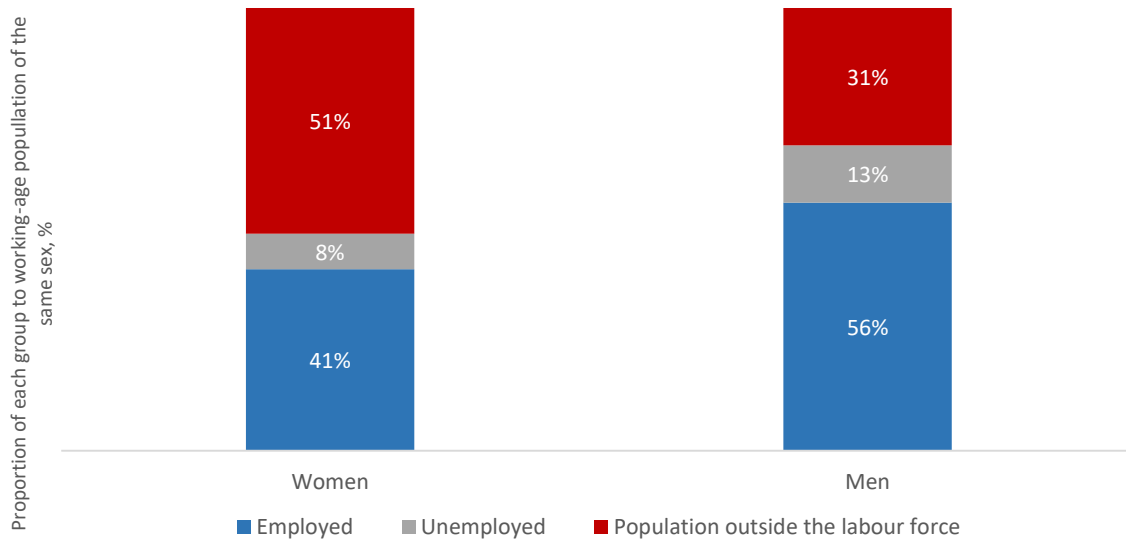
**According to the latest available data, only 41% of women of working age (15+ years old) are employed (Figure 10), suggesting that there is a significant potential economic contribution from women in Armenia that remains untapped.** Moreover, the number of employed women over the last decade is declining. In 2020, 486.4 thousand women were employed, which is less than 54 thousand or by 10% than in 2010<sup>28</sup>. Women also work fewer hours than men and such differences are spread among ages and occupation types. Overall, Armenian women are found to work 39.1 hours per week, while men work 45.2 hours (14.3% difference)<sup>29</sup>. As demonstrated in Figure 10, a significant 51% of working-age women,

<sup>28</sup> RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank <https://bit.ly/3IHihgw>

<sup>29</sup> UN Women, ARMSTAT, "Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labor Market in Armenia", 2020 <https://bit.ly/3ztQQEq>

or total 603 thousand women do not participate in the labor force, in other words, they do not have or do not seek a job. It is worth mentioning that the main reason for women being out of the labor force is family circumstances: according to RA Statistical Committee's report,<sup>30</sup> 37.1% of women or 224 thousand persons stated this as a main reason for being out of the labor market.

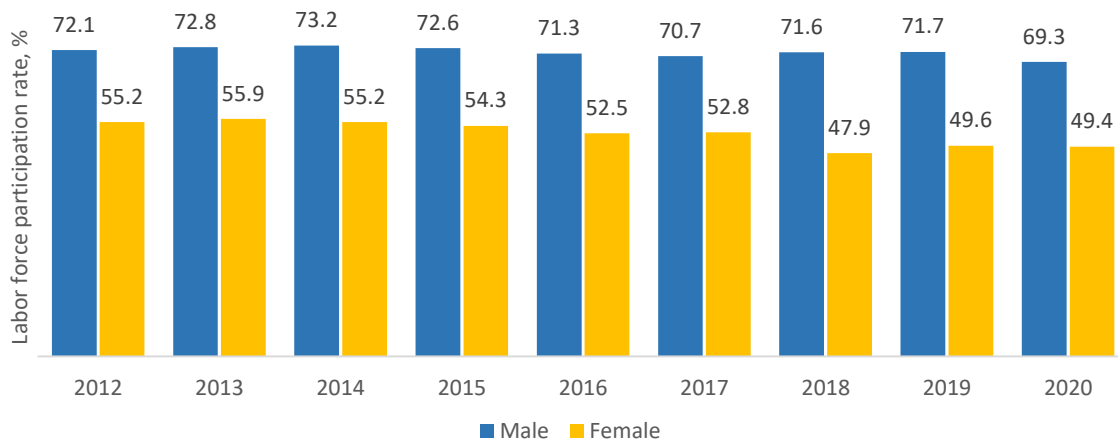
**Figure 10. Structure of working-age population in Armenia by gender, 2020**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, <https://bit.ly/3aEknRG>

**In Armenia, the labor force participation rate for women is significantly lower than that for men.** In 2012-2020, the participation of women aged 15-74 in the labor market fluctuated between 47.9%-55.9%, while in the case of men, the labor force participation rate was around 70% or more (Figure 11).

**Figure 11. Labor force participation rate in Armenia, 2012-2020**



Source: RA Statistical Committee

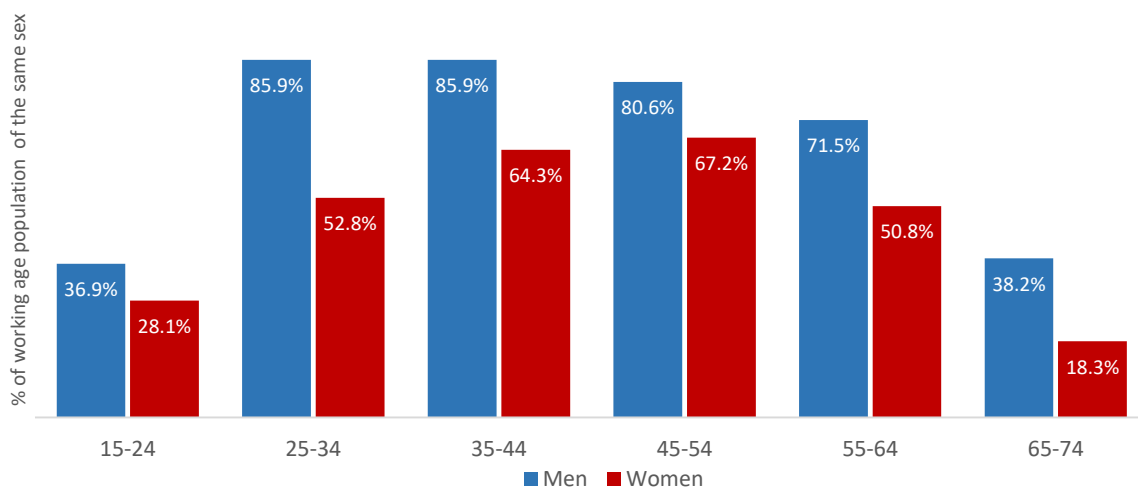
Note: The methodology behind labor statistics was revised since 2018, which can partly explain the differences in data from before 2018 and after.

<sup>30</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Women and Men in Armenia-2021", 2021, <https://bit.ly/3ATxKs4>

Female participation rate in Armenia is less than the average for countries in the same income group. According to the latest estimate of the International Labor Organization, in 2019, the female labor force participation rate (measured as the proportion of the economically active female population ages 15-64) in Armenia (51.0%) was considerably lower than the average for upper middle-income countries (63.0%), as well as peer countries such as Georgia (61.0%) and Estonia (76.0%)<sup>31</sup>.

**The gap in labor force participation rate is significantly higher between younger women and men** - in 2020 only 52.8% of women aged 25-34 were employed, compared with 85.9% of men<sup>32</sup> (Figure 12). The lower participation rates for younger women can be partly attributed to family responsibilities, including caring for small children.

**Figure 12. Labor force participation rate by age, 2020**



Source: RA Statistical Committee

**In 2020, in Armenia 42% of married women compared to 64% of married men are employed**<sup>33</sup>. One of the factors behind this may be that there are not sufficient conditions for aspiring women to be able to raise children without having to compromise their careers, however, there may also be another very important reason which is restrictions on economic activity by their life partners. A 2021 survey conducted among women ages 15-59 in Armenia shows that 65.7% of ever-partnered women have experienced restrictions on economic activity (preventing a victim or survivor from working, taking earned money against her will, or withholding access to money)<sup>34</sup>, the most common form of economic abuse being preventing women from working.

**Looking into sector-based employment we see that in Armenia occupations are segregated by gender**, with a much higher share of men in such stereotypically male professions as construction (97.6% of employed persons in the sector), mining (88.2%), transportation (85.4%), electricity, gas supply (89%), while the share of women is high in education (80.3%), and human health, and social work activities (78.8%). Regarding activities

<sup>31</sup> World Bank open data, <https://bit.ly/3b24C7b>

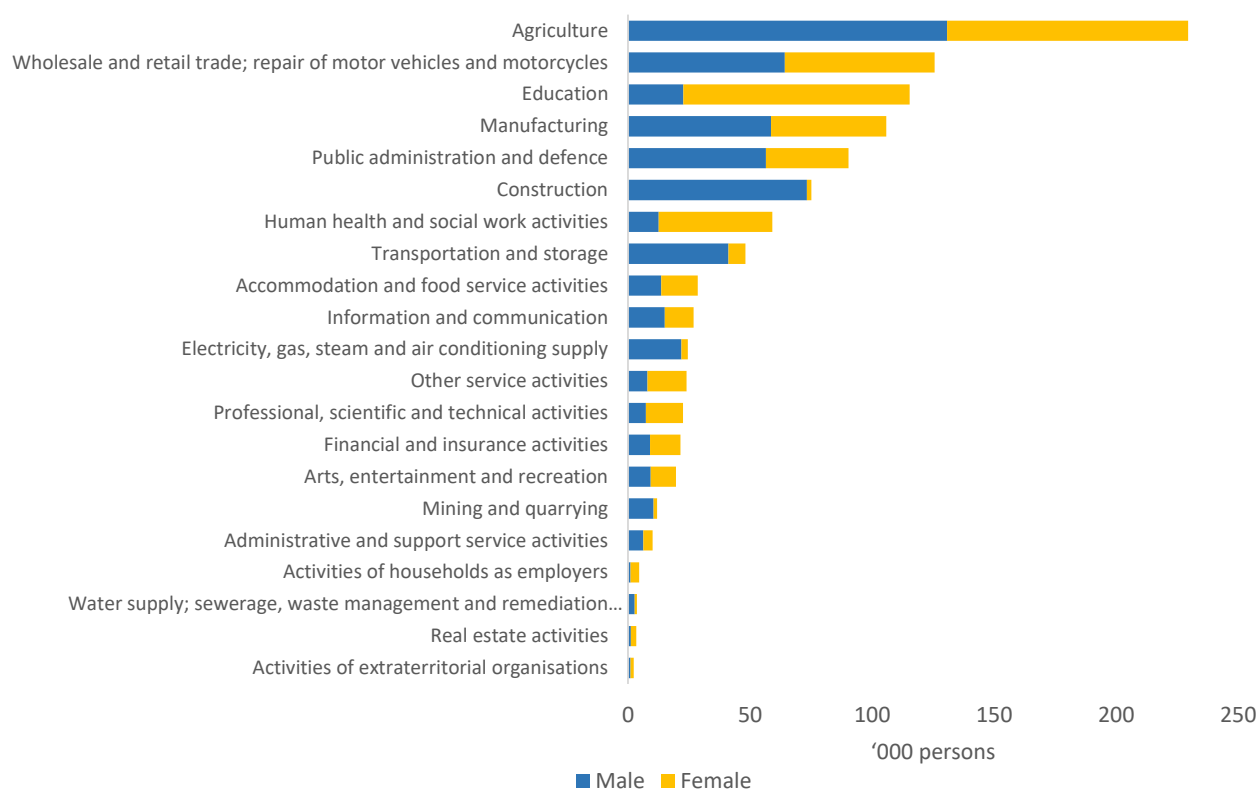
<sup>32</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Statistical Yearbook of Armenia, 2021", <https://bit.ly/3mxXzpd>

<sup>33</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Women and Men in Armenia-2021", 2021, <https://bit.ly/3ATxKs4>

<sup>34</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Survey on domestic violence against women. Analytical Report 2021", <https://bit.ly/3QNngzP>

related to agriculture, in 2020, 56.9% of 229.6 thousand persons engaged in these activities are male and 43.1% are female.

**Figure 13. Employed Persons by Types of Economic Activity, 2020**

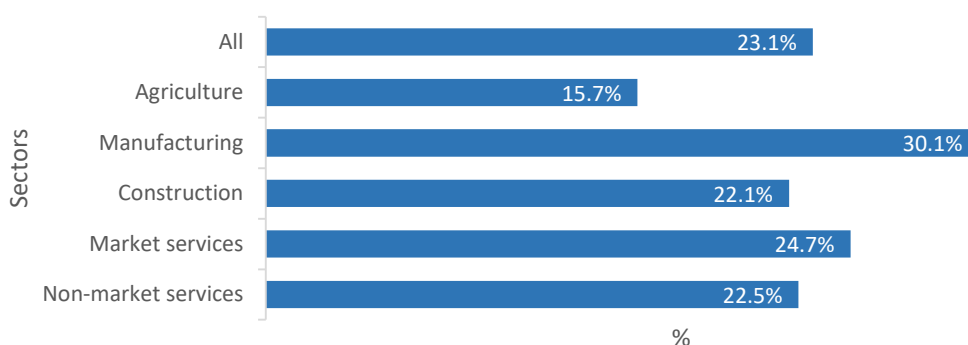


Source: RA Statistical Committee, <https://bit.ly/3NWpBa5>

**Further analysis shows that women in Armenia are mainly involved in only three sectors (2020),** which are agriculture (98.9 thousand women or 20.3% of employed women), education (92.7 thousand or 19.1% of employed women) and wholesale and retail trade (61.5 thousand or 12.6% of employed women). It is worth mentioning that despite the large numbers of women working in the agriculture sector formally and informally, only 16% of women in Armenia own land compared to 35% of men (2015-2016), which is down from 39% of women in 2010<sup>35</sup>. The large presence of women in agriculture corroborates their larger share as unpaid family workers.

<sup>35</sup> UN Women, “Armenia country gender equality brief”, 2019 <https://bit.ly/3Pdxdp7F>

**Figure 14. Raw gender pay gap (hourly) in Armenia by sector**



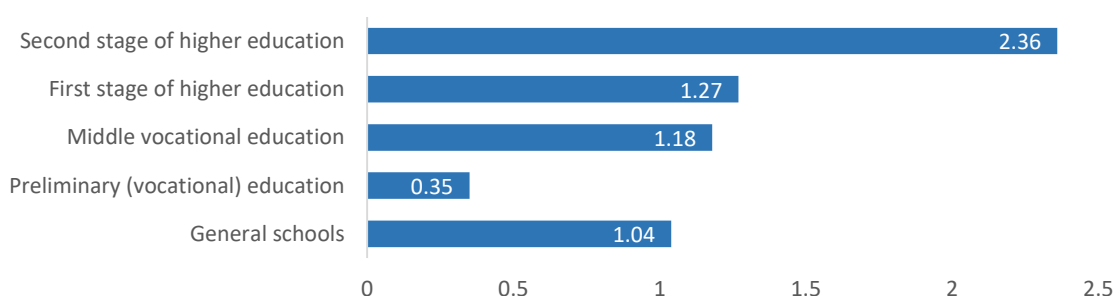
Source: RA Statistical Committee, UN, <https://bit.ly/3mQYOQi>

**Women in Armenia are also paid less than men do.** In 2020, UN Women and Armstat conducted a “gender pay gap” analysis in the labor market of Armenia, which shows that there is a significant 23.1% raw gender pay gap<sup>36</sup> in the country<sup>37</sup>. Figure 14 shows that the gender pay gap varies from 15.7% in agriculture to as high as 30.1% in manufacturing.

### 1.3 Gender Aspects in Education

World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index 2021 suggests that the educational attainment gap in Armenia is almost closed (99.8%)<sup>38</sup>. Some gender-related differences are revealed in the analysis of the statistics, especially when we consider the specializations in higher education.

**Figure 15. Gender Parity Index<sup>39</sup> in Armenia in 2020**



Source: RA Statistical Committee <https://bit.ly/3bvs2BM>

**According to the Gender Parity Index calculated by the RA Statistical Committee, the gender parity significantly varies depending on education level.** Particularly, Armenia has achieved gender parity at the level of general schools (1.04), which means that the share of involved men and women is almost equal, while men dominate in vocational education (0.35),

<sup>36</sup> The raw or unadjusted gender pay gap is estimated as a difference between men’s and women’s wages. It is “raw” since it does not take into account the characteristics of the individuals used in the comparison, most notably education.

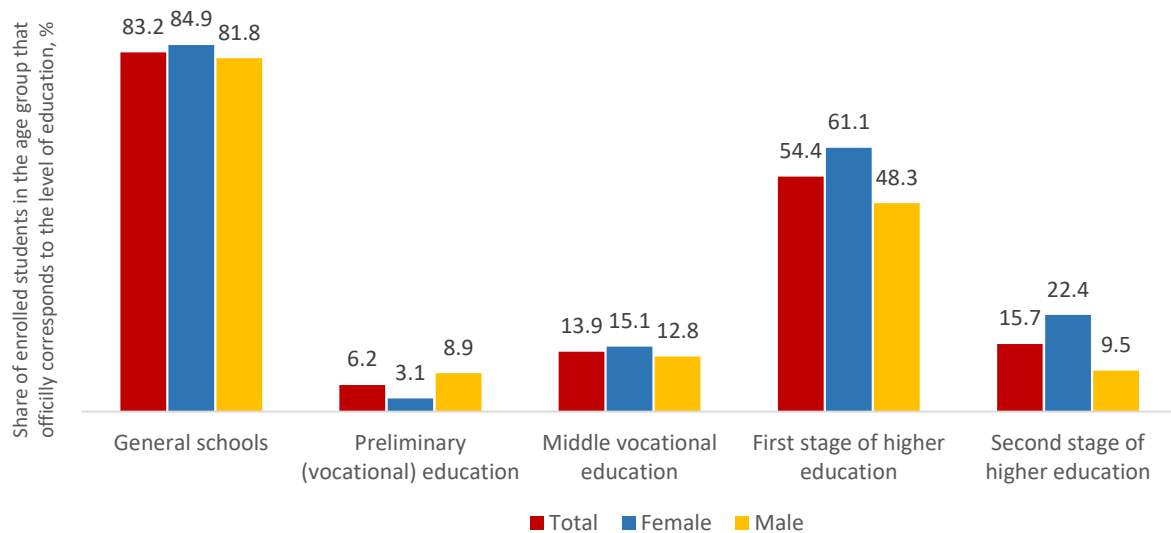
<sup>37</sup> UN Women, ARMSTAT, “Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labour Market in Armenia”, 2020 <https://bit.ly/3ztQQEq>

<sup>38</sup> WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2021, <https://bit.ly/3OQc4Bf>

<sup>39</sup> Ratio of female to male values of a given indicator. A GPI between 0.97 and 1.03 indicates parity between the genders. A GPI below 0.97 indicates a disparity in favor of males. A GPI above 1.03 indicates a disparity in favor of females. (UNESCO, <https://bit.ly/3NikUW0> )

and women dominate in the first (1.27) and second (2.36) stages of higher education. This suggests that female students are much less likely to enter vocational training than male students, while more likely than men to enroll as university students at bachelor and master levels. More specifically, the enrollment ratio in general schools is 84.9% for girls and 81.8% for boys (Figure 16). Education at this level is mandatory and free at public schools, which explains the high enrollment of students. Enrollment level in other levels of education is relatively lower. The gross enrollment rate for preliminary education is 6.2%, with more male students (8.9%) than female students (3.1%) enrolled. The gross enrollment rate for the first stage of higher education is 54.4%, with more females (61.1%) than males (48.3%) enrolled. Given that tertiary education in Armenia is not free, students from richer households are most likely to attend vocational and higher educational institutions, which may explain the lower enrollment ratios.

**Figure 16. Gross enrollment ratio by gender and level of education in Armenia, 2020**



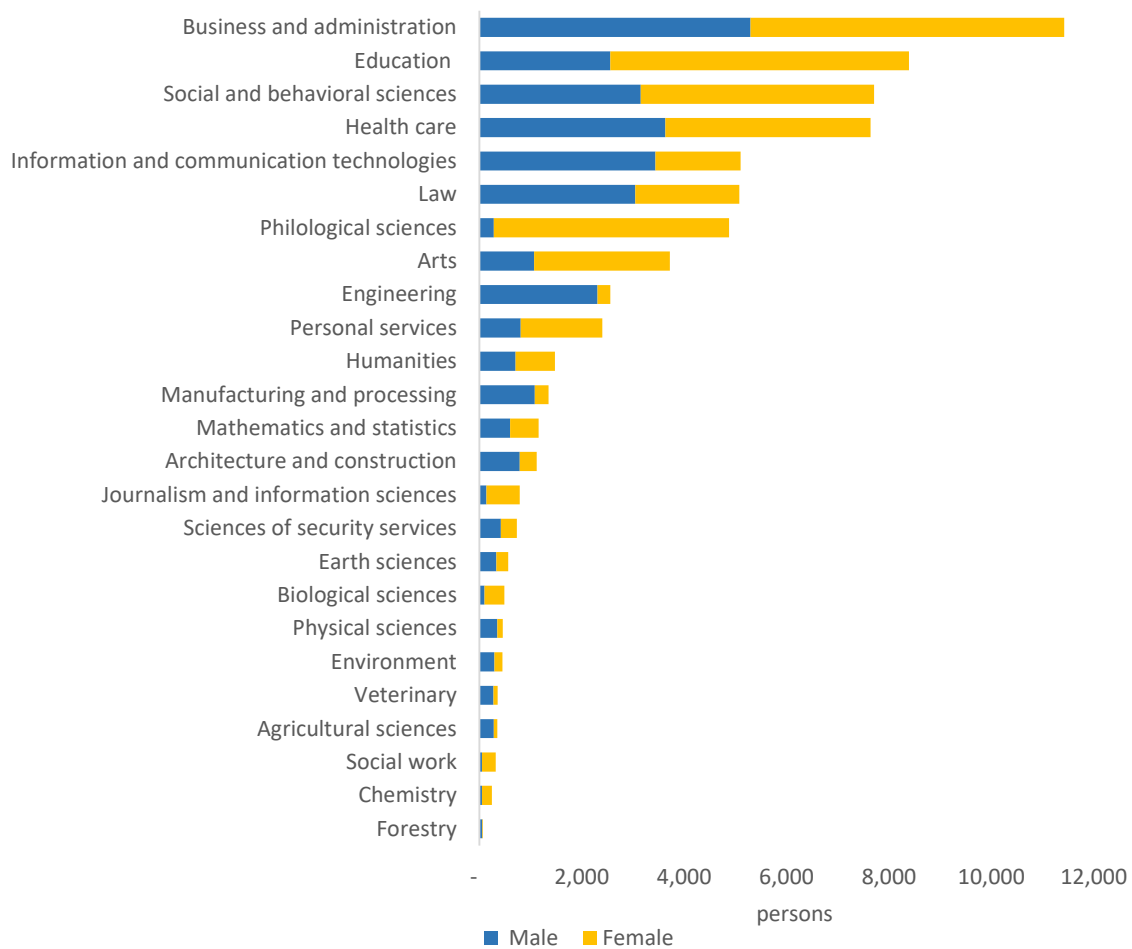
Source: RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank, <https://bit.ly/3zgfaOT>

**Over the last decade, a positive trend is observed in the share of women enrolling at the postgraduate level, as well as completing their degrees<sup>40</sup>.** In 2011 women were only 43.5% of students enrolling in postgraduate degrees while in 2020 female students are 50.3% of students entering postgraduate studies; the share of female students graduating with postgraduate degrees also increased from 30.5% in 2011 to 63.6% in 2020. Regarding the doctoral level, while the share of women enrolling at the doctoral level has declined (from 25% in 2011 to 12.5% in 2020), the share of graduates with a Doctor of Science degree has increased- 50% of the students who completed their doctoral degree in 2020 were women, compared with the 30% share in 2011.

**Although women's level of enrolment in higher education is higher compared with men's, gender segregation persists in higher education.** For example, most young women are enrolled in the fields of the arts, humanitarian and social sciences, whereas more young men are studying engineering, industry, and technology ( Figure 17).

<sup>40</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Women and Men in Armenia-2021", 2021, <https://bit.ly/3ATxKs4>

**Figure 17. Students in higher educational institutions by the specialization, 2021/2022**

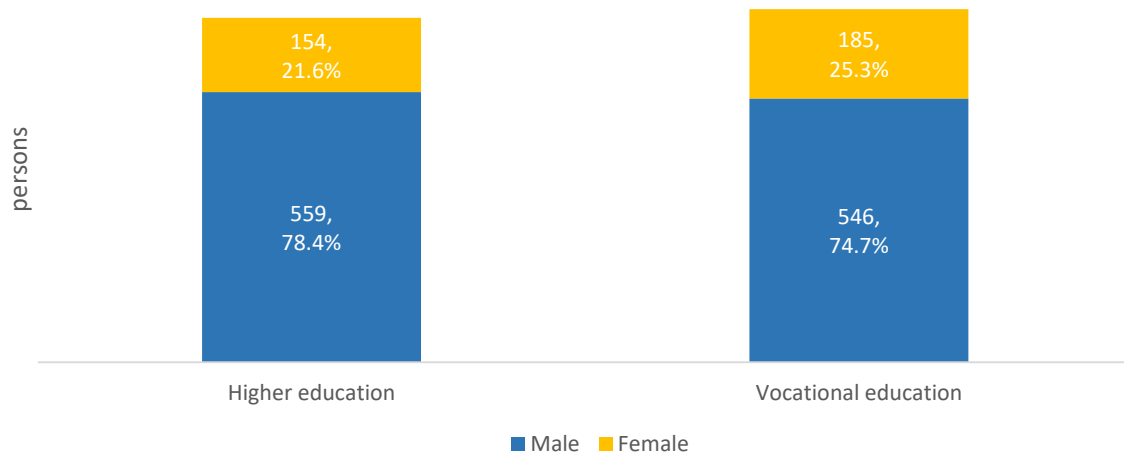


Source: RA Statistical Committee

**In 2021/2022 educational year only 1.0% of total enrolled students in higher education study agricultural sciences and veterinary or in a total of 713 students, of which 559 or 78.4% male and 154 or 21.6% female.** The number of students in vocational education studying agricultural sciences<sup>41</sup> is 731, of which 546 or 74.7% are male and 185 or 25.3% female ( Figure 18). Women's low levels of agricultural education mean that they are far less likely to hold decision-making and management positions in the agricultural sector.

<sup>41</sup> There is not a separate qualification for veterinary.

**Figure 18. Students studying agricultural sciences and veterinary in higher and vocational education in Armenia, 2021/2022**



Source: RA Statistical Committee

**Despite women and girls' high levels of enrolment in education, the rate of young women (15-29 age group) not in employment, education, or training (NEET) in Armenia remains high.** Moreover, a significant gender imbalance exists in the NEET rate among Armenian men and women. The share of young women who are not in employment, education, or training (41.7%) is almost twice higher than among men (23.5%)<sup>42</sup>. This rate also significantly varies depending on the settlement type. Particularly, the NEET rate among women in urban areas is 39.6%, while in rural areas it is 44.9%. Moreover, the type of settlement also affects the gender gap in the NEET. While in urban areas, the gender gap is 12.5%, in rural areas, it is 26.3%. Overall, it means that in Armenia the school-to-work transition is different for men and women. Family formation and the related norms attached can help to explain why many younger women than men fall into inactivity after finishing school. As the World Bank's report<sup>43</sup> indicates the share of married young women (15-29 years old) is higher among the NEET group than in the group of women, who are employed, in education, or in training. The higher NEET rate of women in rural areas may also be explained by their larger share as unpaid family workers in agricultural spheres. The fact that more young women remain inactive and out of the labor force for longer periods after they finish school means that their transition pathways are different and more difficult.

<sup>42</sup> World Bank, "Exploring the Diversity of Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET): The Gender Profile of NEETs in Georgia and Armenia", 2019 <https://bit.ly/3QMihFY>

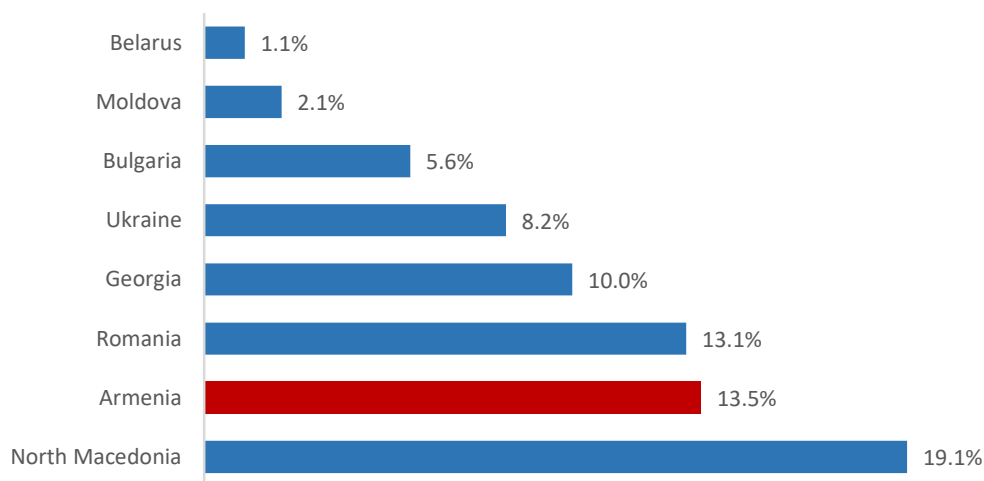
<sup>43</sup> *ibid*

## 1.5 Opportunities from Gender Perspective

In 2022, the World Bank estimated the size of long-run GDP per capita gains from closing gender employment gaps for different countries. According to the World Bank's estimations, men predominate over women in employment in Armenia, and **in the long-run Armenia has opportunities to increase the GDP by about 13.5% through closing the employment gap between men and women in other things being equal<sup>44</sup>.**

Armenia may have the second highest positive effect on the long-run GDP among selected peer countries which can be reached by closing the gender employment gap. Only North Macedonia has a higher positive effect (19.1%) than Armenia, which indicates that the gender employment gap in Armenia is worse compared to other countries. For example, in the case of Belarus, according to the ILO estimate<sup>45</sup>, the number of employed men and women is almost equal, which explains a lower gender employment gap.

**Figure 19. The positive effect on the long-run GDP from closing the gender employment gap, as of 2022**



Source: World Bank, <https://bit.ly/3ylbyUF>

**Compared to neighboring Georgia, Armenia has better potential to increase the long-run GDP by closing the gender gap.** Since the situation with the gender employment gap in Georgia is better than in Armenia, closing the gender employment gap will increase the GDP of Georgia by just 10%. In addition, in the case of Armenia, as of 2019, the female labor force participation was worse than in Georgia (51% vs 61%, as a percentage of the population ages 15-64)<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Pennings, Steven Michael, 2022, "A Gender Employment Gap Index (GEGI): A Simple Measure of the Economic Gains from Closing Gender Employment Gaps, with an Application to the Pacific Islands", World Bank <https://bit.ly/3ylbyUF>

<sup>45</sup> ILO, ILOSTAT: Employment by sex and age – ILO modeled estimates, <https://bit.ly/3vQ33k5>

<sup>46</sup> World bank open data, <https://bit.ly/3depoBn>

## **Chapter 2. Gender Equality Performance of Armenia and International Comparisons**

### **2.1 SDG – Gender Equality Performance in Armenia**

There have been important developments toward gender parity in Armenia, since 2015 when the country started actively working on the implementation of SDGs. However, there are still areas in the Gender equality component that need to be improved.

**Armenia has made progress in terms of legislation promoting gender equality.** The Global SDG indicators database accords Armenia 90.0 points on a 0-100 scale for its legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor gender equality in public life<sup>47</sup>. The country receives a score of 81.8 points for legislative frameworks on marriage and the family and 80.0 points for its legal frameworks on gender equality with respect to employment and economic benefits. Regarding access to ownership and control over property, in 2015 the proportion of women ages 15-49 with ownership (alone, jointly with someone else, or both alone and jointly with someone else) over agricultural or non-agricultural land, who has a title deed and their name is listed on the title deed was 75.2% (SDG Indicator 5.a.1.b.a.1). Although Armenian laws grant men and women equal rights, including in terms of property ownership, women in Armenia rarely exercise their rights<sup>48</sup>.

**Work still needs to be done in Armenia to achieve gender equality in terms of participation in politics, involvement in community decision-making, and several other areas.** For example, the role of women in political life is an important indicator for assessing the equality between women and men (Indicator 5.5.1). In 2022, 34.5% of seats in parliament were held by women (37 out of 107 seats). Although this is an improvement from several years before (10.7% in 2015), the results are not sufficient. Although for example in terms of seats held by women in parliament Armenia made progress over the last years (in 2022 34.5%<sup>49</sup> of seats in parliament were held by women compared to 10.7% in 2015<sup>50</sup>), the involvement of women in political life is still insufficient. Particularly, according to the UN “Women in Politics Report 2021”, Armenia ranks 98<sup>th</sup> among 189 countries in terms of the percentage of women in parliament and closes the rankings in terms of women in government<sup>51</sup>. Particularly, currently, there is only one woman in the government of Armenia (1 minister among 12 ministers). Women’s involvement in community decision-making also remains low (1.8% among heads of community, and 9.6% among community council members<sup>52</sup>). Moreover, though women accounted for nearly 55%<sup>53</sup> of the working-age population in Armenia in 2020, they occupied only 30.8% of managerial positions, only 1.7 percentage points higher than in 2015<sup>54</sup>.

**In spite of some improvements, women in Armenia are still subjected to violence, including psychological violence.** A recent study which also provides information on SDG gender equality indicators (Indicators 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, 5.3.1), shows that in 2021 there were no cases of women aged 20-24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age

---

<sup>47</sup> UNSTAT, <https://bit.ly/3BUSIr3> (accessed 11.08.2022)

<sup>48</sup> UN, “Gender equality and SDGs: Armenia”, <https://bit.ly/3bTz9Vc>

<sup>49</sup> National Assembly of RA, “Members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia eighth convocation”, <https://bit.ly/2KOKWSt> (accessed 26.08.2022)

<sup>50</sup> USAID, “Strengthening women’s political participation in the Republic of Armenia: existing efforts, challenges and opportunities”, 2015, <https://bit.ly/3POJxLX>

<sup>51</sup> UN, “Women in Politics Report 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3vYQNhq>

<sup>52</sup> RA Statistical Committee, “Women and Men in Armenia, 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3pd8Z2W>

<sup>53</sup> RA Statistical Committee, “Labor market in Armenia in 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3zVqYA2>

<sup>54</sup> RA Statistical Committee, <http://sdg.armstat.am/5-5-2/>

18<sup>55</sup>, while in 2015 this indicator was 1%<sup>56</sup>. According to the same study, 31.8% of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-59 have experienced psychological violence. Section 3.2 GBV Situation in Armenia presents more detailed information on gender-based violence in Armenia.

**Armenia has made progress by enhancing the use of enabling technologies, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.** For example, the proportion of women who own a mobile telephone was 80.7% in 2020, 12.5 percentage points higher than in 2017 (Indicator 5.b.1).

**It should be mentioned that, as of 2022, only 53% of indicators (or 10 out of 19 indicators) needed to monitor the SDGs from a gender perspective available in Armenia<sup>57</sup>,** with gaps in several key areas, in particular sexual violence, unpaid domestic and care work, access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, equal rights to economic resources, etc. In addition, many areas lack comprehensive national data for regular monitoring, which presents a serious challenge in promoting equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men and monitoring the developments regarding equality and SDGs.

## **2.2 Armenia in the International Rankings**

As demonstrated in different international rankings, over the last decade, Armenia has registered improvement in several areas regarding gender equality (e.g., legislation, women in politics) and nearly closed the gender gap in education. However, there are still key aspects in gender equality, such as economic opportunities, employment, and pay, where the country has work to do.

### **2.2.1 United Nations' Gender Inequality Index**

UN Gender Inequality Index (GII) measures gender inequality in different countries based on three dimensions:

- reproductive health (measured by maternal mortality ratio, adolescent birth rate),
- empowerment (measured by the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women, the percentage of the population with at least some secondary education by gender),
- labor market (measured by participation in the labor force by gender).

The index ranges from 0, where women and men fare equally, to 1, where one gender fares as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions<sup>58</sup>.

**Armenia's overall GII score is 0.25 points for 2019, positioning the country at 54 out of 162 countries<sup>59</sup> and suggesting a low inequality level between men and women.** Over the last decade, Armenia's GII score decreased from 0.34 in 2010 to 0.25 in 2019 indicating progress towards gender equality. This progress was mainly achieved due to a significant

---

<sup>55</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Survey on Domestic Violence Against Women, 2021", <https://bit.ly/3Ado6zA>

<sup>56</sup> RA statistical Committee, <http://sdg.armstat.am/5-3-1/> (accessed 11.08.2022)

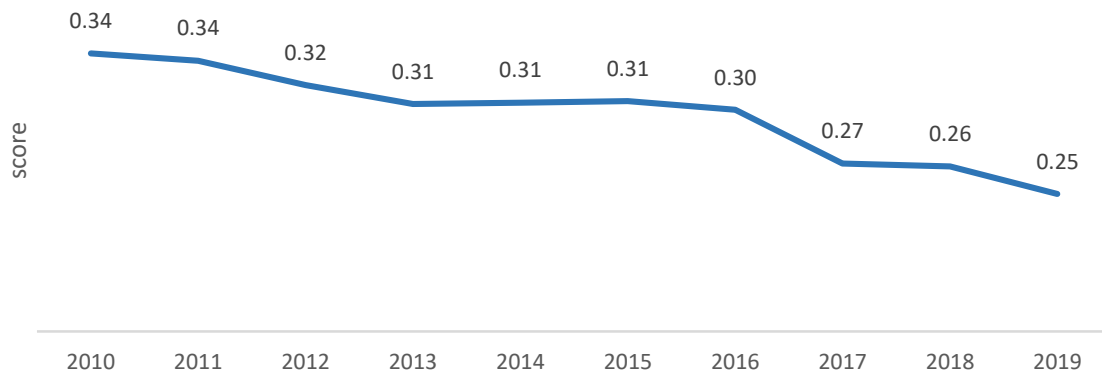
<sup>57</sup> RA Statistical Committee, <http://sdg.armstat.am/5/> (accessed 11.08.2022)

<sup>58</sup> UNDP, <https://bit.ly/3nlveCG> (accessed 28.06.2022)

<sup>59</sup> UNDP, Human development report 2020, <https://bit.ly/3bHfXcT>

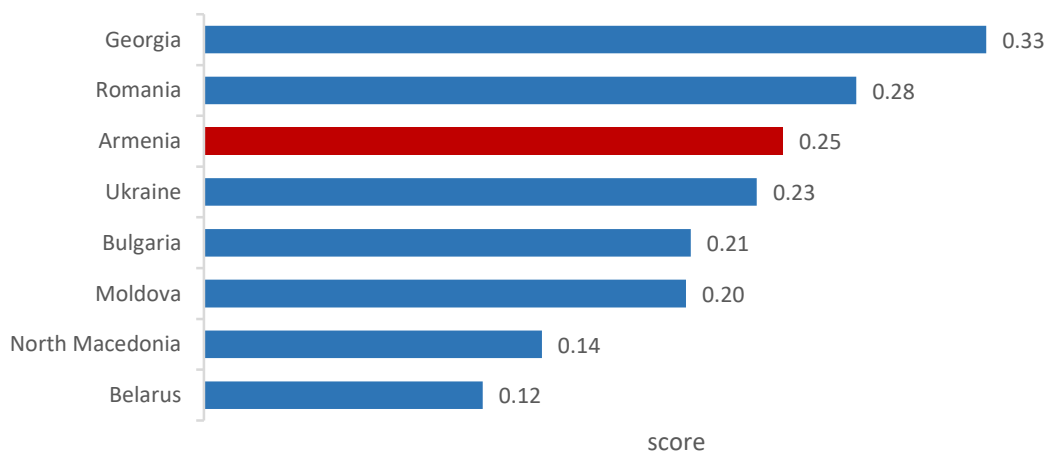
increase in the share of women in parliament, improvement in maternal mortality ratio, and adolescent birth rate<sup>60</sup>. For example, in GII 2010, in Armenia, only 9.2% of parliamentary seats were held by women, while in GII 2019 the percentage reached 23.5%. Armenia also reduced its maternal mortality ratio over the period of 2010-2019. According to GII 2019, In Armenia for every 100,000 live births, 26.0 women died from pregnancy-related causes, while in GII 2010 this number was 32.0. The country also improved its adolescent birth rate, namely from 27.8 births per 1,000 women of ages 15-19 to 21.5 births.

**Figure 20. Armenia's Gender Inequality Index in 2010-2019**



Source: UNDP, Human development reports

**Figure 21. Gender Inequality Index 2019 in Armenia and selected countries**



Source: UNDP, Human Development Index 2019

**Armenia underperforms compared to most of the selected peer countries.** Although Armenia has a better score than Romania (score 0.28, rank 61) and neighbor Georgia (score 0.33, rank 76), the country underperforms compared to Belarus (score 0.12, rank 31), North Macedonia (score 0.14, rank 37), Moldova (score 0.20, rank 46), and several other selected countries (Figure 21). Despite the improvements over the years Armenia is still significantly behind peer countries Belarus and North Macedonia in maternal mortality ratio, adolescent

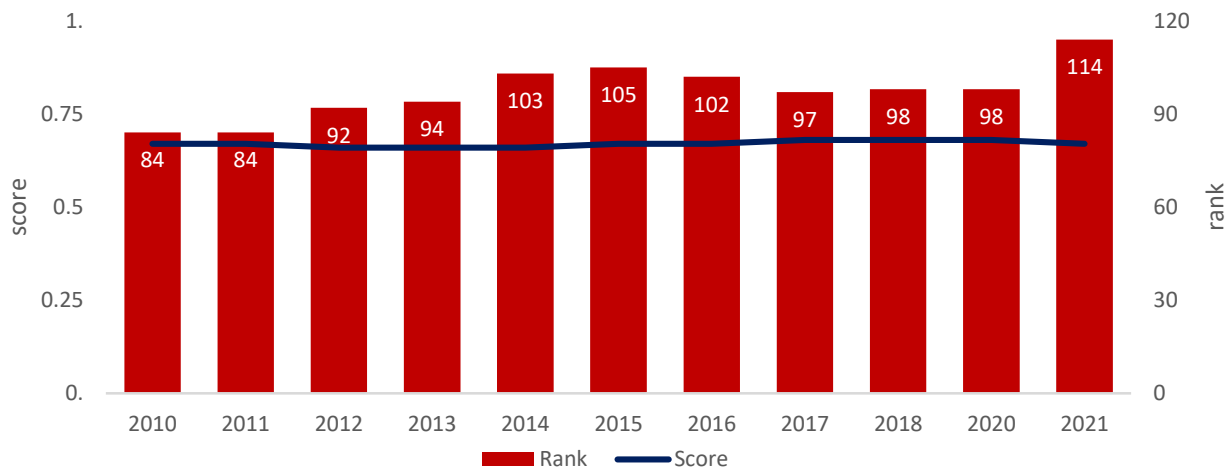
<sup>60</sup> UNDP, Gender Inequality Index, <https://bit.ly/3NKWHsf> (accessed 06.07.2022)

birth rate, percentage of parliamentary seats held by women, while is ahead of these countries in population with at least some secondary education component.

### 2.2.2 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) measures gaps between men and women across four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment) and tracks progress of countries towards closing these gaps over time<sup>61</sup>. The index ranges from 0 (inequality) to 1 (equality).

**Figure 22. Armenia's Global Gender Gap Index in 2010-2021**



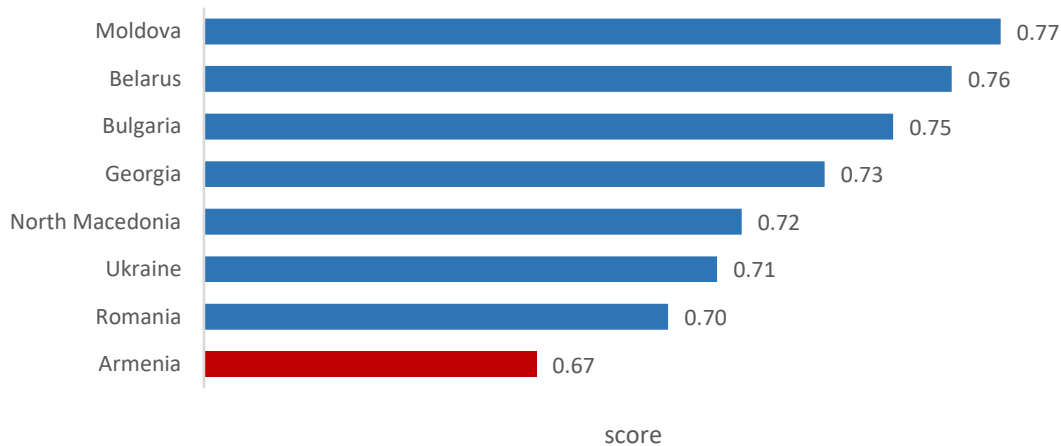
Source: The World Bank, TCdata360 database, <https://bit.ly/3utLKVa>

Armenia's overall GGGI score is 0.67 for 2021, positioning the country at 114 out of 156 countries, and suggesting that overall, there is a 32.7% gender gap to close. As Figure 22 demonstrates, over the last decade Armenia's overall score remained almost unchanged fluctuating between 0.66-0.68, while the rank deteriorated from 84<sup>th</sup> to 114<sup>th</sup> (-30). This means that although Armenia's score has remained nearly the same, the situation in other countries has improved notably because of which Armenia's position relatively dropped down.

While Armenia has almost closed the gender gap on Educational Attainment (0.998), Health, and Survival (0.95) sub-indexes, its score for economic participation and opportunities for women is 0.66, while the Political Empowerment dimension has the greatest gender disparity: just 9.1% of the Political Empowerment gap has been closed, meaning 90.9% remains to be bridged.

<sup>61</sup> WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2021, <https://bit.ly/3OQc4Bf>

**Figure 23. Global Gender Gap Index 2021 in Armenia and selected countries**



Source: WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2021, <https://bit.ly/3OQc4Bf>

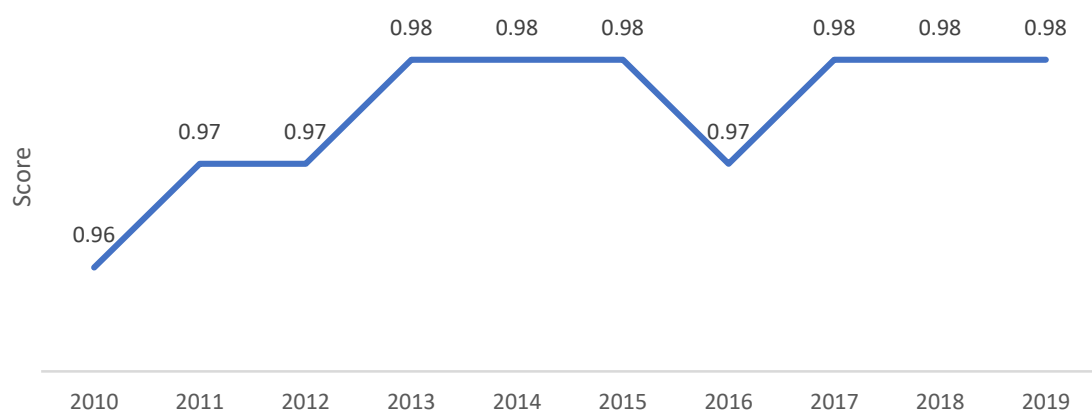
**Armenia is behind all selected countries in GGGI.** Armenia (0.67) scored slightly behind Moldova (0.77), Belarus (0.76), Bulgaria (0.75), Georgia (0.73), North Macedonia (0.72), Ukraine (0.71), and Romania (0.70). Armenia is behind the selected countries mainly in Political Empowerment and Economic Participation and Opportunity dimensions. The average Political Empowerment score of selected countries is 0.21 (78.1% gap to close) compared with Armenia's 0.09 (90.9% gap to close), the average Economic Participation and Opportunity score of selected countries is 0.74 (25.8% gap to close) compared with Armenia's 0.66 (34.5% gap to close). Regarding the other two sub-indexes, Armenia and the selected peer countries nearly closed the Educational Attainment gap, while Armenia still has a 5.0% gap (score 0.95) to close on the Health and Survival dimension compared to the average 2.3% gap of selected countries (score 0.98).

### 2.2.3 United Nations' Gender Development Index

The UN Gender Development Index (GDI) was introduced by the UN as a measure of disparities in the Human Development Index (HDI) by gender. It is simply measured as the ratio of HDI calculated separately for women and men. The closer the GDI value is to 1, the smaller the gap between women and men in average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable, and having a decent standard of living<sup>62</sup>.

**The gap in development between men and women in Armenia is almost closed.** As Figure 24 demonstrates, over the last two decades Armenia's GDI fluctuated between 0.94-0.98. According to the latest figures currently is at 0.98.

**Figure 24. Armenia's Gender Development Index in 2010-2019**



Source: UNDP, Gender Development Index, <https://bit.ly/3zkAM6i>

**In Armenia, the most significant gap between men and women as measured by HDI is observed in the standard of living (Table 1)<sup>63</sup>.** Namely, in 2019 income per capita in constant 2017 purchasing power parity terms for men was USD 18,574, nearly two times higher than for women (USD 9,737). This indicates that the standard of living for women is much lower than for men.

**Table 1. Gender gaps in HDI 2019, in Armenia**

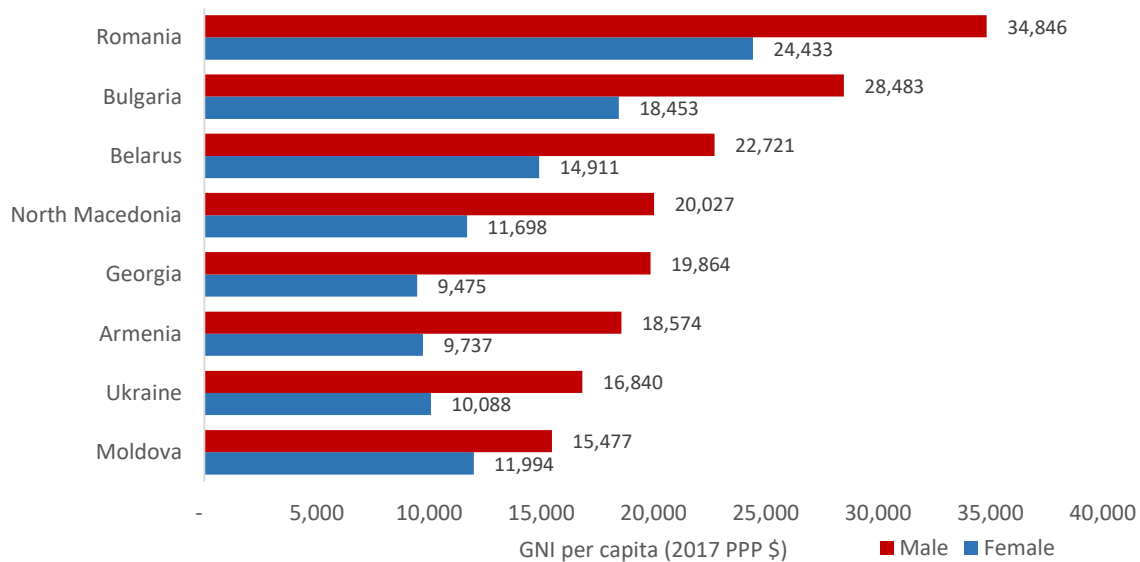
|                                                       | Female | Male   | Gender Gap |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|------------|
| <b>HDI value</b>                                      | 0.766  | 0.780  | -0.014     |
| <b>Life expectancy at birth</b>                       | 78.5   | 71.3   | 7.2        |
| <b>Expected years of schooling</b>                    | 13.6   | 12.6   | 1          |
| <b>Mean years of schooling</b>                        | 11.3   | 11.3   | 0          |
| <b>Gross National Income per capita (2017 PPP \$)</b> | 9,737  | 18,574 | -8,837     |

<sup>62</sup> UNDP, "Human Development Report 2020", <https://bit.ly/3JJ4BIL>

<sup>63</sup> In HDI the long and healthy life or longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth, the education dimension is measured by expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling, and the decent standard of living is measured by gross national income per capita.

**Disparities in male and female per capita incomes are observed also in peer countries of Armenia, albeit the size of the gap is different.** The highest gap in this dimension is observed in Ukraine (2.1 times) and Armenia (1.9 times), while for example in Moldova GNI per capita in constant 2017 PPP terms for men is 29% higher than for women, and in Romania where the GNI per capita is the highest among selected countries income per capita for men is by 42.6% higher than for women.

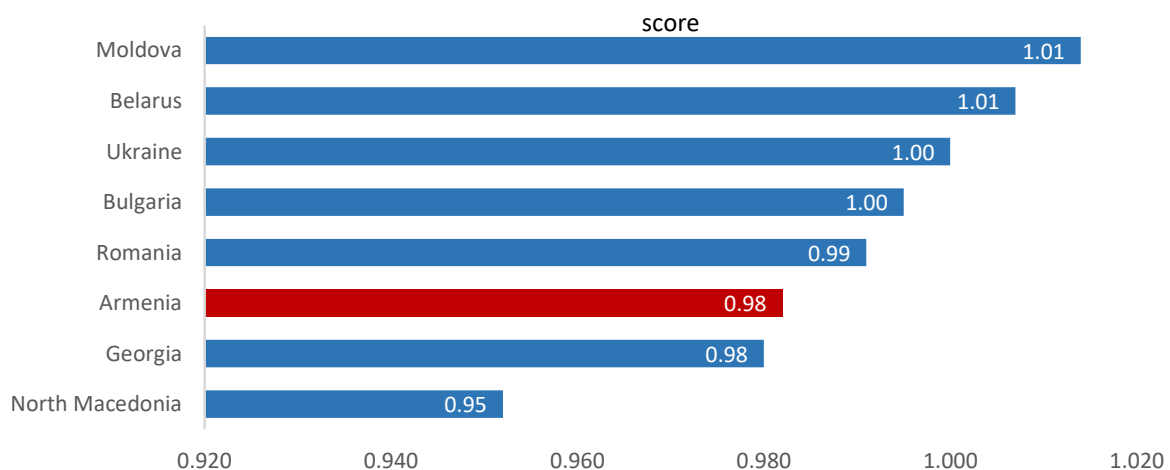
**Figure 25. GNI per capita in Armenia and selected countries in 2019**



Source: UNDP, GDI Dataset, <https://bit.ly/3p9vtBJ>

**Overall, all selected peer countries either have closed or have nearly closed the gap between women and men in human development.** For example, the GDI for Ukraine is 1, while for the rest of the selected countries, the value of GDI is higher than 0.95.

**Figure 26. Gender Development Index 2019 in Armenia and selected countries**



Source: UNDP, Gender Development Index, <https://bit.ly/3zkAM6i>

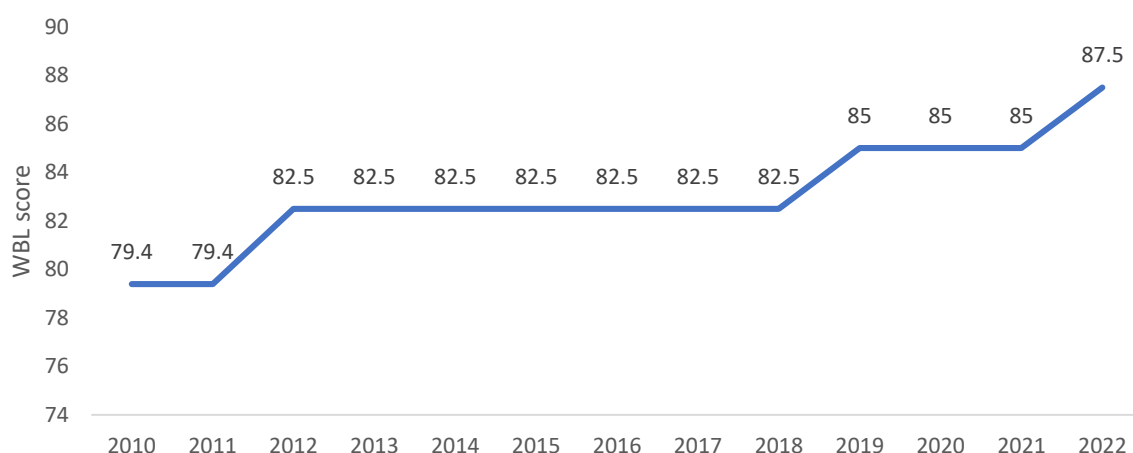
The fact that nearly all selected peer countries have almost achieved equality in the development of men and women is mainly due to the achievements in the education dimension where all selected countries have nearly closed the gender gap.

### 2.2.4 World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index

The World Bank's Women, business and the law index (WBL index) measures progress toward gender equality in 190 economies by identifying the **laws and regulations that restrict and incentivize women's economic participation**<sup>64</sup>. The project presents 8 indicators that coincide with the milestones that many women experience throughout their adult lives: **mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets, and pension**. The WBL index is calculated by taking the average of all eight indicator scores and ranges from 0 to 100 representing the share of good-practice provisions in an economy. As

Figure 27 demonstrates, over the last decade Armenia has improved its average WBL score from 79.4 in 2010 to 87.5 in 2021.

**Figure 27. Armenia's WBL score in 2010-2022**



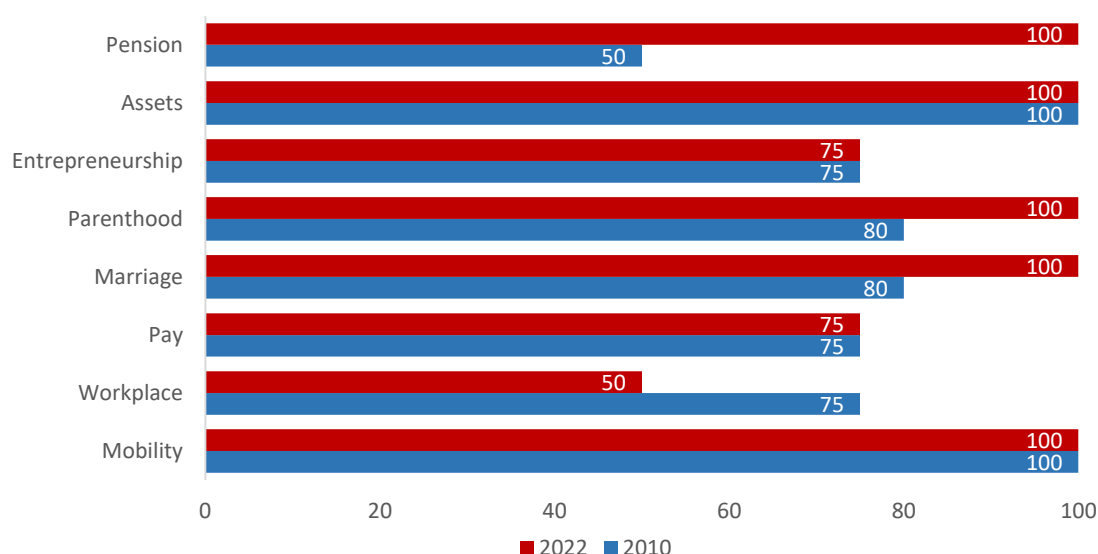
Source: World Bank, WBL index dataset

**Armenia has registered the largest improvements in terms of the Pension indicator (from 50 to 100), Marriage and Parenthood indicators (from 80 to 100).** This means that the country removed restrictions or introduced the relevant legal rights, and protections regarding the size of a woman's pensions, marriage and divorce, as well as women's work during and after pregnancy, including paid leave, etc. Over the last decade, Armenia consistently had a perfect score (100) in terms of the Mobility and Assets indicators. This means that Armenia's laws and regulations do not constrain women's freedom of movement (e.g., men and women have equal rights in obtaining a passport, choosing where to live, leaving home at will, and traveling outside the home) and there are no gender differences in property and inheritance law.

**When it comes to laws affecting women's decisions to work, laws affecting women's pay, and constraints on women starting and running a business, as the WBL index demonstrates, Armenia has a room to improve legal equality for women.** For example, regarding Pay and Entrepreneurship indicators, Armenia's score is 75 out of 100. In particular, the Pay indicator examines whether laws are in place to ensure equal remuneration between men and women for work of equal value as well as to allow women to work in the same way as men at nightshift, in industrial jobs, and in jobs deemed dangerous. The Entrepreneurship indicator examines also the barriers to women's ability to start and run a business.

<sup>64</sup> WB Group, Women Business and the Law 2022 <https://bit.ly/3QanTmv>

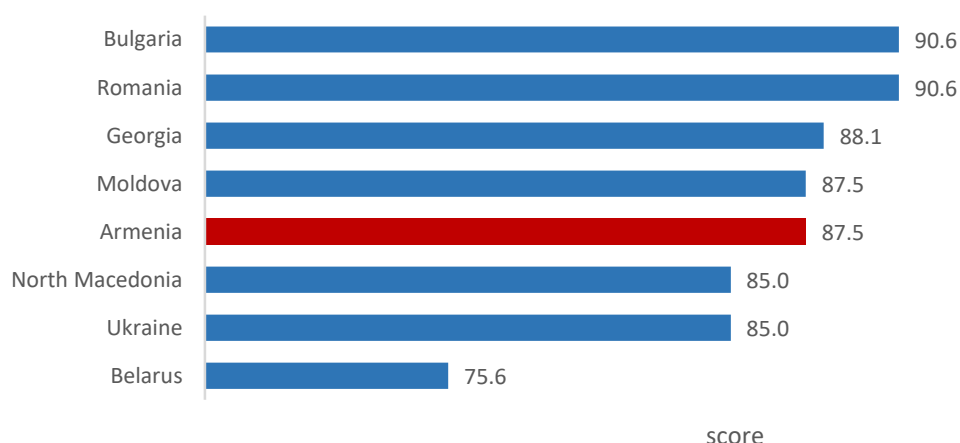
**Figure 28. Armenia's WBL Index indicators for 2010 and 2022**



Source: World Bank, WBL index dataset

**Most notably, Armenia has the lowest score in the Workplace indicator (50) which measures laws affecting women's decisions to work.** Moreover, over the last decade, Armenia's score in this aspect has deteriorated from 75 (WBL 2010) to 50 (WBL 2022). A closer look at this indicator shows that this result is conditioned by poor legislation protecting women from sexual harassment in employment, and criminal or civil penalties for sexual harassment in employment<sup>65</sup>.

**Figure 29. Women, Business and the Law Index 2022 in Armenia and selected countries**



Source: WB, WBL Index 2022, <https://bit.ly/3p2WuXJ>

**Among the selected eight peer countries, Armenia is fifth with 87.5 score.** Armenia outperformed North Macedonia (85.0), Ukraine (85.0), and Belarus (75.6), while it was behind Georgia (88.1), Romania (90.6), and Bulgaria (90.6). All selected countries scored better than Armenia regarding the Workplace indicator except for Belarus which has the same score as

<sup>65</sup> World Bank, WBL, Economy Scores Snapshot: Armenia, <https://bit.ly/3JM4MwD>

Armenia (50)., Armenia and Belarus are behind in terms of women starting and running a business compared with all the other selected peer countries, each of which has a perfect score (100). While in terms of laws affecting women's economic security after retirement Armenia is significantly ahead of the peer countries.

## **Chapter 3. Gender Policy, GBV Situation, and Women Entrepreneurship in Armenia**

### **3.1 Gender Policy Framework in Armenia**

According to the SDG indicators monitored by the UN under the Gender equality goal, Armenia has a relatively strong gender equality and women empowerment framework scoring 83% for overall legislative framework and 80% for legislation on employment and economic empowerment.<sup>66</sup>

However, despite strategies, policies, and laws the implementation of most of those remains an issue. The reasons for this are lack of political will and determination, lower capacities and gender-sensitivities of implementers of various levels, the de-prioritization of gender issues over other areas, and the existing culture and social barriers in some respects.

The main components of the gender policy framework are the legislative sub-framework, institutional sub-framework, and national gender policies, strategies, and action plans.

#### **Legislative sub-framework**

The Armenian legislative sub-framework consists of international conventions (signed or ratified), and special and general legislative acts.

**In recent years, Armenia's Government has signed two Conventions touching upon gender issues:** The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention, ratified in 2020) and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention, not ratified). Armenia signed the Istanbul Convention in 2018, which assumes that the signatory state has to make amendments to its legislation, which would prescribe stricter laws, harsher punishments for perpetrators, and zero to no tolerance for them despite their religion and traditions. Despite the Government's statements on ratifying the given convention, groups that are more conservative spoke against it, and it has not been ratified yet.

**In 2017, Armenia passed the Law on Domestic Violence (DV Law), following heated debates between women's groups and groups opposing the law<sup>67</sup>.** As a result, the title and the wording of the law changed to the Law "On the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Protection of Victims of Violence and Restoration of Peace in the Family". Following the heated, politicized debates, many principal clauses were taken out from the law, which despite all these changes is still a positive step forward.

The law on DV, as **the main source regulating the phenomenon, has issues** to be addressed, below are the few main ones:

- a) **The name of the law, which includes "restoring harmony in family", contradicts the principle of protection of the victim.** The law should not encourage the victim to act, to return to the abuser in this case, but it should be called to protect the person. The law, in its current form, also encourages judges to make decisions based on reconciliation, rather than protection of the victims.
- b) **The DV Law as well as the Criminal Code do not clearly specify all specificities of DV and its punishment.** Although with recent changes in Criminal Code (entered into force on July 1, 2022) the punishment is harsher in case a family member does the deed,

---

<sup>66</sup> UN Women, SDG Indicator Dashboard, UN Women, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8u758h> (accessed 26.08.2022)

<sup>67</sup> OpenDemocracy, "Heated debates around domestic violence in Armenia", 03.11.2017, <https://bit.ly/3Rac7IF> (accessed 26.08.2022)

still it is not strict enough, which proves that the depth of the phenomenon is not fully realized. It also does not regard psychological and economic violence as a punishable act.

- c) **The clauses on “immoral behavior” by the victim and offenses to “dignity or honor” of the abuser are still considered**, which usually in the case of Armenia are widely used by the defending attorneys as well as the judges. It means that any information questioning “the morality” of the woman victim and the possible harm to the “honor” of the perpetrator could result in a milder sentence.
- d) **The wording used in the DV Law also leaves gaps in the identification of perpetrators.** Research shows that many DV cases in Armenia as well as globally are perpetrated by intimate partners of a domestic nature (not current or former husbands or men residing in the household). As a result, the victims are not able to seek justice and punishment in those instances when the perpetrator is a long-time partner.

**Furthermore, the following legislative amendments have been adopted:**

- **Criminal Procedural Code of the Republic of Armenia-** amendments on the usage of telecommunication methods for interviewing, which would help the traumatized victims of domestic violence and hindrance of family member/guardians’ participation in interviews of a minor, which is important in cases of child sexual abuse, when a family member is a suspect.
- **Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia-** criminalization of public calls for violence towards a person or group based on their sex, race, skin color, political or other views, or other characteristics and harsher punishment in case a violence is perpetrated by a family member.
- **Electoral Code of the Republic of Armenia-** a quota of 30% was introduced for party lists participating in Local Council (Avagani) Elections in communities with more than 5000 residents.
- **Law of the Republic of Armenia on Political Parties-** an encouragement clause, with which parties with more women (and individuals from other marginalized groups) in their leadership boards would receive financial state assistance.
- **Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Prevention of Violence within the Family, Protection of Victims of Violence within the Family, and Restoration of Peace-** including preventive and protective measures for survivors and provision of social assistance.

### **Institutional sub-framework**

Armenia has adopted the Law Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The Council on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men adjunct to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia is formed According to the Law, a national vehicle to ensure the provision of rights and opportunities. Moreover, the Department of Family, Women, and Children’s Issues at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is established. Additionally, Permanent Commissions on gender issues are formed in each regional administration. As well as Office of the Human Rights Defender appointed an Advisor on Women’s Issues<sup>68</sup>.

---

<sup>68</sup> ARLIS Armenian legal information system, The Law ՀՕ-57-Ն from 20.05.2013 “Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men”, <https://tinyurl.com/bdyekx3v>

The Council, composed of representatives of state and NGOs, is to propose procedural regulations as a follow-up of the domestic violence law, while the centers are supposed to provide counseling and support to DV victims. However, there are no state-run shelters for victims of DV in Armenia yet. The only two shelters are run by an NGO with non-state funding.

### **National Gender policies, strategies, and action plans**

**Besides the strategies specifically targeting gender issues and/or women, other strategies introduced by Armenia's Government are not gender inclusive.** Government Programme, the developments and reforms in health, education, public administration, local self-governance, small and medium entrepreneurship, tourism, and IT development mainly leave out the gender approach<sup>69</sup>. The few exceptions are usually in the social sector, where special provisions are included for working and non-working mothers in the form of child-care benefits.

In 2019, the Government adopted the National Strategy and Action Plan 2019–2023 for Gender Equality<sup>70</sup>. The Strategy is comprised of five main directions:

1. Reform of National Mechanism for the advancement of women, equal participation of women and men in Government and decision-making,
2. Tackling gender discrimination in the socio-economic sphere, enhancing women's economic opportunities,
3. Full and optimal participation of women and enhancing equal opportunities in education and science,
4. Enhancing equal opportunities for women and men in health,
5. Prevention of gender discrimination.

The subsequent Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy describes the actions leading to the main directions and its goals. The main directions 2 and 5 touches upon agriculture and entrepreneurship. Main direction 2 includes actions on reforms on **child care through the provision of service and social programs for support**, enhancing women's entrepreneurship, particularly in agriculture through SME support, creation of cooperatives, and provision of consultancy. Among the known steps mentioned within this Action Plan was the establishment of nanny services and/or compensation of those services by the state for working mothers. Main direction 5, among others, focuses on **gender-inclusive budgeting and the prevention of gender-based violence**. This direction has been the introduction of gender-inclusive budgeting, initiated firstly by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Finance. Gender-responsive budgeting is to consider the needs of women, including women from vulnerable groups in the budgeting process<sup>71</sup>. According to various reports and available information, however, there is a need for capacity development in this regard.

In 2022, the Government of the Republic of Armenia adopted the second National Action Plan 2022–2024 for the Implementation of the Provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security<sup>72</sup>.

---

<sup>69</sup> EU, "Gender country profile: Armenia", 2021, <https://bit.ly/3Rfvz7c>

<sup>70</sup> The Decision of the Republic of Armenia on approving Gender Strategy and Programme on Implementation of Gender Strategy 2019-2023" (Armenian) <https://tinyurl.com/2p8rbeu8>

<sup>71</sup> UN, "Armenia Country Gender Equality Brief", 2019 <https://tinyurl.com/2wmmwj8c>

<sup>72</sup> ARLIS Armenian legal information system, The Decision of the RA Government N 803-I, from 02.06.2022 "on the Second action plan and time-line for implementation of UN SC "Women, Peace and Security" No. 1325 Resolution" (Armenian), <https://tinyurl.com/3hzm4m8>

Despite all the progress over the years, in Armenia complex policies are needed to address gender-based violence and domestic violence, particularly as **a factor influencing women's entrepreneurship**:

- The legislation, the police, the prosecutor, and the judges need to be sensitized on the issue.
- The public at large would need continuous awareness raising on the existing data and laws, for women to feel empowered and safe to speak up.
- The phenomenon should be kept away from politics and not become part of the discourse only for the sake of political gain and discussions.
- Istanbul Convention, as the latest instrument requiring legislative reform to ensure better prevention and protection should be ratified.
- Any specialized project targeting a sector, a group or a geographical area should be extremely aware and sensitive about the available data on Gender-based violence (GBV) and DV and carefully consider the effects of the initiative on the persons of concern.
- The organizations and individuals designing and implementing the projects should be sensitized and aware of the phenomenon.

To enhance women's economic activism, it is recommended that the strategies and policies adopted by the Government of Armenia should be:

- Based on data collected and analysed through gender lenses, considering all specificities of the beneficiaries, considering factors such as age, geography, vulnerability, etc.
- Finalized through participatory discussions with women, entrepreneurs, NGO representatives,  
Designed to tackle the main barriers to women's agripreneurship: access to resources, work-life balance, and gender stereotypes, through targeted innovative measures,

Well-monitored through realistic monitoring mechanisms.

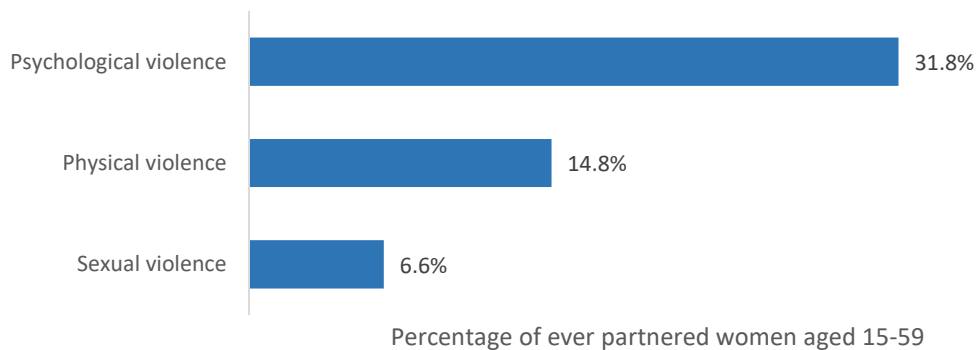
### **3.2 GBV Situation in Armenia**

Several complex laws, regulations, and political will are necessary to tackle the various types of GBV; sexual harassment in all forms including workplace sexual harassment, domestic violence, sex-selective abortions, online harassment, and violence, etc. Moreover, data collection and analysis are needed to comprehend each area by itself. Although Armenia has separate laws addressing some of those, such as sex-selective abortions, there are still complex violence types that remain untouched.

**Domestic violence or Intimate partner violence is one of the most prevalent and latent phenomena of gender-based violence.** It was thoroughly surveyed by the RA Statistical Committee in 2021. Although, as stated above DV, in all its forms is a hidden phenomenon globally and no research can clearly explore its depth, any data reflecting the number of women (and men) that are subjected to violence, their demographics, geography, level of education and socio-economic conditions can greatly help to design preventive, sensitive and inclusive policies.

According to Armstat's survey, **35.9% of ever-partnered women aged 15-59 have experienced some type of violence by their partner (physical, sexual, psychological)**<sup>73-74</sup>. As Figure 30 demonstrates, a significant 31.8% of ever-partnered women have experienced psychological violence by a current or former partner. Psychological violence includes insulting or making women feel bad, humiliating, or degrading women in front of other people, deliberately doing things that scare or frighten women, verbally threatening to harm women or those whom she loves). 14.8% of ever-partnered women have experienced physical violence and 6.6% of surveyed women aged 15-59 have experienced sexual violence. In addition, the survey showed that 13.5 % of ever-partnered women aged 15-59, in their lifetime have been slapped or thrown an object that could harm, 6.3% were pushed, hit or pulled hair, 6.3% were hit with a fist or any other object that could harm, 3.0% were kicked, dragged or beaten, 0.9% were deliberately suffocated or burned, 1.4% were threatened or were subject to usage of gun, knife or any other weapon. Among them women in the 25-44 age group were subjected to the most severe physical violence by their partner.

**Figure 30. Ever-partnered women who experienced domestic violence by their partners**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, "Survey on Domestic Violence Against Women", 2021, <https://bit.ly/3AOKAap>

Note: the same person could be subjected to more than one type of violence: physical and/or sexual and/or psychological.

**Women from rural settlements are more likely to be subjected to moderate and severe physical violence compared with urban women, while urban women are more subjected to psychological violence.** According to the same survey, 82.2% of ever-partnered women from rural settlements aged 15-59 have been subject to moderation and 31.9% of them were subject to severe physical violence, while the figures for urban women are 77.7% and 29% respectively<sup>75</sup>. Meanwhile, 32.6% of ever-partnered urban women and 31% of women from rural settlements aged 15-59 have been subject to psychological violence in their lifetime.

**Many women prefer to stay silent about the violence.** 44.7% of women who have been physically abused and 48% of those who have been sexually abused have not told anyone about the violence. Only 8.4% of abused women have spoken about the violence to someone outside their immediate circle: talked to the police, doctor, priest, psychologist, or relatives (husband's brother, the wife of the brother-in-law, brother's wife, etc.). Hence the latency of the

<sup>73</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Survey on Domestic Violence Against Women", 2021, <https://bit.ly/3AOKAap>

<sup>74</sup> In total 2872 women aged 15-59 were surveyed with about half living in urban and half in rural areas.

<sup>75</sup> The difference between Armstat study and our study can be explained by several methodological factors, including different samples, approach to confidentiality, preliminary description of related terms, etc.

phenomenon and lack of proper statistics, which in its turn also opens the door to debates on the width of the phenomenon and how it should be tackled at the policy-making level.

Although, according to the Armstat survey only 0.8% of women who have reported the violence have done so by applying to “shelter, women’s organizations”, the Women’s Rights organizations report over 700 cases of domestic violence cases each year, with hotlines receiving about 3,000 calls per year. Between 2010 and 2020, at least 83 women were killed by a current or former intimate partner, spouse, or other family member in Armenia, according to those organizations<sup>76</sup>.

To sum up, it should be mentioned that gender-based violence is a result of gender inequality, of the power of one individual over another because of their sex and society’s gender stereotypes. This means that dependence, fear, and expected obedience result in control of the victims. In these circumstances, women’s agency is extremely limited. Thus, in a society where that violence is accepted and silenced women’s activism is also under scrutiny. Various initiatives, including enhancing women’s entrepreneurship, cannot succeed if that phenomenon and its specificities are not considered.

### **3.3 Women Entrepreneurship in Armenia**

**An Asian Development Bank (ADB) evaluation in 2018 showed that women’s share of SME ownership had increased since 2013, as more programs and projects focused on the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship in Armenia were established<sup>77</sup>. In 2017, the percentage of new businesses registered by women entrepreneurs reaches 20% from the 2010 level of 3%<sup>78</sup>.** Since 2013, the state program aimed at the developing small and medium enterprises in Armenia also includes a component on the developing women’s entrepreneurship<sup>79</sup>. Many donors also establish a specific quota for women’s participation in their programs (usually, it is from 30% to 50%), however, very often women are applying for loans or other types of assistance, while in fact their husbands or sons make the decision to receive and use loans<sup>80</sup>.

**Despite the efforts to increase the involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities, male entrepreneurs still prevail over female entrepreneurs in Armenia.** According to the 2018 labor market research in Armenia 29.6% of entrepreneurs were female<sup>81</sup>. The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2022 highlights that only 18.1% of all firms in Armenia have female majority ownership and 19.1% of firms have female top managers<sup>82</sup> (down from 24% according to the 2017 report<sup>83</sup>). However, it should be mentioned that female business ownership does not imply that women are running the businesses since in

---

<sup>76</sup> EU, “Gender country profile: Armenia”, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3Rfvz7c>

<sup>77</sup> ADB, “Armenia country gender assessment”, December 2019, <https://bit.ly/3dxi2Jg>

<sup>78</sup> ADB, “Completion Report: Armenia: Women’s Entrepreneurship Support Sector Development Program”, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3VjhNmF>

<sup>79</sup> Հայկական բիզնես կոալիցիա, “ՓՄՁ ոլորտի գնահատման հետազոտություն Հայաստանում”, 2018 <https://bit.ly/3QsQPGu>

<sup>80</sup> UN Women, “Gender Assessment of rural development and agriculture policies in Armenia”, 2018 <https://bit.ly/3QsQXFY>

<sup>81</sup> Save the Children, “Youth -focused and gender-sensitive labor market research in Armenia”, 2018 <https://bit.ly/2It9MYr>

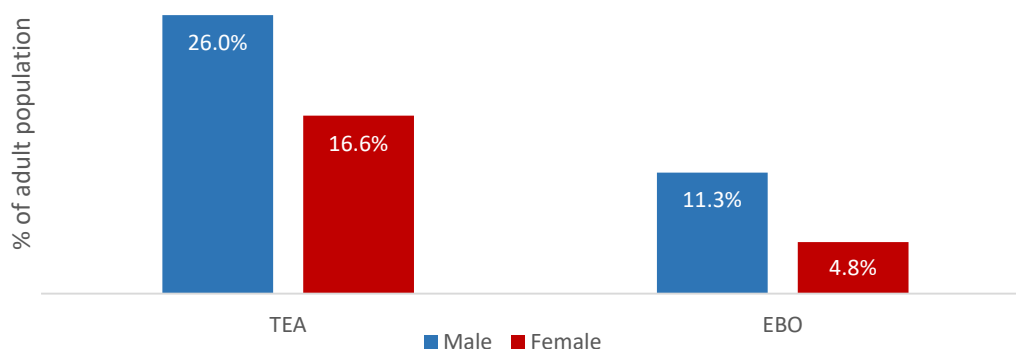
<sup>82</sup> WEF, “Global Gender Gap Report 2022”, 2022 <https://bit.ly/3QLGSUd>

<sup>83</sup> WEF, “Global Gender Gap Report 2017”, 2017 <https://bit.ly/3C63f2A>

any case women are cited as owners, however, the businesses are run by the men of the household.

**The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019/2020 study for Armenia also indicates that there are much fewer female-owned than male-owned businesses in Armenia<sup>84</sup>.** The share of adults owning and managing a sustainable business (that has paid wages for 3.5 years or more) among men is 2.3 times higher than among women ( Figure 31). In the case of newly established enterprises, the share among men is 1.5 times higher than among women. In general, the average number of years of active operations of men-owned businesses in Armenia is 8.4, while for women-owned businesses it is six<sup>85</sup>. Worth mentioning that in both women and men, necessity-driven motivation has the largest share in both early-stage and established-stage enterprises. Moreover, comparison also shows that in Armenia female engagement in entrepreneurship compared to males is lower than the world average.

**Figure 31. Early stage and established entrepreneurial activity rates by gender in Armenia, 2020**



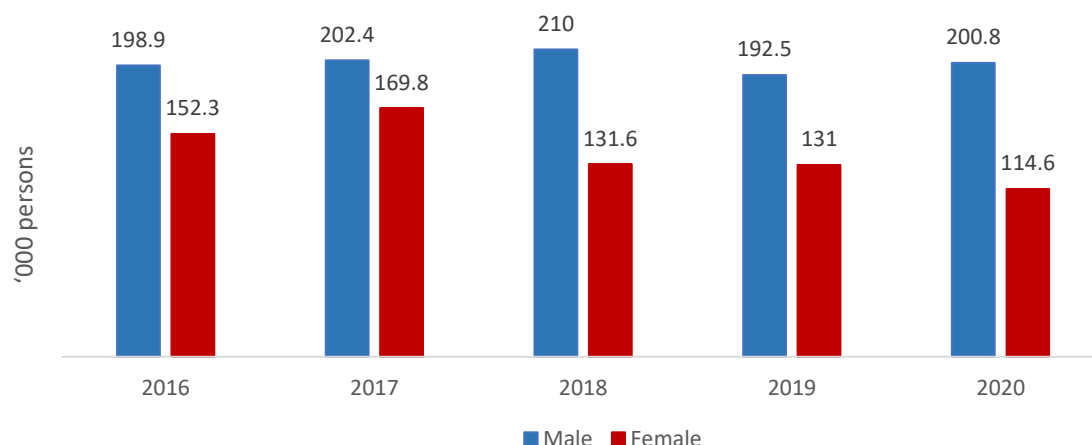
*Source: Global entrepreneurship research association, America Advisory, GEM report, Note: TEA stands for Total early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity; EBO stands for Established Business Owners - who are running a business that has paid wages for*

**Data on the number of self-employed men and women also indicates that in Armenia men are more likely to be self-employed than women.** Self-employment is one of the measures used in economic analysis to proxy entrepreneurial activity if, as in the case of Armenia, there is a lack of comprehensive gender-disaggregated data<sup>86</sup>. It must be acknowledged that self-employment data does not capture the true extent of entrepreneurial activity, since not all self-employed are necessarily entrepreneurs, however, it can help to have some understanding of the difference among the number of male and female entrepreneurs. As demonstrated in Figure 32, the number of self-employed men is nearly twice as much as that of women.

<sup>84</sup> America Advisory, “Global entrepreneurship monitor: Armenia national report 2019/2020”, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3KskvBb>

<sup>85</sup> IFC, “Women entrepreneurship study in Armenia”, 2021 <https://bit.ly/3zODJfr>

<sup>86</sup> OECD, EU, “Policy Brief on Women’s Entrepreneurship”, 2017 <https://bit.ly/2FkmVEj>

**Figure 32. Self-employed persons in Armenia by gender in 2016-2020**

Source: RA Statistical Committee, Labour market in Armenia report 2021, 2020, 2016-2017

**One of the most significant differences between male and female-run enterprises is the size of the business.** The majority of female-owned enterprises are either micro or small businesses (40.2% and 29.9%, respectively), while half of the businesses owned by men are either medium or large (35.6% and 14.2%, respectively)<sup>87</sup>. A 2017 study highlights that Armenian women who run larger enterprises may need influential men's backing<sup>88</sup>.

**There is a significant gap between men and women in terms of confidence regarding knowledge and skills<sup>89</sup>.** Limited self-confidence, a lack of business contacts, feelings of uncertainty, entrenched and perpetuated stereotypes about women's roles and participation in the economy, and in business in particular, risk aversion are some of the main obstacles women must overcome before they starting a business<sup>90</sup>. Women entrepreneurs acknowledge gaps in business knowledge and skill sets, including business planning, analytics, financial literacy, marketing, etc., needed to conduct entrepreneurial activities properly. Business and entrepreneurial skills in general are among the top five skills that, for example, youth in Armenia (both male and female) seek to improve through training and courses. In order to start or to develop entrepreneurial activity both young men and women consider that they need some kind of special skills or support, such as credit and financial support, professional consultation, qualification, special course in the field of business, support in business plan design, etc. in order to start or to develop entrepreneurial activity<sup>91</sup>. Another study shows that 43.6% of entrepreneurs would like to take advantage of support services or training sessions related to their businesses<sup>92</sup>.

**The sectoral structure of entrepreneurship shows that Armenia's entrepreneurship, in general, is largely concentrated into two activities: agriculture and trade.** Particularly, 83% of sustainable and 63% of newly established businesses in Armenia are engaged in agriculture or trade, and the third sector Manufacturing has only 7% and 9% shares

<sup>87</sup> IFC, 2021

<sup>88</sup> FAO, "Gender, agriculture and rural development in Armenia", 2017, <https://bit.ly/3Ch0mMi>

<sup>89</sup> GEM, 2020

<sup>90</sup> FAO, 2017

<sup>91</sup> Save the Children, "Youth -focused and gender-sensitive labor market research in Armenia", 2018 <https://bit.ly/2It9MYr>

<sup>92</sup> IFC, 2021

respectively<sup>93</sup>. Overall, in the most recent OECD SME policy index Armenia scores 2.84 points out of 5 in women's entrepreneurship, especially the cross-sectorial policy linkages (e.g., education, employment, economy) which are critical in ensuring more comprehensive and inclusive support for women's entrepreneurship, 0.74 percentage point lower than the average for Eastern Partner countries<sup>94</sup>.

Over the last decade, the Government of Armenia has been implementing agricultural loans interest rates subsidizing program to reduce the cost of capital for agriculture in order to boost entrepreneurial activities of the rural population, create new jobs, etc., and on average, only 18% of the subsidized business entities (5,307 out of 29,487 borrowers) in 2021 were women. The same percentage holds for the business entities, which have been subsidized from the previous years (9,295 out of 51,644)<sup>95</sup>.

### **3.4 Women Access to Finance**

Access to finance is essential for enabling the economic activity of people, especially women, who usually do not have equal access to agricultural assets (land, machinery), business skills, and a well-developed professional network. Although there are no Central Bank-backed official statistics on lenders or users of other financial services segregated by gender, the longitudinal triannual study "Global Findex" of the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) "Women entrepreneurship study in Armenia" 2021 report shed light on the situation of access to finance in Armenia from a gender perspective.

**According to the IFC study, access to finance is considered one of the most common obstacles to starting a business for women.** 39.0% of surveyed women mentioned this as an obstacle to establishing a business. This was also true for male entrepreneurs (38.8% of men). Furthermore, the high-interest rates and difficult terms of loans (e.g., highly collateralized nature of loans), followed by people being not solvent in Armenia are the main reasons according to entrepreneurs that constraints access to finance for them. Collateral is specifically a serious issue for women entrepreneurs since cultural norms and customary practices in Armenia dictate that property is inherited by and registered to male family members and women's rights to own, use, and make decisions regarding land and non-land assets are discriminated<sup>96</sup>. Another reason why women have limited access to land assets may be the privatization of land in 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as was mentioned in the previous chapter; during this period land ownership was awarded to the "head of the family", usually identified as a man. This process positions men entrepreneurs at a greater advantage over women. It should be also mentioned that access to finance was rated as an obstacle primarily by micro-businesses, which are mostly women-owned<sup>97</sup>. Practices of competitors in the informal sector are the second most mentioned obstacles (27.6% men and 29.1% women). A large informal sector represents a challenge to formal firms as informal firms can engage in practices that can give them an unfair advantage over formal firms that must comply with the prevailing rules and regulations. The focus group discussions held in the frame of our study show that access to finance; particularly getting a loan, is one of the main obstacles for women to get involved in agripreneurship. Lack of credit history and sufficient collateral (as a rule,

---

<sup>93</sup> GEM, 2020

<sup>94</sup> OECD, "SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2020: Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe", <https://bit.ly/3w5r7zB>

<sup>95</sup> Ministry of Finance of RA, State budget report for 2021 (in Armenian), <https://bit.ly/3pPbzN1>

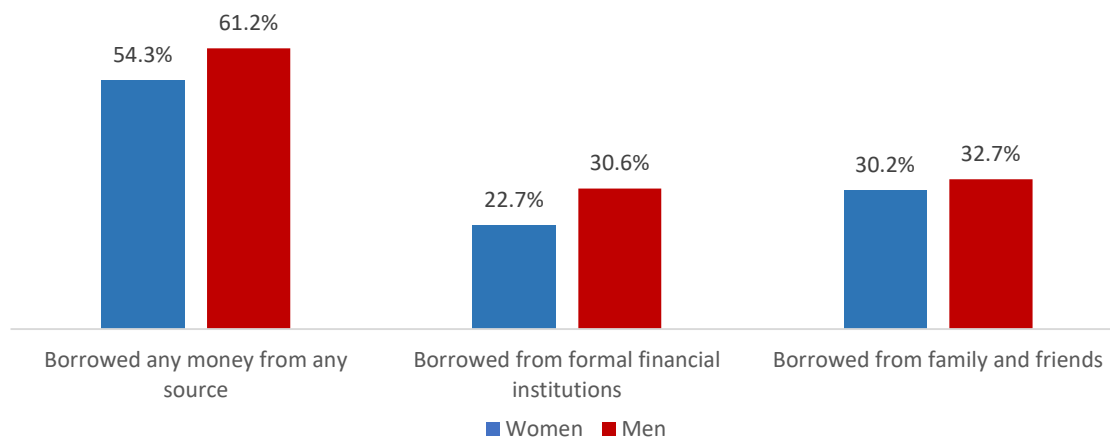
<sup>96</sup> OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2019, <https://bit.ly/3AnItu9>

<sup>97</sup> IFC, 2021

women do not own land or other property) are some of the main reasons why women in our focus groups have problems with access to finance.

In contrast to the IFC study, the recent study of “Global Findex” (2021) shows that in Armenia, **men are more prone to borrow money than women, moreover, depending on the source of borrowing the gap is changing**. Particularly, the survey shows that over the last 12 months, 54.3% of women aged 15 and higher borrowed any money for any reason from any source (both formal and informal), while the same indicator in the case of men is 61.2%. Notably, in the case of formal financial institutions, the difference between women and men is as high as 8 percentage points, which may be related to the fact that women have less economic engagement or fewer assets that can be used as collateral in a formal financial institution. In contrast to formal financial institutions, the gap between men and women is narrowing in the case of borrowing from family and friends. Particularly, over the last 12 months 30.2% of women and 32.7% of men aged 15+ approached family and friends to borrow money.

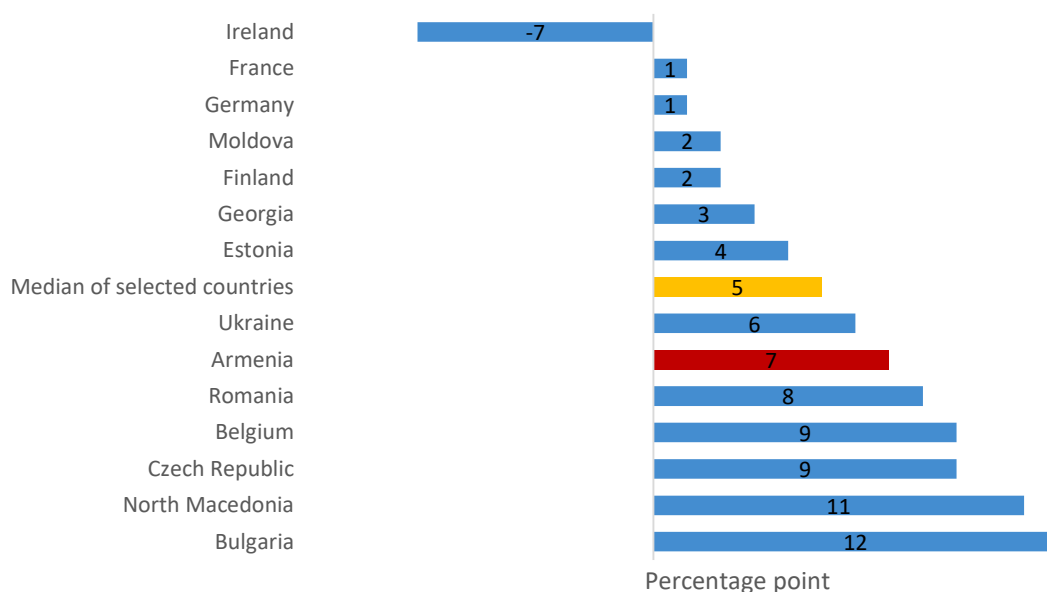
**Figure 33. Borrowing money in Armenia among women and men aged 15 and higher, 2021**



Source: World Bank, Global Findex Database 2021, <https://rb.gy/lkara2> (accessed 17.08.2022)

**The gender gap in borrowing money in Armenia is worse than the median for selected countries, however, it is lower than in some Western developed countries.** According to the Global Findex 2021 study, the gender gap between men and women in borrowing money in Armenia is 7 percentage points, while the median indicator of selected countries is 5 percentage points. At the same time, the indicators of Belgium and the Czech Republic are around 9 percentage points.

**Figure 34. Gender gap in borrowing money in Armenia and selected countries, 2021**



Source: World Bank, Global Findex Database 2021, <https://rb.gy/lkara2> (accessed 17.08.2022)

According to the IFC study, there are significant differences between men and women in their sources of initial financing for their businesses- men are more likely than women to use personal/household savings to start a business, and women are more likely than men to seek loans. Particularly, 53.4% of female-owned businesses used their personal/household savings, and 21.6% used funds from commercial banks as the main source of funding to establish/acquire the enterprise, while in the case of male-owned businesses 69.3% of businesses used savings and only 12.3% used funds from banks<sup>98</sup>.

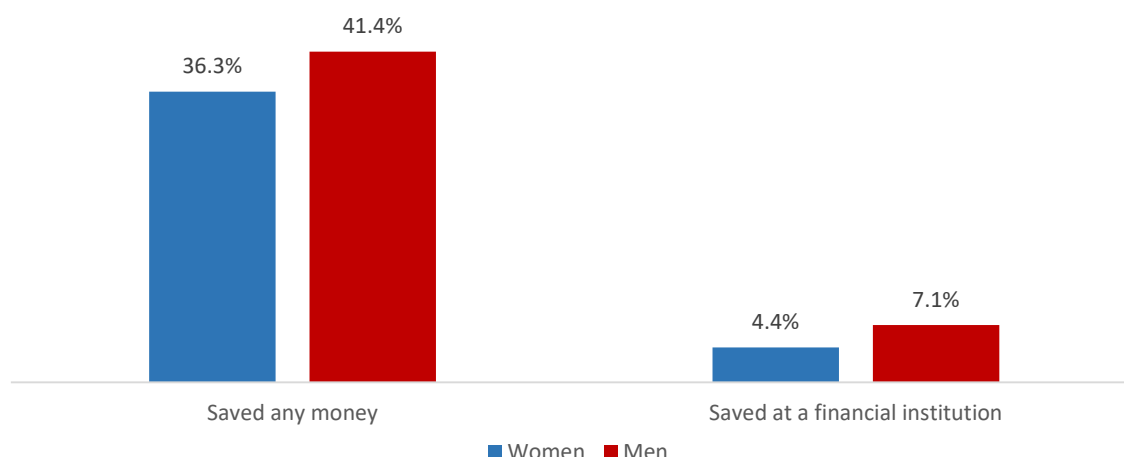
There is no significant difference between women and men in business investments, in contrast to differences in sources for initial financing. In the past two years, 38.3% of women-owned businesses and 32.4% of men-owned businesses sought financial resources to develop their businesses<sup>99</sup>. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (78.4%) who sought financial resources tried to receive them from commercial banks. Particularly, 84.5% of female-owned businesses who sought financial resources for business development received them from banks, only 12.5% of women-owned firms received them from non-bank financial institutions (micro-finance institutions, credit unions, credit cooperatives) and only 6.2% received them from friends or relatives.

When it comes to saving money, the gender gap is smaller compared to the gap in borrowing money. According to the survey data, over the last 12 months, 36.3% of women and 41.4% of men aged 15+ personally saved or set aside any money for any reason, which means that the gender gap in saving money is 5.1 percentage points, compared to 6.9 percentage points of the gender gap in borrowing money. Meanwhile, it is worth mentioning that the savings rate at formal financial institutions is significantly less, which indicates that people still do not have enough trust in formal financial institutions.

<sup>98</sup> IFC, 2021

<sup>99</sup> IFC, 2021

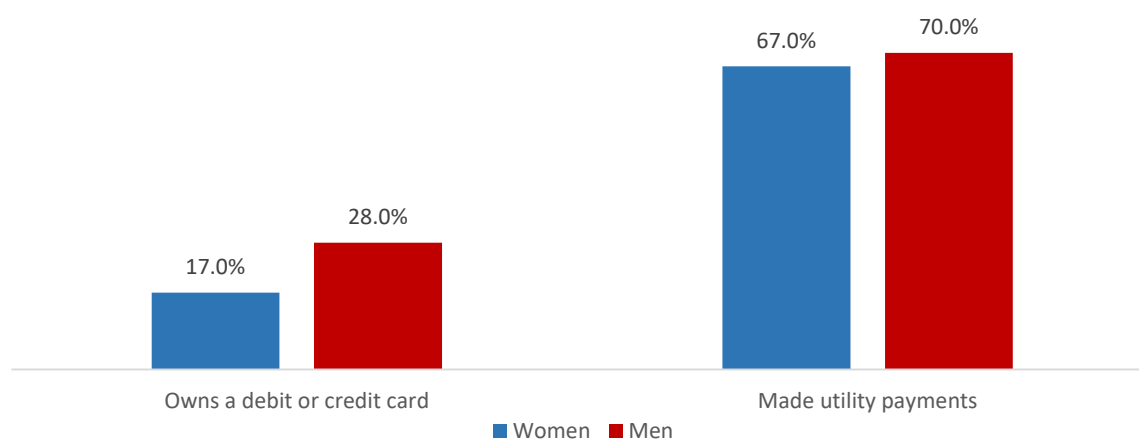
**Figure 35. Saving money in Armenia among women and men aged at 15 and higher, 2021**



World Bank, Global Findex Database 2021, <https://rb.gy/lkara2>

The gender gap in the financial services context is more vivid in the case of a debit or credit card, while in the case of utility payments, the gender gap is moderate. In 2021, 28 out of 100 men aged 15 and higher had a debit or credit card, while only 17 out of 100 women in the same age group had a debit or credit card, which might be conditioned by the dominance of men in formal employment. It should be mentioned that many more women are making utility payments in Armenia. Particularly, the 2021 survey results show that over the previous 12 months, 67.0% of women aged 15 and higher made utility payments, while the same indicator in the case of men is 70.0%.

**Figure 36. Ownership of a credit card or debit card and making utility payments in Armenia by women and men aged 15 and higher, 2021**

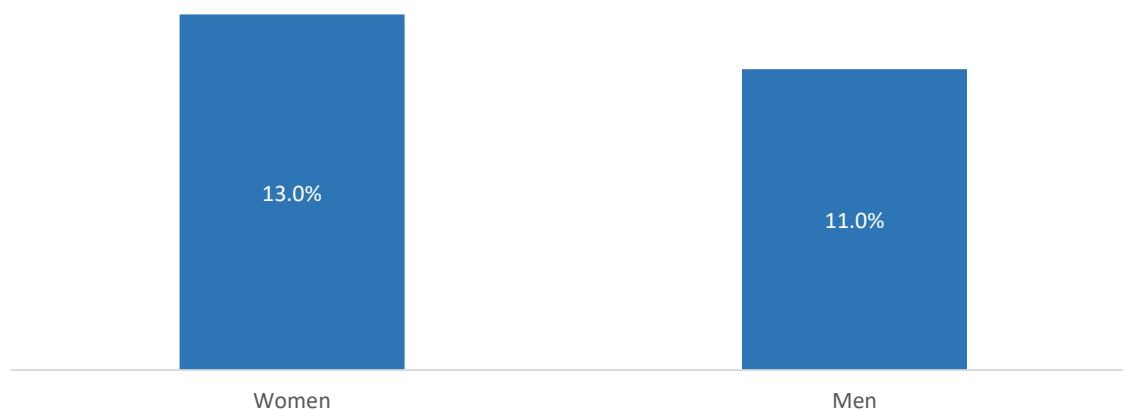


World Bank, Global Findex Database 2021, <https://rb.gy/lkara2> (accessed 17.08.2022)

In Armenia, more women than men receive payments for selling agricultural products, crops, produce, or livestock. The “Global Findex” study of the World Bank shows that over the previous 12 months, 13.0% of women personally received payments for selling agricultural products, crops, produce, or livestock, compared with 11.0% of men. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that a hundred thousand Armenian citizens,

especially men from rural settlements, every year go to Russia for seasonal work, and many women undertake the responsibility of managing family “agribusiness.”

**Figure 37. Share of women and men received payments for the sale of agricultural products, livestock, or crops, 2021**



*World Bank, Global Findex Database 2021, <https://rb.gy/lkara2> (accessed 17.08.2022)*

In general, it is worth mentioning that according to the Global Findex 2021 study, there is a moderate gender gap between men and women in the context of financial services in Armenia. However, in the case of some financial services, for example, borrowing money, Armenia has more favorable positions than some developed countries.

Is limited access to finance a reason or consequence? In the case of Armenia, both are true. Many women do not have agricultural assets for collateral, which restricts their access to finance. At the same time, women have comparatively low economic engagement conditioned by non-financial factors (e.g., gender roles, and cultural norms); therefore, the use of financial services among women is limited.

## Chapter 4. Agricultural Sector Overview

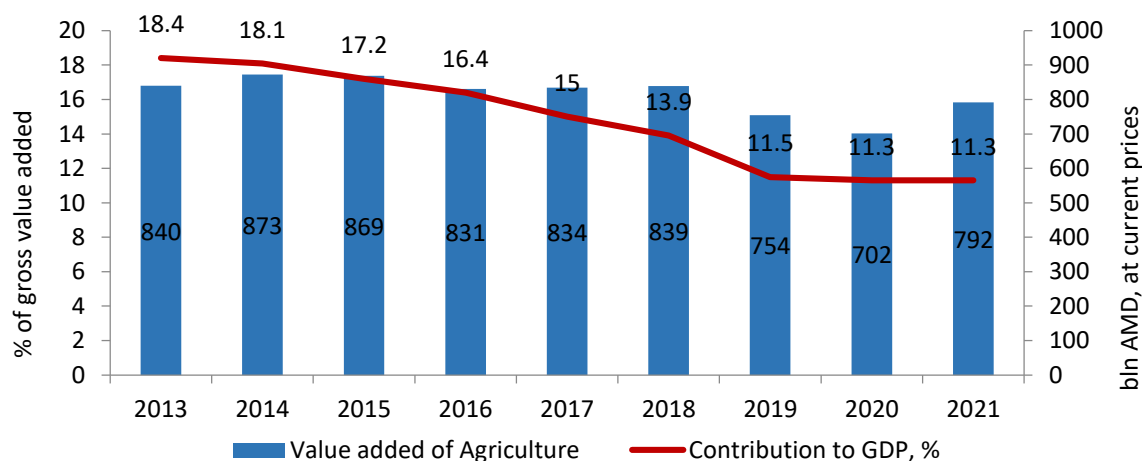
### 4.1 Output and Value Added of the Sector

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of Armenia's economy. It is one of the main contributors to GDP (annual average of 14.8% in 2013-2021<sup>100</sup>), the main source of employment (21.8% of total employed persons in 2020)<sup>101</sup>, and one of the main sectors of export (7.5% share in 2020)<sup>102</sup>.

**Agriculture is a major contributor to the country's gross value added.** In 2013-2021, agriculture contributed an annual average of 14.8% to the Armenia's GDP, followed by wholesale and retail trade (11.2%) and manufacturing (10.7%)<sup>103</sup>. However, the agricultural sector in Armenia for years has been characterized with low levels of productivity, low share of cultivated land, poorly developed infrastructure, the large-scale use of traditional methods and technologies, etc.<sup>104</sup>

**Although agriculture remains one of the main contributors to GDP, the economy has been transitioning away from agriculture over the past decades.** For example, in 2001 agriculture contributed 25.6% to the production of GDP, in 2013 its contribution was 18.1% and in 2021 it went down to 11.3%<sup>105</sup>. At the same time, agriculture value added at current prices was AMD 791.6 billion in 2021, down by 5.7% in 2013 (AMD 839.8 billion). However, it should be mentioned that the structural reforms in Armenia overall have shown relatively slow progress, and in the frame of economic reforms international donor organizations have been advising the country to accelerate the structural transformation from agriculture to agribusiness, and to export-oriented manufacturing and services<sup>106</sup>.

**Figure 38. Agriculture value added and contribution to GDP of Armenia, 2013-2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, <https://bit.ly/3A4a4Ps>

<sup>100</sup> RA Statistical Committee, National Accounts database, <https://bit.ly/3ccogOK>

<sup>101</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Labor market in Armenia, 2021", <https://bit.ly/3NWpBa5>

<sup>102</sup> Eurasian Economic Commission, <https://bit.ly/2M2Fuyw>

<sup>103</sup> RA Statistical Committee, National Accounts database, <https://bit.ly/3A4a4Ps>

<sup>104</sup> «ՀՀ գյուղատնտեսության ոլորտի տնտեսական զարգացումն ապահովող հիմնական ուղղությունների 2020-2030 թվականների ռազմավարության համառոտագիր», <https://bit.ly/3Bji8y7>

<sup>105</sup> RA Statistical Committee, National Accounts database, <https://bit.ly/3ccogOK>

<sup>106</sup> World Bank open data, <https://bit.ly/3b1iEWL>

In 2021, the agricultural output of the country amounted to AMD 933 billion, which although grew in nominal terms compared to the previous year (12%), registered a 1.1% decline at comparable prices. From 2016 to 2019 agricultural output continuously registered a YoY decline in Armenia (Figure 38). This decline was mainly conditioned by the reduction in the plant growing sector: -11.7%, -7.2%, -12.1%, -7.7% YoY real changes over the 2016-2019 period in respective years<sup>107</sup>. One of the main reasons for this was weather conditions. In 2016, a harsh hailstorm harmed 150 communities from 9 regions in Armenia and significantly affected agricultural activities; the hazard resulted in 278.6 tons of harvested loss (AMD equivalent to 33.6 billion)<sup>108</sup>. The 2016 low economic activity in agriculture, and unfavorable weather conditions also continued in 2017. In 2017 the agriculture had -0.9 percentage point negative contribution to the economic growth<sup>109</sup>.

**It should be mentioned that although agriculture is the most climate-sensitive of all economic sectors and one of the major sectors for employment in Armenia, yet Armenian farmers are not well adapted to climate-related challenges, which is one of the shortcomings in the sector.** Contrary to plant growth, animal husbandry grew in 2016 and 2017 (4.7% and 2.2% respectively) main thanks to the second stage of the World Bank “Community Agricultural Resource Management and Competitiveness” (CARMAC) program which was launched in 2015 and continued until 2020 aimed at development of cattle breeding and improvement of pastures<sup>110</sup>. For instance, under this program overall irrigation networks with a length of 250 km were built in 95 communities on pastures and 235 places to provide drinking water for cattle, etc.<sup>111</sup>.

**Over the last decade, the share of plant growing in gross agricultural output was declining, while the share of animal breeding was increasing and in 2021 the shares almost equaled.** The proportion of plant growth declined in total agricultural output from 62.3% in 2013 to 50.3% in 2021, while the share of animal husbandry increased from 37.7% in 2013 to 49.7% in 2021 (Figure 39).

---

<sup>107</sup> RA Statistical Committee, Socio- Economic Situation of RA 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 reports

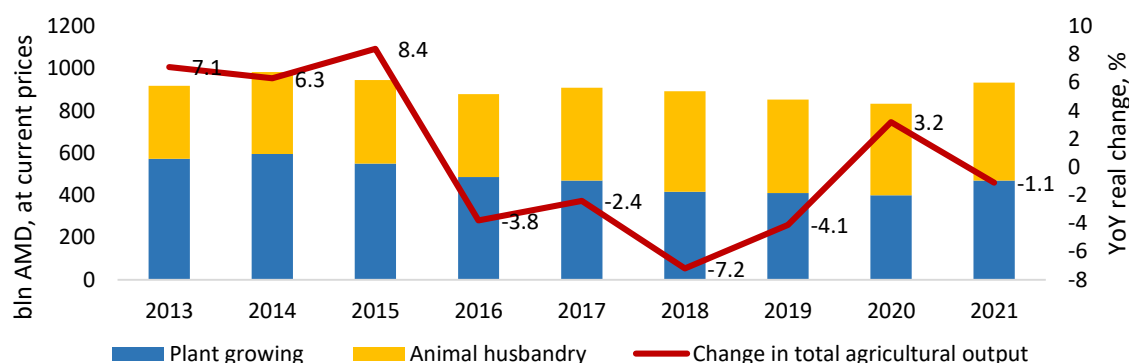
<sup>108</sup> IRTEK legal website, RA Government protocol decision N15 from April 13 2017, <https://bit.ly/3PvGUhR>

<sup>109</sup> RA Statistical Committee, Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-March 2018, <https://bit.ly/3A8speb>

<sup>110</sup> Arka news agency, “Armenia’s agriculture faces 3.5% year-on-year decline in Jan-May 2017”, July 2017, <https://bit.ly/3Pxtu52>

<sup>111</sup> Finport.am, “MoE reports on results of World Bank’s CARMAC2 program”, May 2022, <https://bit.ly/3Aulc9H>

**Figure 39. Agricultural output in Armenia in 2013-2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank for output; Statistical yearbooks of Armenia 2018, 2021; Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-December 2021 for real changes

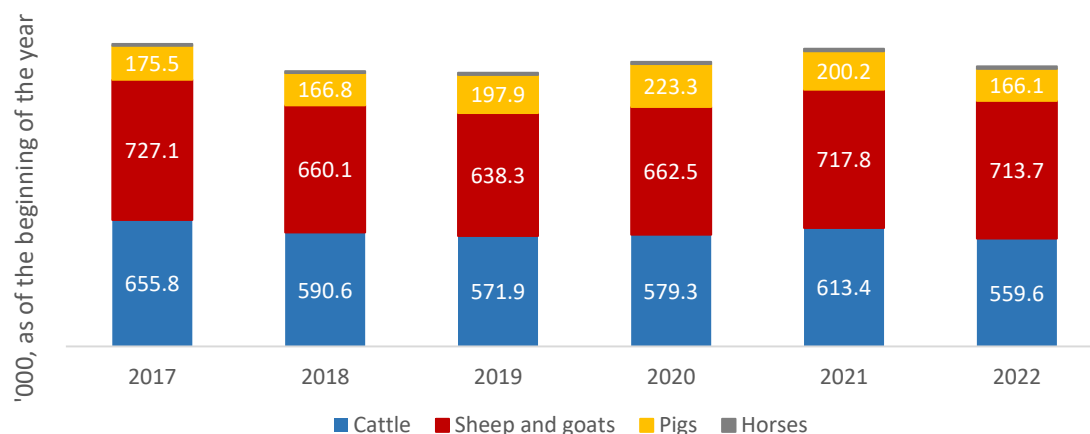
**Cattle breeding and sheep breeding are the main branches of the animal husbandry sector in Armenia.** Armenia has favorable conditions for animal husbandry: approximately 70.0% of Armenia's territory is classified as agricultural land (2,043.5 ha), and pastures represent 51.4% or 1,050.5 ha of total agricultural land territory<sup>112</sup>. As of the 1st January 2022, Armenia's livestock population (excluding poultry) amounted to 1,453 thousand heads, of which 49.1% or 713.7 thousand are sheep and goats, 38.5% or 559.6 thousand are cattle, 11.4% or 166.1 thousand are pigs and 13.9 thousand or 1% are horses (Figure 40). During the year of 2017 the livestock sharply declined by 9%, and at the beginning of 2018 amounted to 1,428 thousand down from 1,569 thousand from a year before. This was mostly due to the decline in the number of cattle (-10% or -65.2 thousand heads). There may have been several reasons for that: one of them is the high prices of fodder (forage) that year<sup>113</sup>. Another possible reason is that during the given period some changes have been implemented in agricultural statistics, which may have impacted the results too. However, it should be mentioned that a widespread numbering and registration of livestock in Armenia is required to have a clear picture of the precise number of heads of livestock, which is not in place currently in the country and presents one of the challenges in the livestock sector. In general, the livestock sector in Armenia faces several serious challenges, including poor pasture management and underutilization, absence of sufficient resources (professional and financial) and proper infrastructure, persistent livestock diseases, etc.<sup>114</sup> The government provides support to the farmers in the frame of a few state projects in order to meet these challenges.

<sup>112</sup> RA Cadastre Committee, The Decision of the RA Government N 19-27-N from 03.12.2020  
<https://bit.ly/3wiwcos>

<sup>113</sup> ARLIS Armenian legal information system, RA Government decision N327-L from 29 March 2019,  
<https://bit.ly/3PF2FMm>

<sup>114</sup> SDA, "Study on pasture management issues and their causality in the Republic of Armenia", 2019,  
<https://bit.ly/3T0VrFp>

**Figure 40. Number of livestock in Armenia, 2017-2022**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank database for 2017-2021, "Sum totals of exhaustive livestock census as of 1st January, 2022" for 2022

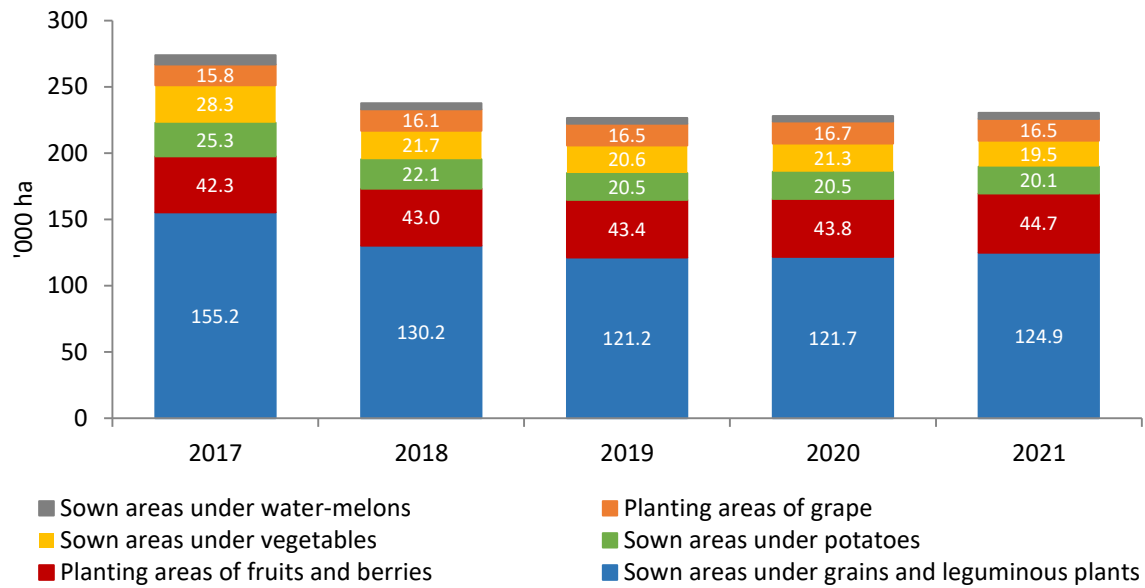
**The sown areas under agricultural crops in Armenia have been on the decrease over the last year, mainly due to the reduction in sown areas under wheat.** The total sown area under agricultural crops in 2021 was 230.3 thousand ha, 16% less (or by 43.4 thousand ha) than in 2017. This reduction was mainly due to the reduction in sown areas under grains and leguminous plants (-30.3 thousand ha), particularly in areas under wheat (-23.3 thousand ha<sup>115</sup>).

Arable land represents 21.7% (444 thousand ha) of agricultural land, while land under perennial crops represents 1.8% (37.3 thousand ha) of the total agricultural land area in Armenia<sup>116</sup>. As Figure 41 demonstrates, the total sown area under agricultural crops in 2021 was 230.3 thousand ha. Most of this area is sown under grains, leguminous plants (54.2%), and fruit and berry orchards (19.4%).

<sup>115</sup> RA Statistical Committee, Sown areas of agricultural crops, the planting area of permanent crops, gross harvest and average crop capacity for 2017, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3Ci1i36>, <https://bit.ly/3Ay79Qw>

<sup>116</sup> RA Cadastre Committee, The Decision of the RA Government N 19-27-N from 03.12.2020 <https://bit.ly/3wiwc0s>

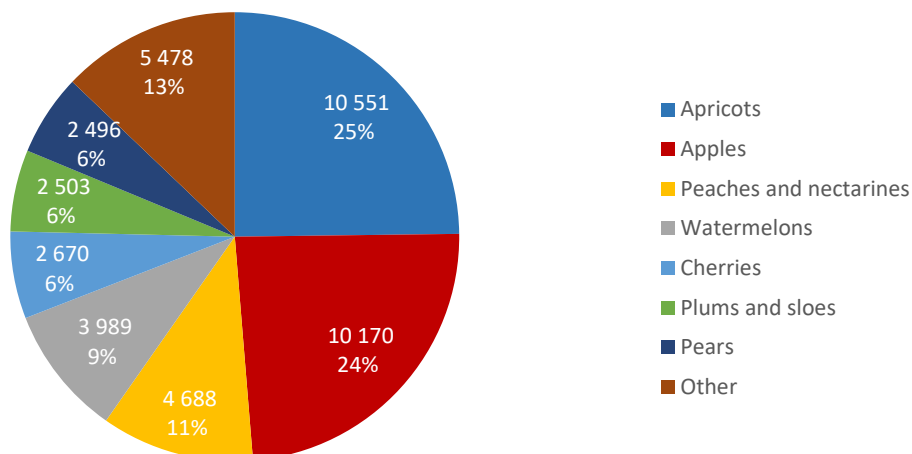
**Figure 41. Sown areas under agricultural crops in Armenia, 2017-2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank, <https://bit.ly/3Ps0awV>

The most cultivated grains in Armenia are wheat and barley (47.3% and 40.5% of the sown area under grains, respectively) and the most cultivated vegetables are tomatoes and cabbage (21.4% and 11.4% of the sown area under vegetable crops, respectively). In 2021, wheat's cultivation area was 59.1 thousand ha, and the sown area under barley was 50.6 thousand ha, followed by oats (7.3 thousand ha) and spelled (4.5 thousand ha)<sup>117</sup>. The most cultivated vegetables are tomatoes (4.2 thousand ha), cabbage (2.2 thousand ha), pepper (1.8 thousand ha), eggplant (1.6 thousand ha), and cucumber (1.4 thousand ha).

**Figure 42. Harvested area of fruit and berries in 2020, ha**



Source: FAOSTAT, <https://bit.ly/3ccGYFI>

The most cultivated fruits are stone (25 thousand ha) and pomaceous (13.9 thousand ha). The most cultivated fruits in Armenia are apricot, apples, peaches, and nectarines. In 2020,

<sup>117</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Sown Areas of Agricultural Crops, Planting Area of Permanent Crops, Gross Harvest and Average Crop Capacity for 2021", <https://bit.ly/3QZbdiR>

the harvested area under these fruits together amounted to 25.4 thousand ha or 60% of the total harvested area of fruits and berries, as demonstrated in Figure 42.

## **4.2 Agricultural Overview by Regions**

**Half of the country's total agricultural production is produced in only three regions<sup>118</sup>.** As Figure 43 demonstrates, Armavir (AMD 211 billion in 2021), Ararat (AMD 141 billion) and Gegharkunik (AMD 113.6 billion) regions were the major producers of agricultural production in Armenia in 2021. Vegetable farming is more developed in Armavir and Ararat regions, grains and leguminous plants cultivation is mainly concentrated in Lori, Shirak, Syunik, and Gegharkunik, and fruit farming is more developed in Armavir, Ararat, and Aragatsotn. Animal breeding is developed in Gegharkunik, Shirak, Kotayk, Armavir, Aragatsotn, and Lori regions.

**Armavir and Ararat regions are the main contributors to the plant - growing sector in the country (around 33.5% and 23.6% of total plant - growing output in 2020 respectively<sup>119</sup>).** Particularly these two regions are the primary producers of vegetables, and fruits, and berries, and grape and melon crops. For example, in 2021, 51.8% (319.7 thousand tons out of 617.4 thousand tons) of vegetables came from Armavir and 33.2% (204.8 thousand tons) came from Ararat. These regions are also the primary producers of fruits and berries: 32.2% or 102.6 thousand tons of 322.9 thousand tons of fruits and berries harvested in the country came from Armavir, while 27.4% (87.3 thousand tons) came from Ararat. In 2021, 45% or 106.5 thousand tons of 236.6 thousand tons of grapes were harvested in Armavir and 41.9% (99.1 thousand tons) in Ararat. Nearly 100% of melon crops in the country were cultivated in Armavir (70.2% or 92 thousand tons out of 131.1 thousand tons) and Ararat (27.8% or 36.5 thousand tons)<sup>120</sup> regions.

**Gegharkunik, Shirak, Kotayk, and Armavir regions are the main contributors to the animal husbandry sector.** In 2020, 50.7% of the output in this sector was produced by Gegharkunik, Shirak, Kotayk, and Armavir regions, followed by Aragatsotn (11.1%), and Lori (11.0%) regions.<sup>121</sup> For example, in 2021, 188.6 thousand tons (live weight) of livestock and poultry were realized for slaughter by ten regions, out of 52.2% came from Gegharkunik, Shirak, Lori, and Armavir combined<sup>122</sup>. In terms of another main product of the animal husbandry sector, 17.6% of milk in the country was produced in Gegharkunik, 15.4% in Shirak, 12.8% in Lori, and 11.8% in Aragatsotn.

---

<sup>118</sup> In this section the share of regions is determined to the total of all ten regions, excluding Yerevan.

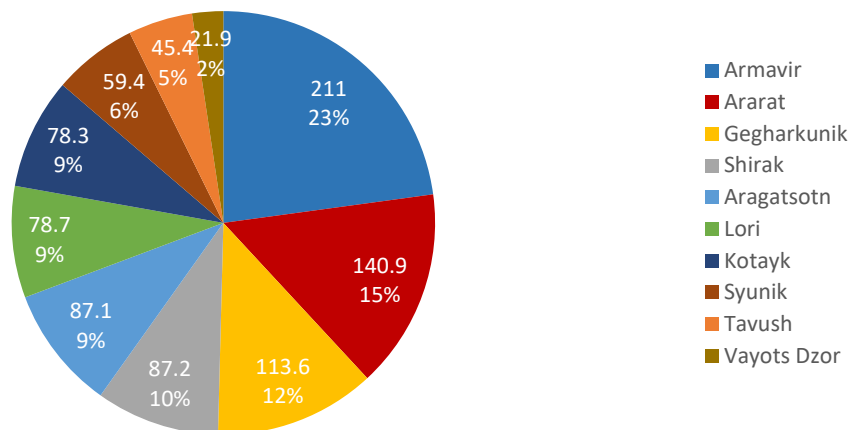
<sup>119</sup> RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank, <https://bit.ly/3dR49Gb> (accessed 23.08.2022)

<sup>120</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-December 2021", <https://bit.ly/3AcBvH7>

<sup>121</sup> RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank, <https://bit.ly/3dR49Gb> (accessed 23.08.2022)

<sup>122</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-December 2021", <https://bit.ly/3AcBvH7>

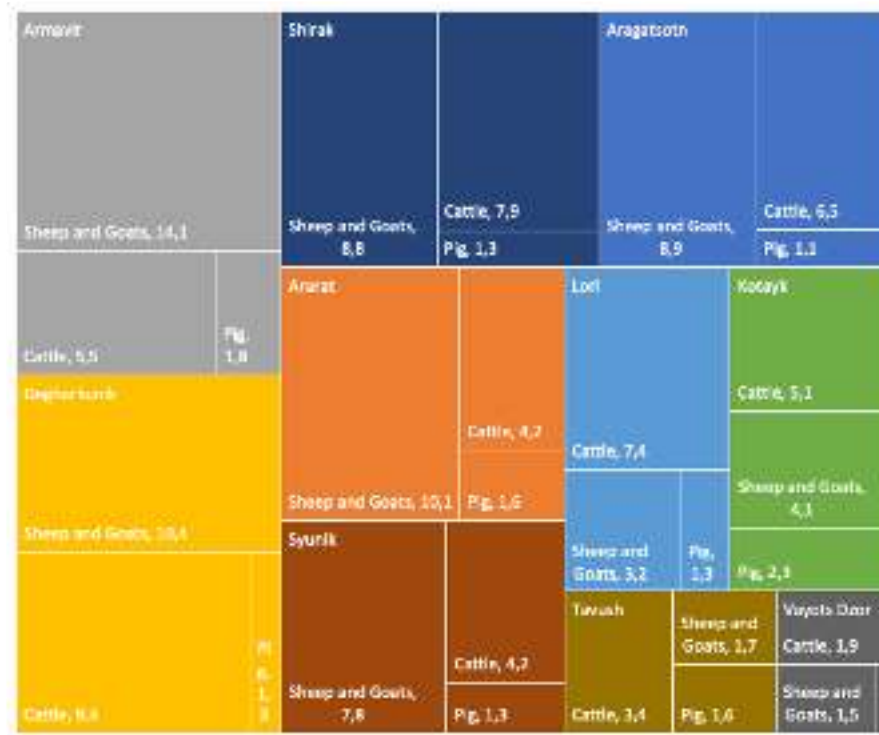
**Figure 43. Total agricultural output in Armenia by regions in 2021, AMD billion**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, "Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-June 2021",

The largest population of livestock in Armenia is concentrated in Armavir, Gegharkunik, Shirak, and Aragatsotn regions ( Figure 44). Particularly, the largest population of cattle is concentrated in Gegharkunik (17% of the total in the country or 94 thousand heads), Shirak (14%, 79.2 thousand heads), Lori (13%, 74.5 thousand heads), Aragatsotn (12%, 64.7 thousand), and Armavir (10%, 55.2 thousand heads). The largest population of sheep and goats are bred in Armavir (20% or 140.8 thousand heads), Gegharkunik (15%, 104 thousand heads), and Ararat (14%, 100.7 thousand heads), followed by Aragatsotn and Shirak. Pig breeding is more developed in Kotayk (16% or 22.8 thousand heads), Armavir (13%, 18 thousand heads), and Ararat (12%, 16.5 thousand heads), followed by Tavush, Lori and Shirak. The largest population of horses is concentrated in Tavush (29% or 4.1 thousand heads) and Lori (19%, 2.7 thousand heads).

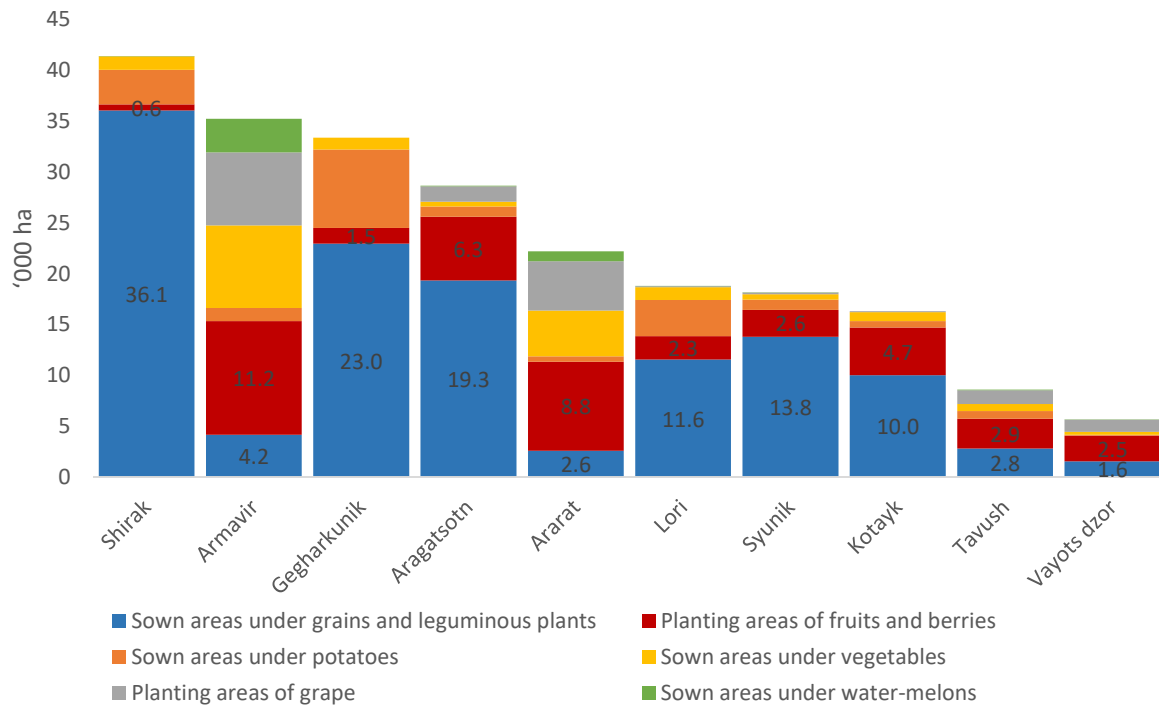
**Figure 44. Number of livestock in Armenia by regions as of 1 January of 2022, thousand heads**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, "Sum Totals of Exhaustive Livestock Census as of 1st January 2022", <https://bit.ly/3pAuGKD>

The most cultivated crops in Armenia are grains and leguminous, and they are mainly cultivated in Shirak (28.9% of sown area in the country), Gegharkunik (18.4% of sown area), and Aragatsotn (15.5% of sown area) regions, as Figure 45 demonstrates.

**Figure 45. Sown areas under agricultural crops in Armenia by regions in 2021**



Source: RA Statistical Committee, "Sown Areas of Agricultural Crops, Planting Area of Permanent Crops, Gross Harvest and Average Crop Capacity for 2021", <https://bit.ly/3QZbdiR>

Fruits and berries are mainly cultivated in Armavir (25.7% of sown areas in the country), Ararat (20.2%), and Aragatsotn (14.4%). The sown areas for potatoes in ten regions amount to 20 thousand ha, out of which 38.5% comes to the Gegharkunik region, 17.7% to Lori, and 17% to Shirak. Vegetables in Armenia are mainly cultivated in Armavir (42.2%) and Ararat (23.2%). Vineyards in Armenia are established mainly in Armavir (43.7%) and Ararat (29.6%).

## Chapter 5. The Economic Engagement of Women in the Rural Settlements of Armenia

### 5.1 Women's Engagement in the Agripreneurship

Nearly 28% of women in rural settlements have been either involved in agripreneurial<sup>123</sup> activity within the last 2 years or intend to start a business in the coming years, while 2% were engaged in other types of entrepreneurial activities. Particularly, 16.4% of women are presently involved in agripreneurship, and 13.1% of women have plans to start a new business (2.3 percentage points of which are active entrepreneurs). At the same time, 3.9% of women have been engaged in entrepreneurship within the last few years and terminated their entrepreneurial activities within the last 24 months ( Table 2). Worth mentioning that 10.0% of total women living in rural areas without prior experience in business (at least for the past 24 months) are trying to start a business, most of them in agripreneurship.

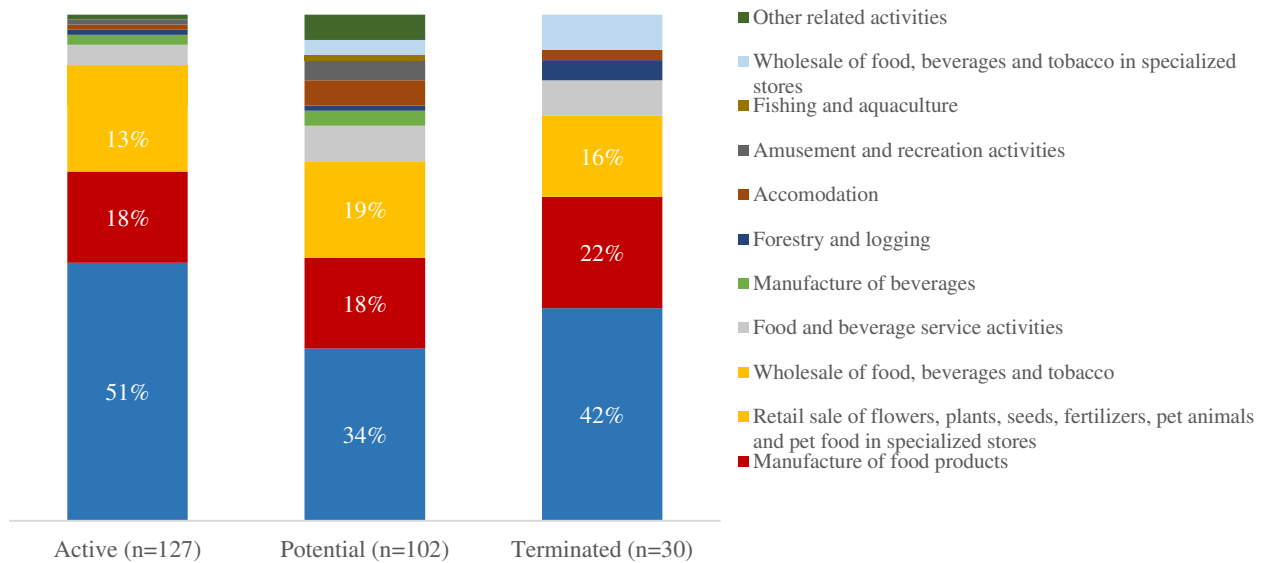
**Table 2. Current, potential, and past engagements in entrepreneurial activities among women in rural settlements of Armenia**

| Active entrepreneurs<br>(n=779)                                                                           | Beginner or potential<br>entrepreneurs (n=777)                                                                                                                     | Entrepreneur who<br>terminated activities<br>(n=778)                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Women own a business<br>(alone or with others), are<br>self-employed or sell goods<br>or provide services | Are currently trying to start<br>a new business, either<br>alone or with others,<br>including becoming self-<br>employed or selling goods<br>or services to others | In the past 24 months, have<br>sold, terminated, or otherwise<br>alienated any business they<br>owned and operated,<br>including self-employment,<br>or the sale of goods or<br>provision of services |
| 16.4%                                                                                                     | 13.1%                                                                                                                                                              | 3.9%                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

Crop growing and animal production, manufacture of food products, and retail sale of flowers, plants, and seeds are the most popular areas of economic activities with 51%, 18%, and 13% shares in the responses provided by active entrepreneurs, respectively. These three areas are also the most popular areas among those who intend to start a business (34%, 18%, and 19% of responses respectively), as demonstrated in Figure 46. Worth mentioning, that on average, respondents are conducting business in more than one sector.

<sup>123</sup> The definition of agripreneurship is provided in the methodology section, which includes owning and managing businesses (women alone or with others), self-employment, and engagement in selling goods or providing services related to the agricultural sector.

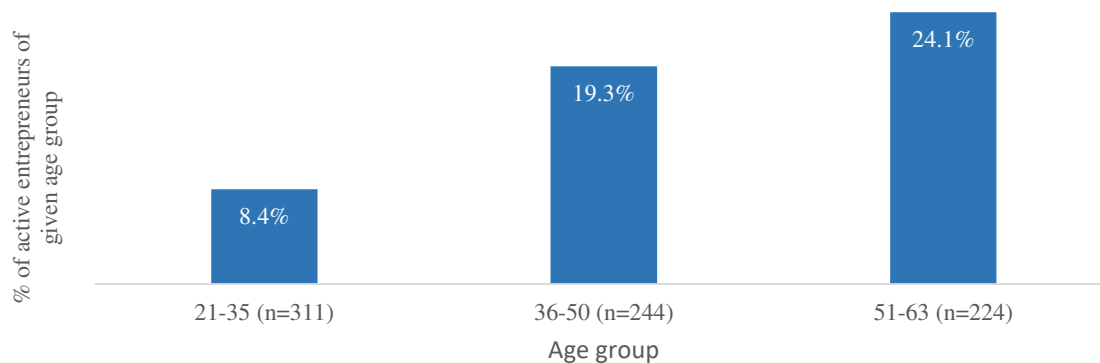
**Figure 46. The structure of entrepreneurs by type of economic activity**



Note: Multiple choice question, (1) Active: total 232 responses received, on average each respondent involved in entrepreneurship activity mentioned 1.8 sectors; (2) Potential: total 189 responses received, on average each respondent who plans to be engaged in entrepreneurship activity mentioned 2.0 sectors; (3) Terminated: total 45 responses received, on average each respondent who terminated entrepreneurial activity mentioned 1.6 sectors.

**Engagement in entrepreneurial activity is positively associated with the age of women: elderly and middle-aged women are engaged in entrepreneurial activity compared to younger ones.** To profile active entrepreneurs, the analysis looked at confounding factors including gender, age, education, parental status, sex of the head of the household (HH), region, and families' economic status. The analysis per confounding factors revealed a significant difference for only one aspect, that is the age group of the respondents (Chi-square=25.9, df=2,  $p<0.00$ ), meaning that more women aged 51 to 63 are involved in entrepreneurial activities (24%), compared to women aged from 36 to 50 (19%) and aged from 21 to 35 (8%). The indicator is the lowest among women aged 21 to 35, indicating a clear need to promote women's entrepreneurship among youth living in the rural settlements of the country ( Figure 47).

**Figure 47. Engagement in entrepreneurial activity by age groups**

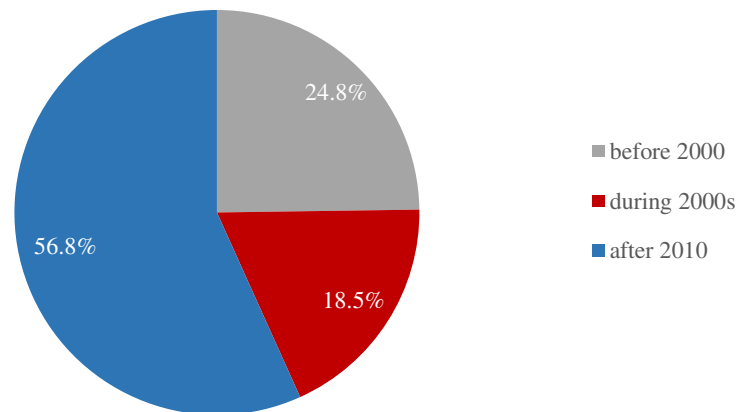


Note: Chi-square=25.9, df=2,  $p<0.00$

Further analysis shows that women living in rural areas are mostly engaged in non-formal unregistered small-scale business activities. Namely, 89.2% of businesses operate in the informal sector and are not registered as taxpayers. As demonstrated in

Figure 48 more than half of the businesses (56.8%) were established after 2010, moreover, among them, 33.7% are relatively new businesses established within the last five years.

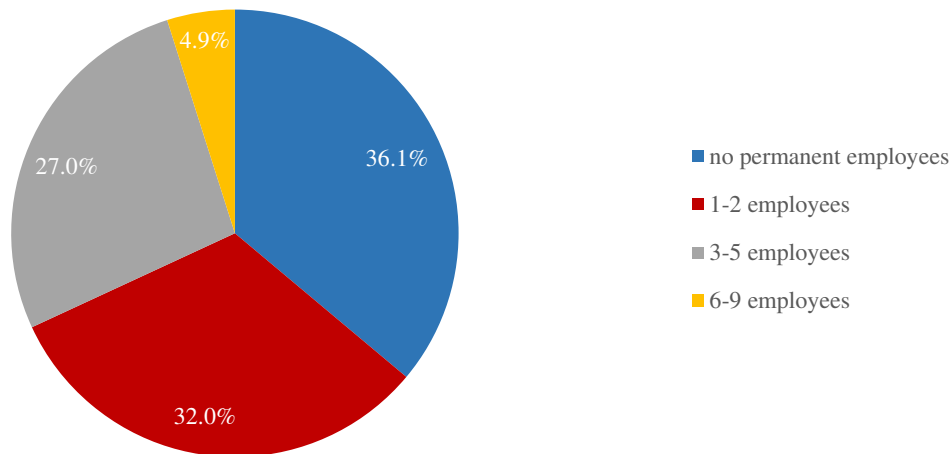
**Figure 48. Structure of entrepreneurs by the period of starting the operations**



Note: n=125

**Most female entrepreneurs in rural settlements on average create nearly 2 permanent jobs.** Only 36.1% of female businesses are solo entrepreneurs, while most businesses (63.9%) hire more than one permanent employee. As a rule, women entrepreneurs in rural settlements create from 1 to 5 jobs (59.0% of the cases) and few businesses (4.9%) have more than six employees ( Figure 49). It is worth mentioning that 23.4% of entrepreneurs also hire seasonal workers. Overall, on average, women entrepreneurs manage 1.91 permanent employees (median value=2 employees, SD=2.02) and 1.44 seasonal employees (median value=1 employee, SD=4.07), registered and unregistered. Considering the annual turnover and the number of employees of women's businesses, it is worth mentioning that, as a rule, women run micro-enterprises.

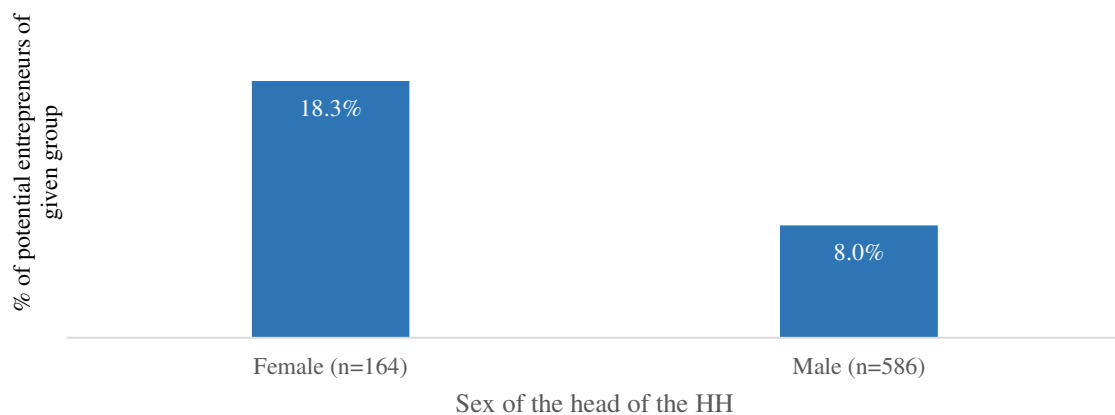
**Figure 49. Structure of entrepreneurs by the number of permanent employees**



Note: n=122

**Women from female-headed households are more likely to start a new business than women from male-headed households.** Namely, 18.3% of women from female-headed HHs who have not been engaged in any entrepreneurial activity within the last 24 months plan to start a business in the coming years compared with 8.0% of women living in male-headed HHs ( Figure 50).

**Figure 50 . Women prone to start a business by the sex of the head of the household**

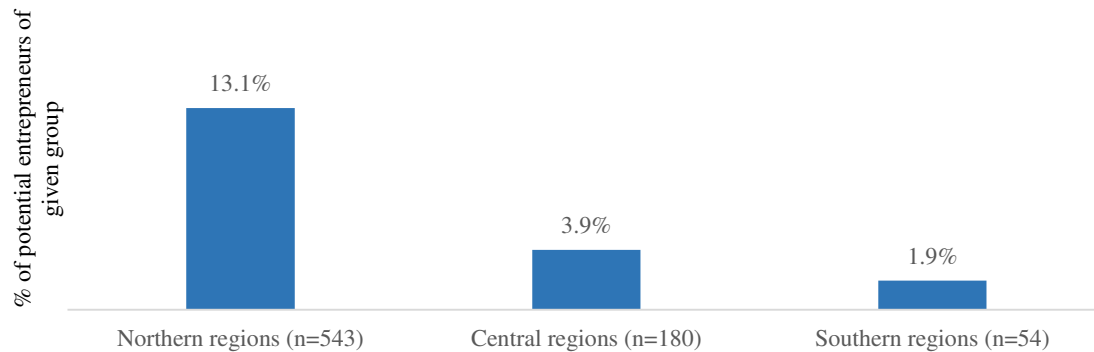


Note: Chi-square=14.7, df=1,  $p < 0.00$

**Women from northern regions are more likely to start a new business compared with women from central and southern regions.** Namely, 13.1% of women from northern regions who have not been engaged in any entrepreneurial activities within the last 24 months plan to start a business in the coming years compared with the women living in the central (3.9%) and southern (1.9%) parts of the country ( Figure 51). Supposedly, the main reason behind this is migration patterns observed in these regions. For instance, if in the Syunik region, 1.6% of the population is involved in migration, then in Shirak or Lori, the number equals

16.0%<sup>124</sup>. In the regions with high rates of migration (mainly men are involved in migration), women had to get involved in economic activities to support the household.

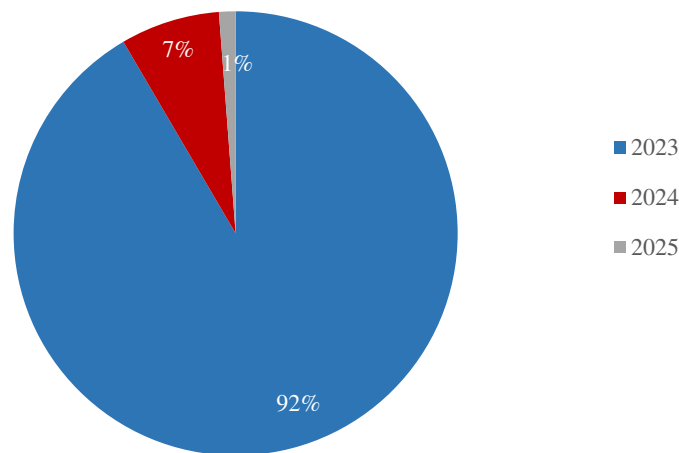
**Figure 51. Women prone to start a business by the region**



Note: Chi-square=16.9, df=2,  $p < 0.00$

There are a few discrepancies between the businesses women plan to start and existing businesses, which in some cases may indicate that women have set unrealistic targets or have made incorrect estimations. Women who intend to start a business have been asked to specify when they plan to start, whether they plan to register the businesses, what annual turnover they anticipate, etc. More than 90% of women who plan to start a new business (excluding those who already run a business), plan to do so in 2023 (Figure 52).

**Figure 52. Structure of potential entrepreneurs by planned start date of activity**

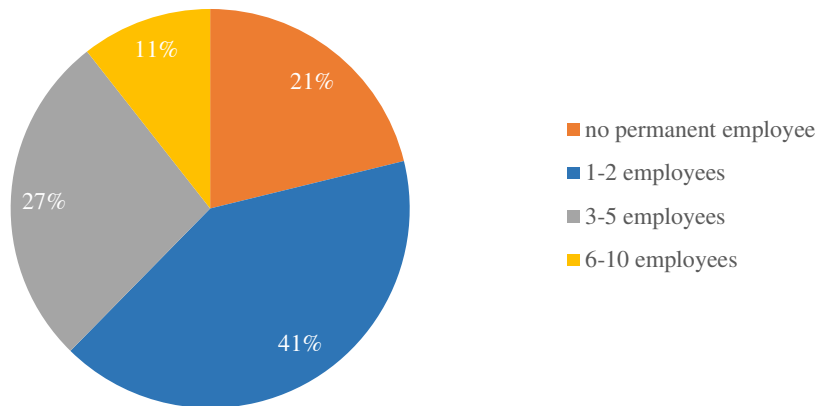


Note: n=83

The majority of women also anticipate hiring permanent and seasonal employees. Particularly, they plan to hire on average 2.6 permanent (median =2, SD=2.52) and 2.8 seasonal (median=2, SD=3.48) employees, and only 21% of potential entrepreneurs do not plan to hire permanent employees (Figure 53).

<sup>124</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "The Demographic Handbook of Armenia 2021" <https://bit.ly/39saUMR>

**Figure 53. Structure of potential entrepreneurs by the number of planned permanent employees**

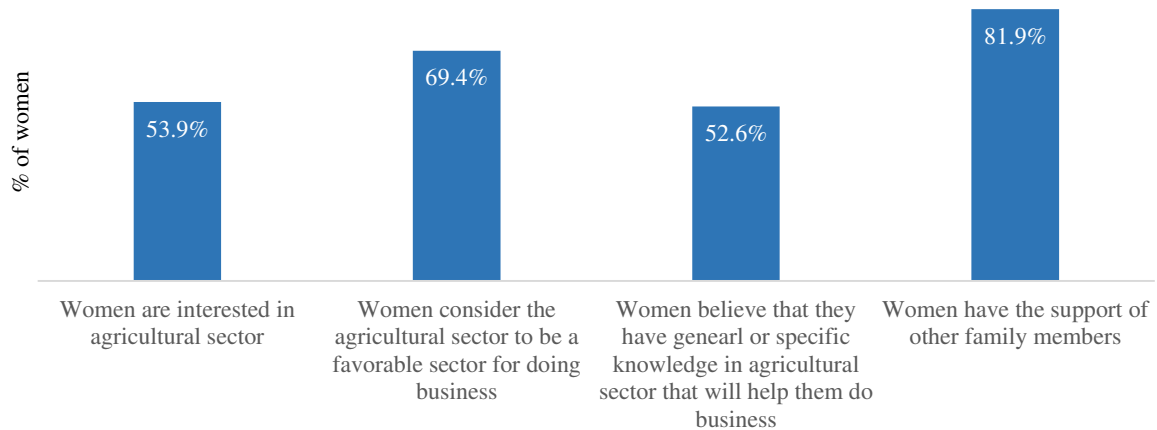


Note: n=86

**Like current business activities, terminated business activities are small-scale and informal.** As mentioned, 3.9% of women had terminated their businesses within the last 24 months. The analysis of confounding factors for the entrepreneurs who terminated activities within the past 24 months did not reveal any significant difference for any of the factors. Like current business activities, the majority of the terminated activities were unregistered (73.8% of the cases) and had a limited number of permanent employees (on average 1).

**Most of the women living in rural areas believe that agriculture (crop and animal production) is the best sector to start a business.** This is mainly explained by the favorable conditions for doing business in the sector, and their knowledge of the sector. Namely, 53.9% of women are interested in the agricultural sector and 69.4% consider it a favorable sector for doing business as demonstrated in Figure 54. More than half of women (52.6%) believe they have general or specific knowledge in the agricultural sector that will help them to do business in this sector while 81.9% expect to receive support from their family members when starting a business.

**Figure 54. Main reasons of women in rural areas for doing business in agriculture**



Note: n=780

**Interest in agriculture is high among women who have basic and secondary education.** Particularly 58.7% of women in rural areas with basic and secondary education are interested in doing business in agriculture, in contrast, only 37.6% of women with higher and postgraduate education are interested in the sector (Chi-square test,  $p < 0.00$ ) as demonstrated in Table 3.

**Younger women are also less interested in doing business in agriculture than relatively older women.** Particularly, women above 36 are more interested in the sector (60.2% of women aged 36 to 50 and 62.2% of women aged 51 to 63) compared to younger age groups (42.9% of women aged 21 to 35). Finally, more women who have children are interested in agriculture (56.3%) compared to women who do not have children (23.2%) (Table 3).

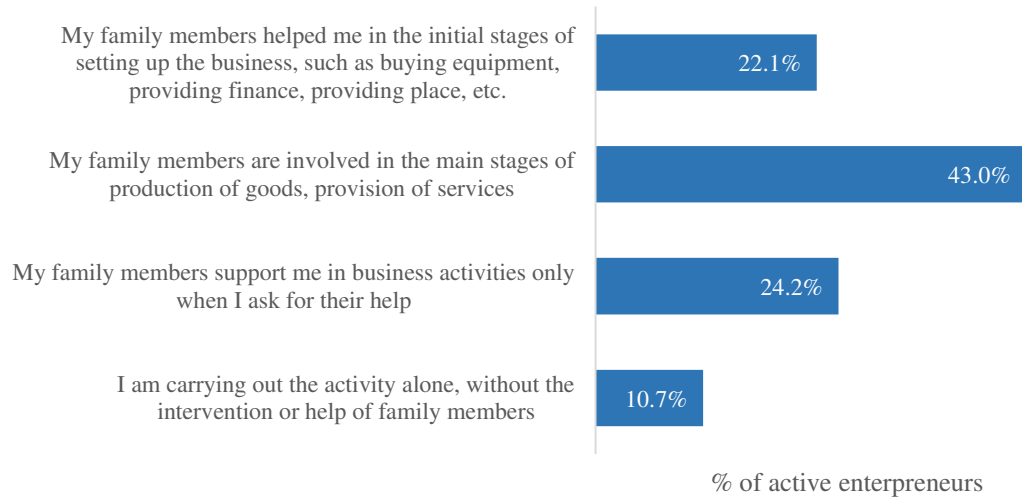
**Table 3. Interest towards agriculture sector per confounding factors**

|                       | N   | % of given group | Significance test             |
|-----------------------|-----|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total                 | 780 | 53.9%            | N/A                           |
| Education             |     |                  |                               |
| Basic and secondary   | 419 | 58.7%            | Chi-square=18.2, df=2, p<0.00 |
| Vocational            | 222 | 54.5%            |                               |
| High and postgraduate | 133 | 37.6%            |                               |
| Age groups            |     |                  |                               |
| From 21 to 35         | 308 | 42.9%            | Chi-square=25.1, df=2, p<0.00 |
| From 36 to 50         | 244 | 60.2%            |                               |
| From 51 to 63         | 222 | 62.2%            |                               |
| Parental status       |     |                  |                               |
| Has children          | 718 | 56.3%            | Chi-square=22.8, df=1, p<0.00 |
| Do not have children  | 56  | 23.2%            |                               |

**The vast majority of women, who are currently active entrepreneurs, receive support from their family members during any stage of their business activity.** Nearly 90% of women received some kind of support from their family members for running a business. Worth mentioning that in 43% of cases, women reported that they received support

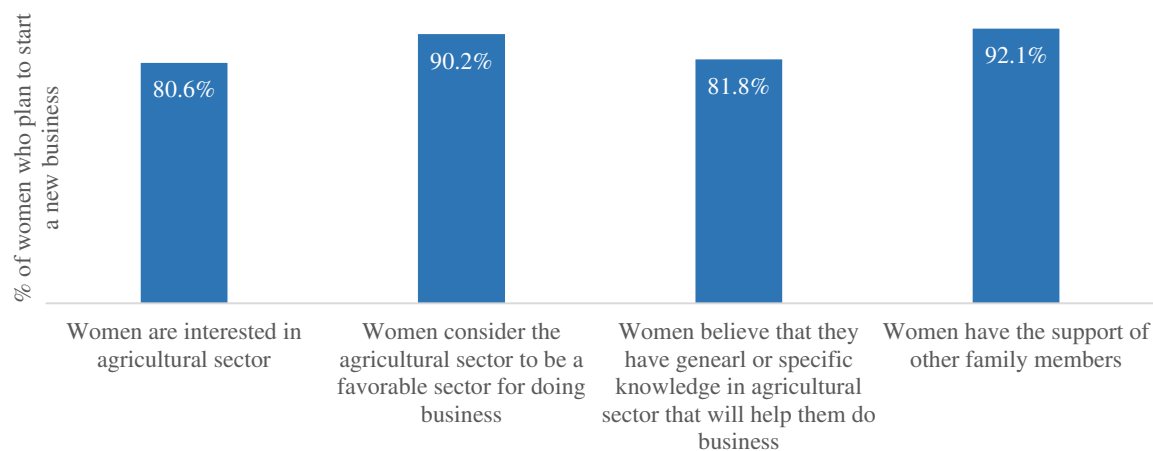
in the production or services provision stage of their businesses, which might indicate that the role of family members is vital (Figure 55).

**Figure 55. Receiving family support during business establishment and operation**



**Agriculture is the primary area of interest for doing business for women who have not been engaged in any economic activity within the last 2 years and who plan to start a new business in the coming years.** Potential entrepreneurs consider this sector first of all because of its favorable environment for doing business and secondly because they believe they have general or specific knowledge of the sector. Particularly, 80.6% of women who plan to start a new business are going to do so in agriculture (versus 53.9% of the total women living in rural areas). More women from this group believe agriculture is a favorable sector for starting a business (90.2% versus 69.4% of the total women living in the rural areas). In comparison, 81.8% of women from this group believe they have general or specific knowledge to start a business (versus 52.6% of the total women living in rural areas). Women who plan to start a business also enjoy larger support from their families, as some 92.1% reported they have support from their family members versus 81.9% of the total women living in rural areas (Figure 56).

**Figure 56. Main reasons for doing business in agriculture among women who plan to start a new business in coming years**

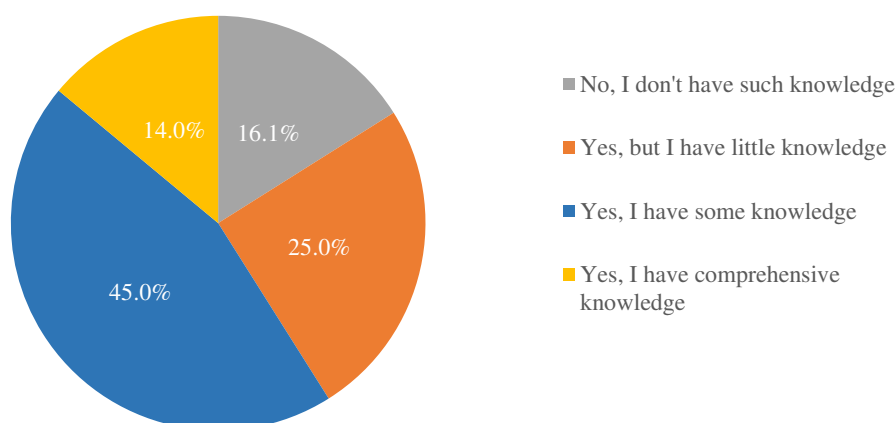


Note: n=79

However, women lack sufficient knowledge to start and manage a business, and only a few have been enrolled in business courses or training in related subjects. Only 14.0% of women who plan to start a business reported they have comprehensive knowledge of establishing and managing a business, and 45.0% reported that they have some knowledge (

Figure 57). Additionally, only 13.3% of women who plan to start a business have attended courses in business management, marketing, or related subjects or received online training on similar topics.

**Figure 57. Do you believe you have sufficient knowledge for establishing and managing a business?**



Note: n=79; % of women who plan to start a business

In addition to a lack of knowledge of business management, women's knowledge and skills in agriculture are generally experience-based and self-taught within family and community units, which might be explained by the fact that girls' enrolment in the vocational sector remains low. Namely, there are three times more male students enrolled in vocational

education than that female<sup>125</sup>. Outside formal education, women also have limited access to experience and information exchange opportunities.

**More than half of women who plan to start a business have experience in selling their agricultural product on their own (61.5%), either in their communities (60.2%), outside of their communities (35.3%), or outside of Armenia (6.3%).** It must be mentioned that women need further empowerment to develop their social interaction and networking skills. Approximately, 25% of women who want to start a business are hesitant to perform activities that are primarily related to business development, such as contacting an expert through social media, contacting the directors of sales points or stores to sell their products, applying to non-governmental organizations or offices that support small businesses, etc.

**Affordable financial resources and moral support are the main factors that would motivate women to start a new business.** Most of the women mentioned the provision of financial resources as the primary motivator (61% of the cases), followed by moral support from the family (31% of cases). Other factors also considered as important include support during sales (28% of the cases), delivery of training and courses on general business (21% of the cases) and on agricultural topics (19% of the cases), as well as some peer-learning and support opportunities (13% of the cases). Free time for women was mentioned in 16% of the cases, while women also highlighted the need to change public attitudes towards women entrepreneurs in society (9% of the cases) ( Table 4).

**The moral support of the family (50% of women planning to start a business) and the opportunity to receive courses on agriculture (28%) have been mentioned more frequently by women who plan to start a new business in the coming years than the total women living in rural areas.** In addition, according to in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the role and need of men of families have been extremely important for women's ability to initiate, develop and maintain an agripreneurial venture. Namely, a male presence is usually required at some stage of entrepreneurship activity be it informal negotiations, traveling distances or solving issues with resources and assets such as water and machinery within the communities.

**Table 4. Main motivational factors to start a business for women living in rural settlements**

| Factors                                        | N   | % of responses | % of cases among total sample (n=780) | % of cases among potential entrepreneurs (n=79) |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Provision of affordable finance                | 427 | 30%            | 61%                                   | 65%                                             |
| Moral support of the family                    | 222 | 16%            | 31%                                   | 50%                                             |
| Assisting in the organization of sales         | 195 | 14%            | 28%                                   | 22%                                             |
| Organization of general business courses       | 148 | 10%            | 21%                                   | 24%                                             |
| Organization of courses on agricultural topics | 133 | 9%             | 19%                                   | 28%                                             |
| Free time for women                            | 112 | 8%             | 16%                                   | 4%                                              |

<sup>125</sup> RA Statistical Committee, "Women and Men in Armenia", 2021 <https://bit.ly/3CIAQ8O>

|                                                                            |       |      |     |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|-----|-----|
| Support of other female entrepreneurs with advice and business connections | 91    | 6%   | 13% | 17% |
| Changing public attitudes towards women entrepreneurs                      | 61    | 4%   | 9%  | 8%  |
| Other                                                                      | 25    | 2%   | 4%  | 6%  |
| Total                                                                      | 1,414 | 100% |     |     |

*Note: Multiple choice question, total 1414 responses received, on average each respondent provided 2.0 responses. Formulated question: “What will encourage you or other women in your village to engage in agripreneurship?”*

Given that the support of family members has been highlighted as a critical encouraging factor to engage in agripreneurship, the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

**Hypothesis 1. Women who have the support of their family members demonstrate a higher level of economic engagement compared with women who do not have the support of their family.**

**Hypothesis is confirmed:** A non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was performed, which confirmed that women who have support from their family members demonstrate a higher level of economic engagement (mean=1.86 out of maximum 10, SD=1.76, measured through the Women Economic Engagement Index) compared to women who do not have such support (mean=1.08, SD=1.27) (Mann-Whitney test,  $p < 0.000$ ).

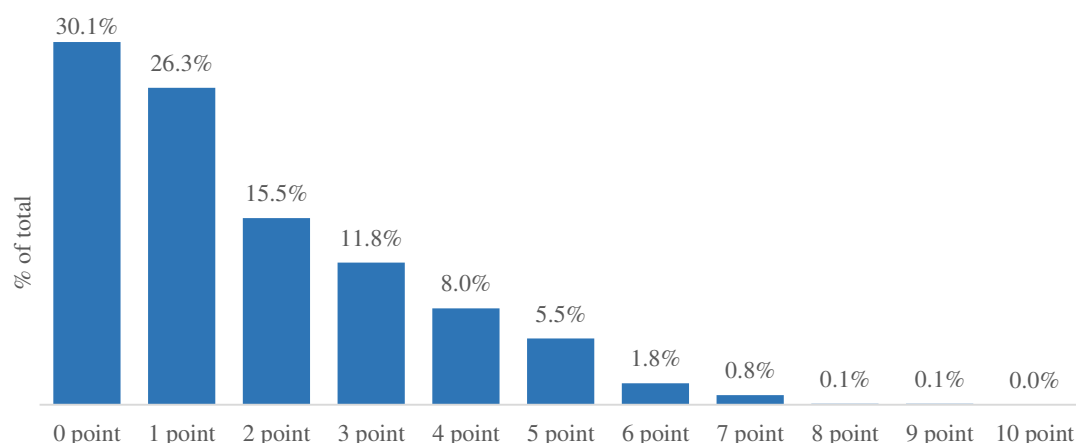
## 5.2 Assessment of the Women’s Economic Engagement

The research team developed a special tool for the assessment of women’s economic engagement in Armenia’s rural settlements. The Women’s Economic Engagement (WEE) Scale is a survey-based measurement through 10 questions. The selected questions measure 3 aspects vital to women’s economic engagement, namely women’s engagement in business activities, access to financial and non-financial assets and resources, as well as their knowledge and capacity.

**Results of the WEE assessment show<sup>126</sup>, that the economic engagement of women in rural areas of Armenia is very low and insufficient.** Particularly, on average women demonstrated positive results in less than 2 questions while 30.1% of women scored 0 overall questions. The average WEE score is 1.71 on a scale of 0-10 (median=1.0, SD=1.71, the actual maximum value was 9 points), which indicates that on average less than two questions have received a “yes” answer. The distribution of the scores shows that 72.0% of women received less than 3 points and only 8.3% of women scored 5 or above ( Figure 58).

<sup>126</sup> Reference to methodology: [Women’s Economic Engagement](#)

**Figure 58. The distribution of the scores for Women's Economic Engagement**



Note: n=780; The average WEE score is 1.71, the median is 1.0

**The analysis of 10 WEE questions shows that most women demonstrated higher results in terms of economic security and self-confidence in establishing and managing businesses.** Namely, 42.6% of women reported receiving money/income that they can control independently at their discretion, while 25.3% have savings. Furthermore, though only 8.3% of women have attended online or face-to-face courses in business management, marketing, or related subjects, 31.5% believe they have sufficient knowledge for establishing and managing a business. On the other hand, though 16.4% of women are currently somehow involved in entrepreneurial activities; only 5.1% cooperate with other organizations, for example, have regular suppliers, sales points, or are members of business associations, etc. Finally, women have limited access to assets and resources, as only 14.1% of women in their name own any land, house, or productive assets ( Table 5).

**Table 5. WEE assessment through 10 questions**

| Domain                                 | Questions                                                                                                                                                                              | % of women |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Engagement in business activity</b> | Do you currently, alone or with others, own a business that you help to manage, or are you self-employed or do you sell goods or provide services?                                     | 16.4%      |
|                                        | Are you currently trying to start a new business, either alone or with others, including becoming self-employed or selling goods or services to others?                                | 13.1%      |
|                                        | In the past 24 months, have you sold, terminated or otherwise alienated any business you owned and operated, including self-employment, or the sale of goods or provision of services? | 3.9%       |
|                                        | Does the woman manage seasonal or permanent workers?                                                                                                                                   | 10.6%      |
| <b>Access to assets and resources</b>  | Do you receive money/income that you can control independently at your own discretion?                                                                                                 | 42.6%      |
|                                        | Do you, in your own name, own any land, house or any productive assets                                                                                                                 | 14.1%      |
|                                        | Do you have any savings at your disposal?                                                                                                                                              | 25.3%      |
|                                        | Have attended courses in business management, marketing or related subjects, or received online training on similar subjects                                                           | 8.3%       |

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                   |       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>Knowledge and capacities</b> | Do you believe you have sufficient knowledge for establishing and managing a business?                                                            | 31.5% |
|                                 | Do you cooperate with other organizations, for example, you have regular suppliers, sales points, you are a member of business associations, etc. | 5.1%  |

**Women with higher education, women from female-headed HHs or from upper-income families have higher economic engagement scores compared with women from other groups.** Particularly, women from female-headed HH have 2.06 mean WEE score, while the mean economic engagement score for women from male-headed HHs is 1.58. Similarly, women from upper-income families demonstrated higher economic engagement (mean score=2.25, SD=1.92) compared with women from low- (mean score=1.82, SD=1.86) and middle- (mean score=1.86, SD=1.75) income families, as presented in Table 6<sup>127</sup>.

**Table 6. Women economic engagement per confounding factors**

|                                 | N   | Mean score <sup>128</sup> | SD   | Significance test                 |
|---------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|
| Sex of the Head of Household    |     |                           |      |                                   |
| Female                          | 164 | 2.06                      | 1.83 | Mann-Whitney U test,<br>p=0.001   |
| Male                            | 588 | 1.58                      | 1.65 |                                   |
| Education groups                |     |                           |      |                                   |
| Basic and secondary             | 421 | 1.47                      | 1.59 | Kruskal-Wallis's test,<br>p<0.000 |
| Vocational                      | 224 | 1.82                      | 1.86 |                                   |
| High and postgraduate           | 135 | 2.25                      | 1.67 |                                   |
| Economic status of the families |     |                           |      |                                   |
| Low                             | 317 | 1.82                      | 1.86 | Kruskal-Wallis's test,<br>p<0.000 |
| Middle                          | 382 | 1.86                      | 1.75 |                                   |
| Upper                           | 75  | 2.25                      | 1.92 |                                   |

Based on exploratory research, a separate hypothesis was formulated and tested to explore further the interrelation of WEE and the educational background of women, as follows:

**Hypothesis 2. Women with vocational and higher educational backgrounds are more inclined to be economically active compared to women with lower educational backgrounds.**

**Hypothesis is confirmed:** A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis's test was performed, which confirmed that women with vocational (mean=1.82 out of maximum 10, SD=1.59) and higher educational backgrounds (mean=2.25, SD=1.67) demonstrate a higher level of economic engagement (measured through Women Economic Engagement Index) compared with women with basic and secondary educational background (mean=1.47, SD=1.59) (Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000) (Table 6).

<sup>127</sup> According to Kolmogorov–Smirnov one-sample test results  $D(780) = 0.226$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , which indicates that the sample distribution is not a normal distribution. Accordingly, for mean comparison tests, non-parametric tests are applied. Kolmogorov–Smirnov one-sample test has been applied for all interval variables involved in the mean comparison or correlation analysis, and according to the normality results, respective tests are applied.

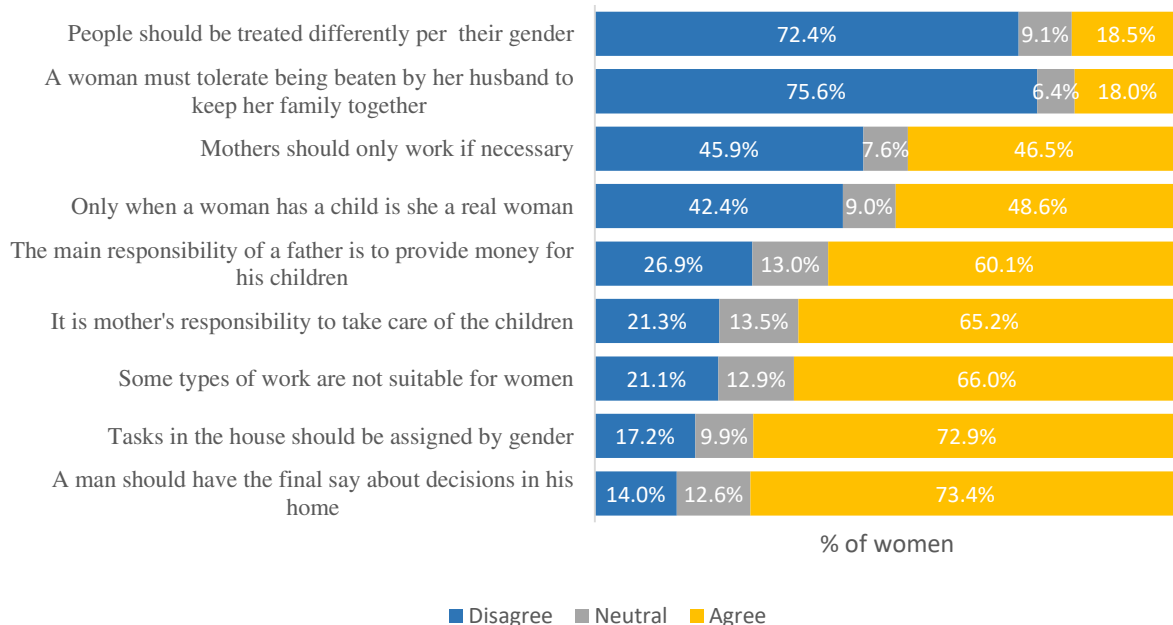
<sup>128</sup> The research team acknowledges that whenever non-parametric mean comparison tests are applied mean rank values should be reported instead of mean values. However, with an aim to make data easy-to-understand for the reader mean values are reported instead of mean ranks.

## Chapter 6. Main Obstacles for Women in the Agripreneurship Sector of Armenia

### 6.1 Economic Engagement and Gender Stereotypes Among Women in the Rural Settlements of Armenia

**Although women support gender equality, their perception of different gender-sensitive situations is highly affected by stereotypes and beliefs.** Certain gender stereotypes primarily relate to women's potential economic activity, for example, the roles of men and women in decision-making at the HH level, division of HH labor, women's prime responsibility is raising children and men's role is in providing financial. As Figure 59 shows, 73.4% of women believe that men should have the final say in decisions in the household. Moreover, most women think that household tasks should be divided by gender (72.9%), while some types of jobs are not suitable for women (66.0%). In terms of gender roles in the family, most women believe that it is women's responsibility to take care of children (65.2%), while men are responsible to provide financially for their children (60.1%). An almost equal number of women agreed and disagreed that women's only purpose in life is having children and that mothers should only work when necessary. As for domestic violence, 75.6% of women disagree that women must tolerate being beaten by their husbands to keep their families together. Yet, 18.0% support this idea. Finally, most women believe that people should not be treated differently because of their gender, which contradicts the responses to other statements.

**Figure 59. Attitude toward gender equality and support for traditional gender roles**



Note: n=780

Similarly, the questions regarding cultural norms and stereotypes were also discussed during the in-depth interviews, and focus-group discussions, and both agripreneurial and non-agripreneurial focus-group participants of all ages confirmed its role as an important factor<sup>129</sup>. However, in the case of agripreneurs the participants mentioned that they somehow overcome

<sup>129</sup> Focus-group Discussions, Azatan

some of the obstacles thanks to male members of the family. According to the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, cultural norms and stereotypes greatly affect women's activity outside the household, including entrepreneurship. Women, albeit educated and employed, still carry the burden of stereotypes. Women are usually associated with childcare and housework, whether they are employed outside the home or not, and men are usually seen as a breadwinner and heads of household.

**Women who do not have children or have higher education or are young or from upper-income families or are from the southern regions are more likely to be intolerant towards traditional gender roles compared to women from other groups.** As the Composite Index for Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles<sup>130</sup> for the women from Armenia's rural settlements shows, women who have children are more likely to support traditional gender roles and male dominance (mean=3.32, SD=1.02) than women who do not have children (mean=2.59, SD=0.94). Also, older and middle-aged women are also more supportive of traditional gender roles (mean=3.50, SD=1.02 and mean=3.34, SD=1.00, respectively) compared to younger women (mean=3.05, SD=1.01). Education is also a significant factor. Women with basic and secondary (mean=3.50, SD=0.99) and vocational education (mean=3.24, SD=1.00) are more prone to support traditional gender roles and male dominance compared to women with higher and postgraduate education (mean=2.61, SD=0.89). Similarly, women from upper (mean=2.98, SD=0.97) and middle (mean=3.16, SD=1.02) income groups are less supportive of traditional gender roles compared to women from low economic groups (mean=3.47, SD=1.02). There are also some differences across regions. As Table 7 illustrates, women from southern regions demonstrated lower support for traditional gender roles (mean=3.30, SD=1.15) compared with women from northern (mean=3.30, SD=0.99) and central (mean=3.32, SD=1.08) regions<sup>131</sup>. The overall mean value of the index is 3.27, which means that women on average have a neutral disposition towards traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Table 7).

**Table 7. Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors                                                                | N   | Mean (out of maximum 5) <sup>132</sup> | SD   | Significance test              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Index for Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles | 780 | 3.27                                   | 1.03 | N/A                            |
| Parental status                                                                    |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Has children                                                                       | 723 | 3.32                                   | 1.02 | Mann-Whitney U test, p<0.000   |
| Do not have children                                                               | 57  | 2.59                                   | 0.94 |                                |
| Age groups                                                                         |     |                                        |      |                                |
| From 21 to 35                                                                      | 311 | 3.05                                   | 1.01 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| From 36 to 50                                                                      | 245 | 3.34                                   | 1.00 |                                |
| From 51 to 63                                                                      | 224 | 3.50                                   | 1.02 |                                |
| Education                                                                          |     |                                        |      |                                |

<sup>130</sup> Reference to methodology: **Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles**

<sup>131</sup> Northern regions include Shirak, Lori and Tavush; Central regions include Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Kotayq and Gegharquniq, and South regions include Vayots Dzor and Syunik

<sup>132</sup> Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles ranged from 1 to 5 where, where "1" means that women are for gender equity and do not support traditional gender roles and "5" means they support traditional gender roles.

|                                    |     |      |      |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----|------|------|-----------------------------------|
| Basic and secondary                | 421 | 3.50 | 0.99 | Kruskal-Wallis's<br>test, p<0.000 |
| Vocational                         | 224 | 3.24 | 1.00 |                                   |
| High and postgraduate              | 135 | 2.61 | 0.89 |                                   |
| Economic situation of the families |     |      |      |                                   |
| Low                                | 317 | 3.47 | 1.02 | Kruskal-Wallis's<br>test, p<0.00  |
| Middle                             | 382 | 3.16 | 1.02 |                                   |
| Upper                              | 75  | 2.98 | 0.97 |                                   |
| Region                             |     |      |      |                                   |
| Northern                           | 545 | 3.30 | 0.99 | Kruskal-Wallis's<br>test, p<0.00  |
| Central                            | 181 | 3.32 | 1.08 |                                   |
| South                              | 54  | 2.80 | 1.15 |                                   |

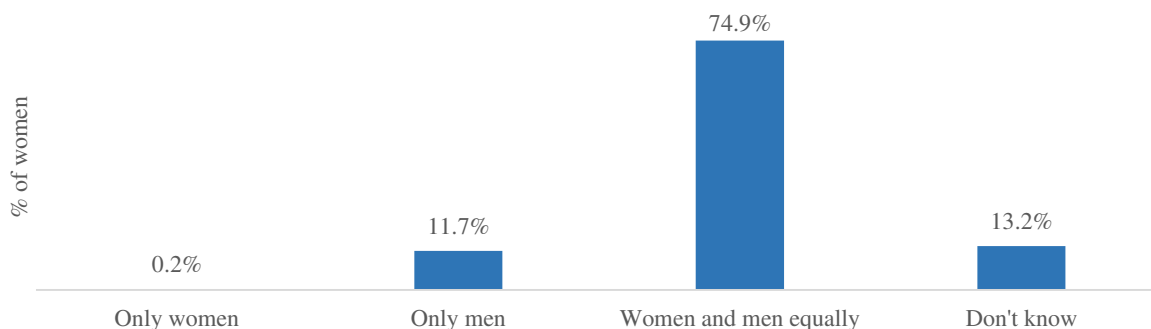
Linking Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles to Women's Economic Engagement the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

**Hypothesis 3. Women prone to gender equality have higher economic engagement compared to women resistant to gender equity values.**

**Hypothesis is confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant weak negative correlation between women's Attitude Towards Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles and Women's Economic Engagement,  $r(780) = -0.148$ ,  $p < 0.000$ .

**Though most women are aware of their inheritance rights, they also support the idea that women should voluntarily drop their rights in favor of male household members.** This kind of gender belief hinders women's access to resources (housing, land, etc.) and exercising of their rights. According to the Figure 60, only 74.9% of women are aware that both women and men have equal inheritance rights in the family, 11.7% of women believe that only men have inheritance rights, while 13.2% had difficulty answering this question.

**Figure 60. Who has the right to inheritance in the family according to surveyed women?**



Note: n=780;

Formulated question: "In your opinion who in the family has the right to inheritance?"

To reveal the associations between awareness of inheritance rights and women's economic engagement, the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

---

**Hypothesis 4. Women with higher economic engagement are more aware of their inheritance rights compared to those with lower economic engagement.**

**Hypothesis is not confirmed:** As non-parametric Mann-Whitney test shows, no statistically significant associations have been revealed between women's economic engagement and their awareness of inheritance rights,  $p=0.033$ .

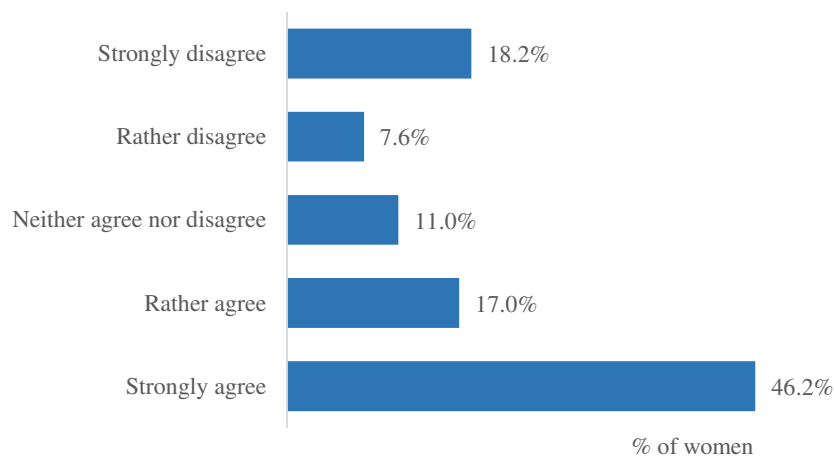
---

While 74.9% of women are aware that both women and men have equal inheritance rights, most women (63.2%, "strongly agree" and "rather agree" options summarized) support the idea that in a family, a daughter should give up her inheritance right to her brother. Only 18.2% of women strongly disagree with this idea, 7.6% somewhat disagree and 11.0% are neutral (Figure 61). The correlation analysis of this variable<sup>133</sup> and the WEE score (Pearson Correlation,  $p>0.05$ ) did not reveal any significant associations.

---

<sup>133</sup> Question was formulated as "to what extent do you agree with the following idea: in a family, a daughter should give up her right to inherit the land or house to her brother?" and measured as a 5-point Likert-scale, where 1 means "strongly disagree" and 5 means "strongly agree".

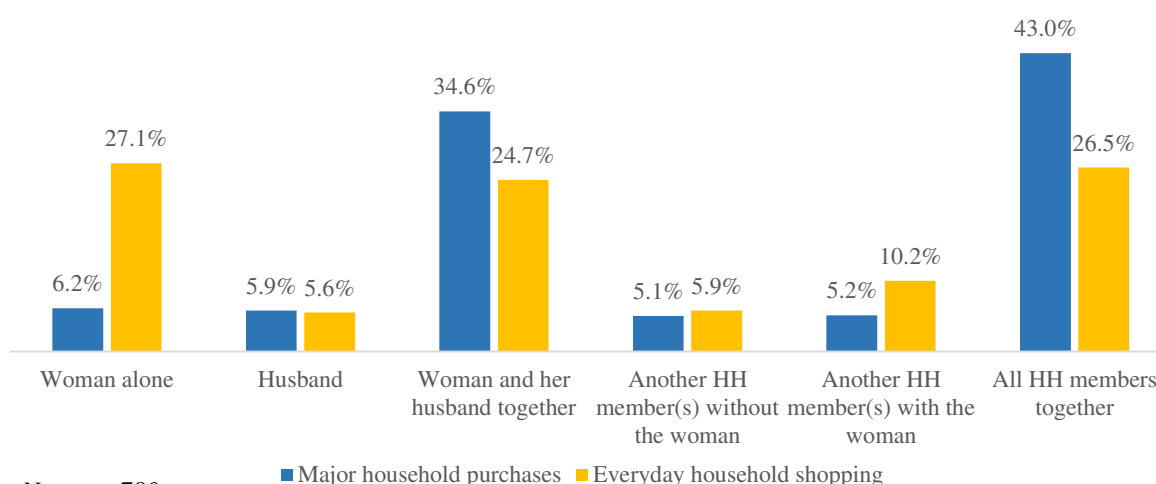
**Figure 61. To what extent do you agree with the following idea: in a family, a daughter should give up her right to inherit the land or house to her brother?**



Note: n=761

Although the analysis of FGDs<sup>134</sup> shows that women have certain agency in matters related to food, children's education, etc., the survey revealed that actually women have little agency in those matters including in agricultural-related decisions. The involvement of women in HH decision-making has been assessed through women's participation in decision-making regarding major household purchases and everyday household shopping. As Figure 62 demonstrates, decisions on major HH purchases are mostly made by spouses or all HH members together (34.6% and 43.0%, respectively). Women are primarily involved in everyday household shopping (27.1%), while again, those decisions are made by spouses or all HH members (24.7% and 26.5%, respectively). Women are excluded from HH decision-making regarding major household purchases for 11.0% of the cases and for everyday shopping for 11.5% of the cases.

**Figure 62. Decision makers by the type of purchases**



Note: n=780

<sup>134</sup> Focus-group discussion participants, agripreneurs, Pokr Vedi

**Women with higher economic engagement are more involved in HH decision-making compared with women with lower economic engagement.** This is revealed by the index for the Involvement in HH Decision-Making<sup>135</sup>. The final score for the Involvement in HH Decision-Making is 2.1 (SD=0.82) on a scale of 0-4 means that overall women are consulted in decision-making regarding major household purchases and everyday household shopping.

Linking women's economic engagement and involvement in household decision-making, the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

**Hypothesis 5. Women with higher economic engagement are more involved in HH decision-making processes compared to women with lower economic engagement.**

**Hypothesis is confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant weak positive correlation between women's involvement in HH decision-making and Women's Economic Engagement,  $r(780)=0.14$ ,  $p<0.000$ .

## 6.2 Economic Engagement and Gender Roles and Time Use among Women Living in Rural Settlements of Armenia

The general perception is that women overburdened with duties and performing unpaid household work have fewer opportunities to be economically active. In order to test this hypothesis, the research team applied the Perceived Division of Household Labor Scale<sup>136</sup> and looked into the division of household labor in Armenia's rural areas and whether women perform the household work alone or they receive support from their spouses or other household members.

**As the analysis shows, there is a clear tendency to divide household work between male and female family members.** For most of the cases, repairing things around the flat is performed by HH male members (70% of the cases), at the same time preparation of the evening meal (97% of the cases), cleaning of the flat (97% of the cases) and washing and ironing the clothes (100% of the cases) are performed by HH female members, indicating a severe gender-stereotypes distinction of roles and responsibilities within the households. The only exception is shopping for food, which is performed either by the respondent alone (17% of the cases), by spouses (43% of the cases), or by other household members.

**Table 8. Who mainly does the following in your household?**

| HH duties                       | Me alone | Me and my husband together | My husband | Another female HH member | Another male HH member | Me and other HH female member | Other |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| Shop for food                   | 17%      | 43%                        | 7%         | 4%                       | 8%                     | 12%                           | 10%   |
| Preparation of the evening meal | 62%      | 2%                         | 0%         | 7%                       | 0%                     | 28%                           | 1%    |

<sup>135</sup> Reference to methodology: [Involvement in HH Decision-Making](#)

<sup>136</sup> More details on the scale can be found in the Methodology section.

|                                  |     |     |     |    |     |     |    |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|----|
| Repairing things around the flat | 5%  | 18% | 46% | 1% | 24% | 1%  | 5% |
| Cleaning of the flat             | 63% | 3%  | 0%  | 6% | 0%  | 28% | 1% |
| Washing and ironing the clothes  | 70% | 0%  | 0%  | 6% | 0%  | 24% | 0% |

In settlements with poor infrastructure, the situation of women might be more complicated. When there is no centralized water supply, women are also responsible for fetching water, which adds an extra burden to their workload, particularly, the survey data shows that only 73.9% of women living in rural areas have access to drinking water with 12 hours and more supply. At the same time, the survey revealed that rural households are well equipped with automatic washing machines (only 4.0% of HHs do not have functioning washing machines).

**Women living in nuclear<sup>137</sup> families are more overburdened with household duties than women from large families; as well as middle-aged women are more overburdened than younger and older women.** The mean value of Perceived Division of Household Labor score<sup>138</sup> for the women living in rural settlements of Armenia equals 0.78 indicating that women receive support from HH members in performing household works<sup>139</sup>. As Table 9 shows, women living in large families are less overburdened with HH chores (mean=0.90, SD=0.67) compared to women living in nuclear families (mean=0.67, SD=0.40, Mann-Whitney U test,  $p<0.00$ ). The other confounding factor that shows a significant difference for this variable is the age groups of the respondents. Namely, the Perceived Division of Household Labor score is lower for middle-aged women aged 36 to 50 (mean=0.67, SD=0.35) compared to younger (mean=0.84, SD=0.37) and older women (mean=0.83, SD=0.50), meaning that middle-aged women are relatively more overburdened with household works.

**Table 9. Perceived Division of Household Labor Scale per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors                         | N   | Mean (out of maximum 2) <sup>140</sup> | SD   | Significance test              |
|---------------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Perceived Division of Household Labor Scale | 780 | 0.78                                   | 0.41 | N/A                            |
| Family type                                 |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Nuclear                                     | 389 | 0.67                                   | 0.40 | Mann-Whitney U test, p<0.000   |
| Large                                       | 391 | 0.90                                   | 0.38 |                                |
| Age groups                                  |     |                                        |      |                                |
| From 21 to 35                               | 311 | 0.84                                   | 0.37 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| From 36 to 50                               | 245 | 0.67                                   | 0.35 |                                |
| From 51 to 63                               | 224 | 0.83                                   | 0.50 |                                |

To study the interrelation between women economic engagement and division of household labor, the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

<sup>137</sup> A group of people who are united by ties of partnership and parenthood and consisting of a pair of adults and their socially recognized children, <https://rb.gy/2vtjq>

<sup>138</sup> Reference to methodology: **Perceived Division of Household Labor**

<sup>139</sup> The final score ranges from 0 to 2, where “0” means that women cover the HH work alone, “1” indicates that women receive support and “2” indicates that other HH members cover the works.

<sup>140</sup> The final score ranges from 0 to 2, where “0” means that women cover the HH work alone, “1” indicates that women receive support and “2” indicates that other HH members cover the works.

**Hypothesis 6. There is a positive correlation between women's economic engagement and perceived division of household labor.**

**Hypothesis is not confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis did not reveal any statistically significant correlation between the Women Economic Engagement Scale and Perceived Division of Household Labor Scale,  $p > 0.05$ .

**On average women spend 4.2 hours daily on household chores.** Additionally, every day women spent on average 2.6 hours on unpaid agriculture work (median = 2.00, SD = 2.51). This means that overall women in rural areas spend 6.78 hours on household chores and unpaid agricultural work (median=6, SD=3.20) ( Table 10).

**Table 10. Average daily hours spent on HH chores and on unpaid agricultural work (n=780)**

| Household chores and agricultural work                                           | Mean        | Median      | SD          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| On average daily hours spend on household chores that does not include farm work | 4.21        | 4.00        | 2.24        |
| On average daily hours spend on unpaid agricultural work within the household    | 2.60        | 2.00        | 2.51        |
| <b>Total unpaid HH work (household chores and agricultural work)</b>             | <b>6.78</b> | <b>6.00</b> | <b>3.20</b> |

**Women who have children spend more time doing unpaid household work compared to women who do not have children. Differences are observed also across different regions: women who live in the country's central regions spend more time doing unpaid household work than women in other areas.** Namely, women who have children spend on average 4.27 hours daily on household chores, while women who do not have children (under the age of 18) spend 3.31 hours on similar activities. Also, women in central regions spend more time on HH chores (mean=5.00, SD=2.5) compared to women living in northern (mean=3.95, SD=2.07) and southern regions (mean=4.15, SD=2.40) ( Table 11).

**Table 11. Average daily hours spent on household chores that do not include farm work per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors    | N   | Mean (out of maximum 24) | SD   | Significance test             |
|------------------------|-----|--------------------------|------|-------------------------------|
| Parental status        |     |                          |      |                               |
| Has children           | 719 | 4.27                     | 2.24 | Mann-Whitney U test, p<0.000  |
| Does not have children | 55  | 3.31                     | 2.02 |                               |
| Region                 |     |                          |      |                               |
| Northern               | 543 | 3.95                     | 2.07 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.00 |
| Central                | 178 | 5.00                     | 2.50 |                               |
| Southern               | 53  | 4.15                     | 2.40 |                               |

**Women who do not have children, have high and postgraduate education or are from middle-income families spend less time on unpaid agricultural work than women**

**from the other groups.** Namely, on average, women with higher and postgraduate education spend 1.50 hours on unpaid agricultural work, while the average time spent by women with secondary and vocational education is 2.98 and 2.53 hours respectively. Additionally, women in middle-income families (mean=2.32, SD=2.43) spend less time on unpaid agricultural work compared to women from low (mean=2.93, SD=2.62) and upper-income groups (mean=2.64, SD=2.33). Finally, similar to unpaid HH work, women who have children spend more time doing unpaid agricultural work (mean=2.71, SD=2.50) compared to women who do not have children (mean=1.13, SD=2.23) ( Table 12).

**Table 12. Average daily hours spent on unpaid agricultural work within the household per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors             | N   | Mean (out of maximum 24) | SD   | Significance test              |
|---------------------------------|-----|--------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Parental status                 |     |                          |      |                                |
| Has children                    | 714 | 2.71                     | 2.50 | Mann-Whitney U test, p<0.000   |
| Does not have children          | 56  | 1.13                     | 2.23 |                                |
| Education                       |     |                          |      |                                |
| Basic and secondary             | 418 | 2.98                     | 2.54 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| Vocational                      | 221 | 2.53                     | 2.56 |                                |
| High and postgraduate           | 131 | 1.50                     | 1.94 |                                |
| Economic status of the families |     |                          |      |                                |
| Low                             | 313 | 2.93                     | 2.62 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p=0.001 |
| Middle                          | 376 | 2.32                     | 2.43 |                                |
| Upper                           | 75  | 2.64                     | 2.33 |                                |

The study assumes that women who are overburdened with HH unpaid work have less time to be economically active, accordingly the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

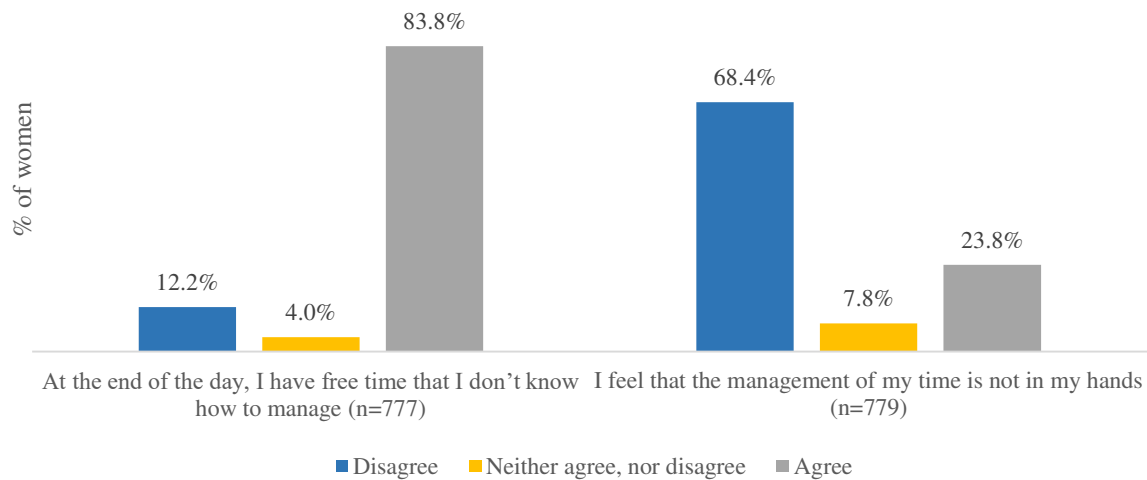
**Hypothesis 7. Women overburdened with HH unpaid work (measured as the number of hours daily spent on household chores that do not include farm work) are less inclined to have high economic engagement compared to women free of HH unpaid work.**

**Hypothesis is not confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis did not reveal any statistically significant correlation between the Women Economic Engagement Scale and the number of hours daily spent on household chores that do not include farm work, p>0.05.

**Worth mentioning that the survey data contradicts insights from FGDs and IDIs when interviewees highlighted “lack of time” and “maintaining a work-life balance” as major barriers to women's economic activity.**

**The majority of women living in rural areas has free time that they do not know how to manage.** In terms of time management, the majority of women (68.4%) feel that they have control over their time while 83.8% reported that they have free time that they don't know how to manage, as demonstrated in Figure 63.

**Figure 63. Management of free time and control over time among women living in rural areas in Armenia**



As Table 13 shows, in the southern regions of the country, fewer women feel they have free time that they don't know how to manage (80.6%, SD=1.19) than in the northern (84.2%, SD=1.20) and central (83.4%, SD=1.26) regions. Similarly, more women feel they have less control over their time (41.9%, SD=1.66), compared to women living in northern (22.5%, SD=1.48) or central (22.6%, 1.58) regions.

**Table 13. Time management and control over time per confounding factors**

|                                                                             | Region   | N   | % of women from the given region | SD   | Significance test              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----|----------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Share of women who have free time that they don't know how to manage</b> | Northern | 542 | 84.2                             | 1.20 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.00  |
|                                                                             | Central  | 181 | 83.4                             | 1.26 |                                |
|                                                                             | Southern | 54  | 80.6                             | 1.19 |                                |
| <b>Share of women who feel that they don't have control over their time</b> | Northern | 545 | 22.5                             | 1.48 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p=0.001 |
|                                                                             | Central  | 181 | 22.6                             | 1.58 |                                |
|                                                                             | Southern | 53  | 41.9                             | 1.66 |                                |

The study assumed that women who have more control over their time are more economically active, accordingly, the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

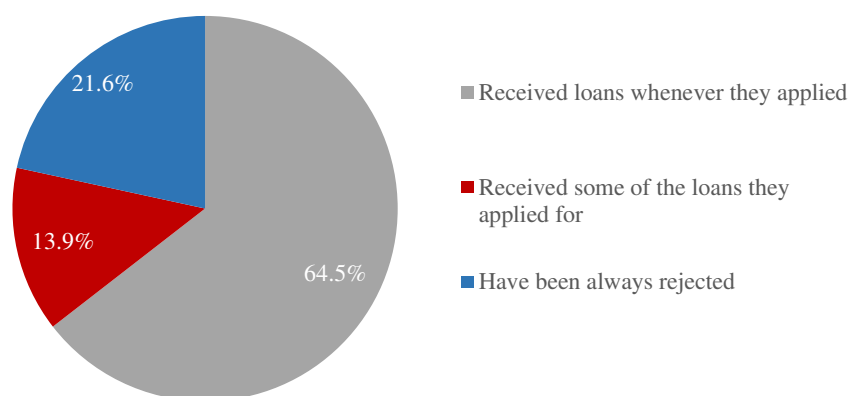
**Hypothesis 8. Women free to use their time as they want are more inclined to have high economic engagement compared to women who are not.**

**Hypothesis is not confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis did not reveal any statistically significant correlation between the Women Economic Engagement Scale and women's perception of control over their time, p>0.05.

### 6.3 Economic Engagement and Access to Assets and Finance

In Armenia, women living in rural areas have limited experience applying for and receiving agricultural and business loans due to a lack of awareness about available funding or women's certain predispositions. As Figure 64 shows, only 21.1% of women living in rural areas have applied for agricultural or business loans to banks or credit organizations. This share is also low among women who are currently engaged in entrepreneurial activities (n=127), particularly since only 27.2% of active entrepreneurs have ever applied for these types of loans. It is worth mentioning that 21.6% of women who have applied for agricultural, or business loans have been always rejected. The main reasons for rejection are bad credit history (36.1% of the cases), insufficient income or collateral (33.5%), absence of credit history, or being overburdened with credits (27.4%)<sup>141</sup>.

**Figure 64. The status of business and agricultural loan applications of women living in rural areas in Armenia**



Note: n=165

In contrast to quantitative data demonstrating that a low share of active women entrepreneurs applies for business and agricultural loans, the in-depth-interviews with the representatives of agri-lending focused financial institutions show that women entrepreneurs tend to apply to banks, credit organizations for loans more or equal to men<sup>142</sup>. This however may be misleading since very often the loans are received in woman's names, especially if it is earmarked for women business owners, while the business eventually is run by men of the household, usually the husband<sup>143144</sup>. However, the lack of disaggregated data does not allow to have clear comparisons and further dive into the phenomenon.

Land<sup>145</sup> is an important agripreneurial asset and/or a collateral and lack of access to it by women is another hindering factor for women's entrepreneurship, especially in rural areas<sup>146</sup>.

<sup>141</sup> The number of observations (n=36) is not sufficient for making a meaningful conclusion.

<sup>142</sup> In-depth Interview, Finca UCO, Armavir branch

<sup>143</sup> USAID, "USAID/Armenia: Gender Analysis Report", 2019 <https://bit.ly/3SZa9Nd>

<sup>144</sup> In-depth Interview, Card Agrocredit

<sup>145</sup> As access to assets, such as land, house or productive assets have been involved in the Women Economic Engagement Scale, the correlation analysis between WEE and access to those assets has not been performed (see Subchapter 5.2)

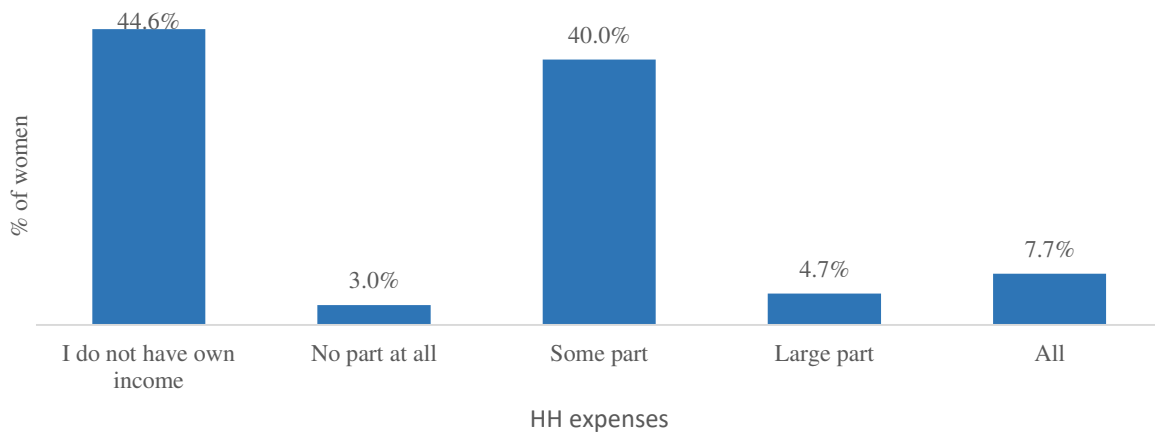
<sup>146</sup> Focus-group Discussions - Azatan

According to survey data, only 14.1% of women living in rural areas own land, house, or any productive asset. Reasons that end with women having less access to land might be:

- during the **privatization** starting in the 1990s the lands were allocated to households, the head of household namely, the men,
- **marriage**: following a marriage the daughters of the family leave to join the husband's household, and within the existing tradition they do not demand their share of property from the paternal household neither they ask for their share in husband's family<sup>147</sup>,
- **inheritance**: the land is usually inherited by the sons in the family, again considering that the daughters are to be leaving at some point in time.

**Most of the women either contribute to only a small part of household expenses or don't have their own income to cover household expenses at all<sup>148</sup>.** The share of women who cover all family expenses or a large part of it is 12.4% (7.7% and 4.7% respectively), while 40% of women cover a small part of household expenses and 44.6% do not have their own income to have any contribution at all, as demonstrated in Figure 65.

**Figure 65. Women's contribution to household expenses**



Note: n=780

Formulated question: "What share of your total household expenses do you cover with your own income?"

**Women from female-headed HHs, women aged 36 to 50 or with higher education, contribute more to household expenses than women from other groups.** Particularly, women from female-headed HHs contribute more to family finances (mean=2.66, SD=1.51) than those from male-headed HHs (mean=2.16, SD=1.19). Women aged from 21 to 35 have a smaller contribution (mean=1.99, SD=1.11) compared to women aged from 36 to 50 (mean=2.51, SD=1.31) and women aged from 51 to 63 (mean=2.42, SD=1.41). Finally, contribution to family support is positively associated with women's educational background. Namely, women with higher and postgraduate education (mean=2.53, SD=1.09) and vocational education (mean=2.33, SD=1.31) have more contribution to HH finances compared to women with basic and secondary education (mean=2.17, SD=1.32).

<sup>147</sup> Focus-Group Discussion - Azatan

<sup>148</sup> Contribution to family support (HH expenses) measured whether the women said they provided all, most, half, or some of her family's support, as opposed to very little or none. Source of variable: Schuler, SR, SM Hashemi, and AP Riley. "The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh's fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use." World Development, 25(4): 563–75, 1997

**Table 14. Contribution to family support per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors          | N   | Mean (out of maximum 5) <sup>149</sup> | SD   | Significance test              |
|------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Sex of the Head of Household |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Female                       | 164 | 2.66                                   | 1.51 | Mann-Whitney U test, p=0.006   |
| Male                         | 588 | 2.16                                   | 1.19 |                                |
| Age groups                   |     |                                        |      |                                |
| From 21 to 35                | 311 | 1.99                                   | 1.11 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| From 36 to 50                | 245 | 2.51                                   | 1.31 |                                |
| From 51 to 63                | 224 | 2.42                                   | 1.41 |                                |
| Education                    |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Basic and secondary          | 421 | 2.17                                   | 1.32 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p=0.004 |
| Vocational                   | 224 | 2.33                                   | 1.31 |                                |
| High and postgraduate        | 135 | 2.53                                   | 1.09 |                                |

Linking women's contribution to family support with the women's economic engagement index, the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

**Hypothesis 9. Women's contribution to family support is positively correlated with the women's economic engagement index.**

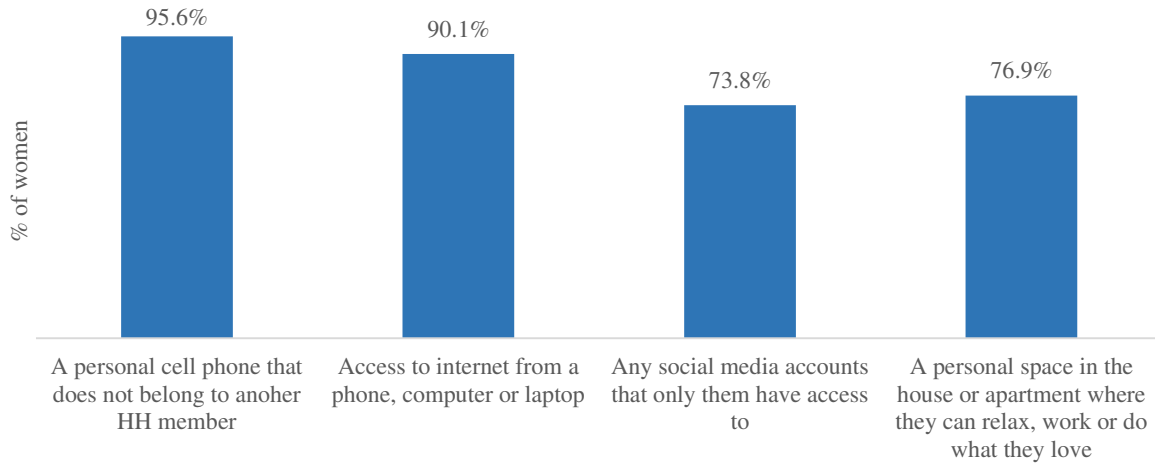
**Hypothesis is confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant strong positive correlation between the Women Economic Engagement Scale and contribution to family support,  $r(780) = 0.57$ ,  $p < 0.00$ .

An important component of women's access to assets, services, and information is the access to personal items, physical and virtual space. The majority of women in rural settlements in Armenia have personal cell phones, access to the internet, and personal space in their houses. Particularly, nearly all women (95.6%) have personal cell phones that do not belong to another HH member, 90.1% of women have access to the internet from a phone, computer, and laptop. Less number of women have any social media account (73.8%) with unique access. Regarding physical space, 76.9% of women in rural settlements have a personal

<sup>149</sup> Contribution to family support (HH expenses) has been measured through a scale where "0" means that women do not have any income and/or do not contribute to family support at all, "5" means they provide all family's support.

space in their house or apartment where they can relax, work or do what they love ( Figure 66).

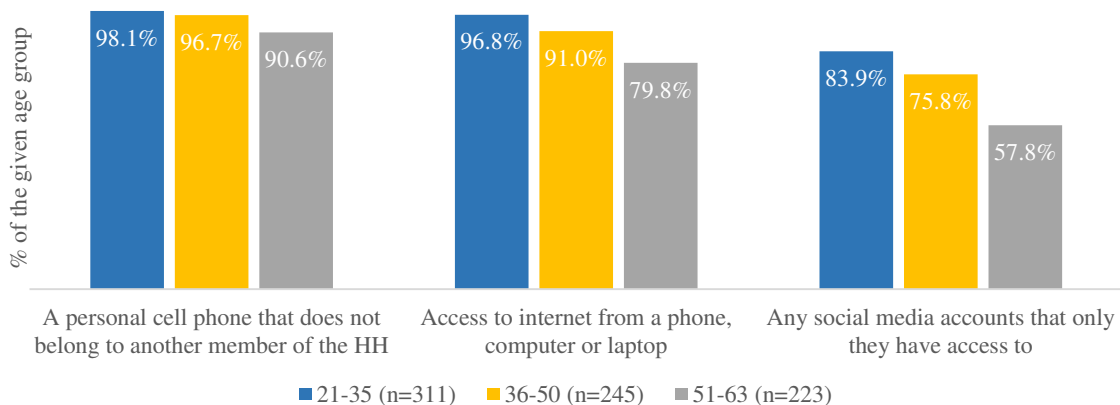
**Figure 66. Access of women in rural settlements to personal items, physical and virtual space**



Note: n=780

**Age, education, and economic situation of families are significant predetermining factors for women's access to the internet, private social media accounts, and personal space in the household.** As expected, access to personal items, the internet, social media, and personal space is dependent on certain confounding factors. Namely, there is a clear association between access to a phone, the internet, and social media with women's age: younger women enjoy more access to the abovementioned than older women do. For instance, 79.8% of women aged 51 to 63 have access to the Internet versus 96.8% of women aged 21 to 35 ( Figure 67).

**Figure 67. Access to items and personal space by age group**

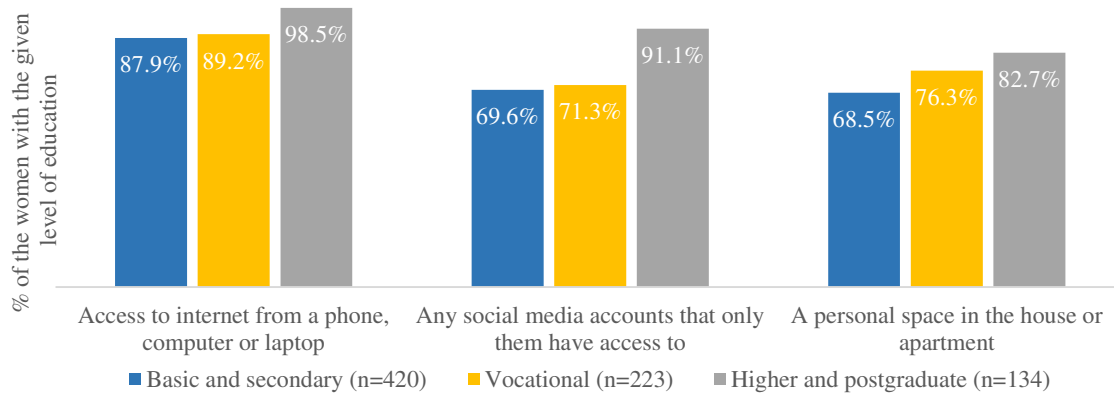


Note: A personal cell phone that does not belong to another member of the HH (Chi-square=18.0, df=2,  $p<0.00$ ); Access to internet from a phone, computer or laptop (Chi-square=42.3, df=2,  $p<0.00$ ); Any social media accounts that only they have access to (Chi-square=46.5, df=2,  $p<0.00$ ).

**Education is another significant factor in predefining women's access to the internet, social media, and personal space.** Namely, more women with higher and postgraduate education enjoy access to the Internet (98.5%) compared with women who have basic and secondary or vocational education (87.9% and 89.2% respectively). Regarding access

to social media, 91.1% of women with higher and postgraduate education have access to social media, while the share for women with basic and secondary or vocational education is respectively 69.6% and 71.3%. Similarly, more women with high and postgraduate education have their personal space in the house or apartment (82.7%), than women with vocational education (76.3%) and women with basic and secondary education (68.5%) ( Figure 68).

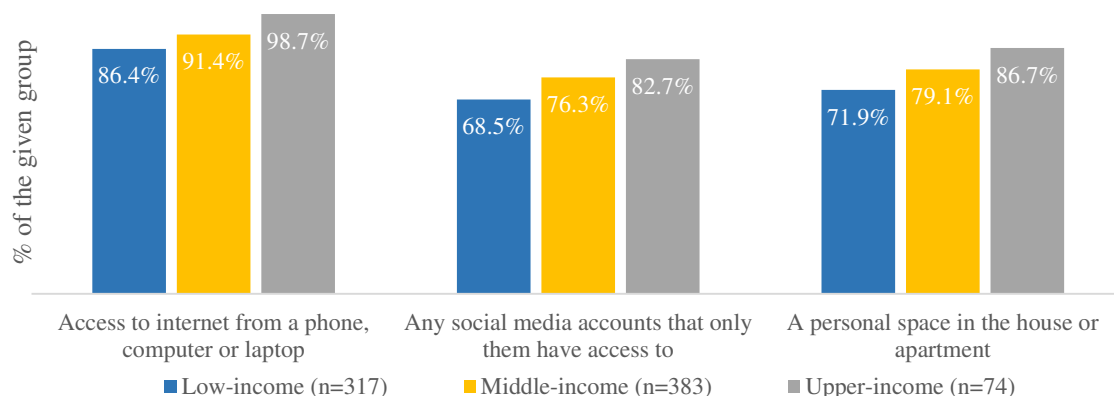
**Figure 68. Access to items and personal space per education**



*Note: Access to internet from a phone, computer or laptop (Chi-square=13.0, df=2, p=0.001 ); Any social media accounts that only they have access to (Chi-square=25.5, df=2, p=0.001 ); A personal space in the house or apartment (Chi-square=17.7, df=2, p<0.00 ).*

**Economic status of the family is another important factor predetermining women's access to physical and virtual space.** Particularly, as Figure 69 shows, more women from upper- and middle-income families enjoy access to the Internet (98.7% and 91.4%) compared with women in low-income families (87.9%). Regarding access to social media, if 82.7% of women from upper-income families have their own social media accounts, in the case of women from low-income families the share is 68.5%. Similarly, more women from upper-income (86.7%) and middle-income HHs (79.1%) have their personal space in the house or apartment, than women from low-income HHs (71.9%).

**Figure 69. Access to items and personal space per economic status of the families**



*Note: Access to internet from a phone, computer or laptop (Chi-square=8.9, df=2, p<0.000 ); Any social media accounts that only they have access to (Chi-square=11.7, df=2, p=0.01 ); A personal space in the house or apartment (Chi-square=9.4, df=2, p=0.009 ).*

**Women with access to private social media accounts and personal space at the house or apartment demonstrated higher economic engagement than women who do not enjoy such access.** As demonstrated in Table 15, the mean comparison test for access to a phone, the internet, virtual and personal space, and women's economic engagement showed significant differences in access to social media and personal space.

**Table 15. Access to virtual and physical space and women's economic engagement index**

|                                                                                                   | Yes                  | No                   | Significance test             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Any social media accounts that only they have access to</b>                                    | Mean=1.83<br>SD=1.72 | Mean=1.36<br>SD=1.60 | Mann-Whitney U test, $p<0.00$ |
| <b>A personal space in the house or apartment where they can relax, work or do what they love</b> | Mean=1.86<br>SD=1.74 | Mean=1.18<br>SD=1.45 | Mann-Whitney U test, $p<0.00$ |

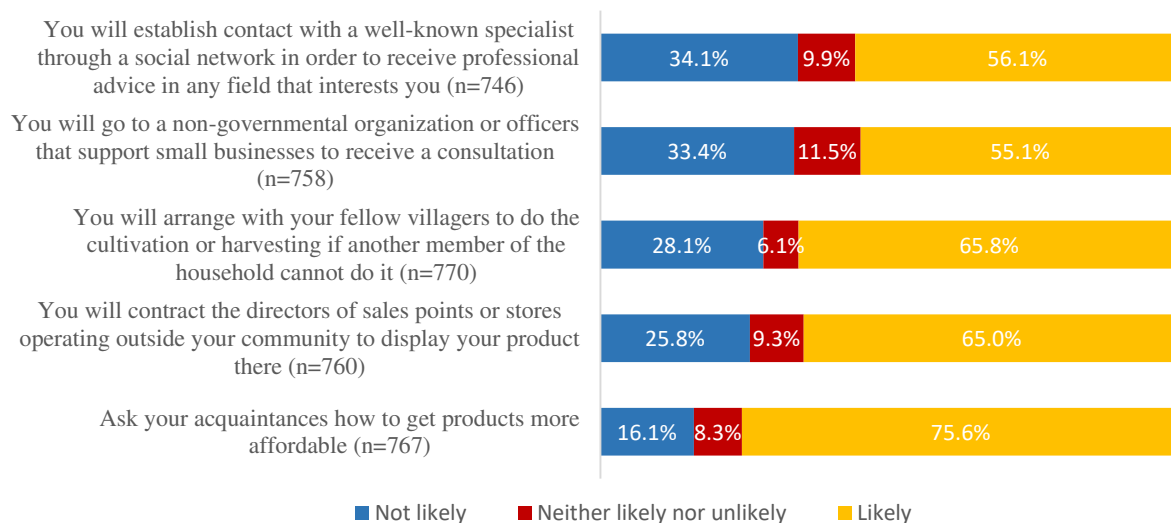
Women who have private access to social media accounts (mean=1.83, SD=1.72) or have access to personal space in their house or apartment (mean=1.86, SD=1.74) demonstrated a higher level of economic engagement compared to women who do not have such access (mean=1.36, SD=1.60 for private access to social media accounts and mean=1.18, SD=1.45 for access to personal space).

## 6.4 Economic Engagement and Social Interaction and Networking Among Women Living in Rural Settlements in Armenia

Building business links within the value chains as an essential predetermining factor for successful entrepreneurial activity is primarily associated with women's social interaction capacities, willingness and access to social, and professional networks. As discussed in exploratory research, women face difficulties accessing formal and informal social networks, resulting in their limited ability to advance their economic status.

More than half of women are open to applying for support from acquaintances, fellow villagers, NGOs, other entrepreneurs, or specialists regarding entrepreneurial activities in the agriculture sector. Moreover, women are more likely to apply to immediate social contacts for help and are less comfortable applying to formal institutions, such as NGOs, or referent groups, such as well-known specialists. Particularly, the descriptive analysis of all five individual variables shows that women are more prone to ask their acquaintances how to get more affordable products (75.6% likely to ask), while in contrast, women are less likely to establish contacts with a well-known specialist through a social network (56.1% likely to establish contact). As the responses demonstrate, the likelihood to contact people or institutions is linked to their perception of social distance. Women feel less comfortable applying for help to formal institutions, such as NGOs, or referent groups, such as well-known specialists than with their acquaintances, directors of sales points, or their fellow villages ( Figure 70).

**Figure 70. How likely is it that women will do the following?**



Women from female-headed HHs, young women aged 21 to 35, and women with higher and postgraduate education are more open to social interaction compared to women from other groups, as revealed by the Composite Openness to Social Interaction Index (COSII)<sup>150</sup>. Overall, the value of COSII was found to be 3.61, which means that women are “rather likely” to engage in social interactions (SD=1.19). As Table 16 shows women from women-headed HHs are more open to social interaction (mean=3.81 out of max 5, SD=1.16) than women from male-headed HHs (mean=3.56, SD=1.20). Younger and middle-

<sup>150</sup> Reference to methodology: [Openness towards Social Interaction](#)

aged women are also more open to interaction (mean=3.85, SD=1.01 and mean=3.71, SD=1.22, respectively) compared to older women (mean=3.17, SD=1.28). Finally, disaggregation per education shows that women with higher and postgraduate education (mean=4.02, SD=0.97) demonstrate higher openness to interaction compared to women with vocational (mean=3.44, SD=1.21) and basic and secondary education (mean=3.57, SD=1.22)

**Table 16. Openness to Social Interaction per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors                  | N   | Mean (out of maximum 5) <sup>151</sup> | SD   | Significance test              |
|--------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Openness to Social Interaction Index | 780 | 3.61                                   | 1.19 | N/A                            |
| Sex of the Head of Household         |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Female                               | 164 | 3.81                                   | 1.16 | Mann-Whitney U test, p=0.009   |
| Male                                 | 588 | 3.56                                   | 1.20 |                                |
| Age groups                           |     |                                        |      |                                |
| From 21 to 35                        | 311 | 3.85                                   | 1.01 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| From 36 to 50                        | 245 | 3.71                                   | 1.22 |                                |
| From 51 to 63                        | 224 | 3.17                                   | 1.28 |                                |
| Education                            |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Basic and secondary                  | 421 | 3.57                                   | 1.22 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| Vocational                           | 224 | 3.44                                   | 1.21 |                                |
| High and postgraduate                | 135 | 4.02                                   | 0.97 |                                |

Based on exploratory research, a research hypothesis linking women's openness to social interaction to their economic engagement has been formulated and tested, as follows:

**Hypothesis 10. Women who are more open to social interaction have higher economic engagement compared to women with limited social interaction.**

**Hypothesis is confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant weak correlation between WEE Index and openness towards social interaction index  $r(780) = 0.18, p < 0.00$ .

**Women traditionally lack access to predominantly male, informal socio-economic networks, which has limited their ability to advance their economic status.** According to focus group discussions, there is a lack of opportunities for women to get into circles and processes where information is generated and shared, hence they face limitations<sup>152</sup> for building business links within the value chains. A very typical example is the access to agricultural heavy machinery such as tractors or combines, which very often is in limited numbers and the processes of accessing them are often semi-official, and a result of negotiations and informal links. Here, a woman without efficient links would face difficulties to enter the queue and

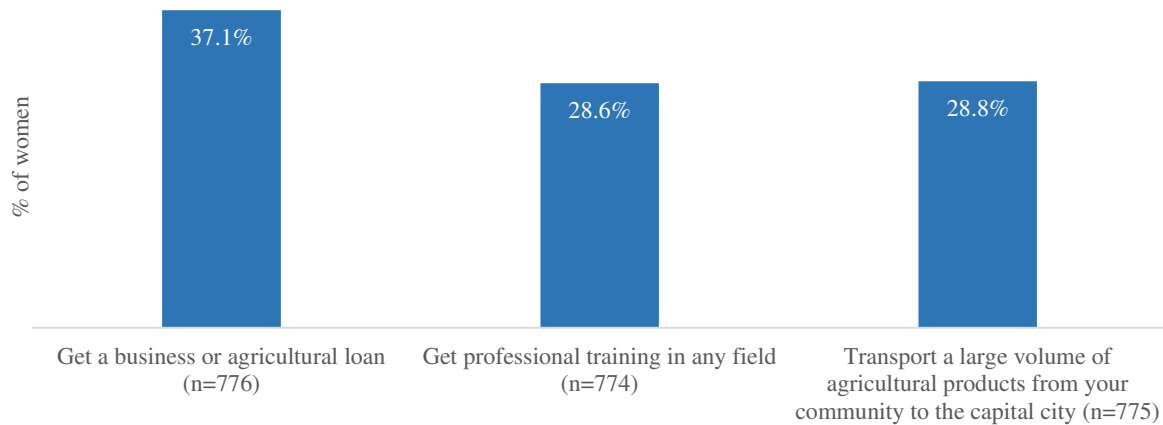
<sup>151</sup> Openness to Social Interaction Index is a variable ranging from 1 to 5, where "1" means that women are "not open to social interaction at all", and "5" means they are "very open".

<sup>152</sup> Focus-group Discussion - Azatan

receiving her fair share of the equipment<sup>153</sup>. The same example would be in the case of irrigation and its management in communities where water is distributed with limited hours and portions.

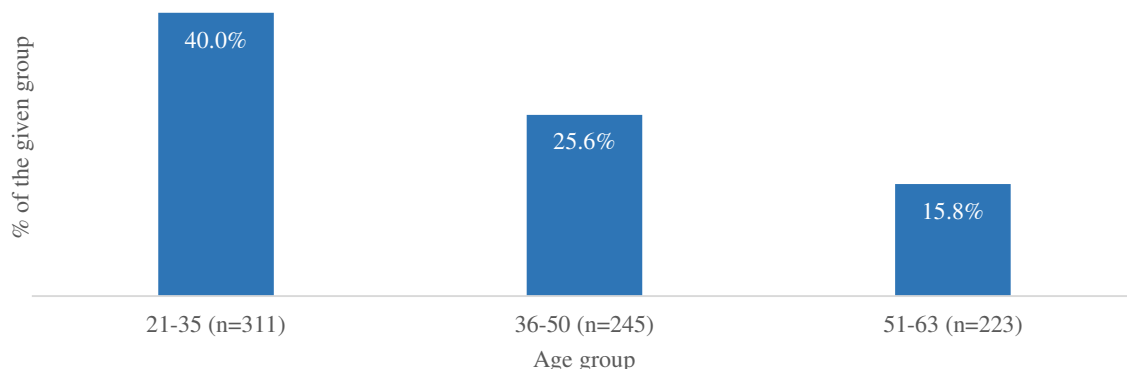
Less than 40% of women have contacts they can apply to for help, getting business or agricultural loans, and less than 30% have access to contacts they can use if they need professional training (28.6%) or to transport a large volume of agricultural products to the capital city (28.8%) ( Figure 71).

**Figure 71. Women who have acquaintances or organizations they can turn to personally in case they need help or have problems**



The analysis of the individual variables per confounding factors reveals that age, education, economic status, and family type are significant predefining factors for network access. Particularly, as Figure 72 shows, younger women have larger access to network for getting professional training in any field (40.0%) compared to middle-aged women (25.6%) and older women (15.8%) .

**Figure 72. Access to network for getting professional training in any field by women's age group**

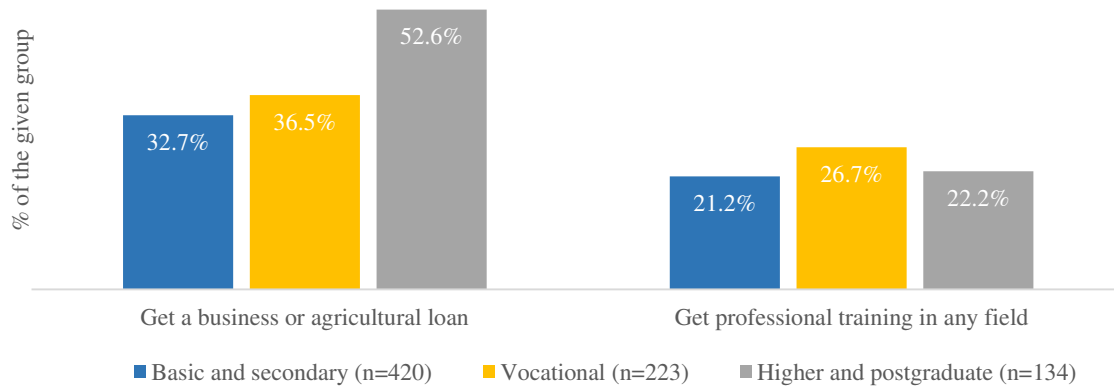


Note: Chi-square=38.7, df=2,  $p < 0.00$

<sup>153</sup> In rural areas, more than 95 percent of car owners, and 100 percent of agricultural machinery operators in the marzes, are men (ACDI/VOCA, 2011).

Similarly, women with a high and postgraduate education have more access to a network to get a business or agricultural loan (52.6%) or to get training in any field (55.2%) compared to women with vocational (36.5% and 26.7%, respectively) and basic and secondary (32.7% and 21.2%, respectively) educational backgrounds (Figure 73).

**Figure 73. Access to networks for solving the following problems by women's level of education**

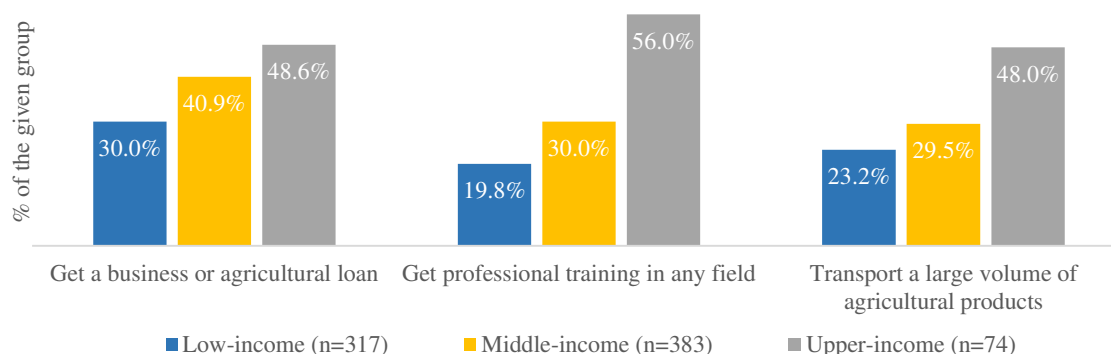


*Note: Get a business or agricultural loan (Chi-square=17.4, df=2,  $p < 0.00$ ); Get professional training in any field (Chi-square=58.1, df=2,  $p < 0.00$ ).*

Women's access to networks is also predefined by the economic status of the families<sup>154</sup>. Namely, as Figure 74 shows, women from upper-income group HHs enjoy greater access to the network to get business or agricultural loans (48.6%), professional training in any field (56.0%) or to transport a large volume of agricultural products (48.0%) compared with women from lower or middle-income groups. Women from low-income groups less frequently mentioned that they have a network to rely on to get professional training in any field (19.8%).

<sup>154</sup> Reference to methodology: [Access to Networks](#)

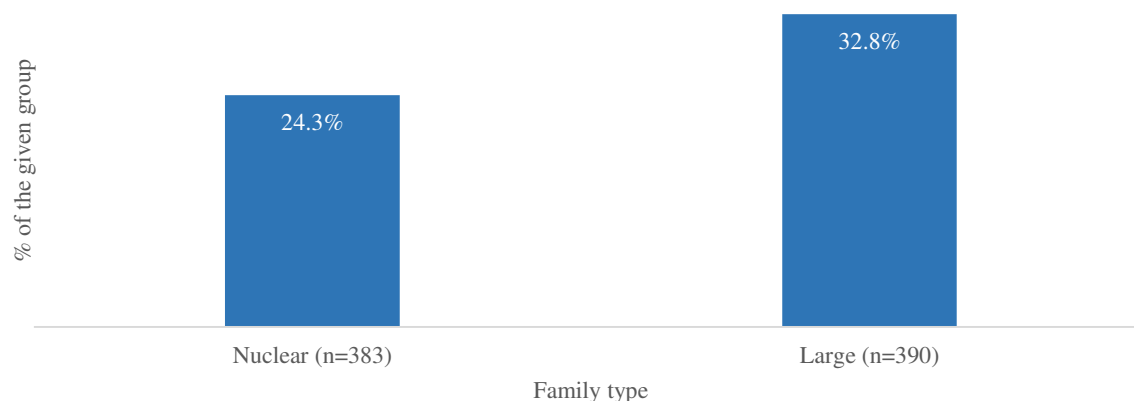
**Figure 74. Access to networks by the HH economic status in order to solve the following problems**



*Note: Get a business or agricultural loan (Chi-square=13.5, df=2,  $p<0.00$ ); Get professional training in any field (Chi-square=39.9, df=2,  $p<0.00$ ); Transport a large volume of agricultural products (Chi-square=18.5, df=2,  $p<0.00$ ).*

**Type of the family (nuclear or large) is also a predefining factor for women's access to the network.** Namely, as demonstrated in Figure 75, women from large families have greater access to networks when they want to get professional training (32.8%) compared with women from nuclear families (24.3%).

**Figure 75. Access to networks for getting professional training in any field by type of the family**



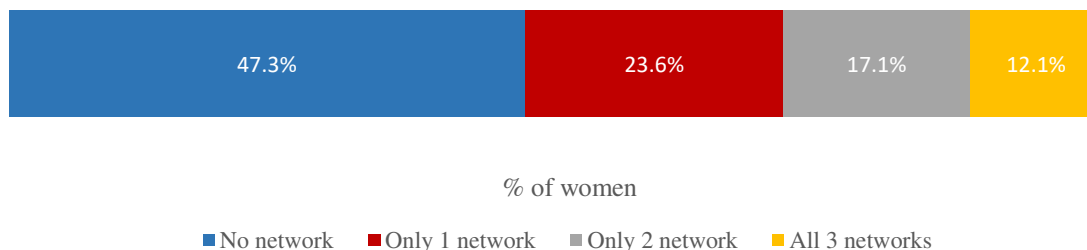
*Note: Chi-square=6.9, df=2,  $p=0.009$*

**Overall, the Access to Network index for the women in Armenia's rural settlements was 0.94, which indicates that on average women have access to only one of the proposed networks<sup>155</sup>.** According to assessment results, 47.3% of women have no social networks they can apply in case of need for the proposed situations, and 23.6% have only one

<sup>155</sup> The index is a variable ranging from 0 to 3, where "0" means that women do not have access to any of the proposed networks and "3" means that women have access to all proposed networks.

network and 17.1% have access to two networks. Only 12.1% of women have access to all three networks ( Figure 76).

**Figure 76. The number of social networks women can apply in case of need**



Note: n=780

As demonstrated in Table 17, women living in large families have broader access to networks (mean=1.07 out of maximum 3, SD=1.11) compared to women living in nuclear families (mean=0.81 out of maximum 3, SD=0.99), which may indicate that women have larger access to a network through their family members' resources and acquaintances. In addition, younger women (mean=1.12, SD=1.11) enjoy greater access to the network compared to middle-aged (mean=0.90, SD=1.07) and older women (mean=0.74, SD=0.94). Similarly, women with higher and postgraduate education (mean=1.40, SD=1.09) and women from upper-income groups (mean=1.51, SD=1.15) compared with women from other groups.

**Table 17. Access to Networks index per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors                | N   | Mean (out of maximum 3) <sup>156</sup> | SD   | Significance test              |
|------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Access to network                  | 780 | 0.94                                   | 1.06 | n/a                            |
| Age groups                         |     |                                        |      |                                |
| From 21 to 35                      | 311 | 1.12                                   | 1.11 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| From 36 to 50                      | 245 | 0.90                                   | 1.07 |                                |
| From 51 to 63                      | 224 | 0.74                                   | 0.94 |                                |
| Education                          |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Basic and secondary                | 421 | 0.83                                   | 1.03 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| Vocational                         | 224 | 0.87                                   | 1.04 |                                |
| High and postgraduate              | 135 | 1.40                                   | 1.09 |                                |
| Economic situation of the families |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Low                                | 317 | 0.73                                   | 0.97 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| Middle                             | 382 | 1.00                                   | 1.06 |                                |
| Upper                              | 75  | 1.51                                   | 1.15 |                                |
| Family type                        |     |                                        |      |                                |
| Nuclear                            | 389 | 0.81                                   | 0.99 | Mann-Whitney U test, p=0.002   |
| Large                              | 391 | 1.07                                   | 1.11 |                                |

<sup>156</sup> The index is a variable ranging from 0 to 3, where "0" means that women do not have access to any of the proposed networks and "3" means that women have access to all proposed networks.

Based on literature review and qualitative data analysis, the following hypothesis has been developed linking women's economic engagement and access to network:

---

**Hypothesis 11. Women more prone to networking have higher economic engagement compared to women with limited networking capacity.**

**Hypothesis is confirmed:** Spearman's rank correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant weak correlation between women's economic  
e  
n

---

## **6.5 Economic Engagement and Women's Mobility**

In order to measure women's daily mobility in Armenia's rural settlements, the research team applied the Women's Mobility sub-scale<sup>157</sup> under the Women's Empowerment Scale<sup>158</sup>. In the rural areas of Armenia, women's mobility is hindered by limited access to personal cars and cultural norms regarding using taxi services alone. In addition, women demonstrated low mobility when visiting cultural and entertainment places. Almost half of the women living in rural areas did not visit such sites last year, while nearly one-third do not see such activities as necessary.

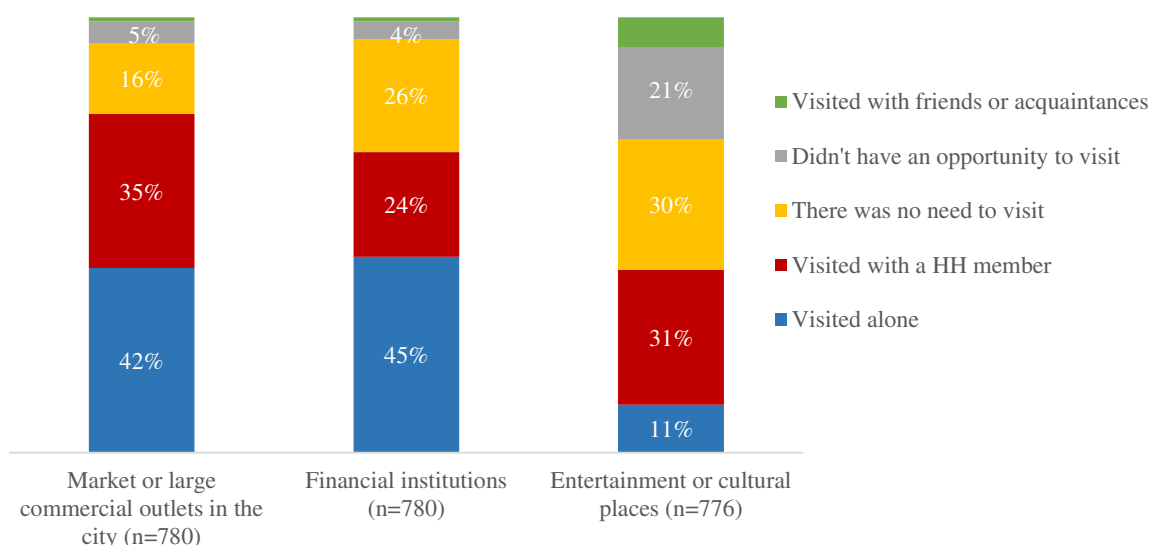
**More than 40% of women living in rural settlements visited facilities such as markets and financial institutions alone, while in the case of entertainment or cultural places, nearly half of the women visited cinemas, theaters, concerts, museums, galleries, or other similar places during the last year.** As Figure 77 shows, above 40% of women visit markets (42%) and financial institutions (45%) alone. At the same time, the share of women who visited markets accompanied by HH members is 35%, and in the case of visits to financial institutions it is 24%. As for entertainment or cultural places, they are accompanied by a HH member (31% of the cases), or they did not have an opportunity to visit such sites (21% of the cases). It is worth mentioning that 30% of women mentioned that there was no need to visit entertainment or cultural places, while women rarely visited any of the suggested places with friends or acquaintances.

---

<sup>157</sup> Reference to methodology: [Women's mobility](#)

<sup>158</sup> Schuler, SR, SM Hashemi, and AP Riley; "The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh's fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use; 1997, World Development, 25(4): 563–75

**Figure 77. Women's mobility in the last year**



As Table 18 reveals women from female-headed HHs are more mobile (mean=3.28, SD=1.73) compared to women from male-headed HHs (mean=2.87, SD=1.68). Also, women aged 21 to 35 (mean=3.28, SD=1.61) and women aged 36 to 50 (mean=3.08, SD=1.68) are more mobile compared to older women aged 51 to 63 (mean=2.34, SD=1.69). In addition, women with high and postgraduate education are more mobile (mean=3.75, SD=1.58) compared to women with basic and secondary (mean=2.75, SD=1.67) and vocational education (mean=2.85, SD=1.68). The economic situation of the families also predetermines women's mobility as women from upper-income groups are more mobile (mean=3.50, SD=1.60), followed by women from the middle (mean=3.19, SD=1.67) and low-income groups (mean=2.54, SD=1.67). Finally, women living in the central parts of the country (close to the capital Yerevan) demonstrated a higher level of mobility (mean=3.33, SD=1.72) followed by women living in the Northern regions of the country (mean=2.89, SD=1.69). Women living in southern regions demonstrated the lowest level of mobility compared to other regions (mean=2.28, SD=1.50). Furthermore, no statistically significant differences have been found per parental status of women (has children or are child-free), type of family (nuclear or not), and their mobility.

**Table 18. Women's mobility per confounding factors**

| Confounding factors          | N   | Mean (out of maximum 6) | SD   | Significance test              |
|------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Women Mobility Index         | 780 | 2.95                    | 1.70 | N/A                            |
| Sex of the Head of Household |     |                         |      |                                |
| Female                       | 164 | 3.28                    | 1.73 | Mann-Whitney U test, p=0.006   |
| Male                         | 588 | 2.87                    | 1.68 |                                |
| Age groups                   |     |                         |      |                                |
| From 21 to 35                | 311 | 3.28                    | 1.61 | Kruskal-Wallis's test, p<0.000 |
| From 36 to 50                | 245 | 3.08                    | 1.68 |                                |
| From 51 to 63                | 224 | 2.34                    | 1.69 |                                |
| Education                    |     |                         |      |                                |
| Basic and secondary          | 421 | 2.75                    | 1.67 |                                |

|                                 |     |      |      |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----|------|------|-----------------------------------|
| Vocational                      | 224 | 2.85 | 1.68 | Kruskal-Wallis's<br>test, p<0.000 |
| High and postgraduate           | 135 | 3.75 | 1.58 |                                   |
| Economic status of the families |     |      |      |                                   |
| Low                             | 317 | 2.54 | 1.67 | Kruskal-Wallis's<br>test, p<0.000 |
| Middle                          | 382 | 3.19 | 1.67 |                                   |
| Upper                           | 75  | 3.50 | 1.60 |                                   |
| Region                          |     |      |      |                                   |
| Northern                        | 545 | 2.89 | 1.69 | Kruskal-Wallis's<br>test, p<0.000 |
| Central                         | 181 | 3.33 | 1.72 |                                   |
| South                           | 54  | 2.28 | 1.50 |                                   |

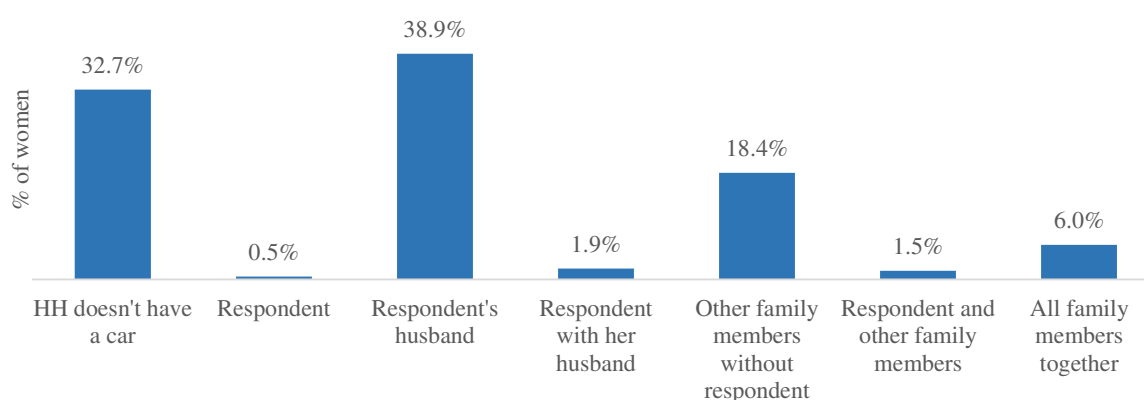
Following key findings of desk research, the following hypothesis has been formulated and tested:

**Hypothesis 12. Women's mobility is positively associated with their economic engagement.**

**Hypothesis is confirmed:** As Pearson Correlation analysis shows, there is a positive weak correlation between the Women Mobility Scale and WEE,  $r(780) = 0.303$ ,  $p < 0.000$

**Less than 1% of women living in rural settlements own, and manage a car alone.** For 3.5% of the cases, women share a car with other household members, including their spouses, and for 6.0% of the cases, cars are used by all HH members (Figure 78). Only 5.4% of women have driven any passenger car alone outside of their community to visit another location in the past year, among them almost half (52%) have driven their husbands' car. Finally, 54.7% of women reported that they can use taxi services without being accompanied by other HH members if necessary.

**Figure 78. Who possesses and manages the car in the HH**



Note:  $n=780$

Formulated question: "If household owns a car, who possesses and manages it?"

**Additionally, the analysis revealed statistically significant associations between Women's Economic Engagement and their experience of driving cars alone outside of the community and women's access to taxi services as transportation.** Namely, as Table 19 shows, women who have driven any passenger car alone outside of their community to visit

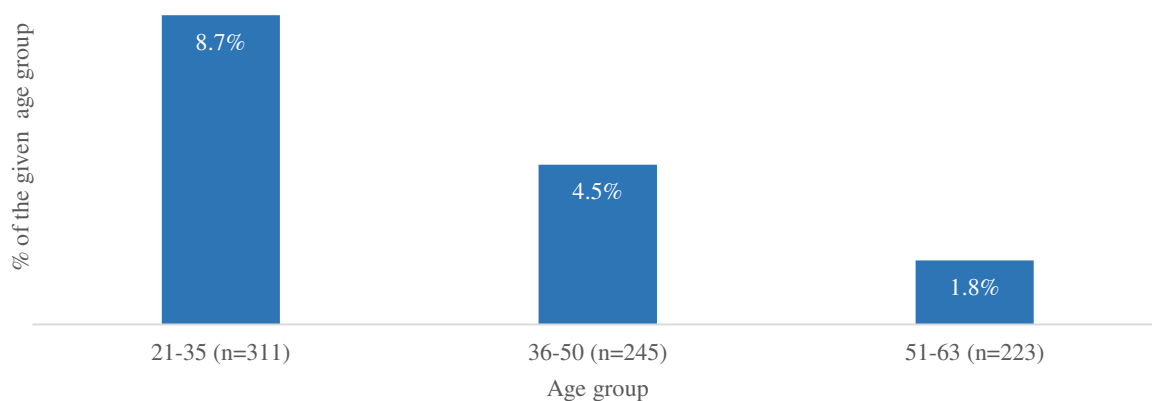
another location in the past year demonstrated higher economic engagement (mean=2.36 out of maximum 10, SD=1.8) compared with women who have not (mean=1.67 out of maximum 10, SD=1.69). Similarly, women who have access to taxi services demonstrated higher economic engagement (mean=2.01, SD=1.76) compared with women who cannot use taxi services without being accompanied by other HH members (mean=1.34, SD=1.56). Again, this indicates a close association between women's mobility behavior and economic engagement showing a certain level of empowerment among economically active women to freely access taxis or use cars to travel outside their communities.

**Table 19. Indicators related to women's mobility and women's economic engagement index**

| Confounding factors                                                                                                | N   | Mean (out of maximum 10) <sup>159</sup> | SD   | Significance test            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------|------|------------------------------|
| Have you ever driven any passenger car alone outside of your community to visit another location in the past year? |     |                                         |      |                              |
| Yes                                                                                                                | 42  | 2.36                                    | 1.83 | Mann-Whitney U test, p=0.008 |
| No                                                                                                                 | 737 | 1.67                                    | 1.69 |                              |
| Can you use taxi services without being accompanied by other HH members if necessary?                              |     |                                         |      |                              |
| Yes                                                                                                                | 427 | 2.01                                    | 1.76 | Mann-Whitney U test, p=0.000 |
| No                                                                                                                 | 353 | 1.34                                    | 1.56 |                              |

**Age, education of respondents and economic status of the families are significant factors for women's transport use.** Particularly, younger women aged from 21 to 35 have driven a passenger car alone outside of their community (8.7%), compared with middle-aged (4.5%) and older respondents (1.8%), as shown in Figure 79.

**Figure 79. The share of women who have driven passenger a car alone outside of their community**



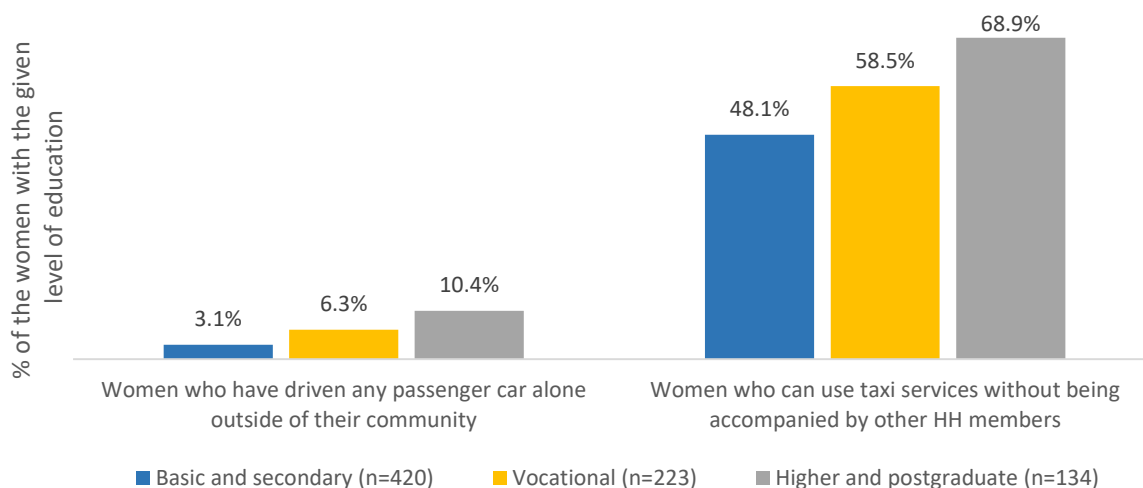
Note: Chi-square=12.6, df=2, p=0.002

**The education is another significant factor predefining women's transport use.** Namely, more women with a high and postgraduate education have experience driving a car

<sup>159</sup> Women's Economic Engagement Index ranges from 0 to 10 where "0" means no engagement at all, "10" means high level of engagement.

alone outside their community (10.4%) and can use taxi services alone (68.9%), compared with women with basic and secondary education (3.1% and 48.1% respectively) and women with vocational education (6.3% and 58.5% respectively) ( Figure 80).

**Figure 80. Women's transport use by women's level of education**



*Note: Women who have driven any passenger car alone outside of their community (Chi-square=11.6, df=2, p=0.003); Women who can use taxi services without being accompanied by other HH members (Chi-square=19.7, df=2, p<0.00 ).*

Overall, 45% of women living in the rural areas of Armenia can't use taxi services without being accompanied by other household members which may significantly restrict their economic engagement.

## 6.6 GBV issues in Rural Settlement of Armenia

In order to assess the GBV situation in Armenia's rural settlements, the research team applied the Freedom of Family Domination Concept (FFDC)<sup>160161</sup>, which in the frame of our study assesses whether women have experienced a display of domination, control, and power towards them by family members.

**Overall, 14.3% of women experienced displays of domination, control, and power.** As Figure 81 shows, for 2.3% of cases, husbands or other family members took women's money involuntarily, for 2.0% of the cases, family members prevented women from visiting their parents or friends and for 12.2% of the cases, women were banned from working outside the home by their husbands or other family members.

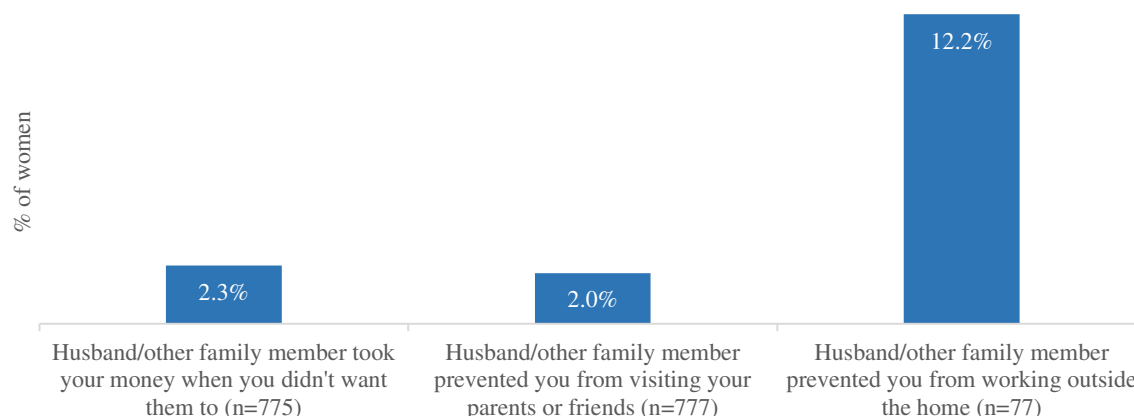
The analysis of confounding factors and composite Freedom of Family Domination index did not reveal any statistically significant associations between the factors and individual variables (Chi-square test, p>0.01). The analysis for associations between the Women's

<sup>160</sup> Schuler, SR, SM Hashemi, and AP Riley. "The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh's fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use." 1997, World Development, 25(4): 563–75.

<sup>161</sup> Reference to methodology: [Freedom of Family Domination](#)

Economic Engagement scale and their experience of family dominations also did not reveal any significant associations (Mann-Whitney test,  $p=0.02$ ).

**Figure 81. The share of women who have experienced displays of domination, control, and power towards them by a family member in the last year**



Note: Formulated question: "Did any of the following happen to you during the last year?"

**Overall, 9.2% of women living in rural areas reported being subject to some kind of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal violence.** According to data, more frequently, women are subject to psychological or verbal violence (7.3% have been subject to this type of violence in the last three years), followed by physical violence (2.8%) and sexual violence (1.5%).

**Table 20. Indicators of domestic violence in the last 3 years**

|                                               | Physical violence (n=779) |            | Sexual violence (n=777) |            | Psychological or verbal violence (n=779) |            |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|------------------------------------------|------------|
|                                               | N                         | % of women | N                       | % of women | N                                        | % of women |
| Have been subject to violence in last 3 years | 22                        | 2.8%       | 12                      | 1.5%       | 57                                       | 7.3%       |
| Among them multiple times or most of the time | 3                         | 0.4%       | 0                       | 0.0%       | 8                                        | 1.0%       |

In addition, the survey revealed cases when women were subject to physical violence and/or psychological or verbal violence multiple times or most of the time. Only 1.8% of women reported that they have been subject to unfair and disrespectful behavior in connection with their agricultural or business activities.

## **Chapter 7. International Best Practice in Women Agripreneurship Development**

Reducing urban-rural disparities and gender inequalities is viewed as a crucial factor for poverty reduction and economic growth. To this end, over the last decades, many developing, and least-developed countries have been implementing government- and international-led programs aimed at mobilization of the potential productivity of women living in rural areas, as well as promotion of a business environment and institutions that will encourage and support their entrepreneurial initiatives. Below are several good practices in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Georgia.

### **Use of revolving funds for sustainable financing for women in Kyrgyzstan, implemented by UN agencies**

From 2014 to 2021, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality, UN Women, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) joined the efforts to implement The Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) in seven countries, including Kyrgyzstan. The global initiative works towards addressing gender-specific constraints that women living in rural areas face in accessing resources and opportunities and implementing measures to expand women's capacities as farmers, entrepreneurs, and leaders<sup>162</sup>.

One of the most effective practices of JP RWEE was the establishment of women's self-help groups (SHGs) in rural communities of Kyrgyzstan<sup>163</sup>. Participation in the SHGs helps women to increase social contacts and support networks. Women have been reporting significant gains from participation in these social groups. Additionally, a practice of revolving funds has been introduced within SHGs, which helps women from rural settlements to mobilize financial resources through informal savings and lending groups. Members of SHGs make monthly contributions to form the revolving funds; after that funds are provided to the selected group to start a business together. After the borrowed funds are paid back in full, another SHG receives the opportunity to obtain the funds and start their business. The revolving funds can also be used at the province level to grant them legal status, and thereby increase their sustainability.

Revolving funds enabled women to start businesses and secure stable capital for purchasing agricultural inputs and tools in Kyrgyzstan, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nepal, and Niger. Particularly, in Kyrgyzstan, this type of financing has been used in 73 communities<sup>164</sup>.

The revolving funds in Kyrgyzstan are operated as follows<sup>165</sup>: in the first stage, the program identifies women for participation in SHGs and invites them to form the social group. As a rule, these are women from vulnerable groups. Later, SHGs receive business and marketing training. Then business ideas are discussed and formulated into business and financial plans, and they are then submitted by SHGs along with applications for loans from the revolving funds. A local selection and monitoring committee is set up, including local government representatives, respected community members and project representatives. It

---

<sup>162</sup> "Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women", IFAD, <https://bit.ly/3ZBVw5B>, accessed 13.01.2023

<sup>163</sup> "Final evaluation of the Kyrgyzstan Joint UN Women/ FAO/ IFAD/ WFP Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women", WFP, <https://bit.ly/3GCZcvl>

<sup>164</sup> (First citation) "Good Practice Information Sheet", JP RWEE, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3CI6htq>

<sup>165</sup> (Subsequent citation) JP RWEE, Good practices, 2018

might also be noted that the committee was also trained for selecting business ideas submitted by the SHGs. The best ideas are chosen by the community and a repayment schedule is agreed upon. And finally, the businesses are launched and monitored. After loan payments are collected by the community treasurer in an agreed-upon timetable, the next-in-line SHG is provided with the revolving funds. The participating UN agencies designed the programme's implementation and provided oversight and quality assurance regarding implementation.

The main advantage of this practice is that it helps women from rural settlements to obtain loans without collateral. It also helps to develop leadership and communication skills. One of the challenges of the practice is the possibility of not paying the borrowed funds back in time, which will delay the next-in-line group's acquisition of funds.

### **Capacity building and financial assistance for women from rural settlements in Uzbekistan by USAID**

As part of the Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative, in 2022 USAID launched several programs in Uzbekistan to support women living in rural areas by facilitating their engagement in the workforce as entrepreneurs and skilled employees.

In the framework of one of the programs, USAID partnered with non-governmental organizations to train around 1,000 unemployed women. The training is related to entrepreneurship, financial and legal literacy, accounting, access to credit, labor rights, and awareness of gender-based violence. In addition, USAID provided targeted vocational trainings to women in horticulture, beekeeping, dairy, silk, rabbit, and poultry production, as well as traditional ethnic crafts, hospitality services, confectionery, cooking, sewing, hairdressing, accounting, computer literacy, and IT<sup>166</sup>.

The results of the program show that since April 2022, over 100 women have already obtained employment and 300 women have registered as entrepreneurs using the knowledge and skills they received in six-month training. Furthermore, USAID provided USD 200,000 worth of equipment to 226 graduates to launch business enterprises. The business enterprises were launched in greenhouse production, milk processing, poultry production, carpet weaving, sewing, embroidery, and bakeries<sup>167</sup>.

In September 2022 USAID also implemented a business development program for women entrepreneurs and artisans in the decorative felt production industry in Karakalpakstan, where decorative felt production is a unique cultural heritage<sup>168</sup>. Particularly, USAID trains local craftswomen to use modern wool production and processing technologies to improve the standard of material inputs and afterward will provide graduates with financing for equipment purchase and support access to new markets. This component of the program helps already established female businesses diversify and add value to their products and sell to new markets both in Central Asia and around the world.

---

<sup>166</sup> (First citation) "USAID Supports Rural Women Entrepreneurs with over \$200,000 Worth of Equipment", [uz.usembassy.gov](https://uz.usembassy.gov/https://bit.ly/3GBHXdH), <https://bit.ly/3GBHXdH>, accessed 13.01.2023

<sup>167</sup> (Subsequent citation), USAID, [uz.usembassy.gov](https://uz.usembassy.gov)

<sup>168</sup> "USAID Supports Karakalpakstan's Women Entrepreneurs Reviving Cultural Heritage Industry", USAID, September 27, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3W5LM0F>, accessed 13.01.2023

## **Mentorship platforms for women in Tajikistan by USAID**

USAID have implemented the Feed the Future Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA) program among other things aimed to support farmers in nutrition-sensitive agriculture sectors so they can increase their yields and incomes. Under the TAWA program, USAID had an objective to increase the agricultural knowledge and skills of the women in the Khatlon region<sup>169</sup>, given that women here provide most of the manual farm labor. To achieve this objective, TAWA designed a specific a gender-sensitive strategy and model for providing extension and advisory services to women living in rural areas. The main reason for the need for gender-sensitive strategy was the fact that program staff trainings taught by male technical leads had lower adoption and participation rates among female participants<sup>170</sup>. Many female participants reported feeling uncomfortable learning the material from male instructors due to cultural and religious reasons.

TAWA established a mentorship platform for women, under which the training sessions were exclusively taught by female household extension agents (HEA) from Khatlon and technical specialists, which fostered a culture of trust, openness, and mutual understanding. This approach was the key to the success of the initiative.

The training sessions have been divided into several sections. Selected topics were taught by HEAs, who worked with each women's group for a 3-5-month period and repeatedly met with the same group to discuss one new topic a month. HEAs serve as a resource for participants on different, more broad topics and serve as a key point of outreach to participants. Certain training topics that involved specialized processes (e.g., apricot drying and care of dairy cows) were taught by TAWA's technical specialists and agronomists instead of the HEAs<sup>171</sup>. Each group consisted of 20-25 women.

The program organization starts with the recruitment of the HEA team. For the one-year program, TAWA recruited 12 household extension agents. HEAs are women who have good communication skills, in some cases, they must be economists or of other specific professions. Candidates are required to be from the same region as the beneficiaries of the program, which builds a culture of openness to dialogue and learning. Once the HEA team was hired, the TAWA leadership team held one-on-one meetings with each team member to review and discuss roles and responsibilities, followed by full-team training. The HEAs travel to their respective assigned districts and organize women's groups. After this TAWA leadership, the HEA team, technical specialists, village local leaders, and women farmers jointly identify training topics and learning objectives through informal surveys and discussions. Based on the feedback from women's groups and local leaders, TAWA staff created or refined training modules and materials, with input from the Tajik Agrarian University. After the design stage, TAWA's technical specialists carried out training of trainers for the HEA team using a variety of training tools: flipbooks, multimedia videos, and tablets. During the training period, participants meet regularly with the HEA team, agronomists and different specialists who teach the designed training sessions. After the training period ends, the HEAs carry out a survey and

---

<sup>169</sup> "Improved Livelihoods and Nutrition in Tajikistan", Chemonics, <https://bit.ly/3CHjov2>, accessed 13.01.2023

<sup>170</sup> "She Is an Agripreneur: Enabling Female Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness", Chemonics, October 22, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3QBrsmx>

<sup>171</sup> (First citation) "Tajikistan agriculture and water activity", Feed the Future USAID initiative, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3HbC9cJ>

collect findings on recently trained women to collect data for project reporting and for adjusting training sessions for the next season.<sup>172</sup>

### **Capacity building of women from rural settlements in Georgia by EU and FAO**

Since 2013, the European Union (EU) provides support to rural development and agriculture in Georgia through European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development initiative (ENPARD). One of the components of ENPARD is to increase the involvement of women from rural areas in productive activities, specifically through capacity building. Under ENPARD, the EU in cooperation with FAO helps those women to improve their agricultural knowledge and enhance their farms' production by teaching and demonstrating the best agricultural practices<sup>173</sup>.

Direct support to women farmers is carried out through FAO demonstration plots and Farmer Field Schools, which help women to make the best decisions for improving crop qualities and increasing incomes. Particularly, FAO agronomists are visiting rural communities and demonstrating best and innovative practices and solutions for more productive farming<sup>174</sup>.

Demonstration plots are organized as follows: FAO experts select a farm in a rural community and conduct hands-on training sessions for the local farmers, where they demonstrate modern agricultural production methods, as well as discuss a variety of topics from the soil, crop, water, and pest management, to establishing links with the relevant agricultural markets.

Along with the capacity development of the female farmers in Georgia's rural communities, the FAO and EU are also implementing a series of gender training sessions for the state agricultural extension specialists<sup>175</sup>. The extensionists are expected to design and deliver quality advice to the farmers in a gender-sensitive way.

---

<sup>172</sup> (Subsequent citation) "Tajikistan agriculture and water activity", 2019

<sup>173</sup> (First citation) "EU and FAO support women in Georgia's rural areas", EU4Georgia, June 11, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3Xpljw5>, accessed 13.01.2023

<sup>174</sup> "Food Heroes: Cultivating women farmers in Georgia", UN, October 10, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3GYXFkG>, accessed 13.01.2023

<sup>175</sup> (Subsequent citation) EU4Georgia, 2020

## **Main Findings and Conclusions**

### **Socio-economic snapshot of Armenia from gender perspectives**

1. Agriculture is one of the core sectors of Armenia's economy, with an 11.1% share in GDP, 21.8% share in employment, and 7.5% share in exports; however, the share of this sector in the Armenian economy is continuously decreasing.
2. Armenia faces serious demographic issues; the population is shrinking and aging due to migration and a decline in the birth rate. At the beginning of 2021, the share of the female population was 52.8%; in all 10 regions of Armenia, female population exceeds the male population.
3. Although women make up the majority of the population, their labor force participation is significantly lower than that of men (55.9% vs 70.0%). Only 41% of women of working age (15+ years old) are employed, moreover, compared to 2010, in 2020 the absolute number of employed women decreased by 10%.
4. In Armenia occupations are vividly segregated by gender, with a much higher share of women in such stereotypically female professions as education (80.3%), human health and social work activities (78.8%). Overall, in Armenia, women are mainly involved in only three sectors- agriculture (20.3% of employed women), education (19.1%), and trade (12.6%).
5. Regarding activities related to agriculture, in 2020, 56.9% of 229.6 thousand persons engaged in these activities are male and 43.1% are female.
6. As gender pay gap analysis in the labor market of Armenia shows, in 2020 there was a significant 23.1% raw gender pay gap in the country.
7. The gender parity significantly varies depending on education level. Particularly, Armenia has achieved gender parity at the level of general schools (1.04), which means that the share of involved male and female students is almost equal, while women dominate in the first (1.27) and second (2.36) stages of higher education.
8. Although women's level of enrolment in higher education is higher than men's, gender segregation persists in higher education. For example, only 21.6% of students in agricultural science and veterinary specializations are female.
9. Armenia can achieve a 13.5% GDP growth in the long run by closing the employment gap between men and women, other things being equal.

### **Gender performance of Armenia**

10. Over the last few years, Armenia has demonstrated progress in terms of legislation promoting gender equality. According to the Global SDG indicators, on a 0-100 scale Armenia has 90.0 points for its legal frameworks to promote, enforce and monitor gender equality in public life. However, work still needs to be done to achieve gender equality in terms of participation in politics, involvement in community decision-making, and several other areas.
11. According to international rankings (UN Gender Inequality Index, Gender Development Index, WEF's Global Gender Gap Index, WB's Women, Business and the Law Index), Armenia has shown some progress over the last few years however work still needs to be done in this direction.

12. Although there are some issues, in general, Armenia has a solid policy framework; however, its implementation remains an issue due to a lack of political will and determination, lower capacities and gender-sensitivities of implementers, the de-prioritization of gender issues over other areas, the existing culture and social barriers in some respects.

### **The role of agriculture in the Armenian economy**

13. Armenia has very concentrated agricultural production, particularly; half of the country's total agricultural production is produced in only three regions (Armavir, Ararat, and Gegharkunik).
14. Over the last decade the share of plant growing in gross agricultural output was declining, while the share of animal breeding was increasing and in 2021 the shares almost equaled.

### **The state of women's agripreneurship in Armenia**

15. According to the survey among women (aged 21 to 63 years old), about 28% of women in rural settlements have been involved in agripreneurial activity within the last 2 years or intend to start a business in the coming years. Worth mentioning that presently, 16.4% of women from rural areas are involved in agripreneurship.
16. Women living in rural areas are mostly engaged in non-formal unregistered small-scale business activities, namely, entrepreneurial activity is positively associated with the age of women: elder and middle-aged women are engaged in entrepreneurial activity compared to younger ones.
17. According to the survey, 3.9% of women have been engaged in entrepreneurship within the last few years and terminated their entrepreneurial activities within the last 24 months. The main reasons for termination are low profitability and lack of financing.
18. The survey shows that 13.1% of women from the rural settlements have plans to start a new business (of which 2.3 percentage points are active entrepreneurs), the vast majority of them (about 76%) do not have prior experience in business and plan to start a business in 2023. And
19. Women living in rural areas intending to start new businesses are primarily interested in the agriculture sector (80.6% of women, who plan to start a business) where according to their perception they have general or specific knowledge that might contribute to their success (81.8%). However, women's knowledge in agriculture is mostly experience-based, as women's enrollment in formal educational institutions in the related specializations is relatively low.
20. Overall, the interest in agriculture is high among women who have basic and secondary education, are aged 36-63 years old, or have a child (children).
21. Most women (59.0%), who plan to start a business believe that they have comprehensive or some knowledge for establishing and managing a business, while only 13.3% of them have attended courses in business management, marketing, or related subjects or received online training on similar topics, which may indicate that there is a significant gap between their perceived and actual capabilities.

22. Every agripreneurship business established by women in the rural settlements of Armenia may create 2.6 permanent and 2.8 seasonal jobs by significantly contributing to employment in those settlements.

#### **Main motivational factors and barriers for starting a business**

23. The vast majority of women (90.0%) received or continue to receive support from their family members at any stage of their business. At the same time, more than 92.1% of women who plan to start a business expect such support from their family members. The moral support of the family has been highlighted as the second important factor in encouraging women to engage in agripreneurship. It is a significant contributor to women's economic engagement as women receiving support from their families demonstrated higher economic engagement than women lacking such support do.
24. According to the survey, the main motivational factors for women from rural areas to start a business are the provision of affordable finance (61.0% of respondents mentioned this factor), moral support of the family (31.0%), and assisting in the organization of sales (28.0%), followed by the organization of general business courses (21.0%) and courses on agricultural topics (19.0%).

#### **Women's economic engagement and factors affecting it**

25. The survey revealed that the Women's Economic Engagement (WEE) Score, which reflects women's engagement in business activities, access to financial and non-financial assets and resources, as well as their knowledge and capacity, is very low and insufficient in the areas of Armenia.
26. Women with higher education, women from female-headed HHs or from upper-income families have higher economic engagement scores compared with women from other groups. However, women with higher and postgraduate education are less interested in the agricultural sector.
27. The study shows that women mostly support gender equality; however, their perception of different gender-sensitive situations is highly affected by stereotypes and beliefs. Certain gender stereotypes primarily relate to women's potential economic activity, for example, the roles of men and women in decision-making at the HH level, division of HH labor, women's prime responsibility for raising children, and men's role in providing financially.
28. Overall, support for traditional gender roles is associated with women's age, education, economic status, living area, and parental status. Young, highly educated women or women from upper-income families or from southern regions are supportive of gender equality compared to women from other groups. Similarly, women who have children also are more prone to traditional gender roles compared to women who do not have children.
29. The cultural norms and stereotypes may significantly restrict women's entrepreneurial activity, thus women living in families supporting gender equality are more economically active than those from families supporting traditional gender roles are.
30. Women's access to assets, such as housing, land, etc., is limited by the incomplete exercise of their inheritance rights, as women support the idea of voluntarily dropping their rights in favor of male HH members.

31. Although the analysis of FGDs show that women have certain agency in matters related to food, children's education, etc., the survey revealed that women have little agency in those matters including in agricultural-related decisions. Nevertheless, women with higher economic engagement are more involved in HH decision-making than women with lower economic engagement.
32. The survey shows, there is a clear tendency to divide household work between male and female family members. Particularly, on average women daily spend 4.2 hours for household chores and 2.6 hours for unpaid agriculture work. However, neither the perceived division of household labor nor women's burden with unpaid HH work are not barriers to economic engagement. Moreover, most women (68.4%) living in rural areas still have free time that they do not know how to manage.
33. Women living in rural areas have limited experience applying for and receiving agricultural and business loans, particularly, only 21.1% of them have applied for an agricultural or business loan to banks or credit organizations, of which one-fifth have been always rejected. The main reasons for rejection are bad credit history (36.1% of the cases), insufficient income or collateral (33.5%), absence of credit history or being overburdened with credits (27.4%).
34. Economically active women also enjoy larger access to private virtual, and personal space. Age, education and economic status of the family are significant predetermining factors for women's access to the internet, private social media accounts, and personal space in the household.
35. Almost half of the women do not have access to the networks to receive professional training, get business or agricultural loans or organize the transportation of a large volume of agricultural products. Access to such networks is limited for women aged 36 to 63, women with basic, secondary, or vocational educational backgrounds and women from low and middle-income groups.
36. Openness to social interaction and women's networking capacities are positively associated with women's economic engagement. However, women are more prone to use social contacts with less perceived social distancing, and feel less comfortable applying to formal institutions, such as NGOs, or referent groups (e.g. well-known specialists). Therefore, women also need further empowerment through the development of their social interaction, and networking skills.
37. The survey confirmed that women's mobility is positively associated with their economic engagement, but 45% of women living in the rural areas of Armenia cannot use taxi services without being accompanied by other household members. Women's mobility depends on their age, education, economic status, family type, and living area. The following women groups such as younger women, the women living in the central parts of the country, women with high or postgraduate education, women from high-income groups, and female-headed HHs demonstrated a higher level of mobility than those from other groups.

#### **GBV situation in Armenia**

38. GBV issues and family dominance remain concerning issues for women living in rural settlements in the country. Approximately 9.2% of women living in rural areas reported being subject to some kind of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal violence. While no significant interrelations have been found between women's

economic engagement and family dominance, women's right to participate in the labor market was primarily violated by other family members who prevented them from working outside the home (12% of women).

**International best practice for promoting agripreneurship**

39. According to the international best practice review, capacity building, provision of financial resources and networking opportunities are the main tools for promoting agripreneurship.

## Recommendations Matrix

| N    | Problem/risk/opportunity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Recommendation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.   | Access to finance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1.1. | More than 60% of women mentioned affordable finance as a motivational factor to start a business.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Considering the importance of women agripreneurship, the government could implement <b>a gender-differentiated agricultural loan interest rate subsidization scheme</b> by providing larger subsidies to qualified women agripreneurs (who have taken special courses or incubation programs run by NGOs). This would allow for the identification of true women agripreneurs and ensure the targeted allocation of affordable funds<sup>176</sup>.</p> <p>Moreover, it is highly appreciated that the loan officers are women, which may reduce the gender barriers.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1.2. | One-fifth of women, who applied for a business or agricultural loan have been always rejected due to bad credit history (36.1% of the cases), insufficient income or collateral (33.5%), absence of credit history or being overburdened with credits (27.4%).                                                                         | <p>Incentivize financial institutions to provide loans to qualified women agripreneurs by <b>sharing risks of credit default</b>. For example, provide up to 30% cashback on non-performing loans of selected beneficiaries (e.g., qualified agripreneurs from border settlements and with more than 3 children).</p> <p>Provide <b>special interest rate subsidies for group loans</b> of interrelated women agripreneurs headed by experienced women, who may reduce credit default risk and support the development of the value chain. For example, the beneficiaries of this scheme could be a cheesemaker and her milk suppliers.</p>                                                                                                                                      |
| 2.   | Capacity building                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 2.1. | Women who plan to start a business are primarily interested in the agriculture sector and believe that they have general or specific knowledge that might contribute to their success, however, women's knowledge in agriculture is mostly experienced based, besides only 13.3% of them have attended courses in business management, | <p>The government can support the empowerment of women in rural areas and <b>improve their knowledge of agricultural and business-related topics by providing grants for the organization of specialized courses</b>. These courses could focus on a range of topics, such as beekeeping, effective horticulture, post-harvest management, growing high-value crops, (e.g., asparagus, Brussels sprout), marketing, negotiations, financial planning, etc.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to engage women instructors for these courses whenever possible, as this can create a more comfortable and supportive learning environment for women. Additionally, encouraging international donors to contribute to this effort can increase the reach and impact of the program.</p> |

<sup>176</sup> In 2021, only approximately 18% of beneficiaries in the agricultural loan interest rate subsidization program were women.

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      | marketing or related subjects or received online training on similar topics.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>The government may support the establishment of <b>agripreneurship incubators</b> for women aged 36 to 63 years old, who are highly interested in the agricultural sector. These incubators could provide comprehensive curricula on both agricultural and business topics, as well as ongoing mentorship and support for the beneficiaries. Engaging experts or successful women agripreneurs as mentors would be beneficial, as they can inspire and guide the beneficiaries through the challenges of starting and growing a successful agribusiness. Providing ongoing support is also critical for ensuring the sustainability of the incubator program.</p> <p><b>Provides grants to the existing extension service centres</b>, which aim to provide consistent and ongoing support to women agripreneurs, ultimately ensuring the longevity and profitability of their businesses.</p> <p><b>Introduction of entrepreneurial courses in the curriculum of high schools.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                      |
| 2.2. | Out of the students enrolled in higher education studying agricultural sciences and veterinary only 21.6% are female. In contrast, the agricultural sector has a higher representation of women, with women comprising approximately 43% of the total employed workforce in this industry. | <p><b>Implementing a special fellowship program for young women</b> from rural areas to study agricultural sciences and veterinary at higher and vocational educational institutions in Armenia.</p> <p>This opportunity can empower young women to develop the skills and knowledge needed to address the challenges facing the agriculture sector in Armenia, such as modernization and technology adoption. It also helps to promote gender equality by increasing the representation of women in these critical fields, promoting equitable access to education, and fostering a more inclusive and diverse workforce.</p> <p>The fellowship can cover tuition fees, living expenses, and other related costs, thus ensuring that talented young women from rural areas have equal opportunities to pursue higher education.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 3.   | Access to market                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 3.1. | Nearly 28% of women stated that assisting in the organization of sales is a motivational factor for starting a business.                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>Organize networking sessions with representatives of online fruit and vegetable stores</b> for establishing business relations. These sessions can provide a valuable opportunity for women agripreneurs, and to connect with potential buyers, share information about their products, and establish mutually beneficial relationships.</p> <p>The organization of networking sessions includes identifying key online fruit and vegetable stores that align with the products and values of the agripreneurs and farmers, reaching out to their representatives to gauge interest, and coordinating logistics such as venue, date, and agenda, as well as providing opportunities for product demonstrations, sampling, and feedback. Additionally, it is important to ensure that both parties have a clear understanding of each other's needs and expectations and that agreements are reached on pricing, quality, and delivery terms. It would be beneficial to engage as many women counterparts as possible in networking sessions, as this can create a more comfortable and supportive environment for women agripreneurs.</p> |

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Organize study visits of women agripreneurs to Yerevan</b> to acquaint them with their competitors' products, potential buyers, and other market opportunities. This can include visits to markets, supermarkets, and other retail outlets to observe and learn from their competitors' products, marketing strategies, and pricing models. It can also include meetings with potential buyers and other stakeholders to gain insights into their needs, preferences, and requirements.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Organize a branding hackathon for young designers.</b> This hackathon could bring together designers and women agripreneurs to collaborate on the development of unique and compelling brand identities for the agripreneurs' businesses, including the development of logos, color palettes, packaging, and marketing materials that will help the agripreneurs stand out in a crowded and competitive market.</p> <p>To ensure the effectiveness of the hackathon organizers must closely work with local design schools and universities to recruit talented students and recent graduates who are interested in this type of work. Once the designers have been identified, the hackathon can be organized as a multi-day event where they will collaborate with the women agripreneurs to develop brand identities. The event can be structured as a competition for designers, with the best brands being awarded prizes such as financial support. During the hackathon, the designers can work closely with the women agripreneurs to understand their unique challenges and opportunities, and to develop branding strategies that are tailored to their specific needs. This can include the development of logos, color palettes, packaging, and marketing materials that will help the agripreneurs stand out in a crowded and competitive market.</p> |
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Establishing a retail outlet with a phygital format</b> (combining physical and online stores) that can provide sales and distribution support to women agripreneurs from different regions of Armenia.</p> <p>The physical store(s) can be located in bedroom suburbs of Yerevan with easy access and high foot traffic. The online store could be developed in parallel, offering the same products with delivery options to customers throughout the city. The mark-up of the retailer will ensure the financial sustainability of this initiative.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 4.   | Promoting a shift in cultural attitudes and empowering women's agripreneurship                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4.1. | The moral support of the family has been highlighted as the second important factor in encouraging women to engage in agripreneurship, namely, around 92% of women who plan to start a | <p><b>Engaging men as allies in promoting women's agripreneurship.</b> This could involve sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at men, as well as targeted programs that encourage men to support women's agripreneurship, such as through moral support, mentoring or financial support.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p><b>Organize visits of couples to their peer families.</b> This would involve connecting couples who are already successful agripreneurs with other couples who are interested in starting their own agribusiness.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|  |                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | business expect such support from their family members. | <p>During the visits, the couples would have the opportunity to learn from each other and exchange ideas about their experiences in starting and growing their agribusinesses. This would not only provide valuable information and insights to aspiring agripreneurs, but it would also help to break down gender stereotypes by showcasing successful examples of couples who are working together as equal partners in their agribusiness. To ensure that the visits are successful in promoting gender agripreneurship, it would be important to select couples who are committed to gender equality and who are willing to share their experiences and knowledge with others.</p> <p><b>Organize joint activities for couples.</b> This would involve designing and implementing activities that encourage couples to work or enjoy free time together and break down gender barriers in various aspects of their lives (e.g., organizing training sessions for couples, watching a movie on a large screen in the village).</p> |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## **Bibliography**

1. RA Statistical Committee, Statistical databases: National Accounts, <https://bit.ly/3OOUexF>
2. RA Statistical Committee, ArmStatBank, <https://bit.ly/3Z2Lklo>
3. RA Statistical Committee, “National Accounts of Armenia, 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3PZTmr4>
4. RA Statistical Committee, Demographic Database, <https://bit.ly/3mI4Bb3>
5. RA Statistical Committee, Socio-Economic Situation of RA 2016-2019 reports
6. RA Statistical Committee, “Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-March 2017”, <https://bit.ly/3ySvIGv>
7. RA Statistical Committee, Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-March 2018, <https://bit.ly/3Z6jVPt>
8. RA Statistical Committee, “Socio-Economic Situation of RA, January-December 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3ySw9AD>
9. RA Statistical Committee, “The Demographic Handbook of Armenia 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3LBeMvt>
10. RA Statistical Committee, “Women and Men in Armenia 2021”, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3ATxKs4>
11. RA Statistical Committee, “Statistical Yearbook of Armenia 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3mxXzpd>
12. RA Statistical Committee, “Labour market in Armenia in 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3JV2VqR>
13. RA Statistical Committee, SDG indicator data, <https://bit.ly/42F0Sie>
14. RA Statistical Committee, “Survey on domestic violence against women. Analytical Report 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3QNngzP>
15. RA Statistical Committee, Sown areas of agricultural crops, planting area of permanent crops, gross harvest and average crop capacity for 2017, <https://bit.ly/3Ci1i36>
16. RA Statistical Committee, Sown Areas of Agricultural Crops, Planting Area of Permanent Crops, Gross Harvest and Average Crop Capacity for 2021, <https://bit.ly/3QZbdiR>
17. RA Government, “Government Programme 2021-2026”, <https://bit.ly/3zgEygY>
18. RA Government, “The budget for demographic improvement programs has doubled in 2022 compared to 2019. A Council meeting takes place”, 10 June 2022, <https://bit.ly/3oj4ljr>
19. National Assembly of RA, “Members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia eighth convocation”, <https://bit.ly/2KOKWSt>
20. CBA, Statistics: External Sector Statistics, <https://bit.ly/3aCWD07>
21. Ministry of Finance of RA, State budget report for 2021, <https://bit.ly/3pPbzN1>
22. RA Cadastre Committee, The Decision of the RA Government N 19-27-N from 03.12.2020 <https://bit.ly/3wiwcos>
23. ARLIS, The Law of RA on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, <https://bit.ly/3JB3BR1>
24. ARLIS, The Decision of the Republic of Armenia on approving Gender Strategy and Programme on Implementation of Gender Strategy 2019-2023, <https://bit.ly/3LEP9d9>
25. ARLIS, The Decision of the RA Government on the Second action plan and time-line for implementation of UN SC “Women, Peace and Security” No. 1325 Resolution, <https://bit.ly/40Imiii>
26. ARLIS, RA Government decision N327-L from 29 March 2019, <https://bit.ly/3PF2FMm>
27. Հայկական բիզնես կոալիցիա, “ՓՄՁ ոլորտի գնահատման հետազոտությունն Հայաստանում”, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3QsQPGu>
28. «ՀՀ գյուղատնտեսության ոլորտի տնտեսական զարգացումն ապահովող հիմնական ուղղությունների 2020-2030 թվականների ռազմավարության համառոտագիր», <https://bit.ly/3Bji8y7>
29. IRTEK, RA Government protocol decision N15 from April 13 2017, <https://bit.ly/3PvGUhR>
30. ADB, “Armenia: Country gender assessment”, December 2019, <https://bit.ly/3PJ1dcz>

31. ADB, “Completion Report: Armenia: Women’s Entrepreneurship Support Sector Development Program”, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3VjhNmF>
32. America Advisory, “Global entrepreneurship monitor: Armenia national report 2019/2020”, <https://bit.ly/3KskvBb>
33. Arka news agency, “Armenia’s agriculture faces 3.5% year-on-year decline in Jan-May 2017”, July 2017, <https://bit.ly/3Pxtu52>
34. EU, “Gender country profile: Armenia”, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3Rfvz7c>
35. Eurasian Economic Commission, Statistical data, <https://bit.ly/2M2Fuyw>
36. FAO, “Gender, agriculture and rural development in Armenia”, 2017, <https://bit.ly/3Ch0mMi>
37. Finport.am, “MoE reports on results of World Bank’s CARMAC2 program”, May 2022, <https://bit.ly/3Aulc9H>
38. IFC, “Women entrepreneurship study in Armenia”, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3zODJfr>
39. ILO, ILOSTAT: Employment by sex and age – ILO modeled estimates, <https://bit.ly/3vQ33k5>
40. OECD, “SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2020: Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe”, <https://bit.ly/3w5r7zB>
41. OECD, EU, “Policy Brief on Women’s Entrepreneurship”, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2FkmVEj>
42. OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Database 2019, <https://bit.ly/3AnItu9>
43. OpenDemocracy, “Heated debates around domestic violence in Armenia”, 2017, <https://bit.ly/3Rac7IF> (accessed 26.08.2022)
44. Save the Children, “Youth-focused and gender-sensitive labor market research in Armenia”, 2018 <https://bit.ly/2It9MYr>
45. Steven Pennings, “A Gender Employment Gap Index (GEGI): A Simple Measure of the Economic Gains from Closing Gender Employment Gaps, with an Application to the Pacific Islands”, World Bank 2022, <https://bit.ly/3ylbyUF>
46. UN Women, “Armenia country gender equality brief”, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3Pdxd7F>
47. UN Women, “Gender Assessment of rural development and agriculture policies in Armenia”, 2018 <https://bit.ly/3QsQXFY>
48. UN Women, Armstat, “Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labour Market in Armenia”, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3ztQQEq>
49. UN Women, SDG Indicator Dashboard, <https://bit.ly/40j2Nqs>
50. UN, “Gender equality and SDGs: Armenia”, <https://bit.ly/3bTz9Vc>
51. UN, “Women in Politics Report 2021”, <https://bit.ly/3vYQNhn>
52. UN, World Population Prospects 2019, <https://bit.ly/2zrWmYB>
53. UNDP, Data Centre, <https://bit.ly/3TwBvL7>
54. UNDP, Human Development Report 2020, <https://bit.ly/3bHfXcT>
55. UNESCO, IIEP Learning Portal: Glossary, <https://bit.ly/3ly8uCn>
56. UNSTAT, SDG Country Profile: Armenia, <https://bit.ly/3BUSIr3>
57. USAID, “Strengthening women’s political participation in the Republic of Armenia: existing efforts, challenges and opportunities”, 2015, <https://bit.ly/3POJxLX>
58. WB Group, Women Business and the Law 2022, <https://bit.ly/3QanTmv>
59. WB, WBL, Economy Scores Snapshot: Armenia, <https://bit.ly/3JM4MwD>
60. WEF, “Global Gender Gap Report 2017”, <https://bit.ly/3C63f2A>
61. WEF, “Global Gender Gap Report 2022”, <https://bit.ly/3QLGSUd>
62. WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2021, <https://bit.ly/3OQc4Bf>
63. WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2021, <https://bit.ly/3OQc4Bf>
64. World Bank open data: Indicators, <https://bit.ly/3losjfr>
65. World Bank, “Exploring the Diversity of Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET): The Gender Profile of NEETs in Georgia and Armenia”, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3QMiHFY>

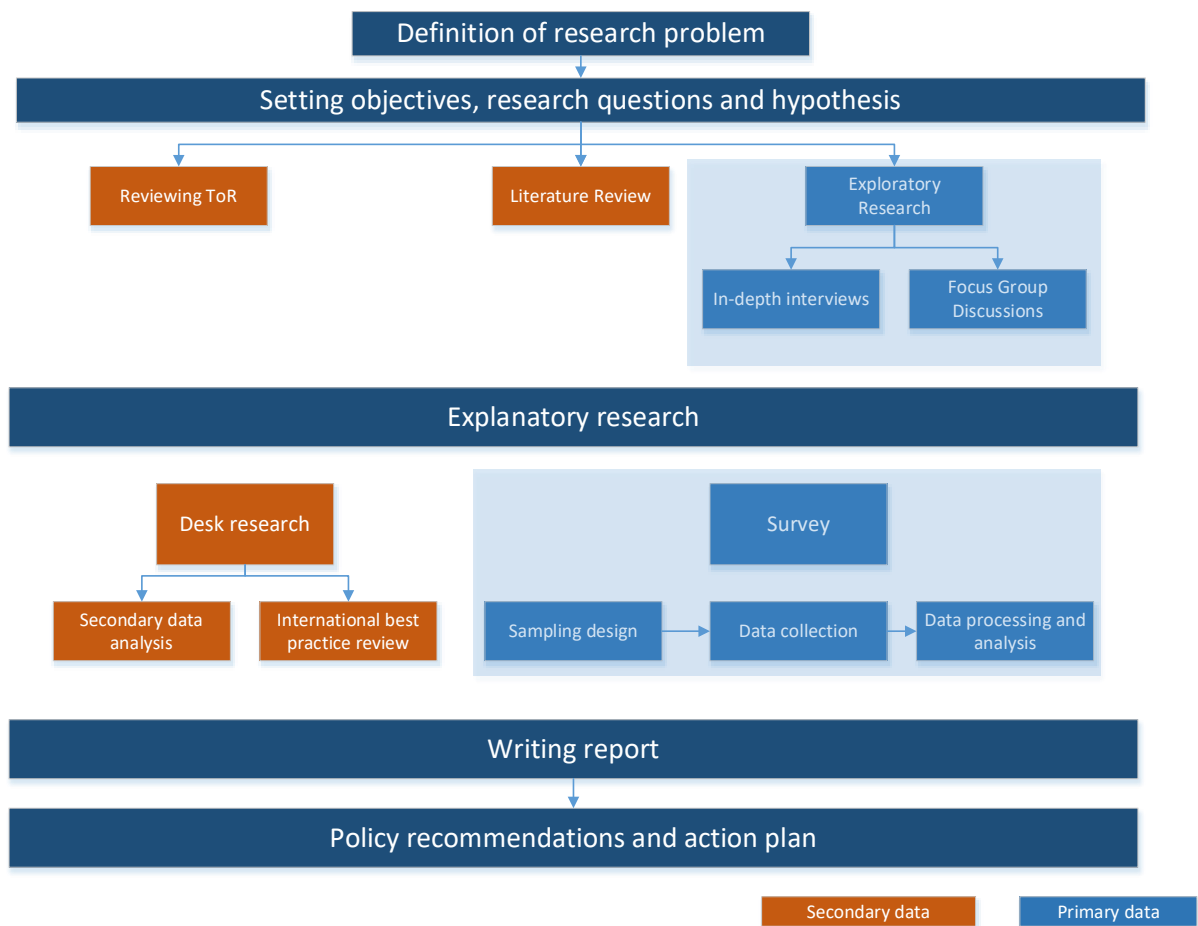
66. JP RWEE, “Good Practice Information Sheet”, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3CI6htq>
67. SDA, “Study on pasture management issues and their causality in the Republic of Armenia”, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3T0VrFp>
68. “Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress Towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women”, IFAD, <https://bit.ly/3ZBVw5B>, accessed 13.01.2023
69. “Final evaluation of the Kyrgyzstan Joint UN Women/ FAO/ IFAD/ WFP Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women”, <https://bit.ly/3GCZcvl>
70. “USAID Supports Rural Women Entrepreneurs with over \$200,000 Worth of Equipment”, <https://bit.ly/3GBHXdh>, accessed 13.01.2023
71. “USAID Supports Karakalpakstan’s Women Entrepreneurs Reviving Cultural Heritage Industry”, September 27, USAID 2022, <https://bit.ly/3W5LM0F>, accessed 13.01.2023
72. “Improved Livelihoods and Nutrition in Tajikistan”, Chemonics, <https://bit.ly/3CHjov2>, accessed 13.01.2023
73. “She Is an Agripreneur: Enabling Female Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness”, Chemonics, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3QBrsmx>
74. “Tajikistan agriculture and water activity”, Feed the Future USAID initiative, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3HbC9cJ>
75. “EU and FAO support women in Georgia’s rural areas”, EU4Georgia, June 11, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3Xpljw5>, accessed 13.01.2023
76. “Food Heroes: Cultivating women farmers in Georgia”, UN, October 10, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3GYXFkG>, accessed 13.01.2023
77. Schuler, Hashemi, and Riley, 1997 “The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh’s fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use”, World Development journal, Volume 25, Issue 4, January 1997, Pages 563-575
78. Alkire, S., Meinzen-Dick, R., Peterman, A., et al., 2013 “The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index”, World Development journal, Volume 52, December 2013, Pages 71-91
79. Corroon, M., Speizer, I.S., Fotso, J.C., et al., 2014, “The role of gender empowerment on reproductive health outcomes in urban Nigeria”, Matern Child Health Journal, 2014 Jan,18(1), Pages 307-315
80. IndiKit, Indicator: Attitudes Towards Gender Equality, <https://bit.ly/3UrKS44>
81. Wegs, C., Creanga, A. A., Galavotti, C., and Wamalwa, E., 2016, “Community dialogue to shift social norms and enable family planning: an evaluation of the family planning results initiative in Kenya”, PloS One, 11(4), e0153907
82. Vannoy, D. and Cubbins, L., “Relative Socioeconomic Status of Spouses, Gender Attitudes, and Attributes, and Marital Quality Experienced by Couples in Metropolitan Moscow”, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 2001, 32(2), pages 195-217

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Methodology

Considering the given research problem and questions, the research team of Modex LLC developed the following research framework to comprehensively address them.

**Diagram 1. Research framework**



### Definition of research problem

Taking into account the lack of widely recognized definition of agripreneurship, the given study will utilize the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's definition<sup>177</sup> of entrepreneurship and will adapt to the subject area. **Thus, agripreneurship is any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business in the agriculture or related fields.**

In order to precisely identify women agripreneurs the scope of the agripreneurship sector is defined by NACE rev 2. In the frame of this study, the agripreneurship sector includes the following economic activities as it is set out in Table 1.1.

<sup>177</sup> GEM, "How GEM defines entrepreneurship", <https://rb.gy/zttxef>

**Table 1.1. The scope of agripreneurship by NACE rev. 2178**

| NACE code | Activity                                                                                           |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | <b>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</b>                                                           |
| A01       | Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities                                 |
| A02       | Forestry and logging                                                                               |
| A03       | Fishing and aquaculture                                                                            |
|           | <b>Agritourism<sup>179</sup></b>                                                                   |
| I55       | Accommodation                                                                                      |
| I56       | Food and beverage service activities                                                               |
| R93.2     | Amusement and recreation activities                                                                |
|           | <b>Related activities</b>                                                                          |
| C10       | Manufacture of food products                                                                       |
| C11       | Manufacture of beverages                                                                           |
| G46.2     | Wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco in specialized stores                                     |
| G46.3     | Wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco                                                           |
| G47.76    | Retail sale of flowers, plants, seeds, fertilizers, pet animals and pet food in specialized stores |
|           | Other related activities                                                                           |

### Setting objectives, research questions and hypotheses

Taking into account the objectives set out for this assignment, the research team conducted literature review and exploratory research to identify hypotheses. In the frame of exploratory research, the research team utilized qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

### Exploratory research

#### In-depth interviews

The research team conducted 8 in-depth interviews with regional NGOs, development organizations with gender development project portfolio, financial institutions with focus in agriculture, representatives of the Ministry of Economy. The list of key informants was identified by the research team taking into account the relevancy of these institutions and active engagement in the field.

#### Focus group discussions

The research team conducted focus group discussions with 2 women groups from rural settlements (21-63 age group, agripreneurs, non-agripreneurs). Prior to conducting FDGs the research team developed a methodology with objectives, topics and participant selection criteria and reviewed it from the gender perspective. The facilitator of focus groups recorded

<sup>178</sup> Eurostat, NACE rev. 2., <https://rb.gy/oigqea>

<sup>179</sup> Agritourism is a form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner. Source: USDA, <https://rb.gy/djg3cx>

the discussions with consent from the participants and prepared a summary for each FDG. In total three FGDs were held with 6-8 participants in each group (Table 1.2)

**Table 1.2. Focus group discussions by regions**

| Location            | Group type        | Number of participants | Involvement in migration, 2015-2020 | Date       |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Ararat, Poqr Vedi   | Non- agripreneurs | 7                      | <10%                                | 24.06.2022 |
| Shirak, Mets Parni  | Non- agripreneurs | 6                      | >10%                                | 27.06.2022 |
| Tavush, Noyemberyan | Agripreneurs      | 8                      | <10%                                | 04.08.2022 |

Diversity in marital status, existence of children and persons in need of continuous care was considered when selecting the FGD participants. Considering the importance of migration patterns of population on the role of women in the society, the regions (then settlements) were selected based on the level of migration involvement of households.

Based on the ToR review, literature review and exploratory research the following hypotheses were set out for further testing in the frame of explanatory research:

- Hypothesis 1. Women who have support of their family members demonstrate a higher level of economic engagement compared with women who do not have support of their family.
- Hypothesis 2. Women with vocational and higher educational backgrounds are more inclined to be economically active compared to women with lower educational backgrounds.
- Hypothesis 3. Women prone to gender equality values have higher economic engagement compared to women resistant to gender equity values.
- Hypothesis 4. Women with higher economic engagement are more aware of their inheritance rights compared to those with lower economic engagement.
- Hypothesis 5. Women with higher economic engagement are more involved in HH decision-making processes compared to women with lower economic engagement.
- Hypothesis 6. There is a positive correlation between women's economic engagement and perceived division of household labor.
- Hypothesis 7. Women overburdened with HH unpaid work are less inclined to have high economic engagement compared to women free of HH unpaid work.
- Hypothesis 8. Women free to use their time as they want are more inclined to have high economic engagement compared to women who are not.
- Hypothesis 9. Women's contribution to family support is positively correlated with the women's economic engagement index.
- Hypothesis 10. Women more prone to networking have higher economic engagement compared to women with limited networking capacity.
- Hypothesis 11. Women more prone to networking have higher economic engagement compared to women with limited networking capacity.
- Hypothesis 12. Women's mobility is positively associated with their economic engagement.

## **Explanatory research**

In the frame of explanatory research, the research team conducted desk research and face to face survey with probability sampling technique.

### **Desk research**

The research team conducted a comprehensive desk research to present socio-economic overview of Armenia from gender perspectives, agricultural sector overview, Armenia's performance regarding relevant SDG goals, international comparisons and international best practice regarding women agripreneurship development.

The research team conducted desk research by gathering secondary data from local and international sources, including from the following datasets, publications and international rankings:

- The WB's Gender Data Portal,
- WEF, Data on global gender gap
- RA Statistical Committee, Agricultural Census 2014
- UN Women, ARMSTAT, "Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap and Gender Inequality in the Labour Market in Armenia", 2020
- USAID, "Armenia: Gender Analysis Report 2019"
- IFC, "Women entrepreneurship study in Armenia", 2021
- America CJSC, "Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2019/ 2020 Report on Armenia"
- ADB, "Armenia: Country Gender Assessment 2019"
- Aramayis Dallakyan, Rafael Bakhtavoryan, "Analysis of Factors Impacting Rural Women's Labor Force Participation in Armenia"
- Publications of Statistical Committee of the RA
- UN Gender Inequality Index
- WEF Global Gender Gap Index
- WB Global Employment Gap Index
- UN Gender Development Index
- Other relevant sources.

### **Survey**

The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews among the rural female population aged 21 to 63 from 07 January to 02 February 2023. The data was collected through a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) tool using tablet devices through a survey platform.

**Sampling:** The research team used annual data published by the Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia for the sample design. As of January 1, 2022, the total target population includes 336,434 women in the rural communities of the ten regions of the RA, from which a sample of 780 interviewees was designed (confidence level - 95%, confidence interval/marginal error - 3.5%) using a multistage probability sampling technique. A total of 780 interviews were conducted. Stratification was done by age groups and regions following the Proportionate to Population Size (PPS) approach (Table 1.3).

**Table 1.3. Number of interviews per regions and age groups of women**

| Regions     | From 21 to 35 | From 36 to 50 | From 51 to 63 | Total |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Aragatsotn  | 29            | 22            | 20            | 71    |
| Ararat      | 54            | 43            | 40            | 137   |
| Armavir     | 54            | 43            | 39            | 136   |
| Gegharkunik | 48            | 37            | 31            | 116   |
| Kotayk      | 33            | 27            | 25            | 85    |
| Lori        | 24            | 19            | 19            | 62    |
| Shirak      | 29            | 21            | 21            | 71    |
| Syunik      | 13            | 10            | 8             | 31    |
| Tavush      | 18            | 16            | 14            | 48    |
| Vayots Dzor | 9             | 7             | 7             | 23    |
| Total       | 311           | 245           | 224           | 780   |

**Step 1.** The sample size was distributed by administrative regions (marzes) of Armenia, so that the data were collected throughout all the regions in the country keeping the representativeness.

**Step 2.** Each stratum within each region was divided into clusters. Each of 925 rural settlements in Armenia, classified per region, were divided into three parts (1. beginning, 2 center, 3 end), thus dividing the rural areas of Armenia into 2775 clusters.

**Step 3.** The number of interviews conducted per cluster did not exceed 10 and not less than 7. PSUs (Primary Sampling Units)/clusters within each stratum of each region were selected randomly from the whole list of clusters of the strata. The number of PSUs/clusters was selected within a stratum depending on the number of interviews to be conducted in the strata, and the interview number allowed in one cluster.

**Step 4.** After completion of 70% of the survey the data was checked, and a necessary soft quota was used to allow the sample to vary by +/- 15%. The soft quota was based on strata and age.

**Step 5.** For the selection of households (HH) within the identified PSUs the random walk procedure was imposed. The starting points within each PSU were given to enumerators; after finding the starting point they walked using the right-hand method walk (always go to the right) by leaving 2 households and selecting the 3rd one for knocking the door.

**Step 6.** The respondents for the interview were selected from the female household members aged 21-63 permanently residing in the given household. If there were more than one potential respondents in the HH then the “Next Birthday” method was used. In case of the first contact if the desired respondent was not at home, the enumerator came back to the same household again.

**Survey tool:** Survey questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives, questions and hypotheses, covering the following aspects:

- Demographics
- Present, past and potential entrepreneurial activities among women
- Gender Roles, Responsibilities, and Time Use
- Women mobility

- Cultural Norms and Beliefs
- Access to and Control over Assets and Resources
- Patterns of Power and Decision-making
- GBV issues

**Quality control:** Survey data was collected through the CAPI tool, which saved time for the data entry process and decreased the likelihood of entry and logical errors. The field quality control was conducted through four stages based on ESOMAR/ISO standards, including 1) silent recording (scripted in the CAPI software, 600 interviews were silently recorded, 180 out of which were listened to by the control team; 2) Telephone back call control (if necessary/upon quality specialist request); (60 interviews); 3) GPS data control (upon needed); 4) Logical control (implemented for 780 interviews). In total, the quality of 240 interviews was verified by random selection. Overall, 30% of the interviews conducted in each PSU were checked.

**Data analysis:** Data analysis was constructed around different concepts employed in the study to explore the interrelations of women's economic engagement and gender aspects of women's life. Descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, central tendency measures, etc.) and inferential statistical methods (mean comparisons, correlation analysis, etc.) were used, especially in regard to confounding factors (gender, age, education, region, etc.). The association/correlation with identified confounding factors was tested for individual variables and indexes to understand whether confounding factors significantly affect the variables and indexes.

The analysis per confounding factors were performed for seven criteria: sex of the head of household (male/female)<sup>180</sup>, age groups of respondents (from 21 to 35, from 36 to 50 and from 51 to 63), education (basic or secondary, vocational, high and postgraduate), economic status of the families (low, middle, upper)<sup>181</sup>, family type (nuclear, large), the parental status of women (has children, child-free) and area of living (Northern, Central and Southern regions of the country)<sup>182</sup><sup>183</sup>.

The interrelations between different scales and women's economic engagement have been assessed through correlation analysis. All variables have been tested against normality criteria, and respective statistical tests have been selected according to the test results.

Sets of variables measuring theoretical concepts have been identified through reliability tests, particularly the Tau-equivalent reliability test (Cronbach's alpha test or coefficient alpha) was applied. Cronbach's alpha test is used when assessing the internal consistency of the unobservable constructs; in other words, it gives an understanding of to what extent the

---

<sup>180</sup> The cases when the respondents did not mention someone specific as a head of the household have been excluded from the confounding factors' analysis

<sup>181</sup> "Low" income group includes the respondents who provided "Income is not sufficient for food" and "Income is sufficient solely for food, not for clothes" responses to the question "Which of the following best describes your family's economic situation?" The middle-income group includes those whose income is sufficient for food and clothes but is not enough for expensive items such as a refrigerator or a washing machine. The "High" income group include those who mentioned that they could afford to buy some valuable items such as a refrigerator or a washing machine, or they can afford to buy anything they need.

<sup>182</sup> Northern regions include Shirak, Lori and Tavush; Central regions include Aragatsotn, Ararat, Armavir, Kotayq and Gegharkuniq, and South regions include Vayots Dzor and Syunik.

<sup>183</sup> Hereinafter, the analysis per confounding factors has been conducted per specified seven factors. Only results of the factors demonstrating statistically significant differences are reported. In case the results for any of the factors is not presented in the report it indicates that respective test has been performed which however, did not show any significant differences per groups.

individual items are measuring the same construct. The items that reduce Cronbach's alpha test results have been excluded from the calculation of final indexes.

During statistical analysis, as multiple tests were simultaneously performed on a single data set, the study took into account Bonferroni correction for P-value applying  $p < 0.01$  threshold instead of  $p < 0.05$ . This criterion is used to reduce the risks of receiving false-positive results (type I errors). For the mean comparison tests, only factors performing statistically significant results are reported.

The number of observations for analyzed data and groups is reported. For the cases when a reported number of observations is less than the sample size (780), "difficult to answer" or "refuse to answer" options are deducted, and the percent data are calculated accordingly.

### **Main concepts and scales employed in the study**

Based on the literature review and considering research questions, as well as country context, the study has employed and adopted several concepts and scales related to gender equality and women empowerment as follows:

**Women's Economic Engagement (WEE):** Research literature suggests various definitions and tools for measuring women's economic engagement or empowerment with no universally agreed-upon approach or methodology<sup>184</sup>. However, the most used approaches have certain overlaps that include but are not limited to consideration of women's access to assets and resources, women's ability to make life choices and involvement in decision-making. There are also indexes designed specifically for measuring women's empowerment in agriculture, e.g. Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), which assesses the empowerment of women in five domains: decisions about agricultural production, access to and decision-making power about productive resources, control of the use of income, leadership in the community, and time allocation<sup>185</sup>.

Based on various definitions and measurement tools, the research team developed a special metric and assessed **Women's Economic Engagement (WEE)** across the following three domains and ten questions:

- 1) Engagement in business activity. which considers women's current, past entrepreneurial activities and intentions to start a business.** Namely, this domain takes into consideration whether women: 1) currently alone or with others, own a business that they help to manage, they are self-employed or sell goods or provide services; 2) target such activity in the future; 3) had performed such activities in last 24 months but have terminated them; and 4) currently manage seasonal or permanent workers.
- 2) Access to assets and resources -** This domain has been constructed around questions included under Economic Security Scale<sup>186</sup> covering three dimensions: 1)

---

<sup>184</sup> E.g. Anand, M., Mecagni, A., and Piracha, M. "Practical Tools and Frameworks for Measuring Agency in Women's Economic Empowerment, The SEEP Network", 2019; Bolis, M., and Hughes, C. "Women's Economic Empowerment and Domestic Violence: Links and lessons for practitioners working with intersectional approaches.", Oxfam, 2015; Buvinic, M., "Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: Overview," Data2X., 2017 etc.

<sup>185</sup> Alkire, S., Meinzen-Dick, R., Peterman, A., Quisumbing, A., Seymour, G. and Vaz, A., "The Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index, World Development" 52 (2013): 71-91.

<sup>186</sup> Source: Schuler, SR, SM Hashemi, and AP Riley. 1997. The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh's fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use. World Development, 25(4): 563-75.

receiving money/income that women can control independently at their own discretion (referred as Economic Freedom Measure)<sup>187</sup>; 2) owning land, house or any productive assets; 3) having savings at their disposal.

- 3) **Knowledge and capacities** - This domain considers women's 1) involvement in online or offline courses related to business management, marketing or related subjects; 2) self-assessment of the level of knowledge for establishing and managing a businesses; 3) cooperation with other organizations, such as suppliers, salespoints, being, member of business associations, etc. (Table 1.4.)

**Table 1.4. Domains and questions included in the Women's Economic Engagement Scale**

| Domain                          | Question N                                     | Question                                                                                                                                                                               | Yes | No |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Engagement in business activity | Question 1                                     | Do you currently, alone or with others, own a business that you help to manage, or are you self-employed or do you sell goods or provide services?                                     | 1   | 0  |
|                                 | Question 2                                     | Are you currently trying to start a new business, either alone or with others, including becoming self-employed or selling goods or services to others?                                | 1   | 0  |
|                                 | Question 3                                     | In the past 24 months, have you sold, terminated or otherwise alienated any business you owned and operated, including self-employment, or the sale of goods or provision of services? | 1   | 0  |
|                                 | Question 4                                     | Does the woman manage seasonal or permanent workers?                                                                                                                                   | 1   | 0  |
| Access to assets and resources  | Question 5                                     | Do you receive money/income that you can control independently at your own discretion?                                                                                                 | 1   | 0  |
|                                 | Question 6                                     | Do you, in your own name, own any land, house or any productive assets                                                                                                                 | 1   | 0  |
|                                 | Question 7                                     | Do you have any savings at your disposal?                                                                                                                                              | 1   | 0  |
| Knowledge and capacities        | Question 8                                     | Have attended courses in business management, marketing or related subjects, or received online training on similar subjects                                                           | 1   | 0  |
|                                 | Question 9                                     | Do you believe you have sufficient knowledge for establishing and managing a business?                                                                                                 | 1   | 0  |
|                                 | Q<br>u<br>e<br>s<br>t<br>i<br>o<br>n<br>1<br>0 | Do you cooperate with other organizations, for example, you have regular suppliers, salespoints, you are a member of business associations, etc.                                       | 1   | 0  |

All variables were measured as binary variables with a yes/no option ("yes" option scored as "1" and "no" option scored as "0"). The composite index has been calculated as the

<sup>187</sup> Source: Corroon M, Speizer IS, Fotso JC, Akiode A, Saad A, Calhoun L, Irani L. The role of gender empowerment on reproductive health outcomes In urban Nigeria. *Matern Child Health J.* 2014; 18: 307-315, <https://gendermetrics.popcouncil.org/scale/economic-freedom-measure/>

sum of “yes” options with equal weights. Accordingly, the composite index is a variable ranging from 0 to 10 score, where 0 means no economic engagement at all, 10 means high level of economic engagement.

**Attitude Toward Gender Equality and Support for Traditional Gender Roles:**

Attitude toward gender equality and support for traditional gender roles has been measured through a combination of several variables employed in two well-known gender-equity scales: Attitude Towards Gender Equality Scale and Support<sup>188</sup> for Traditional Gender Roles Scale (Male dominance)<sup>189</sup>. Through a combination of two scales, the following items have been identified as relevant to the country’s context and were applied during the survey: 1) people should be treated the same regardless of their gender (reverse coded); 2) tasks in the house should not be assigned by gender; 3) the main responsibility of a father is to provide money for his children; 4) some types of work are not suitable for women; 5) mothers should only work only if necessary; 6) it is mother's responsibility to take care of the children; 7) a man should have the final say about decisions in his home; 8) a woman must tolerate being beaten by her husband to keep her family together; 9) only when a woman has a child is she a real woman.

All individual variables under the attitude toward gender equality and support for traditional gender roles scale have been measured through a 5-level Likert scale where “1” means “strongly disagree” with the given gender stereotype, and “5” means “strongly agree”. The internal reliability of the scale has been assessed through Cronbach's Alfa test, the result of which suggested dropping three questions (question 1, 2 and 4)<sup>190</sup>. The scale was constructed by summing the item scores and dividing them by the number of items. The final value of the index ranges from 1 to 5, where “1” means that women are for gender equity and do not support traditional gender roles and “5” means they support traditional gender roles.

**Perceived Division of Household Labor:** Study employed and adopted the Perceived Division of Household Labor Scale, which is originally based on eleven questions asking who typically performs a variety of household tasks<sup>191</sup>. For this study division of labor in the family has been measured through 5 questions as follows: 1) shopping for food; 2) preparation of the evening meal; 3) repairing things around the flat; 4) cleaning the flat and washing and ironing the clothes. The following options were proposed: 1) me alone; 2) me and my husband together; 3) my husband; 4) another female HH member; 5) another male HH member and “other” option.

The consolidated index has been developed as an average value of the scores for each individual item as follows: case, when women cover the HH work alone are scored with 0 points; cases, when women receive support from other HH member(s), are scored with 1 point and if other HH members solely cover the works are scored with 2 points. The final value of the score ranges from 0 to 2, where “0” means women mainly cover all HH tasks, “2” means other HH members cover proposed HH tasks.

---

<sup>188</sup> Link to source: <https://www.indikit.net/indicator/3805-attitudes-towards-gender-equality>

<sup>189</sup> Source: Wegs, C., Creanga, A. A., Galavotti, C., & Wamalwa, E. (2016). Community dialogue to shift social norms and enable family planning: an evaluation of the family planning results initiative in Kenya. *PloS One*, 11(4), e0153907.

<sup>190</sup> Final Cronbach’s Alfa value after dropping two items equals 0.703 which indicates an acceptable level of internal reliability of the scale

<sup>191</sup> Source: Vannoy, D. & Cubbins, L. Relative Socioeconomic Status of Spouses, Gender Attitudes, and Attributes, and Marital Quality Experienced by Couples in Metropolitan Moscow. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*. 2001; 32(2): 195-217; <https://gendermetrics.popcouncil.org/scale/perceived-division-of-household-labor-scale/#>

**Involvement in HH Decision-Making:** Involvement of women in HH decision-making has been assessed through women's participation in decision-making regarding 1) major household purchases and 2) everyday household shopping. The following options were proposed: 1) Women alone; 2) Husband; 3) Spouses together; 4) Another HH member; 5) All HH members together. The index for the Involvement in HH Decision-Making was calculated as the sum of two items with the following scoring: women receive 2 points if they are involved in decision-making alone, 1 point if with other HH members, and 0 points if women are excluded from the decision-making. The final score for the Involvement in HH Decision-Making ranges from 0 to 4 points, where "0" means women are excluded from the decision-making regarding HH purchases, "4" means that women alone make decisions.

**Openness towards Social Interaction and Access to Networks:** The study employed two concepts to explore the interrelation of women's capacities for social interaction and access to networks with their economic engagement: Openness towards Social Interaction and Access to Networks.

Adopting the Openness to Social Interaction concept, the study employed five variables to measure to what extent women are prone to social interaction, offering five hypothetical situations primarily related to entrepreneurial activities in the agriculture sector, as follows: 1) Women will establish contact with a well-known specialist through a social network in order to receive professional advice in any field that interests you; 2) Women will ask their acquaintances how to get products more affordable; 3) Women will contact the directors of sales points or stores operating outside their community to display their product there; 4) Women will go to a non-governmental organization or offices that support small businesses to receive a consultation; 5) Women will arrange with their fellow villagers to do the cultivation or harvesting if another member of the household cannot do it. Women have been asked to assess to what extent it is like that they will do the proposed activities through a 5-scale Likert scale, where "1" means "not likely at all", and "5" means "very likely". Composite Openness to Social Interaction Index has been calculated as an average value of all five individual variables.

Composite Openness to Social Interaction Index is a variable ranging from 1 to 5, where "1" means that women are "not likely at all" to do the activity in question, and "5" means they are "very likely". To test internal reliability of the scale Cronbach's alpha test was applied. The value for the initial reliability equals 0.756, indicating considerable internal reliability of the scale. All five variables demonstrated a good ability to measure the same construct. None of the variables has been excluded from the composite index.

The research team designed an Access to Network Index to find out whether women have acquaintances or organizations they can turn to personally in case they need help or have problems, for example, with 1) getting a business or agricultural loan; 2) getting professional training in any field and 3) transporting a large volume of agricultural products from their community to the capital city. Each variable has been measured with binary "Yes"/ "No" values. Composite Access to Network index has been calculated as a sum of "Yes" options. The index is a variable ranging from 0 to 3, where "0" means that women do not have access

to any of the proposed networks and “3” means that women have access to all proposed networks.

**Women’s mobility:** To measure women's mobility, the study employed and adopted Women's mobility subscale measured under the Women Empowerment scale<sup>192</sup>. The objective of the scale is to measure women's empowerment, defined as the ability to exercise agency and acquire resources within a context of gender inequality, while the mobility subscale tends to tap into women's agency. The indicator is measured as a sum of the following items: 1) visiting alone or with someone a market or large commercial outlets in the city during the last year, 2) visiting financial institutions (such as banks) and 3) visiting entertainment or cultural places (cinema, theater, concert, museum, gallery or other similar places). Each respondent was given 1 point for each place she had visited and an additional point if she had ever gone there alone. The scale ranged from 0 to 6, where “0” means limited mobility and “6” means high level of mobility.

**Freedom of Family Domination:** In the GBV context, the study also employed the Freedom of Family Domination Concept measured as a composite subscale under the Women Empowerment Scale<sup>193</sup>. The original subscale employs four variables checking whether any of the events happened to women, three of which have been measured during this study as follows: 1) Husband/other family member took women’s money when they didn’t want them to; 2) Husband/other family member prevented women from visiting their parents or friends 3) Husband/other family member prevented them from working outside the home. A positive score is counted if none of the things happened to women and no score if for at least one of the events happened to them.

### **Study Limitations**

Quantitative data analysis implies the following limitation:

- The final distribution of the number of interviews per respondent’s age group was slightly different from the targeted sample. Accordingly, data weighting per age group was applied. The comparison of results of weighted and unweighted databases did not show any significant deviations. Data reported in Chapters 5 and 6 are performed for the weighted database. Slight differences in the frequency of data distribution and the percent values at the decimal level are due to the application of the weighted database in the analysis.
- For 69.7% of the cases, someone else was present during the interview, either throughout the entire time or for some period (Table 1.5.)<sup>194</sup>. However, for 93.5% of the cases, the interviewers reported that, to their best understanding, the respondent’s answers would have been the same if no one had been present during the survey.

---

<sup>192</sup> Source: Schuler, SR, SM Hashemi, and AP Riley. 1997. The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh’s fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use. *World Development*, 25(4): 563–75.

<sup>193</sup> Source: Schuler, SR, SM Hashemi, and AP Riley. 1997. The influence of changing roles and status in Bangladesh’s fertility transition: Evidence from a study of credit programs and contraceptive use. *World Development*, 25(4): 563–75.

<sup>194</sup> At the end of the interviews, the interviewers were asked to mark whether the interviews had been conducted with the interviewee alone in the room or if a third party was present during the interview.

**Table 1.5. Was someone present during the interview? (n=780)**

| Options                                    | N   | %     |
|--------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Yes, throughout the survey                 | 255 | 32.7% |
| Yes, mostly                                | 149 | 19.1% |
| Yes, during less than a half of the survey | 71  | 9.1%  |
| Yes, during only a few questions           | 69  | 8.8%  |
| No                                         | 236 | 30.3% |

### **Ethical Considerations**

When carrying out survey, in-depth interviews and focus groups discussions, research team was guided with the following ethical consideration and principles:

- **Informed consent:** Verbal Consent from survey respondents, interviewees and participants of focus group discussions was obtained after explaining the aim and objectives of the study, the procedures they need to pass along, and the possible benefits and risks.
- **Voluntary participation:** Participation in the survey, interviews and group discussions was voluntary, and this was clearly mentioned in the introduction. The respondents could quit involvement in the survey, interviews or group discussions at any time. Besides, they were free to refuse to answer any question they disliked.
- **Confidentiality:** The names of respondents and participants of group discussions are not disclosed anywhere, and the information provided by them is confidential. The data was analyzed generally and will not be transferred to third parties.

Modex LLC and IPM LLC were responsible for data collection, processing and analysis. After analysis and report write-up databases were handed over to the Center for Agribusiness and Rural Development (CARD) Foundation. CARD is responsible for data storage, protection, and management according to their internal policies and procedures.

**Appendix 2. List of Key Informants**

| N   | Organization of a key informants         | Sector    | Date       |
|-----|------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1.  | Ministry of Economy (Agricultural block) | Public    | 18.07.2022 |
| 2.  | CARD Agrocredit UCO                      | Financial | 22.06.2022 |
| 3.  | Finca UCO, Armavir branch                | Financial | 24.06.2022 |
| 4.  | AGBU                                     | NGO       | 08.07.2022 |
| 5.  | Women Support Center                     | NGO       | 04.07.2022 |
| 6.  | World Vision Armenia                     | NGO       | 18.07.2022 |
| 7.  | Strategic Development Agency             | NGO       | 23.06.2022 |
| 8.  | SOSE Women's NGO                         | NGO       | 14.07.2022 |
| 9.  | Armenian Young Women's Association       | NGO       | 08.07.2022 |
| 10. | Armavir Development Center               | NGO       | 01.07.2022 |

### Appendix 3. Key Characteristics of Study Population

The survey involved 39.9% of women aged 21 to 35, 31.4% aged 36 to 50 and 28.7% aged 51 to 63. The average age of women in the sample was 41.5 (median value=40, SD=12.2). As for education, half of the women (50.3%) involved in the survey had middle or high school education (grades 10-12), 28.7% had vocational, and only 17.4% had a high or postgraduate educational background. Overall, 37.7% of women do not have a job and do not look for one, while 21.5% are unemployed. Employees in the state sector comprise 12.7% of the sample (among them, 71.3% work full-time and 28.7% part-time), and 8.5% are employed in the private sector (among them, 62.4% work full-time and 37.6% - part-time). The number of self-employed women with and without permanent employees makes up 12.8% and 1.9% of the sample, respectively (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1. Key characteristics of women involved in the survey**

| Demographics                                    | N   | %     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| <b>Age groups</b>                               |     |       |
| From 21 to 35                                   | 311 | 39.9% |
| From 36 to 50                                   | 245 | 31.4% |
| From 51 to 63                                   | 224 | 28.7% |
| <b>Education</b>                                |     |       |
| Basic (grades 5-9)                              | 29  | 3.7%  |
| Middle/High school (grades 10-12)               | 392 | 50.3% |
| Vocational                                      | 224 | 28.7% |
| Higher education (bachelor)                     | 110 | 14.2% |
| Higher education (masters, diploma)             | 22  | 2.9%  |
| Postgraduate (PhD., doctorate, residency, etc.) | 2   | 0.3%  |
| <b>Primary employment status</b>                |     |       |
| Do not have job and not looking for             | 294 | 37.7% |
| Unemployed                                      | 167 | 21.5% |
| Self-employed without permanent employees       | 100 | 12.8% |
| Employee in state sector                        | 99  | 12.7% |
| Employee in private sector                      | 66  | 8.5%  |
| Self-employed with permanent employees          | 15  | 1.9%  |
| Unemployed due to disability                    | 12  | 1.6%  |
| Pensioner                                       | 10  | 1.3%  |
| Student                                         | 9   | 1.1%  |
| Other                                           | 7   | 0.9%  |

**Marital and parental status of women:** The vast majority of the women involved in the survey were married (88.4%). Only 2.9% of women surveyed have never been married, while 8.7% were divorced or widowed. More than half of women living in rural areas married from 18 to 21 years old (59.9%). Only 7.7% of women were married after 26 years old, while 11.4% got married being underage (from 14 to 17 years old). On average, women married at 20: the average age of marriage for women from rural settlements involved in the survey is 20.64 (median value=20, SD=3.45). In addition, the vast majority of women (92.7%) have children; on average, women have 2.49 children (median value=2, SD=0.90). On average, women had their first child at 21: the average age of having a first child is 21.8 (median=21, SD=3.51). In total, 56.7% of women had their first child being 18 to 21 years old (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2. Marital and parental status of women**

| Key Characteristics               | N   | %     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| <b>Marital status</b>             |     |       |
| Married                           | 689 | 88.4% |
| Widow                             | 41  | 5.3%  |
| Divorced                          | 26  | 3.4%  |
| Never married                     | 23  | 2.9%  |
| <b>Age of marriage</b>            |     |       |
| From 14 to 17                     | 86  | 11.4% |
| From 18 to 21                     | 453 | 59.9% |
| From 22 to 25                     | 158 | 21.0% |
| From 26 to 30                     | 42  | 5.5%  |
| 31 and older                      | 17  | 2.2%  |
| <b>Parental status</b>            |     |       |
| Yes                               | 723 | 92.7% |
| No                                | 57  | 7.3%  |
| <b>Number of children (n=723)</b> |     |       |
| One child                         | 78  | 10.8% |
| 2 children                        | 306 | 42.3% |
| 3 children                        | 271 | 37.4% |
| 4 children                        | 53  | 7.3%  |
| 5 and more children               | 17  | 2.0%  |
| <b>Age of having first child</b>  |     |       |
| From 14 to 17                     | 15  | 2.1%  |
| From 18 to 21                     | 410 | 56.7% |
| From 22 to 25                     | 204 | 28.2% |
| From 26 to 30                     | 73  | 10.1% |
| 31 and older                      | 21  | 2.9%  |

**Head of the Household:** For 13.0% of the cases the respondent was the head of the household (HHH). For the majority of the cases, the HHH was the respondents' husband (61.0%), for the rest 26.0% of the cases other HH members. In the total sample 75.4% HH were male-headed and 21.0% were female headed. There were cases (3.6%) when women specified that no one is considered to be the head of the HH or both spouses are equally heads of the HH. Almost equal number of women live in nuclear or large families, 49.9% and 50.1% respectively (Table 3.3) .

**Table 3.3. Key Characteristics of the Head of the Households**

| Key Characteristics                                      | N   | %     |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| <b>Sex of the Head of the Household</b>                  |     |       |
| Female                                                   | 164 | 21.0% |
| Male                                                     | 588 | 75.4% |
| Equal/No head of household                               | 28  | 3.6%  |
| <b>Head of the Household relation to the respondents</b> |     |       |
| Husband                                                  | 475 | 61.0% |
| Respondent                                               | 101 | 13.0% |
| Other                                                    | 202 | 26.0% |
| <b>Type of family</b>                                    |     |       |

|         |     |       |
|---------|-----|-------|
| Nuclear | 389 | 49.9% |
| Large   | 391 | 50.1% |

**Economic situation of the households.** Overall, 11% of women reported that they do not have enough money to buy food, while 31% have enough money for food but not clothes. Half of the women have enough money for food and clothes but not for expensive items like a refrigerator, washing machines, etc. In contrast, 9% of women reported that their families could afford to buy expensive items, or they could buy anything they wanted (Table 3.4).

**Table 3.4. Economic situation of the households**

| Key Characteristics                                                                                            | N   | %   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|
| The money is not enough to buy food                                                                            | 85  | 11% |
| The money is enough to buy food, but not clothes                                                               | 237 | 31% |
| The money is enough for food and clothes, but not for expensive items like refrigerator, washing machine, etc. | 379 | 49% |
| We can buy expensive items like a refrigerator or a washing machine                                            | 47  | 6%  |
| We can afford to buy anything we want                                                                          | 27  | 3%  |