

## **SUPPORT TO VET REFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN PROJECT**

*Inception Phase*



**GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING SECTOR IN UZBEKISTAN**  
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*«If you educate a son, you will have an educated man. If you educate a daughter, you will have an educated woman, an educated family and an educated society»*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is one of the seventeen goals of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality is a fundamental human right and necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Unfortunately, gender inequality practices still occur in nearly all fields of development; one of which is the education development. So, providing women and girls with equal access to education is very important and will fuel the benefits for humanity at large.

Participation in formal compulsory education in Uzbekistan is almost gender balanced. However, there are differences in the choice of professions and reservations of the labour market to employ women in sectors that are traditionally conceived as “men-specific”, resulting in a lack of female role models and teachers in these sectors. Also, despite their educational achievements, women generally have poorer career prospects than men, including lower wages that can relate to the lower diversification across economic sectors. Gender differences should be considered in the implementation of education in technical vocational education and training (TVET) especially in vocational high schools so women and men can develop their potential without being inhibited by gender bias. One of the ways to overcome gender bias is implementing gender mainstreaming.

The following research aims to identify these gaps in TVET sector in Uzbekistan and provide concrete recommendations for Operational Phase of the project “Support to VET Reforms Project in Uzbekistan”, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation and implemented by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation (Helvetas)

Achieving social inclusion and gender equality in the VET sector requires recognition of the topic in VET governance and exemplary leadership by key stakeholders. The consultancy shall identify entry points and concrete examples for the project to bring the topic of gender and social inclusion on the agenda of ***employers and educational institutions to leverage good practices***, and across VET-related programs, with a specific link to the ongoing reform process of VET, in order that all women and men can “*find and retain an attractive and decent job in sectors with growth potential*”.

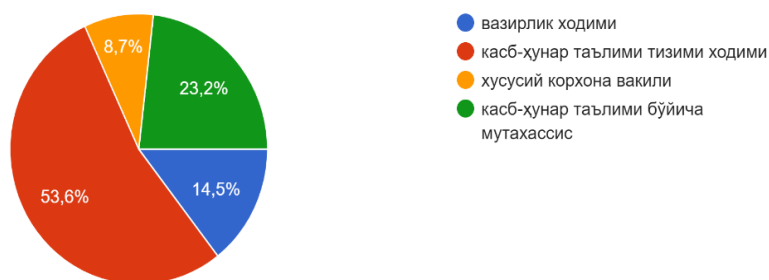
## II. METHODOLOGY

## **Methodological Approaches and Tools**

The report used the analysis of macro, meso, and micro levels of policy, engagement, and statistics which was received through following:

- The analysis of secondary literature consisting of reports from several International Organizations and think tanks, gap analysis of national and international legislation.
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with key experts working in this sector and representatives of the Ministries (Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations as well as the Ministry of higher and secondary specialized education, Ministry of Water Recourse Management).
- Quantitative survey. In order to conduct the gender assessment of the VET sector and examine the capacity building and potential for gender mainstreaming, a set of special questionnaires was designed and is attached in the Annex 1 and Annex 2. Questionnaires were composed mostly of closed questions, but several open- questions were added for receiving more comprehensive information from responders. The toolbox for the *quantitative survey* is composed of two questionnaires developed in English and translated into Russian and Uzbek. One type of the questionnaires targets students and the second targets those who organize and execute the education process. (See Diagram 1). The quantitative survey was conducted among the students, teachers, VET experts, VET providers and staff of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations as well as the Ministry of higher and secondary specialized education. In total, **255 responders** participated in the quantitative survey: **186** students and **69** representatives of the colleges, technical schools, VET experts, VET providers and relevant staff of three Ministries (Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations as well as the Ministry of higher and secondary specialized education, Ministry of Water Recourse Management). According to diagram below, 53,6% of respondents are teachers working in colleges and schools; 23,2% are VET specialist; 14,5% are Ministry staff; 8,7% are private company representatives.

*Diagram 1.*



## **Limitations**

The main study limitations concern accessing accurate gender statistics. The data provided from the State Committee on Statistics and its Gender Statistics website is limited. Up-to-date, reliable information and national statistics are unavailable to the general public. The severe gaps in knowledge and information in Uzbekistan are a major constraint to detailed gender analysis of TVET sector in

Uzbekistan. Therefore, the study will rely on the data from the reports of international organizations, National Gender Commission and available national data in Uzbekistan. COVID-19 related restrictions posed another constraint in meeting government bodies and travelling outside Tashkent. Most experts and ministry representatives were either sick or have not yet received a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the request to participate in the survey. Therefore, most interviews took place either online or by phone.

### III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Gender analysis of legislation in TVET sector

Uzbekistan is on the way of reforming of higher and vocational education system. The Decree<sup>1</sup> and the Resolution of the President of Uzbekistan on TVET published in January and February 2018 respectively established a new organization of the system of general, secondary specialized and vocational education. This reform aims at increasing the labour market relevance of VET, improving the employment of VET graduates, and contributing to the National Development Strategy priorities. The decrees stipulate that, starting from the academic year 2018-2019, young people will study eleven years in general education instead of nine years, as required in the past after which they can enrol in vocational education or University. It also establishes that professional colleges and technicums operate under and funded by ministries, departments, business associations, commercial banks and large enterprises - customers of personnel by industry. The previously compulsory three-years VET programmes will be shortened to either six months or two years and will focus primarily on the provision of professional skills. This decision demonstrates the government's desire to build a new, flexible TVET system accessible to all groups of the population and responsive to labour market demands<sup>2</sup>.

Another example of the government's desire to build a modernized TVET system is the decision to bring national vocational education standards in line with the requirements of the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), international qualification frameworks, organization of modular training, and recognition of national qualifications.

The Presidential Decree<sup>3</sup> was also issued upon the establishment of a National Commission which is responsible for further improvement of the vocational education system and reorganization of over 1,400 vocational colleges to maximize their effectiveness.

Recently, GoU introduced the system of vocational training for students of 9-11 grades with the Presidential resolution "On measures to further improve the system of training of personnel by working professions". According to the resolution, the following will be established:

- An additional 28 vocational training centres will start operating in the system of the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, focusing on adults that are unemployed or seek retraining.
- Short course training in sewing, cooking and confectionery, men's and women's hairdressing, computer literacy, basic accounting and entrepreneurship will be organized in 864 professional education points at mahalla level for their residents.

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<sup>1</sup> Decree of the President No UP-5313 "On measures to radically improve the system of general secondary, secondary specialized and vocational education" issued on 25/01/18

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, Ensuring lifelong learning for all in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan: Country Evidence and Policy Recommendations p. 26-29

<sup>3</sup> Decree of the President No UP-5313 "On measures to radically improve the system of general secondary, secondary specialized and vocational education" issued on 25/01/18

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- The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations will organize short-term courses of vocational training, foreign languages and entrepreneurial skills in 18 professional educational institutions under the jurisdiction of ministries and departments.

According to the resolution, teachers and Master of Industrial Training at “Ishga Marhamat” monocenters, vocational training centres and institutions will be equal in status with teachers and masters of industrial training in vocational educational institutions.

Apart from that, the Resolution introduces the position of Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour Relations for vocational training and development and the department for the organization of professional training and development of vocational qualifications has been established. It is planned to organize trainings for youth in the following areas: web development, graphic design, 3D modelling, digital programming, robotics, digital media and video game development. In addition, cooperatives will be established in fish farming, rabbit farming, poultry farming, beekeeping, horticulture, viticulture, sewing, and handicrafts.

However, all of these policies remain gender blind and do not mention the promotion of inclusion of women and girls in the TVET sector. There is no data on representation of women in bodies that participate in the formulation, implementation, and delivery of the national TVET strategy. The following table presents more examples of gender blind-policies.

<b>Examples of Gender-blind Policies</b>		
<b>Main legislative documents</b>	<b>Provision</b>	<b>Relevant Gender Issues</b>
The Decree of the President dated 26.01.2018 № up-5313 “On measures to radically improve the system of secondary, secondary specialized and vocational education”.	Presidential decree of January 26, 2018, No. UP-5313 established that from 2019/2020 academic year in professional colleges will accept only 11th grade graduates. At the same time, the maintenance of colleges from the state budget will last only until the completion of the training of students admitted in the 2017/2018 academic year. The educational institutions themselves will be transferred to the balance of ministries, departments, commercial banks, business associations and large enterprises.	While a number of issues related to vocational education and training sector (unqualified teaching staff, poorly equipped colleges, their remoteness) are listed in the document there is no account of the issues related to gender (such as girls’ poor attendance, underrepresentation in the workforce) and how they need to be resolved.
Presidential order (Decree) 02/03/2018 No. PP-3504 ‘On improving the activities of the Centre for Secondary Special and Professional Education of the Ministry of	Acts as an additional document for implementation of the Decree of the President dated 26.01.2018 № up-5313 “On measures to radically improve the system of secondary, secondary specialized and vocational education”. Provides for the creation of an Institute for innovative development, advanced training and retraining	Switching the vocational education system from compulsory free to contract-based will aggravate the existing gender inequality issues in the sector.

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<p>Higher and Secondary Special Education'</p>	<p>of pedagogical personnel of the vocational education system at the Centre under the Institute for advanced training and retraining of personnel of the system of secondary specialized, vocational education for the implementation of constant work to improve the structure and content of educational programs and retraining of the teaching staff of the system.</p> <p>It also establishes the system of contract-based enrolment of students to vocational education institutions starting from 2019-2020 academic year while mentioning the provision of grants for students from low-income backgrounds under the condition they will work in the regions for three years afterwards.</p>	<p>No provisions are made to increase the enrolment of girls in vocational education institutions such as grants, quotas, especially in non-traditional sectors.</p>
<p>Cabinet of Minister's order (Resolution) 13.05.2019 No. 394 'On measures to improve the system of professional training of qualified personnel in demand in the labour market'</p>	<p>Provides for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- organization in vocational colleges on the terms of public-private partnership of training mid-level specialists and personnel in blue-collar professions for large enterprises and clusters, as well as taking into account the real needs of the labour market.</li> <li>- organization of vocational training for the unemployed population, especially youth, in non-state vocational training centres for the unemployed population (hereinafter referred to as vocational training centres), accredited in accordance with the established procedure.</li> <li>- organization of activities based on modern standards of non-state competence assessment centres (hereinafter referred to as competency assessment centres), accredited in the prescribed manner.</li> <li>- annual placement by the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, taking into account the needs of the labour market, of the state order for vocational training of the unemployed population at the expense of the State Fund for the Promotion of Employment of the Republic of Uzbekistan, on the basis of direct contracts with vocational training</li> </ul>	<p>The order does not include gender targets or indicators for monitoring or evaluation purposes.</p>

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	<p>centres and other educational institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- introduction of the practice of issuing by competence assessment centres a certificate confirming the level of professional competence in a specific specialty (profession) and which is the basis for assigning qualification categories to workers' professions in accordance with the Classifier of the main positions of employees and workers' professions.</li> <li>- introduction of a mechanism for consistent improvement of the qualification level of mid-level specialists and workers.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	
<p>Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated September 6, 2019, No. UP-5812 “On additional measures to further improve the vocational education system”.</p>	<p>The Decree provides for carrying out consistent work in the country to reform the education system by training highly qualified personnel that meet the requirements of the labour market, implementation international standards for assessing the quality of education, creating effective mechanisms for introducing innovative scientific achievements into practice and implementing the tasks identified by the Action Strategy for five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021. Starting from the 2020/2021 academic year, a network of professional educational institutions has been created in the Republic of Uzbekistan, consisting of vocational schools, colleges and technical schools and relevant educational programs have been introduced into the system of primary, secondary and secondary specialized vocational education.</p>	<p>The decree does not specify any measures to engage women. There are no provisions stipulating enhanced role of women in the provision and management of TVET.</p>

## **2. Gender analysis of TVET and employment sector in Uzbekistan**

### *Participation in education*

Despite general gender parity in literacy and primary education, the prospects for women's development in Uzbekistan are limited by structural barriers that lead to reduced access to training, secondary vocational and higher education (especially for rural women), female predominance in informal and low-wage jobs, and lack of access to resources and control over them,



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be it production assets, information and knowledge or decision making at local and national levels<sup>4</sup>. In accordance with new legislative acts, gender-disaggregated data was collected across different areas of educational sector<sup>5</sup> starting from 2017-2018 school year by the State Statistics Committee, which allows to analyse the gender dynamics in these sub-sectors. Gender asymmetry is visible in the choice of study programme in vocational training institutions. In 2017-2018 academic year, girls accounted for 84.2% of humanities programme students (teaching, humanities and natural sciences, art, journalism). The share of girls in healthcare and social security was 81.1%. In STEM fields (production technology, engineering, architecture, construction, communications, information and telecommunication technologies) girls accounted for 42.9%; agriculture and water management: 19.2%; services sector (services, transport, environmental protection): 26.1%.

Approximately the same dynamics in choice of programme is observed at the beginning of 2018-2019 academic year. This asymmetry then contributes to the composition at the next level of education, i.e., the higher education.

	2017-2018		2018-2019	
	female	male	female	male
Humanities	84.2	15.8		
Health/social	81.1	18.9		
STEM	42.9	57.1		
etc				

The modest proportion of girls among vocational school students is due to the widespread prevalence of traditional gender roles and gender discrimination in access to education by families (especially the poor). Girls from poor families are increasingly being persuaded to marry early. And with a lack of funds, families prefer to pay for the education of their sons rather than their daughters.

Higher education significantly increases the likelihood of employment among women. However, there are still significant imbalances in higher education. Due to the relatively high cost of education in universities, families may give preference to sons over daughters. Recent figures show that the number of girls in tertiary education is only 37% of all students. Moreover, in the field of employment, young women are largely excluded from the labour market. After graduating from high school, 56% of young people aged 19-24 do not receive education, work or vocational training (NEET). NEET for women rises rapidly as they reach the age of 18 (from 1.7% to 69.0%) and reaches 74.0% for the 25-30-year-old cohort, while for men it usually remains lower (maximum 33, 5%) and decreases with age (up to 24.8%)<sup>6</sup>.

Gender asymmetry in higher education is also evident in the choice of study programme - girls dominate traditionally “female” areas such as health care and education, while young men are concentrated in technical disciplines such as finance, transport and communications, construction and engineering. The interviews conducted showed the problem of gender division of students by educational institutions, depending on the industry sector of the latter. Girls still make up the vast majority of students in colleges and technical schools that train specialists for health care, education, culture, which are the sectors of the national economy that are still highly feminized and, as a rule, low-paid. These data indicate that the current gender structure of students will continue to support the existing segregation in employment in the future.

<sup>4</sup> Uzbekistan. Voluntary National Review 2020. On the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Page 50

<sup>5</sup> Draft version Report of the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action, Uzbekistan, 2019

<sup>6</sup> Review.uz, Инвестиции в Образование Девочек и Занятость Женщин Укрепляют Экономику и Сокращают Неравенство – ЮНИСЕФ. Accessed July 7, 2021, <https://review.uz/post/investicii-v-obrazovanie-devochek-i-zanyatost-jenshin-ukreplyayut-ekonomiku-i-sokrashayut-neravenstvo-yunisef>.

### *Participation in labour market*

Gender inequalities in education translate to segregation in labour force participation. Women and girls continue to choose traditionally female dominated fields of career paths such as healthcare, teaching and the service industry, remain underrepresented in natural science and technological education, while men dominate in technical disciplines such as finance, transport and communication, construction and engineering. In Uzbekistan the labour market demonstrates clear gender segregation by industry. Women are widely represented in lower-paid public sector jobs (education, health and social services, culture, and arts), while men dominate in technical and other more profitable fields (construction, finance, transport, communications, industry, IT). More than 94.2% of those formally employed in construction and 92.8% of workers in transportation, information and communication are male. Women account for 76.6% of those employed in health care, social services and sports, and 75.6% of those employed in education, culture, arts and science. In agriculture, forestry and fisheries women account for 44.3%.

### *wages*

Women in both rural and urban areas are often employed in the informal sector. According to the data of World Bank and ILO, in 2019 women composed 40,1% of Uzbekistan's total labour force, their share in formal employment (45.7%) is lower than that of men (54.3%). Moreover, as noted in the Agri-Food Job Diagnostic<sup>7</sup>, women represent a substantial number of seasonal agriculture and low-paid jobs in the formal and informal sectors, and their average wage is lower than men's. In 2019, the average male wage was 4.3 million UZS, while the average female wage was 1.3 million UZS. Apart from that there is an obvious inequity between the women living in urban and rural areas. Seventy nine percent of Uzbekistan's poor live in rural areas. Women in the bottom 20 percent wealth quintile have the lowest employment rates amongst all Uzbek women<sup>8</sup>. The average salary for women in rural areas is less than half that paid to their urban counterparts. Data from the GoU's Listening to the Citizens of Uzbekistan (L2CU) survey finds that of those engaged in full-time work, women represent only 35 percent in urban areas and 27 percent in rural areas. While 60 percent of women in rural areas have general secondary education or beyond, only 8 percent attain a higher education. This figure significantly affects the likelihood of as well as the sectors of employment. Women with vocational or tertiary education are predominantly employed in public sector jobs with formal wages while women educated up to secondary level or lower, work in informal, low paying jobs. There is an overrepresentation of women in informal, seasonal, unregulated and part-time employment situations that are low-skill and labour intensive. Women make up only 5.4% of (8,105) of the heads of farms in Uzbekistan. They specialize in growing horticulture/viticulture - 36.3%; cotton - 35.5%; oilseeds/melons - 10%; vegetables - 7.7%; livestock - 6.2%; vegetable/melon - 4.4%.<sup>9</sup>

The sector of unpaid domestic/care work is rather gendered posing negative economic consequences. Women in rural areas are more likely to work in family-owned businesses such as farming or handicrafts due to the limited number of formal sector jobs available locally and lack of necessary education, qualifications and skills. Because of the social role assigned to them by society, women perform unpaid domestic work and spend about as much time doing it as men do in productive paid work. That is why women have fewer options to be employed in formal sector or start-up their own businesses. Informal employment is often associated with lower wages, as a result of which women contribute less to the household budget.

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<sup>7</sup> World Bank, Uzbekistan: Agri-Food Job Diagnostic, 2020. Available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34526>

<sup>8</sup> FAO, Gender, Agriculture, and Rural Development in Uzbekistan: Country Gender Assessment Series, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Information of the Ministry of Agriculture at the 2nd Forum of Women Farmers of Uzbekistan, Tashkent, February 21, 2019

### *NEET*

A recent survey by UNICEF conducted among 4,458 respondents indicates that the rate of those 19-30-year-old young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in 2020 was an alarming 54.6 per cent with 74.0 per cent for women, and 24.8 per cent for men<sup>10</sup>. The factors impeding the ambition of young women to generate their own income are household and family care responsibilities, as well as their lower mobility in regard to being able to relocate towards economic opportunities.

To summarize, women in rural areas are much less competitive in the labour market, given the limited number of formal workplaces available locally, their lack of sufficient education, professional qualification and skills. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention of education and development of necessary infrastructure to allow women enter the formal labour market.

### **3. Donors and IOs in the TVET sector**

The World Bank is currently preparing a new loan (USD 500 million) to support the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture for 2020-2030, focusing on strengthening applied research institutions in the agriculture sector and provision of agricultural extension services in partnership with the public and private sectors. At the moment, the World Bank is the main development partner which shares a common goal with this project (i.e., support the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture for 2020-2030). While the main focus on this project is the agricultural and irrigation colleges, the World Bank will support, among other things, research and extension services in agriculture and irrigation, both of which will be relevant to the teaching and learning of agriculture and irrigation colleges supported by this project. The World Bank has been consulted during the design of this project and there will be close coordination on the implementation of this project.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is currently implementing a \$900,000 Technical Assistance program initiated in December 2016 covering the following areas: (i) skills demand and supply studies in three geographic areas covering an establishment survey and analyses; (ii) skills monitoring system to address emerging jobs and pilot programs: this work outlines recommendations for future models for skills monitoring and labour market information systems; and (iii) design of new large scale intervention (a concessional loan for around USD 100-125 million) to support the vocational education reform in Uzbekistan. The new ADB program will cover the scopes of linking labour market intervention with skilling labour market entrants (through vocational colleges under MOHSSE) and upskilling labour forces (through the Professional Training Centres under MELR). In relation to the implementation of this project, the methodology used by the ADB on skills demand and supply analysis and its monitoring will be reviewed and considered when this project analyses skills demand and supply in the agriculture and irrigation sectors.

The Government of Israel (MASHAV – Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation) has provided technical assistance on the spot and by organizing study visits to Israel in the areas of beekeeping, resilient water services, plant protection and innovative irrigation technologies. The Government of Israel has been trying to transfer innovative and modern technologies of agriculture and irrigation to Uzbekistan in order to increase agricultural productivity. Some of those technologies

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<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, Youth of Uzbekistan – challenges and prospects, 2020

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should also be taken into account when this project will develop new qualifications, occupational standards, curricula and/or syllabi for the agriculture and irrigation sectors.

The British Council has supported the development of occupational standards in the tourism sector, as well as rural development, agriculture, construction and ICT, in coordination with the UK Sector Skills Council. In addition, it has published a journal on vocational education, called Vocational Education Exchange, to function as a knowledge-dissemination platform targeting practitioners and stakeholders. The methodologies and lessons learned from the British Council's support on the tourism sector should be studied and reflected when this project prepares activities to support the establishment of the Sector Skills Council in the agriculture and irrigation sectors.

UNDP has been planning to implement "Empowering local authorities for enhanced governance and improved service delivery project". Swiss Development Cooperation financed "Skills Development Project in the irrigation sector (2004-2018)" and Korea International Cooperation Agency financed vocational education projects (2007-2018). The Skills Development Project is planning to finalise all project products developed during the last 14 years with additional funding and share with both state and international partners as best practices. New EU Action can closely work with SDP and find synergies in the agricultural sector.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TiKA) has provided support for the infrastructure development for training institutions with MoELR.

KOICA has supported the establishment of vocational training centres in collaboration with MoELR. GIZ and DVV International have taken actions under the framework of lifelong learning. In addition to providing training, they have also tried to establish norms and standards, and facilitate systematic reform of the vocational education system. Some donor agencies have implemented projects with specific target groups.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has set up training centres serving trafficking survivors, women and other disadvantaged groups, while some GIZ activities are targeted at women and vulnerable young people.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) will support Uzbekistan in conducting the next round of the Torino Process in Uzbekistan starting in 2019. This process, which has already been conducted at national level in Uzbekistan in 2016-2017, could look specifically at the agriculture sector issues at a sub-national level and enhance the cooperation among the key stakeholders brought together under the new sector governance of VET. The new round of the Torino Process assessment will continue to inform on the overall VET reform progress during the programme implementation

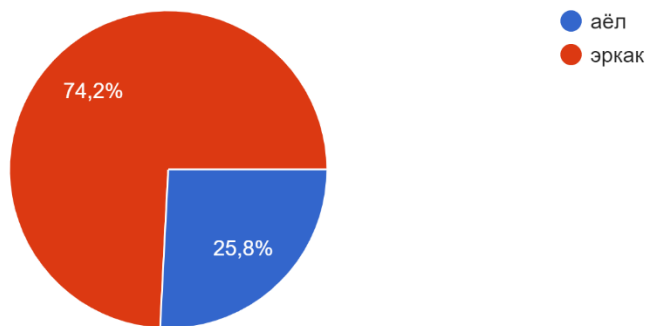
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#### **4. The results of the Quantitative Surveys**

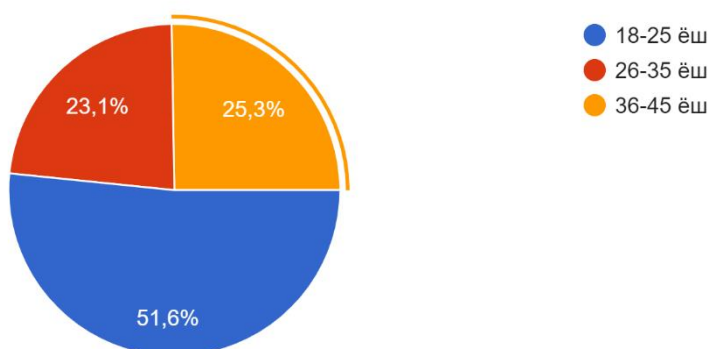
##### **Quantitative survey among students**

###### **1. What is your gender? (female, male)**

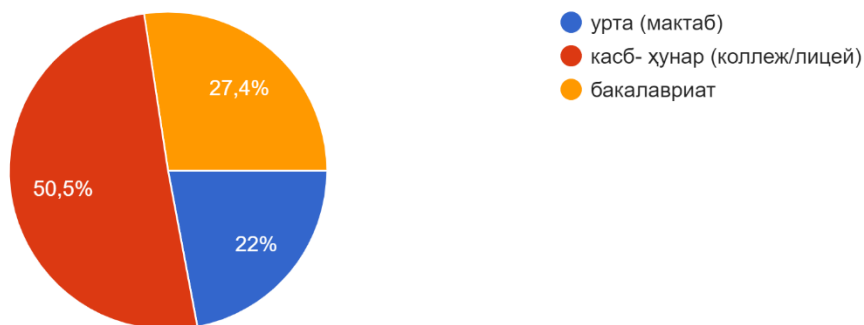
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**2. What is your age?** (18 - 25 years old, 26 - 35 years old, 36 -45 years old)

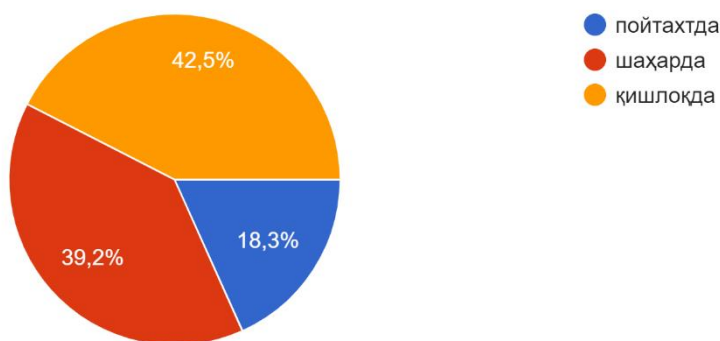


**3. What is your educational background?** (secondary school, professional college/lyceum, bachelor's degree)

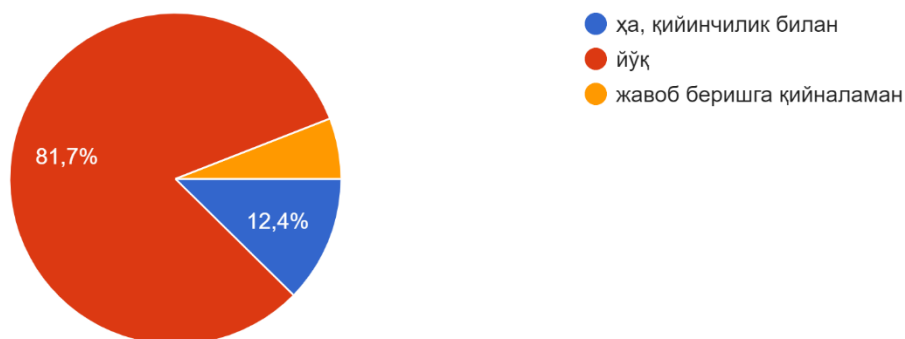


**4. Do you live in the city or village?** (capital, city, village)

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5. **Do you have difficulties attending classes?** (*yes, no, other*)

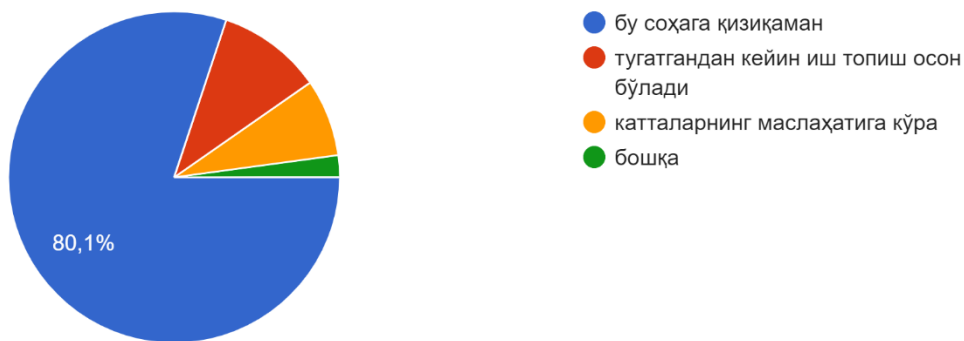


6. **What sector of professional training did you choose?** (*industry and construction, transportation and communications, agriculture, economy, healthcare, education and culture*)

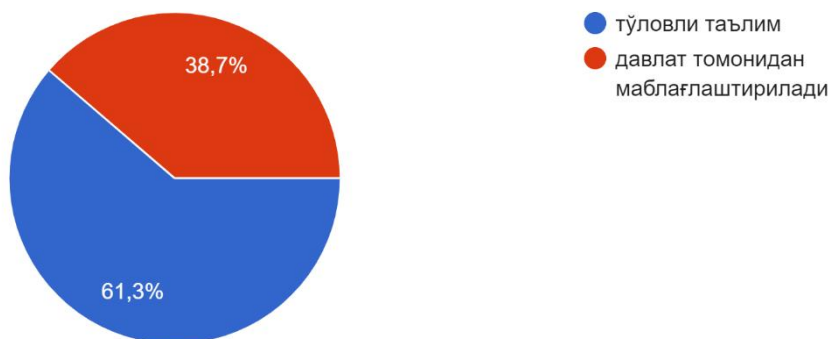


7. **Why did you choose this sector?** (*I'm interested in this direction; easy to find a job after graduation; on elders' advice; Other*)

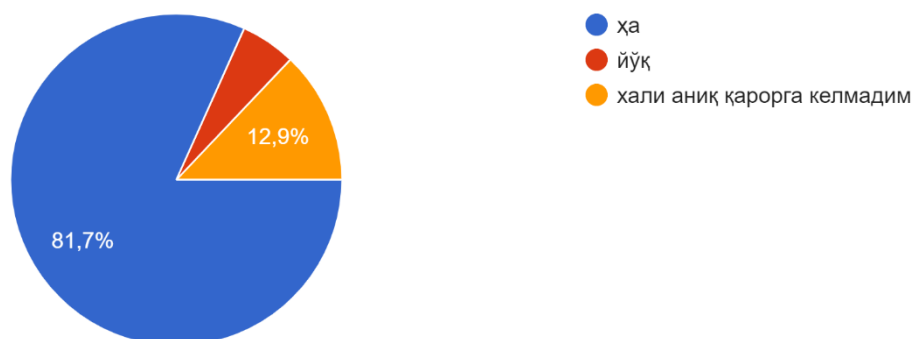
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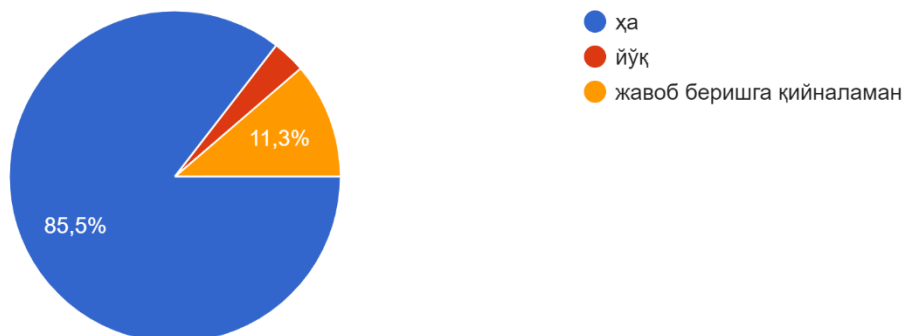
**8. What form of education do you study? (*study-for-fee form, state-financed form*)**



**9. Do you plan to continue your studies at higher educational institutions? (*yes; No, indicate the reason; I don't know yet*)**

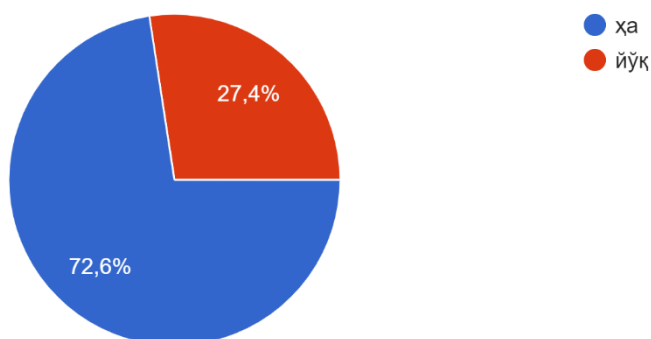


**10. Should there be benefits for students from low-income families, female-headed families, for students with disabilities who are in a disadvantaged position? (Yes, No, Other)**



Here, most of the respondents agree that there should be more incentives for students from vulnerable communities to be engaged in the vocational training and employment.

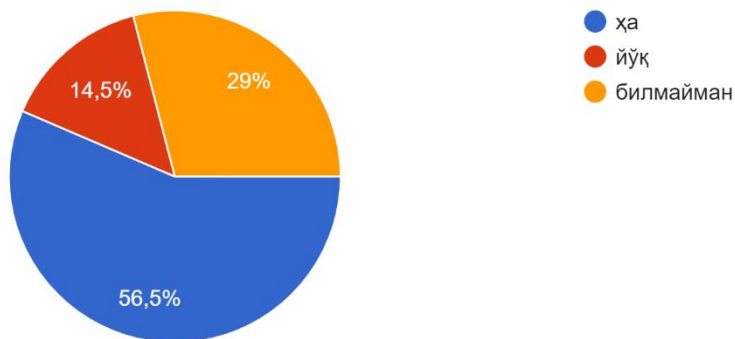
**11. Are you aware of the law of “Guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women” dated September 2, 2019? (Yes, No)**



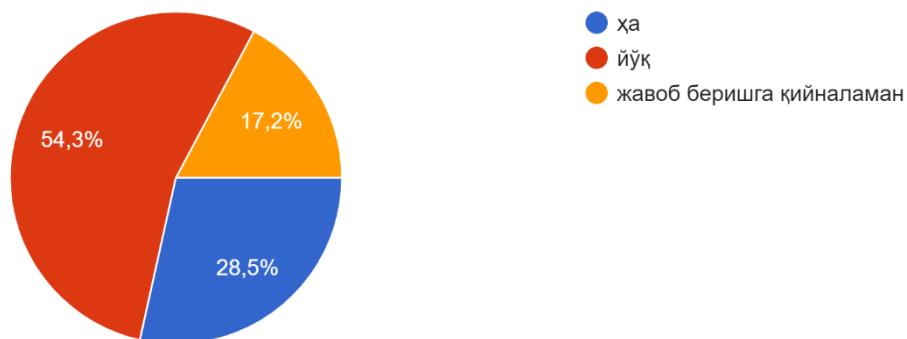
**12. Is there a system for collecting and processing complaints from female students in your facility? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



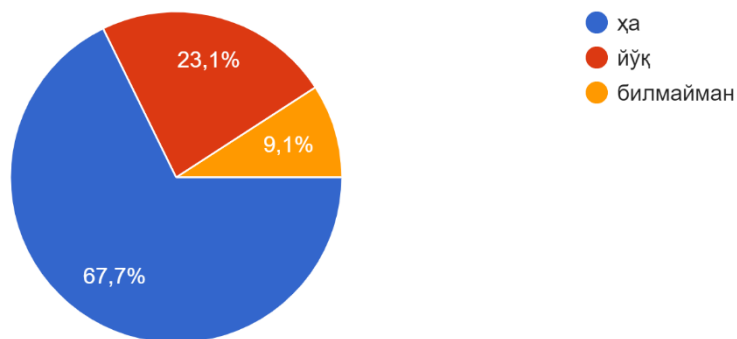
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**13. Do you think that gender stereotypes influence the choice of profession? (Yes, No I do not know)**

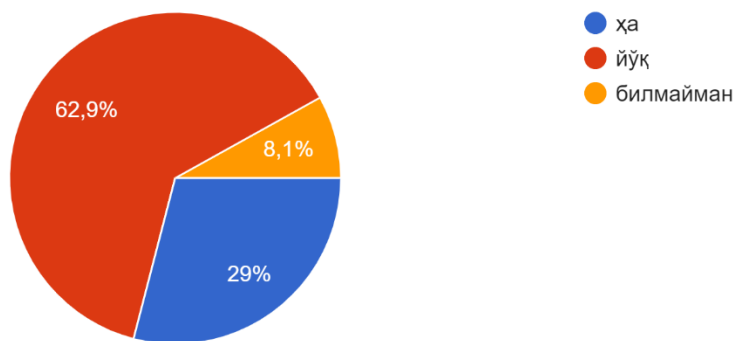


**14. Are there equal opportunities for girls and boys in finding employment after graduation? (Yes, No, I do not know)**

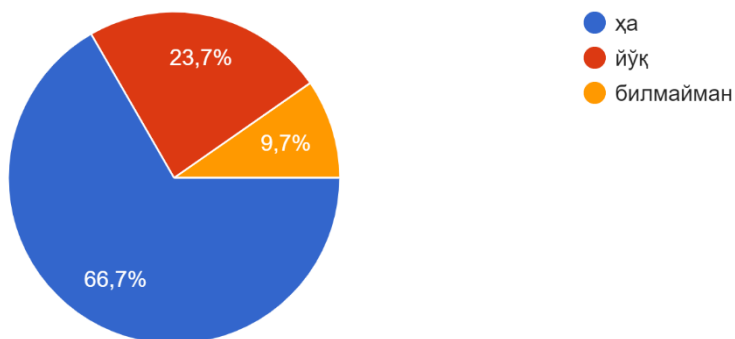


**15. Do you support the opinion about the existence of exclusively female and male occupations? (Yes, No, I do not know)**

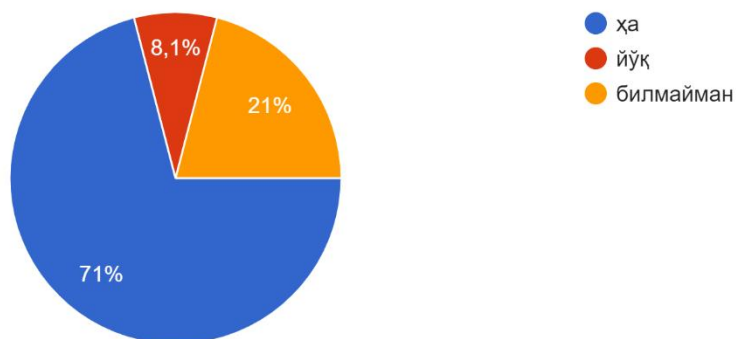
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**16. Do you think rural women have equal access to professional education? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



**17. Does your college / technical school support programs and activities for the prevention of early, consanguineous and forced marriage; elimination of stereotypes regarding the choice of a marriage partner? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



**During the survey, students were also asked the following open questions:**

- 1. Do female and male students participate equally in education processes (participate in lectures, workshops, actively participate in the social life of the educational institution)? If no, what are the obstacles for women to be involved in these processes?**

*The analysis of the obtained data shows that the majority of students are confident that participation in the educational process is the same for girls and boys, and they do not see any difficulties in attending lectures and practical classes. But also, among the respondents there were those who stated that due to frequent instances of early marriages among girls and their involvement in household chores, attending the educational process sometimes becomes difficult, since girls spend most of their time at home, being engaged in housework and taking care of family members.*

- 2. Have you ever been a subject of gender-based violence, discrimination or harassment in your academic institution? If yes, have this had an impact on your academic performance?**

*Most of the respondents deny the fact that they have ever been discriminated against on the basis of gender (173 people out of 186 respondents gave a negative answer), but among the respondents, several people said that they were systematically ridiculed and joked by men and reported cases of oppression in the family.*

- 3. What factors influences your choice of the field of study and your future occupation?**

*Most of the students answered that they did not see any barriers to choosing a future profession and made a choice of their own free will, have an interest in the future profession and look forward towards further professional growth in their jobs. There were also those who stated that they chose this profession because of high wages and future employment opportunities.*

- 4. Do male and female students get the same opportunities as interns on the work floor?**

*The majority of respondents noted equal opportunities for internships during the educational process (148 out of 186 respondents), but 20 people still answered that girls have fewer opportunities due to their family circumstances.*

- 5. Does your institution support graduate students in finding employment?**

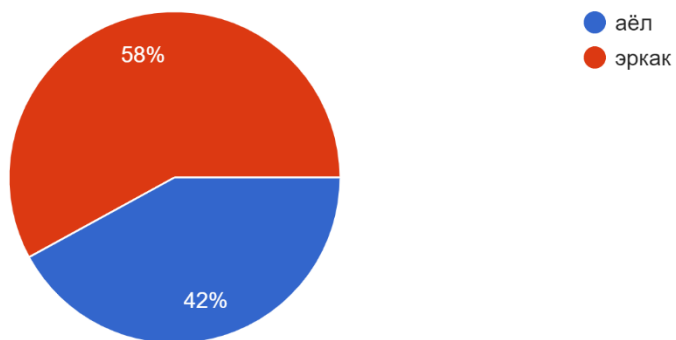
*The majority of respondents said that educational institutions help graduates with employment (117 people), but 37 people noted that they did not receive support in finding an employment.*

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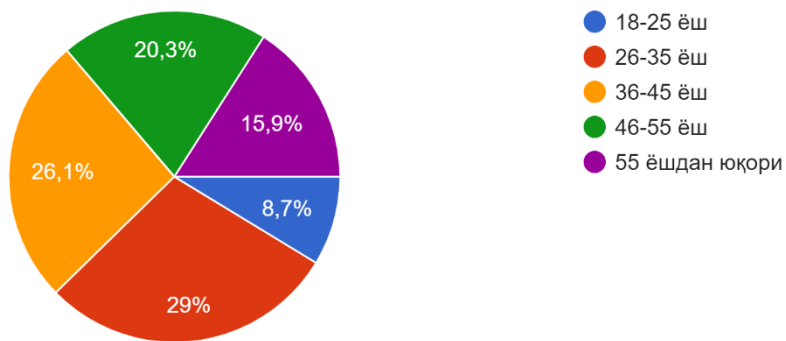
**1. How do you identify yourself?** (*Representative of the government, TVET provider, Private company, TVET expert*)



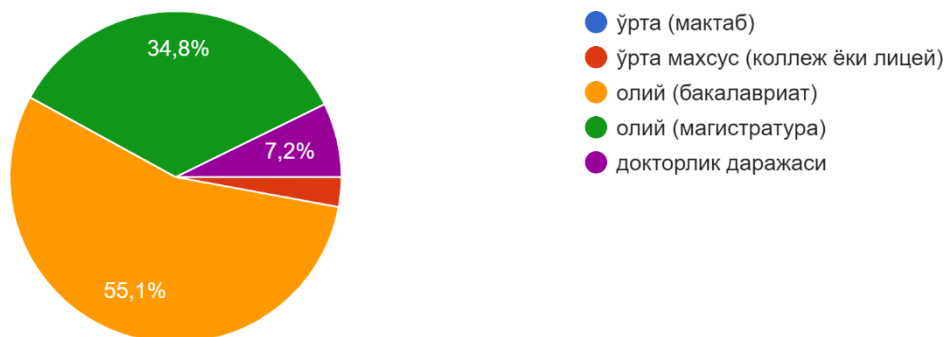
**2. What is your gender?** (*Male, Female*)



**3. What is your age?** (*18 - 25 years old, 26 - 35 years old, 36 -45 years old, 46- 55 years old*  
*55 and more years old*)



**4. What is your educational background?** (Secondary school, Professional college/lyceum, bachelor's degree, Master's degree, PhD)

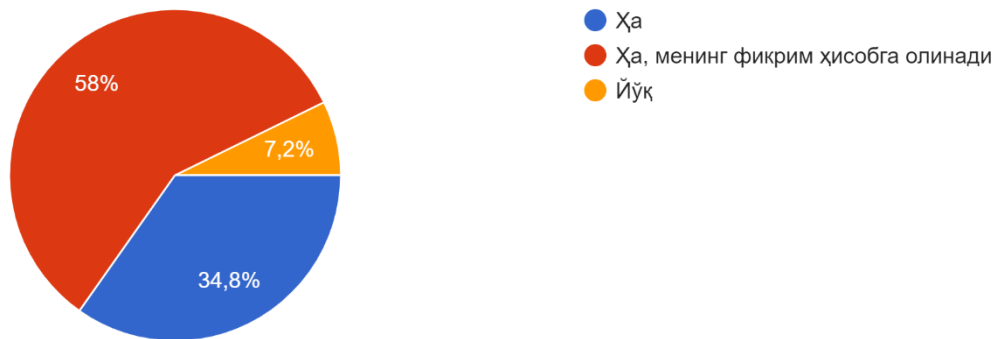


**5. What type of the position you are employed at?** (*Management level (Minister, Deputy ministers, Head of departments, etc.); Implementation level (Lead Specialists, officers), College representative (Director, Deputy Director, teacher)*)

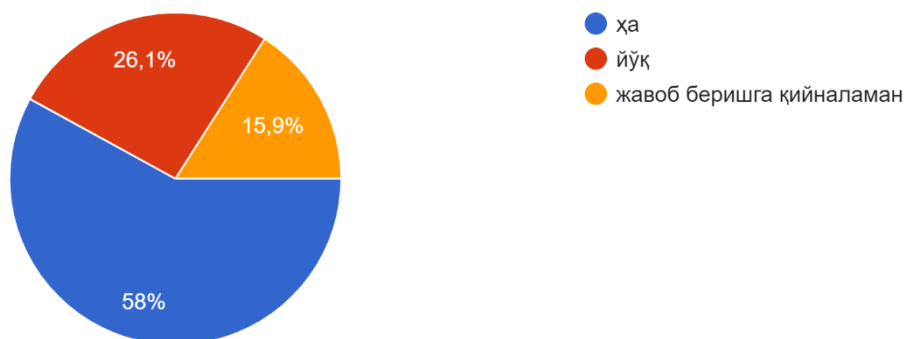


**6. Do you attend meetings in your organization and is your opinion taken into account?** (Yes, Yes, my opinion is taken into consideration, No)

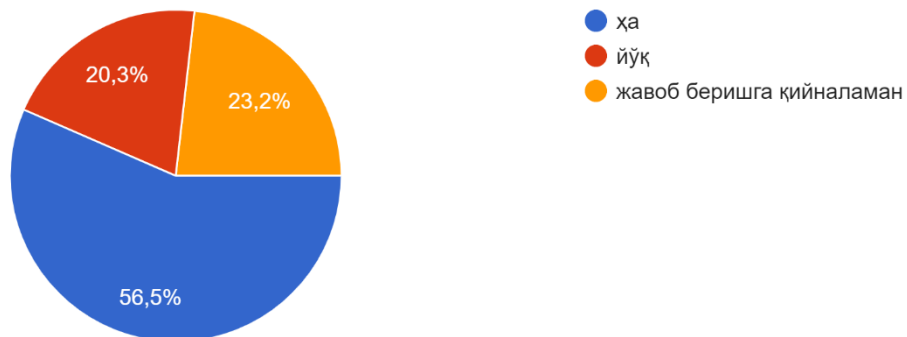
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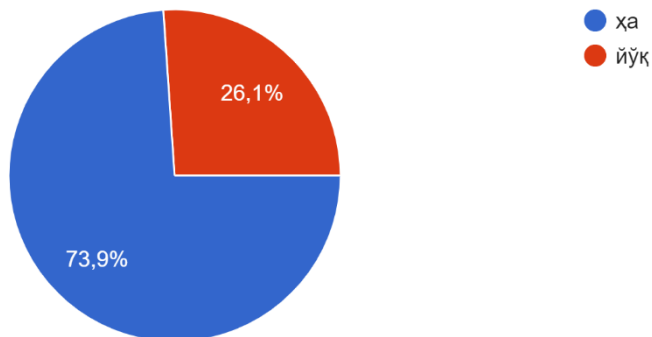
**7. Do you think your organization needs a gender specialist? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



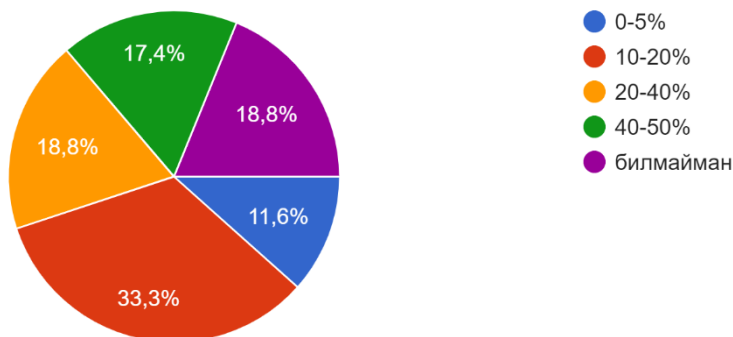
**8. Does your organization work towards gender equality? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



9. Do you participate at the trainings related to the efficient delivery of TVET education?  
(Yes, No, Other)

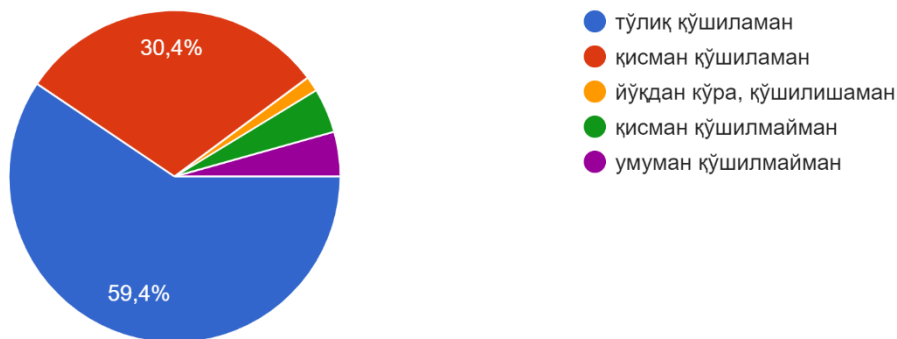


10. Approximately, what percentage of the total participants of your previous trainings were women?

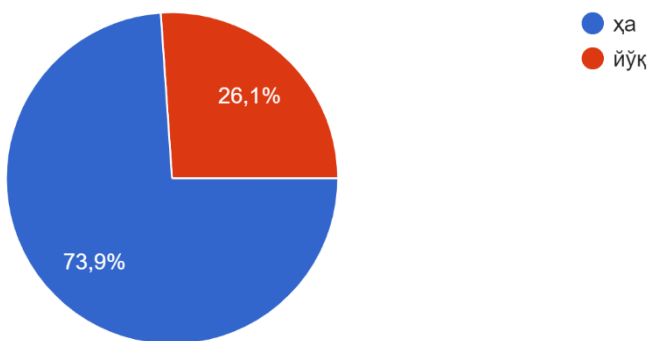


11. Do you agree that TVET sector providers need more information on gender and social related issues? Do you think that international best practice can be applied in Uzbekistan? (Strongly agree, somewhat agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree)

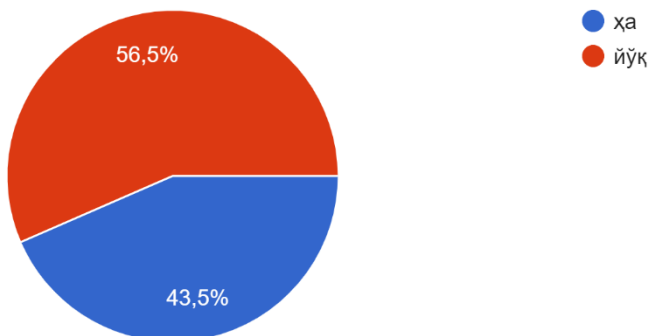
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**12. Are you aware of the law of “Guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for men and women” dated September 2, 2019? (Yes, No)**



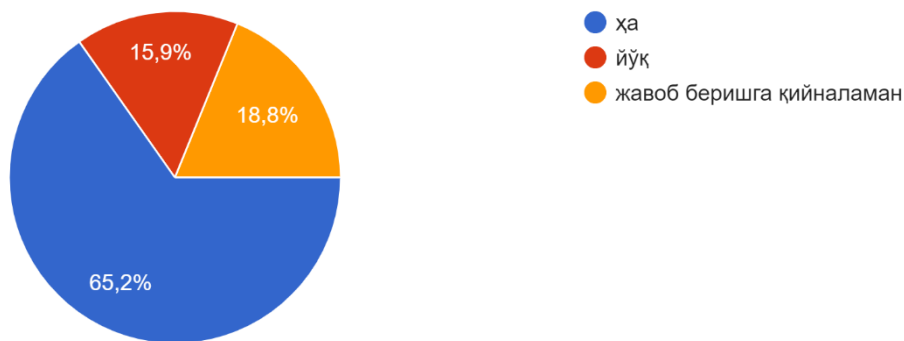
**13. Have you participated in relevant training (s) on gender issues? (Yes, No)**



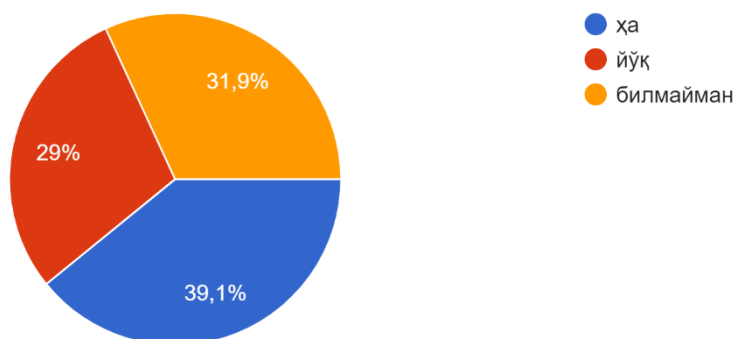
**14. Does your organization keep disaggregated on male and female students or male and female staff? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



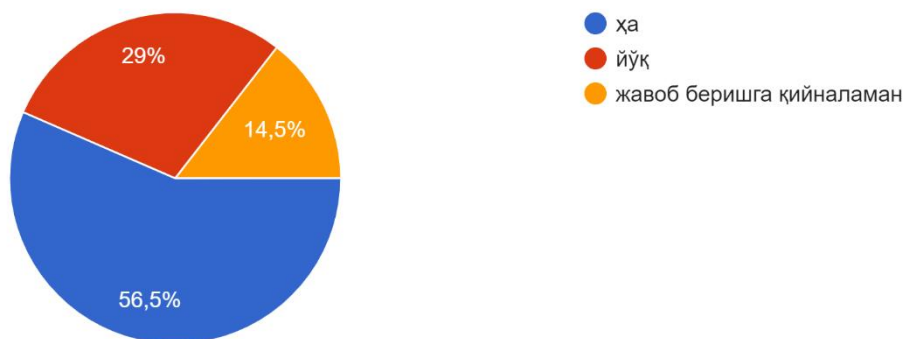
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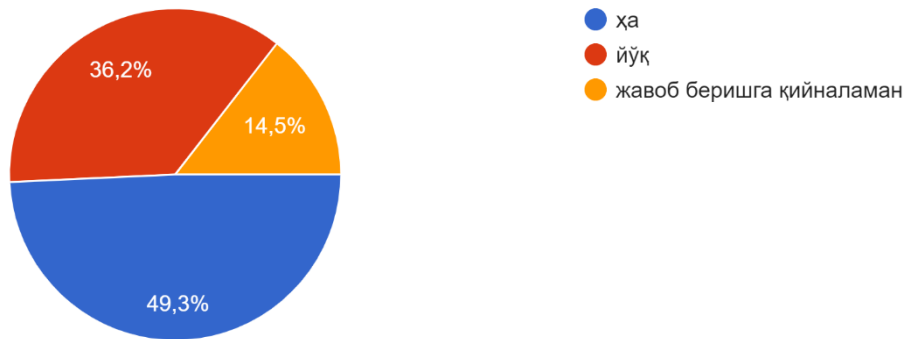
**15. Does your organization have a government program to address gender issues between women and men in the TVET sector such as child marriages, girls drop out of schools or gender imbalance among STEM students? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



**16. Is there a system for collecting and processing complaints from female students or female staff in your facility? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



**17. Do you think that gender stereotypes influence the choice of profession? (Yes, No, I do not know)**



The following open questions were asked as well:

**1. Are you aware of existing policies to promote gender and social inclusion or policies supporting/facilitating gender inequality promoted by Government of Uzbekistan?**

*Less than half of respondents - 45.8% (44 out of 96 respondents) answered that they are aware of existing policies that support gender equality and social inclusion promoted by the Government of Uzbekistan. Others were either unaware of these policies, or had limited knowledge about these policies, and there were also those who stated the need to obtain information about the ongoing changes in the field of achieving gender equality in Uzbekistan.*

**2. What gaps can you identify between the policies and practice in VET sector?**

*More than half of respondents - 56% stated that there are gaps in legislation and its implementation in the vocational education sector. In particular, the following gaps were identified: problems in the practical implementation of laws on the ground, low educational level and qualifications of teachers, employment prospects for graduates, the difference between real needs in training and in practice, increasing opportunities for girls from low-income families, in particular, the provision of grant to cover tuition. In addition, there were proposals for the recognition of local diplomas received abroad (problems of certification and legalization).*

**3. Are you aware of the existence of gender segregated data or how it should be collected?**

*More than half of the respondents said they did not know about the existence of sex-segregated data collected in their educational institutions. Also, some of them replied that this is the responsibility of the HR department, and they are not entirely aware of the process.*

**4. Should women and people with disabilities be included into decision making about TVET and if yes what concrete ideas for this do you have?**

*Almost all survey participants admitted the need to involve women and persons with disabilities in decision-making processes, as they believe that if their opinions are heard, it will help to design*

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*effective socially oriented programs and decisions that will consider gender issues and the needs of socially vulnerable groups*

**5. Which levels of VET show significant drop out of girls from the education process thus inhibiting them further from entering the labour market (if possible, supported with statistical data) and explore reasons for this.**

*Most of the respondents answered that the period of graduation from vocational colleges and technical schools coincides with marriage age of girls and, consequently, the latter do not think about further employment. Also, in Uzbekistan, all young people graduating from high school, colleges or technical schools try to enter higher education institutions and continue their studies for the next 4 years and therefore are not present in the labour market. Finally, one of the reasons of low representation of girls in the labour market is the lack of jobs in rural areas, as well as the existing culture not allowing girls to work far from home.*

**6. Do you think there is evidence for uneven access to VET education, can systemic or social causes be identified, (possibly regional?)**

*20 respondents admitted the existence of unequal opportunities for obtaining vocational education bringing the following reasons: conservative values and traditional mentality as parents are ready to invest more in sons rather than in daughters, lack of employment opportunities after graduation.*

**7. Do you think that state regulations related to the registration of self-employed or freelancers effective, and are there already visible trends (i.e., proportion of women entering the labour market as self-employed)?**

*All respondents agreed on the effectiveness of state regulations related to the registration of self-employed or freelance employees effective and shared the opinion that this will help to ensure self-employment of women, but also noted the need to develop this area in practice and raise public awareness of these regulations and their practical implementation.*

**8. Should there be benefits for students from low-income families, female-headed families, for students with disabilities who are in a disadvantaged position? Why do you think so?**

*63.5% of the respondents admitted the need for such benefits, arguing for the provision of equal opportunities for each person, and opinions were expressed that such benefits are adopted in the legislation, but have no practical implementation.*

**9. Can you name any spheres of vocational education and labour where women and girls are overrepresented? What is the reason?**

*63% of the respondents indicated medicine, education and the service sector as areas of high representation of girls and women.*

**10. Can you name any spheres of vocational education and labour where women and girls are underrepresented? What is the reason?**

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*The majority of respondents indicated the following areas where the representation of women and girls is significantly lower: agriculture, construction, transport, industry. There were also opinions that there are few women in politics, leadership positions, science, and sports.*

**11. Do women and men participate equally in decision-making (politics, economy and society, program management)? What are obstacles to women to be involved in the decision making? What are opportunities?**

*28 out of 96 respondents stated about the existing inequality in the decision-making process, as the number of women leaders is significantly less than men leaders. It was also said that a woman is busier with household chores, and her main mission is to keep the home and raise children, and the involvement of women in society can harm family relations.*

**12. What are gender specific needs and interests?**

*Most of the respondents answered that they would like to gain knowledge about gender equality issues, participate in trainings and learn about the latest laws adopted in this direction. 13 people answered that they did not have sufficient information on this issue.*

**13. What gender context-specific needs (e.g., cultural values, traditions, etc.) can you identify in the region?**

*The respondents noted the following needs: conducting trainings on gender equality in local communities, creating jobs for girls, working with young families, eliminating gender stereotypes. But opinions were also expressed (20 people) that they do not see certain needs and problems in this direction.*

**14. What gender stereotypes in your opinion lead to girls drop out of schools?**

*The respondents noted such factors that translate into gender stereotypes: mentality and traditions, upbringing in a family where the roles of women and men have already been defined, the imposition of material support for daughters on future husbands, and preference of sons in the family. It was also suggested that not only stereotypes lead to inequality, and for example, girls cannot find a job after training, and there are not always opportunities to study on a paid basis.*

**15. Does your organization support programmes and activities for the prevention of early, consanguineous and forced marriage, elimination of stereotypes regarding the choice of a marriage partner?**

*More than half of the respondents answered that their organization supports these programs and actions and are ready to support in the future the development of such programs in organizations where they have not yet been developed.*

*Finally, in-depth interviews with higher-level Ministry representatives revealed that while they welcome international best practices in the sphere, they are ignorant of gender equality issues in the country. They do not understand why it is important to promote gender equality and what is gender. They do not believe in the existence of gender-segregation in the sphere of*

*vocational education and employment and consider that all people have equal opportunities in Uzbekistan.*

## **5. SDC's and Helvetas' principles and policies on the topic of gender and social inclusion as applied to Uzbekistan.**

The following challenges identified in participation of women in TVET sector by SDC are applicable to the context of Uzbekistan:

### 1) Gender division of labour and related gender roles and (practical and strategic) needs

Depending on context, certain occupations are considered “women’s work”, while others are perceived as “jobs for men”. Such perceptions are embedded in cultural traditions and norms. Not only are women overrepresented in some occupations and under-represented in others; segregation often also occurs within occupations, with men holding the more responsible and better-paid jobs compared to women. Women are also more likely to work part time, in positions with no or very limited job security and poor levels of safety.

### 2) Access to vocational skills development and control over resources.

Women in rural areas of Uzbekistan face the challenge of combining education and training with farming, household, community and care responsibilities. Educational and training offers are often difficult to reach, and inflexible in timing, duration, etc. These difficulties are particularly acute in traditional societies, where families are often less willing to invest in female education because of established practices of early marriage, domestic responsibilities, low remuneration for women’s work, and reservations regarding women working outside the home. These barriers prevent many girls from accessing even basic education, let alone further education and training.

Women also face more barriers than men in becoming entrepreneurs and starting their own business. Reasons include time constraints due to care responsibilities, lack of access to productive assets such as land and credit, and lack of access to information or relevant networks.

Now, even after getting married, young women can come and study - but now that students have to pay fees for vocational schools, the gender-based vulnerable may increase and girls not being able not be able to get a profession, or the profession of their choice.

### 3) Participation and leadership.

Women in Uzbekistan are less likely than men to occupy leadership positions; this applies in political circles as well as the labour market. Female role models who can inspire younger women to take up responsible jobs are often an important force for change.

## **6. Recommendations and actions for operational phase of the project**

Considering the challenges that exist in TVET sector in Uzbekistan, SDC recommendations were adapted to the country context for implementation within Helvetas project to ensure its gender-responsiveness. In general, it is recommended to employ a gender expert in the project who will be responsible for gender mainstreaming during the project implementation. It is also important to conduct a deeper analysis in the framework of the project using the data that will be obtained by the expert group during the operational phase.

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Based on the analyses of legal provisions, education and labour market statistics and opinions from students and staff of VET sector agencies and providers of education the following recommendations:

It is recommended to implement the following actions within project components:

1. *Improved governance in VET (outcome 1) requires a coherent regulatory framework, effective coordination mechanism, proper data management system and the capacity building of key VET stakeholders.*
- Support the adoption of measures aimed at reduction of gender disparities in enrolment, progression and retention at all levels of education and lifelong learning for women, men, girls and boys. It is necessary to implement special measures to improve gender balance in the choice of academic subjects and areas of study, for example, setting quotas for the allocation of scholarships, organizing internships, mentoring programs, as well as creating incentives for hiring women in non-traditional sectors. It is also important to note, that these measures should be reciprocal involving men and allowing them to enter fields that are considered traditionally female based on the demand in the labour market.
  - Support policies providing for additional grants for girls and women to study in vocational education institutions to counter inequities and inequalities caused by transition to contract-based system of enrolment to colleges.
  - Support for special measures to improve gender balance in the choice of academic subjects and areas of study (for example, setting quotas for the allocation of scholarships, organizing internships, mentoring programs, creating incentives for hiring women in non-traditional sectors, etc.).
  - In collaboration with local government institutions continue to support programs and activities to prevent early, consanguineous and forced marriage, elimination of stereotypes regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Establishing counselling programs for family members (parents, husbands and parents-in-law) on the value of training and employment for women in order to remove potential hurdles for the trainees during training or at the time of transition to employment.
  - Organize capacity building trainings for the representatives of the Ministries, senior staff on gender issues to increase their sensitivity and awareness on gender related issues in the country as it was revealed that decision makers still do not understand what is gender which impacts the way the policies are made and the absence of gender mainstreaming in this sphere.
  - In collaboration with the National Statistics Committee facilitate gathering systematic information, data, and resources that would guide the development of programs capable of effectively addressing inequalities, while supporting the monitoring and evaluation of sector outcomes on male and female trainees.
  - Expanding entrepreneurship training and access to finance initiatives to prepare and support women starting their own businesses.

- Advocate for the development of a National Gender Mainstreaming strategy and action plan for the TVET sector in Uzbekistan.
2. *Quality Assurance in VET (outcome 2) can be improved through pilot activities with selected formal training providers, under the frame of an accreditation model, and a cluster of leading companies providing field evidence to the continuous improvement of the system.*
- Include gender expertise when developing professional standards, quality standards, assessment criteria etc. to ensure that gender
  - An assessment and gender analysis of labour market demand is needed to identify employment opportunities for women in non-traditional sectors such as industry, energy, transport, construction, information and communication technologies, and finance.
  - Identify trades with flexible and secure working conditions as often, home-based enterprises or part-time work positions are more attractive to women because they are compatible with household obligations, especially childcare and safety.
  - Creation of incentives for women and girls from disadvantaged rural communities to engage in the TVET sector by providing scholarship programs, temporary quotas for selected training programmes, and award quotas. This will allow to engage women in traditionally “male” occupations and breaking gender stereotypes in employment.
  - Conducting gender expertise of school textbooks using positive international experience to carry out gender expertise of textbooks, teaching materials and other publications.
  - Develop a concept for the consistent introduction of gender education into curricula and textbooks at all levels of education, starting from preschool, including general and special secondary education, vocational and higher education.
  - Besides, there are issues associated with the access to hygiene for girls in educational settings. Public schools lack decent hygienic conditions such as hot water and clean sanitation facilities especially in rural areas. Accordingly, the problem of access to hygiene and water entails the problem of girls' non-attendance at school. Programs aimed at improving school sanitation and hygiene should be developed to improve their access to water and hygiene. Provision of separate, clean sanitation and childcare facilities is necessary in order to increase the participation of women with children.
3. *Teachers training in VET (outcome 3) can be enhanced by building institutional capacities of the main teachers training institution, by strengthening the qualification and certification systems and revising the curricula.*
- Target increasing participation of women trainers in teacher development programs and create incentive for women to be engage in teaching technical subjects in VET.
  - Organize trainings for VET teachers on gender-sensitive approaches to teaching using international best practices.
  - Recruit female trainers. Female trainers are supportive to the learning environment, as they teach not only technical skills, but also advise female trainees on specific needs or concerns related to reproductive health, dress code, unwelcome behaviour from male colleagues, and family issues. In non-traditional trades, female trainers serve as role models (for female and

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male trainees). Women trainers not only act as role model, but they are often effective in convincing reluctant female trainees and doubtful family members of the benefits of acquiring skills.

4. *Employers' engagement in VET (outcome 4) necessitates structured platforms, a private-sector led strategy and capacity building in advocacy to effectively contribute to the development of labour market-oriented VET courses and to the VET system at institutional level.*
  - Provide financial incentives to educational entities under private enterprises for training women or certain disadvantaged groups. It is important to ensure transition from education to employment as an outcome. This will help to reach inclusion goals of the project.
  - Together with governmental and non-governmental organizations, improve awareness-raising activities to increase the participation of girls and women in non-traditional technical professions. Engage community leaders (religious leaders, specialists of Makhalla), schoolteachers and trainers in the communication for reaching women and their families.
  - Enable gender-friendly on-the-job training and internships. The practical application of skills helps graduates to gain work experience and facilitates their transition from training to employment. On-the-job training is especially relevant for women, who often have limited networks through which they can connect to potential employers.
  - Develop trainings for managers of private organizations which are potential employers to counter their gender bias. Employers often underestimate women's capabilities, especially if they work in a "male occupation". The establishment of durable relationships between training providers and employers, equipping women with the skills and confidence to be successful, can contribute to overcoming this bias.
5. *Strengthen relationships with industry to promote better labour market outcomes for TVET female graduates.*
  - Responsiveness to future skill needs and projected labour market demands should be the driving force behind TVET in Uzbekistan. This requires a nimble sector with strong and diverse industry relations and partnerships to validate course curriculum, teaching materials, pedagogical approaches, and facilitate on-the-job learning opportunities for trainees. Institutions and industry could work with women trainees to identify training approaches that respond to dual productive and reproductive roles of women such as consideration to flexible hours and work arrangements.
  - It is important to involve civil society organizations working on promotion of women's rights and establish special vocational programs in STEM fields. Some women NGOs already have the capacity to carry out such educational programs and if they are equipped with appropriate equipment, tools, they can carry out these social programs to support women in remote communities promoting non-traditional professions for girls: IT specialists, electricians, mechanics, machinists.
6. *Strengthen information and support to women about education, training, and work options.*
  - Conduct regular awareness raising events to inform girls on the existing grants for enrolment in training programs, particularly in male-dominated course specializations, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities provided by the government and international organizations. Further, labour market assessments and job placement programs can help to advise women on



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market demands, niche skill areas, training programs, and career objectives. These events can be organized to celebrate World Youth Skills Day (July 15) - a unique opportunity for dialogue between young people, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, firms, employers' and workers' organizations, policy makers and development partners.

- Organize job-fairs and match-making events to increase the awareness of youth on the existing vacancies in the labour market engaging both the government institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations.
- Improve the access to the information about existing vacancies on the job market.

#### IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### V. Annexes – Data Collection Toolbox