

Women's socio-economic empowerment in Uzbekistan

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UZBEKISTAN

- Total land area of Uzbekistan is 447,800 sq.km
- Population 26,312 mln.
- Urban population – 40 %
- Dominant religion: Islam – 80%
- Population younger than 18 - years old – 41 %



The Central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.



- Great attention is paid in independent Uzbekistan to the status of women improvement
- The decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “About measures of women’s role improvement in state and public construction of the republic of Uzbekistan” of March 2, 1995 which was the logical course of the President’s decree “About additional support measures of Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan” of May 25, 2004, which both opened new opportunities for further improvements and development of women’s movement and outlined the ways for women’s potential realization.

Legislative system of Uzbekistan regulating women's rights is compiled of the following documents:

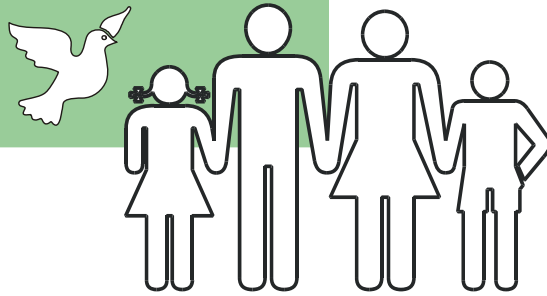
Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

- Article 18 – «All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan have equal rights and freedoms according to the law independent of sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal and public position”
- Article 46 – «Women and men have equal rights».

The Republic of Uzbekistan was the first on the territory of Central Asia which joined UN Convention “About elimination of all forms of discriminations against women” and other international documents. With that goal the following legislative acts were adopted (Family Code, Labor Code, etc.), establishing juridical protection of women's rights and improving status of women in the society.

Women & policy

- Uzbekistan, being among those who signed “Millennium Declaration», undertook obligations to include Declaration Goals into the programs of the country’s development and to observe the target schedule of MDG (Millennium Development Goals) till the year 2015, Millennium Goal No 3 included – “support of the equality of men and women and the increase of rights and abilities”.
- National mechanism of the improvement of women’s position at the legislative level was created in Uzbekistan, the result – is the representation of women in all power structures.
- The activity of women grew from year to year, the results of the election into the Legislative Chamber of the Parliament and local governmental bodies testify that.
- The representation of women in 5 existing political parties in Uzbekistan is from 34 – to 49%.
- At the 14th session of Olyi Majlis (Parliament) the Law “About amendments and alterations into the Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, “About the elections in the Olyi Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan” and “About the elections into regional, city and oblast councils of peoples’ deputies” was adopted (August 2004). **There is a 30% quota for women deputy candidates.**



Socio-economic Development Centre “SABR”

Socio-economic Development Center “SABR” – is a voluntary non-governmental organization , which was founded in 1996.

Mission statement:

The organization works to improve the socio economic situation and protect the interests of most vulnerable layers of the society - women and children. It provides these groups with support, encouragement and opportunities for an independent life and a safe environment.



CURRENT ACTIVITIES

SABR uses unique approach in decision of poverty and domestic violence problems by means of combining social, economical (micro financing) and awareness components which are realized via:

- Social program
- Microfinancing
- Informational – resource center

Social program

The long term goal of “SABR” is to create experimental model of socio-economic protection of most vulnerable layers of population and reduction of domestic violence in the society.



Psychological and advisory support to the population

«SABR» renders psychological, legal and medical support by counseling over two trust telephone lines and internal counseling.

Future newly-married couples have conversations with “SABR” psychologists about matrimonial relations psychology, marriage hygiene, other issues regulated by Family legislation.

The following number of respondents addressed “SABR” since the moment of its creation 1996 - 2008:

16514 people - over the trust telephone line, 75% of them were women and children

4748 respondents - internally, 78% of them were women and children

3400- newly-married couples

Trainings and educational activity

Social program's independent direction – field trainings in rural area of Samarkand oblast, in communities and educational institutions of the city aiming at raising the awareness of population.

Training topics:

- **Reproductive health, women's reproductive rights protection**
- **Family relations psychology**
- **Domestic violence and its prevention**
- **Advocacy**
- **Gender and gender equality**
- **Preventive medicine and healthy way of life**

380 seminars and informational meetings were delivered for the period from 1996 to 2008, with 9327 of participants.



Awareness activity

- Informational booklets on women's and children's rights, domestic violence problem, healthy way of life publication
- Media and advocacy campaigns against domestic violence delivery
- Various actions delivery (conferences, concerts, contests, round tables, socio video films release)
- Sociological surveys on relevant problems delivery



Vocational training for girls and young women from low-income families

To solve social and economic problems of young women and girls from low income families (unemployment, early marriages, domestic violence) three professional-training centers were established.

Girls are trained professional skills (sewing, embroidery, hair dressing) for 2-3 months. Simultaneously with professional trainings girls participate in social trainings on leadership, business skills, successful communications, preventive medicine and healthy way of life, domestic violence and gender issues.

Graduators on can receive loans at SABR's micro finance program to develop small businesses.

More than 445 girls and young women were trained in the vocational-training centers for the period from 2003 – 2008.



“SABR”

Informational – resource center



Types of services:

- **Counseling services**
- **Training activity for crisis centers’ staff**
- **Informational and resource support (to NGOs staff, students and lecturers of higher educational institutions)**
- **Sociological surveys delivery**
- **Training delivery to teachers, judicial bodies, health service and mass media representatives**

- *71 staff members from crisis centers of Uzbekistan were trained on the methodology of “SABR”*
- *165 juridical bodies, health service, public education and mass media representatives were trained at “SABR” as to the prevention of violation against women and children.*



Micro finance program in rural regions of Samarkand oblast

The program aims at income generating activity of low income families of the target regions of Samarkand oblast by means of appropriate conditions for private entrepreneurship creation, small business development by way of group responsibility according to micro finance schemes. Micro finance program of ‘SABR’ started its work through financial support of the NOVIB (Netherlands) in 2001.

In November 2006, micro financing program was registered as a Daughter Enterprise ‘Microcredit organization SABR’ .

Target group: Economically active low income layers of population in the rural regions of Samarkand oblast (Urgut, Ishtihan, Payarik, Taylak regions).



Micro finance methodology and statistics

Methodology main components.

Group responsibility (groups of 3 – 7 clients)

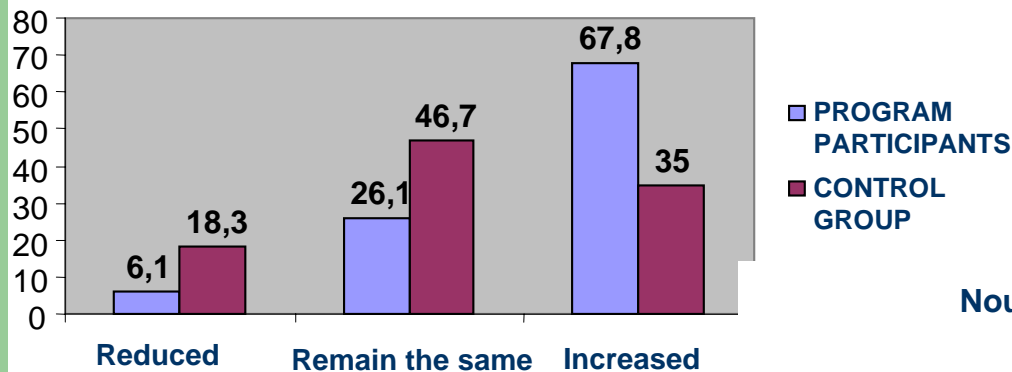
- Interest rate - 6% monthly for the residual amount
- Loan size: first – up to 100 \$ and further on up to 300 – 1500 \$
- Loan period: 3 - 6 months
- **60 % of clients are women**

Since the beginning of the program from the year 2001 till May 2008, the total number of loans constituted 8814 , cumulative amount disbursed – 1465732 US \$.

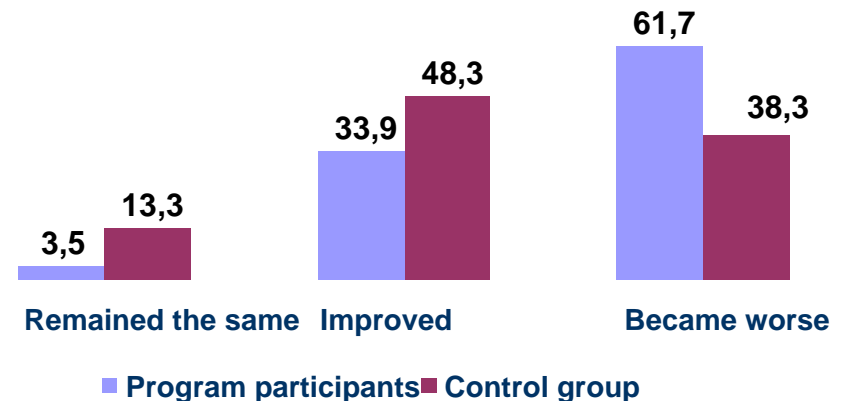
To improve primary business skills of the clients, 236 business trainings were conducted by the training program staff of “SABR”.

Impact of complex approach in decision of poverty and domestic violence problems

Income level



Nourishing quality



What changes originated in clients' life and family after participation in the program?

- Family income grew - 87,0 %
- Family relations improved - 47,8 %
- Self reliance increased - 69,6 %
- Business activity expanded - 63,5 %
- The role in family budget management improved - 11,3 %
- More respect within a family - 42,6 %
- Participation in purchasing expensive goods - 11,3 %
- Family budget management improved - 20,0 %
- The attitude of others towards me improved - 35,7 %
- Nothing has been changed in my life - 0,9 %

What have been changed in communities, settlement for the last 3 years?

- The number of people who deal with business grew - **80,0 %**
- The number of women entrepreneurs grew **62%**
- Family conflicts reduced - **50,4 %**
- The training sewing center was opened for women - **14,8 %**
- The number of mutual decisions as to public problems grew - **79,1 %**

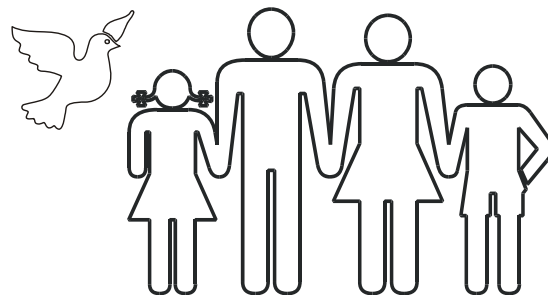
International partnership benefits

SABR cooperates with UK partner organizations (Be Training Ltd., Women's Aid Federation, The Haven Wolverhampton) since 1996 year.

This partnership promoted:

- Organizational and institutional development of organization;
- Improvement of quality and diversity of services provided;
- Increasing of professional level of staff;
- Establishment and strengthening of partnership links with local authorities and republican level authorities;
- Strengthening of technical base of organization;
- Establishment of links between two countries and dialogue between governmental and nongovernmental sectors;
- Development and strengthening of civil society in Uzbekistan by means of establishment of coalitions and networks between women's NGOs;
- And as a result improvement of socio-economic situation of women and reduction of domestic violence in the society.

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