



# STUDY ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE IN GEORGIA



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# 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND ON GEORGIA

## INTRODUCTION

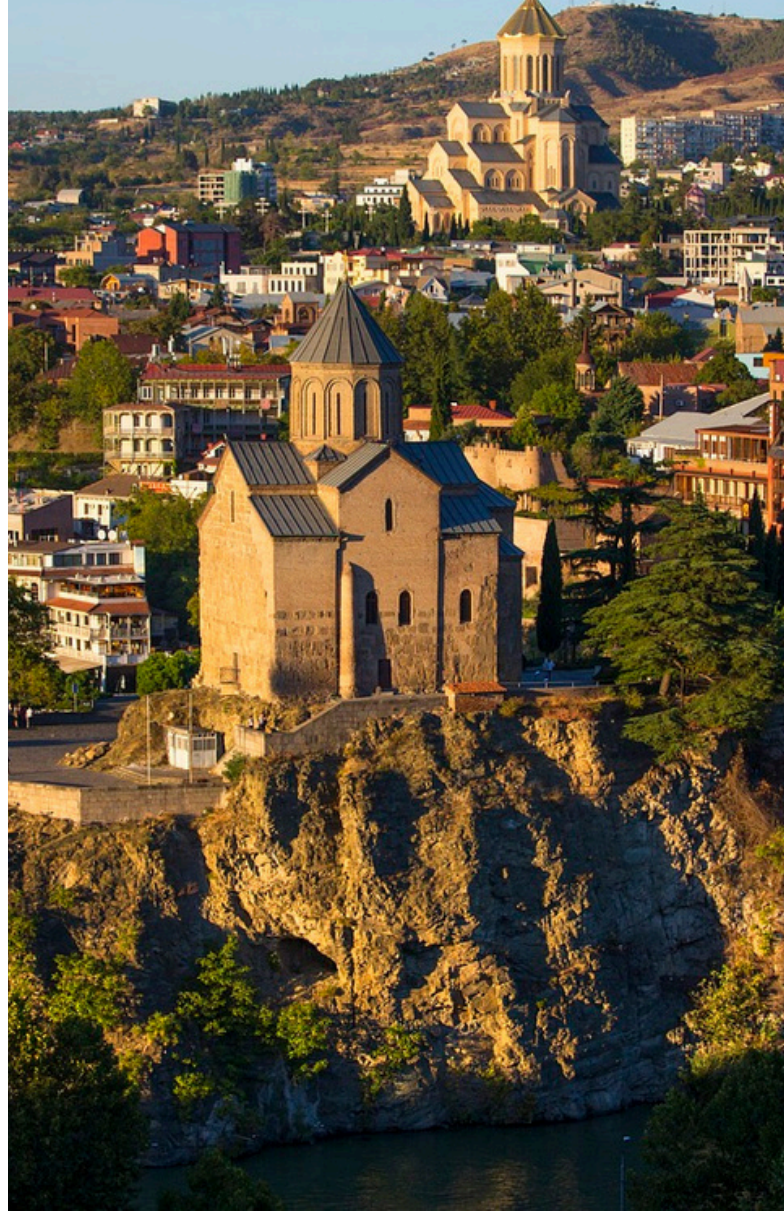
Georgia is a country in the South Caucasus, bordering the Black Sea. The country borders four countries: Russia, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The country's official language is Georgian, but Russian is widely spoken, as the country was a former republic of the Soviet Union until 1991.

English is spoken throughout most of the country. Several specific dialects are also spoken in specific regions, such as Megrelian and Svane. In 2023, the country had a population of 3.7 million, and its capital, Tbilisi, is home to 1.17 million citizens.

Georgia operates a market economy. It is based on international trade and energy, mainly through the production of hydrocarbons, enabling it to potentially become self-sufficient in electricity supply if the necessary infrastructures are developed.

Other key sectors include tourism and hospitality, business process outsourcing, logistics and manufacturing.



Georgia is particularly open to trade and has signed free trade agreements with the European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The geopolitical tensions in the region are particularly intense, especially in relation to Russia following the 1992 war and the subsequent loss of the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, followed by the 2008 war. Following the war in Ukraine, Georgia applied to join the European Union in March 2022.

The country was granted candidate status for EU membership in December 2023, but the official integration process is a lengthy process that is likely to take several years.

## 2. DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS FOR WOMEN IN GEORGIA

In 2023, there were over 1,943,000 women in Georgia. This means that women outnumber men in Georgian society by 8.31%. Nevertheless, the birth rate for women is lower overall than that for men, with 21,010 boys born in 2023 compared with 19,204 girls.

The higher proportion of women in Georgian society can be explained by the fact that the mortality rate for men is higher than that for women, thus reducing the male population. Consequently, the average life expectancy for Georgian men is 68.3 years and 76.6 years for women.

This difference can be explained by the fact that men are more prone to risky behaviours in their lifestyles than women (excessive alcohol consumption, smoking, etc).

Migration is also a factor explaining the higher presence of women in Georgia. Migration flows are considerable in Georgia and mainly involve men looking for work and better living conditions abroad. As a result, the number of emigrants was around 62% in 2022.



Photo : Georgia Today

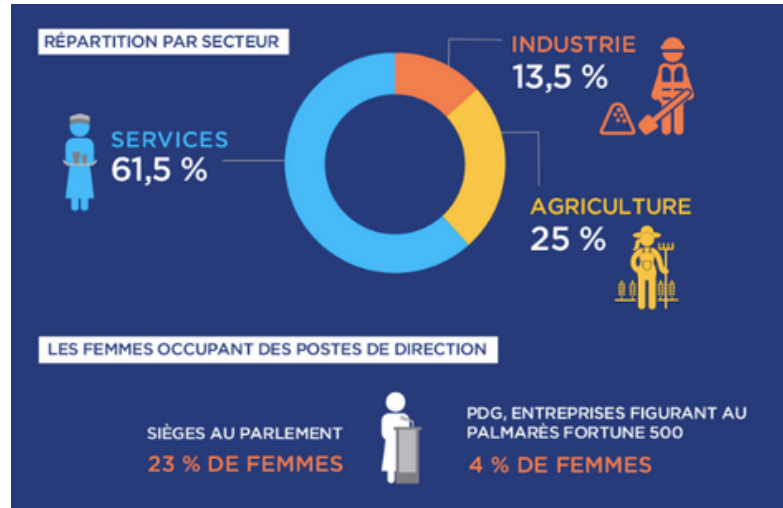
# 3. RELEVANCE OF STUDYING THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE IN GEORGIA

Despite the advance of globalisation throughout the world, the role of women in the workplace is constantly being questioned and challenged. Throughout the world, inequalities between men and women continue to be felt in a number of areas: the pay gap, the ratio of women to men hired in the corporate sector, etc...

The lack of employment for women in the different professional sectors considerably limits their involvement in global economic development, while at the same time restricting their role in society. The economic repercussions of this lack of engagement are considerable, and have inevitably had a profound impact on the most vulnerable populations.

According to UN Women, if women held similar positions to men and were paid fairly, global GDP would increase by 26% by 2025, amounting to an increase of 28 billion dollars.

In professional settings, women are also less likely to occupy positions of high responsibility, which increases the disparity gap. The sectors in which women work vary depending on the country and its level of development.



ONU Femmes

## THIS DISPARITY HAS A TREMENDOUS IMPACT ON THE WORLD ECONOMY.

In the least developed countries, women often work in physically demanding and dangerous jobs (in agriculture, for instance), with no social protection and low pay. On top of this comes the daily unpaid work (housework, running the household, looking after the children, etc.). When women are paid, it is often not at fair value, even for equal work. In 2024, it is estimated that women on average earn 4.3% less than men, even if they are employed in the same profession and work the same number of hours.

There are various reasons for this pay gap: different educational backgrounds, social background, level of experience or seniority within a company, among other criteria, all of which are discriminatory.

## 4. THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN IN GEORGIAN SOCIETY

OVER THE CENTURIES, MANY WOMEN HAVE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIAN SOCIETY, BOTH POLITICALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY.

### **Saint Nino**

(296 - 335 AD)

The Christianisation of Georgia is attributed to Saint Nino, a native of Cappadocia in Turkey. While still a young girl, Nino received a vision of the Virgin Mary giving her a Grape Cross and ordering her to preach the Gospel throughout Iberia (ancient Georgia). After miraculously healing Queen Nana, she succeeded in converting her from paganism to Christianity. Her husband, King Mirian III, was reluctant at first, but finally converted in 327 AD, after being struck by lightning during an afternoon's hunting, leaving him instantly blind. By praying to Nino's God, he managed to find his way back and, finally convinced, he converted the whole of Iberia to Christianity. Saint Nino now rests at the Bodbe Monastery in Kakhetia.

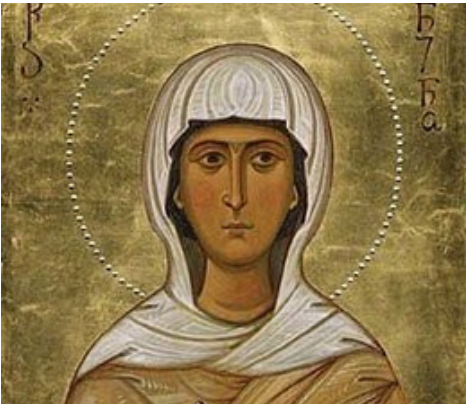


Photo : Wikipedia

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### **Queen Tamar**

(1166 - 1213)

The country's first female monarch, Queen Tamar (known in Georgia as King Tamar) ruled the Kingdom of Georgia during the "Golden Age of Georgia". She was initially co-monarch with her father, Giorgi III, who crowned her in 1178.

Upon his death in 1184, Tamar officially became the ruler of the country. Queen Tamar introduced many policies that contributed to Georgia's prosperity, including expanding the country's borders and introducing reforms to develop Georgian culture.



Photo : Wikipedia

These important historical figures characterise the deep relationship and respect that Georgian society values towards women. These major figures helped Georgia to prosper and contributed to its national development. The role of women in Georgia in the 21st century remains just as essential and deserves to be valued, just as it has been over the centuries through emblematic figures.

## 5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this report is to shed light on the situation of Georgian women in the workplace. The research focuses in particular on the situation of women within companies and the measures taken by Georgian public and private agencies to guarantee equal access and fair pay for Georgian women in the professional sphere.

Photo: 1tv.ge



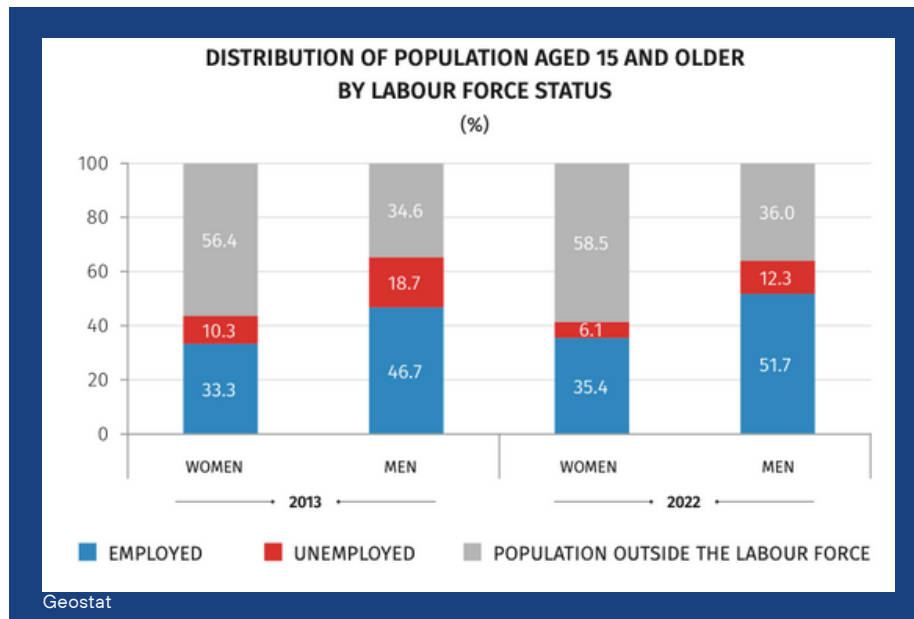
It is therefore essential to take an assessment of the measures implemented to ensure an appropriate working environment that reflects the value of women's work.

In Georgia in particular, it is crucial to highlight the role of women in society and their social and economic value. The research carried out for this report focuses on empowering Georgian women and improving their living conditions to enable them to play a similar role to men in Georgian society.

This report therefore seeks to illustrate the challenges that Georgian women face in society today and the obstacles they encounter in the labour market.

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# 6. ACTIVITY RATES, UNEMPLOYMENT RATES AND TYPES OF JOBS HELD BY WOMEN



Despite their greater numbers, Georgian women's participation in the labour market is significantly lower than that of men.

In 2022, only 35.4% of Georgian women were employed and 41.5% were actively involved in Georgia's economic development, compared to 64% of men. A significant gap that reinforces the barrier of inequality.

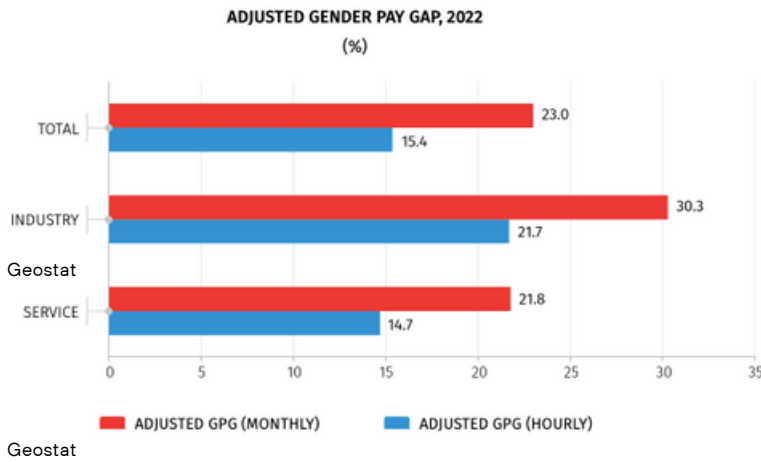
The unemployment rate for men is higher, primarily because they are the most active group looking for work. As women are less present in the Georgian labour market, so is their unemployment rate.

This situation characterises the conditions of women in Georgia and the lack of resources available to them to change their economic situation.

Similarly, women's economic instability also affects their pay. The pay gap between men and women in Georgia is very wide and remains a major issue for Georgian women.

In 2022, Georgian women were paid 36.2% less than men. These statistics do not take into account the characteristics of the jobs, the level of education or the age of the employees.



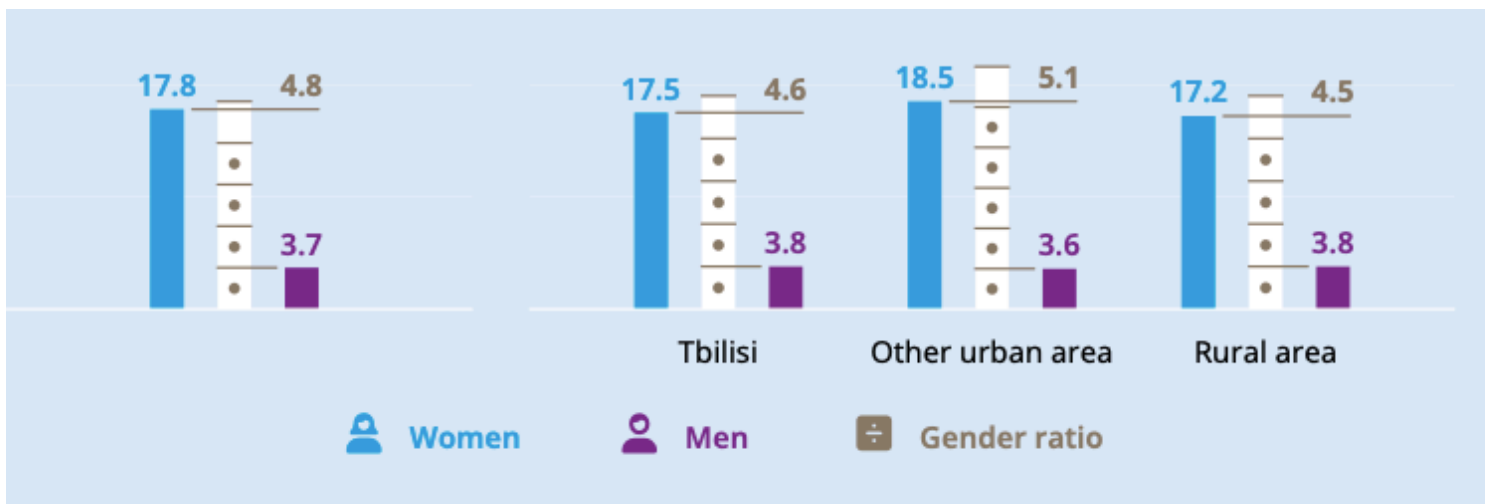


However, when these statistics are taken into account, the adjusted pay gap between men and women is 23% less per month and 15.4% less per hour. This means that for the same level of education and the same job, Georgian women employees earn significantly less than their male counterparts.

The monthly pay gap has also increased in comparison to 2021 and 2020, where the figure stood at 21.4%.

Georgian women are therefore more likely to hold a vulnerable position in society and to experience insecurity. What's more, the professional sectors in which women work are specific and limited. For example, 21.4% of women work in education, 16.4% in sales, 10% in health and social work and 14.8% in agriculture..

Recognising women's unpaid work, i.e. their investment in day-to-day household tasks such as cleaning, cooking, managing the home and supervising children, is especially important. Georgian women spend five times as much time on these tasks as men, particularly in urban areas



UN Women. (2023a). Country Gender Equality Profile - GEORGIA 2023..

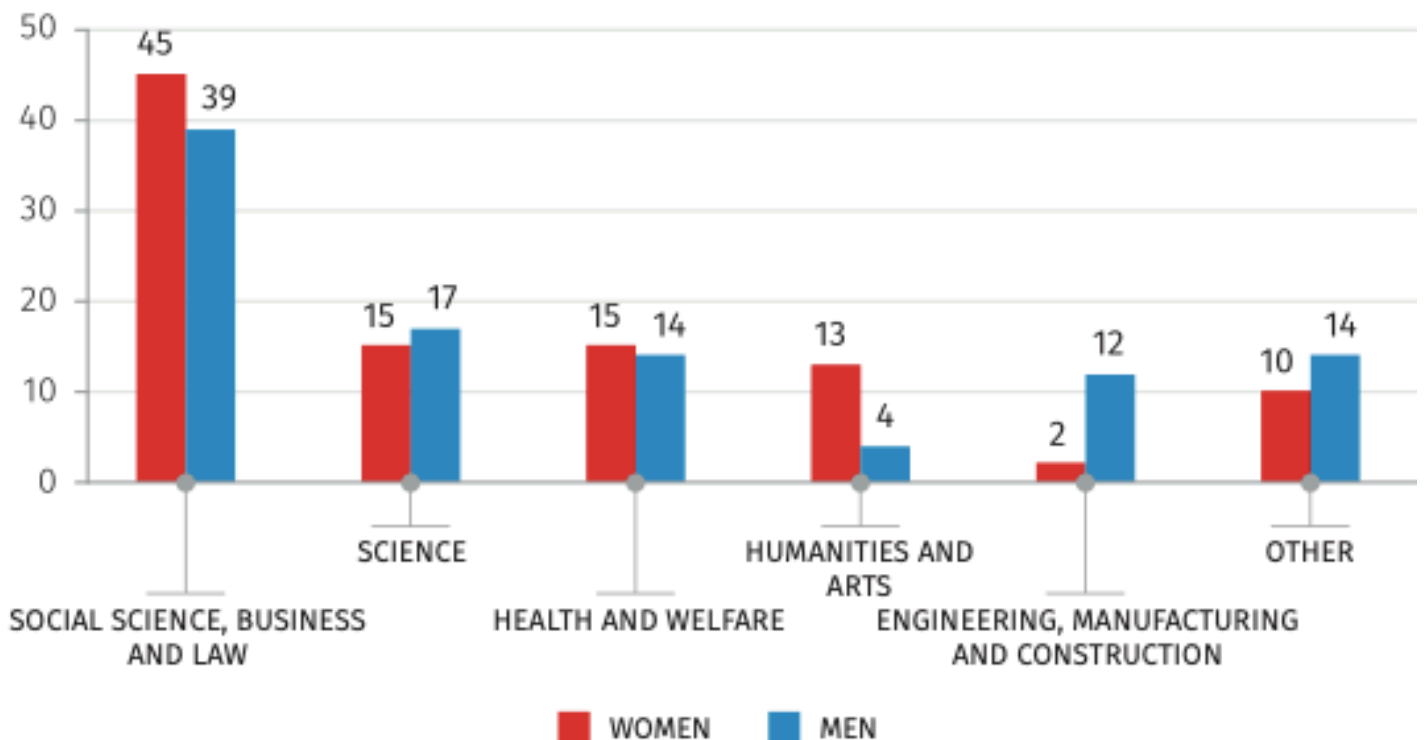
In the corporate sector, the position of women is also affected. They are often under-represented, particularly in senior positions. Only 30% of women are public officials, and 35% are in senior positions such as management.

The situation is all the more alarming if we compare these statistics with those for management positions held by men in the public sector. Only 13% of women are directors or deputy directors. The lack of representation in leading positions highlights the lack of opportunity faced by Georgian women. This lack of integration can also be explained by the low percentage of women employed in companies. Very few companies employ teams with a majority of women, approximately 11.5%.

These statistics may come as a surprise, particularly when you consider that more Georgian women than Georgian men have benefited from higher education.

### THE 2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR BY PROGRAMMES

(%)





Geostat. (2023). ADJUSTED GENDER PAY GAP (GPG) 2022. Dans Geostat.ge.

## 7. WOMEN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As in other fields in the labour market, entrepreneurship is not spared from the lack of representation of women. Georgian women are half as likely to be self-employed and to set up their own business.

### Ownership status across large, medium and small-sized enterprises, by gender (percentage)

|   | Large | Medium | Small | Unclassified | TOTAL |
|---|-------|--------|-------|--------------|-------|
|  <b>Women</b> | 11    | 16     | 34    | 26           | 33    |
|  <b>Men</b>   | 80    | 76     | 63    | 50           | 61    |
| <b>Unidentified</b>   | 9     | 8      | 4     | 24           | 6     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | 100   | 100    | 100   | 100          | 100   |

UN Women & International Labour Organization. (2023). NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA.

Women are more likely to run small businesses and their presence at the head of medium and large companies is still limited. Female entrepreneurship sectors are also restricted and reserved for specific sectors, similar to the sectors in which women are employed.

The majority of women run businesses specialising in sales, health and social services, and the least in construction and transport. Half of women entrepreneurs say that they took the initiative to start their own business in order to reconcile their family responsibilities more easily.

The other half report that they set up a business mainly to be independent and not to be under the authority of a superior. Being self-employed is an opportunity for women to assert and highlight the value of their work as well as the innovation they can bring to sectors dominated by men.

## 8. OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN THE GEORGIAN LABOUR MARKET

The labour market in Georgia is still governed by societal standards that have a major impact on women's professional careers. Despite the fact that they have a higher rate of access to higher education, Georgian women face cultural challenges and stereotypes persist in the world of work. For instance, according to a study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2019, 39% of respondents (including men and women) thought that men were better business leaders than women.

Similarly, the same study reveals that only 40% of Georgian men think that a woman is capable of doing the same job as a man. These opinions obviously have a considerable impact on the opportunities given to women, and only serve to distance them from an egalitarian society.



Photo : Ouest France

In Georgia, women also find it more difficult to obtain funding to start up their businesses. Institutions and other funding bodies have very few support programmes for women's economic development.

In addition, many Georgian women take on the responsibility of looking after the family home, which is difficult to reconcile with a full-time job.

The mental burden associated with this management has an impact on women's health and prevents them from seeking sustainable economic independence, such as that offered by entrepreneurship.

## 9. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

As part of its request to join the European Union, Georgia needs to reach a certain level of standards in order to obtain member status. Over the last few years, Georgia has introduced numerous reforms and laws designed to improve the position of women in the workforce.

Under Article 11 of the country's Constitution, all forms of discrimination based on gender are prohibited, and the government actively promotes gender equality. Since 2010, a series of laws have been passed to guarantee this equality.

As a result, the Gender Equality Act was established in 2010 with the aim of "supporting and guaranteeing the equal rights of men and women in political, economic, social and cultural life". Four years later, the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination was adopted, prohibiting all discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Consequently, the text implies that discrimination against women in the working environment is prohibited and is supposed to be punishable by law.

In 2021, Georgia took a step forward by joining the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), set up by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN and the OECD. Joining the Coalition aims to put an end to pay inequality in Georgia and to promote the presence of women in the world of work.

By joining such a programme, the Georgian government is clearly indicating its position and its desire to change the Georgian mentality. Nonetheless, there is still a long way to go before we achieve real pay equality.



# 10. SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Numerous aid programmes have been set up by national and foreign organisations to promote the development of women in the world of work.

Most of these programmes are sponsored by the development aid agencies of various countries, often in collaboration with international bodies such as the UN, the ILO or the European Union. For example, the Swedish government has participated in the financing of numerous aid programmes in Georgia in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

More specifically, this collaboration has led to the creation and implementation of the **"Joint United Nations Programme for Gender Equality in Georgia"**, which runs from 2022 to 2026.

The programme has three main areas of action:

- The political and economic empowerment of women
- The elimination of violence against women
- The realisation of people's sexual and reproductive rights

The programme set up by this cooperative has helped to promote the role of women in decision-making for the public good. The number of women in government bodies is much lower than that of men. As a result, part of the population is under-represented and unable to speak out in favour of changes in society that are only accessible through government bodies.

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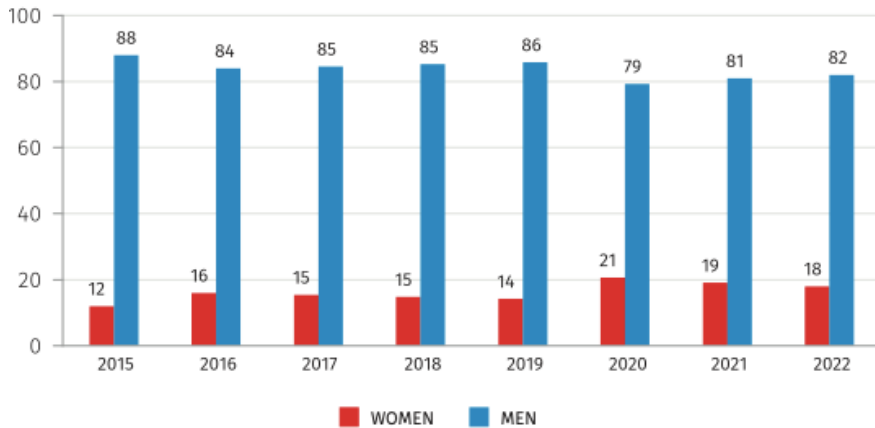
**"EMPOWERING WOMEN IS  
ALSO AN INDISPENSABLE  
TOOL FOR ADVANCING  
DEVELOPMENT AND  
REDUCING POVERTY."**

UNFPA GEORGIA

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This lack of representation is blatantly obvious in the Georgian Parliament, where in 2022 only 18% of the members of the government were women.

**DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA (SDG 5.5.1) AS OF 31 DECEMBER (%)**



Geostat. (2023). ADJUSTED GENDER PAY GAP (GPG) 2022

These figures have been rising for the past 10 years, largely due to the adoption in 2018 of a quota system for women in Parliament.

This system includes quotas of 25% for women in proportional party lists for Parliament and a 50% quota for local government.

It is partly thanks to the initiative of the Joint United Nations Programme for Gender Equality in Georgia between the Swedish government and the international bodies mentioned above that this change has been achieved and continues to evolve.

The United States have also established a support program for the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Georgia through its development agency USAID. This program, called YES - Georgia, aims to encourage innovation and support entrepreneurship among young Georgian women.



The Norwegian government, in collaboration with UN Women, has also set up a programme to support women, promoting gender equality. The “Good Governance for Gender Equality in Georgia” (GG4GEG) programme, which ran from 2019 to 2022, aimed to promote women’s economic empowerment in Georgia.

In France, Proparco, a subsidiary agency of AFD, distinguished itself by granting a loan of 100 million euros to the Georgian bank TBC Bank in 2023. Of this amount, €30 million is allocated to the development of TBC Bank's gender equality portfolio and the promotion of women entrepreneurs.





## ● A STEP BACKWARDS?

Despite the progress made by the Georgian government in the field of gender equality, it would appear that the Georgian Dream party still wants to keep a firm grip on this issue by introducing a controversial amendment.

On 4 April 2024, the Georgian government abolished the amendment guaranteeing mandatory gender quotas in Parliament. Previously, Georgia's Electoral Code had required since 2018 that at least one in four people on a party list be a woman.

The discontinuation of this directive, which is essential to ensure women's place in Georgian political decision-making, underlines the intentions of the Georgian Dream party, which, in taking this decision, is declaring that gender equality is no longer a priority for the government.



Photo : Civil Georgia

The directive was adopted following an agreement between Georgian Dream and the "Girchi" parliamentary political group, which introduced the proposal to abolish the rule. In exchange for the majority party's support for the abolition of quotas, "Girchi" will vote in favour of the Georgian Dream candidate for the post of Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission.

# 11. INCENTIVES FOR COMPANIES TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Some Georgian companies have also begun to implement company-specific policies to reduce the gender pay gap and to ensure women's professional development in the workspace.

At the initiative of the Norwegian government and in collaboration with UN Women, the Women's Empowerment Principles in Georgia (WEPs) were created from 2017 to 2021. WEPs are a series of objectives that participating companies commit to implement.

The principles include:

1. Establish a high-level leadership system for gender equality within companies.
2. Treat all women and men equally at work - respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.
3. To ensure the health, safety and well-being of all workers, men and women.
4. Promote women's education, training and professional development.
5. Implement business development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
6. Promote equality through community initiatives and awareness-raising actions.
7. Assess progresses made on gender equality and report them publicly.

Among the Georgian companies that have agreed to ratify this program are Crystal, a financial inclusion company, the technology company LAB or the Georgian Audit Company, among others. These companies made the decision to promote women's inclusion and promote diversity in their offices. These initiatives are therefore part of a perspective of progress and professional integration for Georgian women of all ages.

## 12. INTERVIEW

Dans le cadre de ce rapport, un entretien a été mené et ceci dans le but d'en apprendre plus sur les systèmes mis en place par les entreprises géorgiennes pour assurer un développement optimal du monde professionnel féminin.

### **SERVIER GEORGIA**

We had the opportunity to ask questions to Maia Khetsuriani, General Director of Servier in Georgia. Servier is a French pharmaceutical company which has been present in Georgia for 21 years. The company promotes gender equality and equal pay, among other programs implemented within the company, so that employees can thrive in their workplace.



#### **What initiatives has Servier put in place to promote gender equality and encourage the career advancement of women?**

Servier has implemented various initiatives to promote gender equality and support the career advancement of women.

These include establishing mentoring program „ She is Servier” where senior female leaders mentor female employees.

Promoting flexible work arrangements to accommodate work-life balance needs, providing home-office opportunities for women who are back from maternity leave as well as 6 months paid maternity leave based on seniority level.

Promoting women career path to leadership positions through targeted talent development programs.

#### **How does Servier ensure that women have equal access to training and career development opportunities?**

To ensure equal access to training and career development opportunities, Servier employs a proactive approach.

This involves offering a diverse range of training programs that are accessible to all employees regardless of gender, including both internal initiatives through internal e-learning platform and collaborations with external trainers and coaches.

These external partnerships are aimed at not only enhancing professional skills but also nurturing personal development and leadership qualities.

Additionally, the company regularly reviews and updates its development programs to address any gender disparities and ensure that they remain relevant and effective in supporting the growth and progression of all employees.

### **Are there mechanisms in place to monitor and reduce pay gaps between men and women in similar positions?**

Servier has implemented transparent salary structures and promotion processes which has robust mechanisms in place to monitor and reduce pay gaps between men and women in similar positions.

These structures are guided by internal salary policies that prioritize gender equality, ensuring that salary increases and bonus allocations are based on objective criteria and performance evaluations.

Servier's approach also involves working closely with top managers to minimize subjective bias in compensation decisions and to mitigate the risk of underpayment for women.

By prioritizing fair and equitable compensation practices, Servier is committed to fostering a work environment where all employees are compensated fairly for their contributions, regardless of gender.

### **What measures are taken to combat gender stereotypes and foster an inclusive and respectful work environment?**

Servier is deeply committed to combatting gender stereotypes and cultivating an inclusive and respectful work environment.

In addition to raising awareness about unconscious bias through comprehensive training programs, the company actively promotes diversity and inclusion through internal communications and events.

Furthermore, Servier enforces a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment in the workplace, ensuring that all employees feel safe and valued.

In line with these efforts, Servier has established a robust ethical code known as the Servier Group Ethical Code, complemented by local handbooks, Servier bylaws.

These documents serve as guiding principles for employees, outlining the company's expectations for ethical behavior and professional conduct.

Servier also provides regular training sessions to employees to reinforce adherence to these ethical norms and to prevent any violations.

## **How does Servier gather feedback on the experience of women at work and what actions are taken in response to this feedback?**

Servier actively gathers feedback through diverse channels, including employee surveys and one-on-one meetings with HR. Notably, with 93% of our local employees being women, we prioritize their development and well-being.

In addition to gathering feedback, Servier is dedicated to fostering a robust implementation feedback culture. This involves not only listening to employees' concerns and suggestions but also taking concrete actions to address them.

Based on the feedback received, Servier implements various initiatives aimed at enhancing the work experience for women.

These initiatives include organizing events such as "one day out with children" to support working parents, providing opportunities for flexible work arrangements such as work-from-home options, offering comprehensive health insurance coverage, and more. By proactively responding to the feedback gathered from female employees, Servier demonstrates its commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive work environment where all employees can thrive and achieve their full potential.

## **What are Servier's short- and long-term objectives or initiatives in relation to diversity and inclusion, particularly with regard to the representation and advancement of women?**

Servier's short- and long-term objectives and initiatives related to diversity and inclusion are multifaceted. Beyond internal efforts to increase the representation of women in leadership positions and foster an inclusive culture where all employees feel valued and respected, Servier is deeply committed to making a positive impact in the broader community.

In addition to internal initiatives, Servier engages in corporate social responsibility initiatives aimed at supporting women who are victims of domestic violence.

These initiatives provide essential resources and support systems to help women overcome their challenges and rebuild their lives.

By actively participating in efforts to address this critical societal issue, Servier not only demonstrates its commitment to diversity and inclusion but also increases awareness and support within both the workforce and the wider community.

Through these combined efforts, Servier aims to create a workplace and a society where women are empowered to thrive, both personally and professionally, and where everyone has equal opportunities to succeed.

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