Gender equality and women’s empowerment

Esuna Dugarova

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Gender equality is about power relations

- Unequal power relations often start from home.
- A key barrier - essentializing women as caregivers.
- Root causes: deeply embedded social norms and neoliberal approach.
  - "Son bias" and "missing women"
  - Austerity policies negative affect women
Gender equality - key to inclusive and sustainable outcomes

- Contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction

  ![Equal educational attainment and labour force participation](image)

  Source: Dugarova (2018)

- Women in politics - integral to strong communities and family well-being.

  - Female parliamentarians more likely to prioritize social issues (education, health, childcare, pensions).
Significant progress made in recent decades

- 1.3 billion women in paid employment in 2018 (891 million in 1991).
- In over 46 countries, women hold 30% of seats in national parliament.
- Gender equality in education is achieved in a number of countries.
- Global movements address violence and harassment against women.
- New partners join forces to advance gender equality.
But challenges persist

- Women remain economically disadvantaged.

- Decision-making is gender unbalanced:
  - 20% of countries reached gender parity in public administration
  - 4.8% of CEOs of Fortune 500 companies are women.

- Women earn 23% less than men but dedicate 138 days more to unpaid care work.

- Gender-based violence pervasive around the world.
UNDP’s work on gender equality

- Over past 5 years, significant results in women’s economic empowerment and political participation.
  - Women accounted for 51% of 37.3 million people who benefited from livelihoods in 120 countries.
  - UNDP’s support enabled 304,000 women candidates to participate in national elections.

- UNDP supports countries to address women’s unpaid care work.
  - 612,000 women-headed households gained access to clean energy in 2018.

- UNDP helps to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

However:

- Many projects (in economic sphere) are small-scale with little transformative impact.
- In many programmes women are passive beneficiaries.
UNDP’s work on gender equality: way forward

- **Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021**
  - achieving structural transformation;
  - shifting gender and power relations;
  - empowering women as agents of change.

- **Priority areas**
  - removing structural barriers (including women’s unpaid care work)
  - tackling multiple forms of discrimination and GBV;
  - advancing women’s participation and leadership in decision-making;
  - promoting gender-responsive strategies, laws and policies.
THANK YOU!

Esuna.Dugarova@undp.org