

Economic Sociology in the Context of Central Asia: Trend Analysis and Development Prospects

Usmankhodjaeva Surayyo Mukhtarovna

Al-Khwarizmi University of Information Technologies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

This article presents an overview of economic sociology on the example of the countries of Central Asia, where there are unique problems associated with the transformation of socio-economic relations in the period of post-Soviet adaptation of the republics that were part of the Soviet Union. Social inequality, discrimination and inequality based on tribal, ethical, religious or gender grounds, lack of inclusivity—these and many other social challenges and problems that our society faces require a search for solutions and an optimal way out of the situation, since society and the development of society directly affect the economy in the countries as a whole, the stability of society and the quality of life of citizens of the entire Central Asian region and each country. Social justice creates stability in market relations and contributes to economic growth, equal rights and opportunities create the necessary level of trust in society at which growth and development take place. The article analyzes the changes that have taken place since the independence of the republics, as well as the post-pandemic period, which has made significant adjustments to the lives of citizens of Central Asian countries.

Keywords: socio-economics, Central Asia, social challenges, social tourism, poverty, economics sociology

Introduction

Integration into the world community began in the Republic of Uzbekistan after the adoption of the status of an independent country in accordance with the resolution “On the proclamation of state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan” and the law “On the principles of state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan”¹ of August 31, 1991. And the country began a long and difficult journey to the formation of its own independence, to the search for standard and non-standard solutions to strengthen its position in the world and in the region. to economic independence from neighboring countries that were tied to each other politically and economically.

Over the 33 years of independence, a lot of work has been done to strengthen the country, Uzbekistan is successfully strengthening its position in the world, strategically developing the economy, diplomatic relations and cultural potential. The economy of Uzbekistan in 2023 grew by 6%—1.07 quadrillion soums (about \$90.8 billion), GDP per capita increased to 28.8 million soums (\$2,468).

Usmankhodjaeva Surayyo Mukhtarovna, assistant, Department of Management and Marketing, Al-Khwarizmi University of Information Technologies, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Usmankhodjaeva Surayyo Mukhtarovna, Al-Khwarizmi University of Information Technologies, A-Temur str., 108, Tashkent 100085, Uzbekistan.

¹ http://iacis.ru/novosti/parlamenti/den_nezavisimosti_respubliki_uzbekistan_#:~:text=31%20%201991%20years%20on,country%20acquired%20all%20complete%20state



Figure 1. Based on the World Bank data source.

Over the years of independence, Uzbekistan has established relations and signed credentials with more than 149 countries of the world, is a member of more than 100 international organizations, including the UN, SCO, CIS, CSTO and others. Currently, the priority task on the way to liberalization of the economy for the republic is to join the WTO (World Trade Organization), as a full member. Uzbekistan's trade turnover in 2022 reached 50.01 billion US dollars, having increased by \$7.84 billion, or 18.6%, compared to the previous year, exports for the year increased to \$19.31 billion, or 15.9%, imports—to \$30.67 billion, or 20.4%.² Here we can cite the words of the President of Uzbekistan that “with the support of the international community, Central Asia will continue to follow the path of consolidation. The transformation of the region into a peaceful and prosperous region will remain a priority goal of Uzbekistan's foreign policy”. We also cite the comment of the Director of the Institute of Eurasia of the Chinese Academy of International Affairs under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Li Ziguo: “Since 2016, fundamental changes have taken place in Uzbekistan, which were presented in the speech of the President of Uzbekistan at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly. The leader of Uzbekistan also outlined his strategic vision of the country's policy for the coming years. In particular, the issues of promoting internal reforms and improving the national governance system, economic integration and global division of labor, early accession to the WTO, the course towards further strengthening good-neighborliness, cooperation and partnership in Central Asia were touched upon.” (Usmankhodjaeva Surayyo Mukhtarovna, 2023)

The cultural potential of the country is also developing rapidly—for example, the city of Shakhrisabz, located in the Kashkadarya region, in 2024 became the tourist capital of the ECO. The Great Silk Road, which gave a huge impetus to the development of Uzbekistan, enriched our country with knowledge, culture, beliefs, innovative ideas of other countries³, including 12 international conferences, forums, exhibitions, fairs, including

² <https://stat.uz/ru/press-tsentr/novosti-goskomstata/33840-o-zbekiston-respublikasi-tashqi-savdo-aylanmasi-2022-yil-yanvar-dekabr-3>

³ <https://touristichka.ru/uzbekistan-poleznaya-informacziya-1/kalendar-meropriyatij-2023/2page/>

the XII session of the Ministers of Tourism of the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the traditional forum on the theme “Crafts of the Turkic peoples”, 7 international events in the field of applied arts and cinematography, including the famous XVI Tashkent Film Festival “Pearl of the Silk Road”. The most famous initiative of the EU within the framework of cultural programs is a project created jointly with the film school and the Focus theater to teach teenagers the art of cinema. The city of Samarkand was declared the cultural capital of the Islamic world in 2025 during the 12th conference “Towards the renewal of cultural activities in the Islamic world”, which was held in Qatar. Samarkand in Uzbekistan is associated with many great and famous events—it was the capital of several states, great personalities were born, lived, worked in it—Ferdowsi, Ulugbek, Babur, Amir Timur. In the Soviet years, the history of our country was distorted and partially destroyed—our language, our history and the glorious deeds of our ancestors were tried to be hushed up or, even worse, presented in a negative way. Take the example of the Emir of Turan-Amir Timur (1336-1405), who created a huge empire on the territory of more than 27 countries of the world, patronized the sciences and arts, created the “Code of Timur”—a kind of symbiosis of the theory of management and the code of laws, whose grandson and son were the smartest people—one poet, commander and statesman (Zahid ad-Din Muhammad Babur 1483-1530)⁴, the creator of the famous “Babur-name”, treatises on Muslim jurisprudence “Mubayin”, poetics “Aruz risolasi”; the second was a mathematician and astronomer, a statesman (Muhammad Taragai ibn Shahrukh ibn Timur Ulugbek Guragan, better known as Ulugbek, 1394-1449)⁵, Ulugh Beg’s astronomical handbook was a textbook on astronomy in all existing observatories in Europe—which proves that Amir Timur encouraged the education and development of exact sciences. I have always been struck by the fact that the story of Suleiman I (1494-1566), the ruler of the Ottoman Empire, is revered and respected, no one calls him “controversial” or “bloodthirsty tyrant”, although this man, in pursuit of power, gave the order to kill his own son⁶. The right policy, support for the history of their own country, excellent marketing has led to the fact that now Turkey and the capital Istanbul are visited by more than 50 million tourists, and 2 million of them go only to visit the legendary Topkapi⁷, the palace of the famous sultan. Turkey’s income from tourism amounted to more than 50 billion US dollars⁸, and it is not difficult to calculate that the share of historical tourism is about 2 billion US dollars. For comparison, Uzbekistan in 2023 was visited by 6.6 million people, of which more than 2 million people visited Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva—the main historical cities of our country. Tourism revenue amounted to \$1.72 billion. United States. In our country there is no access to the sea, there are no exotic animals and savannahs with long walks under the moon, there is no Burj al-Khalifa, but we have a history, original, beautiful and long. We have many buildings and structures that are perfectly preserved and breathe history to this day. There are frescoes, there are many scrolls, products, there are stories of people who lived, fought, created history and who need to be remembered. I would also like to separately note the topic of social tourism. Social tourism as a concept was first mentioned in the 1980 Manila Declaration on World Tourism, which states: “Social tourism is a goal that society should strive for in the interests of the less well-off citizens when they exercise their right to rest”. The

⁴ <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babur#:~:text=Zahir%2Dad%2Ddin%20Muhammad%20Babur,commander%2C%20poet%20i%20state%20figure>

⁵ https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulugbek#Political_and_scientific_activity

⁶ https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suleiman_I

⁷ <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topkapi>

⁸ <https://abaidan.kz/ru/categories/turizm/turciya-zavershaet-2023-god-s-rekordnymi-pokazatelyami-turizma-2024-02-04#:~:text=How%20Announced%20Ministry%20Culture%20and,Night%20For%20Overnight%20Stays%20Reached%20%2499>

official website of the UN⁹ does not give a full breakdown of the topic and does not specify which segments of the civilian population are considered the least well-off, but from this we can conclude that humanity is concerned about the situation of people who are financially incapable, as well as those who have physical disabilities, the right to rest. In the Montreal Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly of the International Bureau of Social Tourism in 1996, according to the 13th Declaration, social tourism is tourism, the purpose of which is not only to make a profit, but the main idea is that tourism is completely available on a mass scale, and not as a privilege, and only for the wealthy segments of the population. In the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 16.04.2019¹⁰ “On Tourism”, Chapter 2, Article 6 says: “...creation of the necessary conditions for the development of domestic tourism, including the organization of tourism and excursions for children, youth, the elderly, as well as persons with disabilities and low-income segments of the population within the framework of the development of social tourism”, tourism is a direction of the economy, fully or partially financed by budgetary funds, state extra-budgetary funds (including funds allocated within the framework of state social assistance), as well as the employer’s funds. That is, here we understand how you can get money for travel, and to whom it is exactly intended, for what category of people. V. A. Kvartalnov, one of the main founders of the concept of social tourism, in his article “Strategic Management in Tourism” (Kvartalnov, 2023) says that tourism is a market, but it is more correct to emphasize that this market is basically understood as a “market of good deeds”. Although the profit from social services can be very tangible, which is sometimes not quite correctly perceived by our government. For example, let’s take the experience of foreign countries: In some European countries, social tourism is organized by various organizations, including associations, cooperatives and trade unions, with the aim of making travel accessible to all, especially those who are less privileged. Such projects in Europe can be both international and national, a direct example of social tourism is the famous Calypso project, with a budget of 1 million euros and a duration of three years, since it was necessary to understand how justified such a project would be within the framework of the economy of the countries, in order to work out the tourism sector. The main goal of the project was to attract more citizens to tourism, to expand local, interregional and, of course, international tourism. And most importantly, it is not only about travel, but a huge role is played by the problem of maintaining health, communication between the elderly and young people, and general social integration. What is particularly important for the EU countries in the Calypso project is that people’s participation in this project can strengthen their attachment to European values and traditions. The target groups of citizens in the project consisted of the elderly and pensioners, youth, disabled people and low-income families. The main objectives of the project were:

- Identification of effective methods of stimulating tourism in the off-season;
- Development of measures at the level of European and national legislation to increase tourist exchanges among the participants of the four target groups;
- Identification of obstacles to achieving these goals and ways to overcome them.

What would the development of this project give to the countries of the European community? First of all, this is the development and growth of tourism activities, the creation of new jobs, the formation of a common consciousness among the peoples of Europe. Non-governmental organizations, travel companies were involved in the project to work with hotels, resorts and holiday homes.

If we discuss the specifics of individual countries, then we note that in France, social support for tourism is

⁹ <https://abaidan.kz/ru/categories/turizm/turciya-zavershaet-2023-god-s-rekordnymi-pokazatelyami-turizma-2024-02-04#:~:text=Как%20объявило%20Министерство%20культуры%20и>

¹⁰ <https://www.lex.uz/docs/4428101>

carried out by the National Agency for Holiday Cheques ANCV¹¹. Vacation checks are not a “trade union voucher”, which is strictly regulated by the place and cost of the object, but a payment check, which can be used to pay for various tourist services, such as: accommodation in accommodation facilities, meals of all kinds, you can pay for transport services, tickets for cultural events, travel agencies, visit various parks and museums. As a result, the owners of checks get the opportunity to increase the nominal value of checks by 4 times! The annual turnover of the National Agency is more than 1 billion euros, more than 3 million French citizens pay for their needs with vacation checks. The agency has more than 21,000 client organizations that finance its work and 135,000 organizations that provide services to cheque holders. Those checks that have not been claimed are shared by ANCV with various charities.

The Spanish government invests about 75 million euros in this program, but thanks to economic instruments such as VAT, personal tax, commercial and professional activities, subsidies and subsidies, the Social Tourism Program generates an annual income of 125 million euros for the country. tourism is especially valuable, because this country has clearly shown the entire world community that this topic is attractive both economically and socially—in the article by L. I. Donskova (2018). Studies conducted by Georgie Garcés Ferrer, Mirela Ferry Sanz, Estrella Dura Ferrandiz in the field of healthy aging, clearly showed that 2 groups of elderly people, one of which is a participant in tourism, the other is not, strikingly differed in several criteria: for example, elderly tourists have a higher level of health, integration into the community is much easier, the parameter “life satisfaction” in older people who are used to traveling, higher than in the other group that does not have the opportunity to travel. Most importantly, tourists from this group of studies have shown that they are able to perform a much better role in the activities of everyday life—that is, their cognitive and mental abilities are much higher than those of the other group of people. This is an important parameter that indicates healthy aging, which means less use of medical services. Social tourism helps to save on the consumption of health and social services for the elderly population, which is reflected in savings for existing governments and households. Moreover, this saving is not carried out by increasing taxes and other mechanisms that irritate society, here we are talking about the triple benefit of this resource:

- Elderly people, traveling, resting in sanatoriums, hotels, visiting tours, feel better emotionally, physically and mentally, respectively, they will serve society longer and more effectively for the good;
- paying only for part of vouchers and tours, and sometimes for free, tourists of this category generate income by spending money on souvenirs, pleasant trifles, the costs of which they would not dare to spend at home;
- visiting sanatoriums, hotels and rest homes in the off-season, this group provides work for these organizations;
- It has long been known that people who travel integrate more easily into any society.

It is also worth paying special attention to social family tourism as a developing segment of the industry, and here the research in this area by Heike A. Schanzel and Jan Yeoman is interesting (Donskova, 2018), who present the results of observations of family tourism assimilated to our current realities, and presumably its appearance in the future. The one we are used to—that is, father, mother and child—can now wear a uniform—two fathers and a child, two mothers and a child, father and mother and a child whose gender has not yet been confirmed, and so on. Gender equality and a strong focus on children are changing the way travel packages and services are purchased. Naturally, such families will choose the place and destination of recreation in a familiar

¹¹ <https://www.atorus.ru/news/press-centre/new/40178.html>

and convenient circle for themselves, where they will not be hung with templates and will not look at such families with their mouths open. Our country professes Islam, and the attitude of Muslims to gender equality is ambiguous, but at the same time, Uzbekistan is a modern secular country that keeps up with the times, and respect for guests and tourists has always been consistently good. Here you need to understand that guests of our country should also show respect for our traditions and religious features, as in the UAE, for example, it is forbidden to drink alcohol in public places, it is forbidden to behave provocatively in society, it is forbidden to be topless on the beaches, you cannot walk in translucent clothes, you cannot show public displays of tenderness, even if it is a husband and wife. In Spain, it is also forbidden to walk in a bathing suit outside the beach, In Bali, tourists are prohibited from entering temples and behavior that offends sacred places, in Tanzania it is forbidden to use plastic bags and pollute lakes, springs, and the sea. In Iran, women are required to wear a headscarf and cover their wrists and ankles, while men are not recommended to wear shorts and T-shirts.

There are no such restrictions for tourists in our country, except for environmental pollution, which will not be welcomed in any country, but propaganda and exposure of one's principles, which are not compatible with the principles and traditions of our country, will be condemned by society and the government. It should be understood that different views on family traditions, the form of relations, and ways of life differ greatly in different countries, but this should not prevent society from getting to know each other, visiting other countries and enjoying cultural values, communication and the development of their own cultural baggage.

In this light, I believe that it is absolutely necessary for the government of our country to consider alternative options to encourage tourism of social groups, and not only people of the elderly segment, but also other groups in need of social assistance. Additional measures for the development of tourism were taken by the President of our country in 2023, in accordance with the Presidential Decree of 26.04.2023¹² "On additional measures to accelerate the development of the tourist potential of the Republic, as well as to further increase the number of local and foreign tourists". The resolution says that in order to increase the tourism potential of the regions, universities will actively carry out work on the study and promotion of tourist facilities, the application of research in practice, improving the quality of tourism services and the training of qualified personnel. From 01.05.2024 to July 1, 2024, enterprises providing tour operator services will have the opportunity to receive a 20% VAT refund through a subsidy from the republican budget on invoices for tour packages. In the tourism sector, tour operators and entrepreneurs have the opportunity to defer the payment of VAT when importing buses with 10 or more seats without accruing interest until May 1, 2026. This provides important support for the development of tourism in Uzbekistan. Within the framework of the resolution, the following documents were developed:

1. Target indicators of tourism development.
2. Work plan for road repair to ensure comfortable movement of tourists.
3. "Road maps" for solving problems arising in the field of tourism.
4. Composition of the working group on tourism development.
5. Schedule for attracting foreign tourists to increase the flow of visitors.

These measures allow the tourism sector to develop and lead to sustainability in the overall economy of our country, but it is necessary to understand that social tourism in Uzbekistan is becoming an increasingly potentially profitable direction, contributing to the further development of the country's economy. Travel, visits not only to cultural sites, but also to have a good rest in sanatoriums, hotels, visits to various recreation areas, the purpose of

¹² https://www.norma.uz/novoe_v_zakonodatelstve/utverjdeny_dopolnitelnye_mery_po_razvitiyu_turizma

which is to participate in charitable projects or exchange cultural experience, attract more and more foreign guests and do not leave the local population indifferent. This type of tourism can not only generate income, but also contribute to a significant improvement in the socio-economic situation of the population. Implementation of social tourism support programs in Uzbekistan can lead to long-term positive results. Also, the issue of infrastructure, convenient roads with modern pavement, comfortable road junctions, transport stations, airports, equipped with modern equipment and sharpened for today's information technologies, is very acute on the agenda. Based on the article by M. L. Kurbanova. "Mechanisms for the Development of the Transport Sector, Services of State and Local Authorities" (Kurbanova, 2024), it can be concluded that special attention should be paid to the development of Uzbekistan's infrastructure and highlighted in the top five most important issues to be solved in the near future.

The issue of the social orientation of the opportunity to travel and have the right to rest in the context of various social programs is especially relevant in the Republic of Uzbekistan today, since against the background of fairly favorable results of various studies in the country, there is a rapid trend of growing income inequality between wealthy citizens and poor segments of the population. For the period 2022-2023, the income of 10% of the poor segments of the population increased by 6%, however, the incomes of the richest 10% of the country's citizens have grown by more than 30%, according to the official website of the World Bank¹³. The Gini coefficient (a statistical measure of income inequality) rose from 0.31 from 2022 to 0.35 in 2023. The poverty rate, therefore, decreased by only 3.1 points, instead of the expected 5.5 points.

In 2024, on February 27, during a videoconference, the President of Uzbekistan noted that 12%-15% of the population of our country is in poverty. This means that the income of these families daily does not exceed 10-13 thousand soums (approximately 1 US dollar), the Center for Economic Research and Reforms reports¹⁴. Starting in 2017, Uzbekistan began to participate in the International Comparison Program, a global initiative for the development of comparable price data, coordinated by the World Bank under the auspices of the UN Statistical Committee. In 2023, the government of Uzbekistan introduced a new methodology for measuring poverty—all this is due to the fact that the poor and poorest population of our planet are considered according to various statistics, and sometimes the line where poverty and simply poor living conditions pass has a very thin line. The World Bank examines poverty in the world using the three international poverty lines, applying different approaches at the respective levels of development of countries.

With all the new data and revisions to the data and methodology, the global extreme poverty rate in 2019 was revised down slightly by 0.1 percentage points to 8.9 percent, resulting in a downward revision of the number of poor people from 701 million to 689 million. The global decline in the number of millions of extreme poor comes despite an upward revision in sub-Saharan Africa, where 14 million people suffer from extreme poverty. The reduction is due to Europe and Central Asia, as well as the Middle East and North Africa. For example, new survey data for 2022 have been added for Syria and Uzbekistan, for which the last survey was conducted in 2003. The poverty rate of \$3.65 and \$6.85 has been revised downward by 0.7 and 0.6 percentage points, reducing the number of global poor by 52 million and 44 million people, respectively. Downward revisions to global poverty estimates at these higher poverty lines have come at the expense of Europe and Central Asia and South Asia¹⁵.

According to the results of a study conducted by the Center for Economic Research and Reforms, a low-

¹³ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/uzbekistan?locale=ru>

¹⁴ <https://www.cer.uz/en/post/publication/bednost-v-uzbekistane>

¹⁵ World Bank: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/march-2024-global-poverty-update-from-the-world-bank--first-esti>

income household in Uzbekistan consists of 7 people, the age of the head of this family is 50+ years, and basically uneducated. In 11% of households, the head of the household does not have a job, 93% do not have a higher education, 43% of households do not have a permanent job, 93% are not connected to the heating system, 96% do not have a sewerage system—I mean a central system, 66% to the water supply. That is, we can conclude that low-income families are families with 3 or more children, with a low level of education, living mainly in rural areas. Of the 13 regions of the republic, 8 can be attributed to the regions in which the level of low-income families is the highest—Karakalpakstan, Jizzakh, Kashkadarya, Namangan, Syrdarya, Khorezm, Navoi and Surkhandarya regions. Moreover, the participation rate of the poorest women in the labour force is lower, despite the fact that one in three households is headed by a woman.

So, the most important 3 factors that determine poor households are:

1. Gender
2. Lack of higher education
3. Lack of permanent work

The Law “On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” was adopted by the Legislative Chamber on August 17, 2019¹⁶, according to Article 56, this law defines equality between men and women. The state has undertaken to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the management of society and the state itself, which is directly indicated in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Our country has adopted more than two dozen legislative acts in this area, 2 laws, 6 decrees and resolutions, 17 government resolutions.

“Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished task of our time and the greatest human rights challenge in the world today”, said UN Secretary-General António Guterres in a video message for International Women’s Day on 8 March 2018.

In the national Sustainable Development Goals, the Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality in our country has been developed and adopted, the strategy is aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in all spheres of activity (social, economic, political, etc.). For example, in politics, the quantitative increase in women’s representation has provided the Republic of Uzbekistan with a place in the top 50 countries out of 190 in total, a large number of tasks are being fulfilled, aimed at training, supporting and increasing the activity of women. Women’s education has been identified as one of the main priorities, and in 2023, 1982 women were admitted to higher education institutions on the basis of a state grant, 12300 women were paid contract amounts for studying in the master’s degree of higher education institutions, and more than 139 thousand students were allocated interest-free loans for up to 7 years to study. In the field of medical care, there are also good figures – more than 3 million women underwent an initial screening examination on a completely free basis (the purpose of such an examination is to detect cancer at an early stage and provide preventive measures to prevent the development of the disease), 1 million 13 thousand elderly women underwent a medical examination and received the necessary medical care. Another acute issue in our country related to gender equality is women who find themselves in a difficult life situation. We state the fact that the provision of psychological assistance and the development of psychosomatics in our country is rather weak. A whole range of challenges awaits us on this topic: there is also a certain pressure from society, when we are accustomed to the fact that complaining and talking about our family problems at home is unusual and simply embarrassing, finding and paying for a good

¹⁶ <https://lex.uz/docs/4494873>

psychologist costs a lot of money, there are no guarantees that the protection provided by the state will work. Violence, especially domestic violence, discrimination, domestic bullying are not uncommon in the countries of Central Asia. A striking example of the attitude of society and the authorities to discrimination against women in Central Asia is the “case of Saltanat Nukenova”¹⁷, the ex-wife of the former Minister of Economy of Kazakhstan Kuandyk Bishimbayev, the loud publicity and noise in the media of this case changed the country’s legislation, resolutions and decrees protecting the rights of women and children were adopted in the shortest possible time. Lack of laws, negligent attitude of heads of families in relation to cruel treatment of women in the family, Lack of outside support led to a deplorable result in the protection of women’s rights. The Asian Women’s Forum, held on May 13-14, 2024 in Samarkand, was called “Regional Approach to Women’s Economic, Social and Political Empowerment”, the purpose of the forum was to exchange experience, study modern approaches of international organizations and financial institutions to prevent all forms of violence against women and children. “We need to work not only with victims of violence, but also with those who commit it”, Sadagat Gahramanova said, Deputy Chairperson of the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of Azerbaijan, @SputnikUzbekistan correspondent reports. Particular attention was paid to the issues of discrimination against children who grow up in families where violence is present. Moreover, violence must be understood not only in the physical, moral sense, but also in the economic sense. For example, as it was explained at one of the sessions on the forum, a man divorces and forgets about his family without paying alimony—this is called economic violence against children. UN Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous said in her welcoming speech, “... Violence against women and children and discrimination in society costs the global community \$6 trillion economically”¹⁸. According to a 2015 McKinsey study¹⁹, gender parity increases global GDP by an additional 26% over 10 years, compared to a scenario where gender inequality persists. which corresponds to the annual GDP of the United States and the People’s Republic of China. Narrowing the large differences in the labor market in terms of the number of participants—more men, fewer women, mismatch in the number of hours spent in the workplace, and discrimination against women in the productive sector—all hinder the economies of development. Already in 2021, the “McKinsey plan” was implemented in more than 10 countries around the world, full gender equality was achieved in Iceland, Ireland, Canada, Belgium, France, Latvia, Sweden, Portugal and Luxembourg—every year the level adds up to 5% globally. In Central and South Asia, the proportion of women is 10.1 percent, while in North America 31.6 percent, Latin America and the Caribbean 30.1 percent. In other words, our region has a lot to strive for, and if economic development and integration into the world community play an important role for our region today, we should try to move in the same direction as progressive and developed countries.

The issue of education in Uzbekistan is even more acute than the problem of gender equality. Weak personnel, and at all levels of education, unsystematic and not meeting modern requirements education programs, poor skill at all levels—from kindergarten teachers to university teachers, low level of use of information technology. According to the international PIRSL test (International Study of Reading Quality and Comprehension), conducted in 2021, schoolchildren in our country scored only 437 points out of the required 500. The next data, in 2022, is even sadder—the international school assessment program according to the PISA

¹⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/c3g8824331ko>

¹⁸ <https://podrobno.uz/cat/world/nasilie-v-otnoshenii-zhenshchin-i-diskriminatsionnye-sotsialnye-instituty-ezhegodno-obkhodyatsya-mir/>

¹⁹ <https://econs.online/articles/ekonomika/makroekonomicheskaya-sila-gendernogo-pariteta/>

test received grades—72nd place in mathematics out of a total of 81 countries participating, and 80th most recent place in natural sciences.

The effectiveness of the learning process consists of such indicators as:

- quality of educational material,
- the number of teachers per student,
- teacher qualifications,
- the general infrastructure of the educational institution,
- the role of parents in the educational process.

The main problems identified during the analysis in the system were as follows:

1. State budget expenditures on the secondary education system are distributed unsystematically
2. 16% of schools are in need of major repairs, more than 4% are unfit for operation
3. Lack of computer software for classes
4. 70% of schools do not have a sewerage connection
5. 28.4% do not have access to the Internet
6. The annual workload of teachers in the city of Tashkent and the Tashkent region is too high
7. Schools do not have enough teachers with knowledge of a foreign language
8. The same shortage of teachers in information technology and engineering
9. High percentage of teachers whose qualifications are not confirmed by international certificates
10. Parents do not pay due attention to the education of children, do not try to control the learning process.

It would be natural to assume that the most important thing in teaching is the learning process itself, good teaching tools, qualified teaching staff, although the lack of sanitary and hygienic standards, teaching children in cold or too stuffy rooms, the lack of normal toilets—all this affects the health of the younger generation, and does not dispose to full-fledged learning. But the most important thing is the curriculum, the standards developed for the acquisition of knowledge, necessary skills, and skills of students.

Different countries have their own approaches to teaching schoolchildren, for example, Estonia, which is in the top 10 best countries as a result of PISA research—on the official website of the Ministry of Education, you can easily find the national curriculum with detailed explanations for each subject. The same is true for another country, Singapore, whose students received the highest scores on the PISA tests. how the programs and according to what principles they were created, various recommendations and scales for assessing educational methods. The current situation in Uzbekistan is not so rosy, which can be easily understood by looking at the test results. After three years of education according to the National Curriculum, primary students were transferred to Novda Edutainment textbooks, which differ in curriculum from the National Curriculum. Grades 6, 7 and 10 study according to the National Curriculum, and grades 5, 8 and 11—according to the old programs adopted back in 2017. That is, a completely unsystematic training program, forcing students to adapt with difficulty every 2-3 years to a new system and new requirements. We can see the main emphasis that countries place on the education of their students—the result, the way they want their children to be when they graduate from secondary education. For example, in Canada, the USA, European countries, there is a lot of practice when studying at college—cosmetologists, web programmers, medical technicians, paralegals—all of them graduate from college, an analogue of our graduate high schools, graduates have relevant work experience during their studies, which allows them to get a position and an adequate salary immediately after training. That is, colleges are aimed at applied specialties, and science, the more theoretical part, is dealt with directly at universities. “Before you start

building a house, you have to understand what you want to get in the end. You must have plans and drawings. If you don't have a plan, you're going to make mistakes: you're going to waste a lot of resources, money, and time. This can also be attributed to education", said Deepa Shankar, UNICEF Chief of Education²⁰, when the development of the project on the National Education Program of Uzbekistan began. That is, we must understand what to expect from schoolchildren when their education is completed. develops memory and low-level skills, but for further development—analysis, synthesis, the ability to draw conclusions, and even more so to create alternative options in the mind—this requires skills that are not yet taught in our educational institutions. And there are too few specialists of this level. It is clear that our country is testing various training options in order to choose the best option, standardized for a country where there are a lot of young and young people, in order to try to choose the best option. Reforms always bring something new, changes for the better, but we should not forget about the time factor—while innovations are underway, and every two or three years, a new generation grows up, which receives a low-quality education, simply because the personnel do not have time to receive new requirements and apply them sufficiently, as instructions and, accordingly, conditions arise. Adaptation is a slow process, and constant changes eventually lead to burnout and unwillingness to change the methods to which you have just managed to adapt. If we want to get educated, intelligent, practical young people at the end of their schooling, we must think through the learning process itself with the final result, approve the program for the coming years, and have a little patience to wait for the results at least in the near future. Constant monitoring, assessment by independent experts, timely intervention, not just changing the program at full school, but with recommendations and support, the help of parents, of course, that is, the involvement of parents in the learning process—will change the state of our modern education system.

Unemployment remains a serious problem in Central Asia, according to the report of the International Labor Organization, the global unemployment rate in 2023 was 5.1%, which is a slight improvement compared to 2022, which was 5.3%. The countries of Central Asia are characterized by instability associated with geopolitical conflicts, with commodity and economic ties and the gradual recovery of the post-pandemic period In Central Asia, the gap due to age and gender is a large difference with more developed countries, as well as differences between high- and low-income countries. The unemployment rate in high-income countries was around 4.5%, with a low rate of 5.7%. According to the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of Uzbekistan²¹, at the end of 2023, the unemployment rate decreased by 2.1% and amounted to a total figure of 6.8%. The number of workers as of 01.01.2023 amounted to 19.7 million people.

Experts have found out what reasons form the unemployment market in Uzbekistan:

- irrational distribution of employees in the field
- Weak factor of competition in the market
- Lack of investment in the labor market
- poorly qualified specialists
- demographic factor

In addition, the demand for workers of any specialty in Tashkent and the Tashkent region is higher than in the regions, which explains the higher level of unemployment in the regions of the country.

The demographic factor is an alarming signal, since over the past five years, the population of Uzbekistan

²⁰ <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2019/07/03/unicef/>

²¹ Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction.

has grown by 700-800 thousand people annually. Currently, the population of our country is 36.8 million people²². In the long run, this means that the need to create more jobs is inevitable in the future. The “gray” economy, despite the government’s struggle with this sector, also causes frictional unemployment. “The damage to Uzbekistan’s GDP from the gray economy is 135 trillion UZS (\$10.8 billion), the total losses of the state budget are estimated at 30 trillion UZS (\$2.4 billion)”, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said at a government meeting on January 16, 2024. The head of our country gave an example that 41% of construction companies indicated only one worker in their reports, with the volume of work performed for the year in the amount of 4 trillion soums. More than 5 thousand farms with a volume of 25 hectares of land also indicated only one employee in their reports. About 5 million people work in the informal sectors, receiving a minimum wage, are not protected by the state and the law from sudden dismissal and unjustified fines. Perhaps, out of desperation, agreeing to work unofficially, workers do not understand that they fall into almost slavish dependence on their employer, who is ready to use his employee in his own interests. Having interested the employee in the fact that he will allegedly receive more than with the official salary from deductions to the budget, the employee does not understand that in this case he has no rights, but only obligations. This aspect of the problem arises with low education and ignorance of the laws and their own rights as a citizen of the country.

In 2024, the official number of unemployed was 1.3 million people, while another 2.4 million people will enter the labor market. As part of the employment promotion program, it is planned to provide jobs for 5 million people in Uzbekistan this year²³. According to the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration of Kyrgyzstan, in 2024, the population of the republic was 7.14 million people. The population employed in the labor sphere is 2.58 people, the unemployed are 131.6 thousand people. The unemployment rate was 4.9%. There are 66.2 thousand officially unemployed people in the country. The main cause of unemployment in the country is domestic and global economic crises, as well as high dependence on agriculture and extractive industries, which makes the economy too vulnerable to world prices for food and raw materials. Social factors of the economy are also important—lack of education and low qualification of specialists. In Kyrgyzstan, there are also state programs to support the population, the priority is to educate illiterate citizens. According to the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Population of Tajikistan, the economically active population of the country at the beginning of 2024 amounted to 2 million 675 thousand people, of which 2 million 627 thousand work in various sectors of the economy. That is, 98.2% of the working-age population is provided with permanent work. The number of unemployed amounted to 48.3 thousand people and, according to data for the period of 2022, unemployment in the country decreased by 9.7%. The analysis of the study showed that of the officially unemployed, 22.4 thousand people, or 46.3%, are women. In 2023, according to the Statistics Agency of Tajikistan, 230 thousand new jobs were created in the country, including additional jobs, most of them in the field of agriculture, hunting, mining and manufacturing. To provide jobs for the population, the government of Tajikistan is mainly engaged in the export of labor outside the country. In 2023, 12.29 thousand labor migrants were sent. In order to diversify labor migration, negotiations are currently underway at the highest level of the country with Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Singapore, Japan and the Philippines.

Speaking of unemployment, it is necessary to point out modern trends—for example, young people aged 15-24, according to the ILO, are not eager to work. They prefer to study because high unemployment reduces the

²² <https://stat.uz/ru/press-tsentr/novosti-goskomstata/49355-hududlar-kesimida-2024-yil-boshiga-doimiy-aholi-soni-2#:~:text=Численность%20постоянного%20населения%20на%20начало%202024%20года%20в%20разрезе%20регионов>

²³ <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/6960>

opportunity cost of education. Next, the next trend is part-time work, or a free schedule of visits. Young people prefer to spend time at their own discretion, rather than sitting in the office for days and counting minutes until the end of the working day. The pandemic has given us a lot of new directions, the widespread development of social networks, e-commerce, delivery services, online negotiations, and the ability to work via the global Internet from almost anywhere in the world. These features were especially supported by the younger generation, as this is a convenient and unassuming way to solve many issues—as long as a smartphone or laptop is nearby. For example, in Kazakhstan, the level of unemployed young people was 3.4%. The share of NEET youth who are not working, not engaged in education or vocational courses is 7.1%.

Findings

The countries of Central Asia, being in a disadvantageous geographical position, nevertheless carry the main source of wealth today—human capital. Of course, it is also impossible not to take into account natural resources—gold, oil, natural gas, uranium, coal, iron ore and so on. In terms of gold reserves, Kazakhstan ranks 9th in the world with 402 tons of gold, Uzbekistan with 362 tons - 15th. But we understand that fossil wealth is not infinite, and therefore the main trends around the world now are the search for alternative energy sources, respectively, it is impossible to develop in our modern life without human capital—knowledge, skills, professional skills. Let's not forget that human capital includes not only the formation and transfer of knowledge, but also health and personal well-being. The social economy, which is based on the personal development of the individual, as well as adequate service to the country, the people, and the entire global system, implies the protection and awareness of one's rights, spiritual development, personal growth, building confidence in a person in the future, stability in the workplace, the right to health care and good education—all these aspects should be developed and supported by state, social services and organizations, aimed at the development of education, culture, and science. The higher the social level of the population, the higher the welfare of the country, which was mentioned above. Increasing employment, decent incomes, an improved system of social protection and public health, gender equality lead to an increase in the overall level and well-being of the nation and the country, which is ultimately reflected in the world equivalent. Timely analysis, a focus on real results, and not just reporting in numbers, the use of the latest technologies and a quick response to changing trends will enable each country and region to develop for the better in the forward movement in the global economy.

References

- Donskova, L. I. (2018). European Experience in the Development of Social Tourism (Scientific Review by Foreign Authors). Standardization and Certification, p. 277.
- Donskova, L. I. (2018). Study of Social Tourism by Foreign Authors: Theory and Practice. Science and Tourism: Strategies of Interaction, p. 8.
- Kurbanova, M. L. (2024). Mechanisms for the development of the transport sector of services of state and local authorities. *International Scientific Journal "Interpretation and Researches"*, 2 (9)(31).
- Kvartalnov, V. A. (2023). Derived from https://tourlib.net/books_tourism/kvartalnov_pril.htm: Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction.
- Usmankhodjaeva Surayyo Mukhtarovna. (2023). Digital transformation of Uzbekistan on the example of marketplaces // Raqamli iqtisodiyot (Digital economy), No. 5. Available at: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/tsifrovaya-transformatsiya-uzbekistana-na-primere-marketpleysov> (accessed: 26.05.2024). (Myxtrapovna, 2023)
- http://iacis.ru/novosti/parlamenti/den_nezavisimosti_respubliki_uzbekistan_#:~:text=31%20%201991%20years%20on,country%20acquired%20all%20complete%20state

- <https://stat.uz/ru/press-tsentr/novosti-goskomstata/33840-o-zbekiston-respublikasi-tashqi-savdo-aylanmasi-2022-yil-yanvar-dekabr-3>
- <https://touristichka.ru/uzbekistan-poleznaya-informacziya-1/kalendar-meropriyatij-2023/2page/>. (n.d.).
- <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babur#:~:text=Zahir%2Dad%2Ddin%20Muhammad%20Babur>, p. (n.d.).
- https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulugbek#Political_and_scientific_activity
- https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suleiman_I. (n.d.).
- <https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topkapi>. (n.d.).
- <https://abaidan.kz/ru/categories/turizim/turciya-zavershaet-2023-god-s-rekordnymi-pokazatelyami-turizma-2024-02-04#:~:text=How%20announced%20Ministry%20culture%20i>, n. (n.d.).
- <https://www.lex.uz/docs/4428101>. (n.d.).
- <https://www.atorus.ru/news/press-centre/new/40178.html>. (n.d.).
- https://www.norma.uz/novoe_v_zakonodatelstve/utverjdeny_dopolnitelnye_mery_po_razvitiyu_turizma. (n.d.).
- <https://data.worldbank.org/country/uzbekistan?locale=ru>, V. b. (n.d.).
- <https://www.cer.uz/en/post/publication/bednost-v-uzbekistane>. (n.d.).
- <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/march-2024-global-poverty-update-from-the-world-bank--first-esti>, V. b. (n.d.).
- <https://lex.uz/docs/4494873>. (n.d.).
- <https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/c3g8824331ko>. (n.d.).
- <https://podrobno.uz/cat/world/nasilie-v-otnoshenii-zhenshchin-i-diskriminatsionnye-sotsialnye-instituty-ezhegodno-obkhodyatsya-mir/>. (n.d.).
- <https://econs.online/articles/ekonomika/makroekonomicheskaya-sila-gendernogo-pariteta/>. (n.d.).
- <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2019/07/03/unicef/>. (n.d.).
- <https://stat.uz/ru/press-tsentr/novosti-goskomstata/49355-hududlar-kesimida-2024-yil-boshiga-doimiy-aholi-soni-2#:~:text=Number%20permanent%20population%20na%20beginning%202024%20years%20in%20section%20regions>, -1. (n.d.).
- <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/6960>. (n.d.).