

Women, Work and the Economy: How to Foster Women Leadership in Armenia and in the World

Teresa Daban Sanchez
IMF Resident Representative
to Armenia

March, 2016



Motivation, why are we here?

Women have made an impressive progress at all levels of the career ladder in recent decades. This is good news for themselves, for their families, companies, and their countries.

Women participation in labor market and entrepreneurship remains low ; women usually earn less.

What can be done at the level of policies and, especially, at the level of individuals in Armenia?.



MD Madame Lagarde

**IMF Management
Team**



DMD Mrs. Grasso



DMD Mr. Zhu



DMD Mr. Furusawa



FDMD Mr. Lipton

Outline

What are the facts from a global perspective? The broad picture

How things have been changing in recent decades? The European experience

What are the challenges for Armenia? Policies versus Individuals

The facts from a global perspective

- ***Women labor/entrepreneurship participation low:*** at 50 percent of +15 year-old female population, low-status sectors, worse conditions, no senior positions, and lower salaries/earnings (**gender gap** 16 % in advanced countries).
- ***Women are freeing up a lot of time for men:*** women spend twice as much time on household work and four times as much time on childcare than men.
- ***Vicious circle:*** women more vulnerable to economic crisis (e.g. lose their jobs first), more prone to poverty.
- ***Costs are huge:*** countries that have eliminated the gender gap have increased their income per head by 27 percent.



Important changes in recent decades: the European example

- Females participation rates increased from 40 percent in 1980s (below in Spain and Ireland) to almost 80 percent nowadays.
- **Why?** The return of stay at home has become lower relatively to the one of working outside (Becker 1965).
- **How?** Women have fewer children and obtain more education (Bloom and others 2009; Eckstein and Lifshitz 2011).
- **Only women education?** No, also changes in attitudes, by lowering the costs of violating personally/family held beliefs or social norms

Important changes in recent decades: the European example

- ***Which beliefs have changed?*** Working mothers can ensure a warm and secure relationship with their children, family life and children do not necessarily suffer when mothers work outside the home, and women could find more fulfilling working outside the home, etc...sometimes women themselves had negative beliefs!
- ***What about policies?*** Yes, they have helped too, with better maternity/paternity leave, greater offer of daycare, taxation, greater public spending on early education and childcare, etc.

Why things do not change faster?

- ***Demand-side constraints:*** Social norms and gender stereotypes create a *glass ceiling* for women. Bosses and voters are biased against appointing women as managers and leaders (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993; Eagly and Karau 2002).
- ***Supply-side explanations:*** Women themselves might not believe in their ability to lead, since they rarely see other women succeeding in such positions (Beaman and others 2012) and have to leave high-power career tracks because of children (Bertrand, Goldin, and Katz 2010).
- ***Self-perpetuation.*** Lack of exposure to female leaders, in turn, may perpetuate biased perceptions of women's effectiveness in leadership roles (Beaman and others 2009).

What about Armenia? Policies versus Individuals

- Armenia's legislation mostly is broadly ok. The country has ratified over 50 Conventions and other international legal instruments reaffirming its commitment to gender equality.
- Nonetheless...Armenian women's representation and participation in governance and decision-making continues to be low.
- Why? Pejorative stereotypes on the role and the position of women and men in society discourage women from playing a more active role, especially in rural communities.
- There is a need to run public campaigns and implement anti-discrimination laws, to ensure women receive equal treatment, i.e. that women are not rejected for a job or at the time of applying for a loan only because of being a woman.



What could you do as Armenian women?

- ***Learn*** . Read about the experience of other women in other countries in other historical periods. In the absence of role models get inspiration from books!
- ***Self-confidence***. Believe in yourselves. Do not ever tell yourself, do not allow anybody to tell you, that you cannot achieve something because you are a woman!
- ***Reach out***. Get together with other women, network, support each others, find allies among men, get a mentor, do not fight alone!
- ***Stand up***. Do not be silent in the face of male chauvinistic comments, behaviors, etc, made by others, either women or men.
- ***Advocate and educate***. Convey a message of equality at the minimum opportunity!



Thank you!

