



- Started in 2021
- In Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- 12 female participants

Financed by



“Sustainability and Value Added in Agricultural Supply Chains – Cotton, Uzbekistan”

Implemented by



Management Development Institute Singapore, Tashkent



Textile Association Uztextileprom

FASHION INCUBATOR TASHKENT



CONTEXT

In Uzbekistan, women's rights are gradually evolving. The country has made strides, including the establishment of shelters, hotlines, and improved legislation addressing domestic violence and gender discrimination. However, the country remains traditional and patriarchal. Many women, despite higher education, face challenges balancing work and family responsibilities due to societal norms emphasizing women's roles in the household. Overall, prevailing beliefs maintain male authority, affecting issues such as family finances and women's employment opportunities.

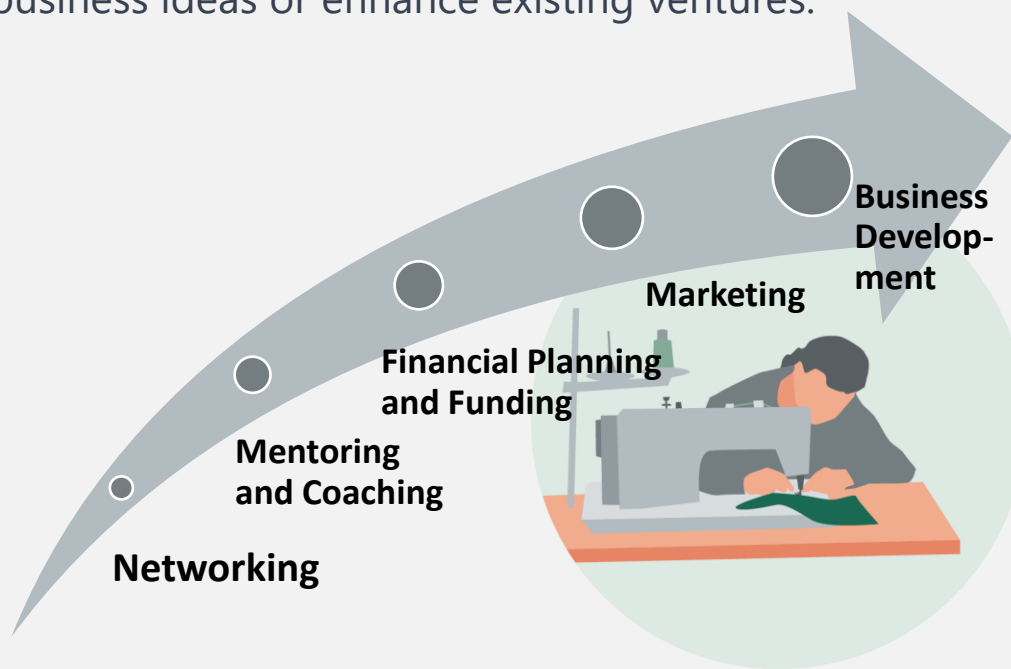
FEMALE LED BUSINESSES

Women in Uzbekistan still encounter challenges in various aspects of entrepreneurship. While the government expresses commitment to gender equality, persistent issues include, e.g. access to finance, limited training or missing role models.

In the textile sector, women occupy sewing or assembly lines while men dominate supervisory positions. This gender divide extends to leadership roles, contributing to a wage gap. Additionally, women in textiles encounter difficulties accessing crucial resources, hindering their ability to initiate or expand their businesses.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Collaborating with a Tashkent based university and the Uzbek Textile Association, the Fashion Incubator Tashkent (FIT) was launched as a year-long program for 12 young women in the textile sector. The program aimed to develop and actualize their business ideas or enhance existing ventures.



Challenges?

Bringing all stakeholders from different spheres together

Balancing political issues and implementation

Uniting all participants with individual goals in one programme



Solved with team effort

WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

In one year, the participants



Underwent **monthly mentoring** sessions

Visited **1** top of the art **textile company**



Met with **5 local designers** to learn about their stories, lessons learnt and their advice

Attended more than **15 guest lectures**



Showcased their designs in **2 fashion shows**

Documented their progress on social media, through influencers and in newspaper articles



Success Factors

Endurance

Creativity

Shared Efforts



PARTNER(S) WORK

Uztextilprom and MDIST University collaborating for the first time and taking over different areas of action. The program received **positive feedback and resonance**, prompting both partners to express eagerness to continue with a second cohort. The success of this women-focused project, **unprecedented in Uzbekistan**, promises to sustain beyond the GIZ project's duration until 2025.

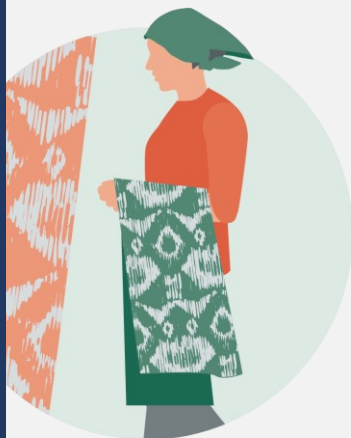


FIGHTING MISOGYNY AND COLONIALISM

The project had a **profound gender-transformative impact**, countering the entrenched misogyny affecting women in Uzbek society. Initiatives like the FIT, **promoting teamwork and a shared goal**, play a crucial role in addressing internal misogyny, fostering **sisterhood**, and creating lasting change.

FIT's business coaching modules boosted participants' **self-confidence**, addressing past impacts on their professionalism. They learned to **navigate patriarchal structures in work and during negotiations**.

Postcolonial structures were challenged through creative expressions using traditional Uzbek fabrics for modern designs or by recycling old materials to challenge conservative patterns. This creative rebellion signifies a thriving and innovative new fashion scene. Uzbekistan is finding its **own identity**.



“What I liked most about the project? The expression of freedom.”

Participant