

# **Gender Development Policy for Vologda Region.**

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## **Summary**

The policy for Vologda region conforms to the ideas, laid in the Gender Policy of the Russian Federation and the international documents supportive of gender equality. Policy developers took into consideration the experience of implementation of the international, federal and regional development projects, using modern technologies in addressing the gender issues. The policy presents general measures to assure equal access for men and women to the labor market, income, education, health service, social protection, protection against violence, and decision making. It outlines priority policy directions and programs, taking into account gender problems specific for Vologda region. The policy directions are developed to support gender equality on the municipal level in the urban and rural areas.

The objective is to coordinate activities of the government, local administration and public organizations directed to improve social conditions of life of men and women. The policy involves the use of the region's financial, human, and administrative resources based on the federal legislation. The policy directions are interconnected. They address the subject in view, based on the competence level of the authorities, public organizations and research centers, and cover the main aspects of the life of men and women in the Vologda region.

## **Introduction**

Economic growth and public and municipal administration reforms in Vologda region are ones of the fastest growing among the regions of the North-West Federal District. The gender issues are given the special attention, which is supported by the region's participation in the gender statistics reforming program and implementation of the World Bank gender program.

The gender analysis, made in the previous report, emphasized the dimension of the regional and settlement differentiation in the access to the labor market, income, education, health care, and particularly policy making for men and women in Russia. The analysis laid the groundwork for designing gender policy for Vologda region. Such a policy, taking into account the specific aspects of the regions, could serve as pilot for the other entities of the South-West of the Russia Federation.

The report consists of the following parts:

- policy conceptual framework;
- brief classified description of the main gender related problems in Vologda region;
- policy description, its main directions, and priority programs on the regional and municipal levels;
- main institutional mechanisms for the policy implementation;
- assessment of the possibility to use the policy in the other North-West regions;
- draft list of activities and actors for each of the policy directions.

## **1. Policy conceptual framework.**

The gender development policy for Vologda region is based on the major international documents supporting equal rights and possibilities for men and women, ratified by the Russian Federation:

- The UN Millennium declaration, 2002;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979;
- The Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995.

The gender development policy for Vologda region reflects and advances the Gender policy of the Russian Federation, developed with the participation of the Russian expert researchers and submitted for approval to the Government of the Russian Federation. The policy for Vologda region generalizes and systematizes the experience of the implementation of international, federal and regional development projects, and the use of modern technologies in resolving gender related issues.

The policy uses the results of “Gender policy of the Russian Federation - development and promotion in the regions”, a joint project of the Moscow office of the International Labor organization and the Ministry for Labor and Social Development, realized in 2003-2004, with the financial support of the International Labor Organization, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the World Bank. The project contributed to the identification of the urgent gender related issues on the federal and regional levels, and the mechanisms to resolve them, and to the promotion of the gender based approach and gender equality principles in policy making on the federal and regional levels. In addition, the discussions on the Gender policy of the Russian Federation held in the regions of the different federal districts traced some clear guidelines for the regional policies design, inclusive of the specific development character of the RF entities. The developers of the policy for Vologda region used as reference the gender policy for the North-West federal district, of which the author is one of the developers.

The Gender development strategy for Vologda region is based on a number of documents, setting the directions of the government policy aimed at the gender equality in general, and at the advancement of women in particular:

- National scenario for the advancement of women and increasing of their role in the society for the period of 2001-2005, approved by the Government of the RF.
- National concept of the advancement of women of the Russia Federation (January 8, 1996), that defined the general strategy and priority directions of the government policy on women, and has for objective to realize the principle of equal rights and freedom, and to achieve the equality of opportunities for men and women.
- Presidential edict “On the urgent objectives of the government policy on women” of March 4, where one of the main goals is: “to gradually change the situation, when women are less paid in the public sector, employing mostly women”.
- Periodic reports on the implementation by the Russian Federation of the UN on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Concept of the legislative activities for assuring equal rights and possibilities for men and women.
- Draft federal law “On state guarantees of the equal rights and freedom, and equal opportunities for men and women in the Russian Federation”.
- Regional programs for the advancement of women, developed in the entities of the RF.
- Regional programs of public employment, developed in the entities of the RF.

The policy calls for the joint action by the authorities, local administration, public associations and organizations in order to achieve better social conditions of life for men and women. The proposals reflect specific aspects of the legislation on federal and regional level, as well as the possibilities to configure new institutional conditions. The proposals suppose the use of the local resources of an entity of the RF. Policy directions are interdependent and take into consideration the level of competence of the local authorities, public organizations and research centers, as

well as the financial, human, and other resources, they encompass the main areas of life of the region's population.

The gender development policy for Vologda region is based on the following principles:

- The gender based approach means striving to achieve real gender equality and to assure equal opportunities for men and women.
- The advancement of women is an important but not the only factor for achieving the gender equality, since the gender issues consider both men and women.
- To find solution to a problem of gender inequality in Russia one needs to take into account their regional characteristics and to use the regional experience of social reforms.
- Policies at the regional level should include the whole range of policy directions to achieve gender equality, emphasizing the priority directions, areas of responsibility of the federal and regional authorities, civil society, as well as their most efficient forms of cooperation.
- Regional gender policy should take in to account the municipal characteristics, as the intraregional disproportions in Russia are often bigger than the interregional ones; the most efficient way is to implement the gender related programs at the different geographical levels, from federal to municipal.

## **2. Characteristics of the gender issues in Vologda region.**

An analysis of the socio-economic situation of men and women in Vologda region provided data for policy developing. The analysis showed that in addition to the gender issues common for the country in general Vologda region has some special socio-economic characteristics. The aged population of the region is characterized by the high level of depopulation and low education level, especially among the men. The low density of population, small amount of towns and poor infrastructure are the reasons for the lack of big vocational education centers, and deficiency of the qualified medical care. The region's economy is located in two major cities of Cherepovets (industrial center) and Vologda (administrative center). The extensive periphery of the region, especially the remote agricultural and forestry areas, is degrading economically and demographically. The region's industrial economy, with the dominance of exporting enterprises (metallurgy, timber industry), ensures better situation on the labor market, average to above-average level of income and retirement benefits. However the intraregional contrasts in the levels of income, employment and consumption are very significant.

The survey shows that although the socio-economic advantages and problems of the region are gender sensitive, not all of them can be defined as related to men or women only. Many of the issues concern both men and women. **Gender inequality** in Vologda region manifests itself mainly in the following forms:

- Compared to the other regions of Russia Vologda region has higher level of gender disproportions in the expectation of life, lifespan of men is constantly on decrease, mortality rate is high among men of the active working age due to the external factors (traumatism, alcohol intoxication, suicide), especially in the rural areas.
- The rate of alcoholics among men is high, and is increasing constantly for both men and women, especially in the rural areas, which increases the marginalization of the rural population.

- Low education level of the working men, especially in the rural areas, causes the marginalization of life habits; a combination of low education and manual labor form a traditionalist system of gender roles, generating domestic violence.
- The number of men employed in the enterprises with harmful labor conditions is high, and keeps growing. The same can be said about women employed in the industry.
- Traumatism at work place is significant, particularly among men. This is due not only to the economy structure, but mostly to the low self-discipline and asocial behavior of the population.
- Similarly to the rest of the country the region is characterized by the high concentration of women in the low-income economy sectors. However, due to the underdevelopment of the market services, women are more and more employed in the underpaid state-budget sectors (education, health care). This tendency is stronger in Vologda region compared to the other regions.
- Gender related disproportions of salary and their dynamics are almost at the average level for Russia. At the same time the inequality in salaries is more stable than in unemployment level, the income disproportions are not affected by the economy growth.
- Income differentiation between men and women is more manifest in the economy sectors and towns, where the export oriented heavy industry is located.
- Women were poorly politically represented in the region's legislative and administrative government authorities during the period of transition.

In the meantime some forms of **gender-equalizing** are characteristic for Vologda region, conditioned by the specificity of its economic and social development. However not all the gender-equalizing tendencies are positive. The most significant tendencies are as follows.

- Historically women in the region are more economically active than on the average in Russia.
- During the period of economic growth gender employment pattern became more balanced in industry, as well as in the agriculture. But in return the rate of women employed in the arduous and harmful working conditions increased.
- Satisfactory labor market status and economic growth led to the gender-equalizing in employment and to the reduction of the unemployment level; however, while the unemployment level is low and there is no gender inequality in the region in general, there are significant inner differences in the levels and structure of unemployment between men and women – in the big cities the unemployment level is minimal, and affects mostly women, whereas in the depressed rural and logging areas the men constitute the growing part of unemployed people.
- Gender related disproportions are less important on the rural periphery with an aged and low-educated population, where poverty and noncompetitiveness of men have caused “forced” equalization on the labor market and in the area of distribution.
- The poverty is less important among the elderly women, as retirement benefits to poverty level ratio is less in Vologda region than in the country in general, and the gender related differentiation of the retirement benefits is not significant.
- Adaptation strategies for the elderly people are similar: the share of men and women of retirement age is growing, they have to look for any job to sustain minimum level of income.
- There are no gender related inequalities in salary among those employed in the administrative sector, which puts the region in better conditions compared to the other country regions.

- Women are more largely represented in the municipal authorities, but this is mostly due to lower competition from men, particularly in the underdeveloped local governments with numerous social problems.

The analysis of the problems in Vologda region demonstrated once more that gender issues affect not only women, they concern both sexes. The situation with social inequality is complicated in the region as well as in Russia in general, the structure of social benefits and losses is irregular in gender groups, and does not allow to say that men are in a better position than women and vice versa.

### **3. Gender Development Policy for Vologda region: directions, priorities, levels.**

The analysis provides the basis for developing a gender policy adapted for Vologda region. All its directions target the object in view – achieving equal possibilities for men and women, base on the human potential growth. Policy on the regional level should take into consideration the scope of competence of the regional and municipal authorities, business and public organizations, as well as available financial, human and other resources.

Therefore we need to consider the whole range of gender policy directions; identify the high-priority ones (causing most problems, or giving maximum effect with the concentration of efforts to achieve gender equality); differentiate the priorities for different territory levels – the region in general and local governments, grouped by the socio-economic problems. Logically based choice of priorities and division by territory scope allows to carry out an effective policy with the available resources.

#### **3.1. Gender policy directions.**

##### ***3.1.1. Achieving equality in employment.***

Satisfactory labor market status resulted in gender-equalization of employment and in the minimum unemployment level for both sexes. Higher than average level of women's economical activity also contributed to that. To support positive outcomes the region should develop institutional and administrative mechanisms, ensuring control over implementation of anti discriminatory provisions of the labor legislation and targeting the achievement of equality in employment, promotion, dismissal (monitoring, expertise etc.) for men and women.

Satisfactory basic conditions allow to target the gender policy of achieving equality on labor market at the following problem directions:

First – removing barriers, including gender related, to access the market for young people. Gender disparity in young ages is due to the young women segregation in employment. A series of measures is required aimed to differentiate the education, conforming to the labor market needs, develop the private services sector, including small business. The information support of equal labor market rights policy for the young people is critical.

Second – decreasing stagnant unemployment affecting mostly women. To help long-term unemployed training systems and other costly adaptation measures, including public works, are needed. These measures require synchronized actions by the employment services and social protection agencies.

Third – decreasing the harmful effect of work conditions on the men's health. This requires reduction of jobs with harmful working conditions, lowering industrial injuries, particularly in the cities where the hazardous industry is located. Finding solution to the problem is aggravated by the existing region's economic framework, and by the growth of employment in the industries with harmful exposure, particularly among women. The problem does not have simple solutions and requires substantial growth of investments in modernization of major industrial sectors in Vologda region.

The main short term policy direction is to reverse the negative dynamics and gradually reduce the number of workplaces with harmful conditions of working. For achieving this goal a cooperation with the employers and trade unions is needed, as well as more strict control over the working conditions. Vologda region has already achieved some outcomes: positions of experts on work safety are created in 25 municipal governments; 15 training centers are created, in which about 8,000 persons received training in 2004; inspections of working conditions are regularly carried out. The emerging control system should become more effective. It should be integrated into the programs on the improvement of population quality, fighting marginalization and asocial pattern of life, particularly in the rural areas, small towns and villages.

Fourth – supporting employment in small business, extending access to information, financial, physical resources (including land) for women entrepreneurs. It includes measures by the local authorities to support cooperation of the rural self-employed, including sale of forest products; training programs and micro-credits for small business development.

Another possible direction is addressing problems of the depressed logging townships with high unemployment rate among men. The world practice is to enhance labor mobility, vocational training, render assistance in buying housing in the more economically developed areas of the region. The program can be adopted only after analyzing social and economic effectiveness of the measures and assessing the willingness of the population to change place of residence.

### ***3.1.2. Decreasing gender disparity of incomes.***

Gender disproportions in salary in Vologda region are almost at the same level and as stable as average for the country. Women in the region tend to work in the low-income budget sector, when men tend to work in higher income sectors. Thereby the gradual raise of salaries in the budget sector to the average salary level in the national economy is a basic condition for achieving the decrease of gender disparity in incomes. It is equally important to reduce gender disparity in salaries on enterprise level caused by vertical segregation. These measures are beyond the competence of regional authorities.

However the regional authorities have competence to support the labor flow to the higher salary and more stable income sectors. But due to the underdevelopment of the market services sector in the region, women continue to be employed mostly in the education and health care sectors. Thus, development of the paid services sector, in which small business could play a key role, constitutes the main policy direction related to the gender equalization of incomes.

The economic growth stimulated the raise of number of women employed in suburban industry and agriculture with the higher salary level. Better access to income for women is a positive trend, which should be accompanied with strict observance of labor protection standards, modernization of production, extended use of technological tools in agriculture to facilitate women's work. The efforts of the regional government in this area can bring significant effect, as they substitute positive trends in regulation of the gender related labor market structure.

The number of retired persons, who must seek for employment to sustain the minimum income level, has tendency to grow. This trend is gender related as women prevail among the persons of retirement age. This trend is negative, as it is due to the low level of living standards of the retired persons. The best way to solve this problem is to raise the retirement benefits, but this is beyond the regional government's competence. However, the regional administration and local government authorities should support the retired persons in their search for job opportunities, as it is a way of adaptation for them. The regional authorities should promote naturally forming trends to reducing gender inequality in incomes. Moreover, the working retired persons are willing to fill the low paid full or part time vacancies in the budget sector. The mechanisms of support are mostly communicative and informative, including establishing of information centers of employment for the retired persons in the big cities, publishing vacancies lists for the retired persons in the local press, providing legal assistance in employment and resolution of disputes, and other informative and institutional forms, that do not involve considerable costs.

Reducing poverty level of the socially vulnerable population groups is also gender related. Poverty feminization is particularly significant in two groups: women, heads of broken families with children; single women of retirement age, living in big cities where cost of housing and public utilities is high, or in the rural areas where they have to support farms large enough to sustain minimum level of living standards, which is difficult for senior persons. These groups need different approach:

- Women, heads of broken families with children, need assistance in finding better paid job with flexible schedule, professional education and vocational training.
- Senior single women living in cities need transparent and simple system of housing subsidies, supported by the social protection agencies.
- Senior single women living in rural areas need access to basic services, supported by the local self-government bodies.

### ***3.1.3. Education and vocational training.***

Compared to the other regions Vologda region is characterized by the low education level, particularly among men. Therefore the scope of education related strategies should be broader. Although in Russia the education is not an important factor of gender equalization yet, growth of education level is still indispensable to achieving gender equality, which is supported by the experience of the other countries. The low education level is one of the reasons for the degradation of men in rural areas, leading to the domination of people employed in manual labor, conservation of traditionalist gender roles, incidence of domestic violence.

The first direction is developing a full scale professional education system of different levels, including educational centers in small communities (primary and secondary professional education) and in big cities (higher and secondary professional education). In the local centers higher level of education is the main factor of the youth's mobility and competitiveness, as it allows them to more easily choose where to work and live.

Unfortunately, the regional authorities in Russia are reluctant to accept the need of greater youth's mobility. The tendency is to attach people to the places where they live, notwithstanding the economic prospects of the administrative area or township. In some areas of Vologda region the tendencies to degradation are already irreversible. The region represents a zone of economic depression, highest depopulation and stable outflow of population.

The second direction is financial support of education. Higher education in Russia is gradually becoming paid (55% of students paid for education in 2004). Being a region lacking

human capital, Vologda region needs a program of educational credits and grants, including from the regional budget, banks' loans, sponsor capitals. Credit mechanisms can be different, but they all serve to a unique purpose of supporting the professional education of youth. The system should include gender sensitive correcting mechanisms to reflect the gender structure of the students (57% of students are women) and the low education level of men in the region. It can be advisable to provide credits and grants for the "male" professions (techniques, natural sciences) in the first place, and for the "female" professions within the region's demand ( pedagogics, social work etc.) on regional budget security. This proposal needs further expert evaluation. It is not aimed on discrimination of women, but on the enhancement of educational potential of men, which is very important for gender roles modernization.

Primary and secondary education causes main concern, as effective from 2005 the entities of the RF are responsible for educational institutions financing (Federal law Ф3-122). Vologda region is in a position to meet new commitments, although the higher financial burden on the region's budget is not fully reimbursed by the federal center. However the region's reliance on the economic status of the main tax payer (Severstal) creates risk of failing to carry out the obligations to finance professional education. In order to effectively achieve socialization of youth, particularly young men, the region should cooperate with business, interested in personnel training. This cooperation can take forms of support or sponsorship agreement, co-financing primary and secondary professional education, providing on the job training and practical training etc. This way business could partially recover the educational expenses.

The third direction is gender education. This is the most important issue for Vologda region concerning institutions of general and professional education, as well as the adult population. Establishment of the regional system of education with integrated gender component allows to transform system orientation, so that it assures not only basic knowledge, but social skills and abilities, contributing to the development of human potential of the civil society.

Gender educational project requires qualified teachers, specialists and experts in this area, able to generalize social practices, Russian and international, and to use the most effective forms of gender education in Vologda region in order to implement the gender equality principle in different areas of social development.

### ***3.1.4. Health care and social protection.***

Half of ten priorities outlined in the policy "Health protection and promotion in Vologda region in 2003-2010" are gender related, although it is not clearly determined. For example the region has a policy addressing the most important gender issue for men, the low longevity. The following priorities of the plan work towards achieving longer longevity: "Reducing traumatism, accidents and intoxication", "Drug and alcohol addiction prevention", "HIV, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases prevention", "Healthy way of living".

Some of the directions should be divided by location: HIV and drug addiction prevention is problem in the big cities like Cherepovets; tuberculosis is mostly spread in small towns, rural areas, and the alcohol addiction and resulting traumatism and accidents constitute problem notwithstanding location. The gender policy on men's health should be oriented on the provincial areas, as the life expectancy of men in rural areas is lower than in the urban centers, while longevity of women does not depend of the place of residence. Health care alone cannot solve the problem of low quality of male population. A complex social rehabilitation policy is needed in the fields of employment, professional education and youth mobility.



The directions “Promotion of women’s and children’s health” and “Upgrading quality of life and health of the senior people” also have gender projection, the latter because of predominance of women in the senior population. The main obstacle to implementation of these programs is the low level of expenses on health care. The region’s budget and local medical insurance funds provide only 3,000-4,000 rubles a year per person. Limited financing dictates the need to set gender priorities, assuring required health support for men and women (see below).

For the program to be effective a higher level of coordination is needed between health care and social protection agencies, employment agencies, educational institutions, regional and local law-enforcement authorities. Coordination of actions is particularly important with regard to the senior population and families with disabled children. An optimal combination of social protection and health care measures is needed here. This concerns in the first place access to the primary health care in the rural areas, particularly in small villages, where most of inhabitants are women.

It is also important to improve the reproductive health of men and women. Reproduction issues concern both sexes, although the rate of maternal and infant mortality in the region is going down. The underdevelopment of the health care system results in limited access to the health services for women and young girls. More financial resources are needed to diagnose genital organs diseases of young boy and girls, men and women, and prevent the incidence rate; to reduce the number of abortions, remaining one of the ways to restrict birth, and to promote use of modern contraceptives.

Gender policy in the field of health care should aim on information and education, and be prevention oriented. There is a need of better awareness among the population of protection against HIV/AIDS and other diseases of social character, contraception measures, medical insurance possibilities. The health care system should cooperate with public and non-profit organizations, including women’s organizations, promoting disease prevention, to develop preventive measures and programs on healthy way of life for the public, particularly youth, and highlight the gender components of such programs.

In the field of social protection gender aspects are present in the form of protection of maternity and childhood. The social protection projects for the senior population, for the population with low income, targeted assistance to the poor and categorial forms of support cannot have gender projection as they are provided based on low income criteria, or on other grounds, stipulated in the legislation.

However, gender approach can be effectively used for social protection of the population as well, as it helps to structure the needs of different socially vulnerable groups and choose optimal forms of support. The indicators are needed to identify gender aspects of social vulnerability, first of all poverty profile for each region. The most vulnerable group in Vologda region, as in the rest of the country, consists of children, families with children, particularly large and broken families (where women are often heads of families), households of senior single persons (mostly women) with limited self-maintenance abilities. Gender policy in the field of social protection should be based on the differentiation of forms of support of socially vulnerable groups by types of assistance. Senior single women needs maintenance assistance first of all, which can be provided by the national social protection centers as well as by women’s non-profit organizations on terms of social demand. Broken families with children with women as heads of household need assistance in finding better paid job and in organizing leisure and vacations for children. Families with disabled children, large families, in which women cannot work on constant basis need support in finding homework. An information data base on families in need of help should be

established in order to receive in-kind aid from the local entrepreneurs. The information should be provided to the social departments of the businesses engaged in charitable activities.

Larger involvement in social assistance of the non-profit organizations should be a part of the gender strategy. Women's organizations can act as mediators, ensuring interaction of assistance recipients and givers. Joint actions by women entrepreneurs and women's non-governmental organizations will allow to link material, human and information resources.

It is important to monitor population's needs in social support based on gender differences. Surveys implemented in Vologda region revealed differences in social services needs of men and women (see Table 1). For men support in stressful situations is most important, while women need all the forms of socio-economic support. Anti-crisis centers, shelters, psychological aid services should be developed and profiled based on the actual population's needs and where social assistance of this kind is in demand.

Table 1. Demand for social services\*

Types of services	Men (%)	Women (%)
Psychological and educational	60	71
Social and medical	36	64
Socio-economic	20	80

\* Data provided by Vologda region administration.

### 3.1.5. Combating violence.

The survey show that violence is one of the most problem issues in Vologda region. Large scale of domestic violence is due to the domination of traditional gender roles. The exact scale is difficult to determine because of the uncertainty in measures. Combating violence should not only include eradicating the causes of violence, but the whole complex of institutional and informative measures, contributing to identification of the real scope of problem.

*Information support.* Improved registration and statistics system related to domestic violence will increase the awareness of this gender problem. Meaningful and comprehensive information is needed for adequate media coverage of the issue. Mass media should form the public opinion on issues of violence, contribute to better awareness of the social cost of violence for the society in general. This will make combating against violence more effective. Better understanding by the society of the expressions and symptoms of violence, of its causes (inequality and discrimination of women) and impacts facilitates implementation of mechanisms, preventing violence in families and in society.

*Institutional measures.* These measures include enhancement of the violence related legislation, control of legislation implementation, creation of the system of legal protection of women. Something should be done to change the attitude of the law enforcement authorities that often refuse to interfere with domestic violence, saying that they do not have appropriate instruments to deal with aggressors.

*Experts involvement.* The experts on violence issues should be attracted to design effective mechanisms to combat against violence. Public opinion surveys through questionnaires, analysis

of the socio-economic and behavioral factors affecting the level of violence will contribute to design of the most effective system of measures and mechanisms of combating violence in Vologda region.

*Coordination of efforts of all the stakeholders.* Includes design of forms and mechanisms of cooperation between authorities and non-governmental organizations, involved in combating violence. One of the forms of such a cooperation could be special trainings for the personnel of legal enforcement authorities, educational and medical institutions having to deal with domestic violence issues (educational programs on human rights, on rehabilitation and support of the victims of violence etc.). A system should be established to assess and adjust the implemented projects and measures.

*Active system of assistance to women, victims of violence.* First of all this means financial support by the governmental organizations to the crisis centers, shelters and other forms of assistance, provided by NGOs to rehabilitate victims of violence. Only coordinated planned actions by regional and local government, law enforcement authorities, non-profit organizations and mass media can bring about positive results.

### **3.1.6. Equal opportunities for men and women in decision making.**

The implemented analysis showed that Vologda region is characterized by the absence of gender differences in salary between men and women employed in administrative sector, vertical gender segregation is less pronounced. Women are better represented in municipal authorities. The advancement of women and gender equalization is due not only to the personnel policies of the regional authorities, but to the low competitiveness of men in undeveloped local governments with lots of social problems. Gender disproportions in the decision making are much higher on the regional level and are comparable to the average for Russia.

The enhancement of regional legislation is needed<sup>1</sup> to gradually achieve gender equality in the decision making, create a reserve of qualified personnel, including bigger number of women. Selection and training of the managers for municipal institutions is already in progress, but lacks system. A system should be established to involve women in decision making through the competition based selection procedures. Legislative and administrative authorities should closely work with civil society institutions, as they present the main resource of personnel.

The adoption of the federal law reforming the local self-government resulted in the growing number of municipal formations, which requires launching of new training programs for women-managers of the self-governments and rural communities leaders. This should become a priority of the gender policy for the years to come.

Regional sections of political parties and non-profit organizations establish a training system for women in order to prepare them to participation in political activity (elections to the regional and local governments). The objective of the regional authorities is to support these programs, as they allow to maintain a reserve of personnel for rotation in the government agencies.

## **3.2. Priorities of gender policy for Vologda region.**

Two types of priorities can be found in Vologda region. These are most problem issues requiring special attention, and the issues where some positive outcomes have been achieved.

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<sup>1</sup> Law on guarantees of equal rights and possibilities for men and women, legislation on election in the regional legislative agencies, local self-government authorities, Charters of the regions, towns.

*Problem directions* are: a) marginalization of the population, particularly in the rural areas, due to the low education level and mobility, resulting in high rate of mortality among men, traumatism, domestic violence; b) harmful working conditions for men in the real economy sector; c) limited access of women to the better paid employment and to the self-employment, due to the underdevelopment of services and small business sector. *Positive outcome* is that women are better represented in the municipal government agencies.

Gender strategies should be comprehensive, and integrate different types of mechanisms and cooperation between the authorities, business and civil society institutions. There are five priority strategies:

1. **«Sustainable development of local centers»**. This requires development of small business in the sector of services and primary processing, cooperation of self-employed, implementation of training programs and micro-credit programs for small business, that will generate employment and stimulate gender equalization of the incomes in the small towns and villages.

2. **«Better opportunities through education»**. Higher quality and accessibility of general and professional education, particularly in the rural centers and small towns, result in growing mobility and better opportunities for youth. Retraining and gender programs for adult population prevent marginalization.

3. **«Protection against violence»**. Institutionally and financially supported system of measures to protect women against violence includes establishment of crisis centers and shelters, system of support for the problem families with children, preventive actions of the law enforcement authorities, gender based analysis of the adopted laws and rules.

4. **«Social responsibility of business»**. This includes a set of measures on cooperation with employers, particularly owners of large enterprises and timber companies, with the objective to reduce workplaces with harmful conditions, assure control over work safety; support of the development of professional education by business, close cooperation between business, non-profit organizations and social protection agencies.

5. **«School of self-government»**. This includes programs on broadening representation of women in the self-government agencies of all levels; designing and developing rural communities through women's self-organization and nomination of leaders.

### **3.3. Gender strategies of intraregional scope.**

The level of gender inequality is different throughout Vologda region – from high in industrial center Cherepovets, to minimum in the depressed peripheries. Accordingly the gender policy strategies should be different for the municipal centers with different socio-economic situation and gender problems.

In the area of *employment* there are big differences in the level and gender structure of unemployment. In the big cities unemployment is low, the unemployed are mostly women; in the rural centers and logging townships unemployment is higher, with bigger share of men among unemployed. Different strategies are needed to achieve gender equalization.

In the cities main directions of activity are generation of employment in the sector of services, programs of support of women-entrepreneurs, micro-credits and other mechanism of small business development. One more direction will be needed in future – evaluation and prevention of gender related risks on the labor market, including growth of male unemployment in the

industrial centers due to the possible deterioration of economic environment in the export related sectors.

Rural area and logging townships need comprehensive rehabilitation measures and training programs to improve labor force quality and generate employment for men. To lower the burden on the labor market several measures are needed: self-employment development, governmental programs of vocational training, system of public works in the depressed areas with non-mobile population, migration policy measures.

The main way of *ensuring equal access to income* is to decrease gender disparity in income in the industrial centers, first of all in Cherepovets. Over industrial economy of the region requires social measures, supporting new directions of post-industrial development, generating employment for women (educational services, modern forms of trade and communications, recreation and leisure, consumer services). Consumer demand of the population of the big industrial center is relatively high. In the meantime authorities and business do not cooperate closely enough to change consumers' preferences, promote new services to generate employment in the sector of services with higher incomes. Business plays the key role in promoting this strategy, but regional and municipal governments should provide institutional support to the gender equalization of income policy.

In the periphery areas with aged low educated population the incomes are low in general which results in a sort of "equality". Therefore the approach here should be different and aim on the growth of educational potential of youth, which is important to achieve real equality of income.

Depopulating and aging rural areas need a strategy of local services, base on the cooperation between self-government agencies, rural communities, small business and non-profit organizations, including women's organizations. These services include delivery of essential products, primary health care (home care nursing) and pharmacological support, small repair works, processing of agricultural forest products. In the under-populated areas, where the population has low spending capacity, the small business is not able to provide consumer services, because of their low profitability. This is an area of typical market failures. One of the ways to support women entrepreneurs in the rural areas is to subsidize small business providing services. Another way is to establish a system of state-guaranteed order for the non-profit organizations providing assistance to the senior citizens. This will generate employment not only in the social protection agencies but in the non-profit structures as well. The vacancies can be filled by rural women and inhabitants of the logging townships, as well as by migrants coming back from the Northern regions, some of whom are natives of Vologda region, settling in the regional centers. They have higher labor motivation, they are younger (the retirement age in the Northern regions is less) and could positively influence the behavioral stereotypes of the marginalized local population.

Small trade and public catering business is well developed in the bigger townships and rural centers located along the traffic arteries. This factor assures the employment of women in the sector of paid services. To keep growing the small business needs the bureaucratic barriers to be removed, an improvement of the control system, allocation of land, assistance in getting licenses, consultations and legal assistance.

Gender policy priorities in education, health care and social protection were introduced in the appropriate sections above.

#### **4. Institutional mechanisms.**

Main institutional mechanisms include integration of gender based approach in the legal framework of the RF entities, gender expertise, implementing agencies, advanced training for personnel.

**Gender based approach** has not been integrated in political culture of the regions, it is not fully understood by the policy makers. This is a result of inherent stereotypes of gender roles and social functions of women. Gender related measures are often limited to the advancement of women in the context of traditional gender functions. The names of entities and commissions support the existing stereotypes – “on family, women and children”, “on the advancement of women”.

**Gender expertise** is an important component of verification, development and implementation of social policy measures, programs for socio-economic development of territories. Monitoring done by the Labor Ministry of Russia (2001-2002) showed that most of Russian entities do not use social and gender expertise. When gender expertise is carried out or is carried out on irregular basis it means that the decisions having negative impact on gender equality cannot be identified on the early stage. But gender expertise itself being an important step towards implementation of the gender policy, does not guarantee its success.

**Plans of actions** on the advancement of women developed by regional authorities assure the functions of women related to their maternal and family responsibilities, and aim at reducing of the negative trends in this area. These plans allow to maintain the level of women’s equality achieved in past decades, and to keep it growing. The gender based approach means actual equality for both men and women. Women’s advancement is an important, but not unique factor of gender equality development.

Diagnostics of gender problems should be a basis for the regional and intraregional plans of actions. For the developed exporting territories the objective should be to reduce gender inequality in income and employment, improve population’s health and labor conditions. For the less developed and rural areas plans of actions should include generation of employment, vocational training, development of social infrastructure and social protection, particularly for senior women and children in rural areas.

Political will of the authorities is needed to promote gender based approach and make the gender equality a priority. The authorities should make the decisions showing their interest in achieving gender equality, and requesting the development of gender based strategies. However, very few entities of Russia have legal acts on the gender equality, rights and freedom of women.

In order to achieve gender equality coordinated actions by all the sectors of society is needed – government institutions, business, non-profit organizations, trade unions and women’s public organizations. Public organizations, including women’s organizations, could play a key role by requesting the authorities on all levels to promptly answer to the needs of society and take into account interests of all the population groups.

#### **5. Expanding the experience of the pilot region in the North-West Federal District.**

Development of the gender policy for Vologda region made obvious the dimension of regional differentiation of gender problems. Russian Federation requires regional gender strategies tailored for the needs of each particular entity. As for the regions of the North-West District the priorities are as follows. For Saint-Petersburg it is to support women, employed in small

business, provide social protection for single senior retired citizens, and promote women to the decision making authorities. In the depopulating regions, such as Pskov region, primary objects are income growth, generation of employment for men, better health and longevity of the population, reform of health care system and it's financing in order to improve access to the medical services for senior women in the rural areas. In the exporting regions of the North the primary objectives are generation of employment, salary growth for the already employed women, improvement of working conditions and positive changes in the way of life for men. Special attention should be brought to the logging and coal mining townships, where there is a set of problems related to the behavioral marginalization of men and women.

The following directions of gender policy are relevant for the regions of North-West:

1. Development of different forms of paid medical services, education, leisure in order to raise income of employed women in the exporting regions, where the overall income of the population is higher.
2. Development of small business and different forms of supply-sale cooperation making preserves of forest products (berries, mushrooms) in order to support self-employment (especially for men) in the regions with tense labor market situation.
3. Community service in the depressed logging townships with high unemployment rate among men.
4. Migration policy for the depressed mining and logging townships with high unemployment rate
5. Establishment of employment informational centers for retired women in the major cities.
6. Improvement of working conditions in the regions with high concentration of hazardous industry, promotion of healthy way of life and prolongation of the life span of men.
7. Programs on alcoholism for the industrial cities and logging and coal mining townships with marginal population.
8. Measures to prevent and combat drug addiction and AIDS (young men, infected pregnant women) in big urban centers and near-border regions.
9. Development of professional education in the regional centers, higher level of education being indispensable for gender equalization.
10. Better record system on citizens requiring housing subsidies under housing and utilities reform, simplified system of providing subsidies for the retired citizens in big cities and Northern urban centers with developed housing.
11. Special attention towards the problem of violence (centers of assistance to the victims of violence, shelters) in the industrial urban centers and logging townships with marginal population.
12. Training system for the women, leaders of non-profit organizations, and their preparation for participation in political activities (elections to the regional and local government institutions).

## **6. Proposals on the development of plan of actions.**

(using the materials of the gender program for the North-West Federal District)

### **1. Labor market and inequality of income.**

<b>Direction of activity/measures</b>	<b>Implementing agencies</b>
1. Designing mechanism to carry out gender analysis of the allocation of budget funds and investments.	Non-profit organizations (NPO), Non-profit women's organizations (NPWO), local self-government institutions and legislative authorities of the region.
2. Integration to the regional legislation of the mechanisms, assuring equal opportunities for men and women in employment, promotion and dismissal.	Legislative authorities, trade unions, NPWOs.
3. Attracting investments to the socially important business-projects, with high potential of women's employment, through reduction of interest rates, tax incentives.	Authorities, business, financial institutions.
4. Development of the micro-credits system, education, promotion of women's self-employment in the informal economy sector.	NPWOs, committees on small business support.
5. Partial financing through the regional budget of the youth employment (social partnership mechanism).	Youth NPOs, trade unions, youth committees, employers.
6. Taking into account the gender factor (interests of the non-employed women and employed individuals with families) when signing labor contracts of all levels; establishing trade unions' committees on gender equality.	Employers, trade unions, NPWOs.
7. Holding vacancy fairs for women and youth.	Employment centers, NPOs, local administrations, educational institutions, employers.
8. Design and implementation of special training programs for women in rural areas giving them skills, required for employment.	Employment centers, local administrations, NPWOs
9. Establishment in the regions of the centers providing resources for women, wishing to start their own business, including training programs giving new technological and communication skills.	Entrepreneurship committees, regional and local employment centers, NPWOs
10. Technological renovation of manufacturing sector in order to reduce the number of workplaces with harmful working conditions, industrial injuries.	Employers, trade unions, executive authorities.
11. Establishment of regional consultation centers to review complaints on discrimination of women in labor sector.	

### **2. Education.**

<b>Direction of activity/measures</b>	<b>Implementing agencies</b>
1. Training specialists in gender education, programs for teachers of humanities, heads of regional and local education departments.	Education committees, educational institutions, NPOs, NPWOs.
2. Creating a network of research and resource centers for gender education in each region; support of gender research.	NPOs, research institutes, educational institutions.
3. Integration of gender programs in education on all levels, development of instructional base for the training courses on gender issues.	Educational institutions, education committees, NPWOs.
4. Development of gender education through discussions, forums, conferences, round tables, workshops on necessary skills and knowledge contributing to the development of human potential based on regional and local traditions.	NPWOs, NPOs, teachers, educational institutions, journalists, deputies, public relations departments of the administration, experts.
5. Development and implementation of special courses and gender educational programs on all levels of education system (from school to postgraduate education)	Teachers and professors, education department and education committees, educational institutions, NPOs, NPWOs.
6. Training of pedagogical personnel dedicated to social knowledge, development of human potential and civil society. Подготовка	Educational institutions, education department, NPWOs



педагогических кадров, обеспечивающих получение социальных знаний и навыков, способствующих развитию человеческого потенциала и гражданского общества	
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### 3. Health care and social protection.

<b>Direction of activity/measures</b>	<b>Implementing agencies</b>
1. Development of institutions for healthy family, healthy generation.	Health care committees, NPOs, NPWOs, educational institutions.
2. Promotion of healthy way of life, prevention of drug addiction, smoking, alcoholism.	Health care committees, NPOs, NPWOs, educational institutions.
3. Informative and educative campaign to prevent diseases, including measures using modern communication technologies.	NPOs, mass media, journalists, experts.
4. Informative and educative campaign to promote responsible parenthood.	NPOs, NPWOs, educational and medical institutions.
5. Development of NPOs network dedicated to prevention, rehabilitation and support of a patient and his/hers family.	NPOs, medical institutions, health care committees.
6. Optimization of the health care institutions network, task sharing for better effectiveness and quality of medical services in conditions of limited financing.	Health care committees, all levels of authorities.
7. Development of special social protection programs targeting retired women.	Authorities of all levels, social protection committees, NPOs, NPWOs.
8. Informing about AIDS/HIV through informative and educative campaigns in mass media.	NPOs, NPWOs, medical institutions, mass media.
9. Informing citizens on the medical insurance system.	Experts, NPOs, medical workers, mass media.
10. Creation of a mechanism to analyze the effectiveness of support to vulnerable groups of citizens based on age-sex characteristics.	Social protection committees, scientific institutions, NPWOs.
11. Development and implementation of support and social technologies for men and women of different ages, with identification of problems, characteristic for each age group.	Social protection committees, scientific institutions, NPOs, NPWOs.
12. Targeted social assistance to broken families in order to insure they get a subsistence minimum.	Social protection institutions, trade unions, NPOs.
13. Improving gender competence and awareness of the social workers, as well as of managers, involved dealing with social issues.	Educational institutions, social protection committees, NPOs, NPWOs.

### 4. Combating violence.

<b>Direction of activity/measures</b>	<b>Implementing agencies</b>
1. Writing regional level laws on domestic violence.	Legislative authorities, lawyers, NPOs, NPWOs.
2. Creating new crisis centers, improving their technical and material basis.	Administrative authorities, social protection institutions.
3. Creating a network of special crisis centers for men, children and senior citizens.	NPOs, crisis centers, social protection agencies.
4. Creating social shelters for women.	NPOs, NPWOs, crisis center, social protection agencies.
5. Creating an institutions of social attorneys for women and men.	Law enforcement authorities, lawyers, commissions on human rights, NPOs.
6. Design and implementation of targeted programs on legal protection of women in the region.	NPOs, authorities, deputies, lawyers, law enforcement authorities.
7. Preparing and carrying out research on domestic violence and human rights.	NPOs, NPWOs, educational and scientific institutions, authorities.
8. Information and educational campaigns in the mass media against violence.	NPWOs, NPOs, mass media, public relations committees of the administrations.
9. Creation of voluntary people's guard to maintain law and order and prevent domestic violence, establishment of the regional social organizations coordination committee on violence prevention.	NPOs, NPWOs, law enforcement authorities, regional and local administrations.
10. Professional training for the low enforcement officers, lawyers, judges, health care professionals, social workers on the issues of	NPWOs, educational institutions, education departments, health care

violence towards women in family and society, on human rights.	departments, law enforcement authorities, social agencies.
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### **5. Political representation and access to decision making.**

<b>Direction of activity/measures</b>	<b>Implementing agencies</b>
1. Consolidation of institutional mechanisms for gender equality (committees on gender equality, committees on women, children etc.)	Administrative authorities.
2. Professional training on gender issues for the personnel of administrative authorities.	Administrative authorities, universities.
3. Conducting gender expertise of the decisions of legislative and administrative authorities.	Legal and administrative authorities, NPOs, scientists.
4. Training programs for women, community leaders.	Legal and administrative authorities, NPOs, scientists.
5. Creating a personnel reserve for the self-government institutions taking into account the factor of gender.	Legal and administrative authorities.