

Kazakhstan female entrepreneurs shape the base of economy and national welfare. According to the head of the National Commission for Women's Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy, Elena Tarasenko, their contribution to the national GDP is almost 40 per cent.

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Female entrepreneurs that have various religions do not emphasise their religious beliefs. However, religion helps them keep being conscious, merciful, achieve their goals and dream.



Amina Yusupbaeva

Amina Yusupbaeva is the co-owner of Ahliak kindergarten, which her husband and she founded 10 years ago. When she graduated from the university as an IT specialist, she could not even think about her own kindergarten. She had no experience, knowledge, and had to learn many things from others.

“Kindergartens that worked for five years were colossal for us! Many things have changed since then! For example, now we don't have to get a license, some things have been simplified, but in the past these things were required. And we had to anticipate every little thing. We thought we would never go through the obstacles,” the woman said.

Her spouse suggested her to open a kindergarten when he learned about the problem of his friends and acquaintances. The country had a shortage of kindergartens - young parents had no place to leave their children at. And the spouses took their chance. 30 kids of 35 in their kindergarten were the children of their friends and acquaintances. When selecting the staff, the young woman preferred her co-believers:

At first, my priority was to give jobs to the Muslim women, who had a problem with getting a job in a state institution despite their teacher's diploma.

According to the naib imam of the Central Mosque of Almaty, **Ruslan Kairgali**, a Muslim woman is not confined to household, family only.

"If a woman earns money, she has a right to not support her family. In other words, she can spend her money on herself, while her husband has to support her. However, if she wants to maintain her family, she is welcome to do it," Kairgali said.



The staff of the kindergarten wear headscarves. However, the kindergarten is a secular institution. They prepare halal food there. As to education and teaching, they comply with modern requirements. For example, the kindergarten uses Montessori method of education and the language of instruction is Kazakh.

Amina is dreaming about her own building for the kindergarten, which she wants to do in a Japanese style, where everything is meant for harmonious, safe and ecological development of kids and their preparation for adult life.

Feeding people for good causes

Former author of TV programmes and the head of production studio, **Elena Kim**, today is the owner of a network of canteens. She is the Orthodox Christian and she finds useful the idea of transferring our energy to the people whom we feed.

Once, when she was producing programmes about healthy and delicious food, Elena wondered if she could open her own business because feeding people is a good cause. Her spouse Sergei, who had his own business then, supported her idea.



Elena Kim

This business became their family business - the staff of their canteens are not only the Kims, but their children and relatives - sisters, their husbands, uncles and aunts. Their staff has Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Catholics - people of different religions and ages.

They also have difficulties: often Elena has to distribute food herself, control meal preparation process, procure the food, and even bake:

“We wash dishes and clean the floors whenever necessary. What is important is to make everything work properly. People who come here to eat do not care if your dishwasher quit her job or took a leave. What they care about is to eat in a clean place,” the woman said.

Although religious communities have ambiguous attitude towards female entrepreneurs, archpriest Evgeny Ivanov said that religion does not find this issue problem outstanding or contradictory.

“If business lets the woman be a woman, it’s fine. The woman is free to build spaceships, or run large companies, or lead the state,” said **Evgeny Ivanov**, archpriest and instructor of Almaty Orthodox Ecclesiastical Seminary.

Today Elena Kim does not regret about opening her family business a few years ago. Being a creative person, she is dreaming about a new project - a women’s club, and thinks she has succeeded in her life.

“I am a happy person. I could make many things come true: from the idea to full realisation of TV programmes about healthy and delicious food, I have created jobs for people, for my family. People live and maintain their families because they work at my place, and this is great,” Elena said.



Serving the progress is the priority of the Baha’i

The founder of the optical store network in Almaty, **Aysha Gaisina**, is the follower of the Baha’i. She practised this religion since the 90s and is still the follower. In her business, the entrepreneur tries to apply the equality approach to all people, to accept them and to serve the progress.

Aysha and her husband Sayat used to work in bank sphere. Their life seemed to be prosperous and secure. But when their acquaintance offered an optic store to them when she was leaving abroad, they decided to take a risk and open their business.

“According to Baha’u’llah, a man is like a bird

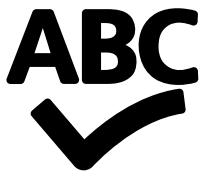


with two wings: one material, another one spiritual. If they don't develop equally, the man won't be able to soar or fly," said Sayat Gaisin, Aysha's husband.

Aysha Gaisina

The woman likes her business is beneficial for people - she helps people see better, thus serves the progress of civilisation, as the Baha'i religion teaches. She is dreaming of spending more time in religion when her children run her business.

This publication was produced under IWPR project «Forging links and raising voices to combat radicalization in Central Asia»



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