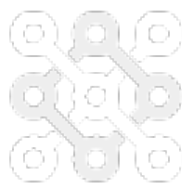


**Pārmaiņas un izaicinājumi
sociālā attīstībā un
nodarbinātībā: Eiropa un
Āzija / Driving changes and
challenges of social
development and employment:
Europe and Asia**

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Book of Abstracts

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1

Driving Trends in Tourism Development in Uzbekistan*

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Number of tourists who visit Central Asia was increasing during the last decades. Covid-19 pandemic with restrictions and geological challenges of 2022 come with changes in the current situation.

Tourism is considered as one of the areas for government reforms in order to provide further economic expansion of the country. Uzbekistan tourism receipts increased until 2018. In 2017 tourism receipts were 835 million US dollars, indicating 44.21% increase comparing with 2016. Year 2018 was even more promising increase – 57% compared with 2017, bringing 1,314 million US dollars income from tourism industry. In the year 2019 the increase was continuing, bringing to the country foreign currency in 1,679 million US dollars, positive increase 27.78% comparing with 2018. Covid-19 pandemic changed the tendency for 2020, tourism receipts decreased by 76.47%, to 395 million US dollars income from tourism industry. With ease of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, number of foreign tourists visiting Uzbekistan almost tripled from 1.88 million in 2021 to 5.2 million in 2022. Current foreign tourist flow has not yet reached the 2019's pre-pandemic level of 6.75 million. Uzbekistan's exports of tourism services reached 1.6 billion US dollars in 2022. Still the projection is to have risen of foreign tourists to 7 million visitors by 2024, and the annual foreign currency earnings from foreign visitors will reach as much as 2,5 billion US dollars. What should be done to reach such optimistic forecast? Country has to continue to work on international and local transportation connections, improve payment solutions for foreign tourists, continue to develop appropriate hotels for foreign tourists, provide countrywide information for tourists in English and other languages.

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Driving Change in Social Development and Employment: Corporate Social Responsibility

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is critical to promoting improvements in social development and employment. CSR refers to a company's commitment to operating in an economically, socially, ecologically, and legally responsible manner. Companies that integrate CSR into their business activities can have a good influence on society and contribute to community well-being. Companies can invest in community infrastructure projects including schools, hospitals, and vocational training centres. CSR projects frequently involve programmes that provide job possibilities for socially excluded or poor groups. Companies may utilise CSR to encourage diversity and inclusion in their workforce. CSR projects might focus on offering training and skill development programmes to local populations. This improves individuals' employability, preparing them to meet the needs of the labour market. Companies that are devoted to environmental sustainability help create green jobs. This covers positions in renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, and other environmentally friendly industries. CSR promotes businesses to use ethical employment practices, such as paying fair salaries, providing safe working conditions, and complying to labour rules.

In summary, CSR is an effective instrument for businesses to actively contribute to social development and employment. Companies that connect their business activities with ethical and sustainable ideals can benefit society while also encouraging long-term financial success.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, social development, sustainable business practices, local economic development, social impact initiatives.

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Analysis of the dynamics of social progress: employment prospects in Uzbekistan

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The article “Analysis of Social Progress Dynamics: Employment Prospects in Uzbekistan” provides an in-depth examination of the socio-economic landscape in Uzbekistan, particularly focusing on employment trends and prospects in the country. Furthermore, the article underscores Uzbekistan’s commitment to addressing employment challenges through strategic initiatives outlined in President Shavkat Mirziyoyev’s “Uzbekistan 2030” Strategy. Moreover, the article delves into the various strategies and programs implemented by Uzbekistan to address unemployment challenges, including public works programs, vocational training, and infrastructure development initiatives.

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Echoes from the suq: exploring informality. The case of Rabat (Morocco)

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The aim of my research is to investigate informal economy in Morocco by taking the suq (lit. the market, bazaar) as a case study. This open/semi-open market represents a point of interest for multiple trades, but to reduce its value to the merely economic would be a mistake, since it encompasses multiple meanings, from the social to the cultural one. Therefore, the exploration of suqs as sites of informal governance moves beyond a narrow focus on economic considerations. In fact, the processes of economic informality cannot be separated from those of urban informality, as they are closely interconnected, especially in this case.

The theory underlying this research is that the French protectorate had a huge impact on the spread of informality. In fact, in 1912 (during the French Protectorate) the Moroccan population was pushed to reside in informal settlements on the outskirts of the city, sustaining themselves through informal economic activities. The urban transformation continued as the city was strictly divided between Moroccan and European zones. What happened in Morocco during the protectorate era had a profound impact on its urban space and the subsequent history of urban planning. In fact, still until nowadays, downtown (the “European” part) is often deemed an inviolable zone, subjecting street vendors to frequent forced evictions.

Consequently, since the medina (the old town, the “Moroccan” part during the Protectorate) is the place where the suq is placed, the research wants to explore the legacy of the cultural and social meaning of this place, and the impacts of the French protectorate on the contemporary urban configuration of the city and the resultant repercussions on the informal economy, that -although relegated to the “margins”- has constantly evolved over time.

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Challenges in the development of tourism in Uzbekistan*

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Tourism industry is dynamic industry that has been developing over decades and being additional income course for a number of countries. At the same time tourism industry is extremely vulnerable to economic, social, and political changes. Uzbekistan is a country with great potential for an expanded tourism industry, located in the heart of Central Asia, country is rich with a rich cultural heritage and nature resources. Its tourism industry has attracted considerable attention in recent years, modernizing and expanding countries airports to serve more travellers, government views the tourism sector as having high growth potential. However, its tourism sector still faces challenges. To boost income flows from tourism, Uzbekistan should fully support and utilize the private sector. Efficient and effective promotion campaigns are also important for attracting new segments of foreign tourists.

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Mastering the Art of Resilience in European and Asian Family Businesses

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An economic shocks and major economic crises refer to changes in fundamental macroeconomic situation that has a significant impact on economic outcomes and measures of economic performance such as unemployment, consumption, and inflation. Such economic crises are often unpredictable and are usually the result of events that are thought to be outside the scope of normal economic transactions. Family businesses are particularly susceptible to such disruptions, as they are usually run by family members who do not always have all the necessary skills to cope with major economic crises consequences. The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasised the vulnerability of businesses worldwide and sparked a discourse on the importance of resilience. It has also initiated research into the factors that contribute to an organisation's ability to recover from and adapt to unforeseen shocks. Consequently, it is imperative to investigate the conditions and capabilities that can strengthen resilience in highly dynamic market environments. This study uses an inductive approach to apply the qualitative research method. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with Latvian, Lithuanian and Taiwan family firms. The data were analysed using a comparative analysis to identify the role of intellectual capital and absorptive capacity in strengthening family businesses' resilience. The presentation will answer following questions: How do European and Asian Family businesses adapt and thrive in challenging times? What factors drive Family businesses resilience in European and Asian Markets? What Lessons Can European and Asian Family businesses Learn from each other's resilience?

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The Women's Entrepreneurship Index of the Kyrgyz Republic: Applied and Academic Aspects

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In recent years, studies and experiences of other countries confirming the links between the development of women's entrepreneurship (WE) and GDP. It has revealed not only barriers but also opportunities for quantitative and qualitative improvement in the development of women's entrepreneurship. For example, in Central Asia countries, the government has started to create national programs to support women's entrepreneurship, thanks to international organizations, there are more activities in the area of access of women's entrepreneurship to finance, education, information, overcoming stereotypes that inhibit women; and platforms for solidarity and partnership between women's entrepreneurship, NGOs, and sectoral business associations have been created.

However, the implementation of these important programs requires the development of policy documents, and activities need to be evaluated, refined, adjusted and resources used more efficiently. This requires continuously collected data on real situation of women entrepreneurs, both in the country (in the Kyrgyz Republic), and in the CA region, because it is profitable and expedient to trade as a region with the world.

To provide an answer, the general patterns of women entrepreneurship in Kyrgyzstan need to be understood first. In order to build Female Entrepreneurship Index in Central Asia, we propose an adaptation of the theoretical framework of the Global Female Entrepreneurship Index developed by The Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (GEDI). However, realizing the international significance of this index, we propose its expansion, as taking into account regional specificities will allow us to more accurately identify not only barriers, but also but also opportunities in some sectors, provinces etc. This approach will allow for more appropriate use of both financial resources and human capital for the development of WE in the KR, in CA.

Regular, more frequent data collection, e.g. 1-2 times a year, will allow for a more realistic policy, help business associations, government representatives, NGOs, and academia to "see" more opportunities and consolidate efforts with a clear focus.

The established research project team (from different countries, from business and academia) developed a concept that has a great applied significance, but also provides a basis for academic circles to research and discuss patterns, opportunities, commonalities and specificities in the development of women entrepreneurship in Kyrgyzstan.