

Kyrgyzstan Final Report

Gender Study for Central Asia

January 2018

Framework Contract EuropeAid/132633/C/SER/Multi

Lot 7: Governance and Home Affairs

Letter of Contract N° 2016/379003

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Submitted on 09/01/2018

This report was prepared with the financial assistance of the European Commission. The views expressed in this report are those of the consultants and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission



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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
aityncha	Female religious leader
akim	Mayor
aksakal	Court of Elders
ayl okmotu	Local municipality
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
BOMCA	Border Management Programme in Central Asia
CA	Central Asia
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CODEV	Working Party on Development Cooperation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of a Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
dekhan	Farm with permanent heritable land use rights created from former state land (Tajikistan)
DG DEVCO	Directorate General Development and Cooperation
DVV	Institut für Internationale Zusammenarbeit des Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes e.V.
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCS	Fragile and conflicted-affected situations
FGD	Focus group discussion
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
GFP	Gender Focal Point
GIZ	German Development Agency – Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GNI	Gross National Income

HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus / Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
hakim	Mayor (Uzbekistan)
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFCA	Investment Facility for Central Asia
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
INL	US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
jamoat	Local self-governing body (Tajikistan)
kenesh	Local representative body (Kyrgyzstan)
kengash	Local representative body (Uzbekistan)
KFW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbauentwicklungsbank. (German Government-owned development bank)
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
mahalla	Local self-government body (Uzbekistan)
MFI	Micro-finance institution
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MP	Member of Parliament
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NDS	National Development Strategy (Tajikistan)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
nicoh	Islamic marriage ceremony
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PPCM	Programme and Project Cycle Management
PwD	Person with Disabilities
R&D	Research and Development

SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOGI	Sexual orientation and gender identity
TA	Technical Assistance
TB	Tuberculosis
TIKA	Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
TMT	Turkmen manat
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
UNITE	UN Secretary-General's Campaign to end Violence against Women
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollar
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WB	World Bank
WEI	Wider European Initiative
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1 Executive Summary

The Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan was carried out in-country during 18 September – 14 October 2017 by the consultant team made up of Ms. Helen Dubok (Team Leader), and Ms. Dilbar Turakhanova (Gender Expert). The objectives were to provide the EU with a review of the gender situation in Kyrgyzstan in order to provide an understanding of whether gender inequalities persist both formally and informally, and to provide specific country recommendations to improve the gender situation and contribute to the elimination of discrimination through EU assistance.

Kyrgyzstan is party to several international human rights treaties relevant to gender equality. CEDAW was ratified in 1997 together with its Optional Protocol. Other treaties ratified such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) also establish the principle of non-discrimination and equality. The National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality to 2020 was adopted in 2012. It is implemented through National Action plans adopted on a bi-annual basis. Following the violent conflicts of 2010, Kyrgyzstan also advanced the development of the National Action Plan by including the implementation of the UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Civil society in Kyrgyzstan is the most robust in Central Asia, and organizations are able to participate in processes of policy formulation and discussion through numerous consultative public councils in line ministries, agencies and local authorities.

Despite strong formal legal guarantees for women's access to political life, women are not equally represented in the civil service nor in the political field. Female participation in representative bodies at local *kenesh* level in 2017 was estimated at 10 percent. Nationwide, there are currently no female Governors, no female *akims*, and no female city mayors.

Kyrgyzstan has made significant investments to improve maternal health. Nevertheless, the rate of maternal mortality remains high, especially in rural areas (57.4 deaths per 100 000 live births in rural areas, compared with 37.9 deaths in urban areas). The country has achieved gender parity for primary and lower secondary education, however, the number of schools in urban areas is insufficient and there is low coverage of children by pre-school education especially in rural areas. School non-attendance rates vary by season, and absenteeism by boys is highest in rural areas during the autumn and spring farming seasons when they are required to undertake farm work. Girls are more likely to be absent due to a lack of clothes or shoes. Poor sanitary conditions in schools lead to greater absenteeism among girls once they reach puberty and begin menstruating.

Gender inequalities persist both formally and informally in Kyrgyzstan and both direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls is evident. There are legal barriers for women wishing to participate in the work force in the formal economy. These include several discriminatory legal provisions in addition to a list of 400 occupations from which women are banned. Anti-discrimination laws covering LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights and the rights of other vulnerable groups are lacking, and adequate measures to protect the fundamental rights of LGBT people as guaranteed by the Constitution and the ICCPR *do not exist*. Bride-kidnapping, or rather abduction for forced marriage continues despite being a serious crime with recently increased penalties, and perpetrators are rarely convicted. Early / child marriage is another common form of gender-based violence in Kyrgyzstan and occurs in all regions of the country and among all ethnic groups. 12 percent of women in rural areas were married before the age of 18 years, and 14 percent of women in urban areas married before the age of 18.¹ Kyrgyzstan's secular laws officially prohibit polygamy. Nevertheless, there were openly-reported cases of polygamy in the 2014 Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)². Polygamy is practised in rural areas with strong conservative Islamic leanings, and also in urban areas even by public officials. Domestic violence is widespread, affecting nearly one third of women and girls aged 15 to 49 years.

Regarding out-migration, currently, 40 percent of Kyrgyz migrants in the Russian Federation are women. The

¹ Information obtained from Department of Gender Affairs, MOLSP, November 2017

² The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Multi-indicator cluster survey 2014 - Final Report. Bishkek. Available at: <http://www.mics2014.kg/index.php/ru/>

main reason women migrate is to provide financial support for their families. Several cases of aggression in Russia towards Kyrgyz migrant women who have relationships with non-Kyrgyz men have been perpetrated by young Kyrgyz men (the so-called 'Kyrgyz patriots'). With the feminization of migratory flows, the number of children left behind in Kyrgyzstan has increased. These children, are often at higher risk of facing restricted access to health care and education, and of being subjected to ill-treatment and sexual violence.

There is rigid entrenched stereotyping for the expected roles of women and men, which cuts across all sectors and areas of life in Kyrgyzstan. Women's agency is restricted by their families and society in all spheres of their life regarding reproductive health, education, employment, and civil rights. Patriarchal attitudes confine women to the private sphere and their role is still mainly perceived as being that of care-giver, and their place is in the home. Rural women have a poorer quality of life than urban women. Health and education services are of lower quality, and the availability of reliable clean water and sanitation facilities remain priority needs in many rural areas. Access to shelters and crisis centres as a response to domestic violence in rural areas is also insufficient.

While Kyrgyzstan may be considered as having progressive gender legislation and policies, a clear implementation mechanism for gender equity laws is lacking, and the national strategy on gender equality is under-financed. The country's gender machinery as represented by the Department of Gender Affairs under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, is nominal, largely ineffectual and significantly under-resourced both in human and financial terms. The environment in Kyrgyzstan could be considered favourable for the advancement of the gender equality agenda, however the capacity of Parliament, Government and line ministries in effective gender mainstreaming, gender analysis of sectors and gender budgeting remains low, and the real political will to effectively take forward GEWE is uncertain. The increasing trend of Islamization may also pose a real risk to gains made to date in gender equality in Kyrgyzstan.

Based on an analysis of the gender situation in Kyrgyzstan, it was concluded that all 14 gender objectives across the three thematic areas of EU GAP II, are relevant to Kyrgyzstan, and to which the EU can add value as part of the country's national development. However, the most important priority gender objectives are as follows: 'Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere'; 'Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women and throughout their life cycle'; 'Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination'; 'Access to decent work for women of all ages'; 'Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship'; 'Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport infrastructure, and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women'; 'Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels'; 'Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes'; 'Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues'.

EU budget support conditionality in the education sector should be linked to gender equality outcomes in the country. The recommended conditionality includes addressing the removal of gender bias and stereotypes as part of teacher training; the training of girls in VET in non-traditional skills, which are linked to new labour market requirements (such as tourism, innovations, IT); the removal of gender stereotypes from education curricula and school materials; and the systematic use of gender indicators in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for education sector.

New gender equality actions in Kyrgyzstan of high priority include promoting new actions on assisting in the implementation of CEDAW in the country; actions to improve the capacity of the national gender machinery, or addressing issues such as gender-based violence. There were demands voiced by Ministry of Labour and Social Protection for support for further research on specific issues such as gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms on roles and duties in the family; and the practice of household and care work of women (as part of their commitments under National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2016-2017). There is also a need for capacity building of the Ministry of Labour on Green Economy gender expertise in order to develop effective female entrepreneurship in agriculture.

There is also scope for the EU to promote a regional Central Asia programme on GEWE with a focus on building the knowledge base of Central Asia partners; sharing best practice on legal and institutional framework for GEWE; gender research; use of gender statistics in policy formulation, and gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in national development. Eastern European Member States which have a similar historical Socialist past and context, would be well-placed as partners.

2 Introduction

This report contains the findings of the Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan which was carried out in-country during the period 18 September – 14 October 2017 by the consultant team made up of Ms. Helen Dubok (Team Leader), and Ms. Dilbar Turakhanova (Gender Expert).

The objectives of the assignment are to produce a gender analysis and study for Central Asia which will provide the EU with a review of the gender situation in each of the five countries of the region - Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

The specific objectives are to provide an understanding of whether gender inequalities persist both formally and informally in each country, and to provide specific country recommendations on issues to be addressed to improve the gender situations and contribute to the elimination of discrimination through EU assistance.

2.1 Expected Outputs - Response strategies for Kyrgyzstan

Proposals were to be made concerning the objectives and opportunities for policy and political dialogue in Kyrgyzstan which could contribute to strengthening coordination between EU institutions and EU Member States regarding burden-sharing for the implementation of GAP II objectives based on identified gender-related initiatives by Member States in Kyrgyzstan. The specific outputs are:

- A minimum of three objectives from GAP II selected (one per each thematic priority) to contribute to existing programmes / projects or future programmes / projects of DCI (i.e. those active in the bilateral focal sectors of intervention, and those of Non-State Actor / Local Authorities thematic programme);
- Proposed adaptation to programmes in order to incorporate these objectives and adequately measure their impact;
- Following consultation with the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan, identified and formulated new actions where relevant and possible;
- Identified results for gender equality that will be achieved through existing DCI programmes, and proposed indicators and processes to adequately monitor these results through data-gathering and tracking;
- Identified priorities for forthcoming in-country calls under the EIDHR instrument and possible CSO/LA instrument.

A brief presentation of preliminary findings was made at the debriefing meeting held on 13 October in the EU Delegation with the Head of Cooperation and Project Managers.

This report contains the detailed findings, proposed gender objectives and priorities for Kyrgyzstan.

3 Methodological note

The Consultants employed a combination of data collection techniques for the Kyrgyzstan Gender Study as follows:

- Desk review of secondary data including statistics, survey reports and publications
- Key informant interviews with gender equality actors in Kyrgyzstan
- Interviews with women's organizations and CSOs
- Meetings with national and international gender experts
- Meetings with EU implementing partners
- Meetings with key government and parliamentary bodies
- Site visit to Osh.

Secondary data and literature was reviewed to assess the country's gender situation and to inform the development of method for in-country information-gathering.

Participants selected for stakeholder interviews and meetings were identified according to sector, and specialism. Interviews aimed to gather qualitative data on how the entity / organization functioned and which issues were the focus of its operations. In addition, information was collected related to their experiences; views and perceptions of gender and legal issues; the impact of the organizations on beneficiaries and participants; stakeholders' knowledge and views on relevant law and policy relating to gender equality and empowerment issues, and practice and outcomes in actual situations.

The entities and people met in-country included:

- International Organizations: UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNAIDS, UNODC, OSCE, IOM, WHO, FAO, ILO, USAID, SDC
- International lenders: EBRD, World Bank, ADB
- Ministry of Education; Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Water Resources); Ministry of Interior; National Statistics Committee; Parliamentary Committee on Social Issues, and Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan
- Implementing partners of EU programmes under DCI and other instruments
- EU Member States (representatives from GIZ, KfW, DFID and projects funded by Finland Ministry for Foreign Affairs)
- NGOs and Civil Society Organizations
- Independent national and international gender experts.

The full list of people / entities met is contained in the annex.

3.1 Difficulties experienced

The team was unable to meet all requested government bodies, such as

- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Justice
- Government Administration

4 Current situation

4.1 Legal and human rights framework

Kyrgyzstan is party to several international human rights treaties relevant to gender equality. CEDAW was ratified in 1997 together with its Optional Protocol. Other treaties ratified such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) also establish the principle of non-discrimination and equality. Together with other countries in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan has ratified relevant ILO Conventions. The obligation of ensuring gender equality through ratification of international human rights treaties and ILO Conventions, is embedded in Kyrgyz legislation. The Constitution and the Law on State Guarantees on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, ensure gender equality and include provisions prohibiting sexual discrimination. Additionally, this Law establishes the prohibition of sexual harassment at the workplace and specifies that an employer can be prosecuted in the case of sexual harassment. In practice this Law is largely ineffective due to its low priority in government institutions and the lack of a proper enforcement mechanism.³ In April 2017 the new Law “On Safeguarding and Protection Against Domestic Violence” was adopted. This Law replaced the previous 2013 Law and addresses existing gaps. Specifically, the 2017 Law establishes that anyone who is aware of an incident of domestic violence can report it to the police. The 2017 Law further defines clear roles and responsibilities of State and local self-government bodies in protecting against domestic violence; stipulating a coordinated response to addressing domestic violence; introducing a behaviour correction programme for perpetrators, and introducing an improved procedure for issuance of protective orders.⁴ In 2013 Kyrgyzstan increased the punishment for bride-kidnapping.

The country also has the most inclusive formal gender equality legislation regarding the political participation of women and the civil service. It includes mandatory gender-based quotas, with no more than 70 percent of one sex to be represented in the legislative branch and selected executive bodies.⁵ The Decree “On the measures of improvement of gender policy” (2006) also requires the establishment of a mechanism in government executive bodies and local self-governing authorities to ensure representation of a minimum of 30 percent of women.⁶ Labour legislation however creates barriers for women in accessing employment with high remuneration, because it establishes extensive maternity protection measures (e.g. provisions forbidding women to hold more than one job; establishing special measures only for single mothers and women with small children thus emphasising the reproductive role of women and restricting the role of fathers in childcare) and restricts opportunities for women to undertake dangerous and heavy work. Certain types of employed work which incorporate family benefits are available only to women, which is in contradiction to ratified ILO instruments.⁷ The Law “On Agricultural Land Management” (2006) introduced women’s right to register land shares by dividing land into individual plots which can be independently managed and used for transactions. The same Law ensures that male and female family members have equal rights to inheriting land.⁸

4.2 Policy framework at national level

The National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality to 2020 was adopted in 2012. It is implemented through National Action plans adopted on a bi-annual basis. In the most recent plan - National Action Plan for Gender Equality for 2015-2017, it was established that the Plan would be implemented under the overall

³ Ibraeva, G (2012), UNDP Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Public Administration: Kyrgyzstan Case Study, p.15.

⁴ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/5/news-new-progressive-law-on-domestic-violence-adopted-in-kyrgyzstan>

⁵ Karimova M. (2016) Component: Women’s Political Participation. Gender in Society Perceptions Study. Research report, unpublished report, UN Women.

⁶ Ibraeva, G (2012), UNDP Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Public Administration: Kyrgyzstan Case Study, p.14

⁷ Mansfield D (2015), Legal Barriers to Women’s Participation in the Economy in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, EBRD, Law & Partnership Development.

⁸ FAO (2016), National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Kyrgyz Republic. Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, Ankara, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5763e.pdf>

coordination of the Vice Prime Minister of Social Affairs. The Ministry of Social Development (now Social Protection) would be the main body responsible for monitoring and evaluation of implementation progress. It is also foreseen that this body will be responsible for resource mobilization; coordination of donor funds; coordination of central, sectoral and regional executive bodies, and establishing the conditions for both the private sector and civil society to participate in implementing the National Strategy.⁹ Both the National Strategy and Plan establish the following priority areas: 1) women's economic empowerment; 2) developing a system of functional education; 3) eliminating gender discrimination and improving access to justice; 4) gender parity in decision-making, and expanding women's political participation. Special attention is paid to special social groups such as rural women, young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Following the violent conflicts of 2010, Kyrgyzstan also advanced the development of the National Action Plan by including the implementation of the UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

The National Strategy establishes a clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism and a set of indicators. Kyrgyzstan has developed gender-disaggregated statistics which are to be used to routinely assess progress in Strategy implementation. However, during a recent review of secondary data, information about the progress in National Action Plan implementation and its achievements, was difficult to find. It was also not possible to identify the application of a clear gender mainstreaming strategy. There is some evidence which suggests that mainstreaming of gender in national strategies is not always fully effective. For instance, FAO asserts that key documents on agricultural reforms such as the Strategy on Agricultural Development for Kyrgyz Republic to 2017; and the Programme on the Development of Pasture Management of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2015, are actually gender-blind.¹⁰

Gender budgeting in Kyrgyzstan is only now evolving. Several pilot projects have been implemented to introduce gender budgeting at local levels. Gender expertise in legislation and policies became a mandatory requirement prior to their adoption. A manual on gender expertise has been developed with the support of international organizations and is being used locally. However, this mechanism is not fully operational despite capacity building provided to civil servants. For instance, the Law on the National Budget which is adopted on an annual basis has never been analysed from a gender perspective.

4.3 Political setting

Kyrgyzstan is the only republic in Central Asia with a parliamentary form of government. This development is the result of public dissatisfaction with previous Presidents in 2005 and 2010 and a subsequent national referendum on the Constitution, which established a parliamentary form of government. In 2010 Kyrgyzstan was hit by a severe inter-ethnic conflict between Kyrgyz and Uzbek ethnic groups in the south of Kyrgyzstan that caused several hundred civilian casualties. In 2011 a National Action Plan was adopted at the 6th Extraordinary Congress of the People of Kyrgyzstan to establish and implement ethnic policy in Kyrgyzstan and achieve social consolidation.¹¹ It was also followed by a number of legal reforms to ensure the establishment of a proper system of checks and balances. The Concept of Strengthening of Unity of People and Interethnic Relations in Kyrgyzstan was adopted, and the State Agency on Local Self-Governance and Interethnic Relations was established. Its mandate is to improve interethnic unity and effectively develop ethnic diversity¹². In 2015 Kyrgyzstan joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) established in 2014 by Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

The Parliament of Kyrgyzstan (*Jogorku Kenesh*) is a unicameral legislative body with 120 seats and whose members are elected for five years. The current Parliament was elected in 2015 through a free, fair and peaceful process. Six different political parties sit in Parliament. The former President of Kyrgyzstan was elected in 2011 and the most recent Presidential elections took place in October 2017.

Despite strong formal legal guarantees for women's access to political life, women are not equally represented in the civil service nor in the political field. Women make up 40 percent of all civil servants and they occupy, in

⁹ National Strategy of Kyrgyz Republic on Achievement of Gender Equality until 2020, adopted by the Resolution of the Government of Kyrgyz Republic N443 on 27 July 2012.

¹⁰ FAO (2016), National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Kyrgyz Republic. Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, Ankara, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5763e.pdf>

¹¹ Reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention, CERD/C/KGZ/5-7, 10 April 2012

¹² Resolution of the Government of Kyrgyz Republic "On functional and structural changes in the system of state bodies of executive power of the Kyrgyz Republic", 5 March 2012, No. 109.

the main, only non-managerial positions. They are highly concentrated in line ministries addressing traditionally gender-sensitive sectors such as health and social protection. In Parliament, women hold 20 percent of all seats. Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian country where a woman – though not popularly elected – was a President. At the level of local representative bodies (*kenesh*) women make up 16 percent of seats.¹³

Civil society in Kyrgyzstan is one of the strongest in Central Asia. Representatives of civil society extensively participate in processes of policy formulation and discussion through numerous consultative public councils in line ministries, agencies and local authorities. The legal basis for this is the Law on Public Councils of State Bodies adopted in 2014. Based on this law, State bodies should establish public councils through a selection process to serve as citizen advisory bodies. Public councils are to monitor the implementation of public policies in their respective sectors, and make proposals to improve implementation.

In 2013 – 2014 there were several attempts to limit the space for civil society organizations: through introducing new reporting requirements for NGOs established in the draft Law on Money Laundering; prohibiting unregistered NGOs through the draft Law on Unregistered Civil Society Organisations; and the designation of any person working with a foreigner as a ‘traitor’ through the draft Law on Treason. However, these draft laws were rejected as a result of advocacy efforts made by NGOs. A group of parliamentarians proposed a draft Law on Foreign Agents in an effort to restrict foreign funding of NGOs. This draft Law passed through its first and second reading in Parliament, but was finally rejected in the third reading.¹⁴

4.4 Overall economic situation

Kyrgyzstan was one of the first countries in the post-Soviet space to introduce market reforms although the process of transition was subsequently affected by political disturbances and economic crises. Today Kyrgyzstan is a low-middle income country with a 3.6 percent GDP growth rate. This has decreased slightly since 2014. Cotton, tobacco, wool, and meat are the main agricultural products. Industrial exports include gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, and electricity. Gold makes up 46 percent of exports and accounts for 10 percent of GDP. Remittances from migrant workers account for 30 percent of GDP¹⁵. In 2013 the National Sustainable Development Strategy was adopted. Establishing an enabling environment for the private sector to attract investment and growth is a main priority of national economic policy. Public investments and national projects are focused on mining, energy, finance, transport and communication, tourism and services, and agro-industry¹⁶. The Strategy includes a separate chapter on gender equality where such challenges as gender-based violence, early marriage, and the lack of women’s economic empowerment are addressed.

40 percent of women are economically active compared with 70 percent of men. Women’s labour is highly concentrated in traditional sectors such as education (where they represent 77 percent of all employees), and health (85 percent of all employees). Salaries are paid out of the State budget and jobs are generally low-paid. The private sector is male-dominated and men predominantly occupy managerial positions in the private sector. (approximately 75 percent). In business activities, women most often engage in trading; sale of consumer goods; and services. The State is focused on establishing a favourable legal and regulatory environment for private sector development, however, these measures are gender-blind and policies do not include a perspective of female entrepreneurship. Women have less access to large loans which subsequently affects their access to strategic business resources¹⁷. Agriculture is the largest employment sector for women and men. Of all persons employed, 34.5 percent were women and 29.6 percent were men. Trade, construction, education, and car repair are the main sectors employing the remaining labour force.

Despite a strong legal framework for gender equality in Kyrgyzstan and a significant number of vocal women especially in politics compared, for instance, with women in Tajikistan or Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz society is ruled by patriarchal customs and traditions. Opportunities for women to develop their professional activities are restricted as society perceives that women are the main care-givers of the family. Women spend 19 percent of

¹³ Karimova M. (2016) Component: Women’s Political Participation. Gender in Society Perceptions Study. Research report, unpublished report, UN Women; ADB (2016) Country Strategy Paper: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013-2017.

¹⁴ <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/kyrgyz.html>

¹⁵ ADB (2013) Economic Analysis (Summary) ABD Country Partnership Support Strategy: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013-2017; <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic/overview>

¹⁶ ADB (2013) Economic Analysis (Summary) ABD Country Partnership Support Strategy: Kyrgyz Republic, 2013-2017.

¹⁷ National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2014.

their time per day on housework, compared with 6 percent by men. Child care by women represents 2 percent of their time per day and less than one percent of time per day by men. In rural areas women spend an additional two hours per day on housework. The lack of pre-school education in both rural and urban areas also contributes to the low economic activity of women.

4.5 Socio-economic situation

The total population of Kyrgyzstan is six million inhabitants with 66.3 percent of the population residing in rural areas. Despite economic reforms, 30.6 percent of the population is classified as poor and 2.2 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty. Kyrgyzstan has a significant migrant labour force. It is estimated that about 700,000 people have migrated out of the country, the majority of whom have travelled to the Russian Federation. Women make up 30 percent of the total number of migrant workers. Remittances are therefore a considerable source of GDP constituting an estimated 30 percent of GDP¹⁸. Rural people also migrate internally to urban centres (such as Bishkek and Osh) in search of jobs and higher wages and face considerable challenges in cities. In particular, they are not always in possession of registration documents and may experience problems in accessing health and education services. Because they reside on the outskirts of cities on illegally occupied land in self-built houses which lack water and electricity, education and health facilities are located at a considerable distance¹⁹.

Kyrgyzstan has made significant investments to improve maternal health. Nevertheless, the rate of maternal mortality remains high at 76 deaths per 100,000 live births (based on UNFPA estimates in 2015) and 50.1 deaths per 100,000 live births (based on National Statistics Committee data), especially in rural areas (57.4 deaths per 100,000 live births in rural areas, compared with 37.9 deaths in urban areas). Kyrgyzstan has the highest maternal mortality rate in the Central Asian region. The lowest maternal mortality rate was observed in Kazakhstan (12 deaths per 100,000 live births). In Tajikistan, the maternal mortality rate in 2015 was 32 deaths per 100,000 live births. In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the same year, the maternal mortality rates were respectively, 42 deaths and 36 deaths per 100,000 live births.²⁰ The reasons for high rates are attributed to problems in maternity hospitals such as lack of technical equipment; an irregular supply of water, heating and electricity; a shortage of qualified staff, and women's social and economic situation²¹.

Kyrgyzstan has achieved gender parity for primary and lower secondary education. After compulsory education (to 9th grade), most rural youth continue on to vocational schools or begin work. At the level of vocational education, girls make up only 29.4 percent of all students enrolled. Girls tend to enrol in subjects such as education, health, economics and management. Men study specialized technical subjects, including agriculture. Particular concerns are raised about the system of pre-school education, as its availability directly affects the economic opportunities of women. Only 18 percent of children of pre-school age are covered by pre-school education. Access of rural children to pre-schooling is particularly hampered, because of the unavailability of facilities in rural areas. Local governments did not consider pre-school education as a priority and as such, many of the buildings that previously housed pre-school institutions were erroneously privatized. It was perceived at the time that women stayed at home and that a kindergarten was therefore not necessary²².

4.6 Socio-cultural context

Kyrgyzstan is home to a number of ethnic groups. 72 percent of the country's population belongs to the Kyrgyz ethnic group; 14.5 percent are Uzbeks and 6.5 percent are Russians. Dungans, Uighurs, Tajiks and other ethnic groups represent about one percent for each group. Uzbeks and Tajiks mostly reside in the south of Kyrgyzstan in the Fergana Valley. On average families in Kyrgyzstan in urban areas consist of 3.8 members

¹⁸ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic/overview>

¹⁹ National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2014; FAO (2016), National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Kyrgyz Republic. Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, Ankara, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5763e.pdf>

²⁰ Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2015: estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division, p.53, http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/9789241565141_eng.pdf

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

and in rural areas, 5.2 members. The nuclear family model is generally prevalent nationwide. Two thirds of households surveyed during the national census were classified as nuclear families. Traditionally, household heads are male. In 2012, the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) identified 27 percent of surveyed households as being female-headed. It was also revealed that two parent households headed by women were poorer compared to similar households headed by men. 55.5 percent of female-headed households were classified as 'poor households and households living in extreme poverty combined', compared with 34.1 percent of male-headed households. The opposite trend was observed in single parent households. Poverty in single parent household headed by men was higher compared to similar household headed by women (27.7 percent compared to 17.3 percent). Levels of extreme poverty were also higher in single parent households headed by men (2.7 percent male-headed households compared to 1.8 percent of female-headed households).²³

Based on studies, rural women are subject to specific types of violence such as underage/child marriage, bride-kidnapping, and polygamy. It is difficult to estimate the prevalence of underage marriages and polygamy, because these marriages are unregistered customary unions which are entered into through religious ceremonies. The Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) estimated that 13.9 percent of women aged between 15-19 years were married. National statistics on domestic violence are based on criminal statistics and data from crisis centres. The number of domestic violence cases increases every year. In 2013 there were 2,542 cases of domestic violence registered, while in 2015 this number increased to 3,542. Based on the statistics collected by crisis centres, 60 percent of women recently applied for domestic violence-related assistance.²⁴ It is estimated that 60 percent of marriages in rural areas in mono-ethnic groups are entered into through bride-kidnapping.²⁵ Despite the legal prohibition of bride-kidnapping, only a few cases have been prosecuted due to social legitimisation of the practice.

4.7 Government, civil society (in particular women's organisations), international community and private sector response

In January 2016, the EU granted Kyrgyzstan GSP+ status (Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance). GSP+, is part of the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP), which was revamped in January 2014.²⁶ Kyrgyzstan's GSP+ status entails reporting on a number of UN and ILO Conventions vis-a-vis the EU, including those concerning gender equality (Annex VIII of Regulations).

In 2012 the National Council on Gender and Development was established. It is chaired by the Vice Prime Minister and is a consultative body consisting of ministers, deputy ministers and competent representatives of the Government. Coordination of gender policy implementation is assigned to the Department of Gender Policy of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development (Protection). This department has a small number of employees and a separate budget allocation, although in practice insufficient for operations. It is supposed to be supported by gender focal points in line ministries, State agencies and the offices of local authorities, although in practice, this does not function. It is required to introduce activities related to the gender and women's right agenda into all State institutions.²⁷ In Parliament, responsibility for gender policy is also assigned to the Committee on Social Policy (and Issues).²⁸ In its review of implementation of CEDAW by Kyrgyzstan, the respective UN Committee noted that the Department of Gender Policy (in the Ministry) lacks the necessary authority and capacity, including human and financial resources to fully implement gender equality policy. From a review of secondary data sources, it is also unclear how the responsibility to implement gender equality policy at lower levels of government is assigned and monitored.

In the aftermath of political transformation and inter-ethnic conflict in 2010, Kyrgyzstan enjoyed significant support from donors to rebuild the State and mitigate the consequences of the conflict. In 2011, ODA to

²³ National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2014

²⁴ National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic (2016) Women and Men of Kyrgyz Republic for 2011-2015, Bishkek, <http://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/1ef7ad3d-7980-4b42-bbf8-773884aec069.pdf>

²⁵ National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2014

²⁶ Regulation (EU) No 978/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences ('GSP Regulation')

²⁷ FAO (2016), National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Kyrgyz Republic. Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, Ankara, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5763e.pdf>

²⁸ National Review of the Kyrgyz Republic in the framework of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 2014.

Kyrgyzstan was at the level of 9.5 percent of Gross National Income (GNI), and by 2014, was reduced by only one percent²⁹. There are a number of agencies involved in addressing gender-specific issues, such as UN Women dealing with gender mainstreaming, gender equality, and gender-based violence. UN Women recently commissioned a comprehensive gender in society perception study focusing on the political and economic rights of women and violence against women. UNFPA works on reproductive rights and the promotion of transformative approaches such as positive masculinity. EBRD, ABD, WB, USAID all support country initiatives on women's economic empowerment. The work of these organizations is discussed in more detail in the following section.

There are 4,700 operational NGOs in Kyrgyzstan. It is not possible to identify the exact number of NGOs that work on gender equality issues. 80 NGOs are united in a Forum of Women's NGOs. Its main objective is to conduct joint advocacy and training, promoting women's empowerment and so on. Gender-focused NGOs work on a wide array of issues including the provision of support services to survivors of violence; economic and political empowerment; the promotion of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in national policies and development planning; advocacy at the national level, research, and LGBT rights. The role of NGOs in advancing gender equality is acknowledged in the National Strategy on Gender Equality and in all the governmental reports on women's rights and gender equality. The work of selected NGOs is discussed in the next section.

4.8 Mapping of other actors with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality

UN Women

The UN Women Country Office has been present in Kyrgyzstan since 2012, and its current work is linked to the country's national priorities and international commitments made to advance women's human rights in Kyrgyzstan. UN Women prioritises initiatives such as: economic empowerment; ending violence against women; peace and security and engendering humanitarian action; national planning and budgeting, as well as UN system coordination.

UN Women leads the national UNITE campaign to prevent violence against women, and has developed partnerships with the Government, Parliament, civil society organizations, and with international, national and private sector groups committed to women's human rights and gender equality. In previous years, an extended Gender Theme Group which included other donors and actors was active in information-sharing, although this is currently not operational.

UN Women is also part of the UN Joint HIV/AIDS Group, the Youth Theme Group and the UN Communications Group. Interventions in the area of Women, Peace and Security that are funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund and European Union focus on empowering girls and boys at secondary schools and preparing them for sustainable livelihoods to provide an alternative to migration.

UN Women considers that in addition to gender mainstreaming, there is also a need to implement programmes which specifically target vulnerable women in Kyrgyzstan. The new focus of its Country Programme will aim at developing a deeper understanding of motivations behind bride-kidnapping and child marriage, to bring about behavioural change. The approach will be to engage with people and communities in order to discuss these issues and change behaviour.

UNFPA

The UNFPA's 'Strategic Framework on Gender Mainstreaming and Women's Empowerment' (2011) states that its core missions are to further sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and support high-quality national-level data collection. These are considered pillars of poverty reduction, and the realization of gender equality and development.

UNFPA's main partner in Kyrgyzstan is the Ministry of Health. UNFPA is a partner in the UN's global gender programme on gender-based violence together with UN Women, UNDP and UNODC. It has developed standard operating procedures for related health services, law enforcement and emergency services, and a manual dealing with the protection of victims in emergency situations has been produced. UNFPA has also produced standard operating procedures for psychological support for victims of gender-based violence. A

²⁹<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.GN.ZS?locations=KG>

recommended correction programme for perpetrators under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection will come into force in 2018.

UNFPA is currently implementing projects dealing with gender transformative programming. In 2013 a study dealing with male behaviour was conducted in two provinces - Talas and Chui, and based on findings, a training module on positive masculinity for fathers and boys was developed, and teachers were trained. The module promotes non-violent communication between boys and girls, because research has suggested that one of the reasons for the persistence of bride-kidnapping is that boys do not know how to communicate with girls in a non-violent way. Teachers themselves are also promoters of violent behaviour, and are unable to communicate non-violently in the classroom. The module is currently being piloted in seven vocational lyceums nationwide. It is hoped that there will be a transformation in behaviour with both teachers and students, and that the module will be incorporated into 'healthy lifestyle' curricula and taught in vocational education schools.

UNFPA operates reproductive health programmes covering maternal health and family planning and HIV. In collaboration with the National Statistics Committee, it developed data collection forms dealing with domestic violence, and tables were designed to enable estimates to be made on the frequency of domestic violence, by incorporating data from NGOs and the local Courts of Elders (*aksakals*). Each year UNFPA also produces a compendium of statistics on women and men in Kyrgyzstan.

UNFPA under the Ministry of the Interior and in collaboration with other UN agencies is piloting a project addressing women and girls as drivers for peace and de-radicalization. This involves capacity building and awareness-raising of female religious leaders (*aityncha*) who lead Islamic study circles in their homes. They do not have formal religious qualifications, and it is believed their messages may be extremist. UNFPA has designed a module which explains the current legal framework on radicalization, extremism and terrorism, for use in capacity building with *aityncha*, the module has also been shared with the country's Spiritual Authority and Religious Committee. UNODC is also a partner agency and coordinates with local law enforcement; UNICEF is dealing with child protection issues, and UNDP is responsible for the communication component.

UNDP

The aim of UNDP's gender policy is to significantly reduce gender inequalities by empowering women and promoting and protecting their rights,³⁰ paying special attention to women and girls facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, due to ethnicity, disability, or migratory and indigenous status. It has recently completed the project 'Widening Access to Justice for Legal Empowerment in the Kyrgyz Republic (2014-2017)' funded by the Government of Finland Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The project area covered the densely populated provinces of Osh and Chui and targeted women, youth and people with disabilities. UNDP contributed to revising the free legal aid law which was subsequently adopted by Parliament. The project also helped to develop and discuss the new Law on Domestic Violence. It also provided expertise for the sections on persons with disabilities (PwD) in the country's National Strategy of Social Development 2015-2017, and the inclusion of a section on widening access to justice for PwDs. In cooperation with the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Foundation UNDP organized a platform on free legal aid issues and contributed to simplifying the issuance of identity documents. An innovative activity was to implement a mobile legal service – 'Solidarity Bus', which allowed people in remote areas to access the services of lawyers for legal advice. The most frequently legal questions in Chui province concerned how to obtain a passport, and in Osh province, questions concerned how to obtain birth certificates. Common issues requiring legal advice concerned family disputes, inheritance rights and marriage dissolution. Another important project achievement was the creation of a database containing the names of divorced men who owe alimony to their ex-wives and children and have outstanding debts. Previously, men were able to abscond and migrate to avoid paying alimony. Border guards are now able to check their names against the database and prevent those owing alimony payments from leaving the country. This has resulted in a 40 percent decrease in the amount of outstanding alimony payments.

The UNDP Office in Kyrgyzstan has recently been awarded the UNDP Gender Equality Golden Seal, recognizing its outstanding performance in delivering gender equality results. The certification process, awarding, gold, silver and bronze seals, rewards country offices for effective gender equality programming and ensuring that gender is not merely a project 'add-on'.

UNICEF

³⁰ UNDP (2014) 'Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017'

UNICEF has developed a new Gender Action Plan for 2018-21 which specifies how it will promote gender equality across the organization's work at the global, regional and country levels, in alignment with its Strategic Plan.³¹ The GAP contains details of the gender dimensions of expected results across the outcome areas of its Strategic Plan, along with indicators for measuring success.

The lessons learned from its previous GAP 2014–2017 were that the practical application of gender mainstreaming in UNICEF's work needed further definition, but that its Gender Programmatic Review provided a methodology for in-country gender analysis that made concepts more concrete for field-based staff. However, the pathways for engaging boys and men needed to be better articulated. The most significant contributor to progress had been investment in senior-level gender expertise in the regions, who proved to be essential to improving the quality of gender programming, and building gender capacity. UNICEF hopes to take its work on advancing gender equality to the next level in 2018–2021, by scaling up quality gender programming for greater reach and impact. This will entail strengthening partnerships, and taking a focused approach to addressing gender-related barriers to bring about better outcomes for all children, especially adolescent girls.

In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF adopts a dual approach to address gender through both gender-targeted actions and gender mainstreaming. The issue of violence against children is gender mainstreamed, and adolescent health is considered a priority for gender-targeted action, focusing on menstrual hygiene management (MHM) for adolescent girls.

Research commissioned by UNICEF in 2015 revealed that girls suffer distress and isolation when dealing with menstruation and the topic is still regarded as taboo. Parents and teachers themselves do not discuss the topic with adolescent girls. Building on these findings, UNICEF in collaboration with the INGO 'Save the Children' developed a package of communication materials to teach girls about menstruation including a puberty book in two parts (one for girls aged 10-13 and another for girls aged 14-18); teachers' guidelines on puberty and menstrual hygiene management, and guidelines for parents of adolescents. The materials explain puberty, menstruation, MHM and the menstruation cycle in age-appropriate language. The guidelines assist teachers and caregivers in advising girls on hygiene practices before, during and after menstruation. The research and training were a component of the 'Wins4Girls' project, funded by the Government of Canada of which Kyrgyzstan is one of 14 countries worldwide.

UNAIDS

UNAIDS mainstreams gender and human rights concerns into all its programmes. The key populations in Kyrgyzstan which are targeted by UNAIDS as those most likely to be exposed to or transmit HIV, are MSM (men who have sex with men); injecting drug-users, and people living with HIV. There is a gender dimension to HIV infection rates. Previously transmission was through needle-sharing, but is now predominantly through sexual intercourse. Approximately 45 percent of people living with HIV are women which can be linked to risks due to having partners who migrate (and have extra-marital relations), or inject drugs. There are currently a total of 7,117 people living with HIV in Kyrgyzstan which includes foreigners. Of these, 6,747 are Kyrgyz nationals of whom 2,319 females and 4,429 males.³² Chui and Osh Oblasts have the highest concentrations of HIV infection. In 2005, there was an outbreak of HIV in Osh region caused by hospital use of unsterilized needles, and more than 500 children were infected. UNAIDS worked closely with the children and their mothers providing counselling and care. There is an issue of HIV co-infection with TB and hepatitis in Kyrgyzstan caused by high levels of poverty and poor living conditions of internal migrants. People living with HIV are more prone to infections such as tuberculosis. In collaboration with the national AIDS partner organization, harm reduction programmes, and opiate substantive therapy are implemented, together with needle exchanges and the production of information materials.

UNAIDS's gender-responsive HIV programming for women and girls is considered important because, globally, AIDS-related complications are a leading cause of death in women of reproductive age. A gender-responsive framework is considered as providing the opportunity to design programmes that are specific to women living with HIV and women from key populations, in order to address stigma, discrimination, women's human and civil rights.

UNODC

³¹ UNICEF (2017) 'UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021' UN Economic and Social Council. United Nations Children's Fund Executive Board Second regular session 2017 12-15 September 2017.

³² Information received from UNAIDS Office, September 2017

UNODC's work falls into five interrelated thematic areas: organized crime and trafficking; corruption; crime prevention and criminal justice reform; drug prevention and health and terrorism prevention. Its gender policy is contained in its 2013 'Guidance Note for UNODC staff: Gender mainstreaming in the work of UNODC' and includes checklists for ensuring gender mainstreaming for its project templates and programmes. The basis for its policy is that women and men are impacted differently by drugs, crime and terrorism, and have different experiences going through the criminal justice system. In addition, women often have different levels of access to participation, information or justice. They can play different roles in responding to and making decisions about crime prevention, and in developing fair, accessible, accountable, effective and credible criminal justice systems.

In 2015, with resources from the UN Peace-Building Fund, a programme was initiated to improve the participation of women and ethnic minorities in law enforcement. A gender analysis of the current situation in the police force was undertaken highlighting significant under-representation of these groups. Only 6 percent of the total police force is female. Gender sensitivity training was delivered to 250 police officers and measures were developed to promote the recruitment and representation of women from ethnic minorities. Gender-balanced police patrols have been recommended. In 2017 in collaboration with the police force, a roster of women with promotion potential has been drawn up to follow their future progress.

Together with UNFPA, the Association of Crisis Centres and the law enforcement agency, UNODC hopes to establish a referral mechanism for victims of gender-based violence in six pilot municipalities. The police have been taught improved investigative practices, preventing violent extremism, communication skills and human resource issues.

Under 'The Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants', which is a four-year (2015-2019) joint initiative of the EU and UNODC in partnership with IOM and UNICEF, Kyrgyzstan is the only country in Central Asia that has been selected to participate. The programme forms part of a joint response to trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, to be delivered in up to 15 strategically selected countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. A focus will be placed on providing assistance to governmental authorities, civil society organizations, and victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants. The programme aims to assist countries to develop and implement comprehensive national counter-trafficking and counter-smuggling responses. A working group has been established to identify current problems and challenges in obtaining reliable data for analysis, and recommendations will be made for improving trafficking reporting forms. UNODC's 2016 report on trafficking in persons highlighted the fact that trafficking is a gender issue, and that approximately 65 percent of victims were women and girls.

In recent years, UNODC has supported the elaboration of Kyrgyzstan's National Action Plan under UNSCR 1325, and undertakes an analysis of the Plan's achievements. The next plan for 2018-20 will be elaborated together with UNFPA and UN Women. In collaboration with UNDP, UNODC has designed a course dealing with gender-based violence to train police officers, and from 2018 this will be offered as an optional course at the Police Academy. In collaboration with UNFPA and UNDP, UNODC is implementing a project which addresses violent extremism (as mentioned earlier under UNFPA). Both Kyrgyz women and trafficked children have been recruited, usually by relatives, to go to Syria via Turkey as labour migrants. The approach is to establish community councils in 16 pilot villages which include the participation of influential women leaders and religious leaders. Local police officers will be trained in gender-sensitive approaches to the prevention of violent extremism.

International Organization of Migration IOM

IOM assists the government in protecting Kyrgyz labour migrants throughout the migration cycle. It is also working with the government to develop a modern system of labour migration management. According to various sources, the estimated number of Kyrgyz migrants working abroad is between 500,000 and 800,000 in any given year, and remittances sent by Kyrgyz migrant workers make up 25-30 percent of the country's GDP.

Over the last ten years, IOM has implemented numerous projects aimed at the prevention of human trafficking; protection of victims of trafficking; prosecution of recruiters and traffickers, and the development of regional co-operation among the countries of Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan is a source, transit, and destination country for purposes of trafficking. The main destination countries, where nationals, particularly men are trafficked for labour exploitation, are Kazakhstan (for work in agriculture, livestock production and construction) and the Russian Federation (for work in construction, private business and agriculture). Annually, IOM estimates that between 5,000 and 15,000 victims are trafficked from Kyrgyzstan to other countries. In

implementing its activities, it collaborates with more than 35 NGO partners working in the area of counter-trafficking. It supports two shelters for victims of trafficking and an asylum for the rehabilitation of child-victims of trafficking.

IOM's Gender Equality Policy 2015–2019,³³ is designed to formalize and codify the Organization's commitment to identifying and addressing the needs of all beneficiaries of IOM projects and services, and to ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment of all staff members within IOM. The Policy also introduces accountability elements for its implementation. IOM believes that gender equality is central to the causes and consequences of migration, and it is not possible to meet the IOM objective of safe, humane and orderly migration for all unless gender equality is taken into account. The key drivers for promoting gender equality are considered to be: senior manager leadership and accountability; integration of a gender perspective in strategic planning processes; adequate resources and capacity; a common understanding of gender mainstreaming; and an organizational structure that supports gender mainstreaming. The gender policy ensures that all the drivers are in place and will be used to mainstream gender in IOM policies, strategies, projects and activities.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO's global gender strategy was approved in 2007, and requires the integration of gender analysis and actions into its work. For capacity building purposes, the WHO developed a manual in 2011 on gender mainstreaming for use by health managers, which was developed by its Department of Gender, Women and Health. The purpose of the gender strategy is to enhance, expand and institutionalize WHO's capacity to analyze the role of gender and sex in health, and to monitor and address systemic and avoidable gender-based health inequalities. Because of social (gender) and biological (sex) differences, health risks are different for men and women, and they experience different responses from health systems. In addition, their health-seeking behaviours and health outcomes also differ. Rigid gender norms affect men's health significantly by assigning them roles that promote risk-taking behaviour and cause them to neglect their health. Gender mainstreaming aims to institutionalize gender equality across sectors. Given the powerful impact that gender has on the health of women and men, the WHO considers it imperative that health managers be equipped with the skills to address gender-based health inequities in their work.

In Kyrgyzstan, the WHO's activities with the Ministry of Health address communicable diseases; non-communicable diseases; mother and child health; strengthening the health system in terms of legislation and regulation; support to the implementation of national health programmes; laboratory services, polio control, emergencies, and regulations related to public health threats of international concern.

Gender disaggregated data for health indicators is used as the basis for decision-making and policy discussion. There are significant differences in health status between men and women in Kyrgyzstan. Currently approximately 50 percent of men are smokers compared with only 3 percent for women. More men die from cardio-vascular disease and road accidents than women. And male mortality represents a decrease in approximately 4 percent of GDP. Another gender issue relates to obesity, where obesity rates for women aged 40-45 are higher than for men. Health risks differ between young men and women, where young men in Kyrgyzstan are at higher risk of having health problems because of tobacco use and riskier lifestyle choices, compared with young girls. The largest health risks facing women are childbirth, pregnancy, and maternal mortality.

It is estimated that 42 percent of the population suffers from hypertension, although less than 10 percent use medication to treat the condition, and approximately 80 percent of sufferers are not aware of their condition.

OSCE

The participating States of OSCE have adopted measures in support of gender equality, and the 2004 'Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality' provides the main framework for its activities. Specific responsibilities are assigned for field operations as well as to participating States, including: ensuring that all OSCE policies and activities are gender mainstreamed; providing staff with gender mainstreaming training; increasing the representation of female managers in senior positions, and promoting the role of women in conflict prevention and peace reconstruction processes.

In Kyrgyzstan, OSCE's focus is on peace-building, women's economic empowerment, and addressing bride-

³³ IOM (2015) 'IOM Gender Equality Policy' 106th Council Session. C/106/INF/8/Rev.1. Original: English 19 November 2015. International Organization for Migration.

kidnapping. Following the violent events of 2010, women's initiative groups were established in four provinces: Batken, Jalalabad, Osh and Issyk Kul, and a coalition of these groups succeeded in bridging the ethnic and cultural differences between them. The group members currently function as an early warning system for local conflicts. Women have been trained to act as conflict mediators, and have successfully resolved family feuds on socio-economic issues such as family finances, household budgets, and borrowing money. Frequently, these women have also intervened to refer incidents of domestic violence to the authorities, and have provided support to women going through divorce, or those who have been victims of early and forced marriage, who have been later abandoned by their husbands.

In collaboration with the NGO 'Childs Rights Defenders League', OSCE is involved in leadership and entrepreneurship training of young girls in Issyk Kul, Osh and Talas. Young people have been trained by successful business women in writing business plans, and a career fair will be organized, bringing all the girls from the three provinces together. In the coming years a mini-grants programme will be launched to enable them to start their businesses. Building on this, the League will initiate discussions involving girls, boys and their families to discuss the sensitive topic of bride-kidnapping by holding simultaneous discussion sessions, to understand to what extent older women in the family are the drivers and enablers of girls being kidnapped by their sons and grandsons, and how this can be eradicated.

OSCE has identified a major area of concern relating to bank loans taken out by husbands who have then out-migrated. Banks have pressured the wives left behind, to transfer outstanding debts from their husbands to themselves, thereby making them responsible for repayment of the bank loan. Activities to raise awareness of financial literacy will therefore be addressed in the coming year.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The ILO's mandate to promote gender equality in the world of work, is enshrined in its Constitution and is reflected in relevant international labour standards. The ILO's policy on equality between women and men, calls for mutually reinforcing action to promote gender equality in staffing, substance and structure.

The strategy is to intensify the mainstreaming of gender equality into all ILO programmes, including decent work country programmes and national poverty reduction policies and strategies.

In Kyrgyzstan ILO has recently implemented a study dealing with decent work. Findings indicate that in general, the situation of women who have children is worse than that of men in both the public and private sectors, because they have greater family responsibilities and less opportunities to be employed in decent jobs. Labour protection conditions are slightly better in the public sector. The informal sector however, does not provide any labour protection at all for women. It is estimated that approximately 70 percent of total employment in the country is in the informal economy. No more than approximately 30 percent of employees contribute to the country's social fund for a future pension; social package and other protection guarantees, including maternity benefit.

Donors

USAID

The goal of USAID's Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (2012) is to improve the lives of citizens around the world by advancing equality between females and males, and empowering women and girls to participate fully in and benefit from the development of their societies. USAID investments are aimed at: reducing gender disparities in access to, control over and benefit from resources, wealth, opportunities and services; reducing gender-based violence and mitigating its harmful effects on individuals; and increasing the capability of women and girls to realize their rights, determine their life outcomes, and influence decision-making in households, communities, and societies.

In Kyrgyzstan, USAID implements programmes which are aimed at contributing to empowering women in sectors such as agriculture, business development, communicable diseases including TB and HIV, improved nutrition, governance, civil society and counter-trafficking. In Osh, Naryn, Jalalabad and Batken female-headed households have been targeted and given technical training, information and inputs in fruit and vegetable growing in order to develop their businesses and increase household income. In the tourism and ready-made garments sectors, women entrepreneurs received business training to improve their access to finance and production technologies.

USAID supports the Forum of Women Members of Parliament, representing 21 female MPs in the Jogorku Kenesh. Through the National Democratic Institute, USAID provides the Forum's members with professional

training in public speaking, negotiation skills, media outreach, and managing constituent services.

USAID's Dignity and Rights project works with Parliament, the State Migration Service, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to prevent human trafficking and protect the victims of trafficking, who are often women and girls. The project funds two residential shelters, in Bishkek and Osh, where female victims of human trafficking receive medical care and reintegration services including other services, including vocational education, and employment coaching.

International Finance Institutions

World Bank

The strategic focus of the World Bank programme as highlighted in its 2013–17 Country Partnership Strategy has been to support Kyrgyzstan's efforts to improve governance, with a particular emphasis on raising the standards of public administration and public service delivery; improving the business and investment climate; and strengthening the stewardship of natural resources and the physical infrastructure. The 'Nariste' school preparation programme has provided free access to preschool education for approximately 100,000 five- and six-year-old children. Teachers have been trained in improved teaching and learning practices. Schools have switched to a new financing model and will be held accountable for the annual school budget and expenditures.

The World Bank's new Gender Strategy 2017 – 2023 emphasizes achieving measurable results based on data and evidence of what works, and aims to generate higher ambition for policies and operations. The four objectives are: improving human endowments (i.e. health, education and social protection). This will involve addressing 'sticky' first generation gaps in health (especially maternal mortality) and education, and addressing emerging, second generation issues, such as ageing and non-communicable diseases. The second objective is: removing constraints for more and better jobs. This will involve lifting constraints in order to increase the quantity and quality of jobs and closing earnings gaps with a focus on women's labour force participation, occupational sex segregation, care services and safe transport. The third objective is: removing barriers to women's ownership and control of assets. This will involve improving conditions under which women can secure ownership of and control over productive assets, and access the finance and insurance needed to acquire those assets. The fourth objective is enhancing women's voice and agency and engaging men and boys. This involves contributing to prevention and response to gender-based violence and addressing adverse masculinity norms in FCS (fragile and conflict-affected situations) and elsewhere, and enhancing women's voice and agency. In 2017 a new gender 'tag' was launched to strengthen links between country-level and sector gender equality objectives and World Bank Group operations, which identifies those operations that meaningfully narrow gaps between males and females in the four key pillars of the strategy. The gender tag identifies those projects that have a clear results chain, linking analysis with actions and M&E. The main challenges identified however, include specific country challenges, including 'sticky' norms, uneven capacity, and inconsistent demand from World Bank clients.

Because the prospects for growth in Kyrgyzstan, over the next several years are weaker, the World Bank aims to focus on assisting the country to mitigate the impact of the economic slowdown on job creation, provide protection to vulnerable populations, exploit new opportunities for private sector development, and accelerate the pace of structural reforms.

Asian Development Bank ADB

ADB mainstreams gender equality in its operations, based on a gender categorization system for projects, classifying them according to four categories: gender thematic projects, effective gender mainstreaming projects, projects with some gender elements, and projects with no gender elements. Gender analysis begins at the design phase and continues throughout implementation with gender mainstreaming activities. Historically, many projects in Kyrgyzstan were previously assessed as gender-neutral. A new country gender assessment for Kyrgyzstan will be produced in 2018, indicating gender priorities for the next planning period. ADB has been a key development partner in the education sector, providing support to early childhood development, pre-school and general education, and vocational education and training (VET). Educational reforms are supported through improving the quality of school textbooks, and in the context of vocational education, the project raises awareness with parents to ensure that boys complete secondary education and do not drop out of school. Efforts are also being made to attract girls to non-traditional subjects in order to improve their job prospects. Other projects include water and sanitation, sustainable development, SME development, and entrepreneurship development for women in the agriculture sector.

For future programming, it is expected that the focus will include increasing women's opportunities to access TVET and to non-traditional subjects; supporting business advisory services and training programmes that respond to the needs of female entrepreneurs, and improving conditions of women's employment in the private sector.

EBRD

EBRD's engagement in the Kyrgyz Republic in the current strategy period is to foster sustainable growth by strengthening regional cross-border linkages; enable SMEs to scale-up and bolster competitiveness, and promote sustainability of public utilities through commercialisation and private sector participation.

Since 2009 it has been involved investing in priority projects such as water supply rehabilitation, solid waste and urban transport development in the cities of Bishkek, Osh, Jalalabad and other smaller cities of the country through blended EU and EBRD funding (through the IFCA programme).

EBRD has identified a gender gap within the lending sector, which reflects the difficulties women face in moving from small loans with microfinance institutions to larger loans with commercial banks. 80 percent of recipients of microcredit in the country are women indicating that access to other forms of credit among women is difficult. The formal lending regime is highly collateralised with banks generally requiring immovable collateral. Microfinance institutions tend to have a similar approach to collateral when it is required, but approximately 80 percent of their lending is unsecured.

EBRD's Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2016) mandate's EBRD to 'mainstream gender' by 2020 in Bank operations, and mandates the Bank to support women's economic empowerment by enhancing investments to deliver on these goals, and engage in the creation of enabling environments.

The Bank's current approach focuses specifically on two aspects of the Gender Strategy: ensuring equal and fair access to the services which the EBRD finances, and improved equal opportunities within the workplace. This is done by engaging directly with EBRD clients including municipalities and/or related service providers or operators. EBRD's requirements can then be enshrined in the Loan documentation as conditionalities. The Bank then provides focused technical cooperation support to the client, funded under its donor-funded Gender Advisory Services programme.

The gender analysis conducted as part of EBRD investment in the Bishkek Trolleybus Company (during 2011-15), identified differences in transport use and access between men and women. Enhancements included improving equal access focused on tailored trolleybus procurement to meet the needs of women and vulnerable populations, including: greater attention to female driver and passenger safety through installing video cameras, and self-contained driver cabins; and the procurement of low-floor buses to provide easy access for women carrying loads, and passengers with limited mobility.

Civil Society

In recent years there has been an increase in the participation of young people in civil society organizations and movements in the country, where young women are well represented. However, these groups cannot be strictly defined as gender equality or women's organizations.

In addition, there is a significant number of LGBT groups and organizations which have effective communication platforms, using diverse media channels. Informal coalitions have been created and there is a good exchange of information and collaboration between them. They provide support services to their LGBT members and other vulnerable groups, and have begun to undertake research and develop policy papers.

Long-standing feminist groups and women's organizations continue to operate and work on gender issues, particularly organizing around the UN's UNiTE campaign to end violence against women. Attempts were made recently to initiate the production of a magazine for Central Asian and Caucasus feminists, but was not successful.

Association of Women Judges

Female judges currently make up approximately 36 percent of the total judiciary in Kyrgyzstan. The Association of Women Judges has 80 members and began its operations in 2015. Its aim is to improve access to justice of vulnerable groups, such as children, persons with disabilities, women, migrants, and the elderly, and also to raise the awareness of gender concerns with judges. There is a difference in access to justice between women in rural and urban areas. Because the majority of lawyers – approximately 56 percent, are located in Bishkek, the quality and quantity of available legal services in rural areas is lower. In addition, women in urban areas are more likely to be able to afford to pay for legal services and have easier access to courts of justice. Social norms and traditions still constrain rural women from seeking legal redress.

The Association has conducted legal awareness training for senior grade school pupils to explain the role of the judiciary and courts. These activities will continue in the future and will include discussing issues such as bride-kidnapping.

The Association has been involved in developing a curriculum and manual on domestic violence for use in teaching judges in the High Academy of Justice, however the course is not yet mandatory. Nor are courses on gender equality and domestic violence taught in University Faculties of Law.

Because the current law on free legal aid does not envisage the provision of free legal aid to victims of crime, the Association is recommending that if a victim is underage then the State should guarantee provision of free legal aid for his or her defense, because the Public Prosecutor does not always act effectively in defending the victim.

Drafting of special rules for crime investigation in cases of sexual violence and rape, where children and women are involved, is also necessary. Currently the procedures for obtaining testimonies from adults or children are the same. Children are also expected to testify in the presence of their alleged abuser / perpetrator. If an underage girl is raped, she is expected to testify in open court where the alleged perpetrator's relatives may be present. If she is raped by her stepfather, her mother is not allowed to be present whilst she testifies.

The Association is currently involved in four projects which address the needs of vulnerable groups, one of which focuses on the prevention of gender crimes, funded by INL (US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs) and implemented by UNDP.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Supreme Court is responsible for analyzing judicial practice in the context of the National Gender Action Plan. The Association recently undertook a study of the impact of judicial practice on women's human rights with the aim of contributing to the work of the Supreme Court in this regard. The issues covered included sexual violence, bride kidnapping, and violations of constitutional rights. Several violations were identified related to procedural and substantial legislation made by courts, as well as a lack of sensitivity of gender issues by courts. A related manual was developed by the Association and used to train judges, and the manual is now also being used by the High School of Justice of Kyrgyzstan for training purposes. The Association is planning to organize a conference for MPs, teachers of Law, NGOs and international organizations to discuss the access of women to justice in Kyrgyzstan where the study findings will be presented, and recommendations will be developed. A conference is due to take place in Osh in 2017/18, and site visits to a crisis centre and shelter in Osh will be arranged so that judges are able to see where female victims of domestic violence come for assistance.

A major issue of concern relates to the rights of persons with disabilities. Courts are not equipped for addressing their needs or even facilitating their physical access to court buildings. Judges are also insensitive to the needs of disabled persons. There are no sign-language translators for the hearing-impaired, and courts are unable to provide Braille script services for the visually-impaired. It was concluded that there is a need for judges to articulate more clearly so that their statements can be accurately translated into sign language. For the blind, the judge should also actively describe and explain what is happening in the courtroom. There was effective collaboration with NGOs representing people with disabilities, who sensitized the Association to their needs. As a consequence, the Association was able to make relevant recommendations for amendments to legislation which were submitted to Parliament.

Future directions of the Association's work include improving the access to justice of the elderly and migrants who are considered vulnerable groups.

Association of Crisis Centres

The Association is made up of 17 crisis centres located throughout the country and the main aim is to provide services to victims of violence. These include boys, girls, women and the elderly. In addition, the Association carries out special studies and works on promoting legal reforms. Currently it is collaborating with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in operationalizing the new law on prevention of domestic violence and inter-agency mechanisms for cooperation. This includes developing standards of support service provision to victims.

Regional crisis centres depend on donations, donor support and volunteers in order to operate, although the new law envisages funding from local municipalities. Through a telephone hotline, victims are able to receive legal assistance, psychological support, and advice on finding employment. There is high demand for free legal aid, but the main constraint is that few lawyers are willing to work on domestic violence issues. Free legal aid is provided to the alleged abuser by default, but a victim has to provide proof that her income is low in order to be eligible for free legal aid.

There is a need to improve the services provided by crisis centres, linking victims' identified needs to existing services. This will require staff training. In order to increase effectiveness, shelters should ideally be located in each province, and crisis centres should work in close cooperation with investigators, psychologists and lawyers. Studies have found that because of the lack of trust in the current system, most women are unwilling to proceed with taking cases of sexual violence to court. In addition, during criminal investigation, there is a lack of privacy confidentiality and interviews are not recorded. Victims may need to repeat details of the crime several times, which leads to distress.

Public Fund – 'Open Line'

'Open Line' was established in 2009 and addresses bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan. In recent years it has developed several applications for mobile phones designed to assist girls who are being abducted. There is a mobile phone application which allows the victim to send text messages during the actual abduction in an undetectable way; make audio recordings of the dialogue taking place with her abductor, and identify the exact geographic location of where the abduction is taking place. The application also allows the girl to easily speed dial six contacts as a first response with in an unnoticeable way. 'Open Line' explained that many victims of bride-kidnapping have stated that had they had a chance to call their relatives and ask for help whilst they were being abducted, they would never have given in to the kidnapping and the pressure to remain with the kidnapper's family afterwards.

The same mobile phone application can be used during incidents of rape and domestic violence, and can be used by women both inside Kyrgyzstan and abroad. The application has been used by Kyrgyz women living in Russia who have been abducted and attacked by Kyrgyz nationalist 'patriots' (see section below for more on 'patriots') and have been able to call for assistance immediately, and stop the incident.

NGO 'DIA'

The organization was established 19 years ago and focuses on leadership training to increase the participation of women in politics at national and local levels. The major constraints for women at local level are overcoming rigid gender stereotypes and their lack of confidence in standing for office. Women are trained in how to write speeches, public speaking and public image-building. Training has been effective and it is estimated that approximately 65 percent of trainees went on to be elected as future deputies to local councils. Economic empowerment of women is a second area of work, and women are taught how to start their own business, develop business plans, value chain development, marketing and financial management.

Future activities will include establishing a platform for female deputies at the local level in order to promote issues of concern; strengthening the network of women in politics, with the aim of combating early marriage and polygamy, and the provision of support to victims of trafficking.

NGO 'Insan Diamond'

'Insan Diamond' began operations in 2003 and currently works in three southern provinces: Osh, Jalalabad and Batken. The main focus of its work is research, training and community work, and its main partner is OSCE. It has also recently begun collaboration with 'Saferworld.' Studies have been undertaken to analyze school drop-out rates amongst the Uzbek minority, and it was concluded that girls and boys who do not complete education experience marginalization and are vulnerable to extremism. In recent years 'Insan Diamond' has dealt with gender aspects of security and was involved in implementing activities in the framework of UNSCR 1325 in collaboration with OSCE, as mentioned earlier. A network of women peacebuilders was established in 2010 which was operational for two years. Women from 26 communities have continued collaborating together as a network of initiative groups in solving local community conflicts.

A training course for the State Security Service was developed in 2017 covering gender issues and the implementation of UNSCR 1325, which was introduced into the curriculum of the Institute of Staff Improvement and Qualification of the State Security Service. Unfortunately, because OSCE's mandate in Kyrgyzstan has now changed, the organization no longer works with the military or law enforcement agencies because of budget cuts, even though gender inclusion and gender equality training to law enforcement bodies is still considered necessary because of the closed nature of their male communities.

NGO 'BIOM'

The ecological movement 'BIOM' is a public non-profit voluntary organization unifying young specialists, scientists and leaders, that addresses environmental problems of the Kyrgyz Republic and Central Asian region. It was the local partner in a recently concluded EU-funded project in the education sector: 'Fostering

and Monitoring of the Education Reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic'. As part of project activities, in 2017 school textbooks were analyzed to assess whether textbooks reproduce or deconstruct traditional gender roles; whether educational content was based on stereotypes; whether there was any justification for gender inequality, and whether there was evidence of sexism and discrimination.

From the list of textbooks recommended by the Ministry of Education in Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages, only textbooks which were developed in Kyrgyzstan were selected. 16 books were selected for analysis representing 1-2 books for every school grade or 16% of all text books. Textbooks covered various subjects including, mathematics, humanitarian science, natural science, history, chemistry, and life skills. The methodology used combined quantitative and qualitative methods. Findings showed that school textbooks contain more pictures of men than women. In all textbooks, regardless of subject mainly male names are used and boys and men are pictured more often. The traditional role of the woman in the family is emphasized, and any other role is rarely mentioned. Men are pictured in management roles, in recreational activities and at work. History textbooks emphasize the role of men, and women are mainly depicted as victims. Pictures usually illustrate a rigid gender division of roles.

Recommendations were subsequently made to the Ministry of Education, public councils and women MPs to ensure compulsory gender examination of textbook drafts and to make this requirement legally binding, by including it in legislation. Other recommendations included gender awareness training for textbook writers; introducing an accreditation system for independent gender experts, and posting gender experts' opinions on the Ministry's website.

NGO 'Women's Support Centre'

The organization began its operations in 1996 following the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing. It has developed a 'gender school' which is a 7-day course and methodology designed to build the capacity of civil servants, mass media, gender activists, youth committees and women's councils, in gender issues. Following training, participants present proposals or plans, of how they intend to promote gender equality in their sector. Gender schools are designed around specific topics, such as counter-trafficking, HIV/AIDs and gender, and the development of strategic plans for Heads of municipalities. A gender school manual has been published with EU support.

Another area of work involves the 'Kyrgyz Women's Rights Activists Watch' which unites 32 NGOs nationwide. All of its network members have been trained in CEDAW concerns and how to draft CEDAW shadow reports and procedures of optional protocol. Its manual in Russian and Kyrgyz, is used by public servants for drafting official reports to CEDAW.

The Centre also works and lobbies on specific issues such as early marriage, bride-kidnapping and women's political participation etc. In a recent study concerning the reproductive health of men, it was found that their access to health was more limited than for women. Because of stereotypes and stigma, it is considered taboo for men to discuss their health problems. For this reason, men in rural areas avoid the local doctor, and try to solve their health problems including sexually transmitted infections, by discussing them with their friends, nurses or veterinarians.

Public organization of rural women 'Alga'

The organization was established after the 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing and the focus of its work originally was to address the unequal distribution of land in rural areas between men and women. Through lobbying district and provincial authorities as well as Parliament, they were able to assist rural women in obtaining fair land shares. In order to address rural poverty, women have been trained in agricultural techniques, business planning and access to credit on the basis of social collateral. The main constraints faced by rural women are strong traditions and entrenched patriarchal norms. One of the most vulnerable groups is young rural families as they live with in-laws and do not possess property in their names.

Public Fund 'Positive Dialogue', Osh

This organization provides legal assistance to women related to recovering alimony payments and the division of property following divorce. Unregistered marriages leave women without legal redress to claim their share of marital property. The organization also works with women in conflict with the law. Temporary detention cells have been monitored to assess detention conditions, and court hearings have been monitored to assess how frequently depriving women's freedom was used as a punishment. There are no female supervisors for temporary detention cells in Osh, and body examinations were being conducted by men. Women did not have

access to a defense lawyer from the moment of detention and during their first interrogation, and were not informed about their rights, nor was their indictment read out to them. Frequently, the parents or children of detained women are not informed that their daughter or mother is being held in detention. Women detainees were subject to torture, cruel treatment and sexual harassment.

Female drug users in particular are victims of discrimination and when detained, are denied access to methadone therapy, and usually agree to signing a confession because they are suffering from withdrawal symptoms.

With the support of the Soros Foundation vulnerable women such as migrants' wives, drug users and those who were infected with HIV in hospitals are supported. Because of low awareness, people living with HIV suffer from stigma and violence and are also stigmatized by health care institutions and do not receive equal access to health services.

NGO 'ISEDA' – Institute for Social and Economic Development, Osh

The organization was established in 2014 and works on social and economic issues in the Osh region. The establishment of self-help initiative groups are promoted. Local people have received capacity building in monitoring local service provision and how to demand better quality services from local municipalities (*ay/okmotu*) based on legislation. Technical assistance is also provided to local farmers. The main priority identified is the need for information, technical advice, access to new technologies and the introduction of new crops to increase farm income.

In a recent study in which ISEDA participated, it was revealed that local businesses are being registered in women's names in order to take out loans, but in the majority of cases these businesses are run by men. Women still lack confidence in running businesses, and they are constrained in expanding business because of their lack of collateral.

NGO 'Saferworld' Osh

The organization is currently implementing the EU-funded 'Youth Ambassadors for Democracy and Tolerance' which was initiated in February 2017. Volunteers have been selected to address topics bridging democracy and religion. The aim is to promote tolerance, and identify issues of common concern. A community security approach is used to assess local priorities and human security issues which form the basis for elaborating community action plans for dialogue with district authorities, the local police as security providers, migration services, schools and health units. A peace-building approach is used, and stakeholders identify and analyze the causes leading to radicalization and extremism. Young people identified factors such as discrimination, corruption in schools and public services, inability to have their voice heard, and lack of access to participate in decision-making processes. The most marginalized groups have been identified as those belonging to religious fundamentalist minorities, ethnic minorities, and the poor.

NGO International Alert

International Alert has been working in Kyrgyzstan since 2010, and facilitates dialogue between the government and civil society, promoting the role and capacity of civil society organizations to bridge the gap between societal concerns and the democratic process. It believes that gender inequality undermines the long-term prospects for peace and development, and that conflict affects women, men, girls and boys in different ways. It advocates for the integration of gender issues in peacebuilding and security processes, and seeks to empower local communities to support the equal participation of all members of society.

In Kyrgyzstan it has recently initiated the EU-funded 'Constructive Dialogues on Religion and Democracy' project supporting open public discourse about freedom of religion and the role of religion in peoples' lives. A shift in critical thinking which resists more extreme narratives on religion and democracy, among youth is one of the expected results. Gender issues will be integrated into the training programmes designed for the clergy, and the project will focus on what the Koran says about the role of women in Islam, and what the role of local government is in promoting the role of women. The project is collaborating with 'Mutakalim' which is a Muslim women's NGO providing an Islamic perspective on gender mainstreaming in capacity building for the clergy.

NGO DVV International

DVV has also recently initiated an EU-funded project 'Democracy and Religion - Dialogue between Equal and Moderate voices (DREAM)' targeting 14 districts and aimed at building a dialogue platform on religion, civil society and democracy. The project will principally work with young men and women. Youth groups will stage interactive theatre performances based on life stories in specific locations dealing with religion, equality and

civic engagement. A second component will focus on the media which will be trained in how to produce materials on these issues. DVV International describes its domestic and international work as being guided by a commitment to human rights and principles on the promotion of women and gender equality.

NGO ACTED

ACTED's three core pillars in Kyrgyzstan are: building population resilience in disaster-prone areas; increasing access to the legal system for marginalised communities; and leading inclusive and sustainable growth to reduce poverty in Kyrgyzstan. Sustainable growth continues to be the largest sector programme in Kyrgyzstan, through capacity building in climate-smart agricultural methods, rehabilitation of local infrastructures and support to on-farm value chains through the EU-funded Ala Buka Partnership for Development.

For future interventions, ACTED has programmed legal awareness both in schools and through social media. Although early marriage has been outlawed, it is believed that parents and religious authorities still fail to respect the law. The intervention will target both boys and girls, parents and religious authorities. Forum theatre sessions will be organized in schools in areas where bride-kidnapping is prevalent such as in Naryn, Talas and Issyk-Kul. It is understood that elder women in the household frequently instigate bride-kidnapping in order to acquire a daughter-in-law to carry out household and care work for the family.³⁴ Early marriage is prevalent in the South (Jalalabad and Osh). Theatre scripts will be based on real stories and children will be the performers. Parents and children will be able to sit and discuss issues in the forum theatre together, and the audience will have the opportunity to interrupt the performance and ask questions.

NGO 'Indigo'

'Indigo' is a member of an anti-discrimination coalition of five organizations and represents the LGBT community. Currently in Kyrgyzstan there is no anti-discrimination legislation penalizing acts of discrimination. Subsequently, vulnerable groups such as people living with disabilities, LGBT persons, people living with HIV, sex workers and children, are not fully protected against discrimination, and their rights are not respected. The coalition is active in lobbying and advocacy work for the anti-discrimination law; providing support and rapid response to vulnerable groups, preventing HIV/AIDs, and empowering the LGBT community. The organization documents cases of rights violations which are submitted to CEDAW, the UPR (Universal Periodic Review) of UNCHR and OSCE. The five members of the coalition also work closely with the Ombudsman's Office building sensitivity about the needs of their members.

'Indigo' has also developed a training module for staff of the Ministry of Interior aimed to raise awareness of LGBT issues, which has also been incorporated into the training course for 3rd and 4th year students of the Ministry's training academy.

EU Member States and Switzerland

Germany

KfW

KfW Entwicklungsbank is a German development bank providing mainly hardware as its development assistance. It has been progressively integrating gender equality into its work since the mid-1980s. In 2005 the bank adopted its first Gender Strategy, with the aim of making financial cooperation measures more effective in the areas of poverty and gender equality. Gender expertise at KfW has increased over time and the gender relevance of the financial cooperation portfolio has grown. A substantial number of measures were taken to consolidate the gender issue within financial cooperation. Examples include nominating Gender Focal Points for each sectoral competence centre, and establishing a gender network, where experience is shared on an ongoing basis.

KfW has been active in Central Asia for the last 20-25 years and in Kyrgyzstan it has implemented programmes supplying small and micro-enterprises in rural areas with loans and improving their value creation. Commercial banks partnering with KfW were required to provide gender disaggregated statistics on their beneficiary clients, and access to credit was considered equitable with no evidence of discrimination against women. KfW has also supported housing finance for low-to-medium income households to renovate and reconstruct their homes. In the past, the health sector received KfW support for the national 'Manas Taalimi; health reform programme during 2006-2011. The main goal for the follow-on programme, 'Den

³⁴ UN Women 2016 Perception Study

Sooluk' was to improve conditions in priority areas such as the provision of mother-child health care. Currently KfW finances tuberculosis-testing laboratories and has recently initiated a programme of constructing new pre-natal care centres. Other interventions include collaborating with the World Bank / IFC to provide finance for logistics related to the supply of kidney dialysis equipment in hospitals.

GIZ

The German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is a service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Gender equality is considered an essential factor for achieving sustainable change. The goal of the GIZ's Gender Strategy is to comprehensively promote gender equality – both within partner countries, as well as throughout the entire company. GIZ states that it is committed to advocating women's rights and realising equal opportunities for men and women.

As standard procedure, GIZ is obliged to inform BMZ about how it is complying and contributing to achieving BMZ's GAP II. Gender analysis is an obligatory requirement of GIZ's project proposal preparation, and during the project cycle, gender analyses are undertaken by both national and international gender experts from GIZ headquarters.

GIZ's programmes in Kyrgyzstan support health system development and the fight against drug use and drug trafficking through the EU-funded Central Asian programme, CADAP. GIZ's other areas of activity in Kyrgyzstan are: improving primary and secondary education and reform of vocational training; legal and judicial reform; transboundary dialogue on water resources management; support for sustainable natural resource management; assisting the Ministry of Youth Affairs to improve the prospects for young people in disadvantaged and conflict-prone areas; promoting civil society organisations through a fund for small-scale development projects, and support for the German minority in Kyrgyzstan.

As policy, a gender analysis is to be undertaken for each project, which is subsequently updated for each new project phase. In addition, a gender focal point is identified for each project in order to ensure that gender issues are addressed and that there is effective gender mainstreaming in project activities. In its work with youth councils, GIZ promotes greater participation of young girls as member of youth councils through capacity building, so that they have greater confidence in presenting their priorities, such as lack of employment opportunities, to local municipalities. Women have been trained in income-generating activities such as fruit processing, tourism and processing milk products. Although certain occupations are considered gender-specific, such as milk processing, which is considered a female occupation, and construction work, which is considered male, GIZ has encouraged men and women, boys and girls to participate in non-traditional occupational training, in an effort to combat stereotyping and improve gender equality.

United Kingdom

DFID

DFID is currently in the process of re-thinking its 'Strategic Vision for Gender Equality', which has not been updated since 2011. The original focus on girls' education, women's economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and ending violence against girls and women will continue. However, the approach will be developed to ensure it is fit for purpose in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, and an increasing focus on conflict and humanitarian crises. It will also be rooted in the latest thinking and evidence in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for girls and women.

In Kyrgyzstan, the 'Governance in Action' programme aims to strengthen the Kyrgyz political system by improving the responsiveness of Parliament and political parties to citizens' expectations and needs, and supporting civil society to work more effectively with government. Recent activities included supporting the development of two manifestos and platforms of action reflecting the demands of young people and women nationwide. These were produced and presented to the candidates standing in recent Presidential elections in October 2017. Features of the women's demands for action included the elimination of violence against women; family counselling in the face of growing religious extremism; improved access to affordable quality health services; access to quality education for children, and improving the quality of education in rural areas through appointing better-qualified teachers.

Finland

Ministry for Foreign Affairs

In 2008, the Government of Finland created a Wider European Initiative (WEI) as a framework for its bilateral

development aid and cooperation in Central Asia, Caucasus and Eastern Europe, in order to promote stability, democratic and legal development and principles of good governance in eleven different countries including Kyrgyzstan. Gender equality is also a long-standing priority of Finnish development policy, and it has pioneered the promotion of the rights of all women and girls. This continues to be a significant objective of its development policy.

In Kyrgyzstan, the Government of Finland Ministry for Foreign Affairs has funded the 'Wider Access to Justice' project implemented by UNDP (as described above). In addition, its Green Economy Partnership Programme in Kyrgyzstan partners with FAO and the Department for Fisheries of the Ministry for Agriculture, Water Resources and Processing Industry in the project 'Towards Sustainable Aquaculture and Fisheries Development in the Kyrgyz Republic.' The project aims at increasing the capacity of the fisheries sector to generate food, employment and income for rural populations through the introduction of improved aquaculture management, capture fisheries and modern fish processing and marketing in Kyrgyz Republic. In Phase II (2014-2017) the Project aim was to revive inland fishery and aquaculture and contribute towards sustainable management of ecosystem services of Issyk-Kul lake to increase national fish production and strengthen the Right to Food by enhancing food and nutritional security, livelihoods of communities, particularly of the rural poor, as well as increasing water productivity of irrigation water. In Issyk Kul oblast four fishing associations were established, one of which is a women's association which is involved in breeding of fingerlings and undertaking fish processing. In Tonsk district a group of female-headed fish-pond owners have also joined together to increase productivity through improved production and marketing. In terms of income generation, fish farming is a profitable enterprise, however the main constraints to development include short leases (usually of only five years) issued by local authorities for state-owned ponds, without any guarantee of a lease extension, and the problem of access to credit, as banks are unwilling to lend in the absence of collateral.

SDC

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs' strategy on equal opportunities and women's rights, adopted in 2017, made gender equality a major pillar of Swiss foreign policy. The Federal Council Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation 2017–2020 explicitly states the aim of strengthening gender equality and the rights of women and girls for the first time. Switzerland is also committed to implementing the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SDC's 'Gender Tool Kit' contains information to assist those working in the field to ask the right questions at the right time. This is considered necessary in order to integrate gender dimensions at the various stages of a development programme. Thematic tools have been developed for the following topics: gender and skills development, economic emancipation of women, equality, agriculture, and food security, equality, climate change, and disaster risk reduction, sexual gender-based violence, gender and water, gender in training, gender and interpretation of data, and gender, conflict transformation, and the psycho-social approach.

Throughout Central Asia, Switzerland supports water resource management. In Kyrgyzstan it also supports health sector reforms to ensure equitable access and improve the quality of health services to rural communities and business development. In rural areas, the focus is on creating job opportunities for young people and on vocational education and training.

A recent gender analysis undertaken in 2016 by local consultants based on a sample of SDC programmes indicated that gender was not being adequately addressed through SDC programmes. Sex-disaggregated data was not being collected, and in some cases, projects were strengthening the existing gender roles of women and men. The textile sector including garment sewing workshops for example, employ large numbers of women, but their work and pay conditions were not contributing to any improvement in women's economic empowerment.

Parliamentary bodies and line ministries

Parliamentary Committee on Social Issues, Education, Science, Culture and Health, Jokorku Kenesh

The Parliamentary Committee on Social Issues is gender-balanced and chaired by a female Member of Parliament, and deals with gender issues, education, health, culture, science and sports. Gender budgeting is considered an important tool for combating gender inequality, although currently there are no gender budgeting mechanisms being implemented. The national budget itself is considered very socially-oriented with approximately 50 percent of the budget being allocated to the social sector. Support is needed to develop capacity in male and female MPs for formulating more gender-oriented budgets and thereby holding the executive branch to account. Currently the national budget is based on proposals from ministries and agencies

which are discussed in Committee sessions and later discussed by Parliament during hearings. The Law on National Budget stipulates that the budget should undergo gender and technical expertise examination, but as mentioned earlier, this is not done.

The Parliamentary Committee considers the gender legislation in Kyrgyzstan to be adequate although the situation on the ground is not considered satisfactory. The participation of women in Parliament is not considered very high. While the Social and Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan maintains a 30 percent quota for female MPs, other political parties have gradually replaced female MPs with males. The quota for women in high-level government positions is not respected and there are only three female Ministers and one female Vice-Prime Minister (on Social Issues).

Kyrgyzstan does not currently have any female Governors or female *akims* and women are usually only found at the level of deputy *akim*. In the municipal-level civil service women represent 44 percent of staff.

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians consisting of women MPs of different party affiliations, was successful in introducing amendments to the Family Code addressing issues related to 'nicoh' i.e. Islamic marriage ceremonies, as well as the adoption of the law on domestic violence.

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection – Department of Gender Affairs

The Department of Gender Affairs is staffed by five officials in total, although because of vacancies and absent staff on maternity leave, there is currently only the Head of Unit and one other staff member. The Unit is tasked with developing proposals on current legislation related to gender, planning, coordination with other ministries, reporting to the Government and leading sessions of the National Council on Gender Development under the Government. Gender Unit specialists previously working in the regions have been removed, and because there are no gender specialists in any of the other ministries, it is not possible to undertake gender assessments of other sectors of the economy.

Two-year National Gender Action Plans are elaborated on the basis of the Strategy on Gender Equality to 2020. Currently the Ministry is establishing an inter-agency working group to draft a new National Action Plan for 2018-2020.

The Gender Unit has participated in the production of a series of special studies in Kyrgyzstan, such as the 2016 Gender Perception Studies undertaken by UN Women / UNFPA / IOM, mentioned earlier, covering issues such as the political participation of women, expansion of economic rights and opportunities of women, violence against women in the form of bride-kidnapping and early marriages, religious radicalization of women and the participation of women in labour migration. Previously in 2013, in collaboration with UNFPA a study was conducted on early marriages and early motherhood and in 2015, a special study on the attitude of the general population to problems of early marriage in Kyrgyzstan.

The Department is currently involved in developing by-laws for the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence which came into force in April 2017, through an inter-agency working group. In addition, a plan addressing the implementation of CEDAW recommendations based on the 4th Periodic Report is being elaborated. There are plans to undertake studies on gender stereotypes; current domestic work practices, and also on patriarchal perceptions on the roles and duties in the family in 2017-18, although resources are lacking, and donor support would be needed for these.

In addition, capacity building is needed in the field of green economy interventions i.e. sustainable development combined with reducing environmental risks, in order to access available UN funding. In recent years, through agencies such as FAO and WFP, Kyrgyzstan has implemented projects benefiting rural women entrepreneurs in agriculture. However, the Ministry is constrained by lack of specialized gender expertise for reviewing and analyzing the impact of these separate interventions in order to determine best practice.

Ministry of Education

Kyrgyzstan has four language mediums for teaching: Russian, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik. Schools using Russian as the medium of instruction are considered leaders in terms of the quality of education offered, followed by Kyrgyz schools, and Tajik (although there are only three schools in total). There are several Uzbek schools although the quality of education is not considered of a high standard. Professional education i.e. primary and secondary vocational and tertiary education is provided in Russian and Kyrgyz languages only.

In an effort to reduce inequality in access to good quality education, results from University entrance exams were compared between students from regional and rural schools to analyse the differences in results. Two

policy documents were subsequently produced: '40 Steps to the Future', and the 'Concept of Regional Development'. For the first time, the establishment of 'points of access to education' in regions and villages is proposed to improve access to quality education. The 'Concept' envisages providing internet connections to 700 schools in order to access an electronic library of textbooks that can be downloaded by pupils onto computers, smartphones and tablets. It is hoped that this will improve the access to books and improve the quality of education.

Since 2011, Kyrgyzstan has been transiting to per capita financing for education which ensures that education financing is almost the same across the country, and equalizes the quality of education between rural and urban areas. The education budget is no longer managed by local municipalities (*ayl otmotu*), but by district education departments whose aim is to ensure that schools are able to use available resources for developing their schools and the teaching process, and not only for infrastructure and salaries.

A new action plan for the education sector for 2018-2019 is being finalized, and an education strategy until 2030 will also be developed. The support of the EU will be key, especially in providing advice on incorporating gender issues. During the elaboration of the current strategy, problems were not analyzed from a gender perspective, and 90 percent of performance indicators are quantitative and not gender-sensitive.

A civic education course entitled 'Human being and society' is currently taught for pupils of 10-11 grades, and human rights are studied in the framework of this course. The curriculum will now be revised to focus on the child and child rights, and will be taught to pupils beginning from the fifth grade. This is considered a first step towards ensuring that gender stereotypes are not reinforced, and the curricula of other subject courses will also be reviewed with the same objective. The majority of textbooks in use are considered gender-blind, although as discussed above, textbooks reinforce gender stereotypes (see Civil Society: NGO BIOM). There is now a new regulation in the Ministry concerning the analysis of new generation textbooks. One of the indicators for analysis, is the inclusion of gender aspects.

New sanitation rules were adopted last year which require all new schools to be constructed with indoor toilets. Reportedly, toilets may be located at considerable distance from school buildings and without toilet doors.³⁵ Efforts are being made to promote safe toilets which will have a positive impact on girl pupils, through EU-assisted interventions implemented by partners such as BIOM / Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Agency on primary and secondary vocational education under the Ministry of Education

In response to the fact that girls seldom select vocational education subjects related to higher-paid occupations which they consider 'men's jobs', vocational counselling has been introduced at orientation centres, where girls and boys can receive career guidance, counselling and information about current labour market demands and salary scales for different professions.

Although there is a department within the Agency that is responsible for monitoring training issues and gender aspects, it is constrained by lack of capacity to develop effective methodologies and appropriate gender-sensitive indicators. The country's current education development strategy and plan does in fact contain some gender indicators although a comprehensive gender component is lacking. There is also a need to effectively mainstream gender issues into policies; build capacity for designing education surveys and gender indicators for activities, and for collecting gender-disaggregated statistics in education centres, is lacking. Currently data collection involves collecting only administrative data.

Some follow-up studies are being initiated related to students in primary and vocational schools in order to better understand the outcomes and results of vocational training. Students are tracked nine months after graduating to find out where they are currently employed. The Ministry of Education is introducing a Management Information System to monitor inputs and activities in the sector, although effective monitoring of outcomes and impact evaluation of vocational education which could feed into planning and policy processes, is still lacking.

Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the implementation of the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan (NAP) on Peace, Women and Security. The current NAP expires on 27 January 2018 and the 3rd Plan is currently being drafted by the interagency group led by the Ministry, with the support of donors. Gender issues particularly gender and violence are priority areas for the Ministry which is also one of the implementers

³⁵ In interview, the Ministry of Education official commented that in some places toilets were located "500 metres from school buildings"

of the current National Action Plan on Gender Equality. This also expires in 2018 and the Ministry is a member of the interagency working group responsible for drafting the new National Gender Action Plan 2019-2020.

Women represent approximately 12 percent of total staff in the Ministry and the goal is to see an increase the number of women in senior management positions. Lack of funding constrains the Ministry from implementing gender-related activities which is heavily reliant on donor support.

There is a special unit in the Ministry that deals with domestic violence although it is understaffed. Currently the Ministry is developing an instruction on implementing this Law and regulating interagency cooperation. This instruction provides protection from the abuser ensuring that he will not visit the victim, and can also be evicted from the home. The number of preventive orders issued has increased over time from 2,000-3,000 orders in earlier years to 7,000 orders issued in 2016. District-level police officers are usually those directly involved in reported cases of domestic violence and at district level, there are several female district police officers. These officers will receive capacity building on the new regulations will be implemented. The Ministry also cooperates closely with local NGOs, and in collaboration with the National Statistics Committee, guidelines on the collection of domestic violence data and statistics will be developed.

There are also cases of violence against children and elderly representing approximately 20 percent of total number of reported cases of violence, reflecting serious social problems which also remain to be addressed.

Water Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water

The Water Department promotes the participation of women in water management, and approximately 60 percent of total staff in the Department, are women. The country has approximately 460 Water Users' Associations (WUA) of which approximately 60 percent are considered to function effectively, with offices, equipment and staff. The elected WUA council establishes a Directorate to undertake the activities of the association. Approximately 70 percent of WUA accountants are women, and there are some female directorate members, but very few female directors. WUA members are farm families, and as head of household it is usually men who attend meetings, and women are under-represented.

Kyrgyzstan's irrigation infrastructure which was built 50 years ago is in need of repair. A state programme on construction of irrigation schemes has been designed for 2017-2026. Irrigation infrastructure was recently completed in Kadima district in the South which allowed the cultivation of 1,800 hectares of land. Approximately 45 irrigation schemes in total nationwide will be developed, and farmers will be encouraged to switch to more efficient use of water through drip irrigation and use of sprinklers. The Department would like to introduce river basin management as an approach to water management, involving communities and different water users in a more participatory approach to water distribution.

National Statistics Committee

The National Statistics Committee is currently planning the next MICS (Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey) in collaboration with UNICEF and which will be implemented in 2018. The Committee is also collaborating with UNFPA for data collection related to the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence. New forms will be used from 2019 onwards. While the Committee recognizes the need to collect a range of crucial gender-related statistics, it is constrained by lack of adequate financial and human resources. In cooperation with FAO the situation of women in rural areas has also been monitored and gender-disaggregated data related to the agriculture sector was collected.

The Committee will be responsible for collection of data and monitoring of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for Kyrgyzstan, and in discussion with the Ministry of Economy and based on guidelines from UN Women and recommendations from international organizations working in the country, a list of specific indicators has been compiled. The major constraints are lack of suitable software programmes for electronic data collection. Further capacity building of staff is required particularly in translation skills since reports are required in three languages – Kyrgyz, Russian and English. The limitation in language skills and financial resources for translation means that the Committee's publication 'Men and Women in Kyrgyzstan' cannot currently be presented in all three languages. Gender statistics are taken from statistical reports and administrative data received from the Ministries and government bodies, and data is disaggregated by sex and age.

A pilot population and housing census is planned for 2018, in preparation for the country's next census which is held every ten years and due in 2020. Technical and financial support from donors will also be required for implementing the Kyrgyzstan census.

4.9 Relevant actions taken by key actors

4.9.1 Key statistics on the situation of women and girls, men and boys in Kyrgyzstan.

Gender Statistics in Kyrgyzstan

The requirement to collect gender statistics in Kyrgyzstan is established through the “Law on State Guarantees on the Provision of Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women” (2008). The National Statistics Committee collects gender statistics in accordance with UN guidance on the recommended minimum set of gender indicators, and currently collects 32 of the recommended 52 indicators.³⁶ Gender statistics are published in the regular compilation ‘Women and Men in Kyrgyz Republic’. The most recent edition covers the period 2011-2015 and provides gender statistics for the following areas: 1) population; 2) health of population; 3) education levels; 4) employment and unemployment; 5) State bodies of public power and administration; 6) living standards; 7) time use; 8) crime; and 9) Millennium Development Goals. The source of data is statistical reports and administrative data collected through official channels and approved statistical forms. Other sources include the population census, demographic and health surveys, labour force surveys, and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). As a minimum, data is disaggregated by sex and age. Besides this, the National Statistics Committee carries out studies on specific gender issues in collaboration with international organizations. As already mentioned, in 2016 in cooperation with UN Women, UNFPA and IOM, the ‘Gender in Perception of Society Study’ was conducted and the results of the quantitative study were made available online. A ‘Programme of Improvement and Development of State Statistics of Kyrgyz Republic for 2015-2019’ envisages an expansion of the national database of sex-disaggregated indicators in accordance with international standards.³⁷

Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)

The most recent MICS was conducted in 2014. 6,854 women age 15-49 years participated in the survey, and questionnaires for children under five were completed for 4,577 children including 2,342 boys and 2,235 girls. The main findings were as follows:

One in four children (26 percent) age 5-17 were engaged in child labour, and 15 percent were working under hazardous conditions. Male children (30 percent) are more likely to be involved in child labour than female children (22 percent), with rural areas having 2.5 times higher child labour percentage than urban areas (1 vs. 12 percent).

Among women age 15-49 years, just 0.4 percent were married before age 15. Among women age 20-49 years, about one in eight (13 percent) women were married before age 18. About one in seven (14 percent) young women age 15-19 years is currently married or in union.

Regarding attitudes towards domestic violence, 33 percent of women in Kyrgyzstan feel that a husband/partner is justified in hitting or beating his wife (in at least one of five different situations, including unsatisfactory food preparation etc.).

In Kyrgyzstan, one in nine children (11.2 percent) age 0-17 have one or both parents living abroad. Both the mother and father were abroad in almost half of these cases.

Overall, 77.1 percent of children age 0-17 years in Kyrgyzstan live with both their parents. One in ten children (9.9 percent) live with neither of their biological parents while, most often, both of them are alive (9 percent).

In Kyrgyzstan, 95 percent of the women age 15-49 years have heard of AIDS. However, the percentage of those who know two main ways of preventing HIV transmission is only 62 percent.

The vast majority of children of primary school age (99.3 percent) are attending school. Of all children starting Grade one, the majority (99.7 percent) will eventually reach Grade 5. Nearly 93 percent of children age 11-17 years are attending secondary school grades. For the children of upper secondary school age the attendance decrease sharply reaching the minimum among children age 17 (73 percent). At the secondary school level girls account for about 39 percent of the total out-of-school population.

Only 27 percent of children age 0-59 months live in households where at least 3 children’s books are present

³⁶ FAO (2016), National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods – Kyrgyz Republic. Country Gender Assessment Series, FAO, Ankara, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5763e.pdf>

³⁷ <http://stat.kg/ru/about/pravovye-osnovy-organov-gosudarstvennoj-statistiki/>

for the child.

Nearly 23 percent of children age 36-59 months are attending an organised early childhood education programme. Urban-rural differentials are notable – the figure is as high as 40 percent in urban areas, compared to 16 percent in rural areas. For close to three-quarters (72 percent) of children age 36-59 months, an adult household member is engaged in four or more activities that promote learning and school readiness.

Overall, 87 percent of the population in Kyrgyzstan uses an improved source of drinking water – 98 percent in urban areas and 82 percent in rural areas. Only 64 percent of the household population have the drinking water source on the premises. 98 percent of the population of Kyrgyzstan lives in households with improved sanitation. However, only 16.8 percent of the population use flush toilets; use of flush toilets is significantly different between urban and rural areas (47.2 and 2.7 percent, respectively).

4.10 Important country-relevant gender issues

As part of the Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan, certain country-relevant gender issues were also investigated as follows:

4.10.1 Gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting

In general, there is commitment by government bodies to gender mainstreaming but it is not always effective due to the low level of knowledge and capacity among public servants about methods and tools for gender mainstreaming.

Following the 1995 United Nations (UN) Beijing Conference, gender mainstreaming was identified as the most important mechanism to reach the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It requires changes in institutional working methods, and shared responsibility for promoting gender equality. The UN defines gender mainstreaming as 'a process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality'.

Mainstreaming of GEWE is also EU policy and has become a mandatory requirement laid down by law in the Development Cooperation Instrument Regulation, which defines GEWE as a cross-cutting issue to be integrated into all development activities. Gender inequalities can only be effectively tackled when policies in all areas (e.g. economy, health, education, environment, infrastructure, trade, science and research, agriculture, peace and security etc.) are designed in such a way as to address specific concerns, needs and constraints of both women and men while building on their respective capacities and contributions. Mainstreaming is to begin with an analysis of the gender concerns of each sector; policy documents for the sector, and the specific legislation governing each sector.

As described above, gender disaggregated statistics are widely available in Kyrgyzstan and are used as a tool in some sectors such as health, although they are not being fully used in other sectors. To be effective, gender mainstreaming in national development planning should address the specific concerns of women and men. Detailed analyses of the gender concerns in each sector of the economy, the policy documents for each sector, and analyses of specific legislation governing each sector, are also required.

Gender-responsive budgeting, which seeks to compensate for the disparate impacts of government spending on people of different genders through an analysis of existing financial budgeting, is evolving, although still not widely understood by stakeholders.

4.10.2 Discrimination

Gender inequalities persist both formally and informally in Kyrgyzstan. Both direct and indirect discrimination against women and girls is evident, which impinges on their access to human rights, education, employment and opportunities.

Direct discrimination

Legal barriers in employment

There are legal barriers for women wishing to participate in the work force in the formal economy. These

include several discriminatory legal provisions in addition to a list of 400 occupations from which women are banned. Specific provisions in the Labour Code prohibit women (but not men) from working in harmful or dangerous conditions and from undertaking heavy work, as well as forbidding the employment of women in underground work (Articles 218 and 303). This is a legacy from Soviet times. Government resolutions under articles 218³⁸ and 303 of the Labour Code reserve up to 400 occupations for men only. Occupations for men only include; ‘cement work – laying and compacting of soil, rubble and gravel’; ‘operating blast furnaces’; ‘production of thermal insulation materials’ and ‘production of fibrous materials - related to the production of raw pulp, paper, paperboard and articles thereof’.

Some of the occupations on the list are now obsolete or are jobs that, due to advances in technology and working practices, could be judged to be no longer dangerous or requiring physical strength. Regardless of the original intent, these legal provisions limit women’s ability fully to participate in the workforce.

Other provisions in the Labour Code intended to preserve women’s flexibility to balance work and family life include those that give pregnant women and women with young or disabled children the option to refuse night work.³⁹ In addition, women with children under 3 years old may refuse to undertake business trips or work overtime, weekends or public holidays⁴⁰ and pregnant women are not permitted to have more than one job at any one time.⁴¹

Overall, there is a contradiction between the laws that were originally intended to benefit women but are today considered discriminatory, and laws that seek to preserve equality in the workplace for men and women.

While preserving women’s flexibility to balance family and work life, these provisions have the potential to disadvantage women by presenting women as less flexible in the labour market than men who do not have the same benefits or similar provisions. In some cases, such as the shorter working week at altitude, it is more expensive to employ a woman than a man, as a full (40 hour) week’s wage is payable for fewer hours of work.

ILO emphasises that while pregnant and breast-feeding women employees need special interventions and protections, these should be strictly restricted to maternity concerns and not on stereotypes related to women’s professional abilities and roles in society.⁴²

The ILO Committee of Experts also advises that blanket bans on dangerous work as well as night work and overtime for all women, however laudable they may seem in terms of concern for health, are contrary to the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation and contribute to gender-based discrimination at work.⁴³

Lack of anti-discrimination laws

Anti-discrimination laws covering LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights and the rights of other vulnerable groups are lacking, and adequate measures to protect the fundamental rights of LGBT people as guaranteed by the Constitution and the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) do not exist. LGBT people in Kyrgyzstan experience ill-treatment, extortion, and discrimination by both state and non-state actors and there is widespread impunity for these abuses.

In 2016 the Parliamentary Committee on Law, Order and Fighting Crime, returned Kyrgyzstan’s anti-LGBT bill, which would have banned ‘propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations,’ for a repeat second reading, where it then stalled. The bill appears to be aimed at silencing anyone seeking to openly share information about same-sex relations in Kyrgyzstan.

LGBT people are also discriminated against in obtaining medical services, in education, and at work. Discrimination against transgender people is particularly predominant in Kyrgyzstan. Despite the fact that paragraph 2 of Article 16 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic includes the right to protection against discrimination, it does not explicitly indicate protection against discrimination on the grounds of sexual

³⁸ Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on March 24, 2000 # 158 “On the list of industries, jobs, professions and positions with harmful and (or) dangerous working conditions, which prohibits the employment of women”.

³⁹ Article 97

⁴⁰ Article 304

⁴¹ The Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on March 14, 2000 #135 “Regulation of workers with more than one job”.

⁴² ILO (2014) “Maternity and paternity at work. Law and practice across the world.” p.89 Addati, Laura; Cassirer, Naomi; Gilchrist, Katherine.

⁴³ ILO (2014) “Maternity and paternity at work. Law and practice across the world.” p.89 Addati, Laura; Cassirer, Naomi; Gilchrist, Katherine.

orientation and gender identity (SOGI).

Because there are no comprehensive anti-discrimination or anti-hate crime laws in Kyrgyzstan relating to SOGI, physical, psychological and sexual violence against LGBT people is exacerbated. Victims of violence are often unable to contact the police due to violence and torture by the police. Unconstitutional divisions within public authorities also exist.⁴⁴ Such divisions include the 'Department of Morals' under the Ministry of Interior, with the tacit consent of the Ombudsman, Parliament and President.

Indirect discrimination

Bride kidnapping (abduction for forced marriage)

The targets of bride kidnapping are usually young women or girls, some under the legal marriage age of 18. Once abducted, the young woman is subjected to psychological pressure by the groom's female relatives and even rape by the groom himself until she agrees to the marriage. Simply by having been held captive, the girl's virtue is considered irredeemably compromised, and she is often shamed into remaining with her kidnapper.

Despite bride kidnapping being a crime in Kyrgyzstan, perpetrators are rarely convicted. In 2013, the President approved legislation that increased the penalty for bride kidnapping to up to 10 years, (although longer prison terms may be conferred for property theft alone). Articles 154 and 155 of the Criminal Code were amended, designating bride kidnapping as a serious crime which cannot be dismissed. Nevertheless, according to NGO data there are approximately 15,000 cases of bride kidnapping every year, but in 2013 there was only one case in which a person was convicted of bride kidnapping.

In its 2015 country report, the CEDAW Committee said it is "deeply concerned that bride kidnapping appears to be socially legitimized and surrounded by a culture of silence and impunity, and that cases of bride kidnapping remain under-reported, as they are considered a private issue that should remain within the family." While there are no official statistics, it is estimated that in the period 2004 – 2013, up to half of all marriages in Kyrgyzstan resulted from bride kidnapping.⁴⁵ UN Women using figures from the NGO Women Support Centre has identified at least 11,800 cases of forced abduction of women and girls every year in Kyrgyzstan, with more than 2,000 of them having reported being raped.

The commonly held belief that bride kidnapping comes from a long-standing Kyrgyz tradition has been rejected.⁴⁶ Before the Soviet era, the practice was extremely rare as it caused serious conflicts between families or clans. In addition, forced marriage is totally forbidden in Islam. Under Sharia law, any marriage that is forced in any way is considered null and void.⁴⁷

Some observers dismiss the seriousness of bride kidnapping, citing it as a way of bypassing parental approval or avoiding dowry payment.⁴⁸ However, as noted by the UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur in her report, staged kidnapping impedes efforts to recognize, combat and punish genuine cases of bride kidnapping.⁴⁹

Supporting the charge by human rights experts that bride kidnapping is a form of sexual violence, the Kyrgyz government has acknowledged in its National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality by 2020, that the practice is one example of the link between gender inequality and violence against women.

The CEDAW Committee has recommended that the government develop a comprehensive strategy to address bride kidnapping that includes effective investigation, prosecution and conviction of perpetrators, as well as remedies and support services for victims. Media campaigns led by NGOs have not been effective, and it has been suggested that awareness-raising needs to be led from the highest levels, such as the President's office.

⁴⁴ Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Provisions of ICCPR related to LGBT People in Kyrgyzstan.' Submitted for consideration at the 110th Session of the Human Rights Committee March 2014. Geneva. Prepared by LGBT organizations in Kyrgyzstan, 'Kyrgyz Indigo' and 'Labrys'.

⁴⁵ Kleinbach R and Gazbubu Babaiarova (2013) 'Reducing Non-Consensual Bride Kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan.' Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences. 1(1), 2013, 50-60

⁴⁶ Kleinbach R and Gazbubu Babaiarova (2013) 'Reducing Non-Consensual Bride Kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan.' Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences. 1(1), 2013, 50-60

⁴⁷ Kleinbach R and Gazbubu Babaiarova (2013) 'Reducing Non-Consensual Bride Kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan.' Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences. 1(1), 2013, 50-60

⁴⁸ OECD Development Centre (no date) Social Institutions and Gender Index 'Kyrgyzstan'

⁴⁹ Human Rights Council (2010) Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo, Addendum Mission to Kyrgyzstan, A/HRC/14/22/Add.2, UN General Assembly Human Rights Council, Geneva.

Early / child marriage

Bride abduction and early marriages are the most common types of gender-based violence in Kyrgyzstan. The growing number of early marriages is evidenced by the increasing number of births among women of premarital age.⁵⁰ It is estimated that 12 percent of women in rural areas were married before the age of 18 years, and in urban areas, 14 percent of women were married before the age of 18.⁵¹

Under law, both parties to a marriage must be at least eighteen years old. The Code of Marriage and Family Article 18 provides for the possibility of lowering the marriageable age, but only for the woman, and not by more than one year.

As many victims of bride kidnapping are 17 to 18 years old or even younger, families use religious ceremonies to consecrate these marriages and avoid registration with the State. In November 2016, the President signed into law a bill that would introduce criminal sanctions of three to five years' imprisonment for parents found responsible for allowing their underage children to marry; for religious leaders for carrying out religious ceremonies for minors, and for adults who marry minors.

Child marriages occur in all regions of the country and among all ethnic groups. By virtue of being children, child spouses are considered to be incapable of giving free and full consent, meaning that child marriages should rightfully be considered a violation of human rights and the rights of the child.

Girl child spouses are also vulnerable to domestic violence and sexual abuse within relationships that are unequal, and if they become pregnant, they frequently experience complications during pregnancy and childbirth, as their bodies are not ready for childbearing.

Findings from a 2014 UNFPA study on Child Marriage in Kyrgyzstan suggest that that child marriage is more widespread among certain ethnic groups such as Uzbeks, Dungans, Turks, and Tajiks. There is evidence that child marriage is also widespread among the Central Asian Lyuli people (related to Roma). Child marriage is particularly widespread in Osh, Jalalabad, Batken, and Chui oblasts, and in Osh city, and there has reportedly been an increase in the frequency of child marriage in recent years. This is particularly noticeable in Osh and Jalalabad oblasts, following the June 2010 inter-ethnic violence there. It is believed that the significant rise in the number of child marriages in the south of the country is a consequence of widespread rapes that occurred during the 2010 violence. Daughters were married off early so their virginity could not be compromised. Another reason for child marriage is ethno-cultural tradition, which has witnessed a resurgence in the post-Soviet period. A not-insubstantial factor behind the increased number of child marriages, according to UNFPA, is the increasing influence of Islam.

Increasing trend in non-registered marriages, and respective lack of property rights in cases of marriage dissolution

There is an increasing number of unregistered, traditional unions or de facto marriages. De facto unions are popular especially in the South, and among rich men in cities. Couples who marry in religious ceremonies however, or under customary law at younger ages are not legally married and do not receive legal marriage benefits. Without state recognition of their marriages, women have no protection in cases of divorce or abandonment.

De facto marriage, or cohabitation carries no legal family obligations (such as alimony or division of property) according to the civil code. Such unions are not forbidden, but the law does not accord them any legal significance. They are not considered spouses and do not inherit from each other.

One of the problematic consequences of unregistered (and polygamous) marriages is the difficulty in obtaining birth certificates for children.⁵² A child born in an unregistered marriage cannot take the surname of the father. Children born from these unions are considered illegitimate, and bear the mother's surname. Although children from unregistered marriages have the right to receive child support from their natural father, the law does not provide for inheritance rights after his death. A child's parentage becomes legal when certified by the Civil Registry Office (ZAGS), and fathers' and children's rights and duties arise from establishing parentage. The Code of Marriage and Family does not include legal rules to govern the distribution of property when one of the cohabitants dies intestate before the validity of the relationship is decided. The process of establishing

⁵⁰ UNFPA 2016 'Gender in Society Perception Study. Knowledge Attitude Practice (National Survey Results)' Bishkek

⁵¹ Information obtained from Department of Gender Affairs, MOLSP, November 2017

⁵² <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/RiseinunregisteredmarriagesinKyrgyzstancalledworrying.aspx>

paternity may be difficult, particularly after the father has died. Documentary evidence is rarely available, and the widow from an unregistered or polygamous marriage has to provide proof of established cohabitation.⁵³

In cases of forced abduction for marriage, a de facto non-registered union may be short-lived and may not have been long enough to meet these criteria. Genetic paternity-testing is not as yet available.

Polygamy

Kyrgyzstan's secular laws officially prohibit polygamy. Nevertheless, there were openly-reported cases of polygamy in the 2014 Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS)⁵⁴. An estimated 0.9 percent of women aged 15-49 were reportedly in a polygamous marriage or union. It has been suggested that economic hardship in recent years which has led to thousands of young Kyrgyz men out-migrating in search of job opportunities, has left women with fewer marital options. Some young women may prefer to marry an older, financially established man and therefore consider entering into a polygamous marriage as the best opportunity to do so. Such unions are based on religious marriage ceremonies alone. Polygamy is not only practised in rural areas by men and women with strong conservative Islamic leanings, but also in urban areas even by public officials. The effects on family life are damaging. Religious marriage ceremonies alone have no legal weight and divorce or the death of a husband can leave a woman and her children bereft of property, as mentioned above.

A recent survey undertaken by the 'Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society'⁵⁵ found that 67.5 percent of respondents were against legalizing polygamy in Kyrgyzstan. The number of men supporting the initiative was greater than the number of women (33.8 percent of men compared with 10.8 percent of women). The majority of those supporting the legalization of polygamy were from Osh (42.9 percent); Talas (30.8 percent) and Batken regions (31.1 percent). The majority of respondents who support the legalization of polygamy (56.9 percent) did not object to their daughter or sister entering a polygamous marriage, or becoming the second or third wife.

High levels of domestic violence

Approximately 95 percent victims of violent crimes in Kyrgyzstan are women.⁵⁶ Domestic violence is widespread, affecting nearly one third of women and girls aged 15 to 49. Seven percent of women have suffered from violence during pregnancy and three percent of women aged 30 years and above have experienced sexual violence.

According to the most recent government data for 2013, fewer than half of registered domestic violence complaints resulted in a court case.⁵⁷ Of those that did, only 7 percent were referred to the courts as criminal offences. The rest were treated as administrative offenses, which have a lesser punishment. Of domestic violence cases that resulted in administrative penalties, 64 percent resulted in only small penalties for 'minor hooliganism', or disorderly conduct.

The organization 'Human Rights Watch' has documented cases of severe physical and psychological domestic abuse, sometimes with long-lasting consequences.⁵⁸ Women told Human Rights Watch about instances in which perpetrators pounded their heads against walls and pavement; broke their jaws; caused concussions and skull fractures; stabbed them; beat them with rolling pins, metal kitchenware, and other objects; locked them outside in extreme cold without shoes or appropriate clothing; beat them while pregnant to the point of miscarriage; chased them with knives and spades; attempted to choke or suffocate them; threatened to kill them; spit in their mouths; and verbally humiliated them at their workplaces. In many cases, women experienced domestic abuse for years, almost always at the hands of husbands or partners, but also by in-laws. Some of the women suffered from long-term physical or psychological distress as a result of domestic violence.

Limited services and police hostility obstruct survivors' access to protection and justice. Pressure to keep families together, stigma, economic dependence, and fear of reprisals by abusers hinder some women from

⁵³ <http://family.jrank.org/pages/1030/Kyrgyzstan-Independence.html> Kyrgyzstan - Independence

⁵⁴ The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Multi-indicator cluster survey 2014 - Final Report. Bishkek. Available at: <http://www.mics2014.kg/index.php/ru/>

⁵⁵ Sociological survey by phone, July 2017

⁵⁶ Information obtained from Department of Gender Affairs of MoLSP, November 2017

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch May 2017 website

⁵⁸ Human Rights Watch (2015) 'Call Me When He Tries to Kill You: State Response to Domestic Violence in Kyrgyzstan' ISBN: 978-1-6231-32866. USA

seeking assistance. In addition, police do not systematically enforce protection orders.

As mentioned earlier, the new Law on the Prevention and Protection against Family Violence and accompanying legislation, takes effect in January 2018, and includes measures to improve protection for victims of domestic abuse and strengthen police and judicial response. The police are required to register a domestic abuse complaint from anyone, not just the victim. The law recognizes not only physical and psychological abuse but also 'economic violence', which in Kyrgyzstan often takes the form of restricting access to and use of financial resources, property, or other assets.

The accompanying Law On Amending Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Prevention and Protection of Domestic Violence, changes elements of the Administrative Code and other relevant laws. An important feature is that any victim of domestic violence, regardless of whether criminal proceedings are opened or not, can avail of the provisions. These include key rights, such as access to safe shelter, and medical and mental health services.

Inadequate access to water and sanitation in rural areas causing hardship especially for women and children.

The UN CEDAW Committee has expressed its concern at the lack of measures and discrimination against rural women to ensure their access to safe drinking water and sanitation.⁵⁹

Although Kyrgyzstan has abundant rivers, glaciers and lakes, it suffers from Soviet-era water systems that have fallen into disrepair. 2014 data from the Department of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation of the State Agency for Architecture, Construction and Housing and Communal Services, indicate that 1,272 villages do not have adequate access to a centralized drinking water system and 396 villages have no access at all and use unprotected water sources.⁶⁰ While more than two-thirds of urban households have access to water piped into the home, most rural households rely on outside taps, standpipes or wells for their water. Women and children are those most likely to collect water for the family, when it is not piped into the home, with girls and boys having almost equal responsibility for this chore. The lack of access to clean drinking water presents a serious health problem in hundreds of villages. Up to 86 percent of typhoid cases occur in villages that lack safe drinking water. In many areas, particularly in the southeast of the country, rural communities depend on water from open irrigation canals which are vulnerable to contamination from animals, debris and waste. At schools and homes, water has to be brought in by bucket and then boiled before drinking.

In most rural households, pit latrines are located at some distance from the house, and are usually constructed from poor quality materials and are not emptied when they are full but rather rebuilt elsewhere.⁶¹ Women report that they experience health problems, such as urinary tract infections, due to the reluctance to use pit latrines at night and during winter, and such toilets are also considered unsuitable for children.⁶² Women and girls are responsible for the routine cleaning of latrines. A lack of clean water resources, combined with a lack of hygienic sanitation facilities, and the absence of clean water for hand washing, are associated with a risk of disease transmission within rural households. Children and the elderly are especially at risk and many children miss school due to hepatitis and gastro-intestinal infections.

4.10.3 Gender issues related to migration

Both men and women out-migrate in almost equal numbers to the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan in search of work

Since the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in August 2015, Kyrgyz educational diplomas are recognized in the Russia Federation (hereafter referred to as Russia), Kazakhstan and other member countries, and the procedures for migrants and members of their families to stay and work legally in Russia, have been simplified. Access to health care and education for children has improved somewhat,⁶³ however, since the majority of Kyrgyz migrants are undocumented, and those who migrate legally often do not

⁵⁹ CEDAW (2015) Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Kyrgyzstan

⁶⁰ The Ministry of Health estimates that 497 villages have no access to a centralized water supply. Vashneva, N.S., Kirilenko, A., Prigoda, N., Kochorbaeva, Z., Choytonbaeva, A. & Grechko, E. (2014). 'Gender Aspects of Access to Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation. Assessment and Concept.' Bishkek, Social Technologies Agency.

⁶¹ Bakashova, A., Jorritsma, F., Choytonbaeva, A. & Wendland, C. 2013. Opportunities to Stimulate Local Economies through Sustainable Innovations for Home Comfort. Gender-sensitive feasibility study for rural areas in Issyk Kul and Naryn. Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF). p. 10.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ FIDH 'Kyrgyzstan Women and children from Kyrgyzstan affected by migration: An exacerbated vulnerability' September 2016/No. 675a. International Federation for Human Rights. Paris, France

have a written employment contract, they cannot benefit from these rights, and therefore still remain very vulnerable.

Although migratory flows are mainly comprised of young males, feminization has increased. Currently, 40 percent of Kyrgyz migrants in Russia are women, whereas Tajik and Uzbek women represent respectively less than 20 percent of the total number of migrants from each country.⁶⁴ The main reason women choose to migrate – whether alone or with their husband or another member of their family – is to provide financial support for their families. Migration is often considered as the only solution to improve their living standards.

Approximately 60 percent of Kyrgyz migrants do not have all the required documents to comply with current migration rules of countries of destination.⁶⁵ Women and children are at particular risk of discrimination – psychological, physical, and sexual violence and abuse; or labour or sexual exploitation. Further, they may be subjected to exploitative conditions of work, inadequate living conditions, and lack of access to health care – including access to safe sexual and reproductive health services including abortion for women and girls. Undocumented migrants' children are at particular risk of having no access to education in the countries of destination. Violations of their rights may be committed by law enforcement representatives or non-state actors, including migrants' employers, male Kyrgyz migrants, or citizens in the country of destination, especially in Russia where there is an increasing anti-migrant and xenophobic climate.

Kyrgyz women are victims of violence from male Kyrgyz migrants (so-called 'patriots')

Several cases of aggression towards Kyrgyz migrant women who have relationships with non-Kyrgyz men have been perpetrated by young Kyrgyz men (the so-called 'Kyrgyz patriots') in Russia. In 2012 a video was posted online showing a young Kyrgyz woman standing naked in a dark street, while a group of Kyrgyz men insult her and beat her, demanding an answer as to why she is "bringing shame on the nation and engaging in prostitution with men of another nationality." This triggered a massive outcry at the time,⁶⁶ although episodes of this type of violence have increased with impunity. In February 2016, three 'patriots' were arrested⁶⁷ for the first time by the representation of the Ministry of Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic in Moscow, after several victims filed complaints. However, the Ministry representative, instead of denouncing the aggression, also expressed online his disapproval of the lifestyle led by young Kyrgyz women abroad.

Migration has a very significant negative impact on children left behind in Kyrgyzstan by their parents

With the feminization of migratory flows, the number of children left behind has increased. These children, who can become invisible, are often at higher risk of facing restricted access to health care and education, and of being subjected to ill-treatment and sexual violence. As up to 17 percent of the Kyrgyz population are migrant workers, there are numerous children left behind. Many parents do not want to, or are not able to, take their children with them when they migrate because they fear difficulties in the countries of destination, or do not have the financial means to cover the transportation and living costs for them, or because they fear that the migration police can identify them as undocumented migrants through their children.

When both parents migrate, they usually leave their children with their grandparents. Should they be deceased or refuse to take them, parents then reach out to other relatives (uncles or aunts), or neighbours. In extreme cases, they can be placed with unknown people or in State-run institutions, where they are often referred to as 'social orphans'. Children left behind are more vulnerable to discrimination and humiliation, both at home or at school than other children. This is particularly true when both parents have migrated and they live with more distant relatives, who do not always treat them as their own. These children are particularly at risk of ill-treatment and psychological, physical, and sexual abuse.

Internal migration to cities

⁶⁴ According to figures published by the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation in April 2016, 574 194 Kyrgyz citizens were on the Russian territory, of which 223 073 were women.

⁶⁵ Migrants who do not have all of the documents required to stay and work legally in the country of destination are considered as 'undocumented'. In Russia, those who do not have all the required documents, such as a health insurance or a signed contract, risk being placed on the re-entry ban list. In the Joint Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic, prepared under the supervision of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Labor, Migration, and Youth in 2014, it is estimated that 60% of Kyrgyz migrants are 'undocumented', but no official data are available on this issue.

⁶⁶ Eleanora Beishenbek Kyzy and Claire Bigg, "Kyrgyz Migrant Women Brutally Assaulted in 'Patriotic' Videos", Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 31 May 2012, available at: www.rferl.org/content/kyrgyz-migrant-women-brutally-assaultedin-patriotic-videos/24599390.html

⁶⁷ Ayjamal Muratalieva, "Moscow: arrestation of "patriots", who abused Kyrgyz women", Kloop, 2 March 2016, available at: <http://kloop.kg/blog/2016/03/02/moskva-zaderzhany-patrioty-izdevavshiesya-nad-kyrgyzstankami/> (Айжамал Мураталиева, "Москва: Задержаны «патриоты», издевавшиеся над кыргызстанками", Kloop, 2 март 2016)

There are four main internal migration trends in the country: from rural to urban areas; from remote mountainous areas to valleys; from the periphery to administrative and economic centres; and, more generally, from the South to the North. Internal migration may, at first, be a solution to the economic difficulties faced by Kyrgyz citizens, but then it becomes a push factor to external migration if the initial move did not solve the economic problems.

Over the past 20 years, one in every three Kyrgyz citizens has changed their domestic residence at least once, which means that migration processes are familiar to most people. In the new suburbs, or “novostroika”, of Bishkek, 60 percent of inhabitants arrived from southern Kyrgyzstan to find work. As already highlighted, internal migration affects women and children more in terms of access to health and education services because they are unregistered and reside in makeshift houses built on the outskirts of city.

Women migrants are strongly stigmatised by their communities when they return to Kyrgyzstan

Many women migrate independently, whether married, single or divorced. According to Russian statistics,⁶⁸ 48 percent of female migrants were ‘independent workers’ (who travel alone, not accompanied by their husband if married). Of these women, 82 percent were married to someone who remained in Kyrgyzstan. In northern Kyrgyzstan and urban areas, it is well accepted that women migrate independently, while others from rural areas and southern Kyrgyzstan may face disapproval from members of their communities.

Because of their migration experience, women may be stigmatized within their community upon their return. Additionally, in case of an unsuccessful migration experience, women migrants are more at risk of losing social status in their communities than are migrant men. Women who emigrated alone and wish to marry upon their return may face difficulties in some conservative communities, where the question of their ‘honour’ is in doubt. This risk is particularly high in rural parts of Kyrgyzstan. It is feared that women living abroad, and away from the strong social control of their local communities, have had sexual relations and thus have lost their honour, as well as the honour of their family and community.

Migration, polygamy and bride kidnapping

Labour migration of Kyrgyz men has also led to an increase in polygamous relations, as married men may enter into an extramarital relation and establish a second family while abroad.⁶⁹ Some of them continue to send remittances to their first wives in Kyrgyzstan, while others just stop having any contact at all. Migration has become one of the factors which has led to an increase in bride kidnappings. Before emigrating, a man is usually keen to find a wife to take care of his parents whilst he is away. In addition to being abducted, these girls also become victims of exploitation, shouldering the domestic burden of the husband’s family.

4.10.4 Gender issues related to education sector in Kyrgyzstan

There are several gender issues which are relevant to the education sector, which relate to gender stereotyping, differences in access to education between urban and rural areas, attendance rates and drop-out rates.

Gender stereotypes are being reinforced in textbooks and school materials at all levels of education curricula. (see Section ‘Civil Society: NGO BIOM’, for more on gender analysis of school textbooks). Teachers at all levels are also not gender-competent, and tend to reinforce gender stereotyping in the classroom. This is true for both male and female teachers. The gender dimensions of education and schooling are not being addressed in teacher-training.

The number of schools in urban areas is insufficient and there is low coverage of children by pre-school education especially in rural areas. Predominant stereotyping of gender roles results in young boys dropping out of school especially after 9th grade (15 years of age) to begin working as labourers, and of girls in certain regions (primarily in the South) to get married.

Parents may decide to send their children to religious schools (madrasas) for a variety of reasons which include the perceived falling standards of the State education system; endemic corruption, and a learning environment which is sometimes seen as violent because of bullying. Younger teachers in State-run schools may also be perceived by parents as having bought their credentials and lacking in adequate skills and knowledge. Madrasa diplomas however are not recognized by the State.

There are more boys than girls enrolled in primary and secondary vocational education, and gender parity in

⁶⁸ IOM Joint Report on Migration in Kyrgyzstan, 2014

⁶⁹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Rashida Manjoo,

enrolment in higher education. Higher education for girls however, does not appear to lead to increased or better employment opportunities for girls compared to boys. There is significant gender segregation in educational subjects studied by girls (health, education) which results in gender segregation in the job market also.

Pre-school education is not compulsory in Kyrgyzstan, and only 18 percent of children under the age of seven attend pre-schools.⁷⁰ Coverage varies considerably by location, and according to national estimates, 32.2 percent of urban children aged one to six years and 13.2 percent of rural children attend pre-schools.⁷¹ Even in areas where pre-school facilities exist, access may be limited for other reasons. For example, some pre-schools are intended only for children with special needs; public pre-schools can often be overcrowded; private facilities may be too expensive for parents to afford, and some facilities have opening hours that are not compatible with the working day.⁷² The absence of pre-school educational facilities is a primary factor in preventing women from working outside the home especially in rural areas and has important implications for child development and future educational outcomes.

While there are no significant gender gaps in enrolment in primary and lower secondary education by province or between rural and urban areas, school attendance and completion rates however do differ. Students in rural and remote areas are more likely to be out-of-school. In rural secondary schools at Grades 5-11, boys are much more likely than girls to be out-of-school, and non-attendance increases with age. In comparison, in urban areas, girls account for more than half (i.e. 57.3 percent) of the out-of-school population at secondary level. In rural areas, boys make up almost three-quarters (i.e. 71 percent) of out-of-school children.⁷³

School non-attendance rates also vary by season, and absenteeism is highest in rural areas during the autumn and spring farming seasons. Many of the factors that contribute to absenteeism are common for both boys and girls and include: household poverty; the need for child labour both for housework and agricultural labour; a lack of clothes, shoes, textbooks and other school supplies; a lack of money to pay for schooling; school-related reasons, such as the psychological climate in the school; the curriculum, teaching and discipline methods; cold classrooms and bullying, and health-related reasons such as illness or disability.⁷⁴

Boys are more often required to undertake farm work while girls are more likely to be absent due to a lack of clothes or shoes.⁷⁵ Poor sanitary conditions lead to greater absenteeism among girls once they reach puberty and begin menstruating. Almost all schools have latrines which are located outside school buildings, and even in urban areas, only 14.3 percent of schools have indoor toilet facilities.⁷⁶

Following compulsory education up to Grade 9, the majority of rural youth either continue their studies in vocational education or begin work, as shown by higher economic activity rates for young people aged 15-19 years in rural areas compared with urban areas.⁷⁷ 42.8 percent of rural boys and 25.9 percent of rural girls are economically active compared with 21.4 percent of urban boys and 10.2 percent of urban girls.

There are significant gender differences both in the TVET system and in post-compulsory education generally, especially in the choice of academic subjects. As mentioned, the majority of female students in secondary vocational education enrol in education, health, economics and management courses, accounting for almost 80 percent of female students. Male students study a greater range of specialized technical subjects, including agriculture.⁷⁸ An analysis of the TVET system indicates that in some years, certain courses are not offered at all. For example, in 2006 there was no enrolment for the following vocations: weaver, carpet-maker, food-seller and secretary-typist, all of which are traditionally considered as women's occupations.⁷⁹ Female enrolment in TVET institutions in rural areas is lower than the national average (with the exception of Talas oblast), suggesting that vocational training is less available to women in rural areas than in the larger cities.

⁷⁰ National Statistical Committee, 2015, Table 4.3. p. 132; National Statistical Committee. 2011b. Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic. 2006-2010. Table 4.3. p. 33.

⁷¹ National Statistical Committee, 2015. P.132

⁷² International Labor Organization (ILO). 2008. Work and Family: The Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Moscow. p. 4.

⁷³ National Statistical Committee & UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2015. P.157

⁷⁴ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2008. Out-of-School Children in the Kyrgyz Republic. Bishkek p 27.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 29.

⁷⁶ Korotenko, V.A., Kirilenko, A.V. & Prigoda, N.P. 2013. Gender, Environment and Climate Change. Bishkek, UNDP/UN WOMEN/BIOM.p. 36. [in Russian].

⁷⁷ National Statistical Committee. 2014b. Employment and Unemployment. Bishkek. Table 1.3. p. 35 [in Russian].

⁷⁸ National Statistical Committee, 2015, Table 3.5. p. 46

⁷⁹ State Agency for Vocational Education. 2009. Gender Audit of the State Agency for Vocational Education under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic: Final Report. Bishkek. p. 24. [in Russian]

4.10.5 Gender issues related to rule of law sector in Kyrgyzstan

The Government has taken a strong stand in combating gender-based violence through mainstreaming gender concerns into law enforcement, legislative reform, and by increasing penalties for gender-based violence.

Nevertheless, there is low gender sensitivity among investigators, prosecutors, judges and defence lawyers, linked in large part to the lack of gender sensitivity in curricula at Law faculties and in-service training institutions. In the judiciary, only approximately 36 percent of judges are women.⁸⁰

No special procedures are employed or specified for the investigation of rape, child abuse, domestic violence or other cases of gender-based violence. As mentioned earlier (see Civil Society: Association of Women Judges) the procedures for obtaining testimonies from both adults or children are the same. Children are also expected to testify in court in the presence of their alleged abuser / perpetrator. If an underage girl is raped, she is expected to testify in open court where the alleged perpetrator's relatives may also be present. If she is raped by her stepfather, her mother is not allowed to be present whilst she testifies.

To date, the training on gender-based violence has been mainly piecemeal. Some manuals have been developed to train the police, prosecutors, judges and defence lawyers, although the approach has not been systematic. In-service training still does not include mandatory courses on investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases of rape, domestic violence, child abuse and other cases of gender-based violence.

All the above-mentioned factors contribute to a culture of impunity of the perpetrators of gender-based violence.

The current free legal aid framework does not fully take into account women's specific legal aid needs in cases of gender-based violence. Few lawyers are willing to work on domestic violence issues, and the Public Prosecutor does not always act effectively in defending the victim.

Free legal aid is provided to the alleged perpetrator by default, but a victim has to provide proof of low income in order to be eligible for free legal aid.

Women, youth, and people with disabilities face particular challenges in addressing legal problems and in seeking redress for their complaints, both in the formal and informal justice sectors.

Legislation on civil, criminal and administrative procedure does not meet the special needs of persons with disabilities. Those who are hearing- and sight-impaired require sign-language translators and documents in Braille.

The Kyrgyz constitution also provides for the provision of an informal justice mechanism through the *aksakal* (Court of Elders) made up of between three to nine respected community elders, who are unpaid.⁸¹ These are community-based courts, mainly located in rural and remote areas, and the types of disputes most commonly heard include land boundary disputes, livestock-stealing, water disputes, divorce and property division.

Women are less likely to receive a favorable *aksakal* decision in property division conflict proceedings following marital breakdown, because in many cases, they do not originate from that community.

The 'World Justice Project Rule of Law Index' measures how the rule of law is experienced and perceived by the general public across the globe. According to the Index, Kyrgyzstan's overall rule of law performance places it at 10 out of 13 countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region;⁸² 14 out of 28 among lower-middle income countries, and 83 out of 113 countries and jurisdictions worldwide.

Performance is measured using indicators across eight primary rule of law factors namely: constraints on government powers; absence of corruption; open government; fundamental rights; order and security; regulatory enforcement; civil justice, and criminal justice.

4.10.6 Gender issues related to rural development sector in Kyrgyzstan

The State recognizes the key role of women in agriculture, but key documents governing the agricultural sector are gender-blind. Approximately 60 percent of rural women do not own any land, and only 3 percent of women compared with 22 percent of men, have sole ownership of land in rural areas. Another constraint is

⁸⁰ Information obtained from Association of Women Judges, November 2017

⁸¹ Langford, L. & Elemanov, E. 2014. Access to Justice for Vulnerable Groups in the Kyrgyz Republic: Findings from Baseline Assessments in Bishkek, Chuy Province, Osh City, and Osh Province. Bishkek, UNDP.

⁸² Countries measured in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, FYR, Moldova, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

that girls give up any land they may own when they get married and re-locate to their husband's family home. There is a strong tradition in Kyrgyzstan of land ownership being men's domain.

Many women work in agriculture as individual entrepreneurs or as heads or members of peasant farms, but the revenue derived from agricultural production is used principally for household consumption. These women may also sell surplus agricultural products but even then, the income earned is generally used by the family and rarely reinvested in business development. Women's businesses tend to be smaller than men's and operate informally. Limited ownership of key assets and property affect women's opportunities to apply for large loans requiring collateral. Women tend to have less knowledge of how to run a business, and less experience. There are fewer female members of cooperatives. 82 percent of men and only 18 percent of women report owning livestock. However, women play a significant role in animal husbandry. In the case of divorce, the tradition is for family livestock to remain with the husband.

While there is potential for growth in the fruit and vegetable industry, women are almost absent from ownership or management of commercially viable SMEs in expanding market channels. Instead, women currently work in informal, home-based and micro-sized enterprises that are considered stagnant market channels, with limited opportunities for growth. Consequently, women do not currently enjoy employment-related benefits such as maternity benefits and pensions.

As mentioned above, there is high absenteeism of boys from school during peak agricultural work periods, indicating the prevailing use of child labour in agriculture.

Following Kyrgyz independence and reforms, land shares were divided among approximately 2.6 million people, 50.6 percent of whom were women and girls whose names appeared on land titles. Since then, custom and tradition constrain many women from retaining or receiving the full benefits of land distribution.⁸³

In its most recent conclusions, the UN CEDAW Committee identified rural women's lack of land ownership as one facet of persistent discrimination.⁸⁴

The share of women employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries has increased considerably in recent years from 40.2 percent to 44.5 percent of all workers.⁸⁵ This change may reflect the tendency of men to enter other sectors or migrate to seek work, or it may also be due to the reduction in other employment opportunities for women in rural areas.

Access to water for irrigation is an acute concern for farmers in Kyrgyzstan and there is also a gender dimension to the issue. The irrigation infrastructure is in poor condition and in need of capital repair. During the growing season, water shortages occur and they are especially problematic in the southern region in the Batken, Jalalabad and Osh provinces. The limited water supply causes losses especially in kitchen gardens and household plots. Rural women identify shortages of irrigation water as one of the most pressing problems in their villages.

When a woman divorces, the community would consider her rights to land and pasture to remain with her former husband.⁸⁶ Even though such a woman might technically have the protection of the law, she would in effect lose her rights over livestock and pasture land use. Pasture Management Committees (PMC) are responsible for implementing community plans for pasture use the use of pastures, collecting fees, and resolving disputes. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration in 2016 there were 454 PMCs, approximately 11 of which are chaired by women (or 2.4 percent). Because women are under represented on PMCs, they have limited information and access to decision-making concerning sustainable pasture management.⁸⁷

Currently, there are 469 legally registered Water Users' Associations covering 71 percent of the total irrigated area. However, in 2009, only 18 percent of all WUA members were women and only nine WUAs (or 2 percent) were chaired by women.⁸⁸ The under-representation of women is partly a reflection of the fact that members of WUAs are represented by heads of the household who are male.

⁸³ USAID. 2011. Kyrgyzstan- Property Rights and Resource Governance Profile. Washington, DC. p. 10.

⁸⁴ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 2015, pp. 31-32.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Table 4.6. p. 56

⁸⁶ Undeland, A. 2007. Women and Pastures in Chong Alai Valley of the Kyrgyz Republic. Case Study. Bishkek, Rural Development Fund.

⁸⁷ UNDP. no date. A note on including gender issues in projects across sectors. A case of 'Pasture management' project: Kyrgyzstan. (available at <http://undpgendermadeeasy.org>). [accessed January 2016].

⁸⁸ Korotenko, V.A., Kirilenko, A.V. & Prigoda, N.P. 2013. Gender, Environment and Climate Change. Bishkek, UNDP/UN WOMEN/BIOM. [in Russian] p.13.

Currently, women are active in greenhouse vegetable production, field crop farming, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry and the processing of a variety of agricultural products, although their precise contributions along agricultural value chains are not acknowledged. In addition, they experience substantial challenges, including the lack of protection of their rights to ownership of land as mentioned, limited access to financial capital, a lower level of technical agricultural knowledge, and the constraints of tradition and culture that reinforce women's role as farm workers rather than as leaders of agribusiness.

4.10.7 Status and needs of women in rural areas

Rural women have a poorer quality of life than urban women. Health and education services are of lower quality, and as mentioned, the availability of reliable clean water and sanitation facilities remain priority needs in many rural areas. Access to shelters and crisis centres as a response to domestic violence in rural areas is also insufficient.

Despite their active participation in agriculture and animal husbandry, rural women are not empowered. They are also less likely to participate in political processes. Female participation in representative bodies at local *kenesh* level in 2017 was estimated at 10 percent. Only 39 percent of staff of local self-government bodies are women, and they are predominantly concentrated in lower-level administrative positions and in the health, education and social service sectors. Nationwide, there are currently no female Governors, no female *akims*, and no female city mayors.

Rural families spend on average one and a half times more time on domestic chores compared with urban residents. Women and men devote 88 percent and 72.5 percent of their time respectively on household management. There is a general lack of labour-saving appliances in rural households that are of particular benefit to women, such as washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners and water heaters. This may in part due to an irregular supply of electricity. However, the fact that a majority of rural households have televisions suggests that the purchase of electrical goods that are used by all family members for entertainment, are prioritized over those that are used for domestic chores. Likewise, a lack of access to water piped into the house may dissuade rural families from purchasing washing machines.

The mobility of rural women is limited, due to the unaffordability of transport. Less than half of all rural households owns a car. Due to transport constraints, rural populations remain relatively isolated from facilities such as maternity hospitals, which is especially problematic for women with high-risk pregnancies or birth complications.

4.10.8 Role and responsibilities of women in society

There is rigid entrenched stereotyping for the expected roles of women and men, which cuts across all sectors and areas of life in Kyrgyzstan. Women's agency is restricted by their families and society in all spheres of their life regarding reproductive health, education, employment, and civil rights.

Patriarchal attitudes confine women to the private sphere and their role is still mainly perceived as being that of care-giver, and their place is in the home.

It is estimated that only 10 percent of total property ownership in the country is held by women.⁸⁹

There is low legal literacy of the population as a whole, and particularly low levels of legal literacy for women.

The participation of women in politics is not resulting in transformation of unequal gender relations in society, and the participation of women in Parliament and Government has been declining over time. Currently, women's participation is exploited on political party lists. Following elections, successfully-elected female deputies are then replaced by men by their political parties. The small percentage of women who do participate in politics have faced discriminatory attitudes and obstacles to their advancement.

In 2017 there were 19 women Members of Parliament out of a total of 120 MPs. In local councils there were 706 female deputies out of a total of 6,955 deputies representing approximately 10 percent of the total number of deputies.⁹⁰

The number of women in local councils is decreasing with every election. The number of women in city councils is 595 out of a total of 1,127 deputies representing approximately 21 percent of the total number of deputies.

⁸⁹ Information obtained from Department of Gender Affairs, MoLSP, November 2017

⁹⁰ Information obtained from Department of Gender Affairs, MoLSP, November 2017

4.11 Shortcomings and main challenges to be addressed

4.11.1 Institutional and legal framework on GEWE in Kyrgyzstan

While Kyrgyzstan may be considered as having progressive gender legislation and policies, a clear implementation mechanism for gender equity laws is lacking, and the national strategy on gender equality is under-financed.

The country's gender machinery as represented by the Department of Gender Affairs under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, is nominal, largely ineffectual and significantly under-resourced both in human and financial terms.⁹¹ Less than five staff members in total are allocated to the Department, and because of vacancies, it is currently staffed by two people. It has no specialist staff in other ministries, and staff previously working in the regions have been removed.

The range of reliable gender-disaggregated statistics in Kyrgyzstan however is extensive, and special studies on domestic violence, bride-kidnapping and early marriage are available to the general public.

In addition, the application of gender expertise to examine legislation and policies is mandatory prior to any legislation being formally adopted.

Kyrgyzstan has also adopted a national action plan on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on 'Women, Peace and Security', and is the only Central Asian country to do so. UNSCR 1325 addresses not only the disproportionate impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women play in conflict management, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace.

Civil society remains robust in Kyrgyzstan, and women's NGOs are able to unite around issues of concern and advocate effectively with public bodies.

Overall, the environment in Kyrgyzstan could be considered favourable for the advancement of the gender equality agenda, however the capacity of Parliament, Government and line ministries in effective gender mainstreaming, gender analysis of sectors and gender budgeting remains low, and the real political will to effectively take forward GEWE is uncertain.

4.12 Key barriers to achieving gender equality in Kyrgyzstan

The key barriers to achieving gender equality include the weak capacity of the national gender machinery as mentioned above. In addition, there is currently no effective coordination on gender issues in Kyrgyzstan between donors, UN agencies and the national gender machinery. As mentioned earlier, in previous years under the coordination of UN Women, regular extended Gender Theme Groups meetings were held with other gender actors in the country, such as the EU.

The increasing trend of Islamization in the country may pose a real risk to gains made to date in gender equality in Kyrgyzstan.

For ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek women from socially conservative households in rural areas who are unemployed, or have not completed their education, attending an Islamic study circle organized by an informal female religious teacher may be the only activity outside the home which is accessible to them. The radicalisation of women is often explained as a response to the lack of social, religious, economic and political opportunities afforded to rural women in Kyrgyzstan.⁹² Through Islamic study circles, women are taught that the role of the husband and father is as the financial maintainer of the family, and the stay-at-home mother is considered as being in an honoured position.⁹³ Gender equality in this context is considered as an unrealistic and impractical lifestyle.⁹⁴

A religious leader working with women of both Uzbek and Kyrgyz ethnicities in Osh cited financial problems as a key reason why women, especially those left behind with children because their husbands migrated, are easy targets for Islamic organizations.⁹⁵ Women belonging to Islamic study circles may also receive cash

⁹¹ It has been pointed out that the problem of resource shortages is common to all Kyrgyz ministries and departments

⁹² International Crisis Group (2009) 'Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan.' Asia Report N°176. 3 September 2009.

⁹³ Shabela Begum, "Has the glass ceiling been reinforced by concrete?" 28 September 2008, at www.hizb.org.uk.

⁹⁴ Shabela Begum, "Has the glass ceiling been reinforced by concrete?" 28 September 2008, at www.hizb.org.uk

⁹⁵ Crisis Group interviews, Naryn, March 2016; Osh, 29 March 2016

allowances from external Islamic organizations in order to purchase food and clothing for their children.⁹⁶ Study circles in some cases have been recruitment points in the process towards extremist violence, and the hardship of daily life is said to have made some women receptive to the decision to travel to Syria.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Crisis Group interviews, Naryn, March 2016; Osh, 29 March 2016.

⁹⁷ Crisis Group interview, religion expert, Kyrgyzstan, September 2014.

5 Specific issues and response strategies

5.1 Non-financial instruments: political and policy dialogue

The most relevant document for EU's bilateral political dialogue with Kyrgyzstan is the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.⁹⁸ In all areas of its external action, the EU without exception is to promote a human rights-based approach to assist the country in implementing its international human rights obligations. In July 2015, a new action plan was introduced for the period 2015 to 2019 with increased focus on economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights as key external human rights priorities for the EU. Another major development is the upgraded focus on combating discrimination. The Framework contains a commitment for the EU to 'fight discrimination in all its forms through combating discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity, age, gender or sexual orientation'.

The analysis, expertise and knowledge provided by women's organizations and other stakeholders such as UN organizations is another useful basis for informing the EU's political dialogue with Kyrgyzstan. The EU has a specific cooperation agreement with UN Women which affirms the partnership between the two organizations to support gender equality and women's empowerment around the globe and ensures close collaboration.⁹⁹

The EU is perceived as having political leverage and being influential with the Government. At no financial cost, there is space to conduct effective policy dialogue on gender equality issues in relation to Kyrgyzstan's National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality.

National stakeholders particularly the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Department of Gender Affairs, strongly expressed their wish to have the opportunity to hear and discuss the findings of this EU Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan. This would provide an entry point for dialogue on priority gender issues in the country.

The results of political dialogue should also be continued into the policy dialogue with Member States to ensure that respective external policies and programmes are implemented in accordance with Member States' agreed gender equality commitments, whether through gender mainstreaming or gender-specific actions.

When combined, these three methods - political and policy dialogue, gender mainstreaming and specific actions are an effective three-pronged approach to increasing gender equality. The components are complementary and are essential for ensuring GEWE impact on the ground.

Opportunity for joint action

A major role of the EUD and Member States in Kyrgyzstan is one of advocacy and a common voice is needed. The EU Delegation could convene a meeting with Member States, UN Women, UNODC, UNFPA and other UN agencies for a joint brainstorming meeting to discuss GEWE priorities in Kyrgyzstan in the context of the National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality.

Each (even small) initiative should contribute to general coherent programmes of other active donors. Agreement could be reached between parties on different joint action paths over a range of time-frames such as over the coming one, two or three years. This will ensure that the EU is present at key junctures of Kyrgyzstan's development and extend its political influence.

The EU could become more actively involved in contributing to goals contained in the National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality to mainstream gender, and become more invested in concrete actions such as lobbying the government to strengthen the Department of Gender Affairs under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to make it effective, by having its own dedicated budget and having extended powers to execute, implement and monitor action programmes.

There is scope for taking forward policy dialogue on gender equality in Kyrgyzstan through high level visits; negotiations related to project preparation and formulation; and donor development coordination fora.

⁹⁸ Council of the European Union (2012). EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy. Luxembourg

⁹⁹ UN Women, European Union (2016) 'Working Together for Gender Equality: The EU – UN Women Partnership.' The EU-UN Women partnership focuses on five priorities: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.

As an important donor in the country, the EU is well-placed, and could take the lead in a coordinated donor response in policy dialogue regarding combating gender stereotypes; through human rights and women's rights dialogue, and stressing also the crucial role of women's organizations in monitoring the National Strategy on Achievement of Gender Equality and the achievement of the SDGs.

5.2 Coordination between EU institutions and EU Member States

Agreement should be reached on the choice of measures from the GAP II that will be selected and implemented by the EUD and Member States.

Effective implementation of the EU GAP II objectives in Kyrgyzstan requires much stronger communication between all the different EU actors¹⁰⁰ at partner country level, in order to share analysis, strategic thinking and lessons from practice. Placing discussion of on-going GAP II measures as a rolling agenda item at regular EUD and Member State coordination meetings would maintain the focus and attention on progress being made on the three thematic priorities. The aim is for all actors of the EU's external relations to foster and support gender equality actions in the country.

There are other opportunities for improving coordination between EU institutions and Member States: GAP II could also be a rolling agenda item at regular meetings of EU Heads of Mission to exchange information in EU Member State Councillor meetings at least on a yearly basis.

It is understood that the Delegation already reports to HQ Brussels on the progress on gender issues in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, twice yearly 'in-depth explorations' into EEAS, Commission and Member States' activities on thematic areas, would provide opportunities for substantive peer learning and exchange. The findings could be presented to development partners, CODEV (Working Party on Development Cooperation) and EU Directorates General to maintain focus on the GAP II framework.

5.3 Assessment and recommendations of where EUD can add value for achieving country objectives on gender equality (as part of national development)

The political leverage and advocacy opportunities for taking forward gender equality in Kyrgyzstan is also provided by the Sustainable Development Goals. Twelve of the 17 SDGs have gender targets to be achieved by 2030.

Removing obstacles for female employment and career growth is one of the goals. As discussed earlier, despite full guaranteed gender equality there are hundreds of jobs which remain prohibited for women in Kyrgyzstan because they are considered unsafe or dangerous for women, especially in highly-paid sectors and heavy industries.

Under Goal 5, there is a target on eliminating violence against women, while Goal 16 has a target to promote the rule of law and equal access to justice.

Through advocacy and the established formal dialogue with Kyrgyzstan, the EU could lead the way in recommending that Kyrgyzstan analyse and use data for policy formulation especially regional data, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and other social differences. This would also align well with the emphasis on data within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals in detail are presented in Annex 4.

5.4 Selected objectives from GAP II for Kyrgyzstan

Based on an analysis of the gender situation in Kyrgyzstan, it has been concluded that all 14 gender objectives across the three thematic areas of EU GAP II, are relevant to Kyrgyzstan, and to which the EU can add value as part of the country's national development. In this section, the priority gender objectives are identified:

B. Thematic Priority: Physical and Psychological Integrity

¹⁰⁰ 'EU Actors' refers to Commission services, the EEAS and EU Member States

Ensuring the physical and psychological integrity of girls and women is an EU priority. Preventing and combating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a precondition for equitable and inclusive sustainable development, as well as an important value and objective in itself.

Objectives 7 and 12 are priorities for Kyrgyzstan and are recommended:

- Objective 7: Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere
- Objective 12: Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women and throughout their life cycle.

C. Thematic Priority: Economic and Social Empowerment

Ensuring that girls and women are empowered, that their economic and social rights are fulfilled and that an enabling environment for their fair and active participation in the economy exists are key EU priorities. Such an objective will contribute to faster growing economies, whilst preventing human exploitation.

Objectives 13, 14, 15 and 16 are priorities for Kyrgyzstan and are recommended:

- 13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination
- 14. Access to decent work for women of all ages
- 15. Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship
- 16. Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport infrastructure, and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women.

D. Thematic Priority: Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation

Ensuring that girls and women, boys and men, have a voice at all levels of society, are able to effectively participate and have a say over decisions that affect their lives is central to the EU's approach. Not only is it right that girls and women participate equally, their participation contributes to more inclusive, balanced and representative societies.

Objectives 17, 19 and 20 are priorities for Kyrgyzstan and are recommended:

17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels

19. Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes

20. Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues.

The thematic objectives outlined in Annex 1 of the framework, 'Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020' are all specific initiatives for women and girls (and some also for men and boys). EU actors (EEAS at EU Delegation and Headquarters level) should continue to use the EU's range of means to implement and promote gender equality. To be effective and sustainable however, they also require changes in the broader social, economic, political and environmental country context in Kyrgyzstan.

5.5 Proposed adaptation of programmes in Kyrgyzstan

An overview was made of on-going EU-funded projects to assess to what extent gender mainstreaming was effective, and whether there was adequate awareness of the gender dimensions of the sector in which interventions were being made. It was found that there are effective gender-sensitive interventions being implemented under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) which also addresses the gender risks posed by Islamization. These include such projects as: 'Constructive dialogues on religion and democracy' implemented by 'International Alert'; 'Promoting dialogue and collaboration among youth to counter extremism in Kyrgyzstan' implemented by 'Saferworld', as well as the project implemented by DVV: 'Democracy and Religion - Dialogue between Equal And Moderate voices (DREAM)'.

In the education sector, the project implemented by KAS / BIOM: 'Fostering and Monitoring of the Education Reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic' provided solid evidence of gender gaps in the education sector, (i.e. drop-out rates of boys; attendance rates of girls; gender stereotyping in school textbooks), although the budget support indicators for this sector, do not reflect identified gender gaps.

In the rule of law sector, the project implemented by GIZ: 'Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic' is not effectively mainstreaming gender, and gender issues in the sector are not being effectively addressed by the project

In the rural development sector, there are effective gender-specific interventions targeting women, particularly implemented by 'Mountain Societies Development Support Programme Foundation (MSDSP) in the project: 'Small and medium enterprises growth project', which are working towards the economic empowerment of women.

However, the awareness, knowledge and understanding among some Team Leaders about the obligation and importance of gender mainstreaming in EU projects was very low indeed.

For example, the project log frames of on-going DCI projects which were reviewed, do not systematically contain gender-sensitive indicators or even targets (such as percentage participation rates) for numbers of male and female beneficiaries.

As stated earlier, mainstreaming of GEWE is EU policy and is a mandatory requirement laid down by law in the Development Cooperation Instrument Regulation, which defines GEWE as a cross-cutting issue to be integrated into all development activities.

Recommendations

- EUD should strongly emphasise with implementing partners the EU's commitment to EU GAP II implementation
- A stronger policy should be pursued and reiterated with project implementing partners obliging them to take up relevant gender objectives through mainstreaming, and adequately measuring progress towards achieving GAP II gender objective(s)
- Adequate accountability and reporting mechanisms should be established in the project logframes through indicators and targets which are gender-sensitive
- A requirement to analyse gender concerns related to the sector in which projects operate, should be imposed and reiterated regularly with project implementers, especially those responsible for future projects which are in the pipeline.

Based on findings from the review and analysis of on-going EU-funded projects in the focal sectors in Kyrgyzstan, the following actions are recommended:

For rural development projects:

- GIZ as management body for future EU-funded rural development projects should ensure that gender dimensions are addressed in all situation analyses, inception reports and feasibility studies etc. for all projects in the rural development sector. Gender indicators have been integrated into the log frame.

For rule of law sector projects:

- A comprehensive gender analysis of the rule of law sector should be conducted as part of the design of the next phase of the rule of law project to be implemented by GIZ.
- Ensure that gender concerns are explicitly addressed at outcome and output levels of the new rule of law project and that gender sensitive indicators are formulated to measure progress
- Address the identified needs of women and persons with disabilities in relation to access to justice
- Ensure effective cooperation / partnership with professional associations of women in the rule of law sector (such as the Association of Women Judges, and Association of Women Police Officers) and women's CSOs.

For education sector projects:

With the projects in the education sector, the EU is well placed to address gender stereotyping and eliminate inequality between men and women through education. It should

- Promote the development of professional courses for girls in non-traditional skills
- Assist the Ministry of Education in revising the curricula for teacher-training and educational curricula at all levels of education in order to remove existing gender stereotypes.

Recommended conditionality / performance indicators in education sector: budget support

Engagement in policy dialogue concerning conditions and government reform priorities are an important

activity.

Such EU budget support conditionality should be linked to gender equality outcomes in the country. The following indicators and conditionality are recommended:

- As part of teacher training, include addressing the removal of gender bias and stereotypes
- The training of girls in VET in non-traditional skills, should be linked to labour market requirements (tourism, innovations, IT)
- Gender stereotypes in education curricula and school materials should be removed
- Gender indicators should be systematically used in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of education sector.

5.6 New actions identified for Kyrgyzstan

Following an analysis of the gender situation, and discussions with stakeholders and actors, new gender equality actions have been identified which are considered significant and of high priority in Kyrgyzstan.

There were demands voiced by Ministry of Labour and Social Protection for support for further research on specific issues such as

- gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms on roles and duties in the family;
- the practice of household and care work of women (as part of their commitments under National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2016-2017).

There is also a need for capacity building of the Ministry of Labour on Green Economy gender expertise in order to develop effective female entrepreneurship in agriculture. In this regard, the Ministry has requested technical assistance from donors.¹⁰¹ There have been some effective pilot experiences implemented by FAO in the past, which may potentially be scaled up and disseminated if found feasible and effective. An overview and expert assessment of interventions in the sector would therefore be very constructive and useful.

There is a need to build the capacity of the National Statistics Office and other responsible public bodies on collecting statistics based on recent legislative amendments related to gender-based violence. Capacity building on best practice related to data collection on gender-based violence is required.

5.7 Identified priorities for in-country calls under EIDHR / NSA-LA instrument in Kyrgyzstan

Findings from the Kyrgyzstan Gender Study indicate that there are specific initiatives that would contribute to improving gender equality / women's empowerment in the country through the EIDHR / NSA-LA instruments. The EIDHR is designed to help civil society to become an effective force for political reform and defence of human rights. Its key strength is the ability to operate without the need for host government consent. The 2014-2020 EIDHR has become more strategic in its focus, and its specific objectives are defined with respect to the protection of human rights and support of democratic processes, including in particular:

- stronger emphasis on economic, gender and social rights
- stronger wording on the role of civil society, including a specific reference to the cooperation between civil society and local authorities and relevant state institutions;
- stronger emphasis on vulnerable groups (national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex persons (LGBTI), indigenous peoples).

The priorities which are recommended for Kyrgyzstan include

- actions which assist in the implementation of CEDAW in the country
- actions to improve the capacity of the national gender machinery
- interventions which address gender-based violence.

¹⁰¹ This was recommended during the meeting held with the Gender Study team.

Recommendations on integrating gender-specific interventions into possible future EIDHR country-based support schemes and CSO-LA thematic instrument.

This section contains recommendations regarding calls for proposals in Kyrgyzstan, where projects are to be managed by EUD in Kyrgyzstan. They can be used for elaborating corresponding guidelines for grant applicants to the above-mentioned thematic instruments.

1. As mentioned above, the relevant gender objectives for Kyrgyzstan under Thematic Priority B: Physical and Psychological Integrity are Objectives 7 and 12.

For Objective 7: Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 7 could include:

- Delivering education and raising awareness for behavioural change regarding gender based violence, engaging men and boys and communities.
- Improving the capacity of the judiciary and law enforcement to provide redress to VAWG victims, in line with international standards.
- Providing services that support survivors of VAWG
- Supporting legislative action to penalise all VAWG and gender based violence and to protect victims.

For Objective 12: Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women and throughout their life cycle.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 12 could include:

- Empowering women through income, control of resources and knowledge, as key actors for improving nutrition for themselves and their families
- Supporting nutrition-related programmes for vulnerable households
- Contributing to reducing the occurrence of malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women.

2. As identified, the relevant gender objectives for Kyrgyzstan under Thematic Priority C: Economic and Social Empowerment are Objectives 13, 14, 15 and 16.

For Objective 13: Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 13 could include:

- Providing vocational and professional training for girls and boys that enable them to be change agents
- Providing education (both formal and non-formal), that addresses gender stereotypes
- Ensuring safe, free of sexual and gender based violence environment that responds to child protection principles
- Promoting gender-equal role models in the transition from education to the labour market

For Objective 14: Access to decent work for women of all ages.

The possible relevant activities in Uzbekistan under Objective 14 could include:

- Supporting gender sensitive legislation and public finance reforms, which account for the role of women in the care economy, unpaid labour, unequal gender distribution of family responsibilities
- Supporting institutional capacity to deliver on these reforms and policies
- Challenging social norms and attitudes that hinder women's economic empowerment including economic and social recognition of unpaid and care work
- Supporting regulation for legal migration and protection of the rights of migrant workers with due regard to gender inequalities
- Reducing women's risk of distress migration and the associated exposure to abuse and exploitation, and supporting viable alternatives
- Analyzing and addressing the overrepresentation of female workforce in the informal economy.

For Objective 15: Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 15 could include:

- Supporting transformative legislation on ownership, inheritance and control of land and other productive resources by women
- Eliminating barriers to women's equal access to markets, private sector development services, financial services, entrepreneurship, and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs)
- Supporting female entrepreneurship as well as care facilities that assist families
- Increasing the affordability and use of technology, expanding rural access, and boosting digital literacy for women.

For Objective 16: Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport infrastructure, and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 16 could include:

- Supporting public policies and community-based natural resource management systems and policies that generate greater coverage, safer access to, and inclusive decision making over sustainable energy, infrastructure and water by women of all ages.
- Supporting actions, legislation or policies which enable girls and women to participate in decision-making concerning resource use
- Supporting the development of community infrastructure which has significant impact on women of all ages (solar energy, clean water etc.)
- Supporting country monitoring systems to report with sex disaggregated data and qualitative analysis the situation of water and sanitation, energy, infrastructure in the country.

3. As identified, the relevant gender objectives for Kyrgyzstan under Thematic Priority D: Voice and Participation are Objectives 17, 19 and 20.

For Objective 17: Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 17 could include:

- Promote behavioural change in decision making, combating discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes at family and community level, through public education and media campaigns, engaging with women and men of all ages.
- Increasing the percentage of women in key institutions at national and municipal levels: Government and local councils.

For Objective 19: Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 19 could include:

- Promoting public debate on non-discriminatory gender relationships that respect the physical, mental, social, integrity of boys and girls, and the child protection principle
- Supporting community, peer-to-peer, outreach and mobilisation action, involve men and boys, engaging with leaders and figures of authority to promote the rights of girls and women of all ages and to increase the value placed on them by their own communities
- Investing in broad-based education on social constructions of masculinity / femininity and positive change in decision making for family responsibilities, parenthood, opposition to sexual and gender based violence, etc.
- Supporting civil society action of girls and women, men and boys and their associations as agents for change towards gender equality.

For Objective 20: Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues.

The possible relevant activities in Kyrgyzstan under Objective 20 could include:

- Increasing the resilience of girls and women in facing climate and environmental change and supporting them as agents of environmental protection.

- Researching the differentiated impact of climate change on male and female population of all ages, to be able to design public policy that responds to the real needs of men and women.

Recommendation for Central Asia Regional Programme

There is scope for the EU to promote / formulate a regional Central Asia programme on GEWE with a focus on:

- building knowledge of Central Asia partners
- sharing best practice on legal and institutional framework for GEWE and its effective implementation
- gender research
- use of gender statistics in policy formulation;
- gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in national development

This could be between Central Asia countries and selected EU Member States. Eastern European Member States which have a similar historical Socialist past and context, would be well-placed as partners, thereby improving relevance and effectiveness for Kyrgyzstan.

6 Annexes

Annex 1: People / Entities Met

Name	Designation
	EUD Charge d'Affaires, Acting Head of Delegation
Charlotte Adriaen	EUD Head of Cooperation
Nicola Scaramuzzo	EUD Project Manager and former Gender Focal Point, Cooperation Section
Gulnara Botobaeva	EUD Project Manager, Cooperation Section
Luca Carapelli	EUD Project Manager, Cooperation Section
Robert Brudzynski	EUD Project Manager, Cooperation Section
Sarah Barnat	EUD Project Manager, Cooperation Section
Madina Abubeker	EUD Project Manager and current Gender Focal Point, Cooperation Section
Carl Frosio	EUD Project Manager, Cooperation Section
Claudia Hock	EUD Project Manager, Cooperation Section
Islan Osmonaliev	EUD Project Manager, Cooperation Section
Ernest Robello	Project Leader CADAP 6
Aleksandr Zelichenko	Coordinator CADAP 6
Raitis Tiliks	BOMCA 9
Janna Tashieva	BOMCA 9
Dr. Stefanos Kareklas	Team Leader 'Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic'
Jyldyz Iskakova	Project Coordinator 'Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Public Councils in Kyrgyzstan'
Nuridin Nurakov	Programme Coordinator, Law Programme Soros Kyrgyzstan Foundation
Dr Kenneth Paul Charman	Team Leader, Project 'Support to the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic'
Jenishbek Arzymatov	Project 'Strengthen Prevention and Combating of Corruption in Kyrgyz Republic' (SPCC-KY)
Volodymyr Kudzinski	Team Leader, TA to the Sector Reform Contract: Social Protection Kyrgyzstan
Nazgul Turdubekova	Director, PF 'Child's Rights Defenders League'
Abakhon Sultonazarov	Regional Director, Central Asia Country Director of IWPR in KR
Timur Toktonaliev	Editor, IWPR in KR
Meerim Shamudinova	Project Coordinator, IWPD in KR
Gerald Gunther	Representative, UN Women Country Office, Kyrgyz Republic
Jyldyz Kuvatova	National Programme Officer, UN Women Country Office, KR
Venera Omuralieva	CESIE
Ulan Dastan	Project Coordinator, Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society Association
Baktygul Islabekova	Analyst, Association for Social Technologies
Gulnara Yessentayeve	EBRD Principal Banker, Gender Focal Point for Central Asia Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure
Farhod Rahmatov	Internews Project Director
Gulmira Mamatkerimova	Council of Europe, National long-term Consultant
Svetlana Anisimova	(via Skype) Council of Europe, Strasbourg
Zaruhi Gasparyan	(via Skype) Council of Europe, Strasbourg
Elena Zakirova	National Program Officer / Governance, Swiss Cooperation
Nadezhda Vladimirovna Romanenko	DVV International Country Director for Kyrgyzstan
Lucio Valerio Sarandrea	UNDP Chief Technical Adviser on Rule of Law Democratic Governance Programme, UNDP in Kyrgyzstan
Ainura Alymbekova	Project Coordinator, 'Widening Access to Justice for Legal Empowerment in the Kyrgyz Republic' UNDP Programme Management Unit
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Annex 2: Interview / focus group guides

Question guide for CSOs / NGOs group interviews and meetings

Areas to be covered:

- Mandate and goals of organization
- Current activities
- Current gender situation
- Discussion and analysis of most important gender / empowerment issues
- Impact of current gender policies
- Gender mainstreaming in activities
- Problems specific to Kyrgyzstan – GBV, domestic violence, discrimination, social norms
- Status and needs of women in rural areas
- Role of EU and donors
- Main conclusions and recommendations

Question guide for line ministries / government bodies / Parliamentary committee

For Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture:

Agriculture and water policy in Kyrgyzstan, gender mainstreaming in relation to access to water, rural development, land ownership of women, participation of women in WUAs, status and needs of women in rural areas, role of EU and donors

For Ministry of Education:

Education policy in Kyrgyzstan, gender mainstreaming in education, access of girls and boys to education and vocational education, school pupil attendance rates and dropout rates, monitoring mechanisms, difference between rural and urban areas, role of EU and donors.

For Ministry of Labour, Department of Gender Affairs:

Gender policy of Kyrgyzstan, mechanisms for implementing gender policy, constraints and information gaps; areas for further study, participation rates of women in Parliament and local self-government bodies, role of EU.

For Ministry of Interior

Access to justice of women and girls, gender-based violence, domestic violence, participation of women in law enforcement agencies.

For National Statistics Committee

Available statistics on women, girls, men and boys, information gaps, rural and urban differences, statistics on agriculture and rural women, pipeline surveys such as population census, role of EU

For Parliamentary Committee on Social Issues

Policy and legislation on gender equality in Kyrgyzstan, role of Parliament in establishing policies and laws, national gender machinery, gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies, major challenges to achieving gender

equality, gender budgeting, role of EU.

Question guide for international organizations / gender studies organizations / line ministries

Areas to be covered:

- Statistics on the situation of women and girls, men and boys
- Barriers to achieving gender equality
- Mapping of actors with mandate and capacity to act for gender equality in Kyrgyzstan
- Gender mainstreaming
- Gender budgeting
- Status and needs of women in rural areas / role and responsibilities of women in society
- Discrimination
- Gender-based violence
- Role of EU and donors
- Main conclusions and recommendations

Annex 3: Documentation

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Annex 4: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), known as: 'Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', is a set of 17 Global Goals covering a broad range of sustainable development issues.

The SDGs in detail are:

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages
- Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation
- Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (taking note of agreements made by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change forum)
- Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development.

Annex 5: Workshop "Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan: Key Findings and Recommendations"

Following the request by the EU Delegations in Astana and Bishkek, the project organised a one-day workshop to present the findings and recommendations of the study carried out in 5 Central Asian countries with a focus on Kyrgyzstan. The workshop took place on 16 February 2018 in Bishkek in Park Hotel. A wide range of stakeholders were invited by the EU Delegation in Bishkek. Both the plenary session and the group work generated a number of comments, recommendations and follow-up actions to further promote gender equality on the national level as well as in the framework of EU-funded projects and programmes.

Agenda of the workshop

Workshop "Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan: Key Findings and Recommendations"

16 February 2018, Park Hotel, Bishkek

Session 1	
Moderator: Zulfia Kochorbaeva/ Director, Agency for Social Technologies	
09.00 – 09.30	Registration Welcome coffee
09.30 – 09.40	Opening speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charlotte Adriaen Head of Cooperation/ Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic
09.40 – 10.00	Presentation of the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nicola Scaramuzzo Project Manager/ Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic
10.00 – 12.00	Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan: findings and recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helen Dubok Team Leader, Gender Expert/ EU Gender Study for Central Asia, EuroPlus Consulting & Management
12.00 – 12.30	Q&A
12.30 – 13.00	Side event: Presentation of the new EU-funded project to address the root causes of gender-based violence: entrenched patriarchal attitudes, pervasive gender stereotypes and harmful social norms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jyldyz Kuvatova National Programme Officer/ UN Women
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
Session 2	
Moderator: Helen Dubok/ Team Leader, Gender Expert, EU Gender Study for Central Asia, EuroPlus Consulting & Management	
14.00 – 16.00	Group work (3 groups [rule of law, education, and rural development and social protection] elaborate on ways forward to implement Study recommendations)
16.00 – 16.30	Coffee-break
16.30 – 17.30	Presentation by working groups
17.30 – 18.00	Wrap-up and conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helen Dubok Charlotte Adriaen

List of participants

State Agencies	
S. Isaev	Government Office
Kudaiberdy Kojoshev	Deputy Minister of Education
Larisa Marchenko	Adviser to the Minister of Education
Askar Abduvali uulu	Ministry of Interior, Directorate on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation
Altynai Shabdanalieva	National Training Centre under the Ministry of Interior, Inspector
Bakir Koilubaev	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Land Reclamation, Deputy General Director of Department of Water Resources and Land Improvement
Aizhan Dzhakshylykova	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Land Reclamation, Head of Legal Department
A. Kuttubai kzy	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Department on Gender Issues
Saira Izakova	Ministry of Justice, Head of By-Law Development Department
R.B. Asylbasheva	Ministry of Health
Myrza-Aiym Kamchibekova	Central Election Commission, Head of Legal Department
Chinara Ismailova	Central Election Commission, Representative on Prevention of Corruption
Baktinur Mambetov	Central Election Commission, Expert
Daniayr Bakchiev	State Registration Service
Melis Erjigitov	State Registration Service
Anarbubu Nurdinova	Jogorku Kenesh, Expert of the Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Science, Culture and Health
Mahabat Turdumamatova	Ombudsman Institute, Head of Department on Child Rights and Gender Affairs
Umut Abylgazieva	Ombudsman Institute, Expert of Department on Child Rights and Gender Affairs
S. Ormonbekova	National Centre for the Prevention of Torture
Mirgul Chydyeva	Bishkek City Administration
EU Projects	
Dr. Stefanos Kareklas	Project "Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic", GIZ, Team Leader
Gergely Banhegyi	Project "Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic", GIZ
Gulnura Toleeva	Project "Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic", GIZ
Christoph Kopecky	Project "Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic", GIZ
Bolot Isakov	Project "Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic", GIZ, Human Rights Expert
Jyldyz Isakova	Project "Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Public Councils in Kyrgyzstan", Project Coordinator
Vladimir Korotenko	BIOM
Jenishbek Arzymatov	Project "Strengthen Prevention and Combating of Corruption in Kyrgyz Republic", Council of Europe

Gulnara Asilbekova	Technical Assistance to the Sector Reform Contract: Social Protection Kyrgyzstan, Team Leader
Gerald Gunther	UN Women Country Office, Representative
Jyldyz Kuvatova	UN Women Country Office, National Programme Officer
Gulmira Mamatkerimova	Project "Support to Strengthening Democracy through Electoral Reform", Venice Commission of the Council of Europe
Gulnara Yessentayeva	EBRD Principal Banker, Gender Focal Point for Central Asia Municipal and Environmental Infrastructure
Kadyrbek Kalkanov	EU Education Technical Assistance project
International Organizations	
Elena Zakirova	Swiss Embassy in the Kyrgyz Republic, National Program Officer/ Governance
Nadezhda Romanenko	DVV International Country Director for Kyrgyzstan
Umutai Dauletova	UNDP Programme Management Unit, Gender Mainstreaming Specialist
Nurbek Omurov	IOM Office in Kyrgyzstan
Tristan Petterson	IOM Office in Kyrgyzstan
Gulsana Turusbekova	UNICEF - Specialist on Social Policy
Munir Mammadzade	UNICEF - Deputy Representative
Galina Solodunova	UNICEF C4D Specialist/Gender Focal Point
Damira Abakirova	UNICEF Nutrition Officer
Chynara Kumenova,	UNICEF Education Officer
Chinargul Dzhumagulova	UNICEF ECD officer
Aidai Bedelbaeva	ADB, Gender Specialist
Mahabbat Alymkulova	USAID Project Management Specialist, Democracy and Governance Office
Gulfia Abdullaeva	FAO
Armen Sedrakyan	FAO
Zeinep Isakova	USAID
Elina Galani	OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek
Jypar Turmamatova	UN Women Country Office
Aigerim Toktogulova	UN Women Country Office
D. Mamatova	UN Women Country Office
Aisuluu Kamchybekova,	HelpAge International, Executive Director
Farhod Rahmatov	Internews, Project Director
Rasul Momunaliev	International Alert
Civil Society and Experts	
Zulfia Kochorbaeva	Social Technologies Agency, Director
Baktygul Islanbekova	Social Technologies Agency
Ulan Dastan uulu	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, Project Coordinator
Jamilya Jarkynbaeva	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society
Raushan Sadyrbaeva	Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society

Cholpon Babalieva	Legal Clinic "Adilet"
Nazgul Turdubekova	PF "Child's Rights Defenders League", Director
Usupova Asel	PF "Child's Rights Defenders League"
Janyl Jumakanova	Media Development Centre
Asel Sooronbaeva	Civic Initiative for Internet Policy
Munara Beknazarova	NGO "Open Line", Director
Olga Djanaeva	Rural Women's Association "Alga", Director
A. Bakashova	Rural Women's Association "Alga"
Meerim Kadyrkulova	Crisis Centre "Sezim"
Nurgul Dzhanaeva	Forum of Women NGOs
Saliya Akulova	PA "Agents of Change"
Aidai Sharsheeva	PA "Agents of Changes"
Zhanyl Abdylidabek kyzy	Gender Studies Centre, Gender expert
Aia Omuralieva	Gender Studies Centre
Murat Karypov	PF "Nash Vek"
Ainakan Namazova	Isykkul Association of Women's Communities
Japar Kanaev	FSGP, Balykchy
Gulzhan Baibetova	PF "Women's Democratic Network"
Nurjigit Kadyrbekov	PF "Yiman"
Gulmira Suranaeva	Alliance for Reproductive Health
Galina Chirkina	Alliance for Reproductive Health
Anarbek Shukiev	PA "Dilana"
Other	
Audin Mammadzoda	AUCA
Svetlana Sirmbard	EU Review Mission team member
Aigul Bolotova	EUD Visibility Consultant
Rene Mally	EU DEVCO B4, Head of Sector
Charlotte Adriaen	EUD, Head of Cooperation
Rukiye Komurcu	EUD, Head of Finance and Contracts
Nicola Scaramuzzo	EUD, Project Manager
Robert Brudzynski	EUD, Project Manager
Carl Frosio	EUD, Project Manager
Mia Dubous	EUD, Project Manager
Gulnara Botobaeva	EUD, Project Manager
Islan Osmonaliev	EUD, Project Manager
Sarah Barnat-Said	EUD, Project Manager
Madina Abubeker	EUD, Project Manager
Alexandra Pouwels	EU DEVCO Trainee
Teresa Gil Ricol	EU DEVCO Trainee
Anna Dorottya Zsoldos	EU DEVCO Trainee

Key conclusions and recommendations

I. Plenary session: comments and recommendations shared by workshop participants

1. It is important to highlight impact of migration in rural areas on elderly people, especially elderly women, who are forced to bring up their grandchildren, at times with little or no financial aid from their children.
2. Statistical evidence should be collected to measure the scale of discrimination and harassment of female labor migrants by their compatriots in other countries.
3. Proper monitoring and analysis should be in place to measure effectiveness of free legal aid which is provided to victims of GBV.
4. There is a need to highlight increased religious influence and increased patriarchal pressure as other challenges identified by women in KG.
5. Another issue that should be included is poor access to water resources and sanitation, which has implications on reproductive health of women in rural areas. In the meantime, poor level of sexual and reproductive health services coupled with high fertility have an impact on the role of and level of respect for women.
6. Government programs and initiatives on economic development shall be more gender-sensitive.
7. Attention should be drawn to the need of increased political participation and representation of women.
8. It is important that girls receive at least some vocational education to be able to provide for themselves after they get married.
9. There is a need for gender budgeting on the local level.
10. No stereotypes referring to geographical location/religious affiliation should be applied when talking about gender violence or gender inequality.
11. Theological experts shall be involved in explanation of the concept of gender equality, whereas these explanatory activities and other awareness-raising initiatives shall target men.
12. It is important to look at how gender stereotypes are transmitted by mothers as well as teachers, who are often times female.
13. Ministry of Education and media should take a proactive approach in raising public awareness on the issue of increased religiosity and its implications on women and girls.
14. It is important that the EU pays more attention to capacity-building and awareness-raising of teenagers.
15. There is a need to introduce clear tools and guidelines to assess direct and indirect gender impact as well as to establish a clear mechanism of collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data, both on the national level and within the EU.
16. It is important to focus more on gender related terminology when it comes to awareness-raising.
17. The EU shall also reflect the issues of sexual and reproductive health when it comes to gender mainstreaming.

II. Group work session: conclusions and follow-up actions

1. Rule of Law

- "Promotion of Rule of Law in the Kyrgyz Republic" Project (ROLPRO2), implemented by GIZ, foresees to cooperate with the General Prosecutor's Office (GPO) on the fight against GBV through trainings. Also, activities of the Project in the field of torture prevention as well as regarding the newly established institution of an investigative judge can be gender sensitive.
- In the framework of ROLPRO2 subcomponent on legal drafting, it is envisioned to work on the strengthening of the gender expertise of primary, secondary etc. legal acts. Additionally, the Project will support improvement of the online platform for public discussion of draft legal acts, which will reflect gender aspects.

- ROLPRO2 will try to introduce “gender-audit” of the main beneficiaries the Project will be working with, particularly the (Supreme) Courts and the GPO, provided there is full consent from their side. Alternatively, the Project will seek ways to strengthen gender-sensitivity of judges/prosecutors.
- ROLPRO2 will provide reliable statistical data as regards prosecutorial and judicial practices in GBV cases. In case these data will identify shortcomings that originate from not-appropriate legal provisions, the Project will initiate relevant law-revisionary or amending activities.
- ROLPRO2 will undertake efforts to expand the existing legislative framework pertaining to free legal aid in order to cover also civil and administrative cases. The Project will also ensure proper implementation of the existing legislation, together with other donors active in this field.
- The court management (chair-persons’) training of the Project, already fruitful and successful in the 1st Phase, will be reviewed to include gender related issues and questions, especially for newly appointed female court-presidents.
- A separate cross-cutting activity of the ROLPRO2, beyond gender question, will be close cooperation with civil society. Here synergies with gender aspects should be established and exploited, e.g. through bi-annual civil society events.
- ROLPRO2 will promote inclusion of gender-related topics in all trainings to be organized within the Project, in particular when it comes to capacity-building of the three training centres for prosecutors, judges and lawyers.
- ROLPRO2 will explore the National Gender Action Plan (NGAP), as to how else the Project can contribute to the promotion of gender equality and eradication of GBV.
- Other EU projects will also consider inclusion of gender-oriented activities according to the adopted NGAP.
- Gender equality aspects should be duly reflected in the upcoming Financing Agreements between the EU and Kyrgyzstan.

2. Education

- It is necessary to develop instruments and tools that will increase gender awareness and gender expertise at all levels, from parents to teachers and further to children. It is important to enhance these tools as a way to combat direct or indirect pressure for children to drop out of schools and to reproduce sexist stereotypes.
- Psychological safety of children, particularly girls, should be secured through a) sexual education, b) religious education and c) education on rights (human rights, socio-economic rights and etc.).
- There is a need to include and reinforce dialogue on religion and education, to prevent potential clash between religious beliefs and gender sensitivity. This should be done not only among parents-children-teachers, but also with religious institutions. It is important to strengthen interaction and coordination between pedagogues and religious institutions.
- It is crucial that the content of curriculum becomes more gender sensitive at all stages.
- All schools should have at least one social pedagogue. There is a need for a continuous dialogue between social pedagogues, teachers and children in order to bring about the real change.
- School curriculum should be assessed from the perspective of psychological comfort.
- Existing educational instruments should be assessed from the perspective of gender sensitivity.
- Awareness-raising on gender aspects for teachers and parents should be in place.
- Higher education: it is important to broaden opportunities for distant learning, to further education after high school, particularly if there has been a large gap since high school graduation.

3. Rural Development

The following priority thematic areas were highlighted as relevant to GAP II Gender objectives:

- Nutrition: (Gender objective 12 – Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women throughout their life cycle). With a reference to social protection related activities, targeted social protection measures should be linked given their contribution to food security and nutrition.
- Decent work: (Gender objective 14 – Access to decent work for women of all ages).

- Access to productive resources: (Gender objective 15 – Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship).
- Access to clean water, and infrastructure: (Gender objective 16 – Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport infrastructure, and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women).
- Participation in decision-making processes and community-led initiatives: (Gender objective 17 – Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels).
- Social norms and stereotypes: (Gender objective 19 – Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes). Engagement of boys/men in the design and implementation should be encouraged and is important.
- Climate change and environmental issues: (Gender objective 20 – Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues).

It was recommended that the working group for Rural Development and Social Protection sector should continue discussions with a view to inform an actionable and practical gender plan. The work should particularly focus on identifying clear gender objectives with measurable indicators and specific activities to attain these objectives.

PowerPoint Presentation delivered at the Workshop



Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan




16 February 2018, Bishkek

The study is funded by the European Union

This presentation was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of authors and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.



The Gender Study for Central Asia was initiated by the European Union (EU) to review the gender situation in Central Asia and in each of the 5 countries of the region (i.e. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan).

Results of the analysis should offer the EU the necessary knowledge and insight on how to effectively provide technical assistance in the further improvement of the gender situation in all the countries of the Central Asia region.

There were to be specific **recommendations** on issues to be addressed to improve the gender situation through the EU Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI) at regional and bilateral levels focusing for the latter on the focal sectors of EU intervention in each country.

The expected **output** of the study was a report summarizing the findings of the qualitative and quantitative document review and fresh new field research/analysis developed for each country of Central Asia as well as a regional overview for Central Asia as a whole.



Background and Context

- ⦿ A 2015 evaluation of EU support to gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries, concluded that at that time, country-level gender analysis by the EU was limited and was significantly weakening the relevance of programmes, and undermining the EU's ability to achieve significant gender equality and empowerment results.



Recommendations from the evaluation

- ⦿ It was recommended that robust gender evidence should inform all EU external spending, programming and policy making.
- ⦿ To this end, all EU Delegations should have a gender analysis of the partner country, at the correct level of intervention depending on the specific context – sector, project-level or national level



Definition of gender analysis

The European Commission defines a gender analysis as the study of differences in the:

- ⦿ conditions,
- ⦿ needs,
- ⦿ participation rates,
- ⦿ access to resources and development,
- ⦿ control of assets,
- ⦿ decision-making powers etc.,
- ⦿ between girls/women and boys/men in their assigned gender roles.



Aim of gender analysis

- ⦿ The gender analysis aims to reveal existing inequalities and/or discrimination.
- ⦿ Such identified inequalities and discrimination have therefore to be addressed in EU-funded actions to ensure that girls, women, boys and men benefit equally, and that gender is not a barrier to development actions.



EU policy for development cooperation

- EU policy is that mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) is a mandatory requirement laid down by law in the Development Cooperation Instrument Regulation, which defines GEWE as a cross-cutting issue to be integrated into all development activities.



How is gender mainstreaming carried out?

- The aim of mainstreaming is to combat gender inequalities
- It begins with identifying and analysing the gender concerns in the sector; the policy documents for the sector, and the specific legislation governing the sector.
- Actions and policies in all areas (e.g. economy, health, education, environment, infrastructure, trade, science and research, agriculture, peace and security etc.) are to be designed in order to address specific concerns, needs and constraints of both women and men, while building on their respective capacities and contributions.



EU Gender Study for Central Asia

- The Gender Study for Central Asia was undertaken from February 2017 – November 2017 and comprised 5 separate gender studies – one for each Central Asia country separately
- In addition, a Regional Overview report covering EU-Central Asia regional programmes, was also produced.
- The study was undertaken by independent consultants, Ms. Helen Dubok (Team Leader) and Ms. Dilbar Turakhanova (Gender Expert)



Gender Study for Kyrgyzstan

- The gender study for Kyrgyzstan was undertaken in-country during the period 18 September – 13 October 2017



Objectives of Central Asia Gender Study

- To provide the EU with a **review of the gender situation in Central Asia** and in each of the five countries of the region - Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan
- The specific objectives were to provide an **understanding of whether gender inequalities persist both formally and informally** in each country, and
- To provide specific country **recommendations on issues to be addressed** to improve the gender situations and the elimination of discrimination in each of these sectors through EU assistance through the Development and Cooperation Instrument, focusing on the focal sectors of EU intervention in each country.



Expected outputs for each country

- A minimum of three objectives from GAP II selected (one per each thematic priority) to contribute to existing programmes / projects or future programmes / projects of DCI (i.e. those active in the bilateral focal sectors of intervention, and those of Non-State Actor / Local Authorities thematic programme);
- Proposed adaptation to programmes in order to incorporate these objectives and adequately measure their impact;

Expected outputs

- Following consultation with the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan, identified and formulated new actions where relevant and possible;
- Identified results for gender equality that will be achieved through existing DCI programmes, and proposed indicators and processes to adequately monitor these results through data-gathering and tracking;
- Identified priorities for forthcoming in-country calls under the EIDHR instrument and possible CSO/LA instrument.

Method used for Kyrgyzstan gender study

- Desk review of secondary data including statistics, survey reports and publications
- Key informant interviews with gender equality actors in Kyrgyzstan
- Interviews with women's organizations and CSOs
- Meetings with national and international gender experts
- Meetings with EU project implementing partners
- Meetings with key government and parliamentary bodies
- Site visit to Osh

People / organisations met in Kyrgyzstan

- International Organizations: UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNAIDS, UNODC, OSCE, IOM, WHO, FAO, ILO, USAID, SDC
- International lenders: EBRD, World Bank, ADB
- Line ministries (Ministries of Education; Labour and Social Development, Agriculture (Department of Water Resources); Interior; National Statistics Committee; Parliamentary Committee on Social Issues, and Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan
- Implementing partners of EU programmes under DCI & other instruments
- EU Member States (representatives from GIZ, KfW, DFID and projects funded by Finland)
- NGOs and Civil Society Organizations
- Independent national and international gender experts

Difficulties encountered

- The team was unable to meet all requested government bodies, such as:
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Justice
- Government Administration

Kyrgyzstan Country – relevant issues

Kyrgyzstan: country-relevant issues to investigate

- Gender mainstreaming in relation to education, rule of law and rural development (focal sectors of EU intervention through DCI)
- Gender budgeting
- Discrimination
- Domestic violence
- Status and needs of women in rural areas
- Role and responsibilities of women in society

Current situation in Kyrgyzstan

Institutional and legal framework on GEWE in Kyrgyzstan

- Kyrgyzstan has progressive gender legislation and policies
- However a clear implementation mechanism for the laws is lacking
- The national strategy on gender equality is under-financed
- Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asia country which elaborates a national action plan as stipulated under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

Institutional and legal framework on GEWE in Kyrgyzstan

- Gender-disaggregated statistics are extensive, and special studies on domestic violence, bride-kidnapping and early marriage are available
- The application of gender expertise / analysis of legislation and policies is mandatory prior to adoption
- National gender machinery is under-resourced (both in human and financial terms) and is ineffective

1.Discrimination: Direct Discrimination

- There is evidence of direct gender discrimination in Kyrgyzstan:
- Employment of women is prohibited by law in certain occupations which are defined as 'hazardous.' This list of hazardous jobs excluding women is a Soviet legacy and is still in force
- Anti-discrimination laws, covering LGBT rights and the rights of other vulnerable groups are lacking

1.1 Indirect Discrimination

- Bride-kidnapping
- Early/child marriage
- Increasing trend in non-registered marriages, and respective lack of property rights in cases of marriage dissolution
- Polygamy (this is also practised among public officials)
- High levels of domestic violence
- Inadequate access to water and sanitation in rural areas causing hardship especially for women and children.

2. Gender issues related to migration

- In Kyrgyzstan, both men and women out-migrate in equal numbers to Russian Federation and Kazakhstan in search of work
- Women migrants are strongly stigmatised by their communities when they return to Kyrgyzstan
- In Russia, Kyrgyz women are victims of violence from male Kyrgyz migrants (so-called 'patriots')
- Migration has a very significant negative impact on children left behind in Kyrgyzstan by their parents
- Internal migration to cities affects women and children more in terms of access to health and education services due to lack of registration as they reside in houses which they built in the outskirts of cities.

3. Gender issues in education sector

- The education curricula at all levels reinforces gender stereotypes (in textbooks, materials etc.)
- Teaching personnel at all levels are not gender-competent and teacher-training does not address gender dimensions
- The number of schools in urban areas is insufficient and there is low coverage of children by pre-school education especially in rural areas
- Lack of satisfactory sanitation facilities in schools may also impact negatively on attendance rates of girls especially in rural areas
- Prevalent stereotypes of gender roles result in drop out of boys from education especially after 9th grade (15 years of age) and of girls in certain regions (South)

Gender issues in education (cont.)

- There are more boys than girls in primary and secondary vocational education, and there is gender parity in higher education.
- Higher education for girls however, does not lead to more or better employment opportunities for girls.
- There is strong gender segregation in educational subjects studied, which results in subsequent gender segregation in the job market also.

4. Gender issues in rule of law sector

- The Government has taken a strong stand in combating gender-based violence through mainstreaming gender into law enforcement, reform of legislation, and increasing penalties for GBV.
- The current free legal aid framework does not take into account women's specific needs for legal aid in GBV cases
- There is low gender sensitivity among investigators, prosecutors, judges and defence lawyers which is also linked to the lack of gender sensitivity in curricula of Law faculties and in-service training institutions
- There are no special procedures in the investigation of rape, child abuse, domestic violence and other GBV cases.

Gender issues in rule of law sector

- The training on GBV to date, has been mainly ad-hoc. Manuals have also been developed to train police, prosecutors, judges and defence lawyers
- However, in-service training does not include mandatory courses on investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases of rape, domestic violence, child abuse and other GBV cases.
- All the above mentioned factors contribute to a culture of impunity of the perpetrators of gender-based violence
- Legislation on civil, criminal and administrative procedure does not meet the special needs of persons with disabilities (e.g. braille, sign language etc.)

5. Gender issues in rural development

- The State recognizes the key role of women in agriculture, but key documents governing the agricultural sector are gender-blind
- Approximately 60% of rural women do not own any land, and only 3% of women compared with 22 % of men, have sole ownership of land in rural areas
- Another constraint is that girls give up any land they may own when they get married and re-locate to their husband's family home.
- There is strong tradition of male land ownership
- There is high absenteeism of boys from school during peak agricultural work periods, indicating the prevailing use of child labour in agriculture

Gender issues in rural development

- Many women work in agriculture as individual entrepreneurs or as heads or members of peasant farms, but the revenue derived from agricultural production is used principally for household consumption.
- These women may also sell surplus agricultural products but even then, the income earned is generally used by the family and rarely reinvested in business development.
- Women's businesses tend to be smaller than men's and operated informally
- Limited ownership of key assets and property affect women's opportunities to apply for large loans requiring collateral

Gender issues in rural development

- Women tend to have less knowledge of how to run a business, and less experience
- There are fewer female members of cooperatives
- Women are not well represented in decision-making positions at management level of water users' associations
- 82% of men and only 18% of women reported owning livestock. However women play a significant role in animal husbandry
- In the case of divorce, the tradition is for family livestock to remain with the husband

Gender issues in rural development

- While there is potential for growth in the fruit and vegetable industry, women are almost absent from ownership or management of commercially viable SMEs in expanding market channels.
- Instead, women currently work in informal, home-based and micro-sized enterprises that are considered stagnant market channels, with limited opportunities for growth
- Consequently women do not currently enjoy employment-related benefits such as maternity benefits and pensions.

6. Status and needs of women in rural areas

- Women are poorly represented in local representative bodies (estimate: 10% at local kenesh level in 2017)
- Women make up only 39% of staff of local self-government bodies
- There are no female Governors, no female akims, and no female city mayors
- Despite their active participation in agriculture and animal husbandry, rural women are not empowered
- The rural population spend on average one and a half times more time on domestic chores compared with urban residents

Status and needs of rural women

- Women devote 88% of their time to household management, while men spend 72.5% of their time on household management
- There is a lack of labour-saving appliances and services to reduce the workload of rural women such as washing machines, water boilers.
- Availability of reliable clean water supply and sanitation facilities remain priority needs in rural areas
- The quality of available services such as health and education is much worse in rural than in urban areas
- In cases of domestic violence, women do not have sufficient access to services such as shelters and crisis centres

7. Roles and responsibilities of women in society in Kyrgyzstan

- There is rigid entrenched stereotyping in Kyrgyzstan for the expected roles of women and men, which cuts across all sectors and areas of life
- Women's agency is restricted by their families and society in all spheres of their life especially in rural areas (reproductive health, education, employment, civil rights etc.)
- Women's role is still mainly perceived as being that of care giver and her place is in the home
- There is low legal literacy of the population as a whole, and particularly low levels of legal literacy for women
- Political participation of women in Parliament, Government is declining over time
- Women's participation is instrumentalised and does not result in transformation of unequal gender relations in society

8. Gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting

- Gender mainstreaming is used as a tool in national development planning in some sectors
- In general there is commitment to gender mainstreaming but it is not always effective due to low level of knowledge among public servants about methods and tools of gender mainstreaming and skills on their use.
- Gender budgeting in Kyrgyzstan is only now evolving.
- Gender disaggregated statistics are available, although not fully used as a tool of gender mainstreaming

Conclusions

Key findings

- The environment in Kyrgyzstan is favourable for the advancement of the gender equality agenda
- The capacity of Parliament, Government and line ministries in gender mainstreaming, gender analysis of sectors and gender budgeting still requires major effort
- Civil society is robust in Kyrgyzstan, and women's NGOs are able to unite around issues of concern and advocate effectively with public bodies
- The national gender machinery however is very weak and under-resourced
- There is an increasing trend of Islamization in the country which poses a real risk to the gains made in gender equality policy in Kyrgyzstan
- There is no effective coordination on gender issues in Kyrgyzstan between donors, UN agencies and the national gender machinery

Gender mainstreaming in EU projects in Kyrgyzstan

- There are effective gender-sensitive interventions under the Instrument for Stability (IFS) projects which also aim to address the gender risks posed by Islamization
- In the education sector, the project implemented by KAS / BIOM provided solid evidence on gender gaps in the education sector, although the budget support indicators for this sector, do not reflect these identified gender gaps
- In the rule of law sector, the project implemented by GIZ is not effectively mainstreaming gender, and the identified gender issues are not effectively addressed by the project
- In the rural development sector, there are effective gender-specific interventions which are being implemented (e.g. MSDSP)

Gender mainstreaming in EU projects (cont.)

- The awareness, knowledge and understanding among some Team Leaders about the importance of gender mainstreaming in EU projects was very low indeed
- The reviewed project log frames do not systematically contain gender-sensitive indicators or even targets for numbers of male and female beneficiaries

Recommendations

Selection of gender objectives from GAP II

1. Selection of gender objectives from GAP II

- All 14 gender objectives across the three thematic areas of EU GAP II, in principle are relevant to Kyrgyzstan

B. Thematic Priority: Physical and Psychological Integrity

Objectives 7 and 12 are priorities and are recommended:

- 7. Girls and women free from all forms of violence against them (VAWG) both in the public and in the private sphere
- 12. Healthy nutrition levels for girls and women and throughout their life cycle.

C. Thematic Priority: Economic and Social Empowerment

Objectives 13, 14, 15 and 16 are priorities and are recommended:

- 13. Equal access for girls and women to all levels of quality education and vocational education and training (VET) free from discrimination
- 14. Access to decent work for women of all ages
- 15. Equal access by women to financial services, productive resources including land, trade and entrepreneurship
- 16. Equal access and control over clean water, energy, transport infrastructure, and equitable engagement in their management, enjoyed by girls and women.

D. Thematic Priority: Political and Civil Rights – Voice and Participation

Objectives 17, 19 and 20 are priorities and are recommended:

- 17. Equal rights and ability for women to participate in policy and governance processes at all levels
- 19. Challenged and changed discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes
- 20. Equal rights enjoyed by women to participate in and influence decision-making processes on climate and environmental issues

2. Priorities for new actions

- There were demands voiced by Ministry of Labour and National Statistics Committee for further research of specific issues such as gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms on roles and duties in the family; practice of household work of women (as part of their commitments under National Action Plan on Gender Equality for 2016-2017)
- Capacity building on gender expertise of projects of green economy (to develop female entrepreneurship in agriculture based on piloted experiences of FAO etc.)
- Capacity building of National Statistics Office and responsible public bodies on collection of statistics based on recent amendments of legislation on GBV (new data collection forms will be developed and used to collect GBV data)
- Formulation of new actions which assist in the implementation of CEDAW; improving the capacity of the national gender machinery, and addressing Gender-based Violence etc.

Priorities for new actions (cont.)

- There is scope for the EU to promote / formulate a regional Central Asia programme on GEWE with a focus on:
- building knowledge of local country partners
- sharing best practice on a legal and institutional framework for GEWE and its effective implementation
- gender research
- use of gender statistics in policy formulation; gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting in national development, between CA countries and EU Member States (i.e. partnered with Eastern EU Member States with a similar socialist past)

3. Adaptation of EU projects in Kyrgyzstan

- EUD should strongly emphasise with implementing partners the EU's commitment to EU GAP II implementation
- A stronger policy should be pursued and reiterated with project implementing partners obliging them to take up relevant gender objectives through mainstreaming, and adequately measuring progress towards achieving GAP II gender objective(s)
- Adequate accountability and reporting mechanisms should be established in the project log frames through gender-sensitive indicators and targets
- A requirement to address gender dimensions in all situation analyses, inception reports and feasibility studies etc. should be imposed and reiterated regularly, especially in pipeline projects in rural development, to be managed by GIZ

Adaptation of EU rule of law project

- Conduct a comprehensive gender analysis of the rule of law sector as part of design of the next phase of the Rule of Law Project to be implemented by GIZ
- Ensure that gender concerns are explicitly addressed at outcome and output levels of the new project and gender sensitive indicators are formulated to measure progress
- Address the identified needs of women and persons with disabilities in relation to access to justice
- Ensure effective cooperation / partnership with professional associations of women in the rule of law sector (judges and police women) and women's CSOs.

4. Recommendations for current EU education projects:

- With the projects in the education sector, the EU is well placed to address gender stereotyping and eliminate inequality between men and women through education
- Promote professional courses for girls in non-traditional skills
- Assist the Ministry of Education in revising the curricula for teacher-training and educational curricula at all levels of education in order to remove existing gender stereotypes.

Recommended conditionalities in education sector: budget support

- Conditionalities for budget support should be linked to gender equality outcomes, specifically:
 - As part of teacher training, include addressing the removal of gender bias and stereotypes
 - The training of girls in VET in non-traditional skills, should be linked to the labour market (tourism, innovations, IT)
 - Removal of gender stereotypes in education curricula
 - Gender indicators should be systematically used in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of education sector.

Thank you!