
Gender Assessment

SAP002: Climate services and diversification of climate sensitive livelihoods to empower food insecure and vulnerable communities in the Kyrgyz Republic

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GREEN
CLIMATE
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ANNEX #

GENDER ANALYSIS AND GENDER ACTION PLAN

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Part I. Gender Analysis

1.1. COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Kyrgyz Republic is making progress in ensuring an equal status of women and men under the law and addressing gender gaps; the country is ranked 90th (2015) in the Gender Inequality Index. Women's economic activity is 50% compared with 75% for men. In rural areas women tend to work in lower-end value chains with less predictable incomes. Women engaged in unpaid productive work and women outside the labour force account for 72% of the total working age population living below poverty line. The following factors present structural barriers to women's participation in the labour force: the burden of unpaid care work, as women spend 3.6 times more time on housekeeping compared to men, inadequate childcare facilities and lack of affordable government social provisioning, lack of decent job opportunities, providing maternity and social protection, as well as increasing influence of the traditional stereotypes assigning women as primary caregivers. In addition, there are structural barriers that impede women from establishing their own business and transitioning from the informal to the formal private sector market. (source: UNDAF, pillar 1).

1.2. GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT

The employment rate of men is 71%, and women - 44%. The employment rate of men in all age groups is higher than that of the women, but the most significant gap is in the age group of 25-34 years old. At this age, women often leave their job due to childbirth. Women also experience income poverty due to the significant gender wage gap. In 2015, the average wage of men was 1.3 times higher than that of the women. In general, the difference in wage levels of women and men is due to structure of sectorial segregation in the context of gender. Thus, the highest proportion of women among working population is in the low-paid services sector, especially in health and social services (84%), education (79%), as well as in hotels and restaurants (59%).

The results of a recent GSPS survey suggest that men are twice more likely than women to start a business. Obstacles to the opening of businesses by women are the lack of finance and knowledge on management, business planning, negotiation and agricultural skills. The

vast majority of women are engaged in trade (74%), 7% are in the garment industry another 6% provide are engaged in personal services, 13% in other spheres. For food processors, two thirds are men and only one third are women . Off-farm livelihoods, in particular SMEs, are one of the areas proposed for women to help them respond to the impacts of climate change.

1.3. GENDER AND AGRICULTURE

Around a third of all working women and men are employed in agriculture (34.5 percent of all employed women and 29.6 percent of all working men, the equivalent of 323 500 women and 403 800 men). Women have significant involvement in crop production, while livestock is considered a male occupation, with women making important contributions by processing livestock products. Because of their role in managing livestock, men also generally control the income that results from the sale of animal products such as raw wool and dairy products. Other types of small-scale animal husbandry, such as rabbit or poultry keeping, beekeeping could be considered accessible income-generating opportunities for women¹. Female entrepreneurs are also involved in greenhouse cultivation of medicinal plants, vegetables, flowers and seedlings for sale to local households. While there is potential for growth in the fruit and vegetable industry, women are nearly absent from ownership or management of commercially viable SMEs in expanding market channels.

While there are no formal or legal barriers to women's property ownership, culturally and traditionally, men are the favored inheritors and owners of real property and land. Thus, most houses (62%) are registered in men's name, and only 29% – in women's name. All other assets of households are mainly registered in men's name: living premises / houses / apartments, in addition to those, where families live - 66%; commercial real estate - 61%; land - 80%; passenger vehicles - 90%; cargo transport - 93%; agricultural transport - 93%. Without full ownership, women's ability to use property (for example to sell, rent out or to offer property as collateral to secure loans) is compromised, and this puts them at risk of poverty and extreme poverty in cases of divorce, abandonment or in other situations where they are not supported by a male property owner.

The majority of individual farmers, not only female farmers, have limited financial capacity to own and operate machinery. Female farmers tend to lack ownership and control over a variety of productive inputs. Women's lack of access stems from their more limited knowledge (for example, about companies that sell fertilizers, pesticides and seeds, about processing technologies and about any available subsidies) and the high cost of resources (for example, seeds, fertilizers and fuel). Men have better access to irrigation than women, and female heads of households more often report that they have inadequate access to irrigation compared with male household heads (20 percent of FHH and 13 percent of MHH). As land owners, men consider themselves responsible for making decisions about irrigation, while the women's sphere is seen as the management of water for domestic use. Since 1996, rural water resources have been managed by Water Users Associations (WUAs), but to date, women's representation in such organizations has been minimal.

¹ "National Gender Profile of Agricultural and Rural Livelihoods - Kyrgyz Republic", FAO, 2016.

An assessment of pesticide poisoning revealed that while men are at a high risk of pesticide poisoning because they are responsible for crop spraying and the disposal of empty pesticide containers, many women and children (boys are more likely to take on these tasks than girls, especially tasks involving the direct handling of pesticides) also risk exposure when they use open water sources near sprayed crops, as bystanders when crops are sprayed and due to the gendered division of labour.

According to information provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration as of 2016, there are 454 Pasture Management Committees (PMC), approximately 11 of which are chaired by women (or 2.4 percent). Because women are under represented on PMCs, they have more limited information about, and access to, public decision-making concerning sustainable pasture management. Because only men had been elected, the PMCs prioritized road infrastructure projects. Conversely, the female pasture users had other interests, such as, “clean and safe water at the pastures for people and animal, lack of fuel for cooking, problems with animal health, investments into small scale processing for additional income generation.”

FHH, and poor households, primarily use forest resources for subsistence purposes. Women-led households undertake activities such as gathering firewood, making hay and picking fruit almost exclusively for their own consumption, and they collect nuts entirely for commercial purposes. Other activities, such as collecting berries and medicinal plants, beekeeping and livestock grazing, are carried out for a mixture of household consumption and commercial purposes. The walnut and kernel market chain generates significant employment and has the potential to benefit women and poor households. Poor households, including female-headed households, could earn higher incomes if they had more market information and could process or crack walnuts themselves during winter months.

Women and young men reported that they have very limited access to “high demand forest areas”. Young women, in particular, find it difficult to access information and participate in meetings about the distribution of forest lands that are organized by the local forestry department or community authorities, due to their domestic responsibilities and also gender stereotypes about women’s role in resource allocation and management. Women find it particularly difficult to enter negotiations with the local forestry department and they prefer male relatives to negotiate for them. In addition, women generally have less information about the rules and procedures of forest management.

Men are far better represented in the fisheries sector than women, and they also work in more diverse jobs. Women are best represented in fish production, on fish farms, and in the retail trade of fish and fish products. Looking more closely at commercial fisheries, between 80 percent and 90 percent of fish farm employees are male, and while most farms are small (from six to ten employees). Most fish farms are not engaged in fish processing, but it has been noted that women’s role in post-harvest fish processing, such as drying and smoking, in household-based, small-scale businesses has increased.

1.4. GENDER AND NUTRITION

Malnutrition remains a problem. Some 6 percent of the population face dietary energy deficiencies. Dietary habits favour starchy and monotonous food, which leads to nutrient deficiencies, especially in micronutrients. About 13 percent of children between 6 – 59 months and 18 percent of children between 18 – 23 months are stunted. Anaemia affects 43 percent of children under five years of age and 35 percent of women aged 15-49, while 32 percent of children under five years of age are also deficient in vitamin A. 61.6 percent of pregnant women and 43.1 percent of school age children show iodine deficiency. Folate deficiency among non-pregnant women is 42 percent. Undernourishment rates are higher in urban areas than in rural locations; in 2014, 45.1 percent of the rural population consumed less than 2 100 calories per day, compared with 53 percent of the urban population. The prevalence of overweight adults is almost the same for males and females, but women are more than twice as likely than men to be obese (22 percent of women and 12 percent of men). Children’s nutritional status is closely correlated with their mother’s level of education and breastfeeding practices. Unlike the situation for adults, rural children are more likely to experience nutritional problems than urban children. Indicators on child nutrition show that there are small gender differences in the levels of malnourishment among children under age five (boys are slightly more likely to be stunted than girls). Other research, however, found that girls in remittance-receiving households have statistically significantly lower heights and weights than girls in households without remittance income, suggesting that girls may be taking on more domestic work in the absence of other family members, or that there is a “cultural bias toward male children” and therefore less investment in girl’s health. Assessments have found that female-headed households in Kyrgyzstan are not more likely to be food insecure than male-headed households. Although FHH are slightly more likely to be severely insecure (ten percent of FHH and seven percent of MHH), the reverse is true for moderately food insecure households (16 percent of MHH and 12 percent of FHH). Typical coping strategies for households that are experiencing food shortages include: relying on cheaper and less preferred foods; borrowing food from friends or relatives; increasing the number of household members who migrate for work; and reducing healthcare expenditures. The decision to consume poorer quality foods could have a greater impact on the micronutrient status of women of reproductive age and children. Vulnerable farming households, which include FHH, that are already dependent on home grown products for their own consumption, may also have specific difficulties coping with climate risks that affect crop yields.

1.5. GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

According to studies, women often cite a lack of knowledge on how to respond to emergencies and on climate change adaption practices , and are also more likely to suffer the health and nutrition consequences of climate-induced phenomena, such as reduced food production, natural disasters, land degradation and poorer irrigation. Disaster preparedness and nutrition-related trainings should therefore ensure a priority focus on women and children.

With regard to energy use, children and women spend longer periods in poorly heated rooms than their male counterparts and are therefore more likely to have health problems. According to studies, farmers predominantly use charcoal and firewood for heating and cooking. Poor knowledge and use of alternative energy resources and lack of access to technologies, such as energy efficient heaters

and safe cooking stoves increase greenhouse gas emissions, lead to an inefficient use of scarce natural resources and contribute to poor health outcomes and poverty. Thus, increasing the knowledge and use of such technologies would significantly improve the wellbeing of villagers, especially for women and children.

Thus, the proposed project will take into account issues/challenges related to gender relations to ensure that the design of activities is gender sensitive. Activities should, at the very least, not have a negative effect on gender relations and contribute to improved gender equity.

A particular emphasis has been given in the project proposal to gender considerations, with a number of gender specific benefits. Women farmers will be targeted to benefit from climate services to protect and develop their livelihoods and reduce the impact of climate risks. The project will engage women in risk assessment and decision making on activities related to climate change adaptation; local development planning, provide training for women on disaster preparedness and support information management.

Women will benefit from training in improved agricultural practices, including cultivating drought resistant crops, modern irrigating practices, as well as marketing and business skills, which is set to increase the income and resources at their disposal, allow women to strengthen their role in decision making within their family and community. Women will also get better access to processing of agricultural products and receiving higher income during lean season. The training of women in various off-farm income generation activities, including small business activities, sewing, bakery, etc. will improve incomes. Women of childbearing age and children will also be better able to manage their diets and improve their long- term health through consumption of micronutrient rich foods through promotion of homestead gardens and nutrition education.

Women and children will also benefit from receiving knowledge on applying house heating systems, energy-saving stoves, and other alternative energy resources as it will reduce illness rate and reduce time and domestic burden on collecting wood. Rehabilitation of rural infrastructure, dams, mudflow channels, will reduce the risks of disasters, such as floods, and its influence on women, children and men.