

# Gender Assessment

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## **FP308: Improving climate resilience of vulnerable communities and enabling conditions for local climate action in Tajikistan**

Tajikistan | World Food Programme (WFP) | B.45/02/Add.09

12 June 2026



## Acronyms

|        |                                                                            |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AP     | Action Plan                                                                |
| AS     | Agency of Statistics                                                       |
| CC     | Climate Change                                                             |
| CEDAW  | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CGEP   | Country Gender Equality Profile                                            |
| CoWFA  | Committee of Women and Family Affairs                                      |
| DHS    | Demographic and Health survey                                              |
| FAO    | Food and Agriculture Organization                                          |
| GBAO   | Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast                                         |
| GBV    | Gender Based Violence                                                      |
| GDP    | Gross Domestic Product                                                     |
| IYCF   | Infant and young child feeding                                             |
| NDC    | Nationally Determined Contribution                                         |
| OPD    | Organization of People with Disabilities                                   |
| PwDs   | Persons with Disabilities                                                  |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                                       |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change                      |
| UNSDCF | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework               |
| WB     | World Bank                                                                 |
| WFP    | World food Program                                                         |
| WLO    | Women-led Organization                                                     |
| WUA    | Water User Association                                                     |

## Country context

Tajikistan gender dynamics are explicitly embedded in UNSDCF (2023–2026) Tajikistan’s National Strategy for the Activation of Women’s Role in Society (2021–2030) and their implementation is scrutinized around three strategic priorities such as:

1. Sustainable, inclusive, climate-resilient economic growth
2. People-centered governance & rule of law

With the outcome areas including:

- Enhanced health, education, social protection systems
- Green economic policy frameworks with private sector engagement
- Sustainable management of natural resources and climate adaptation
- Transparent, accountable governance respecting human rights and gender equality

However, up to date, the economic participation and women’s labor force employment stands at approximately 33% in 2025, compared to 59% for men<sup>1</sup>. The gender wage gap persists, with women earning 30–35% less than men in similar roles. Despite government initiatives, only 18% of registered entrepreneurs are women, though recent programs have tripled funding for women-led businesses to 15 million somoni (USD 1.57 million) annually. Rural women face additional challenges, with limited access to credit and land ownership- less than 10% of agricultural land titles are held by women.<sup>2</sup>

Gender disparities significantly impact Tajikistan’s women’s ability to adapt to and mitigate climate change, especially in rural communities. According to the UNDP’s “*Gender Study on Climate Change Awareness and Preparedness in Rural Tajikistan*”<sup>3</sup>, women face markedly lower levels of climate awareness and preparedness compared to men. The study notes that climate risks such as droughts, floods, and soil erosion that are consequently reshaping rural labor dynamics, with women often assuming heavier burdens within households while lacking equal access to climate-resilient agricultural practices and market information. This disparity hampers their capacity to implement adaptive strategies such as crop diversification or sustainable water use, widening the gap between climate-resilient and vulnerable communities

Tajikistan has established a formal architecture for advancing gender equality, led by the Committee for Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CoWFA). The CoWFA reports to the Deputy Prime Minister, however, the system is characterized by a significant implementation gap and cannot function in full capacity especially to lead coherences achievements for set gender milestones and show any tangible outcome.

The given analysis is structured into four sections, accompanied by a detailed Action Plan that highlights the consolidation of findings, mentions policy and implementation gaps, and outlines how the project will address them.

Section I Demography and relevant gender frameworks.

Section II analyses the socio-cultural and economic status of women, girls and youth.

Section III focuses on the intersection of gender and climate change.

Section IV summarizes the key findings identified through questionnaires completed by officials and civil society participants during the regional workshops.

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<sup>1</sup> [Tajikistan | World Bank Gender Data Portal](#)

<sup>2</sup> [GENDER STATISTICS - Agency on statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Gender Study on Climate Change Awareness and Preparedness in Rural Tajikistan | United Nations Development Programme](#)

## Section V: Gender Action Plan

### Applied methodology

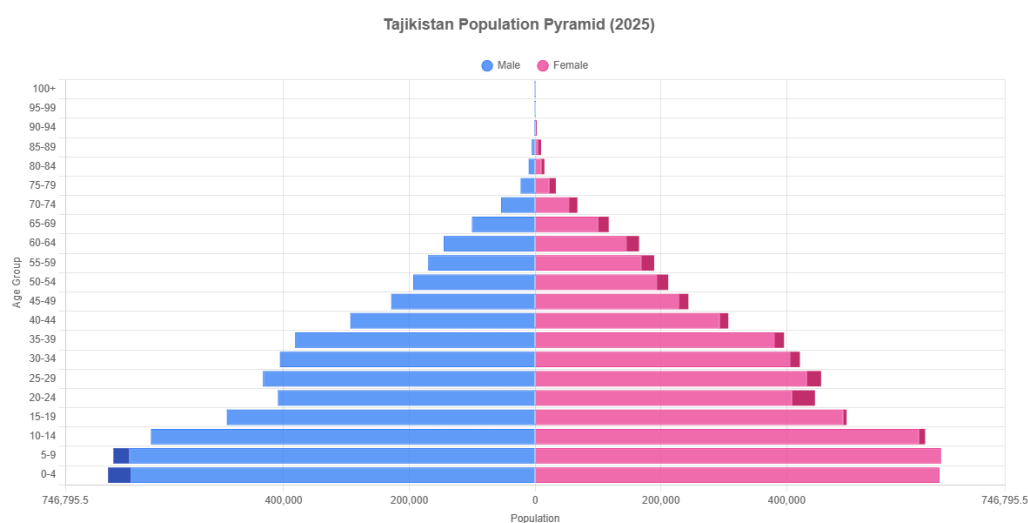
During the analysis, a mixed-method approach was used, combining a comprehensive desk review of official reports and statistical data with interactive consultations involving key stakeholders, policy makers and project management units as well as civil society. This dual strategy ensured that the findings were grounded both in documented evidence and in practical insights from those directly engaged in the relevant sectors.

A special questionnaire was developed to capture the role of women, youth and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the development process, particularly in decision-making that shapes policy on safe environments, food security and the most practical and effective mechanisms for involving communities in the formulation of climate change prevention and mitigation plans. Together with stakeholder consultations, these findings added valuable depth and weight to the overall analysis. Used combination strengthened the validity and reliability of the findings with a solid foundation of secondary data, enabling the identification of trends, gaps and best practices from existing sources.

Findings address and reveal who does what, who has what and who decides what intricating dynamics of gender roles and resource allocation for vulnerable groups, capturing local perspectives and nuances.

### Section I: Demography and relevant gender frameworks

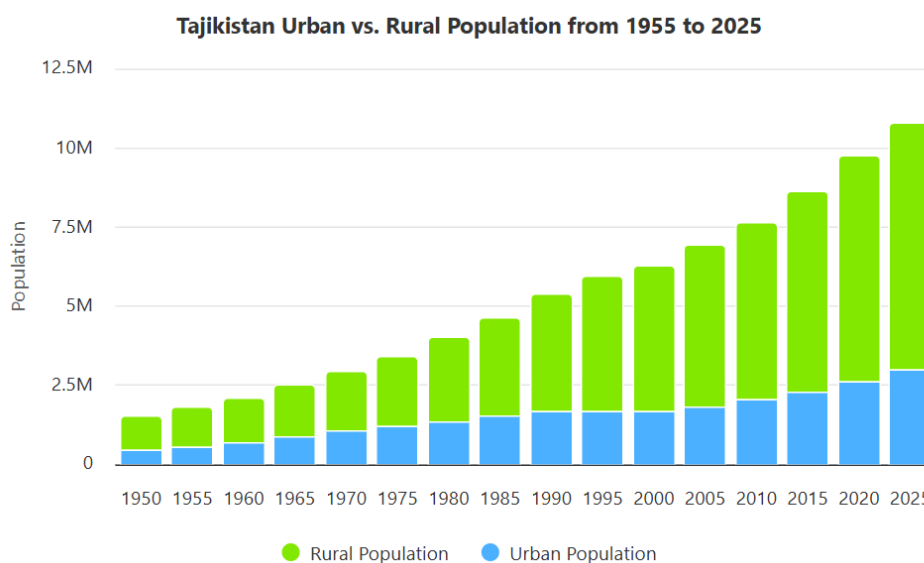
Figure 1: Demographic Profile of Tajikistan<sup>4</sup>



Currently, 27.7% of the population of Tajikistan is urban (2,987,515 people in 2025)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [Tajikistan Population Pyramid 2025 - Demographics & Birth Statistics | 591 Daily Births | Population Pyramids](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Tajikistan Demographics 2025 \(Population, Age, Sex, Trends\) - Worldometer](#)



**Gender Split:** Approximately 50.8% female ( 5.48 million) and 49.2% male ( 5.30 million), resulting in a female surplus of roughly 178,575 .

**GDP per capita:** in Tajikistan (with a population of 10,786,734 people) was \$1,644 in 2025, an increase of \$250 from \$1,394 in 2024; this represents a change of 18.0% in GDP per capita.

## Section II: Socio-cultural and economic status of women, girls and youth

Gendered poverty remains a pressing issue in Tajikistan and continues to pose a major challenge for sustainable development. Despite notable progress in reducing overall poverty rates across the country, the persistence of structural inequalities highlights the vulnerability of certain groups. Patriarchal social norms, restricted access to economic opportunities, and the high levels of male labor migration have combined to create conditions in which women disproportionately shoulder the burden of poverty. This imbalance underscores the need for targeted policies and inclusive strategies that address gender-specific barriers to economic participation and social well-being.

Key aspects of gendered poverty in Tajikistan include:

- Low labor force participation- roughly 69% of working-age women are not working for pay, with female labor force participation at around 31.8% compared to over 50% for men.
- The wage gap- women's contribution to gross national income is 4.5 times less than that of men, with women earning roughly 60% of what men earn.
- Impact of migration- with over a million, primarily male, Tajiks working abroad, many women are left to manage households and farms alone. These "left behind" wives often face extreme hardship, managing household, farm, and childcare responsibilities without financial security.
- Property and asset disparity- women have limited access to land, property, and, consequently, loans. Less than 30% of entrepreneurs are women, and they face barriers in accessing financial services.<sup>6</sup>

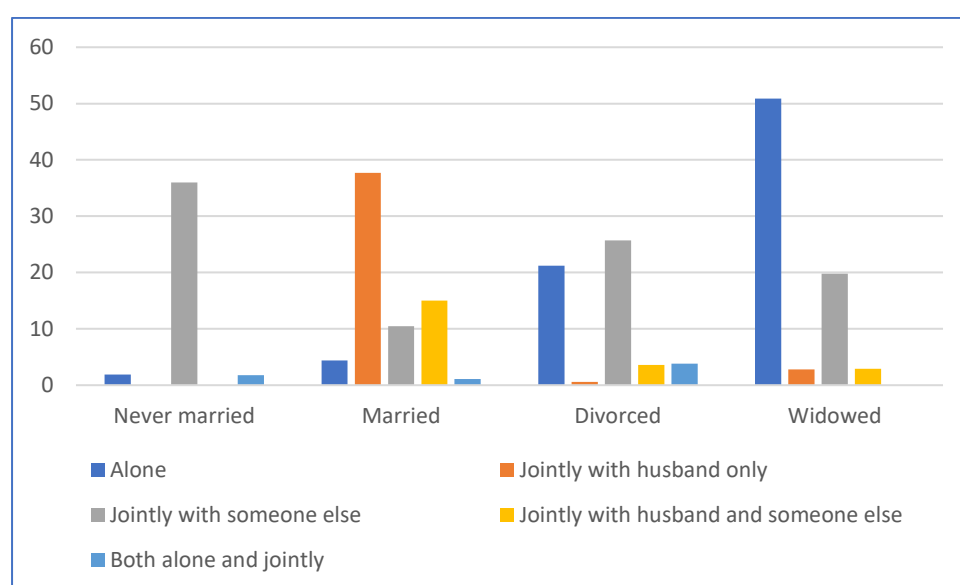
Tajikistan has achieved a remarkable economic transformation over the past decade and a half, recording one of the most significant regional and global reductions in poverty. The national poverty rate plummeted from 56 percent in 2010 to just below 20 percent in 2024, a period that also saw the middle class expand substantially from 8 to 33 percent of the population. The report underscores that remittances have been a pivotal force in Tajikistan's economy. The reliance on migration for income is deeply embedded, particularly in rural areas. In 2022, 33 percent of rural households had members working abroad, compared with 25 percent in urban households, highlighting a greater reliance on

<sup>6</sup> [Tajikistan: Country Gender Assessment](#)

migrant labor in the countryside. This reliance translated into powerful macroeconomic effects: from 2021 to 2022, remittances alone were responsible for 39 percent of the poverty reduction and facilitated 24 percent of the expansion of the middle class (World Bank, 2025).

Women's ownership and control of key resources are another indicator of economic autonomy. While there is no sex-disaggregated data about asset ownership, it has been reported that 45 percent of divorced/separated women and 23.8 percent of widowed women do not own a house, and 37 percent own a house jointly with their husbands (TjDHS, 2023) (Figure 2). Gender norms also shape asset ownership. In Tajikistan, men inherit land and a house, while women move to their husband's family after marriage and do not own anything. According to the findings of this study, unregistered marriages are still common in Tajikistan, which is another factor preventing women from owning assets (CGEP Primary Data 2025). Women in unregistered marriages are usually left with nothing and no rights to claim upon being divorced by their husbands.

Figure 2. House ownership



Source: Demographic and Health Survey, 2023

The current agriculture sector employs 59% of all working women, making up to 46% of the agricultural labor force, yet only 23% of *dehkan* farms are registered to women, and 37% of women in agriculture receive no cash income. These figures illustrate the feminization of agriculture due to male out-migration and the systemic disempowerment of women despite their critical role<sup>7</sup>.

### The Feminization of Agriculture and its contradictions

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Tajikistan's economy, accounting for 22 percent of the national GDP and employing approximately 60 percent of the population (World Bank, 2023; Sevimli & Jungbluth, 2022). This sector is characterized by a profound demographic shift: the feminization of its workforce. While formal employment rates appear equivalent, a disproportionately high 59 percent of all working women are employed in agriculture, a trend driven by scarce alternative employment and mass male out-migration from rural areas (World Bank, 2023; FAO, 2025). Women now constitute 46 percent of the agricultural labor force, serving as its *de facto* backbone (Agency of Statistics, 2020). However, this increased responsibility starkly contrasts with their access to rights, resources, and recognition, creating an entrenched landscape of inequality.

The phenomenon of male migration has thrust women into the role of *de facto* managers of family farms, yet this responsibility is seldom formally recognized. While the number of small *dehkan* farms

<sup>7</sup> FAO (2025) 'National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods: Republic of Tajikistan'

has grown dramatically, reaching 184,000 in 2025, and the proportion registered to women has risen to 23 percent in 2024, a common practice is for men who have migrated to remain the legal head, rendering the woman's day-to-day management unofficial and unrecorded (Agency of Statistics, 2024; FAO, 2016). This disparity is consistent across all regions, as illustrated in Figure 4 below, which shows that men head the vast majority of farms: over eighty percent in Khatlon (81.4 percent), Sugd (70.6 percent), GBAO (87.8 percent), and Dushanbe (84.4 percent). This discrepancy between responsibility and authority is a fundamental feature of gender dynamics in the sector. This discrepancy between responsibility and authority is a fundamental feature of gender dynamics in the sector.

At the community level, women's participation is sharply defined by age, social role, migration dynamics and sector. While older women often engage in local governance, younger women are socially constrained, their participation limited by judgment and the need for permission. Their involvement is particularly low in key institutions like Water User Associations (WUAs), where they make up only 8.3% of members. Within the household, decision-making is highly gendered and generational<sup>8</sup>.

The DHS also measured access to mobile phones and bank accounts. Women's possession of mobile phones increases with age (30 percent of women aged 15-19 and 81 percent of women aged 40 to 44), and it is also dependent on the residence (78.7 percent of women in urban areas had mobile phones vs 59.7 percent of women in rural areas) (TjDHS, 2023). Nevertheless, as this study's findings confirm, the use of mobile phones has been restricted for women, especially young women.

### Health and Nutrition

According to the 2023 Demographic and Health survey (DHS) only 41 per cent of mothers in Tajikistan breastfeed their children exclusively for the first six months, a significant decrease from 50 per cent in 2003. Almost half of mothers start giving their children complementary food between four and six months, and every tenth mother does it even earlier. Only 57 percent of the children are introduced to complementary foods at an appropriate age, and only 40 percent of children 6-23 months (about 2 years) receive the optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in terms of food diversity and meal frequency.

The same survey revealed that 14 percent of children 0-5 years suffer from stunting (too short for their age), the irreversible result of chronic nutrition deprivation. 6% were reported to be wasted among which 4.6 percent were moderately wasted. Although this number is less than the WHO targets for 2025 and 2030, when we translate these rates to actual number of children, it's estimated that 102,000 children under 5-year-old in the country are affected by moderate acute malnutrition, which is the most fatal form of malnutrition.

Suggested that malnutrition in Tajikistan costs almost US\$41.0 million, or 1 per cent of GDP annually in economic losses and contributes to more than 7,600 deaths of children under the age of five years<sup>9</sup>. The same report indicated that a combination of iodine deficiency and stunting contributes to two-thirds of the losses. It goes further to suggest that almost 80% of these losses could be prevented by introduction and implementation of cost-effective evidence-based interventions nation-wide such as promotion of good nutritional practices, universal salt iodization, flour fortification, micronutrient supplementation and management of severe and acute malnutrition.

According to the 2018 Cost of the Diet analysis, nutritious diets cost three times more than diets that meet minimum energy needs, and an estimated 29-56 percent of households across different regions of the country cannot afford a nutritious diet. Households spend over half of their expenditure on food, and the rates are higher among the poor. During the lean season, access to nutritious foods is further constrained due to their lack of availability in markets and higher prices. High consumption of energy-dense foods (e.g., bread and oil) regardless of household wealth status, is reported, and choices of food are closely linked with cultural norms, beliefs, and practices.

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<sup>8</sup> World Bank (2025), "Gender Data Landscape for Tajikistan"

<sup>9</sup> Situation Analysis: Improving economic outcomes by expanding nutrition programming in Tajikistan", UNICEF and World Bank, 2012

These factors, coupled with poor knowledge and skills of health professionals at the primary healthcare level in the management of malnutrition, result in poor nutrition outcomes for children and women and cause micronutrient deficiencies and stunting.

Weak capacities and lack of evidence-based policy actions and financing make it difficult to launch an integrated and cross-sectoral response to address nutritional needs in Tajikistan.

### Gender Based Violence

Protection and gender-based violence remains a critical issue despite progress. National surveys indicate that 16% of women experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence from a partner in 2023, down from 31% in 2017. Early marriage continues to affect girls' development opportunities, with 8.7% of women married before age 18. Maternal health indicators show improvement, yet adolescent fertility remains high at 44 births per 1,000 girls aged 15–19, reflecting gaps in reproductive health education and services<sup>10</sup>.

### Youth engagement in agriculture and food systems

Prevailing gender norms often result in policies that exclude youth, restricting their access to decision-making and productive resources.

There are no youth-oriented gender responsive and transformative policies and programmes that engage youth in their design, implementation and monitoring, taking into account the diverse realities of all youth in diverse situations, including in prevention of climate change affects and increase of sustained food security.

## Section III: Intersection of gender and climate change

Overview of International Conventions ratified by Tajikistan Government and domestic gender-sensitive climate change policies

| Domestic Gender Frameworks and policies                          | Description                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women (2021–2030)    | Focuses on increasing women's participation in leadership, education, and economic sectors. |
| Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities (2005) | Provides the fundamental legal basis for gender equality.                                   |
| Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence (2013)                    | Addresses gender-based violence, which remains high.                                        |
| State Program for Women's Entrepreneurship (2023–2027)           | Aims to boost economic independence.                                                        |
| Quota System                                                     | Presidential quotas facilitate girls from remote regions entering higher education.         |

| International Conventions Ratified                                                     | Description                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CEDAW (1993)                                                                           | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. |
| CEDAW Optional Protocol (2014)                                                         | Ratified to strengthen complaint mechanisms.                                |
| International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers (2002) | Important due to high male labor migration.                                 |

| Gender-Sensitive Climate Change Policies | Description |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|
|------------------------------------------|-------------|

<sup>10</sup> [World Bank Document](#)



|                                                                 |                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (up to 2030) | Adopts a, with plans to incorporate gender-sensitive indicators, recognizing the vulnerability of rural women (74% of the population). |
| Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) (2021)         | Aligns climate action with sustainable development, focusing on strengthening the role of women in environmental management.           |
| Partnership for Climate Action                                  | UN Women integrates gender into disaster risk reduction and climate strategies, focusing on rural, migration-affected areas.           |

WFP's updated Climate Change Policy addresses climate change as a major driver of hunger and malnutrition. It outlines the pathways and modalities through which WFP engages to reduce and manage the impacts of climate-specific risks on lives, livelihoods and food systems. It renews WFP's continued role in relation to global climate change policy processes, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its associated institutions and instruments, where WFP advocates for the inclusion of food and nutrition security through climate action.

In Tajikistan the CC is characterized by droughts, dust storms and heat stress that have already impacted countries' agriculture-dependent economy, disproportionately affecting women. Rural women face heightened vulnerability, limited access to resources, and increased burdens, while playing a critical role in local food security and climate adaptation.

Constructive progress has been achieved at the policy level, reflected in sectoral reforms and the adoption of strategies addressing food security, rural development, and climate change adaptation. The government has also outlined a clear vision through the '*National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021–2030*'. Nevertheless, a noticeable gap persists between stated commitments and their practical implementation.

Although rural and urban populations face similar lifecycle risks and contingencies, rural communities are more vulnerable to natural and environmental risks due to their livelihoods and income-generating strategies, for example farming, which are more susceptible to events such as flooding, drought and land degradation. Climate change-induced variations in temperatures and rainfall are expected to increasingly impact on agricultural production. The World Bank estimates, for example, that as the effects of climate change intensify, average yields of grain and fruit production are expected to decline in Tajikistan by 15 percent, and 9 percent to 11 percent, respectively by 2050, compared with 2015 (World Bank, 2022). Such declines are expected to impact the livelihoods of dehkan farmers, particularly women farmers who have limited capacity to adapt. Female-headed households with scarce resources in rural Tajikistan are especially vulnerable to climate-related disasters. Women, together with children and the elderly, tend to be disproportionately affected by extreme weather events such as floods, landslides, and mudslides due to their societal roles. During periods of climatic stress, they are often compelled to manage heavy workloads with fewer resources at their disposal.

#### **Section IV: Key findings identified through questionnaires completed by officials and civil society participants during the regional workshops.**

During the stakeholder workshops held between January 13- 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, a specially designed set of questionnaires was completed by participants. These questionnaires focused on the critical inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in development planning, particularly in relation to food security, land use, and climate change.

The questionnaires were conducted anonymously, ensuring that respondents could share their perspectives openly and with integrity. This approach not only encouraged transparency but also strengthened accountability in the information provided.

Although all questionnaires were formally completed, many respondents left several sections unanswered. This highlights a serious lack of coordination between civil society, local communities and the most vulnerable groups residing within them.

Participants largely referred to a charity-based model of disability engagement, which reflects a limited understanding of disability inclusion. This approach tends to view persons with disabilities as passive recipients of aid rather than active contributors to development processes.

When asked about climate change mitigation, the majority of respondents indicated that the only widely recognized coping strategy was tree planting. While important, this narrow perspective reveals a critical gap in knowledge and practice. Respondents showed little awareness of communities around essential adaptation methods, such as community-based resource management.

No specific statistics were provided regarding the level of engagement of women-headed households and youth groups (including students and university graduates). The absence of quantified data<sup>6</sup> such as percentages or measurable indicators makes it difficult to assess the actual extent of their participation. This lack of clarity weakens the ability to evaluate whether these groups were meaningfully included in the local development plans and whether their perspectives were adequately represented in the development planning process.

Similarly, the engagement of minority ethnic groups was repeatedly mentioned in narratives, yet no concrete statistics were presented to substantiate their involvement. Without reliable figures, it remains uncertain whether these communities were genuinely integrated into the discussions or if their inclusion was only symbolic. This highlights a critical gap in monitoring and accountability, underscoring the need for more systematic data collection to ensure that vulnerable and marginalized groups are not overlooked in future stakeholder processes.

There are contact numbers exist under various departments, their functionality remains unclear, with no evidence of whether it is actively operational, what types of issues it addresses, or whether referral support is provided to resolve requests and feedback received. The absence of clarity on these aspects indicates that the mechanism is not yet fully capacitated, as it lacks transparency, defined procedures and a well-coordinated response system.